

SECTION 2

Spanish North America

MAIN IDEA

Beginning with the voyage of Christopher Columbus, the Spanish built a vast colonial empire in the Americas.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The Spanish left an impact on the cultures of North and South America that helped to shape present-day America.

Terms & Names

- Christopher Columbus
- Taino
- Treaty of Tordesillas
- Columbian Exchange
- conquistador
- Hernándo Cortés
- Montezuma
- mestizo
- encomienda
- New Spain
- New Mexico

One European's Story

On August 3, 1492, the Genoese mariner **Christopher Columbus** set out on a bold expedition: to find a route to Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. It was a journey destined to change the course of world history. A seeker of fame and fortune, Columbus began his travel journal by restating the deal he had struck with the Spanish rulers financing his voyage.



A PERSONAL VOICE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

“Based on the information that I had given Your Highnesses about the land of India and about a Prince who is called the Great Khan [of China] . . . Your Highnesses decided to send me . . . to the regions of India, to see . . . the peoples and the lands, and to learn of . . . the measures which could be taken for their conversion to our Holy Faith. . . . I was to go by way of the west, whence until today we do not know with certainty that anyone has gone.”

—The Log of Christopher Columbus

Columbus never reached Asia. He landed on an island he thought was off the coast of Asia but was actually in the Caribbean Sea. Instead of finding the Great Khan, Columbus set in motion a process that brought together the American, European, and African worlds.

▲ Christopher Columbus from a painting done in 1519.

Columbus Crosses the Atlantic

In October 1492, roughly two months after leaving Spain, Columbus’s small fleet of ships, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María*, reached land. Columbus went ashore, where he encountered a group of people who would become known as the **Taino** (tā’nō), from their word for “noble ones.” He planted Spanish banners and renamed their island San Salvador (“Holy Savior”), claiming it for Spain. Columbus spent 96 days exploring four coral islands in the Bahamas and the coastlines of two larger Caribbean islands, known today as Cuba and Hispaniola.

Vocabulary

colonize: to establish settlements under the control of a parent country

Convinced that he had landed on islands off Asia, known to Europeans as the Indies, Columbus called the people he met *los indios*. Thus the name *Indian* came to be mistakenly applied to all the diverse peoples of the Americas. The Spanish monarchs were thrilled with Columbus's discoveries and funded three more of his voyages—this time to colonize the lands he had claimed.

THE IMPACT ON NATIVE AMERICANS By the time Columbus set sail for his return to Hispaniola in 1493, Europeans had already developed a pattern for colonization. They had glimpsed the profitability of the plantation system, realized the economic benefits of using native or local peoples for forced labor, and learned to use European weapons to dominate native peoples. These tactics would be used in the Americas.

The arrival of the Europeans devastated Native Americans by another means: disease. The Taino, for example, had not developed any natural immunity to measles, mumps, chickenpox, smallpox, typhus, or other diseases Europeans had unknowingly brought with them. Consequently, the Taino died by the thousands once they were exposed.

THE IMPACT ON AFRICANS With the decline of the native work force the European settlers of the Americas eventually turned to Africa for slaves. The Atlantic slave trade devastated many African societies, particularly in West Africa. Starting in the 1500s, African cultures lost many of their young and more able members. Before the Atlantic slave trade ended in the 1800s, it had drained Africa of at least 10 million people.

THE IMPACT ON EUROPEANS Columbus's voyages had profound effects on Europeans as well. In search of new lives, Europeans began to cross the Atlantic by the thousands in what would become one of the biggest voluntary migrations in world history. Overseas expansion inflamed national rivalries in Europe. In 1494, Spain and Portugal signed the **Treaty of Tordesillas** (tôr'də-sē'əs), in which they agreed to divide the Western Hemisphere between them. **A**

THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE The voyages of Columbus and those after him led to the discovery of plants and animals in the Americas that were new to Europeans and Africans. Ships took items such as corn, potatoes, and tobacco from the Americas to Europe and to Africa. From these countries, they brought back livestock, grains, fruit, and coffee. This global transfer of living things, called the **Columbian Exchange**, began with Columbus's first voyage and continues today.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Events

A What did Spain and Portugal agree to do in the Treaty of Tordesillas?

The Columbian Exchange



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

Human-environment interaction

How do you think the Columbian Exchange has enriched each hemisphere?

The Spanish Claim a New Empire

In the wake of Columbus's voyages, Spanish explorers took to the seas to claim new colonies for Spain. These explorers were lured by the prospect of vast lands filled with gold and silver. Known as **conquistadors** (kōng-kē'stə-dōrz') (conquerors), they conquered much of the Americas.

CORTÉS SUBDUES THE AZTEC Soon after landing in Mexico in 1519, **Hernándo Cortés** learned of the vast and wealthy Aztec empire in the region's interior. With a force of 508 men, 16 horses, 10 cannons, and numerous dogs, the conquistador marched inland.

The Spaniards marveled at Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, with its towering temples and elaborate engineering works—including a system that brought fresh water into the city. "We were amazed," one of Cortés's soldiers said of his first glimpse of Tenochtitlán. "Some of our soldiers even asked whether the things we saw were not a dream." While the Aztec city astonished the Spaniards, the capital's glittering gold stock seemed to hypnotize them. "They picked up the gold and fingered it like monkeys," one native witness recalled. "They hungered like pigs for that gold."

The Aztec emperor, **Montezuma**, convinced at first that Cortés was an armor-clad god, agreed to give the Spanish explorer a share of the empire's existing gold supply. The conquistador was not satisfied. Cortés eventually forced the Aztec to mine more gold and silver. In the spring of 1520, the Aztec rebelled against the Spaniards' intrusion. Regarding Montezuma as a traitor, the Aztec are believed to have stoned their ruler to death before driving out Cortés's forces.

While they had successfully repelled the Spanish invaders, the Aztec were falling victim to the diseases that the Spanish had brought with them. By the time Cortés launched a counterattack in 1521, the Spanish and their native allies overran an Aztec force that had been greatly reduced by smallpox and measles. After several months of fighting, the invaders sacked and burned Tenochtitlán, and the Aztec surrendered. **B**

THE SPANISH PATTERN OF CONQUEST

In building their American empire, the Spaniards lived among the native people and sought to impose their own culture upon them. The settlers, mostly men, tended to intermarry with native women. This practice eventually created a large **mestizo** (mēs-tē'zō)—or mixed Spanish and Native American—population in the Spanish colonies. Nonetheless, the Spanish also oppressed the people among whom they lived. In their effort to exploit the land for its resources, they forced Native American workers to labor in an **encomienda** (ēng-kô-myēn'dä) system. Under that system, natives farmed, ranched, or mined for Spanish landlords, who received the rights to their labor from Spanish authorities.

KEY PLAYER

HERNÁNDO CORTÉS 1485–1547

Cortés made himself the enemy of thousands of Native Americans, but the daring conquistador did not have many friends among Spaniards. Spanish authorities on Cuba, where Cortés owned land, accused the conquistador of murdering his wife, Catalina Juárez. "There were ugly accusations, but none proved," wrote Juárez's biographer.

In addition, the Cuban governor, Diego Velázquez, who resented Cortés's arrogance, relieved him of the command of a gold-seeking expedition to the mainland. Cortés left Cuba anyway. As he fought his way through Mexico, Cortés had to battle not only the Native Americans but also the Spanish forces that Velázquez sent to arrest him.



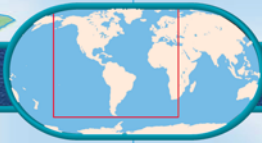
MAIN IDEA

Summarizing

B What factors enabled the Spanish to conquer the Aztec?

European Exploration of the Americas, 1492–1682

INTERACTIVE



Juan de la Cosa, pilot-navigator on Columbus's ship *Niña*, drew the known world on this oxblood map in 1500. Europeans' shaky understanding of the geography of the Americas at this time is revealed in the coastline of North and South America (shown in green).

	Spanish
	Columbus
	French
	English
	Dutch

0 1,000 2,000 miles
0 1,000 2,000 kilometers

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

- 1. Movement** How many voyages to the Americas did Columbus make?
- 2. Place** In what years did the English and French sail to the Americas and which regions did they explore?

A number of Spanish priests demanded an end to the harsh *encomienda* system. In 1511, Fray Antonio de Montesinos delivered a fiery sermon in which he attacked the use of the native population for slave labor.

A PERSONAL VOICE FRAY ANTONIO DE MONTESINOS

“Tell me, by what right or justice do you hold these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? . . . Why do you keep them so oppressed and exhausted, without giving them enough to eat or curing them of the sicknesses they incur from the excessive labor you give them? . . . Are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves? Don’t you understand this? Don’t you feel this?”

—quoted in *Reflections, Writing for Columbus*

In 1542, the Spanish monarchy abolished the *encomienda* system, and to meet their labor needs, the Spaniards began to use enslaved Africans. **C**

SPAIN ENJOYS A GOLDEN AGE In 1532, Francisco Pizarro plundered the wealthy Inca empire on the western coast of South America. With this conquest and others, the Spanish built a vast empire, which included **New Spain** (Mexico, and part of what is now Guatemala), as well as lands in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Spanish explorers also undertook expeditions into what is now the southern United States. There, they established a string of outposts to protect their holdings and to spread their culture and religion to the Native Americans. Beginning with the efforts of Ponce de León in 1513, the Spanish settled in what is now Florida. In 1565, they established the outpost of St. Augustine on the Florida coast. The settlement has survived to become the oldest European-founded city in the United States.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives

C Why did some Spanish priests demand an end to the *encomienda* system?

Spain Explores the Southwest and West

Throughout the mid-1500s, the Spanish also explored and settled in what are now the southwest and west regions of the United States. In 1540, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led a most ambitious venture, as he traveled throughout much of what is now Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and Kansas in search of another wealthy empire to conquer. Failing to find gold and other treasures, the dejected conquistador returned home. After wandering for two years, the only precious metal Coronado carried home was his own battered gold-plated armor.

THE SPANISH FOUND NEW MEXICO Some 50 years later, the Spanish returned to the modern-day Southwest—in search not of riches but of Christian converts. In its Royal Orders of New Discoveries of 1573, Spain outlined the duties of these new explorers who now included Roman Catholic priests. When converting the Native Americans, priests were ordered to provide them with “the many . . . essentials of life—bread, silk, linen, horses, cattle, tools, and weapons, and all the rest that Spain has had.” Numerous Spanish priests had arrived in the Americas to spread Roman Catholicism. The barren land north of New Spain may have held little gold, but it was home to many Native American souls to convert. In the winter of 1609–1610, Pedro de Peralta, governor of Spain’s northern holdings, called **New Mexico**, led settlers to a tributary of the upper Rio Grande. Together they built a capital called Santa Fe, or “Holy Faith.” The hooves of pack mules wore down an 1,800-mile trail known as El Camino Real or “the Royal Road,” as they carried goods back and forth between Santa Fe and Mexico City. In the next two decades, a string of Catholic missions arose among the Pueblos in the area. **D**

THE SPANISH OPEN MISSIONS IN TEXAS As early as 1519, Alonso Álvarez de Piñeda of Spain had mapped the coast of what is today Texas. Soon afterward, in 1528, the first Europeans had begun to settle in the interior. Over the next 200

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives

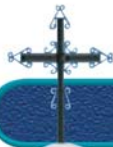
D What attracted the Spanish to what is now the Southwest?

years, using the San Antonio area as their administrative center, the Spanish sent more than 30 expeditions inland to explore and to settle. The land was already sparsely inhabited by Native Americans, including members of the large and diverse Apache group, whom Spanish missionaries sought to convert to Christianity. The first two Spanish missions in Texas were founded in 1682 near what is now El Paso.

Beginning in 1718, a number of missions opened along the San Antonio River. Founded in 1720, Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in San Antonio was by many accounts the most beautiful and successful Texas mission. Its compound included buildings for living, worshipping, storing grain, spinning and weaving cotton and wool, carpentry, iron working, and tailoring.

A STRING OF MISSIONS SPANS CALIFORNIA In 1542 the navigator Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, exploring the west coast of North America, discovered the harbor that was later named San Diego. In 1769, the Spanish missionary Father Junípero Serra founded the first California mission at San Diego.

By 1823, Spanish Franciscan priests, followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, had founded a string of 21 missions, each one day's walk (about 30 miles) from the next. Many of the missions were protected by forts, called presidios, built nearby. A presidio and a mission founded in 1776 in San Francisco preceded the development of that city. The aims of the missionaries in California, as in Texas, were to convert the Native Americans to Christianity, to educate them in European ways and skills, and to secure the area for Spanish settlement. Many Spanish mis-



Spanish Missions in the Southwest

The missions built by the priests who accompanied the conquistadors combined the rich architectural heritage of Spain with symbols and traditions familiar to their Native American converts.

Most missions were a series of buildings grouped around a courtyard, which was used for festivals or services. These courtyards acknowledged the Native American practice of worshipping in the open air.

◀ In Texas and California, bells used to summon people to worship were often hung in *espadañas*, tiered clusters framed by a rounded wall meant to resemble a cloud. To the Native Americans of the Southwest, clouds represented power.



Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, California

Mission San Miguel, California



sions are still standing and some are still in use. They remain as lasting memorials to the great cultures reflected in their architecture.

RESISTANCE TO THE SPANISH The impact of the Spanish missions on Native American cultures has been a subject of much historical controversy. Recent historians assert that the mission system negatively affected many Native American communities in several ways. The Spanish required Native Americans who converted to Christianity to live inside the missions, separating them from their families and cultures. Native Americans who tried to leave were punished. The Spanish also forced Native Americans to provide labor for farming and construction, give up their self-government, and adopt European dress, diet, and living arrangements. During the 1670s, priests and soldiers around Santa Fe began forcing Native Americans to help support the missions by paying a tribute, an offering of either goods or services. The tribute was usually a bushel of maize or a deer hide, but the Spanish also forced Native Americans to work for them and sometimes abused them physically. Native Americans who practiced their native religion or refused to pay a tribute were beaten.

“The heathen have concealed a mortal hatred for our holy faith and enmity for the Spanish nation.”

SPANISH OFFICER,
WRITING OF POPE’S REBELLION

Spanish priests punished the Pueblo religious leader Popé for his worship practices, which they interpreted as witchcraft. In 1680, the angered leader led a well-organized uprising against the Spanish that involved some 17,000 warriors from villages all over New Mexico. The triumphant fighters destroyed Catholic churches, executed priests and settlers, and drove the Spaniards back into New Spain. For the next 12 years—until the Spanish regained control of the area—the southwest region of the future United States once again belonged to its original inhabitants.

But Spain would never again have complete control of the Americas. In 1588, England had defeated the Spanish Armada, a naval fleet assembled to invade England, ending Spain’s naval dominance in the Atlantic. In time, England began forging colonies along the eastern shore of North America, thus extending its own empire in the New World. But Spain’s influence continues in the people and customs of the Southeast and Southwest.



ASSESSMENT

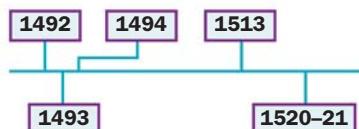
1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Christopher Columbus
- Columbian Exchange
- Montezuma
- New Spain
- Taino
- conquistador
- mestizo
- New Mexico
- Treaty of Tordesillas
- Hernándo Cortés
- encomienda

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES

Create a time line of the major events and significant dates of Columbus’s voyages and the Spanish exploration of the New World. Use the dates already plotted on the time line below as a guide.



CRITICAL THINKING

3. ANALYZING EFFECTS

What do you think were the most important long-term consequences of Columbus’s encounters in the Americas? **Think About:**

- conquering and claiming land
- forced labor of Native Americans and Africans
- the impact on Africa, Europe, and the Americas

4. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

State three conclusions about Spanish exploration and settlement north of Mexico and the Spaniards’ interaction with Native Americans there. Why did the Native Americans of New Mexico revolt against the Spanish settlers?