Richard Chancellor Encyclopedia Article

Richard Chancellor

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Richard Chancellor

?-1556

British navigator who opened the White Sea trading route between England and Russia. In 1553, Chancellor functioned as pilot-general of a small fleet of ships sailing for the Company of Merchant Adventurers (later renamed the Muscovy Company) on its first expedition, led by Sir Hugh Willoughby. The ships were separated in a storm and Chancellor's ship reached the White Sea coast. He established a trading post and traveled inland at the invitation of the Russian czar Ivan IV in Moscow. In 1555, he led a second commercial expedition to Russia, obtaining formal trade agreements from the czar and bringing back the first Russian ambassador to London, Ossip Gregorevitch Nepeja. On the return voyage (in 1556), the ship was wrecked off the coast of Scotland and, although Chancellor was killed, the Russian ambassador survived and eventually reached London.