

the maps and papers left by Sebastian Cabot were lost soon after his death, and the attempt to tell their story has been compared to trying to follow a man in a thick fog. Now and then we catch glimpses of them, then they disappear from view.

4. John Cabot was a citizen of Venice, who settled at the English seaport of Bristol. In his earlier days he had visited Mecca, in Arabia, and had seen the arrival of spice-laden caravans from still furthur east. We hear, too, of voyages which he made from Bristol, out into the unknown Atlantic in a search for the fabled islands of Brazil and the Seven Cities. The latter was supposed to have been peopled by seven bishops and their followers, driven by the Moors from Spain, and the King of Portugal had offered various privileges to any one who could discover it.

5. An old chronicle of Bristol says that John Cabot had "made himself very expert and cunning in knowledge of the circuit of the world." But he was a poor man, and it cost much money to fit out and man even a small ship. In the hope, which proved vain, of obtaining help he had visited Spain and Portugal. At last Henry VII of England gave him and his three sons leave to go in his name to discover and take possession of "new lands of infidels and pagans, which before that time had been unknown to all Christians." The king promised that the Cabots should be lords of these new lands, and should have the sole right of trading with their people, but they were to give him the fifth part of any profit they might make, though he bargained that they were to go at their own expense.