Colonizers, 1400–1800
This section focuses on Spanish, Portuguese, French and British exploration and conquest in the Americas. It examines European exploration and conquest in Latin America, focusing on Spanish and Portuguese contact with indigenous societies, as well as French and British exploration in North America. The emphasis of this section is on contact, interaction and consequences of exploration and conquest for the indigenous populations.

- Exploration and conquest in North America: Columbus; conquest of the Caribbean; French and British exploration in North America

- Exploration and conquest in Latin America: Cortes and the conquest of the Aztecs...
... reasons for Spanish success and Aztec defeat; Pizarro and the conquest of the Incas; later defeat of Manco Inca; reasons for Spanish success and Inca defeat

- Economic impact of exploration and conquest: exploitation of resources; acquisition of gold and silver; fur trade; tobacco trade; the “Columbian Exchange”

- Treatment of indigenous populations; Laws of Burgos (1512), Bartolome de las Casas, New Laws of the Indies (1542); assimilation; eradication; social stratification; use of indigenous labour; women; multiracial issues

- European rivalries; Treaty of Tordesillas (1494); conflicting land claims based upon exploration; impact of conflicting claims
Essential Questions:

1. Why did Europeans colonize the Americas?
2. How did the Columbian Exchange affect Europe, Africa, and North America? How did it affect interaction between and among Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans?
3. How did cultural contact challenge the identities and value systems of peoples from the Americas, Africa, and Europe?
Introduction
During the late 15th century and early 16th centuries, Europeans developed the maritime technology and imperial ambitions to explore and dominate the world’s oceans.

- Long a barrier, the Atlantic became their highway.
- Between 1450 and 1500, European mariners, in dozens of voyages, found the Americas and rounded Africa to cross the Indian Ocean to India and the East Indies.
- In 1519-1522 the Spanish sailors of Ferdinand Magellan’s voyage first circumnavigated the globe, confirming that the oceans formed an integral system that European ships could probe.
On distant coasts, the mariners established fortified outposts to dominate local trade, creating the first transoceanic global empires.

It was an extraordinary and unprecedented burst of geographic understanding, daring, and enterprise.

As Europeans expanded their geographic range, they also developed a combination of science, technology, and commerce that gave them growing mastery over what they found.

These various advances fed upon one another as the mariners tested innovations in mathematics, astronomy, geology, medicine, and weaponry.
These distant discoveries also brought new commercial riches to Europe:

- Precious metals
- Sugar
- Tobacco
- Vital new foods such as maize and potatoes
- New sources of slave labor

By enriching Europe, these new resources financed further exploration and conquest.
The discovery and exploitation of the Americas and the route to Asia transformed Europe from a parochial backwater into the world’s most dynamic and powerful continent.

Europeans delighted in the sudden and dramatic change in circumstances, perspectives, and prospects.

During the 1550s the explorer Jean de Lery reported that America was so “different from Europe, Asia, and Africa in the living habits of its people, the forms of its animals, and, in general, in that which the earth produces, that it can well be called the new world.”
But the differences began to diminish as soon as they were recognized.

The invasion of European colonists, microbes, plants, and livestock eroded the biological and cultural distinctions formerly enforced by the Atlantic Ocean.

Newly connected, the two “worlds,” old and new, became more alike in their natures, in their combination of plants and animals.

In 1528, Spanish writer Hernan Perez de Oliva, explained that Columbus’s voyages served to “unite the world and give to those strange lands the form of our own.”
American colonization wrought an environmental revolution unprecedented in pace, scale, and impact in the history of humanity.

This environmental revolution worked disproportionately in favor of the Europeans and to the detriment of the native peoples, whose numbers dwindled.

Although never fully under the control of the colonizers, the transformation enhanced their power by undermining the nature that the indigenous communities depended upon.

Colonization literally alienated the land from its native inhabitants.
In particular, the colonizers accidentally introduced despised weeds, detested vermin, and deadly microbes.

All three did far more damage to native peoples and their nature than to the colonists.

While exporting their own blights, the European colonizers imported the most productive food plants developed by Indians.

These new crops fueled a population explosion in 17th and 18th century Europe.

Part of that growth then flowed back across the Atlantic to resettle the Americas as European colonies.
Europe
Motives for European Exploration

1. Crusades → by-pass intermediaries to get to Asia.
2. Renaissance → curiosity about other lands and peoples.
3. Reformation → refugees & missionaries.
4. Monarchs seeking new sources of revenue.
5. Technological advances.
6. Fame and fortune.
As late as 1400, Europeans were a parochial set of peoples preoccupied with internal and interminable wars.

Europe was also recovering from a devastating epidemic of bubonic plague, known as the Black Death, which during the 1340s had killed about a third of the population.

Moreover, relative to Asian peoples, the Europeans had shown less interest in new science and technology.

Their spiritual and intellectual leaders usually insisted that everything worth knowing had already been discovered by the ancient Greeks and Romans, or had been revealed by their God and recorded in the Bible. Men who indulged in innovative scientific speculation risked prosecution for heresy by church courts.
The era in European history from about A.D. 500 to 1300 is known as the Middle Ages, or the medieval period.

- Warriors invading the former Roman Empire caused instability in the early Middle Ages. Feudalism developed:
  - Servants worked the land on the manors of powerful nobles in exchange for protection.
  - The Roman Catholic Church governed many aspects of European society. Aside from the clergy, few people were educated.
  - In the late Middle Ages, economic growth created a middle class of merchants, traders, and artisans. Powerful monarchs, or rulers, increased their wealth.
The Middle Ages

- **The Crusades** — From 1096 to 1291, the Church organized a series of military campaigns, known as the Crusades, to take Jerusalem from the Turks. The Crusades failed, but they increased Europeans’ awareness of the rest of the world and accelerated economic change.

- **The Growth of Cities** — Centers of trade grew into towns and cities, especially in northern Italy and northern France. This growth had three major effects:
  - Created a middle class, a social class between the rich and poor.
  - It revived a money economy.
  - Eventual breakdown of the feudal system.

- **“Black Death”** — In the 1300s, the bubonic plague, carried by fleas and rats, destroyed one third of Europe’s population. From the devastation came a loss of religious faith and doubts about the Church.
# The Rebirth of Europe

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European Christians also felt hemmed in by the superior wealth, power, and technology possessed by their rivals and neighbors the Muslims, who subscribed to Islam, the world’s other great expansionist faith.

Dominated by the Ottoman Turks, the Muslim realms extended across North Africa and around the southern and eastern Mediterranean Sea to embrace the Balkans, the Near East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

- Long and secure trade routes (Spice roads) of the Muslim World reached from Morocco to the East Indies and from Mongolia to Senegal.
- Within that range, Muslim traders spread Arabic as the language of law, commerce, government, and science.
Europeans felt that they were on the losing end of the struggle for humanity.

- During the preceding three centuries, European crusaders suffered bloody and humiliating defeats in their botched attempts to capture and hold Jerusalem.
- During the 15th century, the **Ottoman Turks** invaded southeastern Europe, capturing the strategic Greek city of **Constantinople** in 1453.
- The Turkish advance created in Europe a powerful sense of geographic and religious claustrophobia, which generated a profound longing to break out and circumvent the Muslim world.
European leaders concluded that the Muslims’ power fed upon the wealth generated by their control of the most lucrative trade routes.

- By paying premium prices to Muslim merchants for gold and ivory of sub-Saharan Africa and for the silks, gems, and spices of Asia, European consumers enriched the Islamic world while draining wealth from Christendom.

- Moreover, the Turkish sultan, collected taxes on the luxury trade passing through his vast empire to Europe.

- Europeans hoped to weaken their enemy and enrich themselves by seeking an alternative trade route by sea to bypass Muslim merchants and Turkish tax collectors to reach Sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Europe

- Popular literature reinforced the European longing for a new trade route to the fabled riches of the Far East.
  - During the second half of the 15th century, the development of the printing press lowered the cost and increased the volume of book publishing.
    - More people learned to read, as books became available to more than the wealthy and the elite.
  - Readers delighted in vivid accounts of the wealth and power of India and China. These included the real travels of Marco Polo, an Italian merchant, as well as pure fictions attributed to John de Mandeville.
Europeans longed to reach the Far East to enlist their peoples and wealth for a climatic crusade against Islam.

The intruding barrier of the Muslim world frustrated European hopes for eastern Asia, especially China.

European expansionists could find hope to the southwest, on the Iberian peninsula, where the kingdoms of Aragon, Castile, and Portugal gradually rolled back the Muslim Moors.

In 1469, the marriage of Queen Isabella and Prince Ferdinand united Aragon and Castile to create “Spain.”

Zealous, able, and expansionist, they completed the reconquista (reconquest) by seizing Granada, the last Muslim principality of Iberia.
Isabella and Ferdinand also looked westward, into the Atlantic, for new opportunities to extend their crusade.

Close to Africa and facing the Atlantic, Spain and Portugal were well situated to lead the maritime expansion of Europe.

In addition, the long and violent reconquista had institutionalized a crusading spirit in Iberia, developing a militant clergy and an ambitious warrior caste known as *hidalgos*. These two groups would spearhead the conquest of the Americas.

For maritime exploration and trade, the Spanish and Portuguese found reinforcements by welcoming Italian immigrants, especially merchants and mariners from Genoa.
15th century trade routes
Direct Causes = 3 G’s

• **Political**: Become a world power through gaining wealth and land. *(GLORY)*

• **Economic**: Search for new trade routes with direct access to Asian/African luxury goods would enrich individuals and their nations *(GOLD)*

• **Religious**: spread Christianity and weaken Middle Eastern Muslims. *(GOD)*

The 3 motives *reinforce* each other
The Atlantic
Along with the motives to explore the wider world, Iberians also cultivated the means.

During the 15th century, the Spanish and Portuguese developed new ships, navigation techniques, geographic knowledge, and cannon that would enable their mariners to voyage around the globe and dominate distant coastal peoples.

At first, the Iberians made none of these improvements with the intention of crossing the Atlantic.

Instead, these innovations were incremental and stimulated by the growing commerce from the Mediterranean into the Atlantic to trade with northern Europe.
Ferdinand Magellan & the First Circumnavigation of the World
A Map of the Known World, pre-1492
But the improvements enabled Iberian mariners to expand their horizons, to explore the northwestern coast of Africa and to exploit newfound islands in the eastern Atlantic.

Emboldened by those modest successes, at the end of the century some mariners attempted two especially bold and risky extensions:

- Southeastward around Africa into the Indian Ocean
- Westward across the Atlantic in search of Japan and China

During the 14th century, the focus of European trade shifted westward beyond the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic.
• The Iberian reconquista opened the western mouth of the Mediterranean to Christian shipping at the same time that the Turkish conquests tightened Muslim control over the eastern Mediterranean.

• Blocked to the east, merchants and miners of northwestern Italy sought alternatives to the west by developing a trade to northern Europe via ports in Iberia.

• The new long-distance trade routes into stormy waters required versatile new vessels suitable to both Mediterranean and Atlantic conditions.

• Involving bulkier commodities, especially grain, the new routes also demanded ships with larger cargo capacities.
The relative shallow and more protected Mediterranean Sea favored maneuverable vessels with triangular lateen sails, while the longer hauls and stormier waters of the Atlantic Ocean demanded stronger and durable ships with square sails.

To facilitate a trade that traversed both the ocean and the sea, Iberian and Genoese shipbuilders developed a hybrid vessel, the caravel, that combined northern solidity with southern maneuverability. The caravel boasted three masts with square sails on the main and fore masts and a lateen sail on the mizzen (rear) mast.

During the 14th & 15th centuries, Iberian and Genoese mariners gradually refined their new ships and navigational techniques as they pressed southward along the Atlantic coast of West Africa.
New Maritime and Weapons Technology

CARAVEL
Portuguese navigators of the 1400s sailed in caravels.

WHEELLOCK
This wheellock pistol was made in northern Europe.

- Lateen sail
- Square topsail
- Wooden ramrod
- Stock
- Iron pyrites
- Barrel
- Powder and bullet front-loaded
- Trigger
- Wheel
New Maritime Technologies

Hartman Astrolabe (1532)

Mariner’s Compass

Sextant

Better Maps [Portulan]
Lacking the means to organize and finance maritime exploration, the monarchs of Portugal and Castile relied on the private enterprise of profit-seeking merchants and adventurers willing to pay fees in return for royal licenses.

Rather than launch risky voyages directly into the Atlantic unknown, they invested in more modest voyages that seemed likely to generate profits quickly.

They proceeded incrementally along the northwest coast of Africa, seeking known commodities: fishing grounds, and the gold, ivory, pepper, and slaves that Muslim North Africans had long tapped by their overland caravan trade with sub-Saharan Africa.

Discovery: three sets of islands in the eastern Atlantic.
The Canaries, Azores, and Madeiras were surrounded by rich fisheries and heavily forested with trees that yielded valuable dyes = immediate commodities + safe harbors and bases that facilitated voyages farther along the coast of Africa.

From the bases on these Atlantic islands, Portuguese sailors took the lead to explore and exploit the western coast of Africa.

- By 1475, they had passed the equator to reach the powerful and prosperous West African kingdom of Benin.

- At first, the Portuguese practiced hit-and-run raids for plunder, but staunch African resistance obliged them to reconsider.
Superior ships & guns enabled the Portuguese to dominate the coastal trade but did not suffice to overcome the immensely superior numbers of Africans on land.

To procure gold, ivory, pepper, and slaves more securely, the Portuguese needed the cooperation of local rulers, who could bring the commodities from the interior.

After 1450, the Portuguese negotiated commercial treaties with African rulers, who permitted the construction of a few small fortified trading posts on the coast. These forts largely served to keep away rival European vessels.

The Portuguese treated interlopers brutally, confiscating vessels and cargoes and casting crews into the sea.
The small but fertile Atlantic islands tempted exploitation by another, more intensive mode of colonization: settlement.

In this mode, Europeans emigrated by the thousands to establish permanent new homes for themselves and their slaves.

By hard labor, the settlers and slaves transformed the colonial environment to cultivate commodities for the European market.

The absence of native peoples facilitated settlement on the Azores and Madeiras, which the Portuguese began to colonize in the early 15th century, but a people known as the Guanche, numbering perhaps 30,000, inhabited the Canaries.
The Guanche, having emigrated to the islands about 2000 B.C., were related to the Berbers of North Africa.

- They had neglected their means of navigation, losing contact with the continent.
- They cultivated wheat, beans, peas, and raised goats, pigs, and sheep.
- But they lacked cattle and horses, and, for want of metallurgy, depended upon stone tools and weapons.
- They were not politically united, but divided into rival chieftainships not only between but also within the seven major islands.
The Iberians turned Guanche resistance to colonial advantage by capturing them for sale as slaves to work on sugar plantations.

- In effect, enslavement converted the Guanche from an obstacle into a valuable asset that could refinance the further process of conquest and colonization.
- Iberian slave-raiding expeditions began in the late 14th century and escalated early in the 14th century.

Conditioned by the reconquista, the Iberians believed that the Guanche deserved to be conquered and enslaved for two reasons: they were neither civilized nor Christian.
Making his own culture the standard of humanity, the Portuguese king assured the pope that the Guanche were “like animals” because they had “no contact with each other by sea, no writing, no kind of metal or money.”

The techniques and technologies that facilitated the Iberian conquest were also, by their absence among the natives, invoked to justify that conquest.

In addition, the Iberians argued that they were obligated to spread the Christian faith to unbelievers.

Any people who resisted that faith could be justly enslaved for the greater good of their souls and the profit of their Christian conquerors.
By exposing the Guanche to Christian indoctrination, slavery might save their souls from hell, rendering their brief bondage on earth a small price to pay for their eternal salvation.

But, with more greed than consistency, the Iberians also enslaved Guanche who had converted to Christianity in the vain hope of living peaceably beside the invaders.

In the mid-15th century the Spanish pushed out the Portuguese and took over the further conquest of the Canary Islands.

In 1483, after five hard years of fighting, the Spanish overcame the guerrilla resistance on the largest island, Grand Canary.
The Guanche on La Palma and Tenerife did not succumb until the 1490s - at the same time Columbus sailed west via the Canaries to America. Reasons for Spanish victory:

- Mounted on horses and armed in steel, Iberians possessed military advantages over the unarmored Guanche fighting on foot with stone weapons.
- But the deadliest advantage was unintentional and beyond Spanish control - microscopic pathogens unknown to the Canaries.
- Lacking the partial immunities enjoyed by the Iberians from long experience with diseases, the Guanche died by the thousands from epidemics of bubonic plague, dysentery, pneumonia, and typhus.
Death and demoralization undercut the ability to the Guanche to resist invasion.

A Spanish friar reported, “If it had not been for the pestilence, [the conquest] would have taken much longer, the people being warlike, stubborn, and wary.”

Although welcoming the reduction of Guanche armed resistance, the Spanish regretted the loss of so many valuable slaves.

- By the middle of the 16th century, the Guanche were virtually extinct as assimilation and intermarriage enveloped the few survivors into the settler population and colonial culture.
- So complete was the cultural destruction that only around nine sentences of the Guanche language survived.
During the 15th century, Iberians settled on the Azores, Canaries, and Madeiras in growing numbers.

Colonists cleared the forest to cultivate fields of domesticated plants - especially wheat and grapes - and to pasture grazing animals introduced from Europe.

The products of these activities were not just for their local subsistence but for the profitable export in ships to markets in Europe.

Although lucrative to landowners and merchants, the transformation proved ecologically costly.

- By 1500, trees were so scarce that the colonists lacked sufficient firewood and timber for building.
Ecological cost continued:

- Deforestation also induced erosion, depleting the soil on the hillsides.
  - Droughts increased, for want of the trees that formerly captured the moisture in the oceanic fogs.

- On the semitropical Madeiras and the Canaries, the Iberians succeeded in raising sugar, which was in great and growing demand in Europe. (Becoming Europe’s leading suppliers by 1500)
  - Enjoying high value per volume, sugar could be transported over long distances and still reap a profit at sale.
  - To produce sugar, the colonists developed the plantation mode of production.
Plantation mode of production:

- A plantation was a large tract of privately owned land worked by many slaves to produce a high-value commodity for export to an external market.
- As plantation colonies, the Canaries and Madeiras depended upon long-distance merchants and their shipping to carry away the sugar and to bring in tools, cloth, food, and new slaves.

- At first, most of the slaves were Guanche, but they rapidly died from the new diseases.
- To replace the dead, the colonists imported Africans to work the sugar plantations.
West African societies had long enslaved war captives and convicted criminals for sale to Arab traders, who drove them in caravans across the Sahara to the Mediterranean.

This caravan trade was relatively small in scale, with a volume of only about one thousand slaves per year in the early 15th century.

After 1450, however, the advent of European mariners along the West African coast expanded the slave trade.

By 1500, the Portuguese annually bought about eighteen hundred African slaves, primarily to labor on the Canaries and the Madeiras.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: The Atlantic

• The conquest and transformation of the Atlantic islands prepared for the discovery, invasion, and remaking of the Americas.

• To colonize the islands, especially the Canaries, the Portuguese and Spanish learned how to:
  
  ▪ Organize and sustain prolonged oceanic voyages that were predatory as well as exploratory.
  
  ▪ The expeditions successfully tested steel weapons, mounted men, and war dogs upon natives on foot armed with stone implements.
  
  ▪ The invaders also learned how to exploit rivalries between indigenous peoples as well as their devastation by disease.
• By turning native peoples into commodities, for sale as plantation slaves, the invaders developed a method for financing the further destruction of their resistance.

• In the Atlantic islands, the newcomers also pioneered the profitable combination of the plantation system and the slave trade.

• The 15th century Atlantic islands (and principally the Canaries) = the training grounds for the invasion of the Americas.

• The discovery and profitable exploitation of the Atlantic islands also set the precedents that encouraged Europeans to seek more islands westward.
Columbus
As the colonizers of the Azores and Madeiras, the Portuguese might have maintained their westward momentum across the Atlantic.

Instead, they turned south and east, probing along the African coast in search of a trade route to Asia.

Along the way they could reap the immediate and profitable commodities of Africa to finance further voyages to the ultimate prize: the trade of India, the East Indies, and China.

By comparison, voyages due west into the Atlantic were shots into the unknown.

In 1487: Bartolomeu Dias discerned how to use the counterclockwise winds of the South Atlantic to get around southern Africa.
In 1498 Vasco de Gama exploited that discovery to enter and cross the coveted Indian Ocean, the gateway to the trade riches of the East.

The profits from trade riches of the East kept the Portuguese focused on the southern & eastward route to Asia, leaving the westward route largely unguarded for their Spanish rivals to explore by default.

Spain pioneered transatlantic voyages, thanks to the aggressive ambition, religious mysticism, and navigational prowess of Christopher Columbus.

A devout and militant Catholic, Columbus drew upon the Bible for his geographic theories.
He also owned and cherished a heavily annotated copy of *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which inspired his dreams of reaching the trade riches and the unconverted souls of East Asia.

Columbus also hoped to convert the Asians to Christianity and to recruit their bodies and their wealth to assist Europeans in a final crusade to crush Islam and reclaim Jerusalem.

Such a victory would then invite Christ’s return to earth to reign over a millennium of perfect justice and harmony.

Columbus hatched his scheme to head west across the Atlantic to find East Asia and open a profitable trade as early as 1484.

Because no private individual had the capital or inclination to finance such an expensive and risky voyage, Columbus sought royal patronage.
Columbus first approached the Portuguese crown, the leading promoter of long-distance exploration; but Portuguese authorities declined, regarding the western route as too speculative and dangerous.

Columbus then tried the royal courts of France and England, again without success, before turning to Spain as a last resort. Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand approved; reasoning that even if Columbus failed to reach Asia, he might instead find valuable new islands like the Canaries.

Contrary to popular myth, 15th century European intellectuals and rulers did not think the world was flat.

- Since the ancient Greeks, learned men agreed the Earth was round.
They also accepted the theoretical possibility of sailing West to come up on the East Asian side of the known world.

They expected to find some more Atlantic islands to the West, however none of these Europeans anticipated that any large continents would obstruct a westward voyage to Asia.

And given the high value of Asian commodities, there was a powerful commercial incentive for testing Columbus’s theory.

What deterred Europeans from sailing due West for Asia was not fear of sailing off the edge of the world but, instead, their surprising accurate understanding that the globe was too large.

15th century European ships were too small to carry enough water and food to sustain their crews on a 10,000 mile voyage beyond contact with land.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Columbus

- Breaking with geographic orthodoxy, Columbus dared the westward trip to Asia because he underestimated the world’s circumference as only 18,000 miles, which placed Japan 3,000 miles west of Europe.
  - Columbus was fortunate that the unexpected Americas loomed at about 3,000 mile mark to provide fresh water and provisions before his men mutinied.
  - In 1492, Columbus first landed at the Bahama Islands, just east of Florida; he then turned South, encountering the West Indies, islands framing the Caribbean Sea.
  - Columbus supposed that all of these islands belonged to the East Indies; labeling the native inhabitants, (the Taino), as “Indians,” a mistake that has endured.
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Arawak men and women, naked, tawny, and full of wonder, emerged from their villages onto the island’s beaches and swam out to get a closer look at the strange big boat. When Columbus and his sailors came ashore, carrying swords, speaking oddly, the Arawaks ran to greet them, brought them food, water, gifts.

He later wrote of this in his log: “They ... brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned.... They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features.... They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane.... They would make fine servants.... With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.”
The colonial enterprise arrived in the Americas in Columbus’s mind. From the start, he treated the Caribbean Islands and their Taino inhabitants as the Spanish treated the Canaries & the Guanche - as places and people to be rendered into commercial plantations worked by forced labor.

He rationalized that such treatment would benefit the Indians by exposing them to Christian salvation and Hispanic civilization. To justify their enslavement, Columbus emphasized their weakness: “They do not have arms and they are all naked, and of no skill in arms, and so very cowardly that a thousand would not stand against three [armed Spaniards]. And so they are fit to be ordered about and made to work, plant, and do everything else that may be needed, and build towns and by taught our customs, and to go about clothed.”
Thanks to the newly invented printing press, word of Columbus’s voyage and discovery spread rapidly and widely through Europe.

Intrigued by Columbus’s glowing reports of the Indians’ gold jewelry and their supposed proximity to Asia, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella acted quickly to send Columbus back with another, larger expedition of exploration and colonization [before the Portuguese could send expeditions west].

The king and queen declared Columbus admiral and governor of the new islands and promised him a tenth of all profits made by exploiting them.

Devout Catholics, Ferdinand and Isabella also vowed to convert the Indians to Christianity, dreading that otherwise so many thousands would continue to die in ignorance to spend their eternity in hell.
To impress and intimidate the Taino, Columbus publicly demonstrated the sound and fury of his gunpowder weapons.

Columbus unilaterally declared the natives subject to the Spanish crown. He reported, “I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses, by proclamation made [in Spanish] and with the royal standard unfurled, and no opposition was offered to me.”

As a further act of possession he renamed all of the islands to honor the Spanish royal family or Christian holy days.

Columbus renamed himself, adopting the first name “Christoferens” - meaning “Christ-Bearer,” testimony to his sense of divine mission.
With the assistance of the pope, the Spanish and Portuguese negotiated the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, which split the world of new discoveries by drawing a north-south boundary line through the mid-Atlantic west of the Azores.

- The Portuguese secured the primary right to exploit the coast of Africa and the Indian Ocean, while the Spanish obtained Columbus’s western discoveries.

- Further exploration determined that South America bulged eastward beyond the treaty line, placing a land called Brazil in the Portuguese sphere.

- In dividing the world, no one bothered to consult indigenous societies, for the Iberians and the pope considered them pagan savages without rights under international law.
The Treaty of Tordesillas, 1434 & The Pope’s Line of Demarcation, 1493
The other western European kingdoms refused to recognize the treaty, for they denied that the Pope could exclude them from exploring and exploiting the new lands.

But no European leaders thought that native americans could, or should, be left alone in their former isolation and native beliefs.

In September 1493, Columbus returned to the West Indies with 17 ships, 1200 men (including farmers and artisans, but no women), sugarcane plants and livestock.

The new colony was supposed to feed itself; recoup the costs by remitting hides, gold, sugar, and slaves to Spain; and serve as a base for further exploration in search of Japan and China.
The Spanish were determined to dominate the land and its natives, and to weave the new lands into an empire based in Europe.

At Hispaniola, however, Columbus discovered that the Taino Indians had killed the 39 men left behind. In these Spanish deaths, Columbus found the pretext for waging a war of conquest.

- Employing the military advantages of horses, trained dogs, gunpowder, and steel, Columbus killed and captured hundreds of Indians on Hispaniola and adjoining islands.

- In 1495 he shipped 550 captives to Spain for sale to help pay for his expedition. Because most died during the voyage or within a year of arrival from exposure to European diseases, Columbus had to abandon the project of selling Indians in Spain.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Columbus

• Instead, Columbus distributed Indian captives among the colonists to work on their plantations and to serve as sex slaves.

• By 1490, Hispaniola’s surviving free natives had been rendered tributary - obliged to bring in a quota of gold for every person over the age of 15.

• Columbus’s slaughter and enslavement of Indians troubled the pious Spanish monarchs, who declared in 1500 that the Indians were “free and not subject to servitude.”
  
  ▪ But Ferdinand and Isabella failed to close the legal loophole exploited by Spanish colonizers.
  
  ▪ It remained legal to enslave Indians taken in any “just war,” which the colonists characterized as any violence they conducted against resisting natives.
In addition to killing and enslaving the Taino, Columbus antagonized most of the colonists. Violent mutinies and violent reprisals by Columbus induced the monarchs to revoke his executive authority in 1500; Hispaniola then became a crown colony governed by a royal appointee, rather than the feudal fiefdom of Columbus.

Other explorers, often working for rival powers, expanded upon Columbus’s discoveries:

- John Cabot (employed by England) sought a northern route across the Atlantic to Asia, instead he ran into the North American continent previously explored and briefly colonized by the Norse (Newfoundland)
- Peter Alvares Cabral discovered the coast of Brazil in 1500
Amerigo Vespucci (alternating between Spanish and Portuguese employ), explored enough of the coast of South America to deem it a new continent; consequently European mapmakers began to call the new land by a variant of his name - America.

The Spanish avoided this term, clinging instead to Las Indias (the Indies), as Columbus had insisted.

Although Columbus had not reached Asia, he did find the substance of what he sought:

- A source of riches that would, in the long term, enable European Christendom to grow more powerful and wealthy than the Muslim world.
During the next three centuries, the mineral and plantation wealth of the Americas financed the continuing expansion of European commerce, the further development of its technology, and military power.

Moreover, the very encounter with strange lands and peoples contributed to the broadening of Europe’s intellectual leaders, spurring sustained pursuit of scientific advances.
Hispaniola
The Spanish invaded America with remarkable rapidity as their growing shipping, cargoes, and colonists connected the European and American shores of the Atlantic. (1508 = 45 vessels crossed from Spain to the Caribbean)

With the Canaries as their colonial model, the Spanish aggressively modified Hispaniola, introducing new crops, especially sugarcane, and new animals, including cattle, mules, sheep, horses, and pigs.

Assisted by their plants and animals, the invaders remade the environment to sustain themselves, to obtain commodities valuable enough to ship to market in Spain, and to dominate and convert the local natives, the Taino.
A Spaniard explained, “Without settlement there is no good conquest, and if the land is not conquered, the people will not be converted. Therefore, the maxim of the conqueror must be to settle.” (The conquest of nature and the domination of natives worked reciprocally).

Transatlantic colonization was difficult and often deadly.

- The first colonists on Hispaniola suffered severely from malnutrition and sickness - Crowded into filthy ships for long voyages, they failed to grow enough food during the early years, prolonging vulnerability to sickness = \( \frac{2}{3} \) of Hispaniola colonists died during the first decade of settlement, between 1493-1504.

- But the natives suffered even more severely, as the colonists shared their diseases and forced the Taino to provide food and labor.
As with the Guanche on the Canaries, colonization rapidly destroyed the Taino people of Hispaniola.

- In 1494, a Spaniard reported more than 50,000 Taino had died, “and they are falling each day with every step, like cattle in an infected herd.”

- From a population of at least 300,000 in 1492, the Taino declined to about 33,000 by 1510 and to a mere 500 by 1548.

- The great missionary friar Bartolome de Las Casas mourned the virtual extermination “of the immensity of peoples that this island held, and that we have see with our own eyes.”
Like the Guanche, the Taino died primarily from virulent new diseases unintentionally brought to the Americas by the Spanish, but the colonizers compounded the destructive impact of the diseases by callous exploitation.

- With armed force, the Spanish drove the Taino to labor on colonial mines, ranches, and plantations, where they suffered a brutal work regimen.
- Natives who resisted Spanish demands faced destructive and deadly raids on their villages by colonial soldiers.
- Abandoning their crops and villages, thousands of Taino refugees starved in the densely forested hills.
- Dislocated, traumatized, overworked, and underfed, they proved especially vulnerable to disease.
Las Casas interpreted the 1518 smallpox epidemic as sent by a merciful and angry God, “to free the few Indians who remained from so much torment and the anguished life they suffered from, in all types of labor, especially in the mines, and at the same time in order to castigate those who oppressed them.”

Although not genocidal in intent - for the Spanish preferred the Taino alive and working as tributaries and slaves - the colonization of Hispaniola was genocidal in effect.
Epidemics
Although extreme in rapidity and thoroughness, the depopulation of Hispaniola was not unique in the Americas. Everywhere the first European explorers and colonists reported horrifying and unprecedented epidemics among the native peoples.

- In New England during the 1620s, a colonist reported that the Indians: “died on heaps, as they lay in their houses; and the living, that were able to shift for themselves, would runne away and let them dy, and let their Carkases ly above the ground without burial.... And the bones and skulls upon the severall places of their habitations made such a spectacle after my coming into those partes, that as I travailed in the Forest, nere the Massachusetts [Bay], it seemed to mee a new found Golgotha.” - Such observers also marveled that so few of their own people succumbed to the same diseases.
The epidemics spread in association with the newcomers.

- First colonized, the Caribbean islands suffered the first great epidemics.
- Spanish soldiers exported the diseases to the mainland between 1510 and 1535, when they conquered Central America, Mexico, and Peru.
- During the mid-sixteenth century, Spanish invaders introduced epidemics into the American southwest and southeast.
- Epidemics afflicted the natives of New England and Canada during the early 17th century as they encountered European fishermen and fur traders.
- Along the Pacific Coast and in the Great Plains, deaths peaked when explorers, traders, or missionaries arrived in the 18th century.
The epidemics spread in association with the newcomers.

- In 1793, an English explorer in the Pacific northwest found the beaches littered with skulls and bones and saw the faces of Indian survivors pocked by the scars of smallpox.

- The Mandan Indians of the northern Missouri Valley (North Dakota) escaped the worst of the ravages until 1837, when in the course of a few weeks, smallpox destroyed all but forty of their two thousand people.

- In any given locale, the first wave of epidemics affected almost every Indian.

- Within a decade of contact, about \( \frac{1}{2} \) died from the new diseases.

- Repeated and diverse epidemics provided little opportunity for the native population to recover by reproduction.
After about 50 years of successive epidemics reduced native groups to about a tenth of their pre contact numbers.

Some especially ravaged peoples lost their autonomous identity, as the few survivors joined a neighboring group.

Consequently, the Indian nations (“tribes”) of colonial history represent a subset of the many groups that existed before the great epidemics.

Historian Alfred W. Crosby, Jr. characterized the population collapse as “surely the greatest tragedy in the history of the human species.”
Our revised understanding of a well-populated North America in 1492 belies the former characterization of the continent as a “virgin land” virtually untouched by humans and longing for European settlement.

According to the nineteenth-century historian George Bancroft, in 1492 the future of the United States was “an unproductive waste... its only inhabitants a few scattered tribes of feeble barbarians.” - Ideologically charged, this description had celebrated colonization as entirely positive.

More recently, the historian Francis Jennings described colonial Americas as a “widowed land,” rendered so by the deadly microbes that accompanied European invasion.
The exchange of infectious diseases between the invaders and the natives was remarkably one-sided.

- One major disease, venereal syphilis, passed from the Americas into Europe. Although painful & sometimes fatal, it did not kill enough people to stem Europe’s population growth during the 16th century + after 1600 it lost much of its virulence as European bodies adjusted to it/pathogen adapted to a longer life in its host.

- Europeans would die in far greater number when they would tried to colonize sub-Saharan Africa (tropical diseases like malaria and yellow fever). Europeans then imported those diseases into the Americas with the slaves brought to work on their plantations, adding African maladies to the epidemics that devastated Native Americans.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Epidemics

Native Americans:

- Lived in hemisphere with fewer and less virulent diseases
- Many generations spent in the subarctic where winters discouraged microbes + killed those suffering from debilitating diseases
- Nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle did not sustain “crowd diseases” needing a steady succession of hosts
- Developed diseases: rheumatoid arthritis, polio, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, hepatitis, syphilis = killed but did not prevent overall growth of Indian population
- European diseases: smallpox, typhus, diphtheria, bubonic plague, malaria, yellow fever, cholera, and influenza
Three factors developed powerful pathogens in the Old World:

- Long distance trade and invasions were more routine in Europe and Asia, providing vectors for the exchange and mutation of multiple diseases. (larger pool of hosts, passing to and fro, strengthened immunities of population)

- Urbanization was older and more widespread in the Old World (crowded populations kept diseases cycling; accumulated more garbage and excrement = breeds microbes that inflict gastrointestinal diseases + sustains mice, rats, roaches, houseflies, and worms to carry disease)
Three factors developed powerful pathogens in the Old World:

- The people of Europe, Africa, and Asia lived among large numbers of domesticated mammals, including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, which share microscopic parasites with humans, encouraging the development of new and powerful diseases as viruses shifted back and forth between the species. ex) swine flu

- The greatest killers were eruptive fevers, esp. Smallpox, measles, and typhus; but native populations also suffered from new respiratory infections like whooping cough and pneumonia; even mild childhood ailments like chickenpox killed natives of all ages.

  - One disease weakened a victim for another to kill. ex) survive smallpox to succumb to measles
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Epidemics

- Because nearly everyone in a village became ill at the same time, few could care for the sick. During the 1630s in New England, a colonist described a smallpox epidemic among the Massachusetts Indians:
  
  - They fell down so generally of this disease as they were in the end not able to help one another, not to make a fire nor to fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead… They would burn the wooden try as and dishes they ate their meat in, and their very bows and arrows. And some would crawl out on all fours to get a little water, and sometimes die by the way and not be able to get in again.

  - For want of healthy people to tend to the sick, to fetch food and water, etc many died of starvation, dehydration, or exposure.
Smallpox (passing through the air on moisture droplets or dust particles to enter the lungs of a new host) conveyed death to those in their vicinity.

In 16th century Mexico and Indian described smallpox victims: They could not move; they could not stir; they could not change position nor lie on one die; nor face down, nor on their backs. And if they stirred, much did they cry out. Great was its destruction. Covered, mantled with pustules, very many people died of them.

Survivors bore scars for the rest of their lives.

Some suffered blindness.

In addition to depleting their numbers, the new diseases sapped morale.
Both natives and colonizers assumed that the epidemics manifested some violent disruption of supernatural power.

Colonists interpreted the diseases as sent by their God to punish Indians who resisted conversion to Christianity.

Indians blamed the epidemics on sorcery practiced by the newcomers.

- When the native shamans failed to stop or cure a disease, they became discredited as ineffectual against the superior sorcery of the newcomers, who survived the epidemics.

- Because kinship ties defined native society and culture, the rapid destruction of so many relatives was profoundly disorientating and disruptive. (elders died, wisdom buried with them)

- In search of new wisdom, a new supply of supernatural power, the most devastated gave Christian missionaries their attention.
During the 16th and 17th centuries, the colonizers did not intentionally disseminate disease

- Did not know how to do so
- Valued native bodies coerced as labor to work on mines, plantations, ranches, and farms
- Christian missionaries despaired when diseases could kill natives before they could be baptized.
- Only later, and almost exclusively in the English colonies did some colonists cheer epidemics depopulating the lands they wanted to settle.

Left with large tracts of fertile land, other European colonists cast about for a new source of cheap and exploitable labor that was less susceptible to disease.
Beginning in 1518 in Hispaniola, the colonizers imported growing numbers of slaves from West Africa.

Prior to 1820, at least \( \frac{2}{3} \) of the twelve million emigrants from the Old to the New World were enslaved Africans rather than free Europeans.

Most of the slaves were put to work on tropical or subtropical plantations raising cash crops - sugar, rice, indigo, tobacco, cotton, coffee - for the European market.

By 1700, people of African descent prevailed in the American tropics, especially around the Caribbean.
In the temperate zones, the epidemics opened up lands for colonial settlement by free European farmers.

- Ex) the Plymouth colonists of New England in 1620 had their pick of recently abandoned Indian villages with conveniently cleared lands.
  - One colonist remarked, “Thousands of men have lived there, which died in a great plague not long since: and pity it was and is to see so many goodly fields, and so well seated, without men to dress and manure the same.”
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Epidemics

- American colonization tapped Europe’s growing population which swelled from about 80 million in 1492 to 105 million in 1650 and nearly 180 million by 1800.
  - Increases especially dramatic/significant in British Isles (including Ireland = greatest source of North American emigrants prior to 1800).
  - The post 1492 growth nearly doubled Europe’s share in the world’s population from about 11 percent in 1492 to 20% in 1800.
  - At the same time, Native American proportion of the global population collapsed from about 7% in 1492 to less than 1% by 1800.
Colonizers, 1400–1800: Epidemics

- The demographic and colonial history of Africa = instructive contrast to North America
  - Despite inferior firepower, until the 19th century Africans more than held their own against European invasions because African numbers remained formidable.
  - Unlike Native Americans, Africans did not dwindle from exposure to European diseases which were largely familiar. On the contrary, African tropical diseases killed European newcomers in extraordinary numbers until the development of quinine in the 19th century.
  - Thereafter, European soldiers conquered most of Africa, but European colonists remained small minorities who ruled over African majorities.
  - Without a demographic advantage, European rule proved short-lived as Africans reclaimed power during the 20th century (versus 600,000 Indians remaining in Canada and US by 1800/regions dominated by five million Euro-Americans).
Columbian Exchange or the transfer of goods involved 3 continents, Americas, Europe and Africa

* Squash
* Turkey
* Cocoa
* Peanut
* Avocado
* Pumpkin
* Pineapple
* Tomato
* Peppers
* Tobacco
* Cassava
* Vanilla
* Sweet Potatoes
* Quinine
* POTATO
* MAIZE
* Syphilis

* Olive
* Onion
* Grape
* Citrus Fruits
* Cattle
* Flu
* Diptheria
* Coffee Beans
* Turnip
* Peach
* Pear
* Sheep
* Typhus
* Whooping Cough
* Banana
* Honeybee
* Sugar Cane
* Wheat
* Pig
* Measles
* Rice
* Barley
* Oats
* HORSE
* Smallpox
* Malaria
Explanation for European growth:

- Expansion of the food supply
  - As Thomas Malthus noted in the late 18th century: “Human populations tend to grow up to the limit of their food supply and then stagnate as malnutrition, famine, and disease keep pace with reproduction; but populations surge whenever people increase their supply of nutrition; abundant diet = good health and rapid reproduction.

- After 1492, European diet improved:
  - Long-distance transportation for produce + better techniques for rotating and fertilizing traditional grain crops
  - Primary cause: Adoption of new food crops cultivated in the Americas
Native Americans had developed certain wild plants into domesticated hybrids that were more productive than old world counterparts.

- Cassava (9.9 million calories per hectare (10,000 square meters/2.5 acres); Maize (7.3 million); Potatoes (7.5 million)
- Versus European wheat (4.2 million), Barley (5.1 million), and oats (5.5 million)
- Cassava could not be cultivated in Europe, but it thrived in Africa after introduction by the Portuguese = resulting surge in African population; supplying outflow of slaves to the American tropics and subtropics, where African slaves replaced native labor
In Europe, maize and potatoes endowed farmers with larger yields on smaller plots = benefit to poorest peasants.

- Took five acres planted in grain to support a family; potatoes could sustain three families on the same amount of land

- New crops = more stable; allowing cultivation of hostile soils ex) maize can grow in sandy soil and thrive in hot climate + potatoes can prosper in cold, thin, damp soils unsuitable to grain.

- During the 16th and 17th century, maize spread eastward around the Mediterranean to become fundamental to the peasant diet in Italy and France

- Potato cultivation expanded more slowly; primarily after 1680 in northern, central, and eastern Europe, following encouragement from governments eager to alleviate famines and promote population growth.
18th century: potato gained close association with Ireland, Irish numbers grew from 3 million in 1750 to 5.25 in 1800 = vulnerable to blight that devastated crop in 1840s; thousands starved to death and millions fled overseas.

- Ireland = common European story: new crops introduced to Europe = great surge in population; growth caught up to food supply = new hunger; European hunger sought relief by emigrating over the ocean to help settle the Americas; there they found unpopulated lands, rendered so by European diseases exported to New World; filling the demographic vacuum.

- Post-1492 exchange of New and Old World microbes and plants = double boon for Europeans: first, they obtained expanded food supply that permitted reproduction; second, they acquired access to fertile and extensive lands largely emptied by native peoples.
The colonizers brought along plants and animals new to the Americas, some by design and some by accident.

Determined to farm in a European manner, the colonists introduced livestock (honey bees, pigs, horses, mules, sheep, and cattle); domesticated plants (wheat, barley, rye, grasses, grapevines); pathogens, weeds, and vermin = all rapidly spread throughout American landscape = remaking it

To reduce work, colonists only fenced in crops, allowing livestock to roam free foraging for wild plants

- In 1518 a Spaniard reported thirty stray cattle ordinarily multiplied to three hundred within four years
- In 1700 a visitor to Virginia observed that pigs “swarm like vermin upon the Earth... running where they want and finding their own support in the Woods without any care of their owners.”
Ranging cattle and pigs wreaked havoc on American environment and natives depending upon it.

- Spanish pigs in the Caribbean consumed manioc (cassava) tubers, sweet potatoes, guavas, and pineapple that the Taino relied upon.
- In New England, the rooting swine thrived on the intertidal shellfish that natives relied upon; pigs also invaded native crop fields to consume maize, beans, and squash.
- When natives killed and ate the trespassing livestock, the colonists protested and demanded compensation for their lost property; when denied, angry colonists sought disproportionate revenge by raiding and burning native villages.

Other European animals hitched a ride: European rats (larger and more aggressive) which reproduced and spread; afflicting colonists and natives (storage pits inadequate to repel novel).
Disagreeable plants: fast-growing and hardy which competed with edible domestic plants; reproduced rapidly, filling any open, disturbed ground; endured exceptional abuse to push up and around rival plants.

- Native weeds: ragweed, goldenrod, milkweed (not as tough)
- European weeds (dandelions, thistles, plantain, nettles, nightshade, and sedge)
- More formidable European weeds = common cause = adapted to life amidst large domesticated animals (heavy trampling, grazing; benefited from earth exposed to sun by animal-drawn plows)

Spread rapidly; mixed in with hay and grain brought in European ships to subsist livestock; passed through animal digestion to be deposited wherever animals roamed.
Colonists and their livestock facilitated the spread of weeds by disrupting the native plants and by exposing great swaths of soil to the sun, wind, and rain.

- Hacked down forests to procure lumber and to make farms
- Grazing and plowing exposed the soil to erosion and desiccation
- Weeds had abundant experience filling in where plows, hooves, and grazing mouths left gaping holes in the wild biota
- Although unappreciated by farmers, imported weeds helped stabilize the environmental shock wrought by colonization.

= ecological revolution
Although the demographic disaster and ecological imperialism undermined natives’ ability to defend their lands and autonomy, they remained sufficiently numerous to hinder and compromise the colonial conquest.

Native peoples proved resilient and resourceful in adapting to their difficult new circumstances. Many seized upon new plants and animals for their own advantage.

- Horses = new prowess as buffalo hunters and mounted warriors; better fed, clothed, and equipped than before = could defy colonial intrusions; roll back some of their settlement
- Navajo = rich by appropriating Europeans’ heep and looms; producing distinctive wool cloth; defended canyons with European horses and firearms; plundered Indian and Hispanic enemies

Conclusion
Because of their resilience, Indians became indispensable to the European contenders for North American empire.

On their contested frontiers, each empire desperately needed natives as trading partners, guides, religious converts, and military allies.

By the late 17th century, the imperial contests were primarily struggles to construct networks of Indian allies and to unravel those of rival powers.

Indian relations were therefore central to the development of every colonial region.
EFFECTS

- Europeans reach and settle Americas
- Expanded knowledge of world geography
- Growth of trade, mercantilism and capitalism
- Indian conflicts over land and impact of disease on Indian populations
- Introduction of the institution of slavery
- Columbian Exchange