

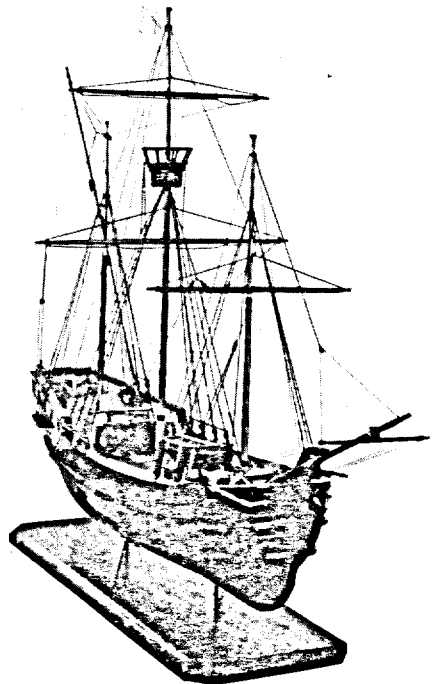
History

NEWFOUNDLAND from the beginning has lived by the products of the sea and its early history is essentially that of the cod fishery. For more than a century before the establishment of French or English colonies in North America the fishermen of Western Europe came year after year to Newfoundland to fill their boats with cod for the markets of the Old World.

Of the earliest exploration and discovery of Newfoundland little is known. It is generally accepted that Norsemen from Greenland visited Newfoundland and Labrador as early as 1001 A.D., and there is a tale that men of the Channel Islands, in the latter part of the 15th century, were blown westward off their course until they came to a strange land where the sea was full of fish. There is better evidence that the Island was discovered in 1497. In the previous year an Italian navigator, John Cabot, then living in England and engaged in the fish trade with Iceland, obtained from Henry VII a charter giving him and his sons authority to "sail to all parts, countries and seas of the East, the West and of the North, under our banner and ensign . . . and to set up our banner on any new-found-land".

Cabot set sail from Bristol on May 2, 1497, in a little ship of 50 tons, the *Matthew*, with a crew of 17. After sailing 53 days they came, on June 24, St. John's Day, to the shores of a new land in the west. There are no records to establish the first spot in North America seen by Cabot, but in Newfoundland there is a long-established tradition that his landfall was Cape Bonavista. An entry in the Privy Purse of England records the discovery: "August 10, 1497: To hym that found the new isle, 10£".

Cabot returned to England with tales of a sea so full of fish that they could be taken "not only with the net but also with a basket in which a stone is put". His stories stirred a ripple of



Cabot's ship, the "Matthew". This model, built by Mr. Ernest Maunder, St. John's, is the result of painstaking research and is believed to be accurate in every detail.