

THE SPANISH REACH THE AMERICAS. (1492-1550)

What happened when the first Europeans made contact with North Americans?



Columbus brought back Native Americans to present to the king and queen of Spain. After his arrival, Native Americans suffered cruelty, disease, and death.

STUDY

After you have read the chapter, write down everything you can remember from it.

Then skim through the chapter, and add any ideas you left out.

Use the list to study for a test.

HINT

Looking at Key Terms

- Vikings • Crusades • Muslims • Indies

Looking at Key Words

- **navigator:** a person who can steer a ship accurately across the water
- **compass:** an instrument used for showing direction
- **colony:** a permanent settlement controlled by a more powerful country
- **conquistador:** a Spanish soldier-explorer

Until the year A.D. 1000, the people of Europe knew nothing about North and South America. In that year, people from northern Europe landed on the shores of what is today Canada. These people were fierce warriors called **Vikings**. The Vikings tried to settle in the new land. They built homes, raised cattle, and farmed.

The Viking settlement did not last very long. We do not know why it did not last. Perhaps Native Americans drove the Vikings away. Perhaps the Vikings planned poorly and ran out of supplies. Whatever happened, Viking ships stopped sailing west.

Before long, the people of Europe forgot the settlement. They even forgot that a huge land lay across the Atlantic. Many people thought that the Atlantic stretched all the way to Asia. Some people began to wonder why they could not get to Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic.

1 Europeans Search for New Trade Routes.

Why did Europeans try to find new routes to Asia?

Today when we sprinkle a little pepper on our food, it is to add flavor. Five hundred years ago, spices such as pepper were far more important. There were no refrigerators to keep food from spoiling. Such seasonings as salt and cloves helped preserve food. If a piece of meat started to go bad, spices could hide the taste.

The search for spices led Europe to the Americas. Before 1095, Europeans knew little about the world beyond their borders. That year, the **Crusades** began. The Crusades were a series of wars fought over the part of the Middle East known as the Holy Land. Europeans who fought in the Crusades were known as crusaders.

At the time, **Muslims** controlled the Holy Land. The Muslims are followers

of the religion of Islam. The Europeans wanted to seize Christian religious places from the Muslims.

The crusaders won a number of battles at first. However, they could not hold on to what they won. Still, the crusaders learned about many new things when they were in the Holy Land. They tasted for the first time the spices that people in Asia used to flavor their food. They saw fine silks used for expensive clothing. Europeans wanted to bring the spices and silks of Asia back home to Europe.

These spices and silks had been produced thousands of miles to the east. Europeans called this part of Asia “the **Indies**.” Muslim traders brought the silks and spices to the Holy Land.

European traders began to trade with Muslims for the spices and silks. Italian merchants bought the goods and sold them all over Europe. These traders could charge whatever they wanted for their goods.

Search for a sea route For years, Europeans paid high prices for silks and spices. Then they realized that they could save themselves a lot of money if they could get the goods directly from the Indies. Portugal began looking for a way to sail to the Indies. In the late 1400s, Portuguese sailors tried to find a sea route to East Asia.

The person who led the search was Prince Henry of Portugal. Henry was called “the Navigator.” A **navigator** is someone who can steer a ship accurately across water. Prince Henry did not actually make sea trips. However, he opened a school for sea captains and sailors from all over the world.

At this school, sailors learned about building ships and navigating. They learned how to use tools to help them navigate across the ocean. One important tool was the **compass**. It had a magnetic needle that always pointed

north. Sailors used the compass to tell the direction a ship was sailing.

Soon, Portuguese explorers were traveling south along the coast of Africa, looking for a path to Asia. In 1488, a Portuguese ship sailed around the southern tip of Africa. It was clear that Portugal had finally found a sea route to the Indies. Sailors from other countries wondered if they could find another way to the Indies.

1. What were the Crusades?
2. How did Prince Henry the Navigator help find a sea route to Asia?

2 Two Cultures Meet in the Caribbean.

How did the arrival of Columbus change world history?

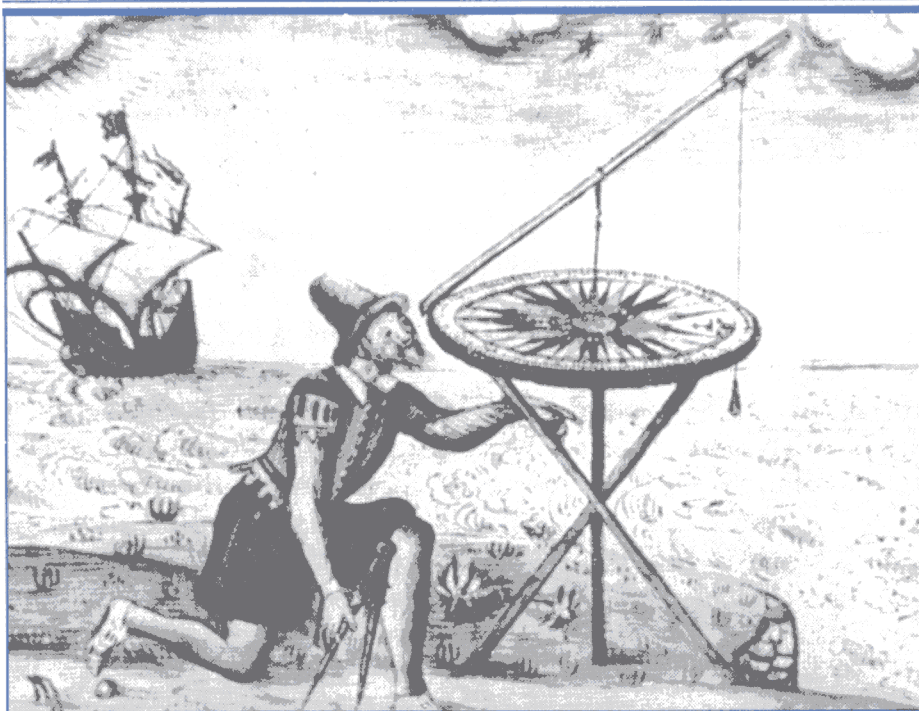
In May of 1492, a white-haired Italian sailor arrived at the port of Palos, in

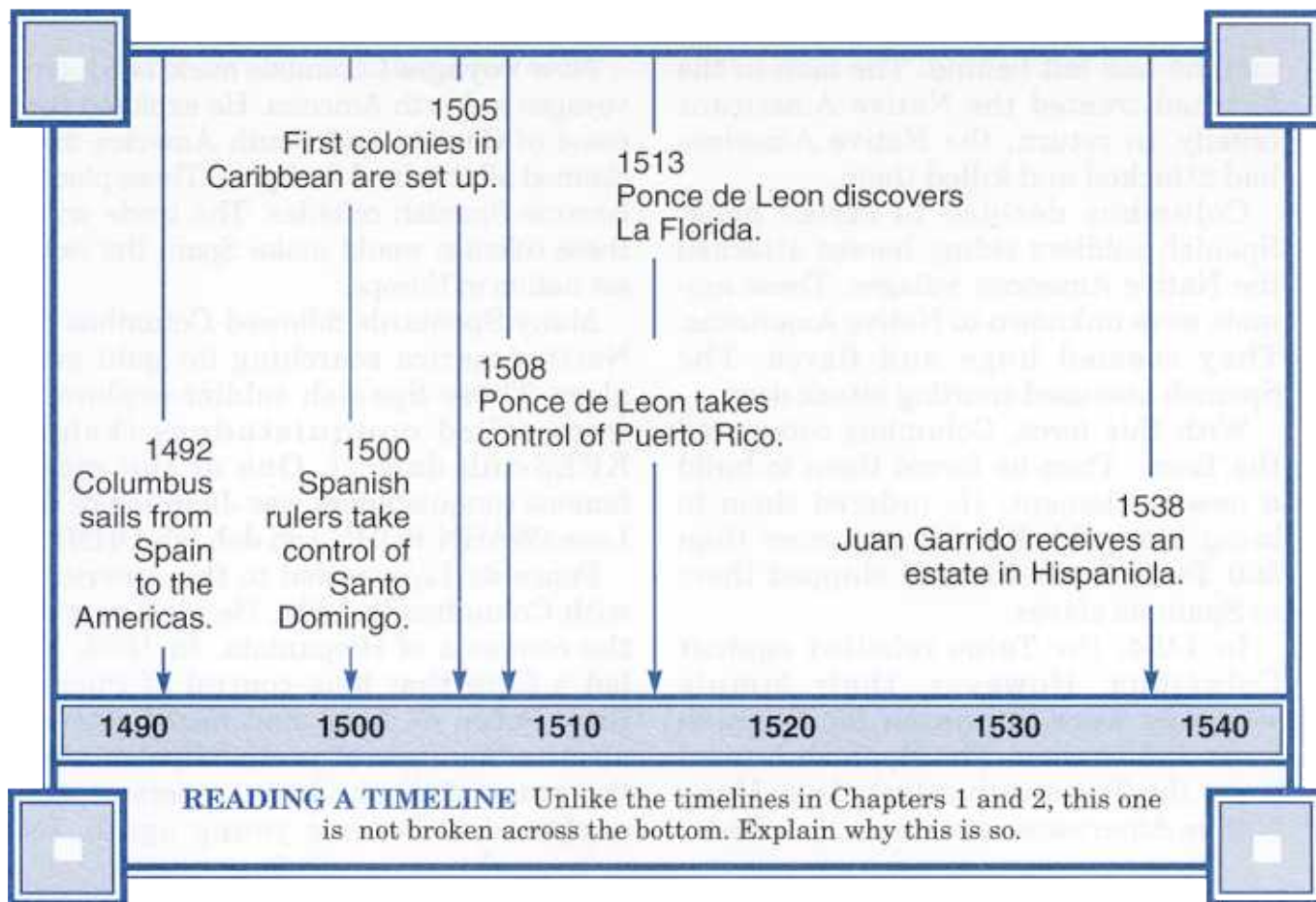
Spain. His name was Christopher Columbus. He had a plan for reaching the Indies. Instead of sailing east around Africa, why not get to Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic? Columbus believed that this would be a shorter route to the Indies. Like other Europeans, he didn't know that North and South America stood in the way.

For six years, Columbus tried to get a European ruler to listen to his plan. Finally, the king and queen of Spain agreed to help him. On August 3, 1492, Columbus sailed from Palos with three small ships. Three months later, Columbus reached an island. He was sure he had found the riches of the Indies. However, instead of rich cities of gold and spices, Columbus found Native Americans living in small villages. He still believed he had reached the Indies. So he called these people "Indians."

No one who was there could realize that they were part of a turning point in world history. The clash between Native

The invention of the compass made it possible for sailors to cross unknown seas. This drawing from the 1500s shows a sea captain using a large compass to plot out the direction of his voyage.





American and European cultures had begun. This clash would shake the Americas for the next 500 years.

The people whom Columbus had found called themselves Taino (TEYE-noh). Columbus wrote of them: “They are very well built people, with handsome bodies. If you ask for anything they have, they never say no. Rather, they invite you to share it. They show as much love as if they were giving their hearts.”

Columbus continued his voyage. He landed on a larger island that he named Hispaniola, (hihs-pan-YOH-lah) or “Little Spain.” There, he built a small wooden fort. Columbus picked 39 crew members to stay at the fort. The rest returned to Spain with him.

Columbus’s second voyage Back in Spain, Columbus received a hero’s welcome. His findings amazed the people of

Europe. Many believed he had actually reached the Indies. They were sure that its wealth was just within reach.

In 1493, Spain sent Columbus back on a second trip. Columbus was supposed to set up **colonies**. Colonies are permanent settlements controlled by a more powerful country. This time, he had 17 ships and about 1,500 people. Most of these people wanted to settle in what they thought were “the Indies.” Columbus also had on board five Roman Catholic priests. Their goal was to convert the “Indians” to Christianity.

This time, the Native Americans did not welcome Columbus. They were afraid that the strangers would take over their land. Native Americans on what is today called Jamaica and the Virgin Islands attacked Columbus’s forces. When Columbus arrived at Hispaniola, he found his fort burned. In the ruins, he found the bodies of the

men he had left behind. The men in the fort had treated the Native Americans cruelly. In return, the Native Americans had attacked and killed them.

Columbus decided to strike back. Spanish soldiers riding horses attacked the Native American villages. These animals were unknown to Native Americans. They seemed huge and fierce. The Spanish also used snarling attack dogs.

With this force, Columbus conquered the Taino. Then he forced them to build a new settlement. He ordered them to bring him gold. He also put more than 500 Taino in chains and shipped them to Spain as slaves.

In 1494, the Taino rebelled against Columbus. However, their simple weapons were no match for Spanish guns and cannon. The Spanish hunted down the Taino with attack dogs. Many Native Americans were brutally killed.

New voyages Columbus made two more voyages to North America. He explored the coast of Central and South America and claimed all this land for Spain. These places became Spanish colonies. The trade with these colonies would make Spain the richest nation in Europe.

Many Spaniards followed Columbus to North America searching for gold and glory. These Spanish soldier-explorers were called **conquistadors** (kahn-KEES-tuh-dawrz). One of the most famous conquistadors was Juan Ponce de Leon (WAHN POHN-seh deh leh-OHN).

Ponce de Leon sailed to the Americas with Columbus in 1493. He took part in the conquest of Hispaniola. In 1508, he led a force that took control of Puerto Rico. Ponce de Leon had heard stories about a “fountain of youth.” By drinking the water of the fountain, a person was supposed to become young again. In

This picture of Columbus landing in the Americas was made over a hundred years ago. It shows Columbus as a hero. Native Americans are only shadows. Contrast this picture with how Columbus is viewed today.





The Spanish forced the Native Americans to work for them like slaves. Here Native Americans on the island of Hispaniola bring in gold they have dug from the ground. The gold is then weighed by the Spaniard at the table.

March 1513, he sailed from Puerto Rico and landed in a place that he named La Florida, meaning “full of flowers.” He found no fountain of youth. However, he was the first European to explore the mainland of what would become the United States.

Joining Ponce de Leon were other conquistadors. One was Juan Garrido (gah-REE-doh), a free African. Garrido was known as *el conquistador negro*, or the Black Conquistador. In the 1490s, he had traveled from Africa to Spain. There, he became a Christian. In 1494, Garrido joined the Spanish army. When Garrido heard of Columbus’s voyages, he decided to make his fortune in the Americas. He joined Ponce de Leon in Puerto Rico. Later, he took part in the conquest of Mexico. (see the next chapter.) Garrido

served Spain for more than 30 years. In 1538, he received an estate on Hispaniola as his reward.

1. What was Columbus looking for when he sailed west?
2. Who were the conquistadors?

3 Hispaniola Becomes the Center of Spain's American Empire.

Why were the settlements on Hispaniola important for Spain?

The first settlers found life on Hispaniola very difficult. The hot cli-

mate was unbearable. Supplies ran out. Many colonists died from the heat and hunger. In 1496, Columbus abandoned the original settlement. He started a new one on the south coast of the island and named it Santo Domingo. This settlement was located at the mouth of a river and had a good supply of fresh water. It also had fertile soil for farming. Later, settlers discovered gold at Santo Domingo.

Columbus was a fine sailor, but he was a poor governor. In 1500, the Spanish rulers took control of Santo Domingo from Columbus. The king and queen were upset by the violence against the Native Americans. They also were angry that Columbus seemed to be always arguing with the Spanish settlers.

Native American rebellion Under a new governor, Santo Domingo entered a period of growth. It soon became the center of Spain's empire in the Caribbean. Here, the government built the first cathedral, the first hospital, and the first university in the Americas. Enslaved Native Americans built these buildings and many

others. They also worked the farms and dug gold and silver out of mines. The gold, silver, and cotton were sent to Spain. The profits from these products did not benefit the Native Americans.

When the Native Americans rebelled against this harsh treatment, they were killed or sent to Spain as slaves. A Taino leader named Hatuey (ah-too-AY) fled Hispaniola rather than become a slave. He later fought the Spanish as they tried to settle Cuba. Hatuey was killed. However, he became a hero to later Cubans.

By 1505, the first colonies in the Caribbean were set up. Native Americans were firmly under Spanish rule. All Native American rebellions had been put down. Now, conquistadors arriving from Spain were ready to conquer new lands in the Americas.

1. What new settlement did Columbus build on Hispaniola?
2. What work did Native Americans do on Hispaniola?

CHAPTER 3 KEY IDEAS

- The desire for spices and silks from Asia started Europe's search for a new sea route. The search ended in Columbus's arrival in the Americas.
- Soldiers, called conquistadors, won lands for Spain in North America and the Caribbean.
- The Native American people of the Caribbean were conquered by the Spanish. The Spanish destroyed the Native Americans' way of life.

THREE GREAT CULTURES MEET IN THE AMERICAS. (1505-1600)

How did European, Native American, and African cultures come to clash in the Caribbean?



An old woodcut shows Hernando Cortés being greeted by worried Aztec nobles as he enters the Aztec city of Cholula. The Aztec had good reason to worry.

STUDY

Write answers to each of the questions that open the three sections of this chapter. If you need help, briefly review each of the chapter sections.

HINT

Looking at Key Terms

- *encomienda* • griots

Looking at Key Words

- **plantations:** large farms where one crop is grown
- **pilgrimage:** a trip to a religious shrine
- **slavery:** the system of owning people
- **vassal:** a person protected by another stronger person in exchange for service

Christopher Columbus's voyages turned world history upside down. Before 1500, people in Spain and Portugal realized that Columbus had not reached "the Indies." Rather, he had reached a vast land that they had known nothing about.

It quickly became clear that there was great wealth in these lands across the Atlantic. One Spaniard said it best: "We came here to serve God and the king, and also to get rich."

1 Spain Builds an Empire in the Caribbean.

How did Spain conquer the Caribbean islands?

To win these riches, the government of Spain had to get the Spanish to settle on the Caribbean islands of New Spain. It offered Spanish settlers a large grant of land called an *encomienda* (en-kom-ee-EN-dah). Anyone with this grant had the right to use the labor of Native Americans living on the land.

However, the landowner also had responsibilities. He was supposed to teach the Native Americans the Christian religion. The landowner was also expected to pay Native Americans fairly for their work.

It was easy in faraway Spain to make these rules to protect Native Americans. However, it was a lot harder to get landowners in New Spain to follow the rules. Most landowners treated Native American workers badly. Native Americans were forced to work from dawn to dusk and were whipped for almost nothing. Was there no one who would speak for the Native Americans?

The encomienda system In 1511, a young conquistador heard a sermon protesting abuses of Native Americans that was preached in Santo Domingo.

Tell me, by what right do you hold these Indians in such cruel slavery? Who gave you the right to wage such terrible wars against these people? They lived so quietly and peacefully in their land. Why do you keep them so oppressed? Should you not love them as you love fellow Spaniards? Don't you understand this?

When Bartolome de las Casas heard these words, he felt very guilty. Las Casas had come to Hispaniola in 1502. As a young man, he had helped to set up the *encomienda* system. He saw Spanish soldiers with fierce attack dogs attacking Native American villages. After hearing the sermon, Las Casas tried to repent for his actions. He became a Roman Catholic priest. He began to write to important people in Spain criticizing the way Native Americans were treated.

Conquering Puerto Rico and Cuba Las Casas moved to Cuba in 1511. He gave up his lands and became a parish priest. He watched as Native Americans were shipped in chains to Spain. Las Casas wrote the rulers of Spain: "This action will end only when there is no more land nor people to conquer. We will destroy the people in this part of the world."

Las Casas then devoted his life to ending the unjust system. However, the conquest of Cuba and Puerto Rico helped make the system even more unjust.

After the conquest, the Spanish planted sugarcane on both islands. The sugarcane was grown on large farms called **plantations**. Many workers were needed to plant the cane and cut it for the mill.

Sugar quickly became the main crop on Puerto Rico and Cuba. Native Americans were worked so hard by the

landowners that many died. Diseases such as smallpox killed many more Native Americans. Smallpox wiped out whole villages of Native Americans.

2 The Heritage of Africa Arrives in the Americas.

What was the rich heritage that Africans brought to the Americas?

1. What was an *encomienda*?
2. What became the main crop on Cuba and Puerto Rico?

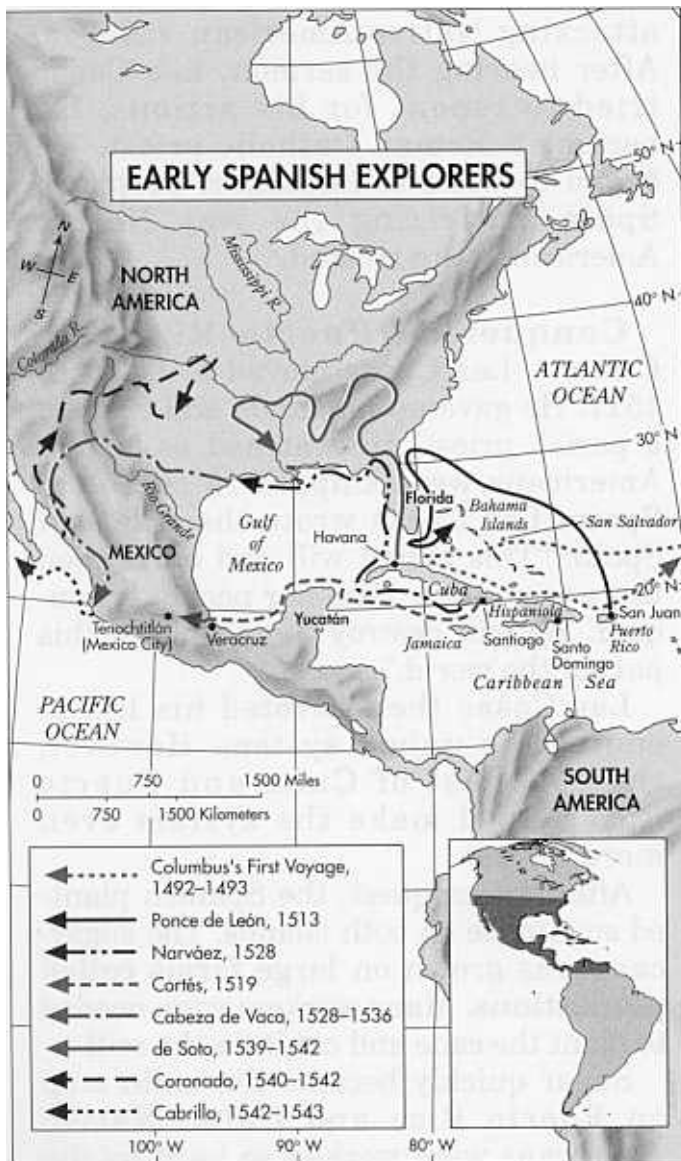
Reading a Map. To the Spanish, it was a “New World.” But not for long. Which explorers traveled in what is today the state of Florida?

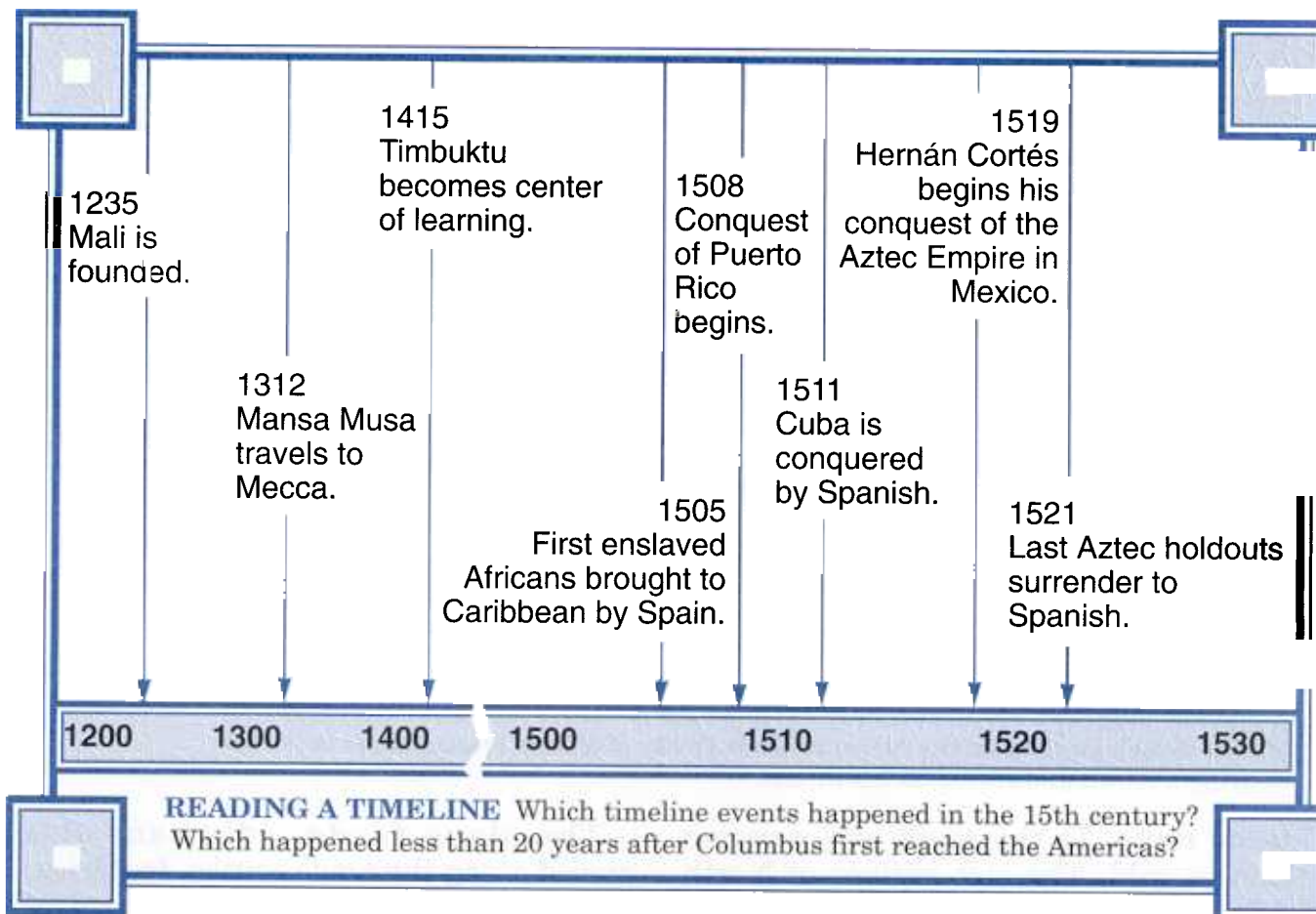
As the Native Americans died, the Spanish became short of labor. They began bringing enslaved Africans to take the place of the Native Americans. These Africans had been taken from their homes in chains and shipped to the Caribbean as slaves. The first few enslaved Africans came to Hispaniola in 1505. In years to come, this trickle swelled into a flood. Millions of enslaved Africans were forced to leave their homeland. They were torn from a land in which they had built up rich and valuable traditions.

Ancient Egypt Africa was home to one of the greatest civilizations of the world. The ancient Egyptians built many fine buildings, but none were more impressive than the pyramids. These huge stone structures were built as tombs for the rulers of Egypt. They are still among the largest buildings in the world. The Egyptians also developed a system of writing and made important advances in math and medicine.

Empires of gold Wealth of another kind developed in Africa after Egypt’s decline. Far to the west, three great kingdoms arose between A.D. 500 and 1600.

The first kingdom was Ghana. The name Ghana meant gold. The ruler of Ghana was called “king of gold.” When the king met his subjects, he wore a tall golden cap. At his side walked dogs with golden collars. Ghana’s king was so rich that he had the largest army in the world at that time. Over 200,000 soldiers served him!





Around the early 1200s, the empire of Mali became powerful. Mali was as large as Western Europe. It was even wealthier than Ghana. Mali's greatest ruler was Mansa Musa (MAHN-suh MOO-suh). Mansa Musa was a Muslim. In 1324, he began a **pilgrimage** to the Muslim holy city of Mecca, in Arabia. A pilgrimage is a trip to a religious shrine.

From generation to generation, African **griots** have told the story of Mansa Musa's trip. Griots are African storytellers who memorize and pass down the history of their people.

Mansa Musa's caravan consisted of 60,000 people. He had 80 camels, each one carrying 300-pound bags of gold dust. Mansa Musa arrived in Cairo, Egypt, in the summer of 1324. The people of Cairo were stunned. They had never seen a group of people so rich.

When Mansa Musa was in Mecca, he persuaded some of the finest builders

and scholars in the Arab world to return with him to Mali. They helped enlarge the city of Timbuktu (tim-buk-TOO). Workers built many handsome new buildings. Timbuktu became a major center of learning. The city had great universities and wonderful libraries. Scholars taught religion, law, and medicine at Timbuktu's universities. Students came from across Africa to study there.

Like Ghana and Mali, the empire of Songhai (sahng-HY) grew wealthy from trade. It was powerful from 1450 to about 1600. Songhai was even larger than Mali, covering most of West Africa. Its greatest ruler was Askia Muhammad (AHS-kee-uh moo-HAM-uhd). He set up a strong and fair government. He also created a system of fair taxation.

The "silent trade" The wealth of these African kingdoms depended on trade. Ghana was located on a major



A Spanish map that was drawn in 1375 shows the African kingdom of Mali and Mansa Musa's journey across Africa to the holy city of Mecca. Mansa Musa is shown wearing a crown and seated on his throne.

trade route. To the south was a region rich in gold. The salt regions of North Africa lay to the north. The people of West Africa depended on salt in their food to replace body salts lost in the heat of the region.

The rulers of Ghana held tight control over the supply of gold. They charged taxes on all gold and salt that went through their empire. The traders paid these taxes in gold. With their income, the kings had huge armies to protect the trade routes.

Because there was no common language, the trade in gold and salt took place through silent trade. Not a word was spoken between the traders. The salt traders left their blocks of salt on the ground at some distance from the gold. Then they retreated a distance. The gold traders approached to examine the amount of salt. They left what they believed was a fair amount of gold, and then they withdrew. The salt traders came back to examine the amount of gold. If they accepted it, the deal was made. If they did not, the process was repeated until an agreement was reached.

The slave trade Humans also moved along the trade routes. In Africa, there was **slavery**, or the system of owning people. It went back hundreds of years. Slavery existed in many other parts of the world, including ancient Greece and Rome.

Enslaved people in Africa had usually been captured in wars. They worked as farm laborers and servants. Slaves were often able to buy their freedom after a time. Some became members of the families to whom they were enslaved.

Slavery was about to change. In 1502, a Portuguese ship from Europe landed on the coast of West Africa. The Portuguese ship carried away Africans as slaves to another land. These Africans were the first of many millions who were taken from their homes.

Slave trading became a big business. African rulers now allowed slave raiding in their territories. Slave raiders rounded up thousands of captives for sale to the Portuguese. The slaves were brought in chains to Portuguese slave-collecting forts along the coast of West Africa.

In 1517, the Spanish king had 4,000 enslaved Africans shipped to Hispaniola. Soon enslaved Africans were working on plantations in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica. By the middle of the 1500s, there were more Africans than Europeans on some islands.

Spanish slave owners treated enslaved Africans harshly. The Spanish were afraid that the Africans would rise up and kill them. Often, the Spanish branded and whipped slaves. Sometimes, they even hanged them. However, Africans managed to keep their traditions alive. Over time, African and Spanish ways mixed with those of Native Americans. Out of this mix came entirely new cultures. They are the cultures of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

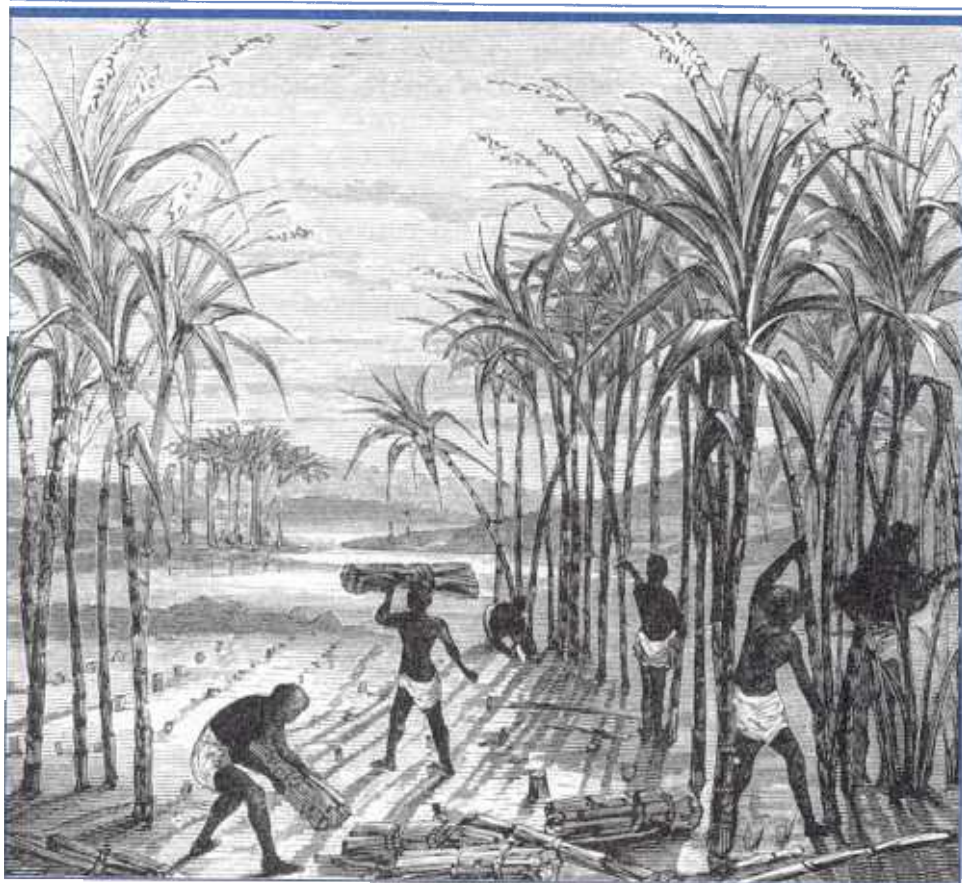
1. How did the African empire of Ghana grow wealthy?
2. In what ways did Timbuktu become a great city?

3 Spain and Native Americans Struggle for an Empire.

How did the Spanish conquer the Aztec in what is today Mexico?

The Caribbean islands brought tremendous wealth to Spain. Now many young Spanish nobles began to look to the mainland. They wanted to find adventure and gold. One of these young men was Hernán Cortés (air-NAHN kohr-TES).

Sugar cane being harvested by enslaved Africans. This print dates from the 1600s. Why was the labor of enslaved people from West Africa so important to the Spanish colonies in the Americas?





In this Aztec drawing, Cortés is shown with Aztec messengers. At his side is Malinché, the Native American woman who spoke the Aztec language. Cortés greeted the Aztec coldly. When they gave him gold, he said: "Is this all?"

The march to Mexico In 1511 Cortés helped conquer Cuba. Cortés was given land and gold mines, but he wanted more. He heard Native Americans tell tales about a rich nation to the west. Cortés asked the governor of Cuba to let him lead an army to conquer this land. When Cortés said he would pay for the trip himself, the governor agreed. Cortés sailed from Cuba in February 1519.

The land that Cortés found is today called Mexico. In the 1500s, it was ruled by the Aztec, a powerful warrior people. (See page 22.) The Aztec had many **vassals**, or people who had been conquered by a stronger people. The Aztec had treated their vassals cruelly. The vassals hated their conquerors and wanted to help the Spanish destroy the Aztec empire. As Cortés headed for the Aztec capital, many vassals joined him.

Cortés and Malinché. One of these vassals was a woman named

Malinché (muh-LIN-chay). Malinché hated the Aztec. She spoke the Aztec language as well as that of some of the vassal people. She helped Cortés become allies with other Native American people. Without Malinché, Cortés might have failed.

From Malinché, Cortés heard stories of the wealth and power of the Aztec. Malinché also told Cortés of a god whom the Aztec believed would return one day from the east. Knowing about the god gave Cortés an advantage.

The return of a god The Aztec emperor was Montezuma (mon-teh-SOH-muh). When Montezuma heard of Cortés's arrival, he believed Cortés was the returning Aztec god. Montezuma made a decision that would cost him dearly. He sent Aztec messengers with rich gifts to the coast. He gave them these instructions: "When you see the god, say to him: 'Your servant Montezuma has sent us to you. Here are presents to welcome you home to Mexico.'"

Cortés greeted the messengers coldly. He said, “Is this all?” He made it clear what he had come for. “I and my soldiers suffer from a disease of the heart. It can be cured only by gold.”

Conquest of the Aztec In November 1519, Cortés and his army entered the Aztec capital. The Spanish were amazed by the city’s large stone buildings and wide streets. “These great buildings seemed like a dream,” wrote one soldier.

At first, the Aztec were friendly and treated the Spanish as gods. But the Aztec soon saw the Spanish were just men. Cortés’s men took Montezuma hostage. They then killed hundreds of Aztec during a festival. Montezuma died in the fighting that followed.

The Aztec warriors fought fiercely against the Spanish. But the Spanish had guns and cannon. They also had many Native American allies. But

their deadliest weapon was smallpox. This disease killed many more Aztec than did Spanish bullets.

On August 13, 1521, the Aztec surrendered to Cortés. The Spanish destroyed the Aztec city and began to build a new city on its ruins. The new city was called Mexico City. The Aztec and other Native Americans worked as slaves. They built the new Mexico City in three years. Some Aztec worked in mines digging gold and silver. These metals were shipped to Spain. The Aztec empire was gone. A new Spanish empire took its place.

1. Why was Cortés able to get Native Americans to fight against the Aztec?
2. Why did Montezuma first welcome Cortés to Mexico?

CHAPTER 4 KEY IDEAS

- Spain conquered the Caribbean islands by destroying the Native American way of life. A few people, such as Las Casas, tried to protect the Native Americans, but they had little success.
- Trade helped lead to the great empires of West Africa. Ghana became a great state by controlling the trade in gold and salt.
- The death of many Native American workers led the Spanish to bring enslaved Africans to the Caribbean.
- Cortés led the Spanish conquest of the Aztec empire. The Aztec helped to defeat themselves by believing that Cortés was a god.