

Martin Waldseemüller Encyclopedia Article

Martin Waldseemüller

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Martin Waldseemüller

c. 1470-c. 1521

German clergyman and cartographer who coined the name *America* for the New World. Waldseemüller read of Amerigo Vespucci's explorations in a 1504 letter. Adept at inventing names, including his own, he named the newly discovered continents in honor of Vespucci in *Cosmographiae Introductio* and on a world map, both in 1507. His map was widely distributed, and thus two continents came to be known by the name of a relatively minor Italian navigator.