European Exploration of the Americas, 1492–1700

Europeans explored and colonized the Americas and had a major impact on Native Americans. Slavery developed in the colonies.

Hernando Cortés and Montezuma II. Engraving (19th century), Gallo Gallina.
European Exploration of the Americas, 1492–1700

SECTION 1: Spain Claims an Empire
SECTION 2: European Competition in North America
SECTION 3: The Spanish and Native Americans
SECTION 4: Beginnings of Slavery in Americas
Section 1
Spain Claims an Empire
Spain claimed a large empire in the Americas.
Indian Population Density in North America, c. 1500

Historical demographers have devised estimates of Native American population density in North America before the arrival of Europeans. Estimates are based on the “carrying capacity” of different ecological regions: rainfall, access to fish and animals, soil fertility, and length of growing season are all factors in the capacity of the land to support human life.
Pre-Columbian Societies of the Americas

Once described as nomadic hunter-gatherers, indigenous peoples in the Americas were agriculturalists and urban dwellers in many areas and populated the land as densely as did people in many other parts of the world.
Native American Trade Networks in 1400

By recovering objects such as shell necklaces, stone tools, and decorative copper from ancient sites of Indian habitation, and by determining their place of origin, anthropologists have developed this approximate map of Native American trading networks in the century before the arrival of Europeans.
Expansion of the Aztec Empire, 1427–1519

In the century before Europeans breached the Atlantic to find the Americas, the Aztecs’ rise to power brought 10 to 20 million people under their sway—more than the entire population of Spain and Portugal at this time.
Spain and Portugal Compete

Spain Claims an Empire

Spain and Portugal Compete

• Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal (1494):
  - moves Line of Demarcation 800 miles west
  - gives Portugal much of eastern South America
• European missionaries convert Native Americans to Christianity
• Europeans also explore to become rich and expand their empires
• Get rich by mercantilism—setup of favorable balance of trade
The Treaty of Tordesillas, promulgated by Pope Alexander VI, drew a line dividing all claims to land in the Americas between Portugal and Spain. Until the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas, never before had such small numbers of people established their dominance over such a large and populous area.
Europeans Explore Foreign Lands

- **Amerigo Vespucci** sets out to find sea route to Asia (1501)
- He realizes that Americas are not Asia; America named after him
- Explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa finds Pacific Ocean (1513)
- Ferdinand Magellan sails west around South America to Asia; he dies
- Magellan’s crew returns; first people to sail around world (1519—1522)
Vasco Núñez de Balboa discovers the Pacific Ocean. Painting (1911), Clyde O. De Land.
European Exploration of North America

The English and French dominated European explorations of North America in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Verrazano, an Italian sea captain, sailed in the service of the French king.
The Invasion of Mexico

• *Conquistadors*—soldiers; explore Americas, claim for Spain
• *Conquistador* Hernando Cortés and men land in Central America (1519)
• Aztec leader Montezuma at first welcomes, then opposes Cortés
• Cortés defeats Montezuma, Aztecs; takes over region for Spain
The Conquest of the Incan Empire

- Inca have powerful empire along western coast of South America
- *Conquistador* Francisco Pizarro and men conquer Incas (1531)
The Spanish *Entradas* in North America

The *entradas* of the Spanish conquistadors were all motivated by gold fever as well as the mission to claim vast territories across the lower tier of North America for the Spanish. Most of the early explorers became governors of Spanish colonies in South America.
Reasons for Spanish Victories

- European diseases kill millions of Native Americans; weakens resistance
- Spanish are excellent soldiers, sailors; have superior weapons
- Spanish form alliances with Native American enemies of Aztecs and Incas
- *Conquistadors* treat Native Americans brutally
Other Spanish Explorers

- 3 Spanish expeditions set out to find cities of gold (1539—1542):
  - Francisco Vázquez de Coronado travels through Arizona, New Mexico
  - Hernando de Soto explores southeast North America
  - Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sails up California coast
- All 3 expeditions fail to find cities of gold
Other European countries competed with Spain for control over territory in the Americas.
2 European Competition in North America

The Search for the Northwest Passage

- Northwest Passage—theoretical water route through North America to Asia
- **Henry Hudson** searches for passage for Dutch, English
- **John Cabot** searches for English (1497); 2nd voyage never returns
- **Giovanni da Verrazzano** searches for French along Atlantic coast (1524)
- **Jacques Cartier** searches for French up St. Lawrence River (1534—1536)
- None of the expeditions successful in finding Northwest Passage
Spain Responds to Competition

- Spain angry about English and French claims in North America
- Religious tension among Spain, England, France
- French Protestants found colony in Florida (1564)
- Nearby, Spanish troops build St. Augustine fort
- Spanish troops destroy Protestant colony, massacre French
Spain and England Clash

- Catholic Spain wants England’s Queen Elizabeth, a Protestant, dethroned
- England challenges Spain’s sea power
- Englishman Sir Francis Drake travels around the world
- During voyage, he plunders Spanish galleons, gets treasures for England
The Defeat of the Spanish Armada

- Philip II of Spain sends Spanish Armada to conquer England
- Using smaller, faster ships, English fleet defeats Spanish Armada (1588)
- English victory has two major effects:
  - England remains independent and Protestant
  - Spain’s image suffers; other nations challenge Spain
- England does not finance colonization; its private citizens must
Sea battle between Spanish Armada and English naval forces. Oil (about 1600), Hendrik Cornelisz Vroom.
The French and Dutch Seek Trade

- Frenchman Samuel de Champlain explores St. Lawrence River
- In Quebec, Champlain founds first permanent French settlement (1608)
- Rich fur trade develops; colony of New France thrives
- Dutch start colony of New Netherland along Hudson River
- Dutch buy Manhattan Island (1626), start town of New Amsterdam
Section 3

The Spanish and Native Americans

Spanish rule in the Americas had terrible consequences for Native Americans.
Spanish Colonies in the Americas

- By 1700, Spain controls much of the Americas
- Divides American empire into two provinces, New Spain and Peru
- Each province called **viceroyalty**; top official—viceroy
- Build new roads; transports soldiers, goods more efficiently
Life in Spanish America

- Spanish colonists receive *encomiendas*—grants of Native American labor
- Spanish rulers create *haciendas*—large estates; produce food for colony
• Spanish colonial society has four levels
• Spanish-born colonists are top level; hold the most power
• Creoles are second level, Spanish descent born in colonies
• *Mestizos* are third level, mixed Spanish and Native American ancestry
• Native Americans, enslaved Africans lowest layer; have least power
The Role of the Church

- **Missions**—Spanish settlements in Americas; church, town, farmlands
- Missions’ goal is to convert Native Americans to Christianity
- Missionaries provide food, protection, education for Native Americans
- Some missionaries treat Native Americans as slaves
- In 1680, **Popé** leads rebellion against Spanish, but is defeated
Sugar Plantations Develop

- **Plantations**—large farms that grow cash crops; export crops to Europe
- Many plantations grow sugar
- Using *encomiendas* Spaniards force Taino to labor, who suffer, die
The Abuse of Native Americans

- Most Spaniards treat Native Americans as beasts of burden
- Catholic priest Bartolomé de Las Casas gives up his encomienda
- For 50 years, he fights against the abuse of Native Americans
- Because of his efforts, Spanish king issues New Laws in 1542
- These laws order freeing of enslaved Native Americans
- But king eventually reverses many of these laws
The First Americans: Location of Major Indian Groups and Culture Areas in the 1600s
The Columbian Exchange

- **Columbian Exchange**—transfer of living things between hemispheres
- Includes transfer of germs that kill millions of Native Americans
- Horses, cattle, wheat, onions, grapes move to Western Hemisphere
- Potatoes, corn move to Eastern Hemisphere; help feed population
- People move from one hemisphere to other; cultures blend
The Columbian Exchange
European Exploration of the Americas

Causes
- National Competition
- Desire for Wealth
- Spread Christianity

Effects
- Destruction of Aztec and Incan Empires
- The Columbian Exchange
- European Colonies in the Americas
- Slavery
The Columbian Exchange

In the last several millennia of world history, the Columbian Exchange, as historian Alfred Crosby has termed it, stands as the most significant geographical rearrangement of organisms with profound environmental and human consequences.

Reflecting on the Past  Can you determine why inhabitants of the Americas had few domesticated animals before the arrival of Europeans? Why were infectious diseases rare in the pre-Columbian Americas? What is the relationship between the lack of domesticated animals and the general absence of infectious diseases?

Diseases to Europe  hepatitis, yaws, syphilis

Items to Europe  corn (maize), potatoes, yams, beans, squash, peppers, tomatoes, tobacco, manioc, peanuts, pumpkins, pineapples, cacao, turkeys, guinea pigs, llamas, alpacas

Tlatoc, the Aztec rain god, holds a corn plant, one of the most important American contributions to the Columbian exchange. (Library of Congress)

Diseases to the Americas  smallpox, measles, bubonic plague, influenza, typhus, diphtheria, scarlet fever

Items to the Americas  barley, wheat, rice, citrus fruits, sugar cane, horses, pigs, sheep, goats, oxen, oats, coffee, bananas

Among the animals European settlers brought to the Americas were long-haired steer. Descendants of these still survive today on Sable Island off the coast of Nova Scotia.

Maize and pineapple were among the native American plants that expanded and enriched the European diet.
The Columbian Exchange

**CAUSE**

Europeans cross the Atlantic to create new communities in the Americas.

**EFFECTS IN THE AMERICAS**

- European diseases kill millions of Native Americans.
- Settlers bring cattle, pigs, sheep, and horses, which thrive in the Americas.
- Settlers bring grains, fruits, and vegetables, which grow well in the Americas.
- Europeans and Native Americans create a blended culture in the Americas.

**EFFECTS IN EUROPE**

- Europeans take Native American crops back to Europe.
- Europeans begin to grow nutritious foods such as corn and potatoes.
- New foods help fuel rapid population growth in Europe.
Slavery in the Americas began in order to provide cheap labor for the colonies.
The Origins of American Slavery

Beginnings of Slavery in Americas

The Origins of American Slavery

- **Slavery**—holding a person in bondage for labor
- In some societies slaves own property and their children are freed

Continued . . .
Sugar plantations change slavery
First use enslaved Native Americans; many die from disease, overwork
Turn to using enslaved Africans because they:
- are immune from most diseases
- provide cheap labor
- have experience farming
- have no allies to help them in the Americas
The Slave Trade

- In 1509, Spanish king sends 50 African slaves to Hispaniola
- Starts slave trade in Americas; soon colonies depend on slave labor
- European slave traders ship Africans to Americas
- West African kingdoms on coast gather captives from inland
- These kingdoms then trade captives for goods, become rich
- Inland African societies weaken
West African Slaving Forts

Europeans fought lustily for control of slaving forts on the West African coast, and many forts changed hands several times during the long period of the Atlantic slave trade. Reflecting on the Past: How did West Africans participating in the slave trade adjust to the languages of different European slave traders? Or did the European slave trades learn a variety of African languages in order to trade at the coastal forts?
The Middle Passage

- **African Diaspora**—forced removal of people from Africa
- Slave trade lasts until the late 1800s
- Overall, about 12 million enslaved Africans are shipped to Americas
- About 2 million of these die during voyage called the **middle passage**
- On the ships, enslaved Africans face horrible conditions and disease
Slavery in the Americas

- Most enslaved Africans are forced laborers in haciendas, mines
- Many slaves rebel; laws to prevent rebellion, punish slaves—slave codes
- Europeans connect slavery with black Africans, dark skin with inferiority
- Leads to racism—belief that some people inferior because of their race
- Enslaved Africans bring their knowledge and culture to Americas
- Crops such as sweet potatoes, peanuts, chilies go to Africa
The Atlantic Slave Trade

The enslavement of Africans and their forced migration to many parts of the world has no precedent in human history.

Reflecting on the Past: To what degree did climate and other environmental factors determine the development of slave-based societies in the Americas? What differences marked the Atlantic slave trade from the slave trade across the Sahara and through the Red Sea and Indian Ocean?

Most slaves came from coastal West Africa.

DESTINATION OF ENSLAVED AFRICANS

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<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>British North America</td>
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<td>Portuguese America</td>
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Source: Data from Philip D. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade

The transport of Africans to Portuguese Brazil dwarfed that of all other colonies.

The illustration above, from an eighteenth-century pamphlet, demonstrates British regulations for storing the human cargo aboard slave ships. The Brooks, a 520-ton slave-trading ship, was built to accommodate 451 persons. However, because it was expected that many slaves would die en route, ship captains sometimes attempted to increase their profits by crowding even more slaves into the hold than regulations allowed (The Library of Congress).

For every African brought to North America, more than nine were sold as slaves in the West Indies and more than eight in Brazil.
**Timeline**

1440s  Portuguese begin kidnapping Africans and trading with them for slaves on Africa’s western coast

1460s  Using African labor, sugar plantations in Portuguese Madeira become major exporters

1492  Christopher Columbus lands on Caribbean islands Spanish expel Moors (Muslims) and Jews

1493–15041493–1504  Columbus makes three additional voyages to the Americas

1493  Spain plants first colony in Americas on Hispaniola

1494  Treaty of Tordesillas

1497–1585  French and English explore northern part of the Americas

1498  Vasco da Gama reaches India after sailing around Africa

Early 1500s  First Africans reach the Americas with Spanish

1508–1511  Spanish conquistadors subjugate native people on Puerto Rico and Cuba

1513  Portuguese explorers reach China

1517  Luther attacks Catholicism and begins Protestant Reformation

1520  First disease contracted from Spanish devastates Aztec people

1521  Cortés conquers the Aztec

1528  Spain plants first settlement on Florida coast

1528–1536  Cabeza de Vaca entrada across southern region of North America

1530s  Calvin calls for religious reform

1533  Pizarro conquers the Inca

1534  Church of England established

1540–1542  Coronado explores the Southwest

1558  Elizabeth I crowned queen of England

1585  English plant settlement on Roanoke Island

1588  English defeat the Spanish Armada

1590  Roanoke settlement fails

1603  James I succeeds Elizabeth I
Chapter 2 Interactive Quiz/Game
For review purposes only