

America or Amerike

Officials of Bristol 600, that English city's 600th Anniversary exhibition, claime that it was a citizen of their city - Richard Amerike - who gave his name to America.

The claim is based on the tradition that it was a sheriff of Bristol by that name who was the main commercial backer of John Cabot's 1497 voyage to Newfoundland, which was the first documented discovery of North America by Europeans.

Mr. Ted Rawlings, managing director of Bristol 600, said that the name Richard Amerike first appears in the City records spelt with a "k", but that this changed mysteriously to a spelling with "c."

Dean of American maritime historians, Samuel Eliot Morison says of Richard Amerike in his recent book The European Discovery of America, The Northern Voyages: "here also (is) buried (St. Mary Redcliffe church in Bristol) sheriff Richard Amerike, traditionally one of Cabot's backers and Bristol's nominee as the

person after whom America was named - not Amerigo Vespucci, if you please!"

Bristol's claim contends with the usually accepted theory for the naming of America. This is that the famous and influential Waldseemuller map of the Americas prepared after Amerigo Vespucci's voyages down the South American coastline, by its wide distribution, established the name America. In his map Martin Waldseemuller suggested the name America for the new continent in honor of Amerigo Vespucci.

Mr. Rawlings, however, feels that Richard Amerike holds a stronger claim and that the spelling of the nation's name could be reverted to the United States of Amerika in the interests of "historical accuracy."

America or Amerika, the Bristol exhibition's organizers are hereby invite Americans and Amerikans to Bristol's exhibition in the old castle grounds, July 21 through

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August 12. They promise that medieval jousting will be a main attraction and that there will be taverns, ox-roasting, nightly banqueting, side-stalls, jugglers and costumed wenches - Cabot style in the city that is today helping to build the Concorde supersonic airliner.

Rawlings and his sales director, Edward Rogers, are touring American cities and towns with the name of Bristol, besides visiting Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Chicago, Boston and Washington.

They are introducing their Bristol Heritage Collection of commemorative art works available for sale in limited editions, by leading British craftsmen. These include a Claret Suite of goblet, jug with glasses and the Crown Coaster, modelled after the Crown of Edward III, who granted the City its Charter in 1373. Also there is a Coalport mug and goblet in porcelain designed by Donald Brindley and the "Bristol 600 Goblet" in sterling

silver parcel gilt and gold designed by Stuart Devlin.

