

## Memorandum on the Cabots

The identification of John Cabot's landfall in 1497 is an extremely controversial question ( a select few of the books on the subject are listed below). The difficulty arises from the fact that there is no direct evidence for either of John Cabot's two voyages; that is, no log book, no map, nothing at all written by any person who was actually on the voyages. Nearly all the contemporary chroniclers, letter writers, and cosmographers who refer to the voyages had motives for misrepresenting the results. Cabot himself had such a motive; he wished to represent his voyage as having been as far north as possible, since he was supposed to avoid territories previously claimed by Spain.

The most recent, thorough, and reliable research on the subject has been done by J.A. Williamson in his book The Voyages of the Cabots and the Discovery of North America (London, 1929). After an exhaustive examination of all the available evidence, Williamson, reaches the following conclusion:-

John Cabot made two voyages, in 1497 and 1498. On the first he made landfall on Cape Breton Island, coasted along Nova Scotia and pushed on as far as Maine. On the way back he may have sighted Newfoundland, but did not stop to examine it. On the second voyage in 1498 he coasted further south, in all probability down to Delaware.

### Bibliography

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