

# The Explorers: Henry Hudson

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Henry Hudson From the public domain

**Synopsis:** In the 1600s, English explorer Henry Hudson hoped to find a sailing route to Asia that wasn't blocked by ice. In 1609, he traveled to the New World—North America—and the river that would later be named after him. On his fourth voyage, Hudson came upon the body of water that would later be called the Hudson Bay.

## Early Life

One of the world's most famous explorers, Henry Hudson was born in England around 1565.

There is little information available about Hudson's life prior to his first journey as a ship's commander in 1607. He must have had a talent for navigating ships early on because he was made a ship commander in his late 20s. Before 1607, Hudson probably worked aboard other ships before finally leading one of his own. It appears he was also married to a woman named Katherine. They had three sons together.

## First Three Voyages

Hudson made four journeys during his career. During that time, countries and companies competed with each other to find the best ways to reach important trading posts. They especially wanted to explore Asia and India. In 1607, an English company asked Hudson to find a northern route to Asia. Hudson brought his son John with him on this trip, as well as Robert Juet. Juet went on several of Hudson's voyages and recorded these trips in his journals.

Hudson and his crew battled icy conditions. They explored some islands near Greenland before turning back.

The following year, Hudson set sail again to find the rumored Northeast Passage. He thought he could reach Asia by traveling north. But when he made it to the Arctic Ocean north of Russia, he was blocked by thick ice, so he returned to England.

In 1609, Hudson became a commander for the Dutch East India Company. It is commonly called the world's first major corporation. Hudson was asked to find a northern route to Asia by heading north of Russia. Again, ice put an end to his travels, but this time he did not head home. Instead, Hudson decided to sail west to find a passage to Asia.

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean, Hudson and his crew reached land that July, coming ashore at what is now Nova Scotia. They encountered some local Native Americans there and traded with them. Hudson traveled south down the North American coast, reaching the Chesapeake Bay. He then turned around and decided to explore New York Harbor. Around this time, Hudson and his crew clashed with some local Native Americans. A crew member died after being shot in the neck with an arrow. Two others onboard were injured.

After burying the crew member, Hudson and his crew traveled up the river that would later carry his name. Along the way, Hudson noticed that the lush green lands that lined the river contained abundant wildlife.

### **Final Journey**

Aboard the ship *Discovery*, Hudson left England in April 1610. He and his crew made their way across the Atlantic Ocean. After traveling around the southern tip of Greenland, they entered what became known as the Hudson Strait. The exploration then reached another body of water later named after him, the Hudson Bay. Traveling south, Hudson came to a dead end.

By this time, Hudson's crew was trapped in the ice and low on supplies, and they became angry. A long winter only made tensions worse. By June 1611, conditions had improved enough for the ship to set sail once again. Hudson, however, didn't make the trip back home.

Shortly after leaving, several members of the crew, including Juet, took over the ship. They decided to cast out Hudson, his son and a few other crew members. These rebels put Hudson and the others in a small boat and set them adrift. It is believed that Hudson and the others died sometime later, in or near the Hudson Bay. Some of the rebels were later put on trial, but they were not found guilty.

More European explorers and settlers followed Hudson's lead, making their way to North America. The Dutch started a new colony, called New Amsterdam, at the mouth of the Hudson River in 1625. New Amsterdam later became known as New York City.

While he never found his way to Asia, Hudson is still widely remembered as a determined early explorer. His efforts helped drive European interest in North America. Today, his name can be found all around us on waterways, schools, bridges and even towns.

## Quiz

1 Read the sentence from the section "Final Journey."

*His efforts helped drive European interest in North America.*

Which sentence from the article BEST supports the conclusion that Hudson helped initiate more exploration and colonization?

- (A) Around this time, Hudson and his crew clashed with some local Native Americans.
- (B) Along the way, Hudson noticed that the lush green lands that lined the river contained abundant wildlife.
- (C) More European explorers and settlers followed Hudson's lead, making their way to North America.
- (D) Today, his name can be found all around us on waterways, schools, bridges and even towns.

2 Which piece of evidence from the article BEST explains the cause of Hudson's failure to find a passage to Asia?

- (A) During that time, countries and companies competed with each other to find the best ways to reach important trading posts.
- (B) But when he made it to the Arctic Ocean north of Russia, he was blocked by thick ice, so he returned to England.
- (C) A crew member died after being shot in the neck with an arrow. Two others onboard were injured.
- (D) After traveling around the southern tip of Greenland, they entered what became known as the Hudson Strait.

3 Which answer choice accurately characterizes the reaction of Hudson's crew members to being faced with dangerous conditions and limited supplies?

- (A) The crew members regretfully abandoned Hudson, leaving him and the ship behind to start a new life across the Hudson Bay.
- (B) The crew members cautiously negotiated with Native Americans, hoping to trade for supplies, but ended up starting a conflict.
- (C) The crew members patiently waited out the long winter, rejoicing when conditions improved enough to set sail for home.
- (D) The crew members angrily took matters into their own hands, taking over the ship and leaving Hudson behind to die.

4 Which of the following MOST influenced Hudson's search for a passage to Asia?

- (A) his employment by various trading companies
- (B) the encouragement of his wife and sons
- (C) his experience as a successful explorer
- (D) the loyalty and camaraderie of his crew