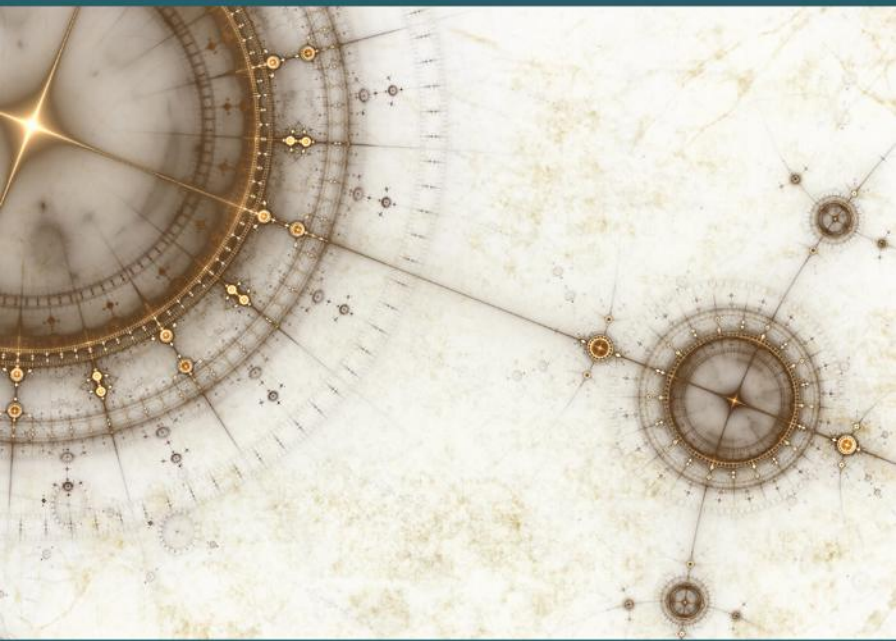
Colonial America
IN AN ATLANTIC WORLD

SECOND EDITION



T. H. Breen • Timothy D. Hall

Colonial America in an Atlantic World

From Colonies to Revolution

Second Edition

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Preface

The second edition of *Colonial America in an Atlantic World*, like the first, responds to a growing interest among teachers and students in a broad and exciting field commonly known as Atlantic history. The approach greatly expands the human and physical boundaries of the subject, which once only looked at white settlers organizing new forms of religion and government. This traditional perspective left too many people out of the story. We have, therefore, tried to present the history of Colonial America in terms of dynamic interaction among the peoples of four continents over several centuries. The world in which these diverse peoples fought, traded, befriended, allied, betrayed one another, made love, married, and bore children was an extraordinarily complex and fluid multiplicity of communities, a vast region in which nations remained in constant flux from fifteenth century through the end of the eighteenth century and beyond.

Our narrative continues to center on the development of the North American region that became the United States. In this second edition, we carry that narrative through the ratification of the Constitution in three new chapters. While we wish to avoid treating the long colonial period as a mere prologue to the founding and development of the United States, we also want to avoid the sort of emphasis on the Atlantic and world contexts that risks fragmentation of the narrative into discreet treatment of topics with no attempt to identify a larger, unifying set of themes. To be sure, a variety of narratives may be teased out of the scattered documentary and archaeological traces of past historical experience. But one that surely emerges from an examination of colonial experience in what became British America is the development and eventual division of empire as the thirteen mainland colonies eventually came to declare and win their independence from British rule.

Approach and Themes

We set the story of colonial British America's development in a broader Atlantic narrative not simply for the sake of shifting the interpretive focus away from a familiar tale of intrepid settlers in the wilderness. The Atlantic context exposes more clearly themes that are often overlooked. After all, it constituted the very atmosphere within which ordinary men and women made crucial decisions about work and religion, about families and communities, and about warfare and exploitation. The first European settlers brought with them a bundle of social and religious ideas that shaped how they behaved in the New World—both for good (e.g., setting up governments that allowed for greater participation than had been known in the Old World) and for ill (removing Native Americans and promoting slavery). So, studying Early America without a background that includes European and Africa misses the significance of the flow of ideas and customs across the ocean.

Moreover, from the very beginning, the Europeans saw that Atlantic commerce was essential to their prosperity. Massachusetts governor John Winthrop and his friends traded with planters in the Caribbean; early Virginians sold their tobacco on the European market. Without understanding the movement of goods—incentives for work and entrepreneurial efforts—we are left with a narrow, parochial, and truncated understanding of the development of these communities. The frontier was always in close contact with distant markets and imperial capitals. Our approach, therefore, dismisses the long-discredited notion that white

Americans were merely plotting for independence and democracy from the first landing. This is wrong. They were trying to carve a place within this larger commercial world, and on the ships that carried trade, came new religious, literary, and scientific ideas from Europe as well as Creole languages, music, and art from Africa, and combined both with borrowed ideas, practices, and bits of language borrowed from the indigenous peoples they encountered in this world they called new.

No inhabitant of North America remained unchanged from this experience, and the European colonists in particular did much more than simply echo European thought, art, and architecture. They turned these influences into something different—not degenerate, as some aristocratic eighteenth-century European *philosophes* charged—just different. Anglo-American political experiences were based on English law and practice, but the particularities of life in the North American colonies required adaptations that produced different institutions. Architecture made use of readily available local materials and fitted local needs.

It was this creative aspect of the Atlantic World—a borrowing and recasting—that many historical treatments tend to overlook. And this process of creative adaptation characterized not just the first generation of colonization, but continued to shape the development of colonial American society and culture throughout the eighteenth century. The wars that defined the entire period from 1690 to 1763 were driven in large part by competition for markets among European powers. But here again, there were unintended consequences. The Americans were not cut off from Great Britain, but they had their own ambitions for land, which in turn exacerbated white-Indian relations. The creative process of constitution writing that occupied leaders of the newly independent states reflected the same process of creative borrowing and refiguring. Seen in this light, the Federal Constitution ratified in 1788 was yet another product of the process of creative adaptation that made America at once a part of the larger Atlantic World and a collection of particular local communities with their own distinct cultures.

Structure and Features

The structure and features of *Colonial America in an Atlantic World* are intended to stimulate student interest and curiosity about a complex, multiracial past. The book traces the theme of creative adaptations—a key argument throughout the work—within a three-part structure organized chronologically. The first edition's three chapters of Part I, "Three Worlds Meet," have been condensed to two. The first chapter of this section reviews the pre-Columbian background of European conquest Europe and explores the earliest years of European discovery and encounter within a complex story of trade and bondage throughout the African and American worlds. The next chapter surveys sixteenth-century Iberian colonization of the Caribbean and North America and the contest among other European powers for entry into this lucrative Atlantic system. Unlike other titles in the field, we insist that imperial power in the New World—battle ships and trained soldiers—figured centrally in how people formed and maintained political identities over the entire period. Together, these chapters provide an indispensable historical context for understanding the specific shape taken by English, Dutch, and French colonization of North America during the following century.

The five chapters of Part II, "The Contest for Seventeenth-Century Settlement," focus more closely on English and Dutch colonization of the Caribbean and North America while continuing to trace Spanish and French development on the continent. The varieties of adaptation that took place in each colonial region help explain both the striking diversity that appeared—even among colonies established by the same European nation—and the course of imperial conflict that emerged among various European and native rivals for North America. The five chapters

of Part III, "Provinces in a Contested Empire: The Eighteenth Century" survey the growth of Anglo-American colonies through an ongoing process of political and cultural adaptation. It sets this process within a context of an accelerating struggle among the British and French for control of the North Atlantic world as Spanish influence in the region waned. A new Part IV, "Revolution in Atlantic America," offers an overview of the rapid alienation of the thirteen mainland colonies in response to sweeping changes in Britain imperial policy, which eventuated in the division of the first British Empire when armed conflict erupted and the thirteen mainland colonies declared independence. The final chapter reviews steps the newly independent United States took to establish itself as an Atlantic power in its own right.

Each chapter of *Colonial America in an Atlantic World* opens with an account of human experience written to raise one or more significant questions about the chapter topics and provide a concrete example of how actual men and women—many of them obscure people—experienced the great historical changes of their era, the conquest of the Native Americans, the expansion of world markets, the demands of imperial competition and warfare, the spread of evangelical region, and the growth of slavery. Chapters are organized chronologically and by colonial region, incorporating the main themes of the text in the appropriate context. Each chapter includes brief chronology and a bibliographic essay, which summarizes works consulted in preparation of the chapter and offers suggestions for further investigation. We believe that the organization and length will make the text especially useful for providing students of history a comprehensive overview of colonial development, which they can deepen through further investigation of specialized works like those included in each chapter's bibliographic essays.

New to This Edition

- In response to a rapidly expanding student interest in Atlantic History, *Colonial America* draws on the latest scholarship and develops a broad comparative story of New World Conquest and Imperial Rivalry in North America and the Caribbean.
- The new edition adds chapters on the American Revolution, an event covered only superficially by other products in the market.
- Provides much fuller coverage of Native American history from before European Conquest through the 18th century.
- Offers enhanced discussion of the African Diaspora and Development of African American culture in the New World.
- Includes updated bibliographies for each chapter so that students can locate the best current scholarship in Atlantic and Colonial American history.
- Each chapter has been thoroughly revised and updated to incorporate new developments and interpretations in colonial American history.

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Part I
Creating an Atlantic World
Three Worlds Meet

"I have found a continent more densely peopled and abounding in animals than our Europe or Asia or Africa," the explorer Amerigo Vespucci reported to his Florentine sponsors in 1503. "These we may rightly call a new world, because our ancestors had no knowledge of them, and it will be a matter wholly new to all those who hear about them."

Vespucci's new world soon came to bear his name as word of its existence spread throughout Europe. The news stimulated a rush of explorers across the Atlantic: intrepid, idealistic, and often unscrupulous men who set out in search of treasure, converts to Christianity, and opportunities for enterprise and transatlantic empire. Within a few decades after Columbus first set foot on the island of Hispañola, the Americas were undergoing cataclysmic change that made their worlds equally new to the remnants of once-great peoples who had originally inhabited them. The transformation quickly swept Africa into its wake as America's new overlords brought Africans in chains to replenish a native labor supply unexpectedly decimated by the introduction of epidemic disease to the Americas.

Iberian adventurers and missionaries dominated the sixteenth-century New World. Spain took possession of vast territories rich in precious metals, which enriched the entire European economy as they entered circulation through the port of Seville. Spanish rulers initially hoped to secure all lands discovered in the western Atlantic through the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. Yet the subsequent discovery that the Brazilian coast lay east of the treaty line allowed Portugal to stake its own claim to New World territory that was rich in dyewood and soil suitable for sugar cultivation.

Ambitious European rivals viewed the burgeoning Iberian empires with a mixture of envy and fear. By the 1560s, both England and France were mounting vigorous challenges to Iberian hegemony in the New World. Soon Spain's rebellious northern provinces in the Netherlands entered the fray. The ensuing contest for treasure and territory brought a fresh wave of contact and exchange as northern Europeans raided Spanish and Portuguese possessions and probed for resources and trading partners not yet exploited by the Iberians.

Spanish authorities found themselves increasingly pressed. They strengthened the armed escorts of their treasure fleet. They seized foreign vessels in American waters and enslaved the crews in galleys or on plantations. They patrolled the North American coastline, searching out rival settlements, razing the buildings, and enslaving or killing the inhabitants. They sent out

missionaries to win converts, establish missions, and strengthen ties with native peoples in hopes of shutting their rivals out. Yet English, French, and Dutch raiders kept striking at the edges of Spain's mighty but increasingly brittle empire, exploiting every weakness they could find and growing more effective with every success. By the end of the sixteenth century, the widening cracks in Iberian hegemony were creating new opportunities for rivals to gain permanent colonial footholds in the New World.

Chapter 1
Origins of an Atlantic World

Learning Objectives

1.1 Recognize the presence of Indians in America before Columbus' discovery of it

1.2 Describe the early Portugese and Spanish sea ventures to America

1.3 Report the conflict that occurred when the voyagers tried to settle in America

1.4 Explain how coastal North America came to be conquered by European countries other than Spain

1.5 Examine the effect of the Europeans invasion on the indigenous traditions of America and Africa

1.6 Explain how the encounters between the invaders and the invaded transformed the landscape of North America

On August 7, 1498, inhabitants of the París Peninsula on the northern coast of South America welcomed Admiral Christopher Columbus to their shores with presents of "bread and maize and things to eat and pitchers of a beverage." According to his custom, the Spanish Admiral brought the Native Americans on board his ship and laid out samples of trade goods for their inspection. His guests proved discriminating customers, giving "nothing for the beads, but all they had for hawks' bells. . . . They esteemed brass very highly." In return the Indians offered him "parrots of two or three species" and "kerchiefs of cotton carefully embroidered and woven in colors and workmanship exactly like those . . . from the rivers of Sierra Leone [West Africa]." The Indians left Columbus's vessel before nightfall, thwarting his desire to take "half a dozen" New World souvenirs with him.

The account of this brief exchange during Columbus's third voyage reminds us that the story of cultural encounter involved much more than simply discovery and conquest. Yet the native voice in this exchange was quickly drowned out by a familiar European narrative in which intrepid explorers brought glory to the Christian faith, to the Spanish monarchs, and, not least, to the conquerors themselves. In a letter circulated throughout Europe at the end of his first voyage—the new print technology spread knowledge of the New World to an eager public—Columbus announced,

"As I know that you will be pleased at the great victory with which Our Lord has crowned my voyage, I write this to you, from which you will learn how in thirty-three days, I passed from the Canary Islands to the Indies. . . . And there I found very many islands filled with people innumerable, and of them all I have taken possession for their highnesses [King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella]."

Columbus and the adventurers who sailed in his wake wove a tale of discovery that survived in Western memory long after many of the Indians he encountered had become extinct. The story recounted first in Europe and then in the United States depicted visionary captains, selfless missionaries, and intrepid settlers carrying civilization to the peoples of the New World and opening a vast virgin land to economic progress. This tale celebrated the inevitable triumph of European values over peoples and cultures viewed as primitive and inferior. It was a history populated by the victors that silenced the voices of the conquered, ignored a horrific record of untold millions dead or enslaved, and overwrote the pasts of their victims with a woefully partial and inadequate explanation of how Europe's descendants had come to dominate the world we know today.

Yet the newcomers established settlements on the ruins of an ancient America whose majestic archaeological remains constitute only part of a huge body of evidence that suggests a much different story line. Historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists since the 1960s have tapped these sources to reconstruct long, complex histories of American Indian and African civilizations along with much more balanced accounts of early encounters among the inhabitants of four Atlantic continents. Far from being passive victims of Columbian Conquest or Atlantic slavery, Indians and Africans brought sophisticated cultural traditions to the exchanges with Europeans, influencing powerfully the character of interracial societies that developed in the New World.

By placing these complex, often unsettling events within a framework of encounters shaped by the past and present cultures of the various participants—rather than exploration, colonization, or settlement—we can begin to recapture the full human dimensions of these early exchanges. At the same time, we must recognize that the manifold settings of encounter, which historians have variously described as "cultural frontiers," "zones of exchange," or "middle grounds," were extremely precarious. Like environmental ecotones or border areas between two ecological systems, New World settings of encounter were fraught with opportunity and danger. Too often, the New World was the scene of tragic violence and systematic exploitation. Yet it also presented ordinary people with opportunities to exercise extraordinary creativity in shaping their own lives; neither the Native Americans nor the Africans were passive victims of European colonization. Nor, for that matter, were the poor whites who took their chances on the New World.

Within their own families and communities, these obscure men and women made choices, sometimes rebelling, sometimes accommodating. Yet always they labored to make sense in their own terms out of what was happening to them, taking advantages and minimizing costs as they were able. Although they sometimes failed to preserve dignity and often lost independence, their efforts poignantly reveal that the history of the New World—be it from the perspective of the Native American, the African American, or the European—is above all else a story of human agency.

1.1: Diverse Historical Experiences

1.1 Recognize the presence of Indians in America before Columbus' discovery of it

A recent outpouring of scholarship reminds us that African and American Indian cultures possessed pasts as lengthy and distinguished as the

cultures of Europeans who came into sustained contact with them in the sixteenth century. Inhabitants of Africa and the Americas as well as Europe were divided into a multiplicity of nations and peoples embroiled in intense and constantly shifting conflicts and alliances. Each brought to the New World encounter conflicting cultural beliefs, assumptions, aspirations, customs, and practices that had been shaped by long historical development. The diverse perspectives each group brought to encounter sometimes overlapped, allowing them to find common ground for cooperation. On other occasions conflicting agendas sparked deadly clashes, which engulfed neighboring peoples as well. Whatever the outcome, the processes of conflict, adaptation, resistance, and accommodation that marked colonial American history were conditioned by histories that had been shaping each group long before Columbus plotted his westward course in 1492.

Most North American Indian origin stories have taught that their ancestors have always been on the continent, a belief that many continue to hold today. Most modern archaeologists, on the other hand, believe that America's indigenous peoples arrived in successive waves of migration during the last Ice Age, beginning at least thirty thousand years ago and perhaps much longer. They theorize that the vast glaciers of the period lowered ocean levels by hundreds of feet, creating- the subcontinent of Beringia in the region of what is now the Bering Sea as well as a much longer Aleutian Island chain, which supported travel by small boats. Ancient hunters fished along the Aleutian coastline or tracked large game animals such as mastodons and wooly mammoths across the land bridge from the Asian steppes to North America, eventually pressing into South America as well.

Traditional Indian and modern archaeological accounts agree that the first American peoples were highly migratory, dispersing widely across both Americas in waves. Local populations developed distinct languages, distinct cultures, and often even distinct physical features such as stature. Some lineage groups continued to rely on hunting and gathering for thousands of years, while others began cultivating agricultural crops on a scale that eventually supported large and powerful civilizations. Evidence suggests that some such civilizations existed in South America over four thousand years ago and in North America by the first few centuries C.E. In Mesoamerica, the highly complex Olmec civilization flourished more than two thousand years ago, giving rise to a succession of large-scale civilizations whose massive ruins dot the landscape from central Mexico through Central America. By the first few centuries C.E., inhabitants were constructing the sophisticated Mayan centers of the Yucatán, the highland city of Monte Albán, and the great Mesoamerican metropolis of Teotihuacán. Like the Incas who lived in what is now known as Peru, Mayan and Toltec peoples ruled their great city-states through government bureaucracies that controlled large tributary populations. The Mayans also developed hieroglyphic writing and a solar calendar that predicted eclipses as accurately as any Old World systems. In size and population, Mesoamerican cities often exceeded those of medieval and early modern Europe. The Aztecs and Tlaxcalans encountered by Cortés were only the latest of several such civilizations.

Further north, the Anasazi people of what is now the U.S. Southwest lived in large cities of stone connected by a network of well-surveyed and well-constructed roads for communication and trade. The area encompassed more than 25,000 square miles, linking central towns with straight, well-made roads up to 40 feet wide and as much as 60 miles long. At its height in 1150 C.E., the principal settlement at Chaco Canyon supported a population of at least 15,000 people, while another center at Mesa Verde sustained a population of at least 2,500 in dwellings

CAHOKIA

dramatically situated among almost inaccessible cliffs, while a cluster of settlements in nearby Montezuma Canyon was home to as many as 30,000. In the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys of central North America, a succession of mound-building civilizations such as the Adena, Hopewell, and Mississippian cultures flourished over a similar range of time, conducting trade that ranged from the shores of Lake Superior to the north, Yellowstone to the west, and the Appalachians and Gulf to the south.

Like the Americas, sixteenth-century Africa boasted a great variety of states and societies with long and distinguished histories. As with American Indians before Columbus, the work of archaeologists, ethnographers, and anthropologists over the past hundred years has done much to uncover the rich complexity of sub-Saharan Africa's ancient past. Trans-Sahara trade flourished for millennia, supporting a succession of populous, and powerful states and empires. By the fifteenth century, these trans-Saharan routes provided rich sources of gold and salt for the Mediterranean trade, further enriching the African states while sparking competition among them. Great rivers of West and Central Africa such as the Gambia, the Niger, and the Congo enabled merchants to extend trade networks deep into the interior. Skilled boatmen also plied the African coast with valuable cargos of iron bars and implements, rich varieties of cloth, gold, silver, kola, gum, and slaves.

The multiplicity of African states and societies obscured some important overarching unities among the peoples of various regions. Scholars now identify three broad cultural zones within which West and Central Africans lived out their lives. The Upper Guinea cultural zone encompassed the region from the Senegal River to modern Liberia and incorporated the dialects of two great linguistic families, the Wolof and the Mande. The Lower Guinea cultural zone stretched from the Ivory Coast to modern-day Cameroon. Little interaction took place between Lower and Upper Guinea, but trade and travel flourished among the two major cultural and linguistic groups, the Akan of the west, many of whom mined gold, and the Aja farmers, fishermen, and salt traders

of the east. The zone of central Africa's Angola coast extended north and south from the mouth of the Congo River and stretched hundreds of miles inland throughout the Congo's vast network of tributaries. Most coastal peoples spoke either Kikongo or Kimbundu, two western Bantu languages as similar as Spanish and Portuguese. One or the other of these "Angola" tongues also served as a lingua franca among the more linguistically diverse interior groups. Like the peoples of the two culture zones to the north, these peoples shared many religious concepts, artistic forms, social customs, and religious beliefs. In political life, however, sharp rivalries marked relations between the elite leaders of the many states, especially the powerful Kongo and Ndongo kingdoms. Yet ordinary people cared little for their rulers' stance toward other states and interacted readily with one another during war as well as peace.

In fifteenth-century Europe, several important developments began converging to provide powerful new impulses that pushed European adventures southward along the African coast and westward into the open Atlantic. Europe became more prosperous; political authority became more centralized; and the overlapping movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation fostered an extraordinary intellectual ferment, religious reform, and political change. A major element in this shift was the slow but steady growth of population after 1450. Historians are uncertain about the cause of this increase—after all, neither the quality of medicine nor personal sanitation improved much—but the result was a substantial rise in the price of land, since there were more mouths to feed. Landlords profited from these trends, and as their income expanded, they demanded more of the consumer goods, often luxury items such as spices, silks, and jewels, that came from distant ports. Economic prosperity created powerful new incentives for exploration and trade even as new political and religious developments presented new opportunities to ambitious, talented persons of ordinary birth.

1.2: First European Ventures across the Atlantic

1.2 Describe the early Portugese and Spanish sea ventures to America

In ancient times, the West possessed mythical appeal to people living along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Classical writers speculated about the fate of Atlantis, a fabled civilization said to have sunk beneath the ocean. Fallen Greek warriors allegedly spent eternity in an uncharted western paradise. But because Greek and Roman ships were ill-designed to navigate the open Atlantic, the lands to the west remained the stuff of legend. In the fifth century, the inventive Irish monk St. Brendan reported visiting enchanted islands far out in the Atlantic. He even claimed to have met a talking whale named Jasconius, who allowed the famished voyager to cook a meal on his back.

In the tenth century, Scandinavian seafarers known as Norsemen or Vikings established settlements in the New World. In the year 984, a band of Vikings led by Eric the Red sailed west from Iceland to a large island in the North Atlantic. Eric, a master of public relations, named the island Greenland, reasoning that others would more willingly colonize this icebound region "if the country had a good name." A few years later, Eric's son Leif founded a small settlement called Vinland at a location in northern Newfoundland now known as L'Anse aux Meadows. At the time, the Norse voyages went unnoticed by other Europeans. The hostility of Native Americans, poor lines of communication, and political upheavals in Scandinavia made maintenance of these tenuous outposts impossible. The Vikings abandoned

the settlements, though Greenland's inhabitants maintained sporadic contact with North America into the fourteenth century. At the time of his first voyage in 1492, Columbus seemed to have been unaware that other Europeans had preceded him.

The inhabitants of Europe's Iberian Peninsula led the way to permanent European contact with the Americas. The Iberians' seafaring impulse sprang from a potent combination of religious and economic motives bound up with their long struggle to reclaim Iberian territory long ruled by North African Muslims and unify it under Catholic rule. This effort, known as the *Reconquista*, not only shaped the internal cultures of Spain and Portugal, but their efforts at exploration and colonization as well.

1.2.1: The Atlantic Route to Gold, Slaves, and Spices

The Iberian path to America took a circuitous route along the coast of West Africa. Strong winds and currents along the Atlantic coast moved southward, which meant a ship could sail with the wind from Portugal to West Africa without difficulty. The problem was returning, and the Portuguese solution was to invent a sailing technology that eventually carried Columbus to Hispaniola. Not surprisingly, the earliest Portuguese explorers were reluctant to venture too far south. Yet the lure of African riches, coupled with a passion to press Portugal's anti-Islamic crusade southward, prompted Portuguese rulers and merchants to push further down the African coast.

Backed by the steady funding and encouragement of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), Portuguese seafarers solved the problems of Atlantic navigation as they encountered them. Their experimentation culminated in the caravel, a vessel that combined a northern European hull design with lateen (triangular) sails and rigging borrowed from North African shipwrights. The caravel's sturdy hull could withstand heavy seas, while the lateen sails allowed seamen to tack much closer to contrary winds than traditional European ships. During the fifteenth century, Portuguese sailors also discovered that by sailing far to the west, often as far as the Azores, they could, on their return trips to Europe, catch a reliable westerly wind. Columbus was evidently familiar with this technique. Before attempting to cross the Atlantic Ocean, he sailed to the Gold Coast (modern Ghana), and on the way, he undoubtedly studied the wind patterns that would carry his famed caravels to the New World and back again.

Decades of Portuguese investment and experimentation began paying off in 1443 when Nuno Tristão pushed past the Muslim strongholds of the North African coast and returned to Portugal with a cargo of slaves from Argium (modern Arguin on the coast of Mauritania). Tristão returned to the area twice to raid the coastal fishing villages for slaves before pressing even further south to the mouth of a large river, perhaps the Saloum or the Gambia. There he met his match when local natives surrounded his launch and killed Tristão and his crew. The unfortunate raiders had reached sub-Saharan Africa, where large, prosperous kingdoms and empires vied for the control of the West African river systems while keeping the Portuguese at bay through military might. Thereafter, the Portuguese had increasingly to accommodate themselves to West African laws and regulations governing trade to turn a profit.

The potential for profit was great in both natural resources and human labor. North African caravans had long traversed the Sahara laden with goods such as gold and salt along with slaves whom they sold along the Mediterranean coast. The Portuguese soon learned to wring great profits from the Atlantic trade by tapping into a robust and widespread West African demand for slaves. In African societies where all land was corporately owned, slavery functioned much differently than in the plantation colonies of the Americas. In Africa, slaves "were the only form of

private, revenue-producing property recognized in African law," according to the historian John Thornton. Because of slaves' role within the African economy, ruling elites prized them highly, and rival states often went to war over slaves for the same reason that European powers battled over territory. Indeed, the quest for slaves made conflict among African states endemic long before Europeans entered the scene. The Portuguese capitalized on this economy by transporting slaves from one part of coastal Africa to another where they could exchange them for African gold and goods sought in Europe.

Before long, the Portuguese also began adapting slavery for use in plantation production of staple crops on various islands they had claimed such as Madeira, Príncipe, and São Tomé. Slavery on Portuguese plantations became a much different institution. Unfree West Africans had often led lives similar to European peasants, working the land at their own direction and providing a small percentage of the crop to their master as a sort of rent. Others performed domestic service. In the eyes of local law, wives and concubines were often slaves. Warrior slaves bore arms in military service, sometimes commanding a king's armies. Other slaves exercised great authority as deputies of a royal master or served in the court as scribes and scholars. The laws of some states extended ownership by ruling families or clans over all inhabitants of their dominions.

Other African slaves had become such by capture and were held by right of conquest in lieu of death. The Portuguese tapped primarily into trade in such captive slaves rather than the "settled" variety and served the captors' interest by transporting them long distances for trade to make escape or rescue more difficult. Such "trade" slaves arriving at a final African destination might often be assimilated into the local society, gaining protection of local law and even being incorporated into their masters' kinship networks. Those carried to Portuguese plantation colonies, on the other hand, usually found themselves chained to short, miserable lives of backbreaking labor in abject conditions, struggling to rebuild what community they could from fragments of the cultures and traditions they brought with them.

No matter where they found themselves, Africans experienced slavery as loss and injustice. The eighteenth-century freedman Olaudah Equiano, who published a fascinating account of his experiences in Africa and America, no doubt spoke for millions of earlier slaves whose memories went unrecorded when he described spending his first months of slavery in Africa "oppressed and weighed down by grief after my mother and friends." Though the apparent kindness of some African masters sometimes tempted him to "forget I was a slave," Equiano regarded the loss of his freedom as slavery's defining characteristic in Africa and America alike. In Africa, he remained vulnerable to the caprice of masters who might treat him as an adopted son one day and sell him into "hardship and cruelty" the next. Slavery among the Europeans sometimes reduced him to "grieving and pining, and wishing for death rather than anything else." Yet Equiano's "love of liberty" empowered him to join other slaves in creating resilient African American cultures that sustained them through the harsh experience of slavery, providing strategies of survival, resistance, and sometimes escape from bondage.

The Portuguese ability to tap into African trade slavery contributed to growing profits and ever further ventures south along the African coast. The Portuguese accepted the trade regulations enforced by officials of West African states such as Mali and Joloff, paying tolls and other fees for permission to enter ports and trade. Local rulers usually restricted the foreign traders to conducting their business in small "factories," forts or castles located at the mouths of the major rivers. Local merchants acquired slaves and gold in the interior and transported them to the coastal traders in exchange for European manufactures. Merchants calculated transactions in

terms of local African currencies: a slave, for example, would be offered to a European trader for so many bars of iron or ounces of gold.

The Portuguese were only too ready to leave the control of interior trade to Africans on a continent where the virulence of local diseases commonly condemned six out of ten Europeans to die within a single year's stay in Africa. There is tragic irony in this exchange, for when the Portuguese and other Europeans carried Africans to the New World, the captives died at rates that paralleled those of Europeans in Africa. Portuguese agents remained at their factories on the coast, where they cultivated the favor of local rulers and traders to build networks of mutual obligation and exchange. Some who survived the initial onslaught of disease sought to strengthen their ties by adopting African customs, settling in African villages, and taking African wives. Some who adopted African ways of life completely became known as *lançados* or *tangos-maos*, and the mulatto families they established often served for generations as powerful intermediaries between Europeans and Africans. Their position gave *lançados* leverage against the Portuguese crown's efforts to regulate and levy taxes on trade.

Portuguese mariners pressed further south along the African coast during the later fifteenth century, establishing factories along the way. In 1487, Bartolomé Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama returned from India with a fortune in spices and other luxury goods. Da Gama secured a Portuguese monopoly on trade with Africa and the East, which endured into the seventeenth century.

The birth of these exploratory efforts in the Portuguese *Reconquista* infused in them a religious as well as commercial purpose that persisted throughout the period of discovery and encounter. Portuguese Catholics regarded Moslems as infidels and potential enemies wherever they encountered them along the African coast and in the Indian Ocean as well. Catholic missionaries traveled with the mariners to provide them spiritual guidance and to propagate Christianity among the peoples they encountered. Most Africans resisted, especially the Moslems who had experienced a long history of antagonism with Portuguese Catholics. Missionaries did manage to establish a few enclaves of Catholic believers near the trading posts of West and Central Africa. In the 1490s, a series of revelations prompted Kongo's King Nzinga a Nkuwu to lead his people in conversion to Christianity. The new religion flourished in Kongo throughout the sixteenth century as priests trained native catechists to propagate the faith. Several of Kongo's princes and children of royal officials also sailed to Portugal, where they resided in the royal court while studying theology and the arts.

By the 1480s, Portuguese traders were diverting so much African gold from the trans-Sahara trade that their Genoese rivals were beginning to suffer. The Genoese traders' Moorish partners charged higher prices than the Portuguese could obtain, and the center of international commerce began a crucial shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. The flow of gold to the coast increased even more when in 1482, the Portuguese obtained permission from Akan authorities to build a castle at Elmina on the coast of modern Ghana. This fort further strengthened their position, giving them a reliable supply of African gold which they obtained in exchange for European iron and slaves brought from other places along the coast. The resulting squeeze on the Mediterranean trade prompted other merchants and rulers to seek an Atlantic route to wealth.

1.2.2: Spain's "Admiral of the Ocean Sea"

If it had not been for Christopher Columbus (Cristoforo Colombo), of course, Spain might never have gained an American empire. Little is known about his early life. Born in Genoa in 1451 of humble parentage, Columbus devoured the Renaissance learning that had so recently become

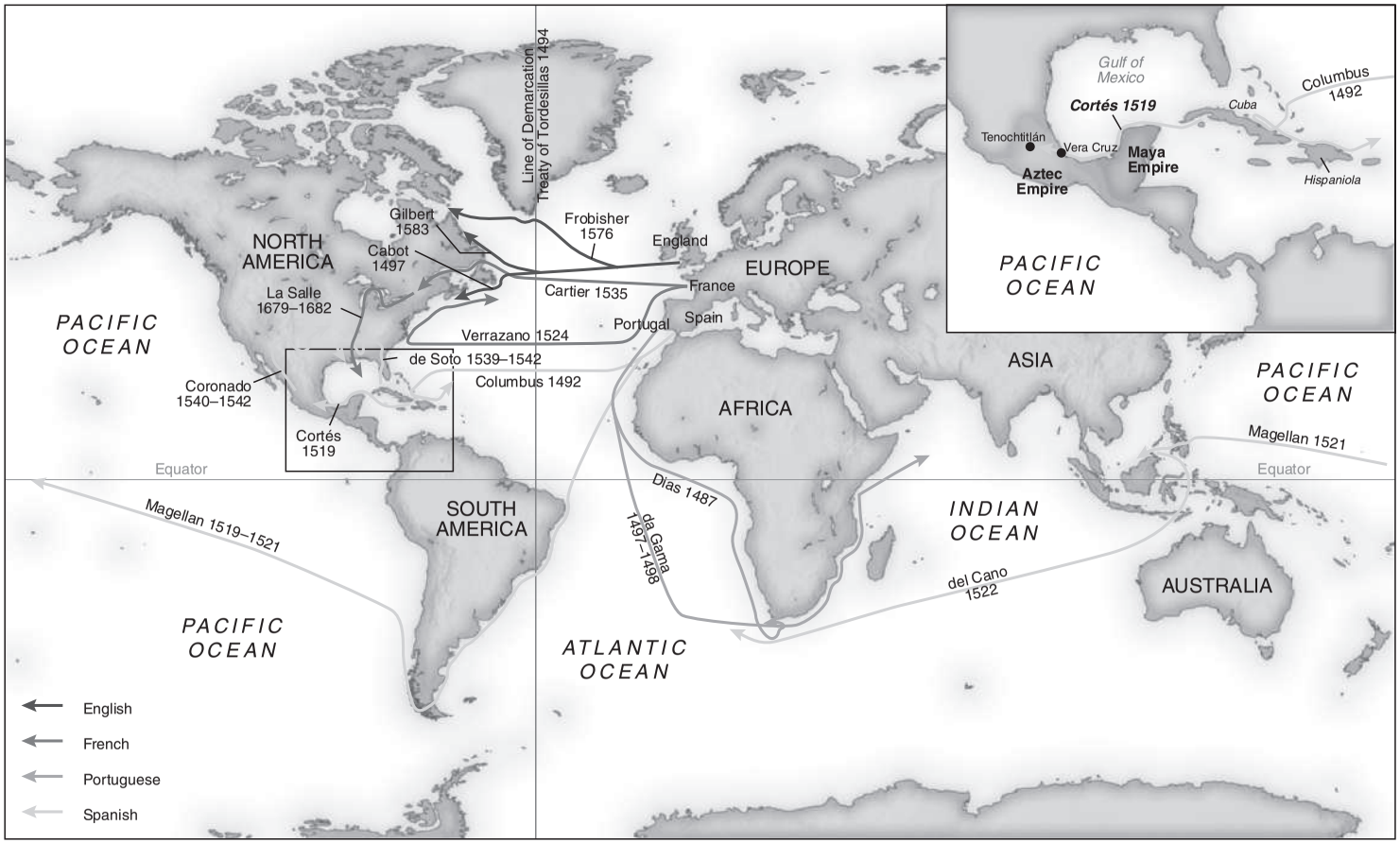
available in printed form. Like other humanists, he combined the study of classical texts with the latest scientific and spiritual developments of his age. He mastered geography, and—perhaps while exploring the coast of West Africa—he seems to have convinced himself that God had called him to sail west across the Atlantic Ocean to reach Cathay, as China was then known.

In 1484, Columbus presented an ambitious plan to King John II of Portugal. However, while the Portuguese were just as eager as Columbus to reach Cathay, their discoveries had already convinced them that the way to the riches of the East lay around the continent of Africa rather than across the Atlantic as Columbus suggested. Contrary to popular modern myth, neither they nor other Europeans doubted the earth was round. Yet they rightly suspected that Columbus's enthusiasm had outrun his mathematical ability. He had substantially underestimated the earth's circumference at 3,000 nautical miles, more than 7,000 miles short of its actual distance, one agreed upon by contemporary navigators and Church scholars. As the Portuguese reminded Columbus, no ship then known could carry enough food and water for such a long voyage. Columbus was clever, but his sailors would surely starve. The Portuguese alternative route around the Cape of Good Hope seemed much more promising even before da Gama reached India, and the king declined to sponsor him.

Like a modern inventor looking for capital, Columbus turned to European monarchs for financial backing. Henry VII of England rebuffed him in 1489, as did the French regent, Anne de Beaujeu. Undaunted by rejection, Columbus ventured to the court of Isabella and Ferdinand. The Spanish were initially no more interested in his grand design than other European monarchs had been. But time was on Columbus's side. Spain's aggressive New Monarchs envied Portugal's recent success in oceangoing trade. Columbus boldly played on the competition between these countries, talking constantly of wealth and empire. Indeed, for a person with so few contacts with those in power, he seemed brazenly confident. One contemporary reported that when Columbus "made up his mind, he was as sure he would discover what he did discover, and find what he did find, as if he held it in a chamber under lock and key."

Columbus's stubborn lobbying on behalf of his "Enterprise of the Indies" gradually wore down opposition in the Spanish court. The two sovereigns provided him with a small fleet containing two of the most famous caravels ever constructed, the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, as well as the square-rigged *nao Santa Maria*. Without the slightest knowledge that America stood between Spain and China, Columbus demanded that Isabella and Ferdinand grant him grand titles and broad authority over any new islands or mainland territories he might discover. The indomitable admiral set sail for Cathay in August 1492, the year of Spain's unification. But had the New World not been in his way, he and his crew would have run out of food and water long before they reached China, as the Portuguese had predicted.

After putting in at the Canary Islands to refit the ships, Columbus continued his westward voyage in early September. When the tiny Spanish fleet sighted an island in the Bahamas after only thirty-three days at sea, the admiral announced he had reached Asia. Since his mathematical calculations had apparently been correct, Columbus began looking for the Chinese. It never occurred to him that he had stumbled upon a world hitherto unknown to most Europeans. Columbus assured his men, his patrons, and perhaps himself that these islands were indeed part of the fabled "Indies," or at least an extension of the great Asian landmass. He searched for the splendid cities Marco Polo had described. Instead of meeting wealthy Chinese, however, Columbus encountered bands of indigenous American Taínos whom he called "Indians," a triumph of theory over fact.



Map 1.1 Voyages of European Exploration

After his first voyage of discovery, Columbus returned to the New World three more times. But despite his stubborn courage, he could never find the treasure his financial supporters in Spain demanded with ever-increasing impatience. Columbus had oversold his dream. Indeed, his third voyage of 1498 was brought to an abrupt end when a royal commissioner charged Columbus and his brothers with maladministration of Spanish claims and sent them to Madrid in chains. His influence at court plummeted. Columbus died in 1506, a frustrated but wealthy visionary, unaware to the very end of his life that he had reached a previously unknown continent separating Asia from Europe. The final disgrace came in December 1500 when an ambitious falsifier, Amerigo Vespucci, fabricated a sensational account of his travels across the Atlantic, convincing German mapmakers that he, not Columbus, had discovered a completely new continent. Before Amerigo's claim could be corrected, his name had spread throughout Europe on the latest published maps.

1.2.3: The World Divided in Two

Only two years after Columbus's first voyage, Spain and Portugal almost went to war over the anticipated treasure of Asia. Pope Alexander VI negotiated a settlement that pleased both kingdoms. Portugal wanted to exclude the Spanish from the west coast of Africa and, what was more important, from Columbus's new route to "India." Spain insisted on maintaining complete control over lands discovered by Columbus, then still regarded as an extension of China. In 1493 Alexander had initially supported the Spanish effort by issuing two bulls, *Inter Caetera* and *Dudum Siquidem*. Both seemed to threaten Portuguese interests in Africa by dividing the entire world along a line only one hundred leagues west of the Azores. The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) averted conflict by moving the line another 170 leagues west. Any new lands discovered west of the line belonged to Spain. At the time, no European had ever seen Brazil, which turned out to be on Portugal's side of the line (a fact that explains why, to this day, Brazilians speak Portuguese). The treaty cut any other European power from trying their luck in the New World, at least in theory.

1.3: Encounter and Conflict

1.3 Report the conflict that occurred when the voyagers tried to settle in America

Spain's new discoveries unleashed a horde of entrepreneurial conquistadores on the Caribbean. History once depicted these ambitious figures as heroic explorers, but the conquistadores merit only tepid regard. Following procedures developed during the *Reconquista*, the conquistadores received a license to extend Spanish dominions in the pursuit of their own interests. These *adelantados* or independent proprietors were not interested in creating a permanent society in the New World. Rather, they risked their own resources to pursue instant wealth, power, and honor. They preferred to take their profits in gold and were not squeamish about the means they used to obtain it. Bernal Díaz, one of the first Spaniards to migrate to this region, explained he had traveled to America "to serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich, as all men desire to do." Even by the values of their own time, their quest for wealth brought violence and suffering wherever they went.

Yet Native Americans were not hapless victims of the Spanish. The earliest encounters often occasioned surprise and unexpected opportunity for trade and alliance. When relations turned hostile, Indians could exact a terrible price for European aggression. No conquistador found them pushovers in battle. Europeans may have possessed tremendous firepower with cannons

and cumbersome matchlock firearms, but Indians wielded their own weapons with deadly effect. Native soldiers were formidable fighters in hand-to-hand combat. Their longbows enabled their users to strike with stealth, hitting a distant target without revealing their position as a matchlock's report inevitably did. Longbows could also be reloaded faster than matchlock guns, were more reliable, more accurate, less cumbersome, required far less maintenance, and still worked after the powder ran out. Indians knew the terrain much better than Europeans, and they initially enjoyed a significant—sometimes overwhelming—numerical advantage over the small groups of European explorers, traders, and settlers.

1.3.1: The Caribbean

For a quarter century, the conquistadores concentrated their actions on the major Caribbean islands. For the first seven years Columbus himself oversaw Spanish exploration and settlement, but he proved utterly incompetent to wield the unprecedented administrative powers the Spanish monarchs had granted him. In 1499, Francisco de Bobadilla superseded him and reorganized Spanish colonial rule. From the port of Santo Domingo, which served as capital of Spain's American dominions for half a century, Crown officials continued the exploration and settlement of Caribbean islands including Cuba, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. In 1501, settlement began in earnest with the arrival of a new governor, Frey Nicolás de Ovando, and 2,500 colonists. Spanish settlement expanded steadily throughout the West Indian archipelago, led by ruthless adventurers in search of gold. Expeditionary forces took each new Caribbean island by storm, terrorizing native inhabitants and brutally crushing any attempts at rebellion.

Indigenous bands of Taínos, Arawaks, and Caribs (from whom the Caribbean derives its name) had hunted, cultivated, and fished in the islands for centuries prior to the arrival of Columbus. Each band governed informally and independently of others. In times of conflict, bands from neighboring islands might join forces for raids against rivals, disbanding the raiding parties to return to their own autonomous communities as soon as their aims were achieved. Their loose organization and limited weaponry made it difficult for these peoples to withstand the Spanish assault as it proceeded island by island across the Caribbean. Yet it gave those on the more remote islands an ability to move quickly to avoid capture and to organize sporadic raids which harassed European newcomers and gave the Caribs, in particular, a reputation as fierce fighters.

Even so, most indigenous inhabitants fell victim to enslavement and distribution among the leading adventurers of the Spanish expeditions of conquest. "One got thirty, another forty, a third as many as a hundred or twice that number," the Spanish observer Bartolomé de Las Casas reported; "everything depended on how far one was in the good books of the despot who went by the title of governor." Colonists put their Indian slaves to work panning for gold in island streams or pasturing herds of pigs and cattle. When the gold ran out on smaller islands, the colonists abandoned them to the surviving livestock, which quickly overran them. On larger islands such as Cuba and Hispaniola, the Spanish put the Indians to work on sugar plantations. In less than two decades, the Arawaks and Caribs who originally inhabited the Caribbean islands had been decimated, victims of exploitation and disease. The Spanish planters sought to meet the consequent labor shortage with African slaves (see Chapter 2).

1.3.2: The Conquest of Mexico

As the Caribbean settlements expanded, rumors of fabulous wealth in Mexico stirred the avarice of many Spaniards. The great city-states of central Mexico were only the latest of a succession of powerful indigenous civilizations whose origins lay in the development of sedentary farming

communities more than four thousand years earlier. By the first centuries C.E., inhabitants were constructing the sophisticated Mayan centers of the Yucatán, the highland city of Monte Albán, and the great Mesoamerican metropolis of Teotihuacán. Like the Incas who lived in what is now known as Peru, Mayan and Toltec peoples ruled their great city-states through government bureaucracies that controlled large tributary populations, and developed hieroglyphic writing as well as a solar calendar that predicted eclipses as accurately as any Old World systems. In size and population, Mesoamerican cities often exceeded those of medieval and early modern Europe.

The Toltec and Mayan civilizations had faded to distant memory by 1250 C.E., when the Mexica migrated into the Valley of Mexico to begin their rapid rise to dominance. An aggressive, warlike people, this group of late Aztec arrivals established themselves in the region by occupying swampy, snake-infested territory no one else wanted. In 1325 the Mexica founded Tenochtitlan on an island in the center of marshy Lake Texcoco and began transforming the swamps into a system of dikes, canals, and productive raised fields. Tenochtitlan's nobles extended the city-state's wealth and territorial influence by forging shrewd alliances with neighboring city states, which they supplied with mercenary soldiers. By 1400, Lake Texcoco's swamps had become a ring of lush raised fields surrounding a beautiful lake, in the center of which rose the splendid capital city of Tenochtitlan. The city attracted migrants from all over the Valley of Mexico, and its population eventually reached 250,000. Aztec princes and nobles secured alliances with neighboring city-states through diplomacy and intermarriage, while Aztec warriors extended Tenochtitlan's dominance through conquest. It is no wonder that when the Spanish conquistadores first saw Aztec "towns and villages built in the water," they asked "whether it was not all a dream?"

The Aztecs ruled by force, reducing defeated rivals to tributary status. When Hernán Cortés arrived in 1519, Aztec rule extended outward from Tenochtitlan to the Pacific coast as well as the Gulf of Mexico. Elaborate human sacrifice associated with Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec sun god, horrified Europeans, who seldom questioned the savagery of their own civilization. These Aztec ritual killings were connected to the agricultural cycle. The Indians believed the blood of their victims possessed extraordinary fertility powers and that daily human sacrifice ensured the return of the sun each morning. A fragment of an Aztec song-poem captures the fiercely self-confident spirit that once pervaded this militant culture:

> Proud of itself
>
> is the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan. Here no one fears to die in war.
>
> This is our glory . . . .
>
> Who could conquer Tenochtitlan?
>
> Who could shake the foundation of heaven?

On November 18, 1518, a minor government functionary in Cuba named Hernán Cortés embarked with a small army from Havana to verify the stories of Mexico's treasure. Like so many members of his class, he dreamed of glory, military adventure, and riches that would transform him from an ambitious court clerk into a preeminent *adelantado*. Events soon demonstrated that in this context Cortés possessed extraordinary ability as a leader.

Cortés's adversary was the legendary Aztec emperor, Montezuma. The confrontation between these two powerful personalities is one of the more dramatic of early American history. A fear of competition from rival conquistadores coupled with a burning desire to conquer a vast new empire drove Cortés forward. Determined to push his men to their imagined rendezvous with glory, he scuttled the ships that had carried them to Mexico, preventing them from retreating in the face of danger. Cortés led his band of six hundred followers across rugged mountains and on the

way gathered allies from among the Tlaxcalans, a tributary people eager to gain freedom from Aztec domination.

Cortés possessed obvious technological superiority over the Aztecs. The sound of gunfire initially frightened the Indians. Moreover, Aztec troops had never seen horses, much less armored ones carrying sword-wielding Spaniards. But these elements would have counted for little had Cortés not also gained a psychological advantage. For some reason, the emperor hesitated to mount full resistance. Some early accounts state that at first, Montezuma thought that the Spaniards were gods, representatives of the fearful plumed serpent, Quetzalcoatl. Many scholars now believe that Aztec survivors invented this self-serving explanation after the fact and that the emperor simply needed time to assess the strength of his alien adversary. When the Montezuma's resolve finally hardened, it was too late. Cortés seized the Aztec ruler as a hostage, setting in motion a chain of tragic and bloody events culminating in the utter destruction of Tenochtitlan. Cortés shrewdly retained the symbolic power of the site by building the colonial capital of Mexico City on the ruins of the Aztec metropolis. Spanish victory in the Valley of Mexico, coupled with other conquests in South America, made Spain the wealthiest state in Europe.

Cortés could not have hoped to conquer the Aztec empire without the cooperation of the Aztecs' own rebellious subject peoples, who paid a heavy price in wartime casualties for their actions. In a culture where subject peoples commonly paid tribute to their overlords in labor, goods, and even human sacrifice, many of these groups may well have understood that terms of alliance with Cortés included replacing Aztec with Spanish overlords. Whatever their initial arrangement, the outbreak of hostilities committed tributary groups to fight to victory with the Spanish or face the gruesome vengeance of their former Aztec rulers. By allying with Cortés, the Indians of central Mexico ensured that they would make their way in their new world from a position of dependence.

The conquest of Tenochtitlan became a model for Spanish conquest elsewhere in North America. Later conquistadores such as Hernando de Soto sought to replicate Cortés' methods. When Spanish governors extended authority over the Pueblos and others who had once maintained diplomatic relations with the Aztecs, they communicated their intentions through symbolic plays portraying Spanish destruction of the great city. Indians who watched the plays soon came to understand that a similar fate awaited all who refused to submit to the Spanish conquerors.

1.3.3: Early Encounter in the Southwest and Florida

Inspired by tales of Cortés's conquests, other ambitious and now jealous conquistadores ventured to mainland North America in search of fabled wealth and glory. Some set out to the north and west from Cortés's New Spain, while others headed for Florida and the Gulf Coast. In both areas, large indigenous civilizations drew the avaricious adventurers in search of their own fortunes.

In what is now known as the U.S. Southwest, a large network of indigenous peoples collectively termed the "Pueblos" lived a sedentary existence sustained by cultivation of maize. Before the arrival of the Spanish, many had engaged in trade and diplomatic relations with the Aztecs and were rumored to possess great wealth in their own right. By the sixteenth century, the sophisticated Anasazi civilization known to historians as the "Chaco Phenomenon" was a distant memory, with most of the old towns abandoned to the desert as climate change reduced rainfalls and poor yields made it no longer possible to sustain their large population centers. Descendants of the Anasazi along with later arrivals lived in smaller villages (*pueblos* in Spanish). The native inhabitants built their adobe dwellings in a style similar to

earlier Anasazi structures and continued to build round, subterranean kivas characteristic of earlier Anasazi ceremonial structures. They also continued to rely on maize as their staple crop, adapting earlier Anasazi agricultural techniques to farm in the arid climate.

Still further west across the Sierra Nevada mountain range, an exceedingly diverse population of indigenous peoples plied coastal waterways and hunted, fished, and cultivated the fertile valleys of what is now California and the Pacific Northwest. Many of these western peoples were bound closely to the lands of their birth and spoke languages viewed as mystically tied to those locations. In the region of California alone, sixty-seven languages were spoken, most of which differed from each other as widely as Korean from English.

Pacific coastal peoples experienced only brief contact with Europeans in the sixteenth century. Two of Cortés's men, Fortún Jiménez and Francisco de Ulloa, sailed colony-built vessels north from the port of Zacatula to explore the peninsula of Lower California. Cortés's rival, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, sent his protégé Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo with a small expeditionary force which pressed north to Santa Catalina Island before Cabrillo died there of infection. His chief pilot, Bartolomé Ferrer, sailed further to the region of the present-day California-Oregon boundary before turning back. These voyages were significant only inasmuch as they formed the basis of Spanish claims to the Pacific Coast. Sustained efforts to colonize much of that coastline did not occur until the eighteenth century.

The Pueblo peoples, by contrast, experienced great change as a result of sustained Spanish presence. In 1538, only two years before Hernán Cortés departed Mexico never to return, Cortés's rival Antonio Mendoza quietly sent Fray Marcos de Niza to reconnoiter the former Anasazi homeland. Although the region was rumored to harbor a civilization greater than the Aztecs, the friar found only a few small adobe-built pueblos. Before he returned home, however, Fray Marcos received assurances from the inhabitants that the fabled city of Cibola was not far away. The news prompted Mendoza to commission Francisco Vásquez de Coronado to lead an elaborate expedition into the North American interior. Fray Marcos's Cibola turned out to be a small pueblo of about one hundred families, and Coronado sent the imaginative friar home to Mexico. Nevertheless, the conquistador captured the Zuñi city, the center of sixteenth-century Pueblo power, and made Cibola his headquarters for further exploration. Coronado spent the next three years in a fruitless quest for wealth and empire that carried him all the way to the Arkansas River at the site of present-day Lyons in central Kansas. Coronado returned to Mexico City empty-handed in 1542. Spanish settlement proceeded slowly northward over the next six decades, culminating in the submission of the Pueblos to Juan de Oñate in 1598 and the establishment of Santa Fe as the capital of New Mexico.

Even before Cortéz sailed to Mexico, Spanish adventurers were reconnoitering Florida and the Gulf Coast. The region supported many coastal tribes as well as significant population centers further inland, several of which were direct heirs to a "Mississippian" civilization that had dominated the great Mississippi River drainage system over four hundred years earlier from the great city of Cahokia near present-day St. Louis. Cahokia's complex of flat-topped, pyramid-shaped earthen mounds—the largest of which was over 100 feet tall—formed a template for the design of smaller Mississippian cities of the Southeast. Cahokia had supported a population of between twenty and forty thousand, nearly as large as that of medieval London. The city went into decline and was largely abandoned by 1400 C.E., permitting Mississippian cultures elsewhere to expand. Rival chiefdoms vied for preeminence in the Southeast throughout the following century, producing nations such as the Natchez, Choctaw, and Cherokee, which endure to the present day.

The Mississippian chiefdom of Coosa, centered on the site now known as Little Egypt in northwest Georgia, achieved regional supremacy by the sixteenth century.

Mississippian peoples themselves had little knowledge of the first Spanish expedition to eastern North America under Juan Ponce de León in 1513. No surviving firsthand evidence supports the idea that he hoped to find a fabled "fountain of youth," but he certainly hoped to bring gold and slaves back to his home base on Puerto Rico. Ponce's initial voyage to the Florida coast netted him little, but Cortés's exploits in Mexico prompted him to try again in 1521. Ponce met his death in Florida during a fierce battle with Calusa Indians.

Almost twenty years later as Coronado was exploring the Southwest, another even less appealing conquistador, Hernando de Soto, was wreaking havoc among the Mississippian peoples of the Southeast. From his starting point near Tampa Bay, De Soto led a force of more than six hundred adventurers on a sanguinary quest for gold and slaves. His route took him north into what is now North Carolina, across the Appalachians into Tennessee, down the Tennessee River valley into Alabama, overland to the Mississippi and across that "Rio Grande" into present-day Arkansas. The Spanish reputation for cruelty preceded De Soto, sparking fierce Indian resistance to his progress. The conquistador, whom one observer described as "much given to the sport of hunting Indians on horseback," exceeded the Indian's worst fears. He slaughtered his Indian foes mercilessly, plundered Indian crops to feed his troops and livestock, and mounted vicious attacks on peaceful Indian towns with little or no provocation. The Mississippians of the Southeast responded in kind. Local leaders deployed expert longbowmen against De Soto's forces—marksmen who could sink an arrow 6 inches into a poplar trunk and shoot more accurately than any European archers. Indian enemies slowly whittled down his troops, and in May 1542, De Soto himself took ill and died. The three hundred survivors of his expedition wandered another year from the Mississippi to Texas and back before finding their way down the river and along the Gulf coast to a small Spanish settlement at the mouth of the Pánuco River.

Later explorers pressed Spanish dominion over Florida but left much of the Southeast to its native inhabitants, contenting themselves with a few small outposts along the Gulf Coast. In 1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés established the municipality of St. Augustine on Florida's Atlantic coast. The town's impressive fortress discouraged European rivals from entering the region until 1763.

1.3.4: Managing an Empire

From the earliest days of New World colonization, the Spanish crown confronted a difficult problem. Ambitious adelantados, semi-independent entrepreneurs interested chiefly in their own wealth and glory, had to be brought effectively under royal authority, a task easier imagined than accomplished. Adventurers such as Cortés were stubbornly independent, quick to take offense, and thousands of miles away from the seat of imperial government. Their brutality toward indigenous populations provoked endemic conflict, making government of the colonies even more difficult and costly.

The crown found a partial solution in the *encomienda* system, an adaptation of the *repartimiento* system which the Spanish had developed to govern the Canary Islands. Like earlier conquering peoples such as the Normans of medieval England, Spanish rulers treated the New World's native inhabitants as a valuable source of tribute labor and rewarded the conquering military leaders with Indian villages. The people who lived in these settlements provided the *encomenderos* with labor tribute in exchange for legal protection and religious guidance. In Mexico the system combined Spanish methods with older Aztec mechanisms for levying labor tribute. Wherever it was

imposed, the *encomienda* subjected Indians to cruel exploitation. One historian concluded, "The first *encomenderos*, without known exception, understood Spanish authority as provision for unlimited personal opportunism." Cortés alone was granted the services of more than twenty-three thousand Indian workers. The *encomienda* system made the colonizers more dependent on the king, for it was he who legitimized their title. In the words of one scholar, the new economic structure helped to transform "a frontier of plunder into a frontier of settlement." For native peoples, the *encomienda* system permitted them to continue the annual cycle of planting and harvest while paying a tribute to the *encomendero* in a manner similar to what they had practiced under Aztec or Tlaxcalan overlords. The rapid decline of the native population eventually gave rise to a modified *repartmiento* where scarce Indian labor was allocated to wage-paying employers for limited periods on the basis of need.

Spain's rulers attempted to maintain tight personal control over their American possessions. The volume of correspondence between the two continents, much of it concerning mundane matters, was staggering. All documents were duplicated several times by hand. Because the trip to Madrid took many months, a year often passed before receipt of an answer to a simple request. But the cumbersome system took on a life of its own. In Mexico, officials appointed in Spain established a rigid hierarchical order, directing the affairs of the countryside from urban centers. The practice of building these cities on the sites of former centers of native administration helped officials to transfer Indian obedience from indigenous overlords to Spanish ones. Spanish and Indian populations of these cities mingled, producing the rich admixture of European and native cultures that remains characteristic of Mexico and other Latin American nations.

The Spanish also brought Catholicism to the New World. The Dominicans and Franciscans, the two largest monastic traditions or "orders" of Catholic clergy, established Indian missions throughout New Spain. Some barefoot friars tried to protect the Native Americans from the worst forms of exploitation. One Dominican, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, published an eloquent defense of Indian rights, *Historia de las Indias*, which among other things questioned the legitimacy of European conquest of the New World. Las Casas deplored "the violence, the oppression, the despotism, the killing, the plunder, the depopulation, the outrages, the agonies, and the calamities" which Spanish conquistadores had inflicted on the Indians of the Americas. He suggested sweeping reforms in Crown policy toward native peoples, including the replacement of Indian laborers with African slaves. Las Casas's work provoked heated debate in Spain. The king had no intention of repudiating his vast American empire, but did initiate new measures designed to bring greater "love and moderation" to Spanish-Indian relations.

To ascertain how many converts these friars made is impossible, though one observer placed the total at 9,000,000 baptisms by 1536. Some conversions, especially in the early years of settlement, took place at the point of a sword. Many early Spanish governors were also priests who authorized their missionaries to build churches and shrines on sites held sacred by indigenous peoples. In Puerto Rico, for example, settlers carved a chapel for celebrating Mass into the trunk of an enormous sacred tree. In Mexico, Cortés built the cathedral in Mexico City on the site of the principal Aztec temple, refashioning the temple treasures into Christian icons and artifacts. Elsewhere in Mexico, Catholic churches also sprang up on traditional indigenous temple sites. Such practices gained at least the external conformity of many Indians.

Indigenous converts throughout New Spain also began making Catholicism an Indian religion or giving traditional beliefs and practices a Catholic mask. In other words, accommodation did not signal the eradication of traditional

Indian cultures. The Native Americans made compromises when compelled to do so, then resisted domination through half measures. They fashioned statues of Mary with native features and dress and adapted processions and rituals to traditional agricultural cycles for traditional religious purposes. Statues of native gods sometimes assumed a place in processions beside those of Catholic saints, and the saints were eventually made to absorb the characteristics of various local deities. The gods of war had proved impotent and were abandoned, but the priest Bernardino de Sahagún found that when his Indian informants knelt in a church built on ancient temple ruins, many secretly venerated the old gods of that site. In 1531, a newly converted Christian reported a vision of the Virgin, a dark-skinned woman of obvious Indian ancestry, who became known throughout the region as the Virgin of Guadalupe. This figure—the result of a creative blending of Indian and European cultures—served as a powerful symbol of Mexican nationalism in the wars for independence fought against Spain almost three centuries later.

In frontier areas where the Spanish were fewer, Indians could sometimes exercise more leverage in negotiating the terms of encounter even when the Europeans insisted on holding the reins of power. Rather than suffer the high cost of armed resistance, many sixteenth-century Pueblos of the Southwest cautiously accepted the terms of Spanish rule which the conquerors communicated through a commemorative dramatization of the conquest of Tenochtitlan. Some Pueblo chiefs embraced Christianity as charismatic Franciscan missionaries convinced them of its spiritual power, sparking factionalism as others resisted the new ways. Inhabitants of the pueblos selectively appropriated Spanish goods and Spanish became the lingua franca among Zuñis, Hopis, Acomas, and other Pueblo groups. Pueblos offered varying degrees of outward conformity to Catholicism, but traditional religion remained strong. Many of the baptized embraced Catholic words and rituals as new names for traditional beliefs and new ways to access traditional sacred powers. Worship in the circular kivas continued, often secretly when Franciscan missionaries attempted to stamp it out.

In the Southeast, repeated depredations by conquistadores such as Ponce de Leon and Hernando De Soto taught the Indians to keep the Spanish at arm's length whenever possible. Throughout the sixteenth century, St. Augustine and other Spanish garrisons encountered resistance from groups such as the Cusabos, who resented the Spanish presence and attempts to extend its authority over them. Yet the outposts did present enticing opportunities to barter for European goods, eventually persuading southeastern groups to forge trading partnerships with the Spanish. Here too, some Indians embraced Catholic Christianity. Other groups favored the Spanish missionaries who came their way with the grisly gift of martyrdom, highly prized by the Catholic clergy—in theory at least—for the glory and divine favor its victims could anticipate when they died for their faith.

The New World attracted hundreds of thousands of Spanish colonists in the first hundred years after conquest. About 250,000 Spaniards migrated to the New World during the sixteenth century. Another 200,000 made the journey between 1600 and 1650. Most colonists were impoverished single males in their late twenties seeking economic opportunities. They generally came from the poorest agricultural regions of southern Spain, almost 40 percent migrating from Andalusia alone. Since so few Spanish women migrated, especially in the sixteenth century, the men often married Indians and blacks, unions which produced mestizos and mulattos. The frequency of interracial marriage indicated that, among other things, the people of New Spain tolerated racial differences more readily than the English who settled in North America. Economic worth affected the people of New Spain's social standing as much, or more, as color. The Spanish regarded

persons born in the New World, even those of Spanish parentage (*criollos*), as socially inferior to those born in the mother country (*peninsulares*).

1.4: The American Northeast and Northern Europeans

1.4 Explain how coastal North America came to be conquered by European countries other than Spain

Ferdinand and Isabella's sponsorship of Columbus gave Spain an early lead in exploring and colonizing the Americas, but coastal North America held less appeal for the Spanish. Rulers of other nations readily stepped into the gap. They were reluctant to accept a Spanish monopoly over the Americas even if a papal treaty had granted it. Northern European explorers were eager to explore possibilities for trade with North America's native inhabitants and to probe for a Northwest Passage to the Pacific and access to Asian wealth. Many also found North America's indigenous peoples indifferent to claims of rulers an ocean away and ready to trade with any partner who could offer them bargains in European goods.

1.4.1: Eastern Woodland Cultures

The historian Colin Calloway has observed that the Europeans who laid claim to eastern North America arrived at the back door of an Indian America whose major exchange networks had been centered on the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf Coast for much of the previous millennium. By 1500, however, Atlantic coastal Indians lived on the fringes of a system that was in severe decline. The causes of this decline remain unknown, but the collapse of the great Mississippian trading network threw much of eastern North America into flux as various groups competed for territory and influence. Indians of the Northeast did not practice the type of intensive agriculture common among inhabitants of the Gulf Coast and Southwest, but generally supplemented mixed farming with seasonal hunting and gathering. Conservative estimates put the total population at less than a million before the arrival of Europeans, and most belonged to what ethnographers term the Eastern Woodland Cultures. Small bands formed villages during the warm summer months. The women cultivated maize and other crops while the men hunted and fished. During the winter, difficulties associated with feeding so many people forced these communities to disperse. Each family lived off the land as best it could.

The northeastern woodlands were nevertheless home to a number of nations and confederacies which were coming to exert considerable influence in their own right. A vast exchange network stretched from the western Lake Superior to the St. Lawrence River valley, bringing meat and skins from groups such as the western Ojibway in exchange for maize produced by Iroquoian-speaking Huron farmers of southern Ontario.

To the south of Lake Ontario lay the settlements of the Huron's powerful enemies, the Hodenosaunee, or People of the Long House. More than a century before their first contact with Europeans, the Five Nations of this people—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—formed what European observers termed the "Iroquois League." According to oral traditions, the league originated during a time of constant feuding among the five nations and surrounding groups. This state continued until an Onondaga chieftain remembered as Hayenwatha or Hiawatha lost three of his daughters in a conflict. Rather than seeking blood vengeance as the Iroquois "mourning war" tradition demanded, Hiawatha determined to break the cycle of violence. A stranger named Deganawidah met Hiawatha in the forest and assuaged his grief

with comforting words and wampum beads. Together Hiawatha and Deganawidah, who became known as the Peacemaker, traveled from village to village, persuading the Five Nations to adopt laws and teachings of peace, each of which they had woven onto a string of wampum for posterity to remember. The nations agreed to unite for common defense. The Seneca became Keepers of the Western Door, the Mohawk Keepers of the Eastern Door, and the Onondaga Keepers of the Council Fire. The Cayuga and Oneida comprised the League's younger moiety.

Confederation generated strength. The League of Peace made the Iroquois a powerful military force capable of holding its own against other Indian groups as well as Europeans. While the Five Nations apparently did not establish sustained diplomatic or trade relations with surrounding groups, they did view their league as a great shelter for other peoples. They could extend protection to client groups through treaty, and they augmented their own population and increased the league's ethnic diversity by taking in refugees and adopting captives.

To the east of the Iroquois League lived many bands of Algonquian-speaking peoples, the Indians whom most seventeenth-century English settlers first encountered as they explored and settled the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Maine. Included in this large linguistic family were the Powhatans of Tidewater Virginia, the Narragansetts of Rhode Island, and the Abenakis of northern New England, as well as the Ojibwe- and Odawa-speakers of the Great Lakes.

Despite common linguistic roots, however, these scattered Algonquian communities would have found communication with each other extremely difficult. In their separate, often isolated environments, they had developed very different dialects. A sixteenth-century Narragansett, for example, could not have understood a Powhatan. Linguistic ties, moreover, had little effect on Indian politics. Algonquian groups who lived in different regions, exploited different resources, and spoke different dialects did not develop strong ties of mutual identity. When their own interests were involved, Algonquian leaders were more than willing to ally themselves with Europeans or "foreign" Indians against other Algonquians. This is an important point. These Indians did not see themselves as representatives of a single racial group, but as Narragansetts or Powhatans. Divisions among Indian groups would in time facilitate European conquest. Local Native American peoples greatly outnumbered the first settlers, and had the Europeans not forged strategic alliances, they could not so easily have gained a foothold on the continent.

However divided the Indians of eastern North America may have been, they shared many cultural values and assumptions. Most Native Americans, for example, defined their place in society through kinship. These personal bonds determined the character of economic and political relations. As historian James Axtell explains, "The basic unit of social membership in all tribes was the exogamous clan, a lineal descent group determined through one parent." The farming bands living in areas eventually claimed by England were often matrilineal, which meant in effect that the women owned the planting fields and houses, maintained tribal customs, and had a role in tribal government. Among the native communities of Canada and the northern Great Lakes, patrilineal forms were much more common. In these groups, the men owned the hunting grounds that the family needed to survive.

Eastern Woodland communities organized diplomacy, trade, and war around reciprocal relationships that impressed Europeans as being extraordinarily egalitarian, even democratic. Chains of authority were loosely structured. Native leaders were renowned public speakers because persuasive rhetoric was often their only effective source of power. It required considerable oratorical skills for an Indian leader to persuade independent-minded warriors to support a certain policy.

Before the arrival of the white settlers, wars among Eastern Woodlands peoples took place on a small scale and were seldom very lethal. Young warriors attacked neighboring bands largely to exact revenge for a previous insult or the death of a relative, or to secure captives. Fatalities, when they did occur, sparked cycles of revenge. Avengers tortured some captives to death, while adopting others into the community as replacements for fallen relatives.

1.4.2: Early English Encounters in North America

The first English visit to North America remains shrouded in mystery. Fishermen working out of Bristol and other western English ports began working their way across the Atlantic in search of new cod fisheries in the fourteenth century and were fishing off the coast of Iceland by 1400. English merchantmen soon struck a prosperous trade with Icelanders while the fishermen pressed even further west. The knowledge they gained of navigating North Atlantic winds and currents may have enabled them to land in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland as early as the 1480s. There they began fishing regularly for codfish along the Grand Banks.

The Bristol fishermen's knowledge of North Atlantic navigation proved valuable to John Cabot (Giovanni Caboto), a Venetian sea captain commissioned by Henry VII to search out a new trade route to Asia in 1497. Cabot's main contribution on this voyage was to publicize the location of the Grand Bank fisheries. Soon ships of other nations such as France, Portugal, and Spain began appearing annually to cast their nets in North American waters alongside the veteran Bristol fishermen. Cabot himself died during a second attempt to find a direct route to Cathay in 1498, but the English fishermen continued venturing further into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. English merchantmen also explored the coast between Labrador and New England between 1498 and 1505, but their failure to establish profitable trade brought formal efforts to a halt. Sebastian Cabot continued his father's exploration in the Hudson's Bay region in 1508–1509, after which English interest in such ventures subsided.

The Newfoundland cod fishery, however, attracted the growing attention of English investors from Bristol, Plymouth, and even London itself throughout the sixteenth century. By mid-century it became one of the largest multinational European business ventures in the New World, attracting investors across national boundaries and annually drawing to the Grand Banks ships from all over Europe. Each year between March and May, fleets of vessels would depart from England's western ports for the coast of Newfoundland, where they arrived in early June just about the time the cod began to come inshore. While one portion of the crew fished, another setup operations on shore for gutting and drying the cod. Once dried, the cod was carefully packed in the holds. English vessels commonly rendezvoused in St. John's Harbor or Placentia Harbor to return in convoy to Europe, often joining ships of other nations there to trade for commodities and surplus fish. Fishermen also engaged in casual trade for furs with coastal Indians.

For the next half-century, the English people were preoccupied with more pressing domestic and religious concerns, and the crown sponsored only a few minor ventures into the Atlantic. When interest in the New World revived, however (see Chapter 2), Cabot's voyages established England's belated legal and diplomatic claim to American territory, and the valuable Grand Banks fishery excited Elizabethan greed to monopolize that claim.

1.4.3: Initial French Ventures

Official French interest in the New World developed more slowly than in England, although individual French mariners were quick to recognize the potential of the North American fisheries. Indeed, soon after the Portuguese explorers Gaspar and

Miguel Corte-Real publicized their discoveries of Labrador and Newfoundland, Norman and Breton fishermen began flocking to the Grand Banks each summer. In 1506, the French navigator Jean Denys of Honfleur explored the eastern coast of Newfoundland. In 1508, another Frenchman, Thomas Aubert of Dieppe, retraced Denys's route, returning to Rouen, France, with seven Indians he had captured from the region. Only in 1524, however, did King Francis I commit French royal backing to a voyage of exploration by sponsoring Giovanni de Verrazano's quest for a short water route to China.

Verrazano's quest initiated a series of sixteenth-century French exploratory efforts along the North American coast. Verrazano himself concluded that North America blocked the route to China and that it held no treasures comparable to those of Mexico. He nevertheless claimed the coast from present-day South Carolina to Maine for the King of France. Despite their apparent lack of value, these claims proved useful to Francis in persuading Pope Clement VII that an earlier papal division of the world between Spain and Portugal applied only to lands known in 1493, not to those discovered later by other nations.

In 1534, Francis I attempted to build on this diplomatic triumph by commissioning the French explorer Jacques Cartier to renew the quest for a route to China. Cartier's first voyage led him to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where he found the rocky, barren coast of Labrador depressing. "I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain," he grumbled. Yet Cartier reported to the king promising signs both in the eagerness of local Indians to trade and in the discovery of a large, promising waterway to the interior. The next year he returned to reconnoiter the Saint Lawrence, traveling up the magnificent river as far as modern Montreal. Despite his high expectations, Cartier got no closer to China. He did, however, bring back to France several captive Indians who assured Francis I that a kingdom of fabulous wealth lay within reach of the St. Lawrence. In 1541, the king sent Cartier and the French nobleman Jean-François de la Rocque de Roberval to establish a settlement that would secure France's exclusive title to the hoped-for wealth of Canada. The explorers failed to find any treasure, however, and the harsh Canadian winter made the land seem uninhabitable. In 1542, Cartier gave up the effort to establish a permanent settlement and returned to the comforts of France.

Despite these early failures, French fishermen carried on sporadic trade with North American coastal peoples throughout the sixteenth century. Indeed, Cartier discovered during his first voyage that this trade was already going on when he encountered a French merchant vessel in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Cartier's voyages helped to ensure the gradual increase of such trade by enabling Francis I win trade concessions in the New World from Spain and Portugal. By 1550, both kingdoms grudgingly accepted the right of French subjects to trade peaceably in territories such as Canada which remained unoccupied by Europeans. The unofficial French presence on the St. Lawrence grew as a result. By the 1570s, traders were establishing small, permanent settlements along the riverbanks to secure a share of the growing market for beaver pelts.

1.4.4: Patterns of Encounter in the Eastern Woodlands

When the French and English began establishing official trading partnerships with North American Indians in the later sixteenth century, native peoples could often draw on a long history of contact with Europeans that had taught them how volatile encounter could be. Some acted on this knowledge in ways similar to a group of Chesapeake Indians who paddled out to a French trading vessel in "over thirty canoes, in each of which were fifteen or twenty persons with bows and arrows." The Indians would not permit "more than two to come on board," but struck a deal satisfying to both sides. The French went home with "a thousand marten skins" for which they gave "knives, fishhooks and shirts."

Like other coastal groups during the early years of contact, these Indians bargained with European traders from positions of strength. Heavy French reliance on their native trading partners allowed the Indians to set many terms of cultural as well as economic exchange. By the 1580s, the benefits of European trade were beginning to entice Indian groups to concede the French "Father" preeminence within a long-existing system of trade alliances. Yet native acknowledgment of French authority remained little more than a formality well into the seventeenth century. Micmac, Abenaki, and Huron allies still held the balance of power in exchange. To secure their position within trade alliances, Frenchmen often married native wives and went to live in native villages, adopting many Indian ways in the process. Early French governors often found they could only preserve a commercial alliance by joining their trading partners in battle against traditional enemies.

Benign though it was in comparison with Spanish rule, French trade and settlement introduced its own set of cultural upheavals. Jacques Cartier described the St. Lawrence of his 1534 visit as a lush river lined with populous towns and fertile fields. Decades of intermittent contact brought about the abandonment of those fields and villages as various groups competed for European trade and as epidemic disease, inadvertently introduced by French traders, ravaged local populations.

1.5: New Worlds for All

1.5 Examine the effect of the Europeans invasion on the indigenous traditions of America and Africa

The arrival of Europeans in Africa and the Americas confronted inhabitants of each continent with a world which, as historian James Merrell has reminded us, was just as "new" as those that greeted European invaders. In the Americas and the Caribbean, the encounters presented unprecedented opportunities and dangers while profoundly altering indigenous American cultures. Coastal Africans also encountered new opportunities for trade and exchange. The rates and depth of change varied from place to place around the Atlantic shorelines. American Indian villages located on the Atlantic coast came under severe pressure almost immediately; inland groups had more time to adjust. African coastal peoples experienced a rapid growth in trade and exchange as well as in the volumes of enslaved peoples transported from port to port and across the ocean. Africans confined their European partners largely to coastal towns and factories, but wrought changes in the dynamics of intertribal warfare and capture in order to supply an ever-growing European demand for slaves. For many Atlantic peoples, European arrival, trade, and conquest strained traditional ways of life. As daily patterns of experience changed almost beyond recognition, native and captive peoples had to devise new answers, new responses, and new ways to survive in physical and social environments that eroded tradition.

1.5.1: The Columbian Exchange and Cultural Transformation

Epidemic disease was the most devastating result of the contact sixteenth-century Europeans initiated among previously separate biological environments. The Columbian Exchange of plants, animals, and microbes continues even today, and the contagious diseases it introduced destroyed the cultural integrity of many sixteenth-century North American tribes. New arrivals from Europe and Africa exposed the Indians to bacteria and viruses which spread like wildfire in "virgin soil epidemics" among populations with no natural immunity. Smallpox, measles, and influenza

decimated the Native American population. Other diseases such as alcoholism took a terrible toll.

Within a generation of initial contact with Europeans, Native American populations were usually decimated. One Massachusetts colonist reported in 1630 that the Indian peoples of his region "above twelve yeares since were swept away by a great & grievous Plague . . . so that there are verie few left to inhabite the Country." Since the earliest settlers possessed no knowledge of germ theory, they speculated that a Christian God had providentially cleared the wilderness of heathens. Historical demographers now estimate that some tribes suffered a 90 to 95 percent population loss within the first century of European contact. The death of so many Indians decreased the supply of indigenous laborers, who were needed by the Europeans to work the mines and to grow staple crops such as sugar and tobacco. The decimation of native populations helped persuade colonists throughout the New World to seek a substitute labor force in Africa. Indeed, the enslavement of blacks has been described as an effort by Europeans to "repopulate" the New World, one that ironically brought with it African strains of virulent diseases such as yellow fever and malaria.

Indians who survived the epidemics often found that the fabric of traditional culture had come unraveled, in a way very similar to the toll AIDS has recently taken in many African nations. Whole villages, bands, and even nations could be wiped out in a single epidemic, obliterating all memory of a people's customs, beliefs, and way of life. The enormity of the death toll and the agony that accompanied it called traditional religious beliefs and practices into question. The living remnant lost not only members of their families, but also elders who might have told them how properly to bury the dead and give spiritual comfort to the living. Nevertheless, survivors struggled to reconstitute tribal groups and customs and, when that failed, to create new communities made up of people from different tribes who supported one another by pooling resources and cultural traditions. The biological devastation that followed in the wake of De Soto's rampage through the Southeast gave rise to the groups eighteenth-century colonists knew as Catawbas, Cherokees, and Natchez. Such groups often combined a variety of dialects into distinctive new tongues and drew upon various traditions to shape the beliefs, rituals, and customs that would bind them together as a people.

Inland native peoples often withstood the crisis better than did those who immediately confronted Europeans and Africans. The distance of Iroquois lands from the northeastern coast gave them more time to respond to the challenge, as did the situation of the Chickasaws and Choctaws of the Southeast. Refugee Indians from the hardest hit eastern communities were absorbed into healthier western groups. Nonetheless, the cultural and physical shock that the dwindling Native American population experienced is beyond the historian's power ever fully to comprehend.

Europeans visitors to Africa proved similarly vulnerable to the diseases they encountered there. Virulent strains of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever killed Europeans by the scores, helping to make sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Africa an unattractive place for potential colonization. Survivors of these visits did manage to marry and reproduce, introducing new mixed populations into coastal societies, but Africans remained largely in control of their own futures.

On balance, the results of the Columbian Exchange were mixed. Native American populations hosted few diseases that threatened either Europeans or Africans who crossed the Atlantic. However, native crops such as beans, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, cassava, and maize supplemented European as well as African diets and helped fuel the rapid growth of the European population and economy. Europeans also brought to the Americas crops such as sugarcane and bananas which flourished in the fertile American soils, as

did European weeds such as dandelions. European and African livestock also thrived. Pigs escaped into the surrounding forests from the herds that accompanied De Soto's southeastern expedition, multiplying into herds of dangerous razorbacks that supplemented native supplies of game.

No European introduction transformed native life more than the horse, which Spanish explorers reintroduced to a land where it had been extinct for thousands of years. Indians acquired horses by capturing them directly from Spanish troops, rounding up strays from expeditions or supply trains, or capturing animals from the wild herds that multiplied from stray Spanish stock. Horses permanently changed the cultures of those groups that employed them by making possible long-distance travel. Plains Indians could now track buffalo herds much more effectively over their entire range. They also gained the speed needed to kill buffalo in large numbers, and the increased food supply permitted large mobile villages to supplant the small roving bands of earlier times. Pawnees, Wichitas, and Comanches rose to dominate the plains north of Texas and New Mexico, far from the effective reach of Spanish military might. Groups such as the Apache found themselves caught in a deadly three-way struggle as Comanches swept south from the Rockies, Wichitas moved west from the Arkansas River, and Spanish pushed north from the pueblos.

1.6: A World Transformed

1.6 Explain how the encounters between the invaders and the invaded transformed the landscape of North America

By the time the first Virginia Company colonists left England for the Chesapeake Bay in 1607, the wrenching, complex processes of encounter had already transformed much of the North American landscape. Disease had wiped out whole peoples who once boasted a long and glorious past. Yet Native Americans had displayed a remarkable tenacity and resilience, a fierce determination to survive. New groups had arisen from the ashes of conquest, weaving together elements of ancient and disparate traditions into a culture adapted to this unprecedented world of opportunity and danger. Experience had made every party wary of the others, but had also taught all how to navigate the treacherous shoals of encounter, seeking out opportunities to mitigate unfavorable circumstances, survive in an adverse environment, and sometimes prosper beyond expectations. American Indians and Africans proved themselves resourceful participants along with Europeans in the creation of the Atlantic World that emerged from the sixteenth-century process of encounter, trade, and conquest.

Chronology

30,000–12,000 B.C.	Migrants cross the Bering Strait from Asia into North America
1000 B.C.–A.D. 400	Adena and Hopewell cultures flourish in North America
A.D. 1001	Norsemen establish a small settlement in Vinland (Newfoundland)
1100	Mississippian society flourishes
1150	Anasazi center at Chaco Canyon begins decline
1324	Mali ruler Mansa Musa takes pilgrimage to Mecca
1325	Tenochtitlán founded by Aztecs
1469	Marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand leads to the unification of Spain

ca. 1480	Iroquois Great League of Peace established
1481	Portuguese build castle at Elmina on the Gold Coast of Africa
1492	Columbus lands at San Salvador
1494	Treaty of Tordesillas establishes dividing line 270 leagues west of the Azores between Spanish and Portugese claims
1500	Pedro Cabral discovers Brazilian coast
1513	Juan Ponce de León leads first expedition to Florida
1521	Cortés defeats the Aztecs at Tenochtitlán
1534	Cartier claims Canada for France
1540	Coronado explores the Southwest for Spain
1536	Pedro Menéndez de Avilés establishes St. Augustine on Florida's Atlantic coast

Chapter 2
Trade and Violence in An Emerging Atlantic World, 1500–1625

Learning Objectives

2.1 Recount the decades of monopoly of Spain and Portugal over the Americas, Africa, and East India

2.2 Examine the impact of slavery on the New World

2.3 Summarize the conflict between the European nations to control the wealth of the emerging Atlantic world

2.4 Recall England's rise to power in the Atlantic

2.5 Examine the continuous human suffering and ecological disaster of the 17th century

Anthony Knivet survived in a harsh seafaring world. His extraordinary adventure began in 1591, when he sailed with the English navigator Thomas Cavendish on an ill-fated attempt to circumnavigate the globe in search of plunder and glory. Knivet fell into Portuguese hands during a raid on the Brazilian coast. His captors put him to work as a slave on the governor's sugar plantation, and his varied tasks brought the Englishman into contact with a diverse range of fellow slaves from Africa, Brazil, and Europe. Knivet oversaw gangs of African and Native American fishermen who caught fish for the plantation labor force and beat paths into the interior, where he gained knowledge of native Brazilian customs.

Knivet remained alert for opportunities to escape, listening eagerly to the rumors that flew among fellow slaves about the appearance of ships from England, Holland, and France as well as Spain and Portugal. On one occasion, Knivet heard that the English seafarer Sir John Hawkins had anchored at a nearby island. Knivet stole a rowboat and tried to slip away to Hawkins's vessel, but was recaptured after crashing on the rocks. Another time, Knivet managed to board undetected a Portuguese vessel bound for Angola, where he hoped to get away to an African port open to English or Dutch vessels that might take him home. In Angola, however, a Portuguese captain reported him to the governor, who

sent him back to Brazil. Knivet worked there several more years before his master eventually brought him to Portugal, where his skill as an interpreter enabled Knivet to make connections with influential English patrons who finally helped him get home nearly a decade after he had departed.

Anthony Knivet was an English Protestant caught up in an ongoing struggle for religious and political control of a new Atlantic World, one that embroiled peoples from Africa, Europe, and the Americas in a series of brutal, far-flung conflicts over trade and plunder. This world began to emerge within a decade after Columbus's first voyage to America as Spanish adventurers sailed west to exploit New World possessions, while other nations launched their own efforts to find westward routes to Asia. By 1510, Spanish vessels were plying regular trade routes from the Caribbean to Seville. The Portuguese likewise began developing trade along the Brazilian coastline they first discovered in 1500.

Not until Spain's conquests of Mexico and Peru, however, did America begin producing the fabulous wealth that sparked the vicious competition for control of this emerging Atlantic World. The conquests not only prompted Spain to organize a system for securing its American riches but also fired the imaginations of competing nations, which mounted stiff challenges to Iberian dominance as the century advanced. By 1570, the Spanish and the Portuguese found themselves increasingly pressed by English, French, and Dutch competitors who sought alternative sources of New World riches even as they tried to siphon off a share of colonial Iberian wealth through unofficial warfare and piracy.

The rivals found ready cooperation among American Indian and African traders for whom increased competition meant leverage for negotiating more favorable terms of exchange. Though these efforts did not immediately displace the Iberians, English, French, and Dutch challengers did manage by 1600 to gain a toehold in Atlantic commerce. In the process, they helped create a volatile, exploitative world that held great dangers for the powerless and unwary but promised fabulous returns for those who thought they possessed sufficient resources, daring, and good fortune to risk in New World ventures.

2.1: The Iberian Atlantic

2.1 Recount the decades of monopoly of Spain and Portugal over the Americas, Africa, and East India

Spain and Portugal entered the sixteenth century with claims to exclusive control of the Atlantic World, but they soon found themselves waging a doomed defensive struggle to preserve their tenuous monopoly. The Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 granted Spain control of all non-Christian lands discovered south and west of an imaginary Line of Demarcation drawn approximately 1,100 miles west of the Azores. Portugal gained rights to non-Christian lands east of that line. Other European nations refused to acknowledge the treaty's terms, but the Iberian powers remained best positioned during the early 1500s to turn their paper claims into the reality of transatlantic empires. Spain's energetic exploration of the Americas (see Chapter 1) made it the most formidable territorial power of the age, while Portugal was able to build on its valuable African and East Indian trade to become the century's great maritime commercial power. It took several decades for European rivals to overcome the Iberians' head start. When they began to do so by the mid-sixteenth century, the cumbersome Atlantic system that the Spanish had constructed proved extremely vulnerable.

LA CARRERA DE INDIAS From the beginning of transatlantic navigation, Spain's dominance rested on precious metals extracted from New World sources mines. Caribbean islands such as

Cuba and Hispañola contained significant gold deposits. By 1510, Spanish seafarers were averaging over fifty voyages per year on its east-west "Indies Run," carrying grain, supplies, missionaries, and colonists to the Caribbean and bringing precious metals and colonial products back to Seville. Despite this steady traffic, the yield from the first quarter-century of Spanish commerce in the New World seemed disappointing in comparison with Spain's own trade with European partners, let alone Portugal's enormously profitable African and East India routes.

Cortés's conquest of Tenochtitlán in 1519 marked a dramatic shift toward Spain in the balance of Atlantic commerce as ships laden with Mexican gold plied annual routes from Vera Cruz to Seville. Francisco Pizzaro's conquest of Peru in the 1530s and the opening of Peru's rich Potosí silver mines in 1545 extended Spain's lead even further. Peruvian silver, like Mexican gold, passed through the Caribbean after being transported up the Pacific coast of South America and across the Isthmus of Panama to the region's Caribbean port of Nombre de Dios. Once loaded, the ships left the swampy, exposed coastline of Nombre de Dios for the well-defended harbor of Cartagena on the coast of Colombia, where they waited for favorable winds that would carry them back across the Atlantic. Through the remainder of the sixteenth century, precious metals flowed from Vera Cruz and Nombre de Dios to Seville. By 1610, Spain was importing nearly fourteen times as much New World treasure annually as it had a century before.

As the artery of Spain's New World wealth, the *Carrera de Indias* enriched several important ports through which it passed on its way to Seville. Chief among these were San Jaun, Puerto Rico, the first Caribbean call of port for convoys from Seville, and Havana, Cuba, where treasure-laden ships from both Vera Cruz and Cartagena regrouped into convoys for the return voyage to Spain. Havana's harbor could accommodate up to a thousand vessels at once, and a chain of fortifications kept the treasure fleets formidably secure. Havana's superior shipyards not only repaired Spanish vessels for the return voyage to Seville but also produced creole ships—ones built in Spanish colonial shipyards—whose quality rivaled that of vessels produced in the best Spanish yards. The French explorer Samuel de Champlain admired Havana in 1599 as the "warehouse where all the riches of America are held."

This great current of New World wealth flowed into the cosmopolitan port of Seville, stimulating the city's rapid growth as people from the surrounding countryside moved to take advantage of new commercial opportunities. Merchants from other European commercial centers established residence in Seville to sell such items as English wool, Flemish textiles, German iron, and French trade goods for Spanish gold and silver. Banking families from the Italian city of Genoa helped make Seville a center of European finance. The transactions made by these merchants and bankers directed Spanish wealth through powerful mercantile networks, which stimulated production and commerce in many other parts of Europe.

New World gold made Spain a military as well as a commercial threat to other maritime powers. It enabled Spanish monarchs to buy the navy, artillery, and armaments needed to make their dominion the most powerful in Europe. After the Spanish crown passed to the Emperor Charles V, the first of the powerful Hapsburg dynasty to rule Spain, he used its wealth and power aggressively to extend his influence over Continental Europe. Charles's successor, Philip II of Spain, continued his father's expansive policies. Other European nations feared the growing Spanish threat. The English promoter Richard Hakluyt the Younger, for example, warned that "the contynuall commynge of . . . threasure" from Spanish America to Philip II would enable the monarch to finance international "mischief" that could destroy England.

2.1.1: Treasure for Some, Oppression for Many

Spanish colonists depended heavily on indigenous American workers to keep the treasure flowing into Seville. The *repartmiento* system established in the first decades of conquest harnessed Indian labor to produce profits for the Spanish colonists (see Chapter 1). In the earliest years of colonization, Columbus sanctioned the enslavement of Carib and Arawak Indians, many of whom panned gold for Spanish masters from the rivers and streams of Caribbean islands such as Hispañola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. The crown soon halted indiscriminate enslavement of Indians, permitting colonists to enslave only hostile "cannibals" on whom they had declared war. Colonists often circumvented this restriction by defining as "cannibals" whatever Indians they wanted to enslave. Nevertheless, the restriction prevented them from fulfilling their need for labor with native slaves. Instead, they had to develop or adapt various traditional forms of obtaining labor by tribute.

In Mexico, Cortés and his successors initially extended a form of *encomienda*, which gave the new Spanish aristocrats almost absolute control over the Indians within their borders. *Encomenderos* often enslaved, branded, rented, and sold their native laborers or put them to work on estates to produce goods or mine ore for export. Soon after the discovery of rich silver lodes at Zacatecas in 1546, the Spanish crown introduced to Mexico a reformed *repartmiento* system of labor tribute. New laws prohibited enslavement of Indians except captives of war and adapted previous Aztec methods of exacting labor from the resident population on a rotating basis. In distant mining zones like Zacatecas, however, the owners and managers had to rely primarily on free wage labor to attract sedentary Indian workers from distant centers of Spanish dominion. The Spanish supplemented the wage-labor force with Indian slaves captured in frontier warfare as well as smaller numbers of slaves transported from Africa.

Indians also comprised the bulk of the mineworkers in early Peru. As in Mexico, the Spanish adapted an earlier indigenous system of labor tribute, the *mita*, to supply the earliest Peruvian mining operations with forced workers. The discovery of silver in the high Andean region of Potosí in 1545, however, brought about a shift to free contract labor as Quechua-speaking Indians flocked to the mines in search of opportunity. The Spanish depended on Indians not only to mine the ore but also to refine it using smelting technology that Inca craftsmen had developed for oxygen-poor high altitudes. For twenty years, Spanish and Indian alike profited from mining and refining the abundant, high-quality ore. After 1570, Indian contract laborers began to drift away as depletion of the purest ore made the task of mining and processing much less profitable. Spanish officials responded by instituting the *mita* system of forced tribute labor once again to sustain production in the Potosí mines.

The various forms of forced labor that the Spanish imposed on their conquered peoples enriched colonists and crown alike. Yet the catastrophic decline in Spanish America's native population—through disease and oppressive work conditions—soon produced a chronic labor shortage, precipitating a search for new sources of workers. The Spanish turned increasingly to African slaves during the sixteenth century, augmenting the economic power of the Portuguese who controlled the transatlantic slave trade.

2.1.2: The Portuguese Atlantic: Another Story of Unfree Labor

While the Spanish were busy using the wealth of the *Carrera de Indias* to expand their economic and political might, the Portuguese were building a worldwide commercial empire that profoundly shaped the Atlantic World. Although the English

promoter Sir Thomas Peckham regarded Portugal as "scarce comparable to some three shires of Englande," he marveled at its leaders' resourcefulness in "fortifying, peopling, and planting" the coasts of "the West, the South, and the East partes of Africa, and also at Calicute (Calcutta) and in the East Indies, and in America." Until Portuguese planters began settling Brazil after 1530, however, their far-flung empire consisted mainly of fortified trading depots strategically located where their commodities would command favorable returns in spices, textiles, gold, and slaves. Until 1530, Portugal imported more gold through its Africa trade than Spain imported from the Caribbean and Mexico combined. Portugal's control of the lucrative Asian spice routes continued to make it the envy of Spain and other European nations even after imports of New World gold began outpacing imports from Africa.

Portugal began extending its trading empire to the New World shortly after Pedro Cabral discovered the Brazilian coast in 1500. Cabral was not primarily interested in discovering New World territory, but rather in finding a way to avoid sailing into the teeth of the southeast trade winds that made navigation to the Cape of Good Hope so difficult. In this he succeeded. Brazil soon became a stop for Portuguese vessels to take on fresh fruit and water en route to the Indian Ocean. Brazil's location east of the Line of Demarcation gave Portugal the exclusive right to exploit its resources, and the Portuguese crown claimed a monopoly on coastal trade in brazilwood, a source of valuable dye.

For three decades Portuguese merchants remained content to use Brazil's coast primarily as a provisioning stop on the route to more profitable ports. The minor trade in brazilwood and logwood (both used for making dyes) did bring the Portuguese into contact with indigenous peoples who bartered their labor for European commodities, cutting the wood that grew wild in the forest and piling it on the shore for loading. During this period, French merchants also traded regularly with Brazilian Indians for dyewood with little opposition from the Portuguese. Only in 1530 did the Portuguese begin to view its American territory as a place for permanent settlement of traders who could secure the monopoly on brazilwood and begin developing other resources.

In the 1550s, Brazilian settlers began shifting attention from the dyewood trade to sugar planting, a fateful change both for their relations with their native neighbors and for the larger history of the Atlantic World. Early planters obtained financing from Antwerp's traditional sugar investors to purchase cane and expensive mills. They brought the sugar-producing supplies and technology from the well-established Portuguese sugar islands of Madeira off the coast of Morocco and São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. More importantly, Brazilian planters transferred from those islands the plantation system based on slave labor. While the east Atlantic sugar planters had long relied on the labor of African slaves, Brazilian planters initially enslaved neighboring Indians to work their cane fields and mills. As in other parts of America, however, epidemic diseases soon began taking their toll on Brazil's indigenous population. As the Indian labor supply declined, planters increasingly turned to slaves shipped from Africa.

Brazil's sugar plantations proved highly successful, stimulating rapid expansion of transatlantic Portuguese shipping between Europe, Africa, and America. The abundance of fertile land near the coast made it possible to produce sugar on a much larger scale than ever before. While a Madeira sugar mill could produce a yearly average of around 15 metric tons of sugar, the average mill in Brazil was producing better than double that amount only two decades after large-scale planting began. By 1600, the average Brazilian sugar mill was producing 130 metric tons per year. The wealth that circulated the Atlantic from Brazilian sugar and African slaves stirred European rivals to envy Portugal as much as they did Spain. Indeed, mid-sixteenth century English promoters commonly referred to the wealth of the "King of Spaine and the King of Portingal" in the same breath.

Shrewd—often cruel—exploitation of their New World possessions enabled Spain and Portugal to transform the sixteenth-century Atlantic into a greater Iberian world. Spanish ships dominated the central east-west route from southern Europe to the Caribbean and Spanish Main, while a growing stream of Portuguese vessels dominated the triangular route between Africa, Brazil, and Europe. Other European seafarers navigated on the margins of this great Atlantic World, gleaning what profits they could at the sufferance of Spain and Portugal or from pockets of trade and plunder neglected by the Iberian lords of the sea. By 1580, when Spain's Philip II seized the Portuguese crown, the combined wealth of the united kingdoms made Iberian power seem invincible.

Spain's apparent strength masked deep flaws in its imperial system, which was soon undone by its own success. The sudden acquisition of so much American gold and silver triggered a huge inflation in the price of necessary goods. This hurt ordinary Spaniards who had no desire to emigrate to America. They were hurt further by long, debilitating European wars funded by American gold and silver. Moreover, instead of developing its own industry, Spain became dependent on the annual shipment of bullion from America. In 1603, one insightful Spaniard declared, "The New World conquered by you, has conquered you in its turn."

2.2: The Sixteenth-Century Atlantic: The African Experience

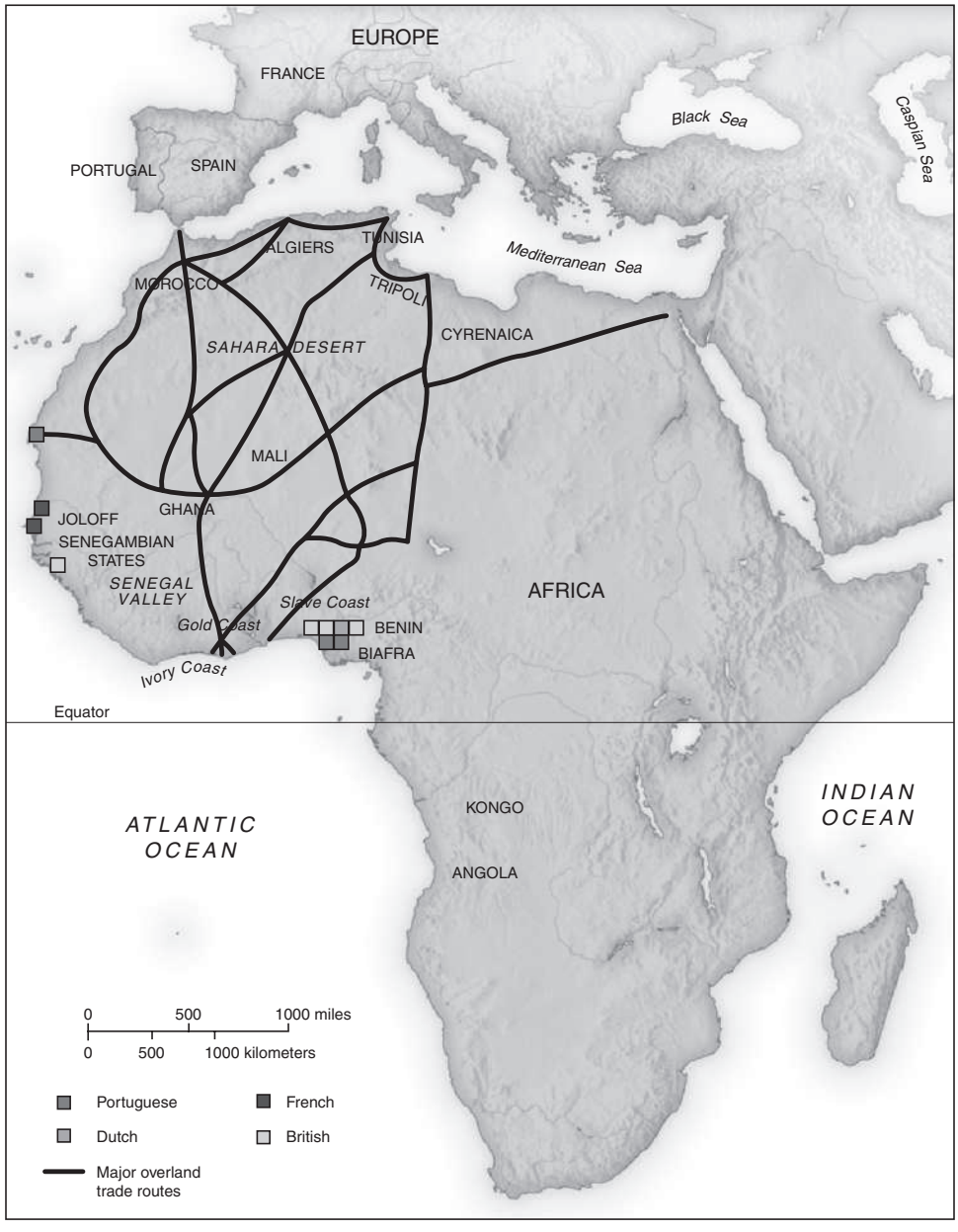
2.2 Examine the impact of slavery on the New World

The ability of the Portuguese to extend African slavery to the Americas flowed out of nearly a century of well-developed trade relations with powerful African commercial interests (see Chapter 1). Too often, historians have ignored Africa in their haste to tell the story of colonial American development. This is a mistake. One should not allow the enormity of the slave trade to obscure either the diversity of Africa's transatlantic commerce or the active role that African leaders themselves took in developing the Atlantic economy.

The expansion of slavery represented a continuous process of change in Africa as new slavers carried the trade to new recruitment areas. Europeans did not dictate the terms of exchange in this developing commerce in human beings. Coastal African rulers and merchant communities brought sophisticated bargaining skills and discriminating preferences to the Atlantic market. In most ports, African law governed the terms of trade. Europeans had to do business using African weights and measures. European rulers often had to lubricate the wheels of commerce with generous gifts to local African rulers. Europeans who balked at or tried to circumvent these constraints often ran afoul of African laws backed by formidable military force. European merchants depended on their African partners to develop the sustained supply and demand—in goods as well as humans—that made Africa a vital link in the emerging Atlantic World economy. The story of New World slavery remains incomplete without understanding how it set in motion transformative processes on both sides of the Atlantic.

2.2.1: Competition and Conspicuous Consumption

Africa's entry into the Atlantic market did not come about because Europeans arrived on the coast with superior goods that Africans could not produce for themselves. Indeed, the reverse often proved true, as early Portuguese traders on the Gold Coast discovered when their Akkan partners demanded African slaves rather than European goods as the price of their gold. African ironworkers possessed the technology to produce



Map 2.1 Trade Routes in Africa

the best steel in the sixteenth-century world. African weavers could produce cloth as fine as any available in Europe.

To break into this sophisticated African market, European traders had to identify and meet specific market demands as well as create new demand by appealing to their customers' instinct for a bargain and taste for variety. Europeans managed this in a variety of ways. Sometimes they supplied Africans' demand for

products originating in other parts of Africa by using their sailing vessels to transport the goods more cheaply, quickly, and in greater volume than could African traders. In the case of iron, Europeans found a market niche in supplying poorer grades at prices far cheaper than those of African producers. African craftsmen could use inferior European iron selectively to produce everyday utensils for which it was adequate, while preferring higher-grade African steel for stronger, more durable items such as metalworking tools and swords. European textiles eventually found a market as well, even among the Akkan of the Gold Coast who were already well-supplied with beautiful cloth of African make. European fabrics offered a greater range of texture, beauty, and design, and large collections of cloth became a mark of wealth and status for their African owners.

African merchants also offered a wide variety of goods that Europeans valued, besides the gold that served as the basis of Portugal's fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century African trade. Sixteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese traders regularly purchased grain from several parts of West Africa for shipment to their plantation colonies. Exquisitely crafted items made from native African materials such as ivory fetched high prices in Europe, as did raw ivory itself. Senegambian mats covered European beds. Some types of African cloth enjoyed a significant European demand. Weavers in the West African region of Allada produced their highly prized fabrics by unraveling the threads from cloth imported from Europe, which they rewove in distinctive patterns for sale to markets as distant as the Caribbean island of Barbados.

2.2.2: Africans and the Atlantic Slave Trade

The European market for African minerals and manufactured goods always existed alongside a strong European demand for slaves. The demand rose steadily even before 1492 as the Portuguese and Spanish sought workers for the sugar plantations on their Atlantic islands (see Chapter 1). The introduction of sugar planting in Brazil after 1550, coupled with the decimation of the native population throughout the sixteenth-century Caribbean and Latin America, brought a dramatic increase in the trade in African slaves. Between 1550 and 1600, the number of Atlantic slave exports from West Africa rose to over 200,000, at least 30,000 more slaves than were exported during the previous hundred years. During the seventeenth century, nearly two million Africans were carried to the New World, and the number soared to over six million in the eighteenth century. By the time Brazil became the last Atlantic nation to abolish slavery in 1880, over eleven million Africans had crossed the Atlantic in chains. The vast majority of those who survived the Atlantic crossing—around 80 percent—wound up on plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.

European demand alone cannot account for the rapid growth of the Atlantic slave trade, for no early modern European state wielded the military or economic power sufficient to coerce African rulers into supplying slaves. Indeed, the Portuguese concluded as early as the 1450s that it was far more practical to trade for slaves than to risk war with powerful West African coastal states by attempting to capture them in raids. African authorities remained firmly in control over all but a few regions such as the Portuguese colony of Angola, and even there European traders depended heavily on African suppliers who readily exchanged slaves for the commodities they desired. Europeans tapped into systems of slavery that had existed for centuries among these African states (see Chapter 1). The victims in most cases were prisoners of war—casualties in the endemic conflict that raged constantly among Africa's many fractious states. Captives were taken in a variety of ways: some during pitched battles, others during lightning raids on villages or fields, still others as tribute from defeated territories. The captors did not

regard their slaves as members of a common racial group, but as alien peoples who had forfeited their freedom by right of conquest and could be put to work or sold as circumstances demanded.

Captives of wars or raids often traveled long distances overland, chained or yoked together, and marched in single columns that could be easily guarded. The marching distances increased as the coastal supply of slaves dwindled, prompting traders to offer higher prices that made it worthwhile for inland rulers to bear the cost of transport. Slaves might change hands between traders several times during transit. A buyer might put a newly acquired slave to work for a while before reselling him. The eighteenth-century slave Olaudah Equiano, for example, recorded how he spent time working temporarily for various masters who exchanged him along the route from his homeland to the West African coast. African masters living in port towns often put newly arrived slaves to work in fields or on projects for several months while waiting for a European slave trader to arrive.

Over time, the slave trade shifted to different centers along the African coast as states responded to new internal demands and pressures as well as new commercial opportunities. During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, for example, Portuguese merchants purchased many slaves from the coast of Benin for resale on the Gold Coast or for transport to their sugar islands of Madeira and São Tomé. By 1550, however, Benin's rulers cut off the supply, possibly because they needed slave laborers themselves to support the brisk export trade they had developed in cloth and pepper. The Kingdom of Kongo, on the other hand, continued to deal in slaves until the early seventeenth century, when war with neighboring states disrupted the trade. As some states pulled out of the trade, others entered, enticed by rising prices or the desire for specific goods. Still other regions, such as the Portuguese colony of Angola with its many links to the continent's interior, continued supplying slaves to the Atlantic market from the late sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries.

The European demand for slaves produced a seismic shift in the direction of the long-distance African trade. Before the sixteenth century, many slaves remained in the region where they were captured. Others were transported to more distant regions along the coast, and a large number were carried north across the Sahara to the Mediterranean and Middle East, where most masters purchased them as domestic servants and concubines. The growing demand for laborers in America, however, redirected the trade to the Atlantic during the seventeenth century.

The Atlantic trade also produced a shift in the demographic impact of slavery in Africa. Not only did it draw off many more slaves than had the trans-Sahara trade, it also demanded a much higher proportion of males. The earlier long-distance trade had drawn a higher proportion of female slaves to satisfy the demand for concubines. European buyers, by contrast, preferred male slaves for heavy plantation labor, although they also put slave women to work in the fields. The sexual imbalance in the Atlantic trade contributed to the ongoing demand for new slaves from Africa by making it difficult in most areas for the New World slave population to sustain itself through natural increase.

2.2.3: The Horror of the Middle Passage

Portuguese dominance of the sixteenth-century African coast ensured that their vessels carried the vast majority of slaves to the New World until the 1620s, when Dutch competitors began to break their monopoly. Portuguese ships could make the trip from West Africa to Brazil in approximately six weeks, making large-scale transport of Africans to their American colony practical and cost-effective. Portuguese vessels also carried Africans to the Spanish American mainland ports

of Cartagena and Vera Cruz as well as Spanish Caribbean ports such as Havana and San Juan, where the much longer voyages took a heavy toll in mortality, disease, and profits.

This voyage across the Atlantic united the slaves that endured it in a shared experience of trauma and deprivation. Mortality during the Middle Passage was high, often killing as much as a third of a ship's slaves during the voyage. Long chains bound slaves together in groups of six or more, and many captains took the additional precaution of shackling captives by the ankles in pairs to prevent escape. Slaves spent much of the voyage locked below decks, where the stifling heat and poor circulation made the air so bad that a candle would not remain lit. The stench of vomit, urine, and feces soon became intolerable, even on vessels whose crews periodically cleaned the holds. A port's inhabitants often knew when a slave ship had arrived by the foul smell near the harbor. On some vessels, the captains gave the sufferers temporary relief from these horrific conditions by bringing them on deck for a short period each day in small, closely watched groups.

Slaves on the Middle Passage also endured malnourishment, dehydration, and illness that only worsened as the voyage grew longer. After 1520, the Portuguese crown required crews to load royal vessels with adequate food and water supplies. The regulations did not bind private traders, however, who commonly overloaded their vessels with slaves and skimped on supplies in an effort to make as much profit as possible. Alonso de Sandoval, an early-seventeenth-century observer of the Portuguese trade, reported that slaves usually received only a "small jar of water" and one meal of millet gruel per day. Sandoval wrote that slaves arriving at the end of the long voyages to Cartagena or Vera Cruz were typically "reduced to skeletons." Poor nutrition made the captives especially susceptible to epidemic diseases such as typhoid fever, measles, yellow fever, and smallpox. These diseases sometimes claimed entire shiploads of slaves along with their crews, and infected ships sometimes spread their epidemics to the ports where they anchored.

The Middle Passage marked its survivors with enduring scars of unspeakable psychological and physical trauma. Yet contrary to the assertions of some modern historians, it neither stripped Africans of their cultural memory nor reduced them to a state of fawning dependence on their European masters. Abundant evidence testifies that the Middle Passage began the process of forging new African communities bound together by a common experience on which they could build coherent cultural traditions. In doing so, Africans drew on their past for the resources to cope with their experience in the New World and to create communities that could provide support and nurture in the midst of a harsh experience. Africans also exhibited a persistent determination to resist bondage when opportunity arose, and some escaped to forge independent societies of "maroons," escaped slaves who lived in areas beyond the control of Latin American authorities.

2.2.4: The African Diaspora: Sixteenth-Century Beginnings

African slaves were part of the process of New World conquest from Columbus's first voyage onward. As their numbers grew in Spanish and Portuguese America, so did their power to contribute distinctive African elements to the emerging Atlantic World. Africans served as seamen on the early voyages of discovery as well as servants in the households and estates of early Spanish conquistadores and royal officials. Spanish colonists soon came to rely on African labor for mining and agricultural enterprises as well, especially after epidemic disease killed so many Native American workers. Portuguese colonists in Brazil likewise turned to African labor to supplement indigenous labor on the colony's sugar plantations. These laborers brought with them knowledge of plants and cultivation, which proved indispensable to

their masters. They also brought patterns of community life; ideas of the sacred; and ways of feasting, marrying, celebration, and mourning that permanently shaped the societies they inhabited.

African slaves filled an important niche in the Spanish American labor system even before the devastating declines in the native population. The limitations that the crown placed on Indian slavery, coupled with the *repartmiento* system's restrictions on the use of Indian labor, created a need for a permanent labor force to sustain and coordinate crucial operations. *Encomenderos* used African slaves to fill the gaps. Throughout Spanish America, African slaves provided the domestic labor force as permanent members of colonial households. Africans occupied supervisory and administrative roles in Spanish mining operations both in the Caribbean and on the Mexican and Peruvian mainland. Slaves from Senegambia, who brought to the Americas cattle-herding skills unknown among the Indians, tended herds on Spanish American *haciendas*. Expert divers from the Gold Coast fished pearls for Spanish masters off the coasts of Venezuela and Trinidad. Skilled African craftsmen worked as blacksmiths, barrel makers, carpenters, and cabinetmakers. African slaves worked in the cane fields and sugar mills of the Spanish Caribbean. They also harvested mahogany trees throughout the region. In many of these operations, they worked alongside or supervised indigenous American slaves, tribute laborers, and wage earners. As disease decimated the supply of native laborers, Spanish masters replaced them wherever possible with African slaves.

In Portuguese Brazil, enslaved Tupinambá Indians provided most of the labor on the early sugar plantations. Even so, Portuguese masters preferred to employ African slaves in domestic service and skilled tasks. The rapid expansion of the plantation economy soon created a demand for African slaves in the fields and mills as well, one that was only exacerbated as epidemic disease began to take its toll on the Tupinambá population. By the early 1600s, African slaves almost completely replaced the Tupinambá in all aspects of plantation labor.

Africans' experiences in Colonial Latin America varied widely according to the type of labor they performed and the conditions in which they lived. Most slaves in the Spanish mining regions, for instance, were male. Though they enjoyed some privileges associated with their supervisory and skilled positions, they usually could not marry African women or create the families and stable communities that could nurture their cultural traditions. The slave populations of plantation regions also suffered from an imbalanced sex ratio of two or more men for every woman. Nevertheless, the greater presence of women on some plantations did make it possible for African slaves to marry, have children, and form communities. Africans also forged a variety of relationships with Indian coworkers as well as Europeans. Both Spanish American and Brazilian colonists tolerated sexual unions among Europeans, Africans, and Indians. The resulting mulatto (offspring of African-European unions) and mustee (African-Indian offspring) populations were incorporated along with mestizos (European-Indian offspring) into Colonial Latin American societies.

Slave communities of Latin America rarely reproduced the culture of any specific African group; in other words, the creation of New World African American cultures drew upon the memories and customs of diverse African communities. Although the ethnic makeup of individual slave cargos was often homogenous, the slaves arrived into port only to be dispersed onto plantations where they encountered people from very different cultural backgrounds. Slaves living in the cities of Spanish and Portuguese America often overcame this separation by seeking out fellow countrymen with whom they formed ethnic secret societies. Slave communities on the plantations, however, had to combine features of diverse cultures they had known at home with European and Native American elements, producing

new cultural forms. The resulting innovations in music, dress, language, religion, and customs of marriage and family life sustained the members of slave communities and eventually linked slaves of entire regions to one another through a shared cultural system. African seamen traveling from port to port on European vessels may have tapped into several of these regional cultural systems to provide even wider links among maritime Atlantic slave communities.

Not all Africans who came to Spanish and Portuguese America as slaves remained so throughout their lives. A master could manumit a slave in reward for particular services performed or as a show of magnanimity, or he might allow a slave to purchase his freedom through additional labor. Over time, significant communities of free blacks emerged in Colonial Latin America. Other slaves simply stole themselves, running away to remote areas where they formed maroon communities that resisted capture while preying on Iberian settlements and shipping. Maroons on Caribbean islands often pursued the time-honored coastal African tradition of piracy, ambushing unsuspecting vessels from canoes and open boats. Maroon communities in Brazil formed powerful, well-armed states that could effectively repel colonial militia units periodically dispatched to suppress them. Maroons of Central America, whom the Spanish called *Cimarrones*, staged periodic raids from their well-hidden jungle villages, harassing coastal communities and attacking the treasure convoys that carried Peruvian silver across the Isthmus of Panama.

The written history of the New World has tended to focus on European migrations. But this is a tale told by the winners, by those who profited from unfree black labor. In fact, during every single year between 1650 and 1831, more Africans than Europeans came to the Americas. As historian Davis Eltis writes, "In terms of immigration alone . . . America was an extension of Africa rather than Europe until late in the nineteenth century."

2.3: Northern Europeans Enter the Atlantic World

2.3 Summarize the conflict between the European nations to control the wealth of the emerging Atlantic world

By the mid-sixteenth century, Africa had become an indispensable part of the Iberian Atlantic system, thanks to a widespread African demand for European commodities and its role in supplying slaves to a growing New World market. African labor increasingly sustained the flow of precious metals from the Spanish Main as well as the growth in Brazilian sugar production. The transatlantic circulation of wealth excited the envy of Spain's and Portugal's rivals to the north, while growing Spanish military power aroused their fears.

In the later sixteenth century, challengers moved ever more boldly to wrest the Atlantic economy from Iberian control. Privateers raided colonial ports and seized vulnerable galleons. Traders intruded into African and New World networks of exchange. Explorers sought alternative routes to the riches of the East and laid claim to stretches of coast unoccupied by Spanish or Portuguese colonists. In most instances, they ignored the prior claims of native peoples, although a few such as the Dutch adventurer Peter Minuit sought to gain legal advantage by purchasing claims from the original inhabitants. The boundaries of the Atlantic World steadily expanded as northern Europeans secured new American beachheads to find new sources of wealth and "cutt off the common mischefes that commes to all Europe by the peculiar aboundance" of the Spanish king's "Indian Treasure."

2.3.1: The French

Spain and Portugal no sooner began consolidating their control of Atlantic shipping lanes between Africa, the New World, and Europe than

the French monarch Francis I began challenging them. France and Spain were locked in almost perpetual warfare from 1521 to 1559, and King Francis viewed New World enterprise as a means of gaining advantage over his rival Charles V. This motive had driven the French crown's sponsorship of Verrazzano's and Cartier's quests for a Northwest Passage to Asia (see Chapter 1). It also prompted several direct challenges to Spanish and Portuguese claims in the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the coast of Brazil. Although most early French attempts to wrest a toehold in the New World ended in failure, they nevertheless established a persistent French presence in the sixteenth-century Atlantic and laid the foundations for successful seventeenth-century colonial ventures.

EARLY FRENCH VENTURES IN THE CARIBBEAN AND BRAZIL France and Spain had barely been at war a year when in 1522 French squadrons belonging to the Norman nobleman Jean d'Ango captured four galleons returning to Spain laden with treasure from newly conquered Mexico. The richness of these prizes, which were taken near the Azores, soon emboldened French captains to seek "letters of marque," official documents from the French crown authorizing them to invade the Caribbean itself in search of Spanish plunder. By 1550, these French corsairs had established a fearsome reputation through their yearly raids on the coastal towns of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Hispañola. In 1655, the corsair Jacques de Sores captured and burned Havana, the fortress of the Spanish Caribbean itself. The conclusion of peace between Spain and France in 1559 did little to diminish the French presence in the Caribbean, where corsairs continued raiding and smuggling operations into the seventeenth century.

The corsairs wasted little time in extending their activities to the coast of Brazil, where they competed with Portuguese merchants for dyewood. The Portuguese initially tolerated the trade out of fear that the French crown would issue letters of marque against their ships. As the tide of war turned against France in Europe, however, Portugal's King John III sent a fleet to round up French traders and execute them as pirates. In spite of this action, the French refused to surrender their contest for Brazil. By 1550, the corsairs controlled a significant stretch of the Brazilian coast, where they traded for dyewood and staged raids on Portuguese settlements. French traders established amicable relations with their Indian trading partners, often settling in native villages and intermarrying to cement alliances in a manner that became characteristic of French-native interaction throughout the Americas. These alliances helped the French hold out against Portuguese efforts to dislodge them from Brazil until 1603.

CHALLENGING SPANISH FLORIDA French adventurers also made sporadic attempts during the sixteenth century to compete with Spain for a foothold in southeastern North America near Florida. In 1562, a group of French Protestants established a settlement on what is now Parris Island in South Carolina's Port Royal Sound. This new colony of Charlesfort was the first European settlement in what would become Britain's thirteen mainland colonies. Its founders hoped it would become a refuge for French Protestants, or Huguenots, a center for exploiting new discoveries of American wealth, and a base for preying on Spanish shipping. Internal strife soon tore the colony apart, however, and Spanish forces from Havana burned Charlesfort's abandoned buildings in 1664. That same year the Huguenots attempted to found a second colony at Fort Caroline near the mouth of the St. Johns River on the Atlantic coast of Florida. It lasted less than a year. In 1565, the Spanish governor Pedro Menéndez de Avilés surprised the settlement, sparing women and children but systematically executing more than 130 male defenders of the "evil Lutheran sect."

This illustration produced by Jacques Le Moyne in 1564 depicts Native Americans of coastal Florida depositing gifts of food at the foot of a column erected by French explorers who had established a short-lived settlement in the region.

France's sixteenth-century efforts along the Florida coast succeeded mainly in spurring the Spanish crown to pour more funds into American defenses. During the 1560s, Florida's Governor Menéndez established St. Augustine along with six other Spanish forts to secure the coast of Florida and the Bahama Channel. He also devised a scheme to bypass Caribbean routes by transporting silver overland from Mexico's Zacatecas mines to the new fort of Santa Elena on Parris Island near the former site of the Huguenot's ill-fated Charlesfort. Menéndez's idea, though impractical, testified to Spain's growing fear of the French corsairs who infested Caribbean waters and to the rising costs of defending the Spain's New World empire.

NEW FRANCE ON THE ST. LAWRENCE While intrepid corsairs contended in the sixteenth-century Caribbean for a share of Spanish treasure, French merchants and fishermen were quietly pursuing a more peaceful and increasingly lucrative enterprise in the Gulf of Lawrence. By the 1550s, the Grand Banks were attracting large squadrons of French fishing vessels to supply a huge demand for fish during France's Lenten season, when consumption of meat and poultry was prohibited by church tradition. In addition, the growing popularity in Europe of wide-brimmed hats was boosting the demand for American beaver pelts, the soft underfur of which made excellent felt for hats. Each year, the abundant supply of pelts and fish enticed more Frenchmen to establish permanent outposts in the region, belying earlier Spanish predictions that Canada's frigid climate would soon force the French to abandon any colony they attempted there. Wherever they settled, the traders soon began farming their own crops and cultivating good relations with nearby native bands.

By the 1570s, these unofficial fishing and trading communities were producing healthy profits for French merchants, who pressed the crown to protect their American investments. Religious turmoil, however, diverted royal attention and resources from North America for another

thirty years. Only in 1598 was King Henry IV able to begin securing the French foothold in Canada by appointing officials to organize government and supervise trade. During the next decade, these men made several abortive efforts to establish a seat of royal government in the region. Finally, in 1608, Samuel de Champlain succeeded in founding the city of Quebec on the banks of the St. Lawrence River.

Quebec proved an excellent strategic choice. From its site at a point where the St. Lawrence narrowed, French artillery could command both riverbanks and control all traffic to the interior. Its location near Huron population centers also enabled the French to forge an alliance with an important nation whose networks of exchange extended throughout the Great Lakes. The Hurons and other northern nations were eager to trade for European goods and readily accepted Champlain's new settlement as a center of commerce with France. To consolidate the native trade network, Champlain reciprocated by cementing an alliance with Hurons against their enemies the Iroquois. The alliance secured France reliable trading partners, while Quebec's strategic location insulated it from European competitors.

As was the case with other colonial powers, the French declared they had migrated to the New World in search of wealth as well as in hopes of converting the Indians to Christianity. As it turned out, these economic and spiritual goals required full cooperation between the French and the Native Americans. In contrast to the English settlers, who established independent farms and who regarded the Indians at best as obstacles to proper cultivation of the land, the French viewed the natives as necessary economic partners. Furs constituted Canada's most valuable export, and to obtain the pelts of beaver and other animals, the French depended completely on Indian hunters and trappers. French traders continued to live among the Indians throughout the colonial period, often taking native wives and studying local cultures.

Catholic missionaries also depended on Indian cooperation. Canadian priests came from two orders, the Jesuits and the Recollets. In 1618, Recollet missionaries laid out a plan to populate New France with settlers who could familiarize the natives with European ways of life to facilitate their conversion. Recollets and Jesuits also traveled far inland with their message, living among the Indians and learning to speak their languages as the fur traders did. Jesuit missionaries distinguished themselves by a careful study of native customs and beliefs in an effort to frame Christian teachings in terms intelligible to Indian cultures. Despite their unavoidable cultural bias, Jesuit accounts remain valuable sources of information on seventeenth-century native culture. This culturally sensitive approach appears to have helped French Catholic missionaries convert more Indians to Christianity than did their English Protestant counterparts to the south.

The establishment of Quebec secured France a permanent outpost in the Atlantic World, albeit one far removed from the great arteries of coveted Iberian wealth. Moreover, the French dream of expanding its northern claims into a vast American empire suffered from serious flaws. Political turmoil in France and Europe prevented the crown from giving much attention to Canadian affairs until late in the seventeenth century. Royal officials stationed in New France received limited and sporadic support from Paris. An even greater problem was the decision to settle what seemed to many rural peasants and urban artisans a cold, inhospitable land. Canada's European population grew very slowly throughout the period of French rule, which came to an end in 1763. A census of 1663 recorded a mere 3,035 French residents. By 1700, the figure had reached only fifteen thousand. Moreover, because of the colony's geography, all exports and imports had to go through Quebec. It was relatively easy, therefore, for crown officials to control that traffic, usually by awarding fur-trading monopolies to court favorites. Such practices created political tensions and hindered economic growth.

2.3.2: The Rise of the Dutch

The Dutch entered the competition for Atlantic wealth as an act of rebellion against the Spanish crown. King Philip II had sparked unrest in the provinces of Netherlands soon after his accession to the throne when he began revoking their ancient privileges, imposing a Spanish garrison, and instituting the Spanish Inquisition to stamp out the Calvinistic Protestantism that had taken root in the seven northern provinces called Holland. The war that broke out in 1572 wore on by fits and starts for eighty years, although it was interrupted in the early seventeenth century by the Twelve Years' Truce. The Catholic southern provinces of Belgium bore the brunt of war and were exhausted into complete submission by the early 1590s. The seven Protestant northern provinces, however, concluded the Union of Utrecht in 1579 and proclaimed their independence from Spain.

Despite warfare with Spain, the United Provinces enjoyed a security and fund of resources that enabled them to capture a significant share of transatlantic commerce very quickly. Holland's treacherous coastline was a curse to potential Spanish invaders, but a blessing to the Dutch navigators who knew the waters well and could take advantage of their strategic location near the center of northern European sea-lanes. During the previous century, Dutch navigators had captured the bulk of the carrying trade between the Baltic and southern Europe, while Dutch artisans had developed a burgeoning trade in export goods. The provinces also experienced a great influx of wealth and talent as refugees poured in from the war-torn south. By the 1590s, the merchants, financiers, and artisans that had once made Antwerp the economic center of northern Europe were poised to capture world markets from Amsterdam.

CHALLENGING THE PORTUGUESE Amsterdam investors began moving to capture Portuguese markets around the world during the last two decades of the sixteenth century. The sea battles of that period had disrupted the Portuguese trade with Africa and the Indian Ocean, creating an opportunity for the Dutch to move in. By 1602, the newly created United East India Company controlled a large share of the spice trade. Many of the company's investors financed voyages to the coast of Africa as well, where they quickly undercut Portuguese traders by offering cheaper, better cloth from Europe and India as well as superior iron ingots from Sweden. Out of this trade the Guinea Company emerged to contend with Portugal for the African slave trade. The company built forts at strategic points in Senegambia and the Gold Coast to double as trading posts and bases of operation against Portuguese slaving vessels.

The Dutch conquest of world markets would be incomplete without a rich American possession, and investors first set their sights on Portuguese Brazil. By the end of the sixteenth century, Dutch shippers regularly carried a large share of Brazilian sugar to European markets. Not content with this, the Dutch launched a struggle for possession of the territory itself. In 1621, the newly created West India Company began pouring its resources into a protracted effort to capture Brazil while continuing the now-defunct Guinea Company's contest for key Portuguese possessions in Africa. The company eventually captured Portugal's West African forts at Elmina and Axim (see Chapter 7), but failed in Brazil. The long struggle diverted resources away from Dutch colonization efforts in the Caribbean, where they gained possession of only a few islands in the Lesser Antilles including Curaçao and St. Eustatia.

NEW NETHERLANDS ON THE HUDSON The Dutch, like the French before them, ultimately found it most practical to establish a foothold on the North American periphery of the Iberian Atlantic. And like the French, they happened on the site of their North American colony while searching for the elusive Northwest Passage. In 1609, Henry Hudson, an English explorer employed