

Reader's Guide

Explorers & Discoverers: From Alexander the Great to Sally Ride, Volume 7, features thirty biographies of twenty men, eight women, one museum, and one ship that have expanded the horizons of our world and universe. Beginning with an ancient Carthaginian navigator and extending to a present-day aviator, *Explorers & Discoverers, Volume 7*, presents the lives and times of well-known explorers as well as many lesser-known women and non-Europeans who have also made significant discoveries. Who these travelers were, when and how they lived and traveled, why their journeys were significant, and what the consequences of their discoveries are are all answered within these biographies.

The thirty biographical entries in *Explorers & Discoverers, Volume 7*, are arranged in alphabetical order. More than eighty photographs, illustrations, and maps bring the subjects to life as well as provide geographic details of specific journeys. Additionally, sixteen maps of major regions of the world lead off the volume, and a cumulative chronology of explo-

ration by region, a list of explorers by country of birth, and a cumulative index conclude the volume.

Comments and Suggestions

We welcome your comments on this work as well as your suggestions for individuals to be featured in future volumes of *Explorers & Discoverers*. Please write: Editors, *Explorers & Discoverers*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535; call toll-free: 800-877-4253; or fax: 248-699-8066.

Introduction

Explorers & Discoverers, Volume 7, takes the reader on an adventure with men and women who have made significant contributions to human knowledge about the earth, plant and animal life, and ourselves. Journeying through the centuries, we will conquer frontiers and sail uncharted waters. We will trek across treacherous mountains, scorching deserts, steamy jungles, and icy glaciers. We will plumb the depths of the ocean, travel the skies in a vintage airplane, and share in intriguing rituals and customs of unfamiliar peoples. We will accompany Arctic caribou on their centuries-old migration to northern calving grounds, and live among the elusive orangutans that dwell in the rainforests of Indonesia. Encountering isolation, disease, and even death, we will come to know the grave sacrifices that discovery sometimes exacts. But we will also experience the joys of achievement!

Before joining the explorers and discoverers, however, it is worthwhile to consider why they venture into the unknown. Certainly a primary motivation is curiosity: they want to find

out what is on the other side of a mountain, or they are intrigued by rumors about a strange new land, or they simply enjoy wandering the world. Yet adventurers often—indeed, usually—embark on journeys of discovery under less spontaneous circumstances.

Many explorers were commissioned by the rulers or governments of their countries to lead expeditions with a specific purpose. The Spanish governor of the South American coastal colony of Santa Marta, for instance, instructed conquistador **Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada** to explore territories further inland, and also to look for the legendary Indian kingdom of El Dorado, famous for its wealth and splendor. In the highlands of the Andes Mountains, the explorer discovered just such a civilization: he conquered the Chibcha Indians and claimed their great riches and land (named New Granada) for Spain. Sponsored by Great Britain's Foreign Office, naval doctor **William Balfour Baikie** led two trade expeditions up West Africa's Niger River. His pioneering use of the drug quinine to prevent and treat malaria made travel on the swampy river much less deadly, and the trading posts he established eventually led to British control of the waterway and its surrounding territories (which would become Nigeria). Pursuit of trade was also the motivation behind the 1500–1501 sailing expedition of Portuguese nobleman **Pedro Álvares Cabral**. After explorer Vasco da Gama discovered a successful sailing route to India in 1498, King Manuel I of Portugal rushed to send Cabral on a follow-up trip to the East to set up direct trade relations with rich Indian ports before other European powers did the same. Not only did Cabral succeed in his trade mission, he also claimed the territory that would become Brazil—one of Portugal's most important colonial possessions—when temporarily blown off course during his outward voyage. In a similar rush to beat competing nations, British naval officer **John Byron** led a secret expedition to the south Atlantic in 1764–1765. It was believed that a great southern continent and other large islands were located there; any country that claimed these lands would have an important base from which to travel to the Pacific, either by way of Africa's Cape of Good Hope or South Amer-

ica's Cape Horn. Byron took official possession of the strategically located Falkland Islands for Great Britain just as France was establishing a colony there—igniting more than two centuries of conflicting claims over ownership that culminated in the 1982 Falklands War.

Explorers also received backing from private sponsors or were motivated by economic self-interest. Amsterdam merchant Isaac Le Maire, for example, was intent on breaking the trade monopoly that the Dutch East India Company enjoyed in the Orient. The company controlled the two known sailing routes to the Pacific, and Le Maire organized an expedition—led by his son **Jacob Le Maire**—to find an alternative route there. While Jacob Le Maire did just that, discovering and rounding Cape Horn at the tip of South America, he was still arrested for monopoly violation by disbelieving Dutch East India Company officials. After Jacob Le Maire's death in captivity, his father fought a court battle for the trading freedom his son had earned. Also failing to receive the recognition he deserved for his explorations was Australian **Ernest Giles**. Sent by Victoria-based sheep farmers and businessmen to explore western Australia in search of new pasturelands, he was the first individual to make an east-to-west crossing of the continent's harsh, desertic interior and then return. While his remarkable achievement was appreciated around the world—and the camels he used made the animals the accepted form of transportation in Australia's arid interior—Giles was not honored in his own country during his lifetime because he failed to discover the type of land his sponsors needed for sheep raising. No such lack of appreciation followed the glamorous discovery made by American treasure hunter **Mel Fisher** in 1985, however. After years of searching the waters off Florida's Key West, he located the treasure-laden Spanish galleon *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, which held an estimated \$400 million worth of precious metal and jewels. He became an instant celebrity; four books, a documentary, and a television movie retold his tale of discovery. The fame turned sour, however, when Fisher was accused of mishandling his wealth, unfairly repaying the investors who had financed his search, and participating in other shady business dealings.

Religious dedication has long been a strong motivating force behind exploration and travel into unknown lands. **Saint Brendan**, an Irish monk who had founded monasteries in Ireland and converted local populations to Roman Christianity in other parts of the British Isles, led a legendary missionary voyage west sometime around 566–573, into the forbidding Atlantic Ocean. With no navigational tools to guide them, Brendan and his seventeen companions wandered the sea in search of legendary islands said to exist there by ancient writers; it is believed that the men eventually made their way to Bermuda or the North American mainland. The success of Brendan’s voyage, in fact, kept alive the hope—during the Middle Ages—that unknown lands lay waiting to be discovered across the vast Atlantic. Also fired by missionary zeal was **William of Rubruck**, a Franciscan friar sent on a religious quest by King Louis IX of France to the court of Mongolia’s Great Khan to convert the ruler and his followers to Roman Christianity. While failing in his religious mission, William made a detailed record of his journey into Russia and central Asia that is now considered one of the most valuable travel accounts written by a medieval Christian. Salvation of souls was not the only motivation behind the friar’s trip to Mongolia, however; King Louis had hoped that the converted Mongols would cease their westward conquests into Europe, and form an alliance with European powers against threatening Muslim forces.

Explorers have been inspired, too, by the quest for scientific knowledge. Self-taught botanist **Alice Eastwood**, for instance, spent a lifetime collecting rare and unknown wildflowers and other native plants in the mountains, fields, and deserts of the American West. In a time when women rarely traveled alone, the scientist journeyed solitarily by horse and on foot through the rugged frontier, eventually establishing an outstanding herbarium of 340,000 specimens at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, where she served as curator of botany. Even the great California earthquake of 1906, which destroyed the academy and most of its collection, could not dampen Eastwood’s passion for gathering plants. Similarly devoting much of her life to her scientific passion is

marine biologist **Eugenie Clark**. The scientist has spent years studying the lives and behavior of tropical fish, particularly sharks. While conducting long-term studies of captive sharks, Clark learned that these lower vertebrate predators—mistakenly labeled “stupid”—had surprising memory and learning capabilities. Studying the creatures in their natural habitat, she found that few species of these feared “man-eaters” attack humans, and that they play a vital role in the ocean’s complex food cycle. Years of study were also required for Canadian scientist **Birute Galdikas** to gain a clear understanding of the life and habits of the orangutan, the most elusive of the great apes. Living among the animals in the jungles of Indonesian Borneo, the scientist devoted extraordinary time and patience to learning more about the shy and solitary creatures, who live their entire lives in the treetops, nearly 100 feet above the ground. Nonetheless, over many years, Galdikas was able to gather enormous amounts of new information about orangutan mating habits, reproductive cycles, young-rearing, diet, and methods of communication. With their population decreasing alarmingly over the years, Galdikas has also been actively engaged in conservation efforts to save the animals from extinction.

And sometimes it is the puzzle of our own, human past that inspires journeys of exploration. **Daisy Bates**, a British governess who traveled to Australia as a young woman, became engrossed with Aborigines, the country’s primitive native inhabitants. She spent a lifetime traveling and living among the various tribes of western Australia, carefully recording their rich history, which was filled with complex rituals, customs, legends, and beliefs. She felt compelled to capture a portrait of their ancient way of life—unchanged until Western civilization had come to Australian shores—because by the early twentieth century it was fast disintegrating before her eyes. Fascination with ancient legends and practices also spurred Norwegian scientist **Thor Heyerdahl** to take extraordinary actions. Noting the shared beliefs and customs of ancient civilizations located oceans apart, Heyerdahl was convinced—contrary to accepted anthropological beliefs—that ancient peoples made migratory trips across the seas. To prove his theories he undertook ocean voyages in replicas of primitive sailing craft: he traveled from

Chile to Polynesia on a balsa raft, and from Egypt to South America in a papyrus reed boat. Despite the success of his journeys, Heyerdahl's theories remain controversial, because more evidence is needed to confirm them.

But perhaps the foremost motivation to explore is the desire to be the first to accomplish a particular feat. American aviator **Linda Finch**, who restores and flies vintage airplanes, decided to duplicate and complete the around-the-world trip that legendary aviator Amelia Earhart was attempting when she vanished in 1937. Locating and meticulously rebuilding a rare Lockheed Electra 10E—which Earhart had piloted on her unfortunate flight—Finch successfully circumnavigated the globe (at or near the equator) in the sixty-year-old plane, becoming the first woman to repeat Earhart's journey in the same kind of craft. Finch said she undertook the flight to celebrate Earhart's courageous spirit, and to encourage young people to follow their dreams. American sailor **Karen Thorndike** was following her dream when she undertook a solo journey around the world in her thirty-six-foot yacht *Amelia* in 1996. Such a trip had been completed by only six other women before her, and it would take Thorndike more than two trying years before she would become the first American woman to do the same. Circling the world in open oceans around the five great capes of the Southern Hemisphere, Thorndike endured towering waves, driving wind and rain, and—at one point—an emergency rescue at sea. Also no stranger to hardships is **Helen Thayer**, an adventurer and veteran outdoorswoman who decided to become the first woman to travel alone to either of the world's magnetic poles. In 1988 she set out for the North Magnetic Pole, traveling by foot and on skis and bringing only the provisions she could pull behind her on a sled. During her 27-day, 364-mile Arctic journey, Thayer withstood frigid cold, polar storms, and attacks from hungry polar bears before reaching her goal. Subsequent Thayer adventures would include kayaking through the Amazon and trekking through the Sahara Desert.

By concentrating on biographies of individual explorers in this book we seem to suggest that many of these adventur-

ers were loners who set out on their own to singlehandedly confront the unknown. But, as a rule, explorers rarely traveled alone and they had help in achieving their goals. Therefore, use of an individual name is often only shorthand for the achievements of an expedition as a whole. Explorers were often accompanied by large groups of servants, porters, and native guides. Sometimes it was on these indigenous inhabitants and their knowledge that survival depended: it is unlikely, for example, that Helen Thayer could have fought off the assaults of polar bears without the fearless efforts of Charlie, an Arctic husky dog that her Inuit trainers insisted she take along for protection on her journey.

Explorers & Discoverers, Volume 7, tells the stories of these men and women as well as those of others motivated by a daring spirit and an intense curiosity.

A final note of clarification: When we say that an explorer “discovered” a place, we do not mean that she or he was the first human ever to have been there. Although the discoverer may have been the first from his or her own country to set foot in a new land, most areas of the world during the great periods of exploration were already occupied or their existence had been verified by other people.