Gonzalo Jiménez De Quesada Encyclopedia Article

Gonzalo Jiménez De Quesada

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Gonzalo Jiménez De Quesada

c. 1499-1579

Spanish conquistador who claimed New Granada (now Colombia) for Spain. Jiménez de Quesada was trained as a lawyer in Granada, then traveled to the colony of Santa Marta on the northern coast of South America to serve as its chief justice. In 1536, he was commissioned by Pedro Fernandez de Lugo to lead an expedition into the center of New Granada. After a difficult journey, in which his men were repeatedly attacked by Native Americans, the group eventually reached and conquered the region, founding Bogota as the capital of New Granada. In 1538, two rival conquistadors arrived in the area, and challenged Jiménez de Quesada for authority. Jiménez de Quesada returned to Spain, and exerted his claim to the region. He was named honorary governor, and returned to New Granada in 1549. In 1569, he went on a quest for the mythical city of gold, El Dorado, but returned defeated after only two years.