

Exploring the Americas

I. A Changing World

A. Expanding Horizons

- After the Holy Crusades, the European nations created a demand for Asian goods (spices, peppers, cloves, cinnamon, perfumes, silks, sugar, etc.)
- In 1271, Marco Polo returns from Asia with many of these goods and marvelous stories of other Asian goods (first of many trips). His book Travels was the inspiration for many explorers.
- The problem began with the overland route, which was very expensive and very dangerous (due to the Barbarian tribes in the area)
- More European nations wanted to find a route to bypass these regions.
- With the emergence of the Renaissance in the 1300's, a new desire for intellectual and artistic creativity began to move explorers into undiscovered areas.

B. Powerful Nations Emerge

- By the 1400's, the nations of Spain, Portugal, England, & France began to become more powerful (much stronger ruling monarchs)
- These new, more powerful kingdoms wanted to make more money by targeting these Asian markets to the East.

C. Technology's Impact

- Advances in technology changed exploration and science forever (more books printed, more learning, more thinking, etc.)
- Better maps were created as more explorers (along with Asian geographers), created more detailed and accurate maps (using latitude & longitude)
- The invention of the astrolabe (which measured the stars) and the magnetic compass (which pointed north) revolutionized navigation.
- These allowed for more daring exploration (no longer sailing the coast for fear of "sea monsters" or falling off the edge of the world)
- Better ship building helped create the caravel, which sailed faster, ran shallower, and carried more supplies & food (a Portuguese invention)

II. Early Exploration

A. Seeking New Trade Routes

- Early maps of the world only included Europe, Asia, & Africa as one giant land mass (the Americas were not known), surrounded by the "Ocean Sea" (the Atlantic & Pacific Oceans)
- To gain better trade from Africa & Asia, Portugal took the lead in early exploration (needed a port city)
- Prince Henry, the Navigator, created a center for exploration in Portugal (brought astronomers, map makers, sailors, geographers, etc. together)

- By mid 1400's, Portugal was making a lot of money with African gold & slaves (wanted to expand to Asia)
- 1487, Bartolomeu Dias sailed south to the tip of Africa (ran into violent storms on the coast), naming it "Cape of Storms" (renamed "Cape of Good Hope")
- 1497, Vasco da Gama continues on Dias' course and rounds the "Cape of Good Hope", continuing along the coast of East Africa and eventually crossed over to India (first to arrive via a sea route from Europe)
- 1500, Pedro Cabral follows da Gama's route, but swings out wide across the Atlantic and reaches Brazil (claimed it for Portugal, giving them a claim in the Americas).
- Portugal begins to take the lead in trade & exploration with Asia & India.

B. Columbus Crosses the Atlantic

- Christopher Columbus (an Italian working for Spain) believed you could reach Asia by heading west across the ocean (rejected by Portugal & Italy)
- Studying Ptolemy (Greek astronomer), Columbus believed the distance to Asia would be about 2,700 miles & 2 months at sea (actually 14,000 miles)
- Around 1000, Viking warriors actually arrived in North America and attempted to settle "Vinland" (failed, so the existence of North America remained)
- In hopes of getting rich and spreading Christianity, Spain finally agrees to finance the voyage.
- August of 1492, Columbus leaves with 90 men & three ships ("Santa Maria" / "Nina" / "Pinta") and are blown off course into the Caribbean Sea.
- After 2 months, Columbus lands on the island of "San Salvador" (the Bahamas), then travels to Cuba and Hispaniola
- Columbus makes 3 more attempts to reach Asia by sailing further west (refuses to believe he had discovered the "New World", going to his death believing he had landed somewhere in the East Indies near Asia)
- 1494, Spain & Portugal agree to the "Treaty of Tordesillas" to create a "line of demarcation" to divide the world (Spain owns all unexplored land west of line, Portugal owns all unexplored land east of line)
- 1499, Amerigo Vespucci explores the coast of South America (European map makers call the New World "America" in his honor)
- 1513, Vasco Nunez de Balboa becomes the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the Americas
- 1520, Ferdinand Magellan becomes the first explorer to circumnavigate the world (sailed from Spain to tip of South America, then across the Pacific). He was killed and only 1 of 5 ships returned (only 18 of 200 sailors remained).

III. Spain in America & Florida

A. Spanish Conquistadors

- "Conquistadors" (or "Conquerors") were Spanish explorers who were given grants from Spain to create settlements and search for riches in America (a mercenary for money)
- Known for their violence against the Native Americans and rival European explorers.
- Used fear as a weapon (strange animals & weapons) and appeared to be gods to the Native

Americans (also played tribes against each other)

- Diseases also wiped out huge numbers of Native Americans (no immunity)
- 1519, Hernando Cortes lands in Mexico (with 500 soldiers, horses, weapons) and moves to conquer the Aztec Empire (attacked the city of Tenochtitlan and captured the emperor Montezuma)
- With the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1521, huge amounts of gold, silver, treasures began flowing to Spain (eventually would be 80% of Spain's income)
- 1532, Francisco Pizarro lands in South America (with 180 soldiers, horses, weapons) and moves to conquer the Inca Empire (captured and executed emperor Atahualpa)

B. Spanish in Florida & North America

- 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon leaves Puerto Rico with 3 ships to explore a large island in the West Indies to search for gold & slaves (and glory), as well as the mythical "Fountain of Youth".
- Lands near present day Melbourne, naming the land "La Florida" or "Flowery Easter" ("Pascua Florida")
- Continues to sail south around Florida, discovering the "Gulf Stream" and the Florida Keys ("Los Martires") while avoiding the Tekesta Indians.
- 1514, de Leon lands in Charolette Harbor and is violently attacked by the Calusa Indians (names the area "Matanzas" or massacre) and retreats.
- 1521, de Leon returns to "Matanzas" and is hit by a Calusa arrow (dies of infection on the way back to Cuba), Florida is abandoned.
- 1528, Panfilo de Narvaez sails to Florida to create settlements and search for riches (lands in present day Tampa Bay with 300 soldiers)
- Quickly decides to explore Florida and search for the "city of gold" to the north (very harsh and violent with the Timucua Indians), but makes a major mistake by sending his fleet north without proper instructions (they never find him).
- Tortures the local chief (has his mother killed by war dogs & cut the chief's nose off)
- After 56 rough days, de Narvaez moves into the Apalachee Indian region (near Tallahassee) and tries to take the villages (violently attacked and retreats to the coast)
- The survivors of the attack build rafts near present day St. Marks and sail west to Mexico City (rafts sink off Texas coast, killing over 250 men including de Narvaez)
- Cabeza de Vaca and an African slave named Estevanico survive and wander for 7 years until they reach Mexico City (his journals detailed the expedition)
- Juan Ortiz (member of de Narvaez crew) is captured by the Timucua Indians and is tortured for many years (saved by the chief's daughter = Pocahontas??)

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- 1539, Hernando de Soto arrives in Florida to create settlements & search for riches (immediately plans an expedition north)
 - The natural barriers of Florida prove to be extremely difficult for the Spanish soldiers (geography, animals, climate, etc.)
 - De Soto is extremely harsh and violent to the Native Americans (much worse than others), moving through Timucua territory searching for gold.
 - December 25, 1539, the expedition arrives in present day Tallahassee and holds the first Christmas celebration on North America.

- After trying to conquer the Apalachee, de Soto is routed north into Georgia by constant guerrilla attacks by the Apalachee.
 - De Soto continues west, discovering the Mississippi River (eventually dies of fever near present day Oklahoma, buried in the river).
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- 1559, Tristan de Luna attempted to settle Pensacola (wiped out by a massive hurricane and de Luna's mental breakdowns)
- Had it survived, Pensacola (not St. Augustine) would be the oldest settlement in North America.

C. Spanish Rule

- In Spanish territory, the settlements were either going to be pueblos (towns), missions (religious communities), or presidios (forts).
- "Nombre de dios" was the first mission built in Florida, with Father Luis Cancer de Barbastro becoming the first missionary to die in Florida (killed by Calusa).
- The class system in New Spain was made up of peninsulares (those born in Spain), creoles (Spanish citizens born in America), mestizos (Spanish / Native), Indians, and African slaves.
- Plantations (large farms that grew cash crops using slave labor) were created in New Spain to grow tobacco & sugarcane, but they needed a large, cheap work force.
- By the 1500's, Spain had granted "encomienda" (right to demand taxes & labor from the Native Americans)
- In 1542, Bartolome de Las Casas pushed for better treatment of Native Americans (Spain banned the use of Native Americans as slaves)
- As a result, the need for African slaves increased.

IV. Exploring North America

A. A Divided Church

- By the 1500's, Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation had begun and challenged the rule of the Catholic Church in Europe.
- In the New World, the Catholic nations of Spain and France competed with the Protestant nations of England and the Netherlands

B. Economic Rivalry

- The new idea of mercantilism helped push the competition in the New World (a nations power was based on its wealth and ability to gain trade, gold, & silver)
- The Columbian Exchange changed the life of those in Europe and America (transfer of plants, animals, & diseases)
- With Spain & Portugal dividing up the New World, other nations tried to search out a new way to get to Asia by traveling above the Americas (the Northwest Passage)
- 1497, John Cabot (England) sailed the coast of Newfoundland searching.
- 1524, Giovanni da Verrazano (France) sailed the coast from Nova Scotia to the Carolinas.
- 1535, Jacques Cartier (France) sailed into the St. Lawrence River (established Montreal)

- 1609, Henry Hudson (Netherlands) sailed into the Hudson River.
- 1610, Henry Hudson (England) sailed into Hudson Bay
- While Spain & England actively desired to create settlements in America, France was content to make money with fishing & fur trading.
- 1609, Samuel de Champlain established Quebec as a trading post for the Native Americans and “coureurs de bois” (French trappers)
- 1621, the Netherlands established New Netherlands (New York)

C. Spanish & French Rivalry in Florida

- By 1560's, France viewed Spain's abandonment of Florida as a chance to move into the area.
- In 1562, Jean Ribault and Rene de Laudonniere established the settlement of “Mayport” on the St. John's River (had help from the Timucua Indians)
- To defend the settlement, Fort Caroline was created (a triangular fort).
- In 1565, Spain sends Pedro Menendez de Aviles to destroy the settlements (landed in present day St. Augustine and established the area).
- Menendez attacks Fort Caroline and Mayport, destroying the settlement and capturing the fort (renamed it “San Mateo”) and killing all soldiers.
- Ribault tried to launch an attack on St. Augustine first, but it failed (he is captured and executed by Menendez on his way back on the beach (“Matanzas”))
- St. Augustine becomes the oldest city in North America while the French are chased from Florida for good.