500th Anniversary of Verranzzano's Discovery

PHOTO ABOVE: *The Verranzzano Bridge Spans New York Harbor*

The Verrazzano Bridge links the New York boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten Island. Giovanni da Verrazzano was born near Florence, Italy. In 1523, with the support of Florentine bankers and the French King, Verrazzano set sail in search of a passage to the Pacific Ocean and the Far East.

His ship, the Delfina, was designed in Genoa, the birthplace of Columbus, as the first high-capacity type of European ship large enough for oceanic trade and exploration. On this voyage, Verrazzano explored the coastline of the eastern seaboard of the United States and Canada. He was the first European to enter New York Bay. He named the area Santa Margherita, also the name of a famous seaside town on the Italian Riviera near Florence.

Verrazzano wrote a report based on his travels to the New World, used by later explorers including Henry Hudson (Hudson's Bay). During his third voyage in 1528, after he had explored Florida and the Bahamas, Verrazzano anchored out to sea and rowed ashore. He was killed by native Caribs.

Columbus also had done battle with the Caribs to protect his men and the friendly native tribes. The Caribs practiced cannibalism on other tribes and the Caribbean Sea is named after them.

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