

•1611

Ship breaks free of ice; Robert Juet leads a mutiny; Hudson, his son, and some crew are set adrift in a boat with no food or water, never to be heard from again.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What did you learn about Hudson's voyage that you didn't know before?
- What did you think you would have found most exciting about being on a journey of this kind? What would you have liked least about it?
- No one knows what the *Half Moon* actually looked like, and the caption about the replica shown in the photograph in the book's postscript indicates that it is based on the New Netherland Museum's research. What kind of research do you think was done?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Imagine you are John Hudson and you are on the *Half Moon* returning to England. Write a diary entry expressing your thoughts about your experience.
- Read in another source about Hudson's voyage of the *Half Moon* and compare it to this story. What do you learn from the story that you don't learn from the other source, and vice versa?
- Create your own illustrated map of the voyage of the *Half Moon*. Use the map included in the book as well as other maps to help you.

TEACHERS GUIDE

Voyage of the Half Moon

by Tracey West



SILVER MOON PRESS
160 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010
1-800-874-3320



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Voyage of the Half Moon, by Tracey West, reaches back in time to travel with Henry Hudson on his journey of 1609 into the unknown—up a river that was later to bear his name. This historical fiction novel is part of the *Stories of the States* series—historical novels whose intent is to show the diversity and strength of our American heritage and culture. *Voyage of the Half Moon* concludes with a short “historical postscript” section that tells more about the lives of real people and the events depicted in the story.

The first voyage ever by Europeans, upriver along the eastern coast of the New World, is brought to life from diaries kept by Henry Hudson and his first mate, Robert Juet. The shipboard experiences and land adventures are seen through the eyes of John Hudson, the thirteen-year-old son of Henry Hudson. John had already traveled with his father on two previous voyages. This third one was, for him, the most incredible of all. Not only had he become a sailor, rather than a mere cabin boy, he and his father were the first to meet, feast, and trade with the native inhabitants of the area—the Mahican.

Hudson never did find a passage to Asia. On his third voyage, he reached a point where he found the river to be too shallow for his ship (a little ways beyond where the Mohawk River runs into the Hudson River) and had to turn. He sailed downriver and back to England.

FACT, FICTION, AND PRIMARY SOURCES

Share with students that *Voyage of the Half Moon* is a novel of historical fiction, and that this form of literature mixes fact and fiction. Many of the events and characters are real, but the dialogue is often made up; sometimes certain characters and events are made up, but they are based on people who really lived at the time and actual events that took place.

Engage your students in a discussion about how a reader can tell what is fact (history) and what is fiction. Students should understand that facts can be checked in reference books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, and atlases; in historical documents and other official public records; and in personal accounts such as letters, journals, diaries, and memoirs. Photographs, paintings, and drawings also serve as a record of a certain time in terms of depicting how people and their surroundings looked.

The historical postscript at the back of *Voyage of the Half Moon* explains that we know the details of the voyage from the diaries of Henry Hudson and one of his sailors, Robert Juet. Make students aware that diaries and other eyewitness accounts/reports, as well as songs, poems, essays, and historical documents, are primary sources. These sources are different from encyclopedias and textbooks (secondary sources) because they are written (or created and passed down orally) by people who actually lived the events being described or saw firsthand the events taking place. Primary sources often provide the kind of details that would never be known by someone who had not lived at the time.

The author gives several dates and time clues in the story and postscript. Consider having students use the dates and time clues to create a time line to clarify the order of these events. The time line might be similar to the one shown here.

•1607

Hudson begins his first of two voyages looking for a sea passage to Asia over the North Pole.

•1609

Winter/Spring; Hudson receives letter from English colonist John Smith who believes there is a river passage to Asia across North America.

Summer; Hudson's third voyage of the *Half Moon*; explores the area along the east coast of North America.

September; Hudson finds the harbor and river, and begins traveling upriver.

September/October; Henry and John meet and make friends with Mahicans.

October; Hudson discovers the water is too shallow and turns the ship around.

November; Hudson returns to England; he vows to try again to find the passage.

•1610

Hudson's fourth voyage, on the ship *Discovery*; John also goes, as does first mate Robert Juet.

Hudson sails to Greenland and then to waters north of Canada; he discovers a huge body of water, later named Hudson Bay; Hudson's ship is trapped in the ice for months.