

Diego De Velásquez Encyclopedia Article

Diego De Velásquez

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Diego De Velásquez

1460?-1524

Spanish conquistador and colonial official who was commissioned by the Spanish Crown to colonize Cuba, which he conquered in 1512. After sailing to the West Indies with Christopher Columbus on his second voyage of exploration (1493), Velásquez settled on Hispaniola, where he helped establish several towns. In 1511, he commanded the Spanish fleet that conquered Cuba. Velásquez founded Baracoa, the first permanent European settlement on the island, and later that year became governor general. From 1517 to 1520, historic expeditions were sent by the new governor from Cuba to the Yucatan and Mexico under the commands of Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba, Juan de Grijalva, Hernán Cortés, and Pánfilo de Narváez (1470?-1528), firmly establishing the Spanish colonies in the New World.