Sir Walter Ralegh

Before his execution for treason, Sir Walter Ralegh won fame as an explorer of the New World — both for voyages to Roanoke Island in present-day North Carolina (whose capital is named after him), and to Venezuela in search of El Dorado, the mythical city of gold. Also a scholar and a gifted lyric poet, Ralegh brought glory to Elizabethan England along with the potatoes and tobacco he is said to have introduced there.