Jacob Roggeveen Encyclopedia Article

Jacob Roggeveen

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Jacob Roggeveen

1659-1729

Dutch admiral who was the first European to discover Easter Island. On Easter Sunday in 1722, Jacob Roggeveen and his crew found the remote island off the coast of Chile. The island, which has a population of 3,000 people, became known mostly for the great stone heads that peer out over the ocean from its shoreline. The heads, constructed of volcanic ash, weighed up to 50 tons apiece and still remain on the island. Anthropologists and linguists have since also taken a keen interest in the written language of the island's inhabitants, who were believed to be of Polynesian descent.