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# Explorers Have Been Around for Eons

BACK in the 1920s, we sixth-grade pupils at Washington school in Ada listened attentively as our teacher, Josephine Purvine, described her "extensive travels." She had toured Washington, D.C., visited the Luray Caverns in Virginia and been to other exotic places.

She ranked only slightly behind Ferdinand Magellan, the first man to circumnavigate the world, in our young minds. As automobiles proliferated, families began traveling around the country, bringing back exciting tales of sights and adventures.

Before World War I, anybody who had been in a foreign country or even a distant state was assured of an eager audience when spinning yarns about travels, but then horizons widened.

Nowadays, thousands of Americans fly to Europe, Asia or Africa every month, but few get good chances to show their color slides and brag about where they've been.

They know that in almost any group there may be others who have gone farther, visited more countries, stayed longer and have wilder tales to tell.

We can find among our family, friends and acquaintances someone who has been to just about every country we can name, plus places we can't spell, pronounce or locate on the map.

Marco Polo earned his place in history and literature by describing his travels from Venice across Persia and the Gobi desert to China and India in the 13th century.

Christopher Columbus set off a stampede of explorations with his reports on new lands in 1492. Adventurers from England, Spain, Portugal, France and Italy set forth competitively on a series of world tours not unlike the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Magellan would be lost in a crowd today if all those who have gone around the world were together.

Francisco Vasquez de Coronado failed to find the fabled seven cities of gold when he explored the Great Plains in 1541, but modern businessmen could tell him of many places where profits could be had here and abroad.

The daring young men who first orbited the Earth in weightless capsules soon discovered that audiences had seen their feats on TV and read about them. Now the names of Lewis and Clark, who explored the Northwest Territories, or Zebulon Pike, who discovered a mountain peak in Colorado, might be recalled as easily as early astronauts.

Now scientists who have previously taken negative views of life elsewhere in the universe are beginning to concede possibilities that somewhere out there intelligent beings may exist and that some of them may have visited the Earth.

This is what believers in God have been saying all along. Perhaps future explorers will establish the truth and the place.