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Vasco Nunez de Balboa

Vasco Nunez de Balboa was a Spanish explorer, governor, and conquistador. He is best known for crossing the Isthmus of Panama to the Pacific Ocean in 1513, becoming the first European to lead an expedition to have seen or reached the pacific from the new world. He traveled to the new world in 1500 and, after some exploration, settled on the island of Hispaniola. He found the settlement of Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien in present day Columbia in 1510, which was the first permanent European settlement on the mainland of the Americas.

Balboa was born in 1475 in Jerez de los Caballersos, Spain. His mother was the Lady de badajoz, and his father was the Hidalgo (nobleman), Nuño Arias de Balboa. He had 3 siblings Gonzalo Núñez de Balboa, Alvaro Núñez de Balboa, and Juan Núñez de Balboa. He got married in 1516 to María de Peñalosa and didn’t have any children.

In 1510 he sailed with a group headed for a colony in what now is Columbia. When they arrived they discovered that the colony had been abandoned except for a few people. Balboa persuaded them to go with him to Darién, in what is now Panama. There they established a stable colony. Indians told Balboa about a great ocean with gold on it’s shore. Balboa asked for a large expedition from Spain to search for this ocean, but before it arrived he set out on his own with a smaller group. In September 1513 he reached the Pacific, which he called the South Sea, and claimed it for Spain.

His discovery of the Pacific Ocean opened up new opportunities for trade and exploration. Balboa’s expeditions laid the groundwork for future Spanish conquests of the Inca Empire by Francisco Pizarro. His actions helped expand the Spanish Empire and establish their dominance in the Americas.

The expedition from Spain arrived in 1514, with Pedro Arias Dávila at its head. Balboa and Dávila competed for power. As governor of Darién, Dávila eventually charged Balboa with various crimes. Balboa was found guilty and beheaded in 1519. In conclusion, Vasco Núñez de Balboa was a daring explorer whose discovery of the Pacific Ocean changed the course of history.

Works cited

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