AP* EDITION 2014 UPDATE

GIVE ME LIBERTY!

AN AMERICAN HISTORY



ERIC FONER

THIRD EDITION



Part 1

AMERICAN COLONIES TO 1763

The colonial period of American history was a time of enormous change, as the people of four continents—North America, South America, Europe, and Africa—were suddenly and unexpectedly thrown into contact with one another. The period also initiated a new era in the history of freedom. It was not, however, a desire for freedom that drove early European explorations of North and South America. Contact between Europe and the Americas began as a byproduct of the quest for a sea route for trade with Asia. But it quickly became a contest for power between rival empires, who moved to conquer, colonize, and exploit the resources of the New World.

At the time of European contact, the Western Hemisphere was home to tens of millions of people. Within the present border of the United States there existed Indian societies based on agriculture, hunting, or fishing, with their own languages, religious practices, and forms of government. All experienced wrenching changes after Europeans arrived, including incorporation into the world market and epidemics of disease that devastated many native groups.

The colonies that eventually came to form the United States originated in very different ways. Virginia, the first permanent colony to be established, was created by a private company that sought to earn profits through exploration for gold and the development of transatlantic trade. Individual proprietors—well-connected Englishmen given large grants of land by the king—established Maryland and Pennsylvania. New York, which had been founded by the Dutch, came into British hands as the result of a war. Religious groups seeking escape from persecution in England and hoping to establish communities rooted in their

understanding of the principles of the Bible founded colonies in New England.

In the seventeenth century, all the British colonies experienced wrenching social conflicts as groups within them battled for control. Relations with Indians remained tense and sometimes violent. Religious and political divisions in England, which experienced a civil war in the 1640s and the ouster of the king in 1688, reverberated in the colonies. So did wars between European powers, which spilled over into North America. Nonetheless, after difficult beginnings, Britain's mainland colonies experienced years of remarkable growth in population and economic activity. By the eighteenth century, the non-Indian population of Britain's North American colonies had far outstripped that of the colonies of France and Spain.

In every colony in British America, well-to-do landowners and merchants dominated economic and political life. Nonetheless, emigration to the colonies offered numerous settlers opportunities they had not enjoyed at home, including access to land, the freedom to worship as they pleased, and the right to vote. Every British colony had an elected assembly that shared power with a governor, who was usually appointed from London. Even this limited degree of self-government contrasted sharply with the lack of representative institutions in the Spanish and French empires. All these circumstances drew thousands of English emigrants to North America in the seventeenth century, and thousands more from Ireland, Scotland, and the European continent in the eighteenth century.



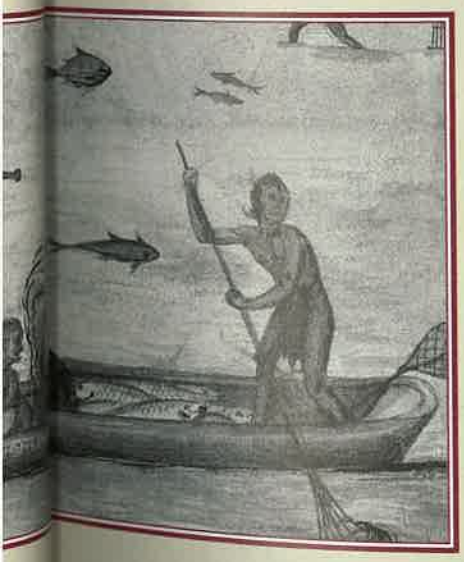


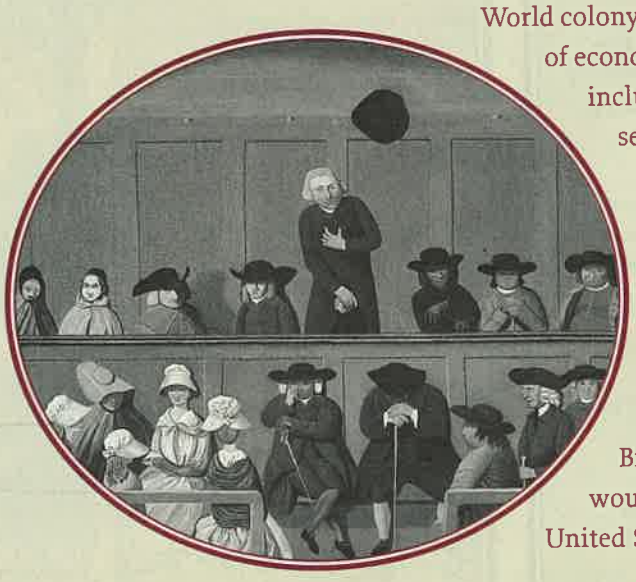


Yet the conditions that allowed colonists to enjoy such freedoms were made possible by lack of freedom for millions of others. For the native inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere, European colonization brought the spread of devastating epidemics and either dispossession from the land or forced labor for the colonizers. Millions of Africans were uprooted from their homes and transported to the New World to labor on the plantations of Brazil, the Caribbean, and England's North American colonies. Even among European immigrants, the majority arrived not as completely free individuals but as indentured servants who owed a prearranged number of years of labor to those who paid their passage.

In colonial America, many modern ideas of freedom did not exist, or existed in very different forms than today. Equality before the law was unknown—women, non-whites, and propertyless men enjoyed far fewer rights than landowning white male citizens. Economic freedom, today widely identified with participation in an unregulated market, meant independence—owning land or a shop and not relying on another person for a livelihood. Most colonies had official churches, and many colonists who sought religious liberty for themselves refused to extend it to others. Speaking or writing critically of public authorities could land a person in jail.

Nonetheless, ideas about freedom played a major role in justifying European colonization. The Spanish and French claimed to be liberating Native Americans by bringing them advanced civilization and Roman Catholicism. England insisted that true freedom for Indians meant adopting English ways, including Protestantism. Moreover, the expansion of England's empire occurred at a time when freedom came to be seen as the defining characteristic of the English nation. Slavery existed in every New World colony. In many, it became the basis of economic life. Yet most Britons, including colonists, prided themselves on enjoying "British liberty," a common set of rights that included protection from the arbitrary exercise of governmental power.





Thus, freedom and lack of freedom expanded together in the colonies of British North America that would eventually form the United States.

Chapter 1

9000 BC	Agriculture developed in Mexico and Peru
5000 BC–1000 AD	Mound builders thrive in Mississippi Valley
900–1200	Hopi and Zuni tribes establish towns
1000	Vikings sail to Newfoundland
1200	Cahokia city-empire along the Mississippi
1430–1440	Chinese Admiral Zheng He explores coast of East Africa
1430s	Gutenberg invents printing press
1434	Portuguese explore African coast below the Sahara
1487	Bartholomeu Dias reaches the Cape of Good Hope
1492	Columbus's first voyage to the New World
1497	John Cabot reaches Newfoundland
1498	Vasco da Gama sails to the Indian Ocean
1500	Pedro Cabral claims Brazil for Portugal
1502	First African slaves transported to Caribbean islands
	Nicolás de Ovando establishes settlement on Hispaniola
1517	Martin Luther launches the Protestant Reformation with his Ninety-Five Theses
1519	Hernán Cortés arrives in Mexico
1528	*History of the Indies*
1530s	Pizarro's conquest of Peru
1542	Spain promulgates the New Laws
1608–1609	Champlain establishes Quebec; Hudson claims New Netherland
1610	Santa Fe established
1680	Pueblo Revolt





A New World

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New Netherland and the Indians

The Village of Secoton, *by John White, an English artist who spent a year on the Outer Banks of North Carolina in 1585–1586 as part of an expedition sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh. A central street links houses surrounded by fields of corn. In the lower part, dancing Indians take part in a religious ceremony.*

Focus Questions

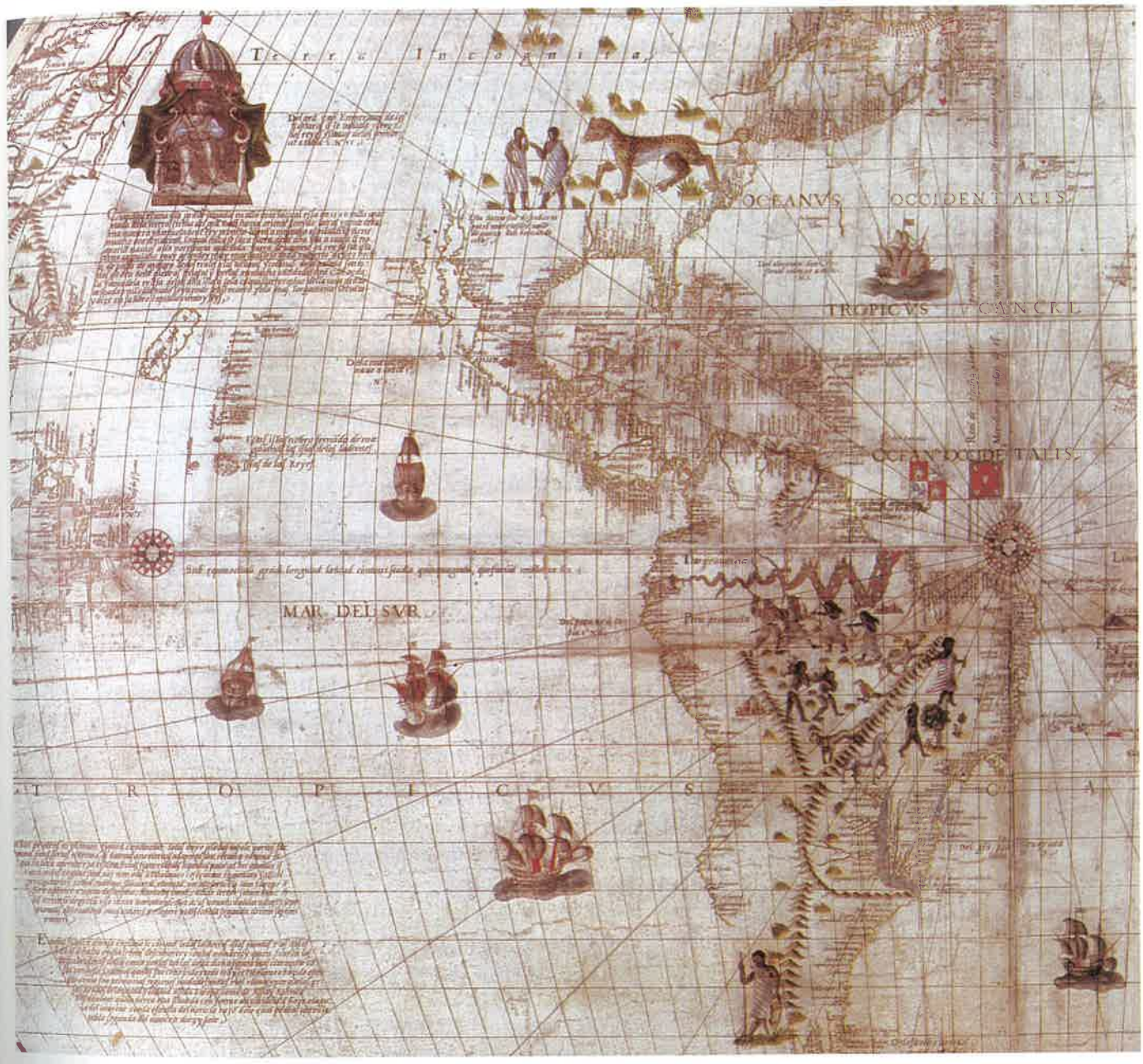
- What were the major patterns of Native American life in North America before Europeans arrived?
- How did Indian and European ideas of freedom differ on the eve of contact?
- What impelled European explorers to look west across the Atlantic?
- What happened when the peoples of the Americas came in contact with Europeans?
- What were the chief features of the Spanish empire in America?
- What were the chief features of the French and Dutch empires in North America?

"The discovery of America," the British writer Adam Smith announced in his celebrated work *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), was one of "the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind." Historians no longer use the word "discovery" to describe the European exploration, conquest, and colonization of a hemisphere already home to millions of people. But there can be no doubt that when Christopher Columbus made landfall in the West Indian islands in 1492, he set in motion some of the most pivotal developments in human history. Immense changes soon followed in both the Old and New Worlds; the consequences of these changes are still with us today.

The peoples of the American continents and Europe, previously unaware of each other's existence, were thrown into continuous interaction. Crops new to each hemisphere crossed the Atlantic, reshaping diets and transforming the natural environment. Because of their long isolation, the inhabitants of North and South America had developed no immunity to the germs that also accompanied the colonizers. As a result, they suffered a series of devastating epidemics, the greatest population catastrophe in human history. Within a decade of Columbus's voyage, a fourth continent—Africa—found itself drawn into the new Atlantic system of trade and population movement. In Africa, Europeans found a supply of unfree labor that enabled them to exploit the fertile lands of the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, of approximately 10 million men, women, and children who crossed from the Old World to the New between 1492 and 1820, the vast majority, about 7.7 million, were African slaves.

From the vantage point of 1776, the year the United States declared itself an independent nation, it seemed to Adam Smith that the "discovery" of America had produced both great "benefits" and great "misfortunes." To the nations of western Europe, the development of American colonies brought an era of "splendor and glory." The emergence of the Atlantic as the world's major avenue for trade and population movement, Smith noted, enabled millions of Europeans to increase the "enjoyments" of life. To the "natives" of the Americas, however, Smith went on, the years since 1492 had been ones of "dreadful misfortunes" and "every sort of injustice." And for millions of Africans, the settlement of America meant a descent into the abyss of slavery.

Long before Columbus sailed, Europeans had dreamed of a land of abundance, riches, and ease beyond the western horizon. Once the "discovery" of this New World had taken place, they invented an America of the imagination, projecting onto it their hopes for a better life. Here, many believed, would arise unparalleled opportunities for riches, or at least liberation from poverty. Europeans envisioned America as a religious refuge, a society of equals, a source of power



A 1544 engraving of the Western Hemisphere by Sebastian Cabot, the son of the Italian-born explorer John Cabot and, like his father, an accomplished mariner. In the early sixteenth century, sailing for England and then Spain, Sebastian Cabot led several expeditions to the New World. The ships depicted are caravels, the first European vessels capable of long-distance travel, and the map also shows stylized scenes of Native Americans, including a battle with Spanish conquistadores.

and glory. They searched the New World for golden cities and fountains of eternal youth. Some sought to establish ideal communities based on the lives of the early Christian saints or other blueprints for social justice.

Some of these dreams of riches and opportunity would indeed be fulfilled. To many European settlers, America offered a far greater chance to own land and worship as they pleased than existed in Europe, with its rigid, unequal social order and official churches. Yet the conditions that enabled millions of settlers to take control of their own destinies were made possible by the debasement of millions of others. The New World

became the site of many forms of unfree labor, including indentured servitude, forced labor, and one of the most brutal and unjust systems ever devised by man, plantation slavery. The conquest and settlement of the Western Hemisphere opened new chapters in the long histories of both freedom and slavery.

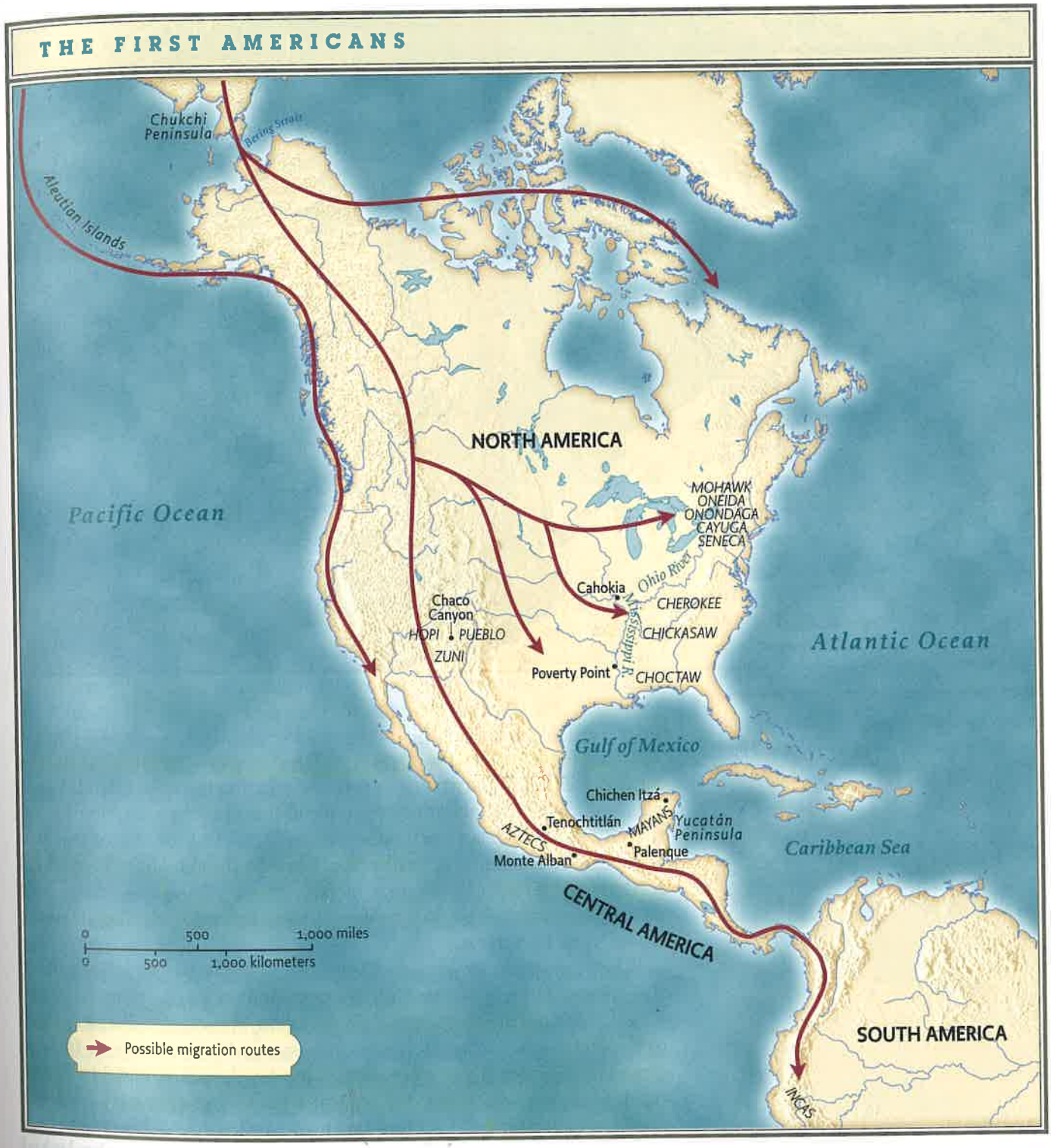
There was a vast human diversity among the peoples thrown into contact with one another in the New World. Exploration and settlement took place in an era of almost constant warfare among European nations, each racked by internal religious, political, and regional conflicts. Native Americans and Africans consisted of numerous groups with their own languages and cultures. They were as likely to fight one another as to unite against the European newcomers. All these peoples were changed by their integration into the new Atlantic economy. The complex interactions of Europeans, American Indians, and Africans would shape American history during the colonial era.

THE FIRST AMERICANS

THE SETTLING OF THE AMERICAS

The residents of the Americas were no more a single group than Europeans or Africans. They spoke hundreds of different languages and lived in numerous kinds of societies. Most, however, were descended from bands of hunters and fishers who had crossed the Bering Strait via a land bridge at various times between 15,000 and 60,000 years ago—the exact dates are hotly debated by archaeologists. Others may have arrived by sea from Asia or Pacific islands. Around 14,000 years ago, when glaciers began to melt at the end of the last Ice Age, the land link became submerged under water, once again separating the Western Hemisphere from Asia.

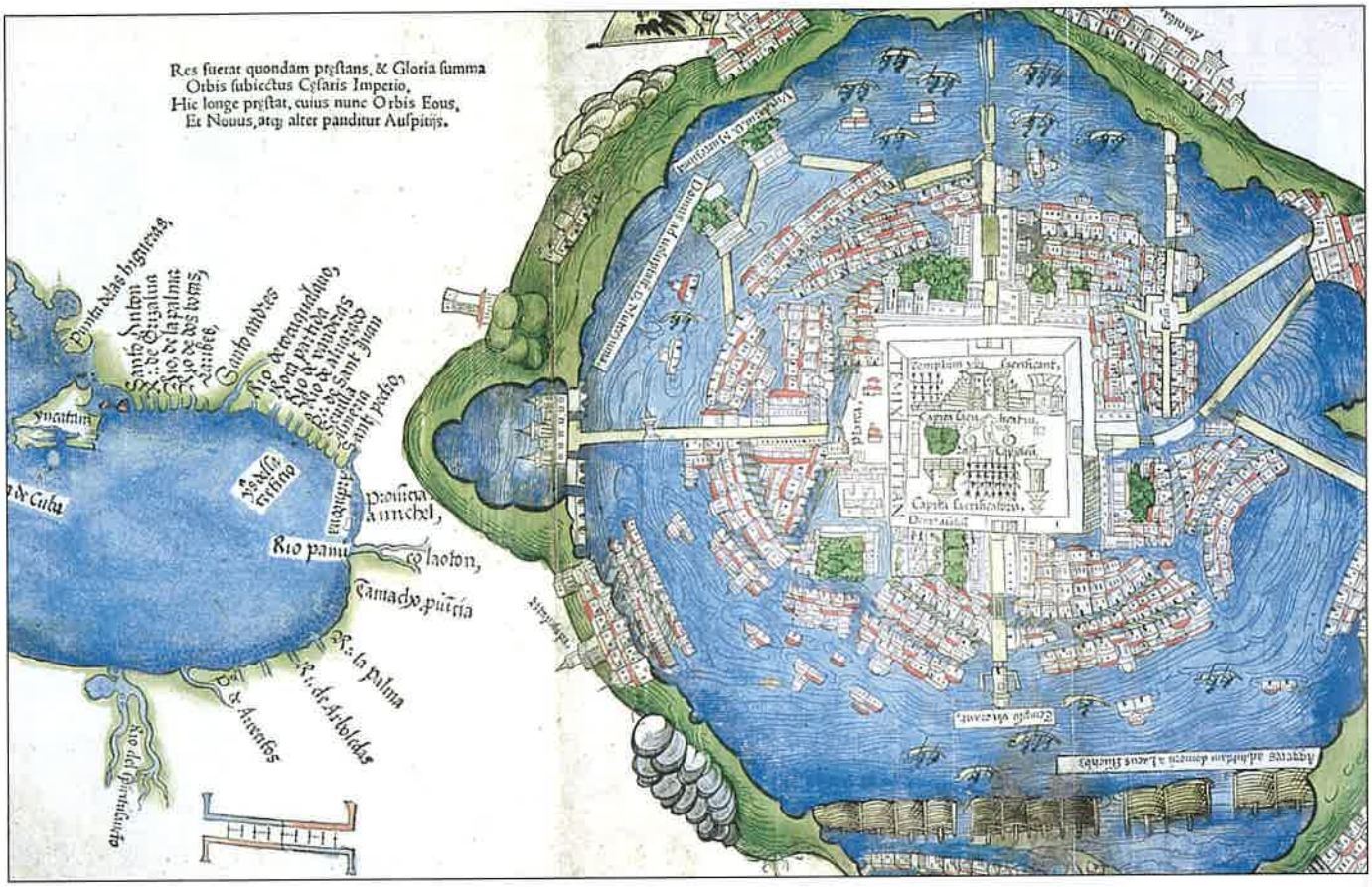
History in North and South America did not begin with the coming of Europeans. The New World was new to Europeans but an ancient homeland to those who already lived there. The hemisphere had witnessed many changes during its human history. First, the early inhabitants and their descendants spread across the two continents, reaching the tip of South America perhaps 11,000 years ago. As the climate warmed, they faced a food crisis as the immense animals they hunted, including woolly mammoths and giant bison, became extinct. Around 9,000 years ago, at the same time that agriculture was being developed in the Near East, it also emerged in modern-day Mexico and the Andes, and then spread to other parts of the Americas, making settled civilizations possible. Throughout the hemisphere, maize (corn), squash, and beans formed the basis of agriculture. The absence of livestock in the Western Hemisphere, however, limited farming by preventing the plowing of fields and the application of natural fertilizer.



A map illustrating the probable routes by which the first Americans settled the Western Hemisphere at various times between 15,000 and 60,000 years ago.

INDIAN SOCIETIES OF THE AMERICAS

North and South America were hardly an empty wilderness when Europeans arrived. The hemisphere contained cities, roads, irrigation systems, extensive trade networks, and large structures such as the pyramid-temples whose beauty still inspires wonder. With a population close to



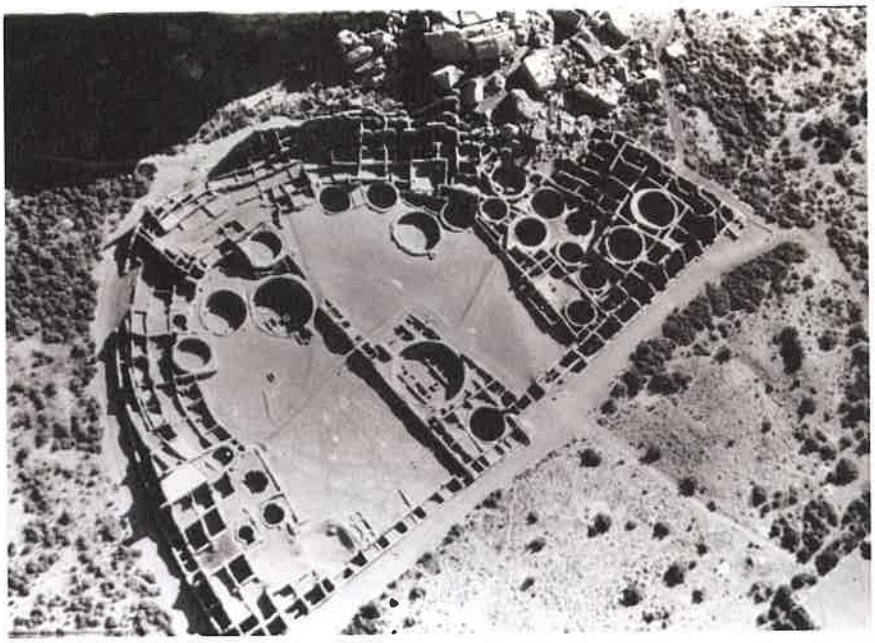
Map of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán and the Gulf of Mexico, probably produced by a Spanish conquistador and published in 1524 in an edition of the letters of Hernán Cortés. The map shows the city's complex system of canals, bridges, and dams, with the Great Temple at the center. Gardens and a zoo are also visible.

250,000, Tenochtitlán, the capital of the Aztec empire in what is now Mexico, was one of the world's largest cities. Its great temple, splendid royal palace, and a central market comparable to that of European capitals made the city seem "like an enchanted vision," according to one of the first Europeans to encounter it. Further south lay the Inca kingdom, centered in modern-day Peru. Its population of perhaps 12 million was linked by a complex system of roads and bridges that extended 2,000 miles along the Andes mountain chain.

When Europeans arrived, a wide variety of native peoples lived within the present borders of the United States. Indian civilizations in North America had not developed the scale, grandeur, or centralized organization of the Aztec and Inca societies to their south. North American Indians lacked the technologies Europeans had mastered, such as metal tools and machines, gunpowder, and the scientific knowledge necessary for long-distance navigation. No society north of Mexico had achieved literacy (although some made maps on bark and animal hides). They also lacked wheeled vehicles, since they had no domestic animals like horses or oxen to pull them. Their "backwardness" became a central justification for European conquest. But, over time, Indian societies had perfected techniques of farming, hunting, and fishing, developed structures of political power and religious belief, and engaged in far-reaching networks of trade and communication.

MOUND BUILDERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER VALLEY

Remarkable physical remains still exist from some of the early civilizations in North America. Around 3,500 years ago, Native Americans constructed a large community centered on a series of giant semicircular mounds on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in present-day Louisiana. Known today as Poverty Point, it was a commercial and governmental center whose residents established trade routes throughout the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys. Archaeologists have found there copper from present-day Minnesota and Canada, and flint mined in Indiana.



A modern aerial photograph of the ruins of Pueblo Bonita, in Chaco Canyon in present-day New Mexico. The rectangular structures are the foundations of dwellings, and the circular ones are kivas, *or places of religious worship.*

More than a thousand years before Columbus sailed, Indians of the Ohio River valley, called "mound builders" by eighteenth-century settlers who encountered the large earthen burial mounds they created, had traded across half the continent. After their decline, another culture flourished in the Mississippi River valley, centered on the city of Cahokia near present-day St. Louis, a fortified community with between 10,000 and 30,000 inhabitants in the year 1200. Its residents, too, built giant mounds, the largest of which stood 100 feet high and was topped by a temple. Little is known of Cahokia's political and economic structure. But it stood as the largest settled community in what is now the United States until surpassed in population by New York and Philadelphia around 1800.

WESTERN INDIANS

In the arid northeastern area of present-day Arizona, the Hopi and Zuni and their ancestors engaged in settled village life for over 3,000 years. During the peak of the region's culture, between the years 900 and 1200, these peoples built great planned towns with large multiple-family dwellings in local canyons, constructed dams and canals to gather and distribute water, and conducted trade with groups as far away as central Mexico and the Mississippi River valley. The largest of their structures, Pueblo Bonita, in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, stood five stories high and had over 600 rooms. Not until the 1880s was a dwelling of comparable size constructed in the United States.

After the decline of these communities, probably because of drought, survivors moved to the south and east, where they established villages and perfected the techniques of desert farming, complete with irrigation systems to provide water for crops of corn, beans, and cotton. These were the people Spanish explorers called the Pueblo Indians (because they lived in small villages, or *pueblos*, when the Spanish first encountered them in the sixteenth century).



Cliff dwellings in Cañon de Chelly, in the area of modern-day Arizona, built sometime between 300 and 1300 and photographed in 1873.



Another drawing by the artist John White shows ten male and seven female Native Americans dancing around a circle of posts in a religious ritual. White was a careful observer of their clothing, body markings, and objects used in the ceremony.

On the Pacific coast, another densely populated region, hundreds of distinct groups resided in independent villages and lived primarily by fishing, hunting sea mammals, and gathering wild plants and nuts. As many as 25 million salmon swam up the Columbia River each year, providing Indians with abundant food. On the Great Plains, with its herds of buffalo—descendants of the prehistoric giant bison—many Indians were hunters (who tracked animals on foot before the arrival of horses with the Spanish), but others lived in agricultural communities.

INDIANS OF EASTERN NORTH AMERICA

In eastern North America, hundreds of tribes inhabited towns and villages scattered from the Gulf of Mexico to present-day Canada. They lived on corn, squash, and beans, supplemented by fishing and hunting deer, turkeys, and other animals. Indian trade routes crisscrossed the eastern part of the continent. Tribes frequently warred with one another to obtain goods, seize captives, or take revenge for the killing of relatives. They conducted diplomacy and made peace. Little in the way of centralized authority existed until, in the fifteenth century, various leagues or confederations emerged in an effort to bring order to local regions. In the Southeast, the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chickasaw each united dozens of towns in loose alliances. In present-day New York and Pennsylvania, five Iroquois peoples—the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Onondaga—formed a Great League of Peace, bringing a period of stability to the area. Each year a Great Council, with representatives from the five groupings, met to coordinate behavior toward outsiders.

The most striking feature of Native American society at the time Europeans arrived was its sheer diversity. Each group had its own political system and set of religious beliefs, and North America was home to literally hundreds of mutually unintelligible languages. Indians had no sense of



The native population of North America at the time of first contact with Europeans consisted of numerous tribes with their own languages, religious beliefs, and economic and social structures. This map suggests the numerous ways of life existing at the time.

"America" as a continent or hemisphere. They did not think of themselves as a single unified people, an idea invented by Europeans and only many years later adopted by Indians themselves. Indian identity centered on the immediate social group—a tribe, village, chiefdom, or confederacy. When Europeans first arrived, many Indians saw them as simply one group among many. Their first thought was how to use the newcomers to

enhance their standing in relation to other native peoples, rather than to unite against them. The sharp dichotomy between Indians and "white" persons did not emerge until later in the colonial era.

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGION

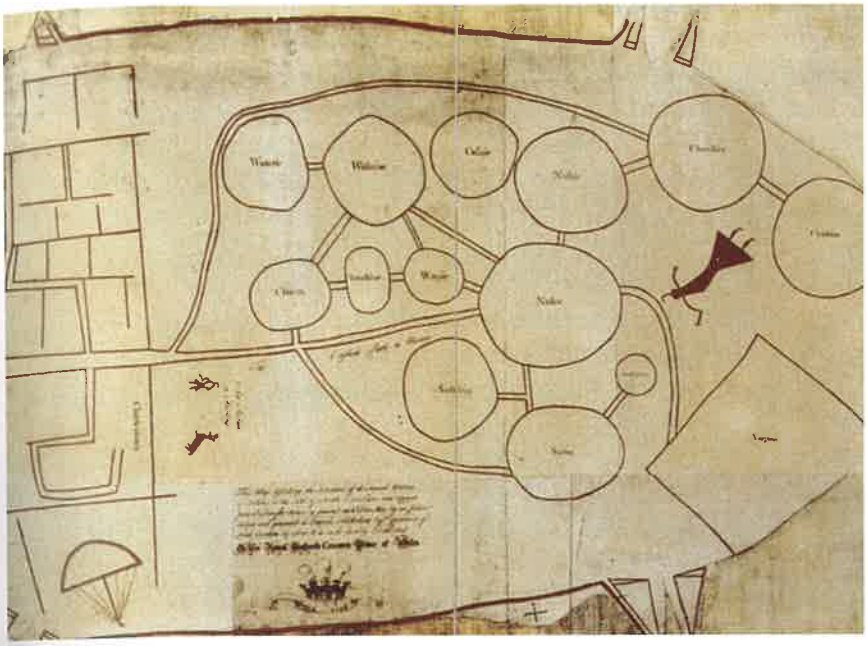
Nonetheless, the diverse Indian societies of North America did share certain common characteristics. Their lives were steeped in religious ceremonies often directly related to farming and hunting. Spiritual power, they believed, suffused the world, and sacred spirits could be found in all kinds of living and inanimate things—animals, plants, trees, water, and wind. Through religious ceremonies, they aimed to harness the aid of powerful supernatural forces to serve the interests of man. In some tribes, hunters performed rituals to placate the spirits of animals they had killed. Other religious ceremonies sought to engage the spiritual power of nature to secure abundant crops or fend off evil spirits. Indian villages also held elaborate religious rites, participation in which helped to define the boundaries of community membership. In all Indian societies, those who seemed to possess special abilities to invoke supernatural powers—shamans, medicine men, and other religious leaders—held positions of respect and authority.

Indian religion did not pose a sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural, or secular and religious activities. In some respects, however, Indian religion was not that different from popular spiritual beliefs in Europe. Most Indians held that a single Creator stood atop the spiritual hierarchy. Nonetheless, nearly all Europeans arriving in the New World quickly concluded that Indians were in dire need of being converted to a true, Christian faith.

LAND AND PROPERTY

Equally alien in European eyes were Indian attitudes toward property. Numerous land systems existed among Native Americans. Generally, however, village leaders assigned plots of land to individual families to use for a season or more, and tribes claimed specific areas for hunting. Unclaimed land remained free for anyone to use. Families "owned" the right to use land, but they did not own the land itself. Indians saw land, the basis of economic life for both hunting and farming societies, as a common resource, not an economic commodity. In the nineteenth century, the Indian leader Black Hawk would explain why, in his view, land could not be bought and sold: "The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon, and cultivate as far as necessary for their subsistence; and so long as they occupy and cultivate it, they have a right to the soil." Few if any Indian societies were familiar with the idea of a fenced-off piece of land belonging forever to a single individual or family. There was no market in real estate before the coming of Europeans.

Nor were Indians devoted to the accumulation of wealth and material goods. Especially east of the Mississippi River, where villages moved every few years when soil or game became depleted, acquiring numerous possessions made little sense. However, status certainly mattered in Indian societies. Tribal leaders tended to come from a small number of families, and chiefs lived more splendidly than average members of society. But their



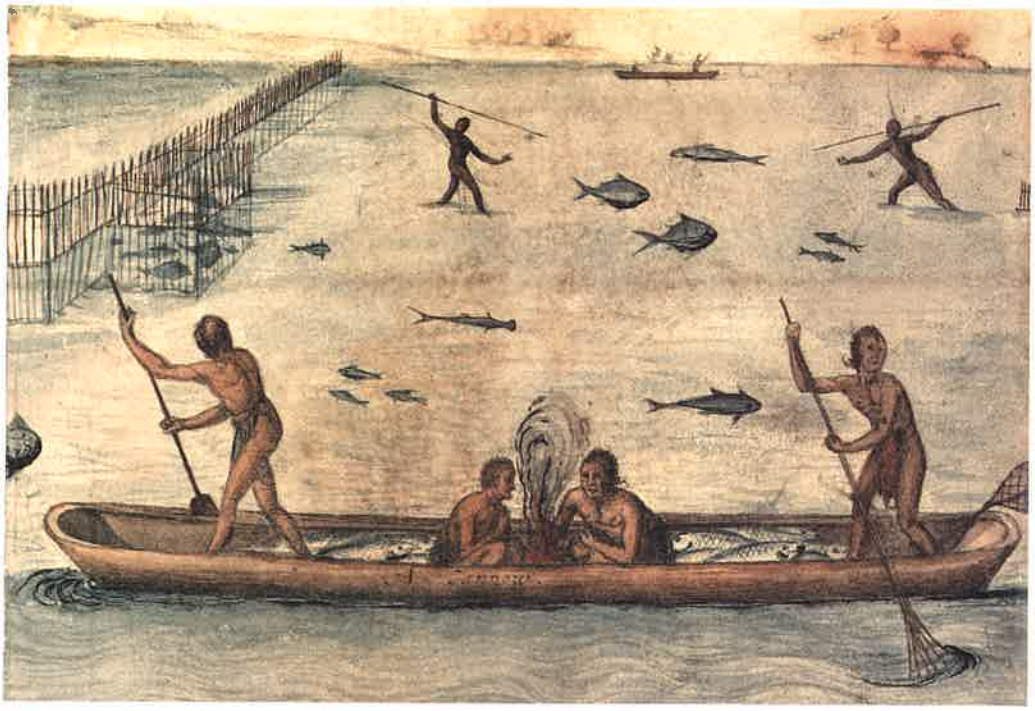
A Catawba map illustrates the differences between Indian and European conceptions of landed property. The map depicts not possession of a specific territory, but trade and diplomatic connections between various native groups and with the colony of Virginia, represented by the rectangle on the lower right.

reputation often rested on their willingness to share goods with others rather than hoarding them for themselves.

A few Indian societies had rigid social distinctions. Among the Natchez, descendants of the mound-building Mississippian culture, a chief, or "Great Sun," occupied the top of the social order, with nobles, or "lesser suns," below him, and below them, the common people. In general, however, wealth mattered far less in Indian society than in European society at the time. Generosity was among the most valued social qualities, and gift giving was essential to Indian society. Trade, for example, meant more than a commercial transaction—it was accompanied by elaborate ceremonies of gift exchange. A central part of Indian economies, gift giving bound different groups in webs of mutual obligation. Although Indians had no experience of the wealth enjoyed at the top of European society, under normal circumstances no one in Indian societies went hungry or experienced the extreme inequalities of Europe. "There are no beggars among them," reported the English colonial leader Roger Williams of New England's Indians.

GENDER RELATIONS

The system of gender relations in most Indian societies also differed markedly from that of Europe. Membership in a family defined women's lives, but they openly engaged in premarital sexual relations and could even choose to divorce their husbands. Most, although not all, Indian societies were matrilineal—that is, centered on clans or kinship groups in which children became members of the mother's family, not the father's. Tribal leaders were almost always men, but women played an important role in certain religious ceremonies, and female elders often helped to select male village leaders and took part in tribal meetings. Under English law, a married man controlled the family's property and a wife had no independent



Indians fishing, in a 1585 drawing by John White. The canoe is filled with fish, while two men harpoon others in the background. Among the wildlife illustrated are hammerhead sharks and catfish.

legal identity. In contrast, Indian women owned dwellings and tools, and a husband generally moved to live with the family of his wife. In Indian societies, men contributed to the community's well-being and demonstrated their masculinity by success in hunting or, in the Pacific Northwest, by catching fish with nets and harpoons. Because men were frequently away on the hunt, women took responsibility not only for household duties but for most agricultural work as well. Among the Pueblo of the Southwest, however, where there was less hunting than in the East, men were the primary cultivators.

EUROPEAN VIEWS OF THE INDIANS

Europeans tended to view Indians in extreme terms. They were regarded either as "noble savages," gentle, friendly, and superior in some ways to Europeans, or as uncivilized and brutal savages. Giovanni da Verrazano, a Florentine navigator who sailed up and down the eastern coast of North America in 1524, described Indians he encountered as "beautiful of stature and build." (For their part, many Indians, whose diet was probably more nutritious than that of most Europeans, initially found the newcomers weak and ugly.)

Over time, however, negative images of Indians came to overshadow positive ones. Early European descriptions of North American Indians as barbaric centered on three areas—religion, land use, and gender relations. Whatever their country of origin, European newcomers concluded that Indians lacked genuine religion, or in fact worshiped the devil. Their shamans and herb healers were called "witch doctors," their numerous ceremonies and rituals at best a form of superstition, their belief in a world alive with spiritual power a worship of "false gods." Christianity presented

no obstacle to the commercial use of the land, and indeed in some ways encouraged it, since true religion was thought to promote the progress of civilization. Whereas the Indians saw nature as a world of spirits and souls, the Europeans viewed it as a collection of potential commodities, a source of economic opportunity.

Europeans invoked the Indians' distinctive pattern of land use and ideas about property to answer the awkward question raised by a British minister at an early stage of England's colonization: "By what right or warrant can we enter into the land of these Savages, take away their rightful inheritance from them, and plant ourselves in their places?" While the Spanish claimed title to land in America by right of conquest and papal authority, the English, French, and Dutch came to rely on the idea that Indians had not actually "used" the land and thus had no claim to it. Despite the Indians' highly developed agriculture and well-established towns, Europeans frequently described them as nomads without settled communities. The land was thus deemed to be a vacant wilderness ready to be claimed by newcomers who would cultivate and improve it. European settlers believed that mixing one's labor with the earth, which Indians supposedly had failed to do, gave one title to the soil.

In the Indians' gender division of labor and matrilineal family structures, Europeans saw weak men and mistreated women. Hunting and fishing, the primary occupations of Indian men, were considered leisure activities in much of Europe, not "real" work. Because Indian women worked in the fields, Europeans often described them as lacking freedom. They were "not much better than slaves," in the words of one English commentator. Europeans considered Indian men "unmanly"—too weak to exercise authority within their families and restrain their wives' open sexuality, and so lazy that they forced their wives to do most of the productive labor. Throughout North America, Europeans promoted the ideas that women should confine themselves to household work and that men ought to exercise greater authority within their families. Europeans insisted that by subduing the Indians, they were actually bringing them freedom—the freedom of true religion, private property, and the liberation of both men and women from uncivilized and unchristian gender roles.



Indian women planting crops while men break the sod. An engraving by Theodor de Bry, based on a painting by Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues. Morgues was part of an expedition of French Huguenots to Florida in 1564; he escaped when the Spanish destroyed the outpost in the following year.

A seventeenth-century engraving by a French Jesuit priest illustrates many Europeans' view of Indian religion. A demon hovers over an Iroquois longhouse, suggesting that Indians worship the devil.



INDIAN FREEDOM, EUROPEAN FREEDOM

INDIAN FREEDOM

And what of liberty as the native inhabitants of the New World understood it? Many Europeans saw Indians as embodying freedom. The Iroquois, wrote one colonial official, held "such absolute notions of liberty that they allow of no kind of superiority of one over another, and banish all servitude from their territories." But most colonizers quickly concluded that the notion of "freedom" was alien to Indian societies. Early English and French dictionaries of Indian languages contained no entry for "freedom" or *liberté*. Nor, wrote one early trader, did Indians have "words to express despotic power, arbitrary kings, oppressed or obedient subjects."

Indeed, Europeans considered Indians barbaric in part because they did not appear to live under established governments or fixed laws, and had no

respect for authority. "They are born, live, and die in a liberty without restraint," wrote one religious missionary. In a sense, they were *too* free, lacking the order and discipline that Europeans considered the hallmarks of civilization. Even slavery, wrote Richard Eden, an English writer of the mid-sixteenth century, was preferable to the Indians' condition before European contact, which he described as "rather a horrible licentiousness than a liberty." When Giovanni da Verrazano described the Indians as living in "absolute freedom," he did not intend this as a compliment.

The familiar modern understanding of freedom as personal independence, often based on ownership of private property, had little meaning in most Indian societies. But Indians certainly had their own ideas of freedom. While the buying and selling of slaves was unknown, small-scale slavery existed in some Indian societies. So too did the idea of personal liberty as the opposite of being held as a slave. Indians would bitterly resent the efforts of some Europeans to reduce them to slavery.

Although individuals were expected to think for themselves and did not always have to go along with collective decision making, Indian men and women judged one another according to their ability to live up to widely understood ideas of appropriate behavior. Far more important than individual autonomy were kinship ties, the ability to follow one's spiritual values, and the well-being and security of one's community. In Indian culture, group autonomy and self-determination, and the mutual obligations that came with a sense of belonging and connectedness, took precedence over individual freedom. Ironically, the coming of Europeans, armed with their own language of liberty, would make freedom a preoccupation of American Indians, as part and parcel of the very process by which they were reduced to dependence on the colonizers.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

On the eve of colonization, Europeans held numerous ideas of freedom. Some were as old as the city-states of ancient Greece, others arose during the political struggles of the early modern era. Some laid the foundations for modern conceptions of freedom, others are quite unfamiliar today. Freedom was not a single idea but a collection of distinct rights and privileges, many enjoyed by only a small portion of the population.

One conception common throughout Europe understood freedom less as a political or social status than as a moral or spiritual condition. Freedom meant abandoning the life of sin to embrace the teachings of Christ. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is," declares the New Testament, "there is liberty." In this definition, servitude and freedom were mutually reinforcing, not contradictory states, since those who accepted the teachings of Christ simultaneously became "free from sin" and "servants to God."

"Christian liberty" had no connection to later ideas of religious toleration, a notion that scarcely existed anywhere on the eve of colonization. Every nation in Europe had an established church that decreed what forms of religious worship and belief were acceptable. Dissenters faced persecution by the state as well as condemnation by church authorities. Religious uniformity was thought to be essential to public order; the modern idea that a person's religious beliefs and practices are a matter of private choice, not legal obligation, was almost unknown. The religious wars that racked

Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries centered on which religion would predominate in a kingdom or region, not the right of individuals to choose which church in which to worship.

FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY

In its secular form, the equating of liberty with obedience to a higher authority suggested that freedom meant not anarchy but obedience to law. Aristotle had described the law as liberty's "salvation," not its enemy. The identification of freedom with the rule of law did not, however, mean that all subjects of the crown enjoyed the same degree of freedom. Early modern European societies were extremely hierarchical, with marked gradations of social status ranging from the king and hereditary aristocracy down to the urban and rural poor. Inequality was built into virtually every social relationship. The king claimed to rule by the authority of God. Persons of high rank demanded deference from those below them. Less than 5 percent of the population monopolized English economic wealth and political power.

Within families, men exercised authority over their wives and children. According to the widespread legal doctrine known as "coverture," when a woman married she surrendered her legal identity, which became "covered" by that of her husband. She could not own property or sign contracts in her own name, control her wages if she worked, write a separate will, or, except in the rarest of circumstances, go to court seeking a divorce. The husband conducted business and testified in court for the entire family. He had the exclusive right to his wife's "company," including domestic labor and sexual relations.

Everywhere in Europe, family life depended on male dominance and female submission. Indeed, political writers of the sixteenth century explicitly compared the king's authority over his subjects with the husband's over his family. Both were ordained by God. To justify this argument, they referred to a passage in the New Testament: "As the man is the head of the woman, so is Christ the head of the Church." Neither kind of authority could be challenged without threatening the fabric of social order.

LIBERTY AND LIBERTIES

In this hierarchical society, liberty came from knowing one's social place and fulfilling the duties appropriate to one's rank. Most men lacked the freedom that came with economic independence. Property qualifications and other restrictions limited the electorate to a minuscule part of the adult male population. The law required strict obedience of employees, and breaches of labor contracts carried criminal penalties.

European ideas of freedom still bore the imprint of the Middle Ages, when "liberties" meant formal, specific privileges such as self-government, exemption from taxation, or the right to practice a particular trade, granted to individuals or groups by contract, royal decree, or purchase. One legal dictionary defined a liberty as "a privilege . . . by which men may enjoy some benefit beyond the ordinary subject." Only those who enjoyed the "freedom of the city," for example, could engage in certain economic activities.

Numerous modern civil liberties did not exist. The law decreed acceptable forms of religious worship. The government regularly suppressed publications it did not like, and criticism of authority could lead to imprisonment. In England, members of the House of Commons enjoyed freedom of speech during parliamentary sessions, but the right did not extend to ordinary citizens. Personal independence was reserved for a small part of the population, and this was one reason why authorities found "masterless men"—those without regular jobs or otherwise outside the control of their social superiors—so threatening. Nonetheless, every European country that colonized the New World claimed to be spreading freedom—for its own population and for Native Americans.

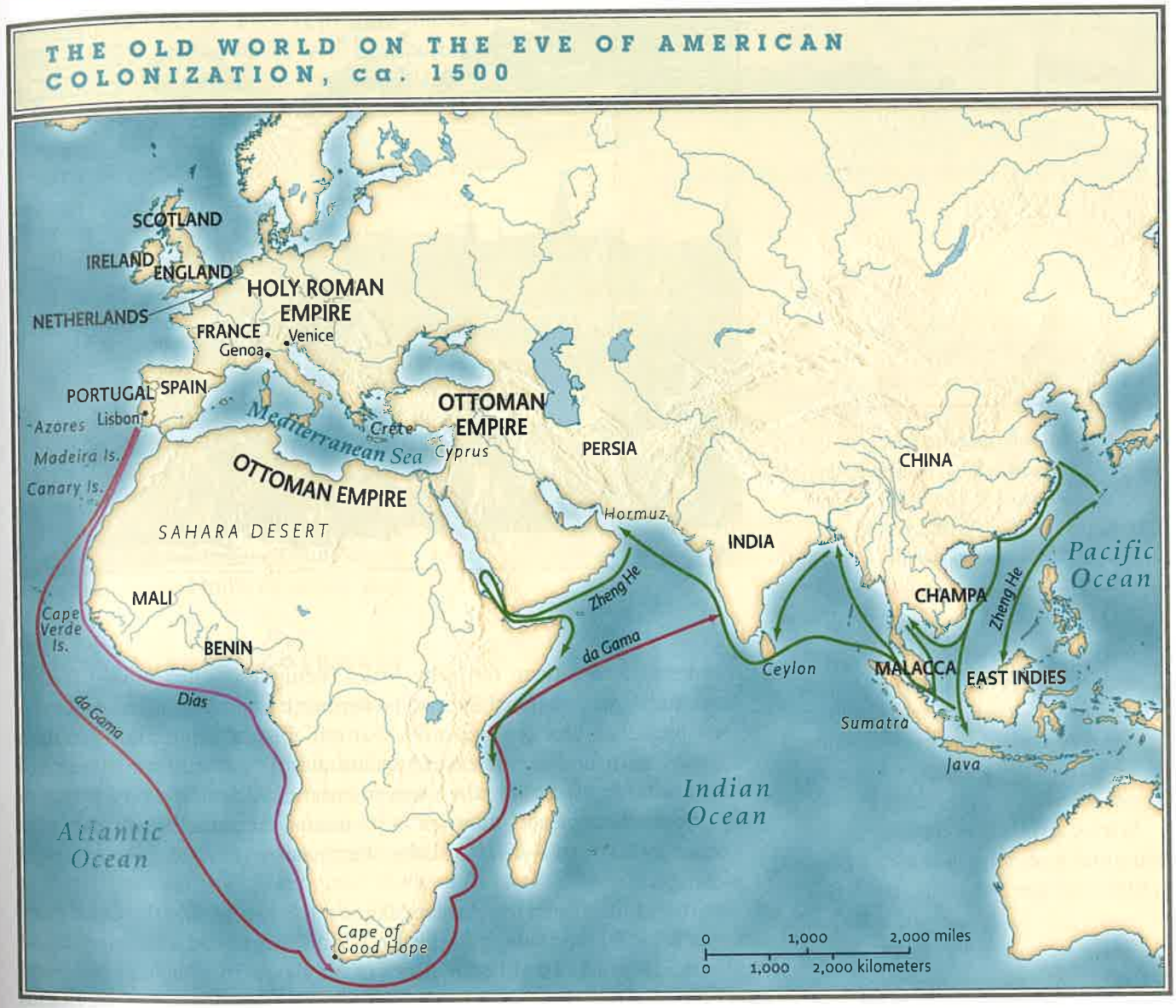
THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

It is fitting that the second epochal event that Adam Smith linked to Columbus's voyage of 1492 was the discovery by Portuguese navigators of a sea route from Europe to Asia around the southern tip of Africa. The European conquest of America began as an offshoot of the quest for a sea route to India, China, and the islands of the East Indies, the source of the silk, tea, spices, porcelain, and other luxury goods on which international trade in the early modern era centered. For centuries, this commerce had been conducted across land, from China and South Asia to the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. Profit and piety—the desire to eliminate Islamic middlemen and win control of the lucrative trade for Christian western Europe—combined to inspire the quest for a direct route to Asia.

CHINESE AND PORTUGUESE NAVIGATION

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, one might have predicted that China would establish the world's first global empire. Between 1405 and 1433, Admiral Zheng He led seven large naval expeditions in the Indian Ocean. The first convoy consisted of 62 ships that were larger than those of any European nation, along with 225 support vessels and more than 25,000 men. On his sixth voyage, Zheng explored the coast of East Africa. China was already the world's most important trading economy, with trade routes dotting the Indian Ocean. Zheng's purpose was not discovery, but to impress other peoples with China's might. Had his ships continued westward, they could easily have reached North and South America. But as a wealthy land-based empire, China did not feel the need for overseas expansion, and after 1433 the government ended support for long-distance maritime expeditions. It fell to Portugal, situated on the western corner of the Iberian Peninsula, far removed from the overland route to Asia, to take advantage of new techniques of sailing and navigation to begin exploring the Atlantic.

The development of the caravel, a ship capable of long-distance travel, and of the compass and quadrant, devices that enabled sailors to determine their location and direction with greater accuracy than in the past, made it possible to sail down the coast of Africa and return to Portugal. Portuguese seafarers initially hoped to locate the source of gold that for centuries had been transported in caravans across the Sahara Desert to North Africa and

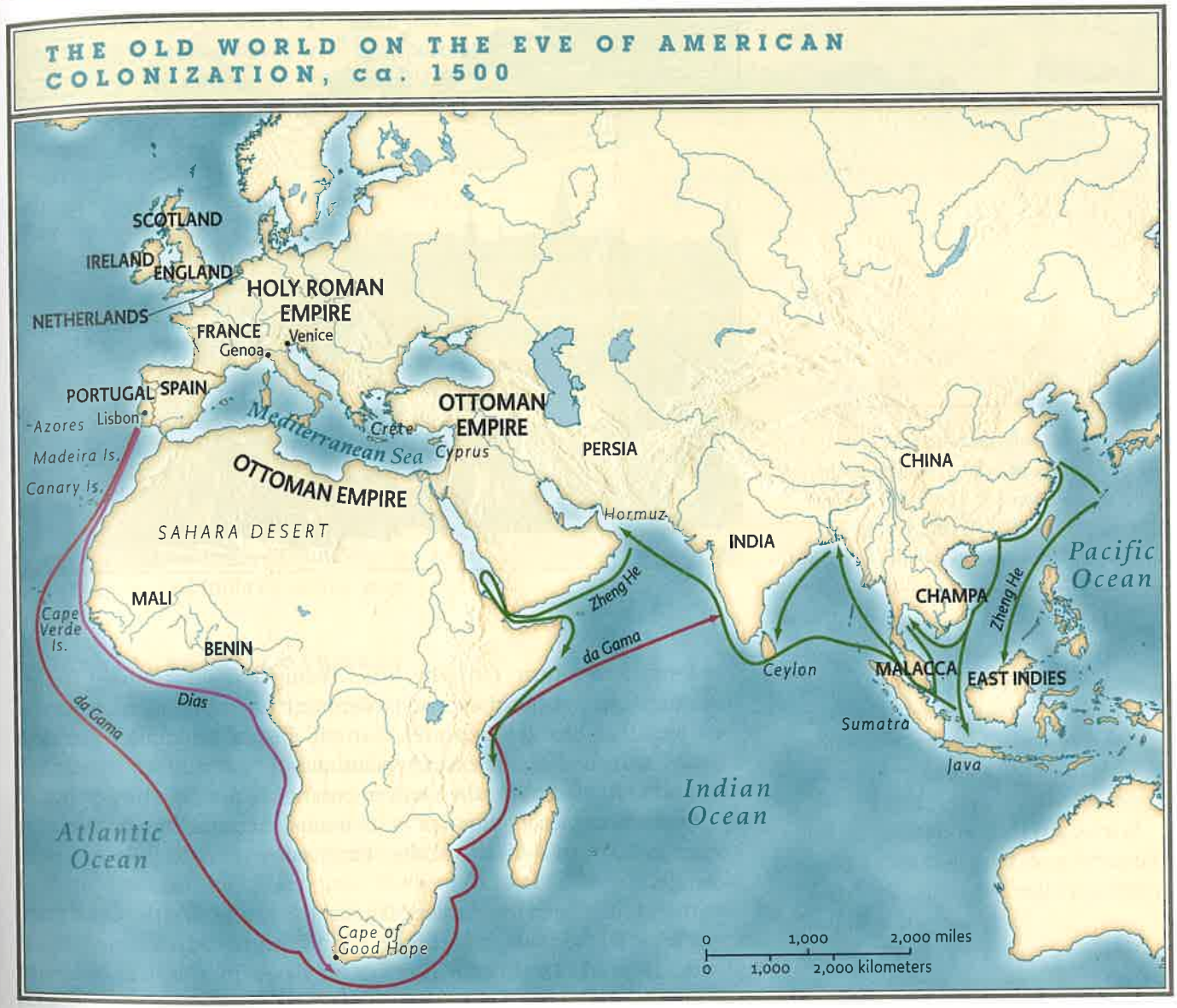


In the fifteenth century, the world known to Europeans was limited to Europe, parts of Africa, and Asia. Explorers from Portugal sought to find a sea route to the East in order to circumvent the Italian city-states and Middle Eastern rulers who controlled the overland trade.

Europe. This commerce, which passed through the African kingdom of Mali on the southern edge of the Sahara, provided Europe with most of its gold. Around 1400, it rivaled trade with the East in economic importance. And like trade with Asia, it was controlled by Muslim merchants.

PORTUGAL AND WEST AFRICA

Today, Africa is the world's poorest continent. In the fifteenth century, it was known for its wealth. Mansa Mūsā, the ruler of Mali, had literally put his realm on the map in 1324 when he led a great pilgrimage to Mecca, distributing so much gold along the way that its price was depressed for a decade. Until 1434, however, no European sailor had seen the coast of Africa below the Sahara, or the forest kingdoms south of Mali that contained the actual gold fields. But in that year, a Portuguese ship brought a sprig of rosemary from West Africa, proof that one could sail beyond



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An engraving, published in 1668, of a procession of the oba (king) outside Benin on the western coast of Africa. The image suggests the extent of the city, a center of government, trade, and the arts.

the desert and return. Little by little, Portuguese ships moved farther down the coast. In 1485, they reached Benin, an imposing city whose craftsmen produced bronze sculptures that still inspire admiration for their artistic beauty and superb casting techniques. The Portuguese established fortified trading posts on the western coast of Africa. The profits reaped by these Portuguese "factories"—so named because merchants were known as "factors"—inspired other European powers to follow in their footsteps.

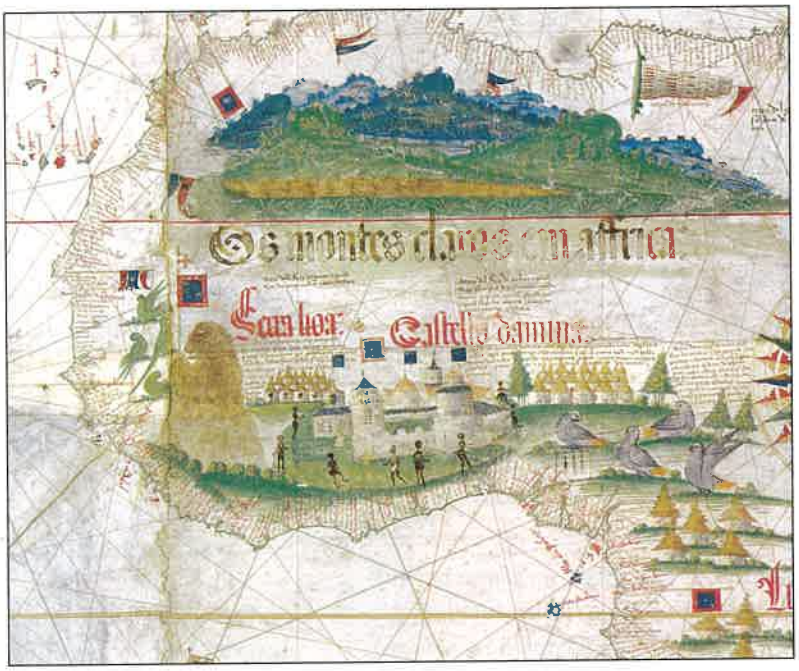
Portugal also began to colonize Madeira, the Azores, and the Canary and Cape Verde Islands, which lie in the Atlantic off the African coast. Sugar plantations worked by Muslim captives and slaves from Slavic areas of eastern Europe had flourished in the Middle Ages on Mediterranean islands like Cyprus, Malta, and Crete. Now, the Portuguese established plantations on the Atlantic islands, eventually replacing the native populations with thousands of slaves shipped from Africa—an ominous precedent for the New World. Soon, the center of sugar production would shift again, to the Western Hemisphere.

FREEDOM AND SLAVERY IN AFRICA

Slavery in Africa long predated the coming of Europeans. Traditionally, African slaves tended to be criminals, debtors, and captives in war. They worked within the households of their owners and had well-defined rights, such as possessing property and marrying free persons. It was not uncommon for African slaves to acquire their freedom. Slavery was one of several forms of labor, not the basis of the economy as it would become in large parts of the New World. The coming of the Portuguese, soon followed by traders from other European nations, accelerated the buying and selling of slaves within Africa. At least 100,000 African slaves were transported to

Spain and Portugal between 1450 and 1500. In 1502, the first African slaves were transported to islands in the Caribbean. The transatlantic slave trade, and its impact on Africa, will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Having reached West Africa, Portuguese mariners pushed their explorations ever southward along the coast. Bartholomeu Dias reached the Cape of Good Hope at the continent's southern tip in 1487. In 1498, Vasco da Gama sailed around it to India, demonstrating the feasibility of a sea route to the East. With a population of under 1 million, Portugal established a vast trading empire, with bases in India, southern China, and Indonesia. It replaced the Italian city-states as the major European commercial partner of the East. But six years before da Gama's voyage, Christopher Columbus had, he believed, discovered a new route to China and India by sailing west.



A detail from the Cantino World Map *depicting the western coast of Africa at the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade. Created by an anonymous Portuguese mapmaker in 1502, the map included Europe, Africa, and a small part of the Western Hemisphere, described as "the islands lately discovered in the parts of India." It was smuggled out of Portugal by Alberto Cantino, a diplomat representing an Italian city-state.*

THE VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS

A seasoned mariner and fearless explorer from Genoa, a major port in northern Italy, Columbus had for years sailed the Mediterranean and North Atlantic, studying ocean currents and wind patterns. Like nearly all navigators of the time, Columbus knew the earth was round. But he drastically underestimated its size. He believed that by sailing westward he could relatively quickly cross the Atlantic and reach Asia. No one in Europe knew that two giant continents lay 3,000 miles to the west. The Vikings, to be sure, had sailed from Greenland to Newfoundland around the year 1000 and established a settlement, Vinland, at a site now known as L'Anse aux Meadows. But this outpost was abandoned after a few years and had been forgotten, except in Norse legends.

Columbus sought financial support throughout Europe for the planned voyage. His brother Bartholomew even visited Henry VII of England to ask for assistance. Most of Columbus's contemporaries, however, knew that he considerably underestimated the earth's size, which helps to explain why he had trouble gaining backers for his expedition. Eventually, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to become sponsors. Their marriage in 1469 had united the warring kingdoms of Aragon and Castile. In 1492, they completed the *reconquista*—the "reconquest" of Spain from the Moors, African Muslims who had occupied part of the Iberian Peninsula for centuries. The capture of Grenada, the Moors' last stronghold, accomplished Spain's territorial unification. To ensure its religious unification, Ferdinand and Isabella ordered all Muslims and Jews to convert to Catholicism or leave the country. Along with the crown, much of Columbus's financing came from bankers and merchants of Spain and the Italian city-states, who desperately desired to circumvent the Muslim stranglehold on eastern trade. Columbus set sail with royal letters of introduction to Asian rulers, authorizing him to negotiate trade agreements.



Columbus's Landfall, *an engraving from* La lettera dell'isole *(Letter from the Islands). This 1493 pamphlet reproduced, in the form of a poem, Columbus's first letter describing his voyage of the previous year. Under the watchful eye of King Ferdinand of Spain, Columbus and his men land on a Caribbean island, while local Indians flee.*

CONTACT

COLUMBUS IN THE NEW WORLD

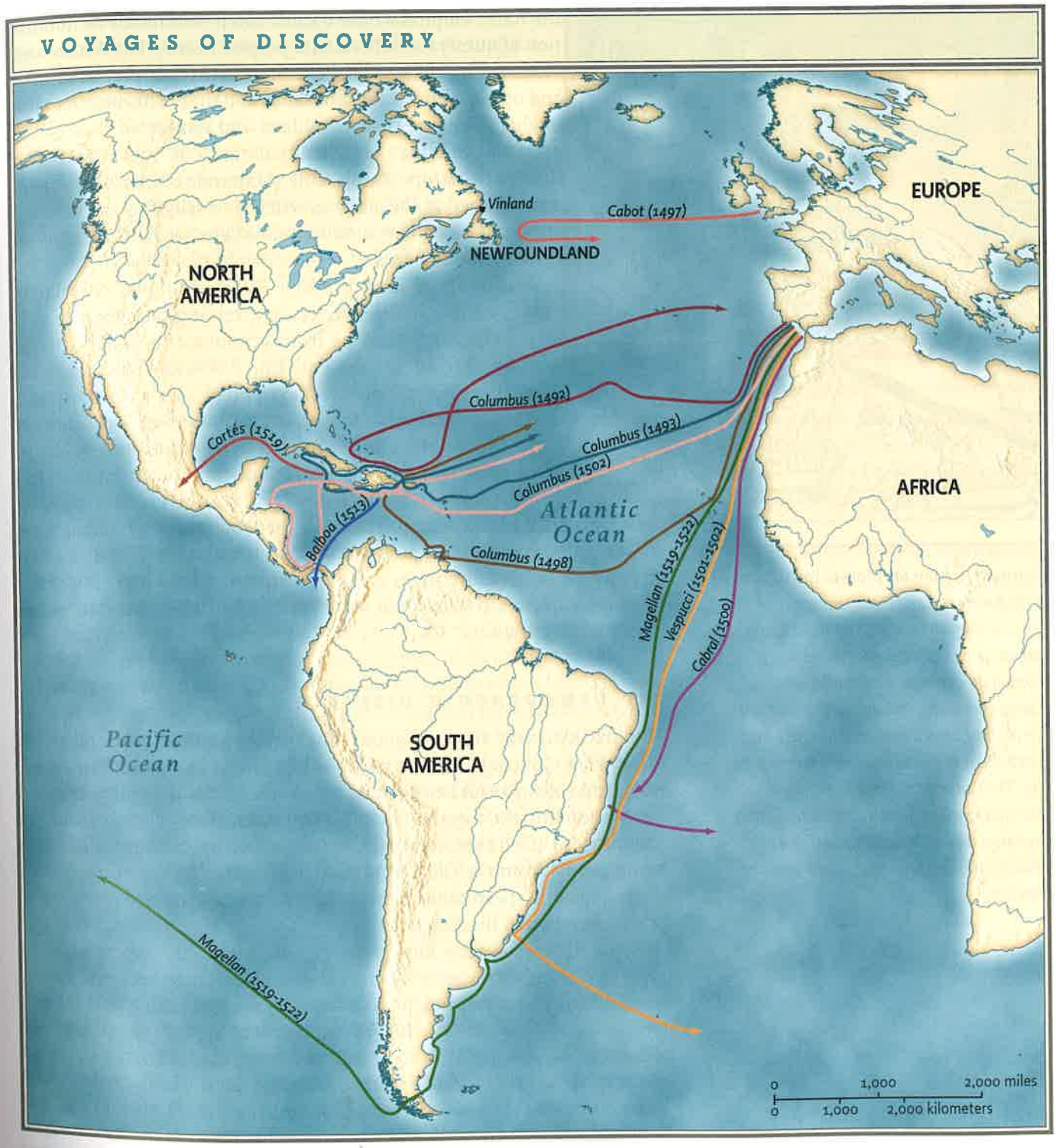
On October 12, 1492, after only thirty-three days of sailing from the Canary Islands, where he had stopped to resupply his three ships, Columbus and his expedition arrived at the Bahamas. His exact landing site remains in dispute, but it was probably San Salvador, a tiny spot of land known today as Watling Island. Soon afterward, he encountered the far larger islands of Hispaniola (today the site of Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and Cuba. When one of his ships ran aground, he abandoned it and left thirty-eight men behind on Hispaniola. But he found room to bring ten inhabitants of the island back to Spain for conversion to Christianity.

In the following year, 1493, European colonization of the New World began. Columbus returned with seventeen ships and more than 1,000 men to explore the area and establish a Spanish outpost. Columbus's settlement on the island of Hispaniola, which he named La Isabella, failed, but in 1502 another Spanish explorer, Nicolás de Ovando, arrived with 2,500 men and established a permanent base, the first center of the Spanish empire in America. Before he died in 1506, Columbus made two more voyages to the New World, in 1498 and 1502. He went to his grave believing that he had discovered a westward route to Asia. The explorations of another Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, along the coast of South America between 1499 and 1502 made plain that a continent entirely unknown to Europeans had been encountered. The New World would come to bear not Columbus's name but one based on Vespucci's—America. Vespucci also realized that the native inhabitants were distinct peoples, not residents of the East Indies as Columbus had believed, although the name "Indians," applied to them by Columbus, has endured to this day.

EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST

The speed with which European exploration proceeded in the aftermath of Columbus's first voyage is remarkable. The technique of printing with movable type, invented in the 1430s by the German craftsman Johannes Gutenberg, had made possible the rapid spread of information in Europe, at least among the educated minority. News of Columbus's achievement traveled quickly. One writer hailed him as "a hero such as the ancients made gods of." Others were inspired to follow in his wake. John Cabot, a Genoese merchant who had settled in England, reached Newfoundland in 1497. Soon, scores of fishing boats from France, Spain, and England were active in the region. Pedro Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal in 1500.

But the Spanish took the lead in exploration and conquest. Inspired by a search for wealth, national glory, and the desire to spread Catholicism, Spanish conquistadores, often accompanied by religious missionaries and carrying flags emblazoned with the sign of the cross, radiated outward from Hispaniola. In 1513, Vasco Núñez de Balboa trekked across the isthmus of Panama and became the first European to gaze upon the Pacific Ocean. Between 1519 and 1522, Ferdinand Magellan led the first expedition



Christopher Columbus's first Atlantic crossing, in 1492, was soon followed by voyages of discovery by English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian explorers.

to sail around the world, encountering Pacific islands and peoples previously unknown to Europe. Magellan was killed in the Philippines, but his fleet completed the journey, correcting once and for all Columbus's erroneous assessment of the earth's size.

The first explorer to encounter a major American civilization was Hernán Cortés, who in 1519 arrived at Tenochtitlán, the nerve center of



Engravings, from the Florentine Codex, *of the forces of Cortés marching on Tenochtitlán and assaulting the city with cannon fire. The difference in military technology between the Spanish and Aztecs is evident. Indians who allied with Cortés had helped him build vessels and carry them in pieces over mountains to the city. The codex (a volume formed by stitching together manuscript pages) was prepared under the supervision of a Spanish missionary in sixteenth-century Mexico.*

the Aztec empire, whose wealth and power rested on domination of numerous subordinate peoples nearby. The Aztecs were violent warriors who engaged in the ritual sacrifice of captives and others, sometimes thousands at a time. This practice thoroughly alienated their neighbors and reinforced the Spanish view of America's native inhabitants as barbarians, even though in Europe at this time thousands of men and women were burned at the stake as witches or religious heretics, and criminals were executed in public spectacles that attracted throngs of onlookers.

With only a few hundred European men, the daring Cortés conquered the Aztec city, relying on superior military technology such as iron weapons and gunpowder, as well as shrewdness in enlisting the aid of some of the Aztecs' subject peoples, who supplied him with thousands of warriors. His most powerful ally, however, was disease—a smallpox epidemic that devastated Aztec society. A few years later, Francisco Pizarro conquered the great Inca kingdom centered in modern-day Peru. Pizarro's tactics were typical of the conquistadores. He captured the Incan king, demanded and received a ransom, and then killed the king anyway. Soon, treasure fleets carrying cargoes of gold and silver from the mines of Mexico and Peru were traversing the Atlantic to enrich the Spanish crown.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC DISASTER

The transatlantic flow of goods and people, sometimes called the Columbian Exchange, altered millions of years of evolution. Plants, animals, and cultures that had evolved independently on separate continents were now thrown together. Products introduced to Europe from the Americas included corn, tomatoes, potatoes, peanuts, tobacco, and cotton, while people from the Old World brought wheat, rice, sugarcane, horses, cattle, pigs, and sheep to the New. But Europeans also carried germs previously unknown in the Americas.

No one knows exactly how many people lived in the Americas at the time of Columbus's voyages—current estimates range between 50 and 90 million. The European population in 1492 (including Russia) was around 90 million, the African population was around 40 million, and about 210 million lived in China and modern-day India. Most inhabitants of the New World lived in Central and South America. In 1492, the Indian population within what are now the borders of the United States was between 2 and 5 million.

Whatever their numbers, the Indian populations suffered a catastrophic decline because of contact with Europeans and their wars, enslavement, and especially diseases like smallpox, influenza, and measles. Never having encountered these diseases, Indians had not developed antibodies to fight them. The result was devastating. Many West Indian islands were all but depopulated. On Hispaniola, the native population, estimated at between 300,000 and 1 million in 1492, had nearly disappeared fifty years later. The

population of Mexico would fall by more than 90 percent in the sixteenth century, from perhaps 20 million to under 2 million. As for the area that now forms the United States, its Native American population fell continuously. It reached its lowest point around 1900, at only 250,000.

Overall, the death of perhaps 80 million people—close to one-fifth of humankind—in the first century and a half after contact with Europeans represents the greatest loss of life in human history. It was disease as much as military prowess and more advanced technology that enabled Europeans to conquer the Americas.



Another scene from the Florentine Codex *depicts the smallpox epidemic that ravaged the Aztec capital after the arrival of Cortés.*

THE SPANISH EMPIRE

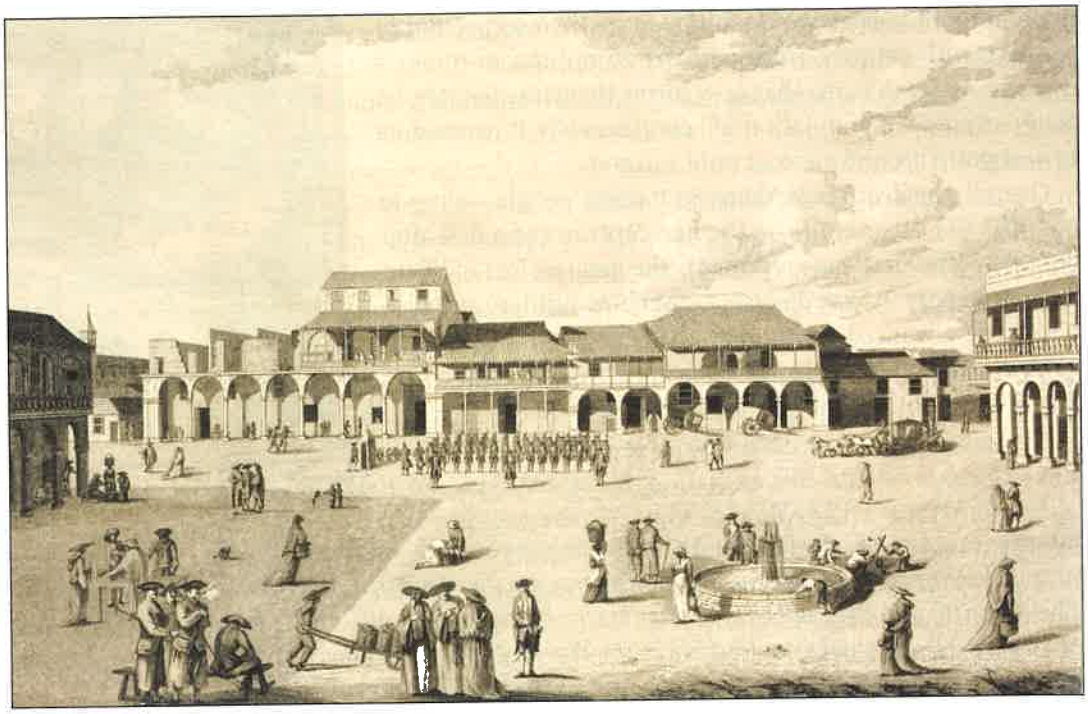
By the middle of the sixteenth century, Spain had established an immense empire that reached from Europe to the Americas and Asia. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans, once barriers separating different parts of the world, now became highways for the exchange of goods and the movement of people. Spanish galleons carried gold and silver from Mexico and Peru eastward to Spain and westward to Manila in the Philippines and on to China.

The Spanish empire included the most populous parts of the New World and the regions richest in natural resources. Stretching from the Andes Mountains of South America through present-day Mexico and the Caribbean and eventually into Florida and the southwestern United States, Spain's empire exceeded in size the Roman empire of the ancient world. Its center in North America was Mexico City, a magnificent capital built on the ruins of the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán that boasted churches, hospitals, monasteries, government buildings, and the New World's first university. Unlike the English and French New World empires, Spanish America was essentially an urban civilization, an "empire of towns." For centuries, its great cities, notably Mexico City, Quito, and Lima, far outshone any urban centers in North America and most of those in Europe.

GOVERNING SPANISH AMERICA

Spain's system of colonial government rivaled that of ancient Rome. Alarmed by the destructiveness of the conquistadores, the Spanish crown replaced them with a more stable system of government headed by lawyers and bureaucrats. At least in theory, the government of Spanish America reflected the absolutism of the newly unified nation at home. Authority originated with the king and flowed downward through the Council of the Indies—the main body in Spain for colonial administration—and then to viceroys in Mexico and Peru and other local officials in America. The Catholic Church also played a significant role in the administration of Spanish colonies, frequently exerting its authority on matters of faith, morals, and treatment of the Indians.

Successive kings kept elected assemblies out of Spain's New World empire. Royal officials were generally appointees from Spain, rather than



An eighteenth-century view of the marketplace in Havana, Cuba, a major center of the Spanish empire in America.

criollos, as persons born in the colonies of European ancestry were called. The imperial state was a real and continuous presence in Spanish America. But as its power declined in Europe beginning in the seventeenth century, the local elite came to enjoy more and more effective authority over colonial affairs. Given the vastness of the empire, local municipal councils, universities, merchant organizations, and craft guilds enjoyed considerable independence.

COLONISTS IN SPANISH AMERICA

Despite the decline in the native population, Spanish America remained populous enough that, with the exception of the West Indies and a few cities, large-scale importations of African slaves were unnecessary. Instead, the Spanish forced tens of thousands of Indians to work in gold and silver mines, which supplied the empire's wealth, and on large-scale farms, or *haciendas*, controlled by Spanish landlords. In Spanish America, unlike other New World empires, Indians performed most of the labor, and although the Spanish introduced livestock, wheat, and sugar, the main agricultural crops were the same ones grown before colonization—corn, beans, and squash.

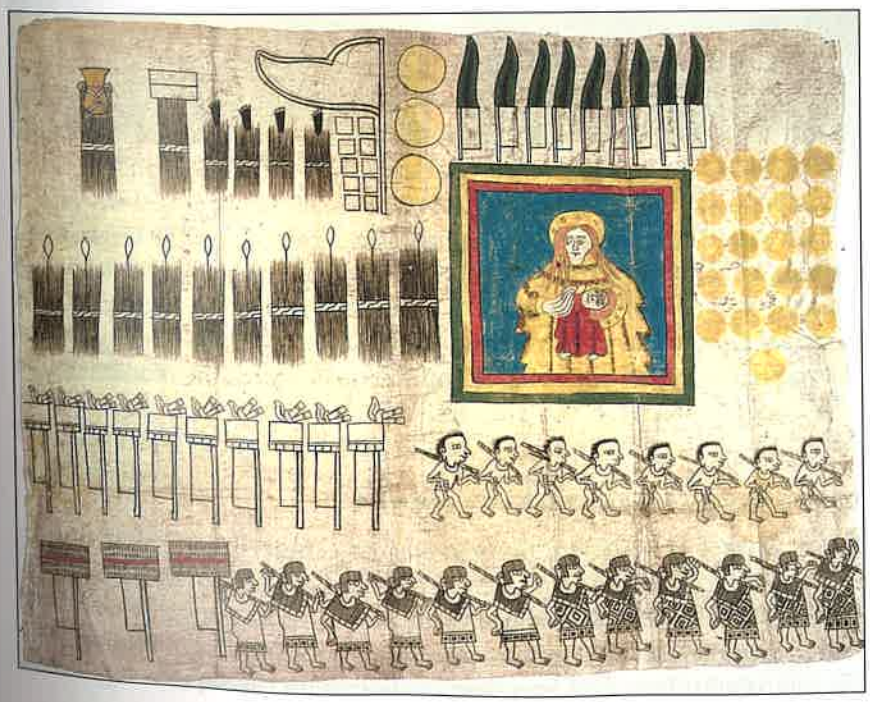
"The maxim of the conqueror must be to settle," said one Spanish official. The government barred non-Spaniards from emigrating to its American domains, as well as non-Christian Spaniards, including Jews and Moors. But the opportunity for social advancement drew numerous colonists from Spain—225,000 in the sixteenth century and a total of 750,000 in the three centuries of Spain's colonial rule. Eventually, a significant number came in families, but at first the large majority were young, single men, many of them laborers, craftsmen, and soldiers. Many also came as government officials, priests, professionals, and minor aristocrats,

all ready to direct the manual work of Indians, since living without having to labor was a sign of noble status. The most successful of these colonists enjoyed lives of luxury similar to those of the upper classes at home.

COLONISTS AND INDIANS

Although persons of European birth, called *peninsulares*, stood atop the social hierarchy, they never constituted more than a tiny proportion of the population of Spanish America. Unlike in the later British empire, Indian inhabitants always outnumbered European colonists and their descendants in Spanish America, and large areas remained effectively under Indian control for many years. Like the later French empire and unlike the English, Spanish authorities granted Indians certain rights within colonial society and looked forward to their eventual assimilation. Indeed, the success of the Spanish empire depended on the nature of the native societies on which it could build. In Florida, the Amazon, and Caribbean islands like Jamaica, which lacked major Indian cities and large native populations, Spanish rule remained tenuous.

The Spanish crown ordered wives of colonists to join them in America and demanded that single men marry. But with the population of Spanish women remaining low, the intermixing of the colonial and Indian peoples soon began. As early as 1514, the Spanish government formally approved of such marriages, partly as a way of bringing Christianity to the native population. By 1600, *mestizos* (persons of mixed origin) made up a large part of the urban population of Spanish America. In the century that followed, *mestizos* repopulated the Valley of Mexico, where disease had decimated the original inhabitants. Over time, Spanish America evolved into a hybrid culture, part Spanish, part Indian, and in some areas part African, but with a single official faith, language, and governmental system. In



An illustration from the Huexotzinco Codex *(1531) depicts Mexicans providing products and services as taxes to the Spanish conquerors. The banner of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus reflects the early spread of Christianity. The people of Huexotzinco, a town near Mexico City, had aided Hernán Cortés in his conquest of the Aztec empire. The codex was part of a successful lawsuit, endorsed by Cortés, in which the Indians challenged excessive taxation by colonial officials.*



Four Racial Groups, *taken from a series of paintings by the eighteenth-century Mexican artist Andrés de Islas, illustrates the racial mixing that took place in the Spanish empire and some of the new vocabulary invented to describe it. Top left: The offspring of a Spaniard and Indian is a* mestizo. *Right: A Spaniard and a* mestiza *produce a* castizo. *Bottom left: The child of an Indian and a* mestiza *is a* coyote. *Right: And the child of an Indian man and African woman is a* chino.

1531, a poor Indian, Juan Diego, reported seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary, looking very much like a dark-skinned Indian, near a Mexican village. Miracles began to be reported, and a shrine was built in her honor. The Virgin of Guadalupe would come to be revered by millions as a symbol of the mixing of Indian and Spanish cultures, and later of the modern nation of Mexico.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR CONQUEST

What allowed one nation, the seventeenth-century Dutch legal thinker Hugo Grotius wondered, to claim possession of lands that "belonged to someone else"? This question rarely occurred to most of the Europeans who crossed the Atlantic in the wake of Columbus's voyage, or to rulers in the Old World. They had immense confidence in the superiority of their

own cultures to those they encountered in America. They expected these societies to abandon their own beliefs and traditions and embrace those of the newcomers. Failure to do so reinforced the conviction that these people were uncivilized "heathens" (non-Christians).

Europeans brought with them not only a long history of using violence to subdue their internal and external foes but also missionary zeal to spread the benefits of their own civilization to others, while reaping the rewards of empire. Spain was no exception. The establishment of its empire in America took place in the wake of Spain's own territorial unification, the rise of a powerful royal government, and the enforcement of religious orthodoxy by the expulsion of Muslims and Jews in 1492. To further legitimize Spain's claim to rule the New World, a year after Columbus's first voyage Pope Alexander VI divided the non-Christian world between Spain and Portugal. The line was subsequently adjusted to give Portugal control of Brazil, with the remainder of the Western Hemisphere falling under Spanish authority.



A banner carried by the forces of Cortés, conqueror of the Aztec kingdom, features an image of the Virgin Mary, illustrating how the desire to spread the Roman Catholic faith provided a justification for conquest.

SPREADING THE FAITH

Not surprisingly, the pope justified this pronouncement by requiring Spain and Portugal to spread Catholicism among the native inhabitants of the Americas. The missionary element of colonization, already familiar because of the long holy war against Islam within Spain itself, was powerfully reinforced in the sixteenth century, when the Protestant Reformation divided the Catholic Church. In 1517, Martin Luther, a German priest, posted his Ninety-Five Theses, which accused the Church of worldliness and corruption. Luther wanted to cleanse the Church of abuses such as the sale of indulgences (official dispensations forgiving sins). He insisted that all believers should read the Bible for themselves, rather than relying on priests to interpret it for them. His call for reform led to the rise of new Protestant churches independent of Rome and plunged Europe into more than a century of religious and political strife.

Spain, the most powerful bastion of orthodox Catholicism, redoubled its efforts to convert the Indians to the "true faith." National glory and religious mission went hand in hand. Convinced of the superiority of Catholicism to all other religions, Spain insisted that the primary goal of colonization was to save the Indians from heathenism and prevent them from falling under the sway of Protestantism. The aim was neither to exterminate nor to remove the Indians, but to transform them into obedient, Christian subjects of the crown. Indeed, lacking the later concept of "race" as an unchanging, inborn set of qualities and abilities, many Spanish writers insisted that Indians could in time be "brought up" to the level of European civilization. Of course, this meant not only the destruction of existing Indian political structures but also a transformation of their economic and spiritual lives.

PIETY AND PROFIT

To the Spanish colonizers, the large native populations of the Americas were not only souls to be saved but also a labor force to be organized to extract gold and silver that would enrich the mother country. The tension



A benign view of Spanish colonization. This engraving from a 1621 book depicts Spanish missionaries bringing Christianity to New World natives while priests do construction work. A fortified colonial town is visible in the background.

between these two outlooks would mark Spanish rule in America for three centuries. On the one hand, Spanish rulers proclaimed the goal of bringing true "freedom" to the Indians by instructing them in Christianity. Even enslaving the natives was justified as a means of liberating them from their own backwardness and savagery and enabling them to become part of Christian civilization. Religious orders established missions throughout the empire, and over time millions of Indians were converted to Catholicism.

On the other hand, Spanish rule, especially in its initial period, witnessed a disastrous fall in Indian population, not only because of epidemics but also because of the brutal conditions of labor to which Indians were subjected. The conquistadores and subsequent governors, who required conquered peoples to acknowledge the Catholic Church and provide gold and silver, saw no contradiction between serving God and enriching themselves. Others, however, did.

LAS CASAS'S COMPLAINT

As early as 1537, Pope Paul III, who hoped to see Indians become devout subjects of Catholic monarchs, outlawed their enslavement (an edict never extended to apply to Africans). His decree declared Indians to be "truly men," who must not be "treated as dumb beasts." Fifteen years later, the Dominican priest Bartolomé de Las Casas published an account of the decimation of the Indian population with the compelling title *A Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies.* Las Casas's father had sailed on Columbus's second voyage, and he himself had participated in the conquest of Cuba. But in 1514 Las Casas freed his own Indian slaves and began to preach against the injustices of Spanish rule.

Las Casas's writings denounced Spain for causing the death of millions of innocent people. "It has been Spain's practice," he reported, "in every land they have discovered to stage a massacre" in order to make the inhabitants "tremble with fear." He narrated in shocking detail the "strange cruelties" carried out by "the Christians," including the burning alive of men,

women, and children and the imposition of forced labor. The Indians, he wrote, had been "totally deprived of their freedom and were put in the harshest, fiercest, most terrible servitude and captivity." Long before the idea was common, Las Casas insisted that Indians were rational beings, not barbarians, and that Spain had no grounds on which to deprive them of their lands and liberty. "The entire human race is one," he proclaimed, and while he continued to believe that Spain had a right to rule in America, largely on religious grounds, he called for Indians to enjoy "all guarantees of liberty and justice" from the moment they became subjects of Spain. "Nothing is certainly more precious in human affairs, nothing more esteemed," he wrote, "than freedom." Yet Las Casas also suggested that importing slaves from Africa would help to protect the Indians from exploitation.



Spanish conquistadores murdering Indians at Cuzco, in what is now known as Peru. The Dutch-born engraver Theodor de Bry and his sons illustrated ten volumes about New World exploration published between 1590 and 1618. A Protestant, de Bry created vivid images that helped to spread the Black Legend of Spain as a uniquely cruel colonizer.

REFORMING THE EMPIRE

Like other Spaniards, Las Casas believed that the main justification for empire was converting the Indians to Christianity. Spanish cruelty, he feared, undermined this effort. Largely because of Las Casas's efforts, Spain in 1542 promulgated the New Laws, commanding that Indians no longer be enslaved. Not everyone welcomed the change. Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of the conqueror of Peru, organized an unsuccessful rebellion in protest. In 1550, Spain abolished the *encomienda* system, under which the first settlers had been granted authority over conquered Indian lands with the right to extract forced labor from the native inhabitants. In its place, the government established the *repartimiento* system, whereby residents of Indian villages remained legally free and entitled to wages, but were still required to perform a fixed amount of labor each year. The Indians were not slaves—they had access to land, were paid wages, and could not be bought and sold. But since the requirement that they work for the Spanish remained the essence of the system, it still allowed for many abuses by Spanish landlords and by priests who required Indians to toil on mission lands as part of the conversion process. Indeed, a long struggle ensued among settlers, missionaries, and colonial authorities for control of Indian labor. Each party proclaimed itself a humane overlord and denounced the others for exploiting the native population.

By the end of the sixteenth century, work in the Spanish empire consisted largely of forced wage labor by native inhabitants and slave labor by Africans on the West Indian islands and a few parts of the mainland. Like all empires, Spain's always remained highly exploitative. Over time, the initial brutal treatment of Indians improved somewhat. But Las Casas's writings, translated almost immediately into several European languages, contributed to the spread of the Black Legend—the image of Spain as a uniquely brutal and exploitative colonizer. This would provide a potent justification for other European powers to challenge Spain's predominance in the New World.



A 1791 view of Mission San Carlos in what is now California depicts the Indian community and a corral in the background, while missionaries and Spanish explorers greet each other in the foreground.

EXPLORING NORTH AMERICA

While the Spanish empire centered on Mexico, Peru, and the West Indies, the hope of finding a new kingdom of gold soon led Spanish explorers into territory that now forms part of the United States. Juan Ponce de León, who had conquered Puerto Rico, entered Florida in 1513 in search of slaves, wealth, and a fabled fountain of youth, only to be repelled by local Indians. In 1528, another expedition seeking plunder in Florida embarked from Spain, but after a series of storms only a handful of men reached the Gulf Coast. For seven years they traversed the Southwest until a few survivors arrived in Mexico in 1536. One, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, wrote an account of his adventures, including tales told by native inhabitants (possibly to persuade the newcomers to move on) of the seven golden cities of Cibola, somewhere over the horizon.

In the late 1530s and 1540s, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo explored the Pacific coast as far north as present-day Oregon, and expeditions led by Hernando de Soto, Cabeza de Vaca, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, and others marched through the Gulf region and the Southwest, fruitlessly searching for another Mexico or Peru. Coronado explored much of the interior of the continent, reaching as far north as the Great Plains, and became the first European to encounter the immense herds of buffalo that roamed the West. These expeditions, really mobile communities with hundreds of adventurers, priests, potential settlers, slaves, and livestock, spread disease and devastation among Indian communities. De Soto's was particularly brutal. His men tortured, raped, and enslaved countless Indians and transmitted deadly diseases. When Europeans in the seventeenth century returned to colonize the area traversed by de Soto's party, little remained of the societies he had encountered. Where large towns had existed, explorers found only herds of grazing bison.

SPANISH FLORIDA

Nonetheless, these explorations established Spain's claim to a large part of what is now the American South and Southwest. The first region to be colonized within the present-day United States was Florida. Spain hoped to establish a military base there to combat pirates who threatened the treasure fleet that each year sailed from Havana for Europe loaded with gold and silver from Mexico and Peru. Spain also wanted to forestall French incursions in the area. In 1565, Philip II of Spain authorized the nobleman Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to lead a colonizing expedition to Florida. Menéndez destroyed a small outpost at Fort Caroline, which a group of Huguenots (French Protestants) had established in 1562 near present-day Jacksonville. Menéndez and his men massacred the 500 colonists and went on to establish Spanish forts on St. Simons Island, Georgia, and at St. Augustine, Florida. The latter remains the oldest site in the United States continuously inhabited by European settlers and their descendants.

Spanish expeditions soon established forts from present-day Miami into South Carolina, and Spanish religious missionaries set up outposts in Florida and on the Sea Islands, hoping to convert the local Indians to Christianity. Most of the forts fell into disuse, and many of the missions were destroyed by local Guale Indians in an uprising that began in 1597. The Indians explained their revolt by noting that the missionaries had sought to eliminate "our dances, banquets, feasts, celebrations, and wars. . . . They persecute our old people by calling them witches." The missions were soon rebuilt, only to be devastated again a century later, this time by English and Indian forces from South Carolina. In general, Florida failed to attract settlers, remaining an isolated military settlement, in effect a fortified outpost of Cuba. As late as 1763, Spanish Florida had only 4,000 inhabitants of European descent.

Table 1.1 ESTIMATED REGIONAL POPULATIONS: THE AMERICAS, ca. 1500

North America	3,800,000
Mexico	17,200,000
Central America	5,625,000
Hispaniola	1,000,000
The Caribbean	3,000,000
The Andes	15,700,000
South America	8,620,000
Total	54,945,000

SPAIN IN THE SOUTHWEST

Spain took even longer to begin the colonization of the American Southwest. Although de Soto and others made incursions into the area in the sixteenth century, their explorations were widely considered failures, since they had discovered neither gold nor advanced civilizations whose populations could be put to work for the Spanish empire. Spain then neglected the area for another half-century. It was not until 1598 that Juan de Oñate led a group of 400 soldiers, colonists, and missionaries north from Mexico to establish a permanent settlement. While searching for fabled deposits of precious metals, Oñate's nephew and fourteen soldiers were killed by inhabitants of Acoma, the "sky city" located on a high bluff in present-day New Mexico.

Oñate decided to teach the local Indians a lesson. After a two-day siege, his forces scaled the seemingly impregnable heights and destroyed Acoma, killing more than 800 of its 1,500 or so inhabitants, including 300 women. Of the 600 Indians captured, the women and children were consigned to servitude in Spanish families, while adult men were punished by the cutting off of one foot. Not until the 1640s was Acoma, which had been

Table 1.2 ESTIMATED REGIONAL POPULATIONS: THE WORLD, ca. 1500

India	110,000,000
China	103,000,000
Other Asia	55,400,000
Western Europe	57,200,000
The Americas	54,000,000
Russia and Eastern Europe	34,000,000
Sub-Saharan Africa	38,300,000
Japan	15,400,000
World Total	467,300,000

By around 1600, New Spain had become a vast empire stretching from the modern-day American Southwest through Mexico, Central America, and into the former Inca kingdom in South America. This map shows early Spanish exploration in the present-day United States.

SPANISH CONQUESTS AND EXPLORATIONS IN THE NEW WORLD, 1500–1600



inhabited since the thirteenth century, rebuilt. Oñate's message was plain—any Indians who resisted Spanish authority would be crushed. But his method of rule, coupled with his failure to locate gold, alarmed authorities in Mexico City. In 1606, Oñate was ordered home and punished for his treatment of New Mexico's Indians. In 1610, Spain established the capital of New Mexico at Santa Fe, the first permanent European settlement in the Southwest.

THE PUEBLO REVOLT

In 1680, New Mexico's small and vulnerable colonist population numbered less than 3,000. Most were *mestizos* (persons of mixed Spanish and Indian origin), since few European settlers came to the region. Relations between the Pueblo Indians and colonial authorities had deteriorated throughout the seventeenth century, as governors, settlers, and missionaries sought to exploit the labor of an Indian population that declined from about 60,000 in 1600 to some 17,000 eighty years later. Franciscan friars worked relentlessly to convert Indians to Catholicism, often using intimidation and violence. Their spiritual dedication and personal courage impressed many Indians, however, as did the European goods and technologies they introduced. Some natives welcomed them as a counterbalance to the depredations of soldiers and settlers and accepted baptism, even as they continued to practice their old religion, adding Jesus, Mary, and the Catholic saints to their already rich spiritual pantheon. But as the Inquisition—the persecution of non-Catholics—became more and more intense in Spain, so did the friars' efforts to stamp out traditional religious ceremonies in New Mexico. By burning Indian idols, masks, and other sacred objects, the missionaries alienated far more Indians than they converted. A prolonged drought that began around 1660 and the authorities' inability to protect the villages and missions from attacks by marauding Navajo and Apache Indians added to local discontent.

The Pueblo peoples had long been divided among themselves. The Spanish assumed that the Indians could never unite against the colonizers. In August 1680, they were proven wrong.

Little is known about the life of Popé, who became the main organizer of an uprising that aimed to drive the Spanish from the colony and restore the Indians' traditional autonomy. A religious leader born around 1630 in San Juan Pueblo in present-day New Mexico, Popé first appears in the historical record in 1675, when he was one of forty-seven Pueblo Indians arrested for "sorcery"—that is, practicing their traditional religion. Four of the prisoners were hanged, and the rest, including Popé, were brought to Santa Fe to be publicly whipped. After this humiliation, Popé returned home and began holding secret meetings in Pueblo communities.

Under Popé's leadership, New Mexico's Indians joined in a coordinated uprising. Ironically, because the Pueblos spoke six different languages, Spanish became the revolt's "lingua franca" (a common means of communication among persons of different linguistic backgrounds). Some 2,000 warriors destroyed isolated farms and missions, killing 400 colonists, including 21 Franciscan missionaries. They then surrounded Santa Fe. The Spanish resisted fiercely but eventually had no choice but to abandon the town. Most of the Spanish survivors, accompanied by several hundred Christian Indians, made their way south out of New Mexico. Within a few weeks, a century of colonization



Acoma, the "sky city," as it appeared in 1904.



VOICES OF FREEDOM

From Bartolomé de Las Casas, *History of the Indies* (1528)

Las Casas was the Dominican priest who condemned the treatment of Indians in the Spanish empire. His widely disseminated *History of the Indies* helped to establish the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty.

The Indians [of Hispaniola] were totally deprived of their freedom and were put in the harshest, fiercest, most horrible servitude and captivity which no one who has not seen it can understand. Even beasts enjoy more freedom when they are allowed to graze in the fields. But our Spaniards gave no such opportunity to Indians and truly considered them perpetual slaves, since the Indians had not the free will to dispose of their persons but instead were disposed of according to Spanish greed and cruelty, not as men in captivity but as beasts tied to a rope to prevent free movement. When they were allowed to go home, they often found it deserted and had no other recourse than to go out into the woods to find food and to die. When they fell ill, which was very frequently because they are a delicate people unaccustomed to such work, the Spaniards did not believe them and pitilessly called them lazy dogs and kicked and beat them; and when illness was apparent they sent them home as useless. . . . They would go then, falling into the first stream and dying there in desperation; others would hold on longer but very few ever made it home. I sometimes came upon dead bodies on my way, and upon others who were gasping and moaning in their death agony, repeating "Hungry, hungry." And this was the freedom, the good treatment and the Christianity the Indians received.

About eight years passed under [Spanish rule] and this disorder had time to grow; no one gave it a thought and the multitude of people who originally lived on the island . . . was consumed at such a rate that in these eight years 90 per cent had perished. From here this sweeping plague went to San Juan, Jamaica, Cuba and the continent, spreading destruction over the whole hemisphere.

From "Declaration of Josephe" (December 19, 1681)

Josephe was a Spanish-speaking Indian questioned by a royal attorney in Mexico City investigating the Pueblo Revolt. The revolt of the Indian population, in 1680, temporarily drove Spanish settlers from present-day New Mexico.

Asked what causes or motives the said Indian rebels had for renouncing the law of God and obedience to his Majesty, and for committing so many of crimes, [he answered] the causes they have were alleged ill treatment and injuries received from [Spanish authorities], because they beat them, took away what they had, and made them work without pay. Thus he replies.

Asked if he has learned if it has come to his notice during the time that he has been here the reason why the apostates burned the images, churches, and things pertaining to divine worship, making a mockery and a trophy of them, killing the priests and doing the other things they did, he said that he knows and had heard it generally stated that while they were besieging the villa the rebellious traitors burned the church and shouted in loud voices, "Now the God of the Spaniards, who was their father, is dead, and Santa Maria, who was their mother, and the saints, who were pieces of rotten wood," saying that only their own god lived. Thus they ordered all the temples and images, crosses and rosaries burned, and their function being over, they all went to bathe in the rivers, saying that they thereby washed away the water of baptism. For their churches, they placed on the four sides and in the center of the plaza some small circular enclosures of stone where they went to offer flour, feathers, and the seed of maguey [a local plant], maize, and tobacco, and performed other superstitious rites, giving the children to understand that they must all do this in the future. The captains and the chiefs ordered that the names of Jesus and Mary should nowhere be uttered. . . . He has seen many houses of idolatry which they have built, dancing the dance of the cachina [part of a traditional Indian religious ceremony], which this declarant has also danced. Thus he replies to the question.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Las Casas, after describing the ill treatment of Indians, write, "And this was the freedom, the good treatment and the Christianity the Indians received"?
2. What role did religion play in the Pueblo Revolt?
3. What ideas of freedom are apparent in the two documents?



St. Anthony and the Infant Jesus, *painted on a tanned buffalo hide by a Franciscan priest in New Mexico in the early eighteenth century. This was not long after the Spanish reconquered the area, from which they had been driven by the Pueblo Revolt.*

in the area had been destroyed. From their own point of view, the Pueblo Indians had triumphantly reestablished the freedom lost through Spanish conquest.

The Pueblo Revolt was the most complete victory for Native Americans over Europeans and the only wholesale expulsion of settlers in the history of North America. According to a royal attorney who interviewed the Spanish survivors in Mexico City, the revolt arose from the "many oppressions" the Indians had suffered. The victorious Pueblos turned with a vengeance on all symbols of European culture, uprooting fruit trees, destroying cattle, burning churches and images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, and wading into rivers to wash away their Catholic baptisms. They rebuilt their places of worship, called "kivas," and resumed sacred dances the friars had banned. "The God of the Spaniards," they shouted, "is dead."

Cooperation among the Pueblo peoples, however, soon evaporated. By the end of the 1680s, warfare had broken out among several villages, even as Apache and Navajo raids continued. Popé died around 1690. In 1692, the Spanish launched an invasion that reconquered New Mexico. Some communities welcomed them back as a source of military protection. But Spain had learned a lesson. In the eighteenth century, colonial authorities adopted a more tolerant attitude toward traditional religious practices and made fewer demands on Indian labor.

THE FRENCH AND DUTCH EMPIRES

If the Black Legend inspired a sense of superiority among Spain's European rivals, the precious metals that poured from the New World into the Spanish treasury aroused the desire to try to match Spain's success. The establishment of Spain's American empire transformed the balance of power in the world economy. The Atlantic replaced the overland route to Asia as the major axis of global trade. During the seventeenth century, the French, Dutch, and English established colonies in North America. England's mainland colonies, to be discussed in the next chapter, consisted of agricultural settlements with growing populations whose hunger for land produced incessant conflict with native peoples. New France and New Netherland were primarily commercial ventures that never attracted large numbers of colonists. More dependent on Indians as trading partners and military allies, these French and Dutch settlements allowed Native Americans greater freedom than the English.

FRENCH COLONIZATION

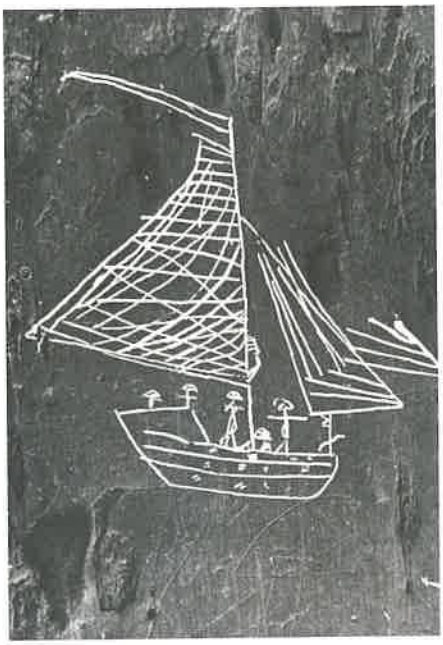
The first of Spain's major European rivals to embark on New World explorations was France. The French initially aimed to find gold and to locate a Northwest Passage—a sea route connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific. But the hopes of the early French explorers were soon disappointed, and North America came to seem little more than a barrier to be crossed, not a promising site for settlement or exploitation. For most of the sixteenth century, only explorers, fishermen, pirates preying on Spanish shipping farther south, and, as time went on, fur traders visited the eastern coast of North

America. French efforts to establish settlements in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia failed, beset by native resistance and inadequate planning and financing. Not until the seventeenth century would France, as well as England and the Netherlands, establish permanent settlements in North America.

The explorer Samuel de Champlain, sponsored by a French fur-trading company, founded Quebec in 1608. In 1673, the Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette and the fur trader Louis Joliet located the Mississippi River, and by 1681 René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, had descended to the Gulf of Mexico, claiming the entire Mississippi River valley for France. New France eventually formed a giant arc along the St. Lawrence, Mississippi, and Ohio rivers.

Until 1663, when the population of European origin was fewer than 3,000, French Canada was ruled by the Company of New France through a governor-general appointed in Paris. There was no representative assembly. In that year, the French government established a new company. It granted land along the St. Lawrence River in *seigneuries* to well-connected nobles and army officers who would transport colonists to take their place in a feudal society. But most of the *engagés*, or indentured servants, returned home after their contracts expired. More than 80 percent of the migrants were men. Apart from nuns, fewer than 1,800 women (compared with more than 12,000 men) emigrated to French Canada in the seventeenth century. And during the entire colonial period, only about 250 complete families did so.

By 1700, the number of white inhabitants of New France had risen to only 19,000. With a far larger population than England, France sent many fewer emigrants to the Western Hemisphere. The government at home feared that significant emigration would undermine France's role as a European great power and might compromise its effort to establish trade and good relations with the Indians. Unfavorable reports about America circulated widely in France. Canada was widely depicted as an icebox, a land of savage Indians, a dumping ground for criminals. Most French who left their homes during these years preferred to settle in the Netherlands, Spain, or the West Indies. The revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes, which had extended religious toleration to French Protestants, led well over 100,000 Huguenots to flee their country. But they were not welcome in New France, which the crown desired to remain an outpost of Catholicism.



A Native American in present-day Nova Scotia carved this image of a European ship on a rock. Long before explorers and colonists descended on the area, its residents were familiar with Europeans. One chief, Membertou, acquired a French ship and traded with fishermen out at sea.

NEW FRANCE AND THE INDIANS

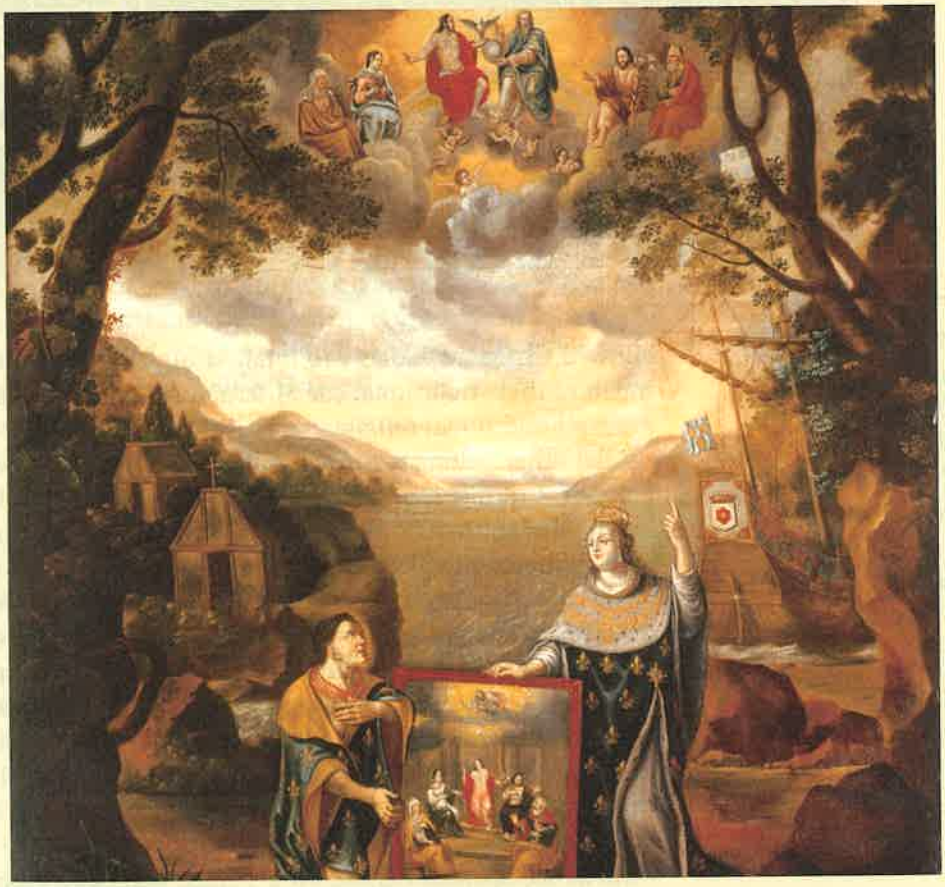
With its small white population and emphasis on the fur trade rather than agricultural settlement, the viability of New France depended on friendly relations with local Indians. The French prided themselves on adopting a more humane policy than their imperial rivals. "Only our nation," declared one French writer, "knows the secret of winning the Indians' affection." Lacking the voracious appetite for land of the English colonies and relying on Indians to supply furs to trading posts, the French worked out a complex series of military, commercial, and diplomatic connections, the most enduring alliances between Indians and settlers in colonial North America. They neither appropriated substantial amounts



New France and New Netherland.

of Indian land, like the English, nor conquered native inhabitants militarily and set them to forced labor, like the Spanish. Samuel de Champlain, the intrepid explorer who dominated the early history of New France, insisted on religious toleration for all Christians and denied that Native Americans were intellectually or culturally inferior to Europeans—two positions that were unusual for his time. Although he occasionally engaged in wars with local Indians, he dreamed of creating a colony based on mutual respect between diverse peoples. The Jesuits, a missionary religious order, did seek, with some success, to convert Indians to Catholicism. But unlike Spanish missionaries in early New Mexico, they

VISIONS OF FREEDOM



France Bringing the Faith to the Indians of New France. *European nations justified colonization, in part, with the argument that they were bringing Christianity—without which true freedom was impossible—to Native Americans. In this painting from the 1670s, attributed to a Franciscan missionary, an Indian kneels before a female representation of France. Both hold a painting of the Trinity. The figure of France points skyward, where God hands the earth to Christ.*

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does the painting suggest that Indians freely accepted Catholicism and French rule?

2. How do the houses, ship, and dress of the Indian reinforce the painting's message?



This engraving, which appears in Samuel de Champlain's 1613 account of his voyages, is the only likeness of the explorer from his own time. Champlain, wearing European armor and brandishing an arquebus (an advanced weapon of the period), stands at the center of this pitched battle between his Indian allies and hostile Iroquois.

allowed Christian Indians to retain a high degree of independence and much of their traditional social structure, and they did not seek to suppress all traditional religious practices.

Like other colonists throughout North America, however, the French brought striking changes in Indian life. Contact with Europeans was inevitably followed by the spread of disease. Participation in the fur trade drew natives into the burgeoning Atlantic economy, introducing new goods and transforming hunting from a search for food into a quest for marketable commodities. Indians were soon swept into the rivalries among European empires, and Europeans into conflicts among Indians. As early as 1615, the Huron of present-day southern Ontario and upper New York State forged a trading alliance with the French and many converted to Catholicism. In the 1640s, however, after being severely weakened by a smallpox epidemic, the tribe was virtually destroyed in a series of attacks by Iroquois armed by the Dutch.

As in the Spanish empire, New France witnessed considerable cultural exchange and intermixing between colonial and native populations. On the "middle ground" of the upper Great Lakes region in French America, Indians and whites encountered each other for many years on a basis of relative equality. And *métis*, or children of marriages between Indian women and French traders and officials, became guides, traders, and interpreters. Like the Spanish, the French seemed willing to accept Indians as part of colonial society. They encouraged Indians to adopt the European division of labor between men and women, and to speak French. Indians who converted to Catholicism were promised full citizenship. In fact, however, it was far rarer for natives to adopt French ways than for French settlers to become attracted to the "free" life of the Indians. "It happens more commonly," one official complained, "that a Frenchman becomes savage than a savage becomes a Frenchman."

THE DUTCH EMPIRE

In 1609, Henry Hudson, an Englishman employed by the Dutch East India Company, sailed into New York Harbor searching for a Northwest Passage to Asia. Hudson and his crew became the first Europeans to sail up the river that now bears his name. Hudson did not find a route to Asia, but he did encounter abundant fur-bearing animals and Native Americans more than willing to trade furs for European goods. He claimed the area for the Netherlands, and his voyage planted the seeds for what would eventually become a great metropolis, New York City. By 1614, Dutch traders had established an outpost at Fort Orange, near present-day Albany. Ten years later, the Dutch West India Company, which had been awarded a monopoly of Dutch trade with America, settled colonists on Manhattan Island.

These ventures formed one small part in the rise of the Dutch overseas empire. In the early seventeenth century, the Netherlands dominated international commerce, and Amsterdam was Europe's foremost shipping and banking center. The small nation had entered a golden age of rapidly accumulating wealth and stunning achievements in painting, philosophy, and the sciences. The Dutch invented the joint stock company, a way of pooling financial resources and sharing the risk of maritime voyages, which proved central to the development of modern capitalism. With a population of only 2 million, the Netherlands established a far-flung empire that reached from Indonesia to South Africa and the Caribbean and temporarily wrested control of Brazil from Portugal.

DUTCH FREEDOM

The Dutch prided themselves on their devotion to liberty. Indeed, in the early seventeenth century they enjoyed two freedoms not recognized elsewhere in Europe—freedom of the press and broad religious toleration. Even though there was an established church, the Dutch Reformed, individuals could hold whatever religious beliefs they wished. Amsterdam had become a haven for persecuted Protestants from all over Europe, including French Huguenots, German Calvinists, and those, like the Pilgrims, who desired to separate from the Church of England. Jews, especially those fleeing from Spain, also found refuge there. Other emigrants came to the Netherlands in the hope of sharing in the country's prosperity. During the seventeenth century, the nation attracted about half a million migrants from elsewhere in Europe. Many of these newcomers helped to populate the Dutch overseas empire.

FREEDOM IN NEW NETHERLAND

Despite the Dutch reputation for cherishing freedom, New Netherland was hardly governed democratically. New Amsterdam, the main population center, was essentially a fortified military outpost controlled by appointees of the West India Company. Although the governor called on prominent citizens for advice from time to time, neither an elected assembly nor a town council, the basic unit of government at home, was established.



A view of New Amsterdam from 1651 illustrates both the tiny size of the outpost but also its status as a center of international trade between Europeans and Native Americans.

In other ways, however, the colonists enjoyed more liberty, especially in religious matters, than their counterparts elsewhere in North America. Even their slaves possessed rights. The Dutch dominated the Atlantic slave trade in the early seventeenth century, and they introduced slaves into New Netherland as a matter of course. By 1650, the colony's 500 slaves outnumbered those in the Chesapeake. Some enjoyed "half-freedom"—they were required to pay an annual fee to the company and work for it when called upon, but they were given land to support their families. Settlers employed slaves on family farms or for household or craft labor, not on large plantations as in the West Indies.

Women in the Dutch settlement enjoyed far more independence than in other colonies. According to Dutch law, married women retained their separate legal identity. They could go to court, borrow money, and own property. Men were used to sharing property with their wives. Their wills generally left their possessions to their widows and daughters as well as sons. Margaret Hardenbroeck, the widow of a New Amsterdam merchant, expanded her husband's business and became one of the town's richest residents after his death in 1661.

Most striking was the religious toleration that attracted to New Netherland a remarkably diverse population. As early as the 1630s, at least eighteen languages were said to be spoken in New Amsterdam, whose residents included not only Dutch settlers but also Africans, Belgians, English, French, Germans, Irish, and Scandinavians. Meanwhile, Puritan emigrants from New England established towns on Long Island. Religious toleration extended not only to Protestants but also to Catholics and, grudgingly, to Jews. Twenty-three Jews arrived in New Amsterdam in 1654 from Brazil and the Caribbean. Referring to them as "members of a deceitful race," Governor Peter Stuyvesant ordered the newcomers to leave. But the compa-

ny overruled him, noting that Jews at home had invested "a large amount of capital" in its shares.

SETTLING NEW NETHERLAND

In an attempt to attract settlers to North America, the Dutch West India Company promised colonists not only religious toleration but also cheap livestock and free land after six years of labor. Eventually, it even surrendered its monopoly of the fur trade, opening this profitable commerce to all comers. Many settlers, Stuyvesant complained, had been lured by "an imaginary liberty" and did not display much respect for the company's authority.

In 1629, the company adopted a plan of "Freedoms and Exemptions," offering large estates to *patroons*—shareholders who agreed to transport tenants for agricultural labor. The patroon was required to purchase title to the land from Indians, but otherwise his "freedoms" were like those of a medieval lord, including the right to 10 percent of his tenants' annual income and complete authority over law enforcement within his domain. Only one patroonship became a going concern, that of Kiliaen van Rensselaer, who acquired some 700,000 acres in the Hudson Valley. His family's autocratic rule over the tenants, as well as its efforts to extend its domain to include lands settled by New Englanders who claimed that they owned their farms, would inspire sporadic uprisings into the mid-nineteenth century.

During the seventeenth century, the Netherlands sent 1 million people overseas (many of them recent immigrants who were not in fact Dutch) to populate and govern their far-flung colonies. Very few, however, made North America their destination. By the mid-1660s, the European population of New Netherland numbered only 9,000. New Netherland remained a tiny backwater in the Dutch empire. So did an even smaller outpost near present-day Wilmington, Delaware, established in 1638 by a group of Dutch merchants. To circumvent the West India Company's trade monopoly, they claimed to be operating under the Swedish flag and called their settlement New Sweden. Only 300 settlers were living there when New Netherland seized the colony in 1655.

NEW NETHERLAND AND THE INDIANS

The Dutch came to North America to trade, not to conquer. They were less interested in settling the land than in exacting profits from it. Mindful of the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty, the Dutch determined to treat the native inhabitants more humanely than the Spanish. Having won their own independence from Spain after the longest and bloodiest war of sixteenth-century Europe, many Dutch identified with American Indians as fellow victims of Spanish oppression. They justified their imperial ambitions, in part, as an effort to liberate the New World from the tyranny of Spain and the Catholic Church. Initially, however, they aimed less to convert the Indian population than to employ it in the profitable fur trade.

From the beginning, Dutch authorities recognized Indian sovereignty over the land and forbade settlement in any area until it had been purchased. But they also required tribes to make payments to colonial authorities.



The seal of New Netherland, adopted by the Dutch West India Company in 1630, suggests the centrality of the fur trade to the colony's prospects. Surrounding the beaver is wampum, a string of beads used by Indians in religious rituals and as currency.

Near the coast, where most newcomers settled, New Netherland was hardly free of conflict with the Indians. The expansionist ambitions of Governor William Kieft, who in the 1640s began seizing fertile farmland from the nearby Algonquian Indians, sparked a three-year war that resulted in the death of 1,000 Indians and more than 200 colonists. With the powerful Iroquois Confederacy of the upper Hudson Valley, however, the Dutch established friendly commercial and diplomatic relations.

Thus, before the planting of English colonies in North America, other European nations had established various kinds of settlements in the New World. Despite their differences, the Spanish, French, and Dutch empires shared certain features. All brought Christianity, new forms of technology and learning, new legal systems and family relations, and new forms of economic enterprise and wealth creation. They also brought savage warfare and widespread disease. These empires were aware of one another's existence. They studied and borrowed from one another, each lauding itself as superior to the others.

From the outset, dreams of freedom—for Indians, for settlers, for the entire world through the spread of Christianity—inspired and justified colonization. It would be no different when, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, England entered the struggle for empire in North America.



A map of the Western Hemisphere, published in 1592 in Antwerp, then ruled by Spain and now part of Belgium. It shows North America divided between New France and New Spain before the coming of the English.

SUGGESTED READING

BOOKS

Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (2005). Argues for writing the history of the entire Atlantic region, rather than any particular nation or empire.

Bender, Thomas. *A Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History* (2006). Attempts to place American history in an international context; the opening chapters offer a global portrait of the age of exploration and conquest.

Calloway, Colin G. *One Vast Winter Count: The American West before Lewis and Clark* (2003). A comprehensive portrait of Indian life in one key region of North America.

Crosby, Alfred J. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (1972). Examines the flow of goods and diseases across the Atlantic and their consequences.

Elliott, J. H. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492–1830* (2006). A fascinating comparison of the development of two New World empires.

Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration* (2006). A history of explorations throughout the centuries, including those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Fischer, David H. *Champlain's Dream* (2008). A lively account of Samuel de Champlain's effort to built a French colony in North America based on toleration and mutual respect between settlers and Native Americans.

Gibson, Charles. *Spain in America* (1966). Surveys the history of Spain's American empire.

Gutiérrez, Ramón A. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846* (1991). Discusses the changes in Indian life in New Mexico as a result of Spanish colonization.

Knaut, Andrew L. *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico* (1997). A recent account of the largest revolt of native peoples.

Mann, Charles C. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (2005). A comprehensive portrait of life in the Western Hemisphere before the arrival of Europeans.

Parry, J. H. *The Age of Reconnaissance* (1981). A global history of the era of European exploration and colonization.

Richter, Daniel K. *Facing East from Indian Country* (2001). Examines the era of exploration and settlement as viewed through the experience of Native Americans.

———. *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (1992). Describes life among one of the most important Indian groups before and after the arrival of Europeans.

WEBSITES

Archive of Early American Images: www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/pages/ea_hmpg.html

Exploring the Early Americas: www.loc.gov/exhibits/earlyamericas/

France in America: http://international.loc.gov/intldl/fiahtml/fiahome.html

Jamestown, Québec, Santa Fe: Three North American Beginnings: http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/small_exhibition.cfm?key=1267&exkey=244

Chapter Review

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe why the "discovery" of America was one of the "most important events recorded in the history of mankind," according to Adam Smith.

2. Using what you read in this chapter about the movement of peoples, explain how North America became the location where East and West came together.

3. One of the most striking features of the Native American society at the time of European discovery was its sheer diversity. Support this statement.

4. Compare and contrast European values and ways of life to that of the Indians. Be sure to look at religion, views on property ownership, gender relations, and views of freedom.

5. What were the main factors fueling the European age of expansion?

6. Describe the political, religious, and economic motivations for Spanish conquest.

7. Compare the political, economic, and religious motivations behind the French and Dutch empires with those of New Spain.

8. Describe how the attitudes and actions of the French and Dutch differed from those of Spain.

9. How would European settlers explain their superiority to Native Americans and justify both the conquest of Native lands and terminating their freedom?

FREEDOM QUESTIONS

1. Although some European observers believed Native Americans embodied freedom, most reached the conclusion that Native Americans did not know what freedom was because they were "too free." On what basis did they make this claim?

2. On the eve of colonization, European concepts of freedom bore little resemblance to our modern concepts of personal liberties. Explain how the ideals of "Christian liberty," obedience to authority, and adhering to one's social rank shaped the fifteenth-century idea of freedom.

3. Spanish and French settlers both claimed to be freeing Native Americans by bringing them advanced civilization and Catholicism. Justify this claim with specific examples as either of these European powers would have at the time.

4. How did Popé's revolt in 1680 immediately restore freedom to the Pueblo Indians, and what happened once the Spanish returned?

5. Both at home and in the New World, the Dutch enjoyed greater freedoms than other European citizens. Explore this comparison using specific examples.

KEY TERMS

maize (p. 8)

Tenochtitlán (p. 10)

Cahokia (p. 11)

Iroquois (p. 12)

"Christian liberty" (p. 18)

Zheng He (p. 20)

caravel (p. 20)

factories (p. 22)

reconquista (p. 23)

Columbian Exchange (p. 26)

peninsulares (p. 29)

mestizos (p. 29)

encomienda system (p. 33)

Black Legend (p. 33)

Pueblo Revolt (p. 37)

Popé (p. 37)

Huguenots (p. 41)

métis (p. 44)

patroons (p. 47)

wampum (p. 47)

REVIEW TABLE

Early Explorers of the New World

Explorer	*Dates*	*Area Explored*
Christopher Columbus	**1492**	Caribbean and Central America
John Cabot	**1497**	Newfoundland
Amerigo Vespucci	**1499–1502**	Coast of Brazil, Gulf of Mexico
Pedro Cabral	**1500**	South America (Brazil)
Juan Ponce de León	**1513**	Florida
Ferdinand Magellan	**1519–1522**	Sailed around the world
Hernando de Soto	**1539–1541**	American Southwest
Francisco Vásquez de Coronado	**1540–1541**	American Southwest
Juan Oñate	**1598**	American Southwest
Nicolás de Ovando	**1502**	Hispaniola
Vasco Núñez de Balboa	**1513**	Panama Isthmus
Francisco Pizarro	**1530s**	Peru
Samuel de Champlain	**1608**	Canada and Quebec
Henry Hudson	**1609**	Hudson River and New York
Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet	**1673**	Mississippi River