

A.P. U.S. History Notes

Chapter 1: “New World Beginnings”

Summary:

225 million years ago, Earth was one supercontinent (Pangaea) and ocean. About 10 million years ago, the North America that we know today was formed (geographical shape). The first discoverers of North America were nomadic Asians who wandered over here by way of an exposed land bridge from Russia to Alaska during the Ice Age. Though they were hunters at first, by 5000 BC, they had become hunter-gatherers with a diet of basically corn. Great pre-European Indian cultures included the Pueblos, the Iroquois, the Mound Builders, the Mayans, the Incas, the Aztec, and the Sioux, among others (**map of tribes on pg. 8**). The Indians revered nature and land, and didn’t carelessly destroy it. Everything was put to use.

In 1000 AD, Vikings discovered Newfoundland, but later abandoned it due to unfavorable conditions. Europeans, though, slowly began to proliferate into non-European worlds starting around the 1400s. After Marco Polo came back with stories of China and its riches, Europeans began to explore. First, they set up settlements in Africa, near the coast, where they used African slaves to work on plantations. In 1498, Vasco da Gama reached India, opening a sea route to the Far East.

Complications and dangers of this eastern sea route influenced Christopher Columbus to sail west. In doing so, he inadvertently discovered the Americas, though he never knew it. The Portuguese were first to settle in America, but the Spanish later became the dominant nation in the Americas. Spanish *Conquistadores* swept through Latin and South America, destroying the Aztecs and the Incas. Meanwhile, Magellan’s crew sailed around the world in 1519, becoming the first voyage to do so. As the chapter ended, Spain was very much in control of much of the Americas, though other countries were beginning to challenge the Spanish dominance.

Important People:

The Aztecs-

Native Americans who that lived in what is now Mexico and routinely offered their gods human sacrifices, these people were violent, yet built amazing pyramids and built a great civilization without having a wheel.

The Mound Builders-

Indians of the Ohio River Valley.

The Mississippian settlement-

At Cahokia, near present-day East St. Louis, Illinois, was home to about 40,000 people in at 1100 A.D.

Hiawatha-

This was legendary leader who inspired the **Iroquois**, a powerful group of Native Americans in the northeaster woodlands of the U.S.

The Norse-

These Vikings discovered America in about 1000 A.D., when they discovered modern-day Newfoundland. They abandoned it later due to bad conditions.

Marco Polo-

Italian adventurer who supposedly sailed to the Far East (China) in 1295 and returned with stories and supplies of the Asian life there (silk, pearls, etc...)

Bartholomeu Días-

A Portuguese sailor, he was the first to round the southernmost tip of Africa, a feat he did in 1488.

Vasco da Gama-

In 1498, he reached India and returned home with a small but tantalizing cargo of jewels and spices.

Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile-

The wedded king and queen of Spain, their marriage united the previously non-existing country.

Christopher Columbus-

An Italian seafarer who persuaded Spain to give him three ships for which to sail west to look for a better route to India, he “discovered” America in 1492

Vasco Nuñez Balboa-

Discoverer of the Pacific Ocean in 1513.

Ferdinand Magellan-

In 1519, his crew began a voyage and eventually ended up becoming the first to circumnavigate the world, even though he died in the Philippines. The sole surviving ship returned to Europe in 1522.

Ponce de León-

In 1513 and 1521, this Spanish Explorer explored Florida, searching for gold (contrary to the myth of his seeking the “Fountain of Youth”).

Francisco Coronado-

From 1540 to 1542, he explored the pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico, penetrating as far east as Kansas. He also discovered the Grand Canyon and enormous herds of bison.

Hernando de Soto-

From 1539 to 1542, he explored Florida and crossed the Mississippi River. He brutally abused Indians and died of fever and battle wounds.

Francisco Pizarro-

In 1532, he crushed the Incas of Peru and got lots of bounty.

Bartolomé de Las Casas-

A Spanish missionary who was appalled by the method of *encomienda*, calling it “a moral pestilence invented by Satan.”

Hernán Cortés-

Annihilator of the Aztec in 1519.

Malinche-

A female Indian slave who knew Mayan and **Nahuatl**, the language of the Aztec.

Montezuma-

The leader of the Aztecs at the time of Cortés’ invasion who believed that Cortés was the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl.

Giovanni Caboto-

AKA John Cabot, he explored the northeastern coast of North America in 1497-98.

Giovanni da Verranzo-

An Italian explorer dispatched by the French king in 1524 to probe the eastern seaboard of U.S.

Don Juan de Oñate-

Leader of a Spanish group that traversed parts of Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas in 1598, he and his men proclaimed the province of New Mexico in 1609 and founded its capital, Santa Fe.

Robert de La Salle-

Sent by the French, he went on an expedition down the Mississippi in the 1680s.

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo-

He explored the California coast in 1542 but failed to find anything of interest.

Father Junipero Serra-

The Spanish missionary who founded 21 missions in California, in 1769, he founded Mission San Diego, the first of the chain.

Key Terms & Words, etc...:

- maize - the Indian word for corn
- Conquistadores* - the Spanish word for “conqueror,” these explorers claimed much of America for Spain, slaughtering millions of natives in the process
- encomienda* - a euphemism for slavery in which Indians were given to colonists to be “Christianized.”
- Día de la Raza* - Spanish for Columbus Day.
- Lake Bonneville - massive prehistoric lake, all of which remains today in the form of the Great Salt Lake.
- Treaty of Tordesillas - treaty that settled Spanish and Portuguese differences in the Americas, Portugal got modern-day Brazil; Spain got the rest.
- Popé’s Rebellion - revolt in which Indians took over New Mexico and held control for nearly half a century.

Places and Countries:

Timbuktu-

Capital of the West African kingdom of **Mali**, a place located in the **Niger River Valley**.

Madeira, the Canaries, São Tomé, Pricipe-

Areas where sugar plantations were established by Portugal then Spain where African slaves were forced to work.

Potosí-

A rich silver mine in Bolivia that enriched Spain with lots of wealth.

Timeline:

c. 33,000 – 8000 BC	First humans come to Americas from land bridge connecting Asia and Alaska.
c. 5000 BC	Corn is developed as a stable crop in highland Mexico.
c. 4000 BC	First civilized societies develop in the Middle East.
c. 1200 BC	Corn planting reaches present-day American Southwest.
c. 1000 AD	Norse voyagers discover and briefly settle in Newfoundland (Vinland). Also, corn cultivation reaches Midwest and southeaster Atlantic seaboard.
c. 1100 AD	Height of Mississippian settlement at Cahokia
c. 1100 – 1300	Christian crusades arouse European interest in the East.
1295	Marco Polo returns to Europe from Asia.
Late 1400s	Spain unites.
1488	Díaz rounds the southern tip of Africa.
1492	Columbus land in the Bahamas.
1494	Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal.

1498	da Gama reaches India. Cabot explores northeastern coast of North America for England.
1513	Balboa claims all lands touched by the Pacific Ocean for Spain.
1513 & 1521	Ponce de León explores Florida.
1519 – 1521	Cortés conquers Mexico for Spain, defeating the Aztecs.
1522	Magellan’s crew completes circumnavigation of the world.
1524	Verrazano explores eastern seaboard of North America for France.
1532	Pizarro crushes the Incas.
1534	Cartier journeys up the St. Lawrence River.
1539 – 1542	de Soto explores the Southeast and discovers the Mississippi River.
1540 – 1542	Coronado explores present-day Southwest
1542	Cabrillo explores California coast for Spain.
1565	Spanish build fortress at St. Augustine.
Late 1500s	Iroquois Confederacy founded (according to Iroquois legend)
c. 1598 – 1609	Spanish under Oñate conquer Pueblo peoples of Rio Grande Valley.
1609	Spanish found New Mexico.
1680	Popé’s rebellion of New Mexico.
1680s	French expedition down Mississippi River under La Salle
1769	Father Junipero Serra founds Mission San Diego, in California.

Makers of America:

- *Conquistadores* included Hernán Cortes and Francisco Pizarro, who conquered the Aztecs and the Incas respectively.
- Within half a century of Columbus’ “discovery” of America, they had claimed, for Spain, territory that stretched from Colorado to Argentina.
- They spread from Cuba through Mexico and from Panama, south through Peru.
- As the Spanish crown tightened its grip on its colonies, though, the *conquistadors* lost more and more power.
- Most of them never achieved their dreams of glory, though a few received royal titles.
- Many of them married Indian women, creating a new class of people called *mestizos*.
- The *mestizos* formed a bridge between Latin America’s Indian and European races.