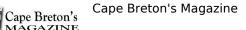


Page 56 - John Cabot's Landfall, 1497 - "It WAS Cape Breton!" ISSUE : <u>Issue 70</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1996/6/1

where the trees were laden with fruit and the climate was al? ways mild. The island of Brazil, whose name means red dye- wood, was also supposed to lie in the Atlantic ocean, and was placed by popular tradition about seventy leagues west of Ire? land. It was to find the island of Brazil, "beyond the western part of Ireland," that in 1480 Thomas Lloyd, in a ship of 80 tons belonging to John Jay the younger, sailed from Bristol. That search for the legendary island of Brazil and the Seven Cities was continued by Bristol mariners in ensuing years, ac? cording to a letter of Pedro de Avala, temporary Spanish am? bassador to England in 1498, and the same goal seems also to have been the object of Cabot's voyage in 1497, according to the same authority. Furthermore, John Cabot, native of Genoa and citizen of Venice, who sailed from England in 1497, seems to have believed that he had found one of Sie Western Islands, as well as the mainland of Asia, on his voyage of that year. It was in 1496 that John Cabot obtained, in England, royal sanction for his voyage to the west. He sought and received from Henry VII of England, for himself and his sons Lewis, Se? bastian and Santius, authority to sail to "all parts, countries, and seas of the east, of the west, and of the north,..., to seeke out, discover, and finde whatsoever isles, countries, regions or prov? inces of the heathen and infidels whatsoever they be and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all Christians." The king also gave them "licence to set up our banners and ensignes in every village, towne, castle, isle, or maine land of them newly found. And that the aforesaid John and his sonnes, or their heires and as- signes may subdue, occupy and possesse, as our vassals, and lieutenants, getting unto us the rule, title, and jurisdiction of the same villages, townes, castles, and firme land so found..." MR. FI's Custom Picture Framing specializing in Custom Framing • Needlepoint Framii' • Paper Tole Framing * Dry Mounting and Laminating Good selection of mouldings and acid-free mats at reasonable prices 308R Commercial St., NORTH SYDNEY (ACROSS FROM SCOTIA BANK PARKING LOT) MON-FRI10-5 or by appointment 794-8826 TAKE C Of YoLii ARGE Small business is now the number one source of job creation in Canada. We can help you become the next success story! We can offer loans to new or existing busi? nesses at competitive terms and interest rates. COASTAL BUSINESS Opportunities Incorporated 338 Charlotte Street, Sydney, N.S. 539-4332 We can invest in your business by way of preferred or common shares. The Self Employment Assistance Program can provide a wage subsidy to unemployed individuals starting a small business. We can help in many other ways, such as business plan development, identi? fication of additional soluces of financing and day to day problem solving. John Cabot made his first trans-Atlantic voyage in 1497. He ap? parently sailed in the ship Matthew from Bristol early in May and returned to England early in August of that year. Although Cabot's journal or log-book for this voyage is not available, evidence of it is found in certain contemporary docu? ments. These include letters written by Lorenzo Pasqualio, one of the Venetian colony living in London, and by Raimondo di Soncino, ambassador in London for Ludovico Sforza,



the usurping Duke of Milan.... In a letter to his brothers, dated 23 August 1497, Pasqualio announces the return of the (Cabot) ex? pedition and gives news of its discoveries: The Venetian, our countryman, who went with a ship from Bristol in guest of new islands, is returned, and says that 700 leagues hence he discovered land, the territory of the Grand Cham (Gram Cam). He coasted for 300 leagues and landed; saw no human beings, but he had brought hither to the king certain snares which had been set to catch game, and a needle for mak? ing nets; he also found some felled trees, wherefore he supposed there were inhabitants, and returned to his ship in perplexity. He was three months on the voyage, and on his return he saw two islands to starboard, but would not land, time being precious, as he was short of provi? sions. He says that the tides are slack and do not flow as they do here. The King of England is much pleased with this intelligence. The king has promised that in the spring our countryman shall have ten ships, armed to his order, and at his request has conceded him all the prison? ers, except such as are confined for high treason, to man his fleet. The king has also given him money wherewith to amuse himself till then, and he is now at Bristol with his wife, who is also a Venetian, and with his sons; his name is Juan Cabot, and he is styled the great admiral. Vast honour is paid him; he dresses in silk, and these English run after him like mad people, so that he can enUst as many of them as he pleases, and a number of our own rogues besides. The discoverer of these places planted on his new found land a large cross, with one flag of England and another of St. Mark, by reason of his being a Venetian, so that our banner has floated very far afield. A day later, on 24 August 1497, Raimondo wrote a letter con? taining information about Cabot's voyage. It reads in part as follows: Also some months ago his majesty sent out a Venetian, who is a very good mariner, and has good skill in discovering new islands, and he has returned safe, and has found two very large and fertile islands; having likewise dis? covered the seven cities, 400 leagues from England, on the western passage. This next spring his majesty means to send him with fifteen or twenty ships. Later in the year, on 14 December 1497, Raimondo wrote an? other letter which contains a fuller account of the voyage. It is as follows: Most Dlustrious and Excellent Lord: Perhaps among your excellency's many occupations, it may not displease IOOIBJJWm''pl John D. Steele's Sons' Limited MONUMENT CENTRE & DISPLAY 32 William Street 794-2713 NORTH SYDNEY, N. S. (after hours: 794-4411 & 794-3171) 56