



0. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY - Story Preface

1. THE SPANISH MAIN

2. SPANISH PORTS FALL

3. TECTONIC PLATES and NATURAL DISASTERS

4. EARTHQUAKE!

5. PORT ROYAL EARTHQUAKE

6. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

7. TORTUGA and the PIRATES' CODE

8. PIRATE-AGE PORT ROYAL

Thomas Malton the Younger (1748-1804) created this watercolor-over-etched-outline, depicting the "East India House" on Leadenhall Street, London, as it appeared circa 1800. People like Elihu Yale (the namesake of Yale University) made fortunes from their investments in the East India Company. The work is now part of the Paul Mellon Collection, Yale Center for British Art, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Near the end of her reign, Queen Elizabeth I issued a Royal Charter for a business officially known as the British East India Company (popularly known as "John Company.") For nearly 250 years (from December 31, 1600 to 1858), it was one of the most powerful enterprises in the world.

It began its long life trying to take control of the Spice Islands (a group of islands in eastern Indonesia, between Celebes and New Guinea, still associated with the famous expedition of Ferdinand Magellan.)

When those efforts failed, the company (whose main office was located on Leadenhall Street in London) focused its attentions on India.

Around 1670, Charles II granted the British East India Company even more sweeping powers. He allowed its representatives to:

- Purchase territories;
- Mint money;
- Raise and command troops;
- Form alliances;
- Make war and peace; and
- Be in charge of civil and criminal law in the acquired lands.

In the 1680s, using indigenous people, the company raised its own army. It had, effectively, become its own country on the Indian mainland, administering Bengal, Madras and Bombay.

Reaching even further into Asia, the company founded Singapore (as a trading post) and Hong Kong. Its representatives established tea cultivation in India and employed Captain Kidd (among others) to protect its ships from piracy.

Elihu Yale, after whom Yale University (in 1718 a struggling New Haven school called Collegiate) is named, made a fortune from his interests in the East India Company. In the 19th century, its representatives held Napoleon captive on Saint Helena.

The scope of the company's influence was breathtaking. So was its economic clout.



This image depicts an example of currency issued by the East India Company. It is a One Rupee coin from 1835.

Its representatives found the 106-carat Koh-i-Noor diamond (one of the world's largest) in India, and for 150 years it has been part of the British Crown Jewels. In fact, until its independence in 1947, India was the most valuable country in the British sphere of influence and was often referred to as "The Jewel in the Crown."

A jewel of a different sort - the Caribbean island of Tortuga- also played a key role during the heyday of pirates. Let's take a virtual visit.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-EAST-INDIA-COMPANY-Pirates-of-the-Caribbean>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-EAST-INDIA-COMPANY-Pirates-of-the-Caribbean>

Media Stream



Queen Elizabeth I

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Queen-Elizabeth-I1>



1 Rupee East India Company

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>

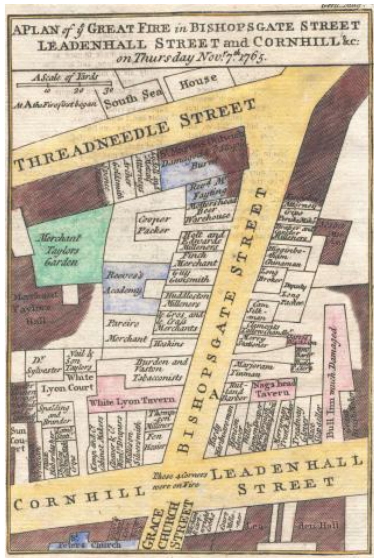


Spice Islands - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spice-Islands-Map-Locator>



Leadenhall Street - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy [London Ancestor](http://www.london-ancestor.com) website.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Leadenhall-Street-Map-Locator>



Singapore - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the University of Texas at Austin.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Singapore-Map-Locator>



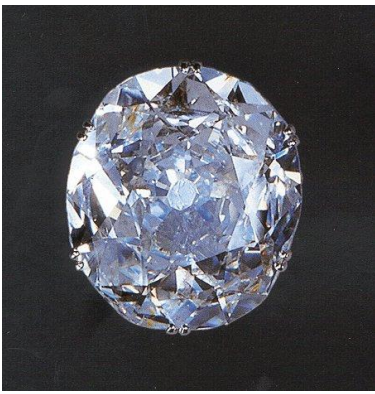
Elihu Yale - Benefactor of Yale University

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Elihu-Yale-Benefactor-of-Yale-University>



Koh-i-Noor Diamond

Image online, courtesy the [Famous Diamonds](#) website.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Koh-i-Noor-Diamond>



British Crown Jewels

Image online, courtesy The Royal Collection Trust [website](#).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/British-Crown-Jewels>



Tortuga - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy World Travel Maps website.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tortuga-Map-Locator>



THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/THE-EAST-INDIA-COMPANY>

Magellan and his Voyage of Discovery - Part 1

Clip from "[Voyages of Discovery: Circumnavigation](#)," produced for the BBC.

[Paul Rose](#) (former ten-year base commander of the British Rothera research station in Antarctica) [presents](#) the unimaginable story of Ferdinand Magellan and his crew (as they attempt to find a westward passage to the Spice Islands), in "Voyages of Discovery - Circumnavigation."

Directed by Sean Smith; written by Chris Bould.

Clip online, courtesy [BBC](#). Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the documentary.

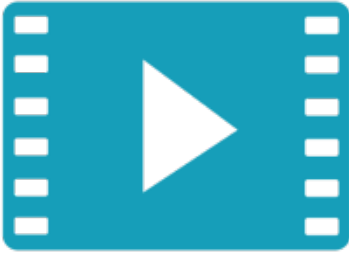
View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Magellan-and-his-Voyage-of-Discovery-Part-1>



Magellan and his Voyage of Discovery - Part 4

Clip from "[Voyages of Discovery: Circumnavigation](#)," produced for the BBC.



Paul Rose (former ten-year base commander of the British Rothera research station in Antarctica) presents the unimaginable story of Ferdinand Magellan and his crew (as they attempt to find a westward passage to the Spice Islands), in "Voyages of Discovery - Circumnavigation."

Directed by Sean Smith; written by Chris Bould.

Clip online, courtesy [BBC](#). Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the documentary.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Magellan-and-his-Voyage-of-Discovery-Part-4>