

Page 59 - John Cabot's Landfall, 1497 - "It WAS Cape Breton!"

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Grand Khan," and henceforward "The New Found Land" is the designation for all the western coasts rather than merely for that part now called Newfoundland. Others have stated that tradition tells that the first land sighted was the east coast of Newfoundland. But that "ancient imme- rtiorial tradition" in Newfoundland seems to be allegation rather than proof. It could not have originated at the time of Cabot's first voyage; in 1583, according to a contemporary account. Sir Humphrey Gilbert was "the first of our nation that carried peo? ple to erect an habitation and government in these countries of America"; and, no matter how early the flying fishery began, no continuous tradition could have existed in Newfoundland. Moreover, whenever this so-called tradition originated, it seems to speak with a very uncertain sound: the Prowses, D. W. and G. R. F., father and son, of Newfundland, apply it to Bonavista, while Bishop Howley accords it to Cape St John and says that Bonavista was probably Cortereal's landfall. In addition. Dr. W. F. Ganong says that it seems likely that the local tradition with respect to Bonavista originated in a confusion, supported by a certain resemblance between the names Cartier and Cabot whereby the real but later landfall of Cartier became attributed to Newfoundland's favorite hero, John Cabot. Furthermore, it must be remembered that La Cosa's map has the southern, not the eastem, coast of Newfoundland flagged. Anotiier claim for Newfoundland is one that is attached to the word 'Bonavista.' D. W. Prowse, the author oi A History of Newfoundland, argues that it is distinctly Italian, that "Bonavis? ta! Oh! good sight! is the natural exclamation the old Italian might make, as after his long and dangerous voyage he first caught sight of land." But that argument is obviously unsub? stantial.... It appears that Bonavista is a Portuguese word: the nasal sound in Boavista, though omitted in spelling, is sounded in pronunciation, and phonetically the word is Bonavista. Moreover, the name is the designation of the easternmost island of the Cape Verde group, belonging to Portugal, and another of the same group is called Fogo. So, in Newfundland, there are two headlands • Bonavista and Fogo • names apparently given by the Portuguese after their own home islands. Evidently the tradition in Newfoundland, as mentioned by some writers, has been given an erroneous foundation; for it should probably be Portuguese rather than English, having reference to the voyage of a Portuguese not to that of Cabot. [H. P. Biggar, in his Pre? cursors of Jacques Cartier, xvii, says that Cape Bonavista still retains the name given it by Cortereal of cabo de Boa Vista, or Fairview Cape.]... Mention must also be made that some contend that Sebastian MacDOMHNALL CONTRACTORS LTD \$55,900. \$61,900. \$63,900. \$64,900. \$79,900. Cabot did not accompany his father on the voyage of 1497, that he never visited "the newe found land," and that he Ued. It is true that Sebastian was stiU only a boy [of 12 or 13] in 1497 but that fact can hardly be taken as precluding him from crossing the At? lantic in that year.... It is to be noted, moreover, that in 1496 John Cabot had received royal sanction for the western voyage for himself and his sons Lewis, Sebastian and Santius; if Sebastian was old enough to be expressly mentioned in the royal authority, perhaps

he may be considered as old enough to go adong on the voyage of 1497. The assertion that Sebastian never visited "the new found land," which is based on the 1521 statement of the Drapers Company, at a time when Henry Vn was proposing not only that Sebastian should lead an expedition but also that twelve companies should contribute toward the expense, seems hardly tenable in the light of Willuamson's account of Sebastian Cabot's voyage of 15C', apart from his probably accompanying his father in 1497. To say tilat Sebastian lied no doubt makes it easier to advance claims for other nations in the new world or to override evidence that does not fit in with other views. Yet the Cosa and Sebastian Cabot maps, if authentic, are two of the most positive pieces of evidence relating to Cabot's landfall, and pointing to Cape Breton Island rather than Newfoundland. Here it must also be said that some have either cast doubt upon • RETIREMENT HOME 24' X 28' Two-Bedroom Home & Land included in Mountainview Subdivision Area TOTAL PKG. • BUNGALOW 24' X 36' Three-Bedroom Home & Land included in Mountainview Subdivision Area TOTAL PKG. • L SHAPE 24' X 26' X 36' Three-Bedroom Home & Land included in Mountainview Subdivision Area TOTAL PKG. • SPLIT ENTRY 24' X 32', Home & Land included in Mountainview Subdivision Area TOTAL PKG. • LARGE BUNGALOW 28' X 40', Land included in Memorial Road Subdivision TOTAL PKG. ALL TAXES INCLUDED. Take advantage of '.ij. & P.S.T. available to first time buyers. Take advantage of 5% down. [LOTS FOR SALE: MEMORIAL ROAD and MOUNTAINVIEW SUBDIVISIONS All You Do Is Turn the Key! • PAUL736-2438 • MIKE562-8457 • OFFICE736-3655 For information on 48,000 Christian Book Titles, 23 McKeen Street GLACE BAY, N. 8. B1A5B9 849-6365 > RS. Nesting's ' COUNTRY KITCHEN SUSAN RESTIMO "I really like the impulse of this book • grow your own and make your own." • Alice Waters, author of The Chez Panisse Cookbook /Ec classic, fully comprehensive bible of home cooking and country living from a Cape Breton Island homestead. Simple, easy and healthy recipes are combined with a back-to-the-land primer that covers everything from cooking with a wood stove, to baking bread, brewing beer, and making cheese. "Clearly a tabor of love... not only is it an eminently practical guide to the world of food, but an encouragaffiOfli to finding your own way." Broum, author of The Tassajara Bread Book OVER 300 ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE i??tUTHOR. RANDOM HOUSE V'm) OF CANADA ' 59