

AMERICAN HISTORY

COMBINED EDITION



1492-PRESENT

THOMAS S. KIDD

American History, Combined Edition
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Published by B&H Academic
Nashville, Tennessee

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ISBN: 978-1-5359-8226-9

Dewey Decimal Classification: 973
Subject Heading: UNITED STATES—HISTORY / UNITED
STATES—CIVILIZATION / UNITED STATES—RELIGION

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Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 VP 24 23 22 21 20 19

To Jonathan and Joshua Kidd

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Introduction</i>	1
Chapter 1 Early American Encounters	3
Chapter 2 England and Its Colonies	23
Chapter 3 A Maturing Colonial Society	47
Chapter 4 The Coming of Independence	69
Chapter 5 The American Revolution and the Constitution	91
Chapter 6 The Early National Period	113
Chapter 7 A Growing Republic	137
Chapter 8 The Age of Andrew Jackson	161
Chapter 9 The American West	185
Chapter 10 Learning and Belief in Antebellum America	203
Chapter 11 The Crisis of the 1850s	221
Chapter 12 Secession and the Coming of the Civil War	239
Chapter 13 The Civil War Begins	257
Chapter 14 To Appomattox Courthouse	281
Chapter 15 Reconstruction	303
Chapter 16 Reforging the Nation	323
Chapter 17 The Gilded Age	349

Chapter 18	Populism and Empire . . . . .	.373
Chapter 19	The Progressive Era . . . . .	.393
Chapter 20	World War I . . . . .	.419
Chapter 21	The Roaring Twenties . . . . .	.437
Chapter 22	The Great Depression and the New Deal . . . . .	.461
Chapter 23	World War II . . . . .	.485
Chapter 24	The Cold War . . . . .	.511
Chapter 25	The 1950s . . . . .	.529
Chapter 26	Civil Rights and the Great Society . . . . .	.547
Chapter 27	Nixon, Watergate, and Carter . . . . .	.575
Chapter 28	Reagan's America . . . . .	.597
Chapter 29	George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and a Changing America . . . . .	.617
Chapter 30	The Age of Terrorism . . . . .	.641
	<i>Illustration Credits</i> . . . . .	.661
	<i>Index</i> . . . . .	.669

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to my wonderful, supportive colleagues at Baylor, including History Department chair Barry Hankins and Byron Johnson, director of Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion. Thanks to my Baylor research assistants, including Kristina Benham, Matt Millsap, and Paul Gutacker; to my agent and friend Giles Anderson; and to the great staff at B&H Academic, including Jim Baird, Chris Thompson, and Sarah Landers. As always, I am so thankful for my wife, Ruby, and my sons, Jonathan and Josh.

INTRODUCTION

Writing an overview of American history—or of any nation’s history—is a daunting task. There’s so much to cover, yet so much has to be left out. Most people who have ever lived left us little to no surviving records of their lives. Historical overviews usually focus on luminaries such as presidents, tycoons, inventors, and celebrities. And they focus on great events such as battles, economic disasters, and presidential elections. My overview of American history focuses a great deal on such characters and events too. But I have tried where possible to weave in anecdotes of regular people as well. Often my justification for weaving in such stories is their utter typicality, or the way they illuminate people’s everyday experiences and struggles.

Focusing on great events also risks giving the impression that those events had the same significance for everyone in America, but that has rarely been the case. Take the Revolutionary War journal of Baptist chaplain Hezekiah Smith, for example. The July 1776 weekend that the Declaration of Independence was signed, Smith wrote one line in his journal: “Something unwell, tho’ kept about.” He was sick and did not know about events transpiring in Philadelphia that weekend. What seems inordinately significant in retrospect may not have seemed so important at the time. Conversely, events and people that seem momentous at the time may not appear that way in retrospect.

To narrow the focus of this book and make it manageable, I have emphasized certain major themes in American history. Some of the focus emerges from my own interests and perspective. Readers should know that I am a Christian, and a Baptist in particular. I identify with the historic evangelical tradition and the faith of figures such as the Baptist champions of revival and religious liberty in the eighteenth century. This

commitment profoundly shapes my view of history. Therefore, I give a lot of attention to religion. I admittedly think that religious people (which in America has mostly meant Christians), for all their faults, have generally been a force for good in American history. I also illustrate that America's best ideas and most stirring speeches have often been rooted in the language and concepts of faith.

Another major theme of this book is racial and ethnic conflict. From the coming of the first colonizers, and the first shipments of slaves, racial tension and violence have been enduring themes in American history. They remain so today. There are obvious signs of progress in race relations in American history such as the end of slavery and the civil rights movement. But just when we think we've entered a "post-racial" America, racial controversies and racial violence roil American society again. These themes, both valuable and painful to consider, are ones to which Christian historians should give special attention.

A final major theme is the state of American culture, especially with regard to issues such as virtue, traditional moral norms, mass media, and entertainment. These issues are in the background of the whole book. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, however, entertainment and mass media have become progressively central to everyday American life. In an indirectly related development, our most basic cultural institutions, such as family and marriage, have come under increasing duress. Especially since the 1960s, Americans have been jettisoning some of our most basic assumptions about a good society and a wholesome life. We have simultaneously been "amusing ourselves to death," in the words of scholar Neil Postman, as mass media, sports, entertainment, and marketing have become increasingly paramount in our daily lives. I tend to observe and describe rather than excoriate and prescribe in this book. But the accelerating pace of social change, and Americans' concomitant obsession with entertainment, will be obvious.

A book on American history is something like national autobiography. It tells us how we got where we are. It cautions us about mistakes and sins we have committed in the past and urges us not to go there again. It encourages us to understand why the past is often pertinent to the present. It inspires us by the courage of historical heroes and stiffens our resolve as we try to honor their legacies. Christians believe the kingdom of God is our ultimate commitment, and we should confuse no temporal nation with that kingdom. But we are also thankful for the ways God has moved in American history, redeeming untold millions of people and building his church in each generation. I hope that readers will grow in their appreciation for the role faith played in the American past and discern the ways in which America has been (or has not been) a congenial place for people of faith to flourish.

Early American Encounters

The earliest human settlements in America are shrouded in archaeological mystery. For almost a century, scientists thought the first people arrived in North America some 13,000 years ago. These were the “Clovis” people, named for the New Mexico town where their carved spear points were unearthed in 1929. But archaeologists working at Buttermilk Creek, a central Texas dig site, recently found evidence of human settlement, including tools and weapons, that date to as early as 15,500 years ago.

For some Christian readers, this will raise a question. Had God even created humankind 15,500 years ago? This is not the place to debate about the topic of human origins. But the chronology of America’s original human settlements will look quite different depending on how you view the age of the earth and how long ago you believe humanity originated. This is an instance where one’s faith makes a direct difference in how one assesses history.

Using a method known as “optically stimulated luminescence,” scientists at Buttermilk Creek tested the soil in which the artifacts were found to determine when the minerals in the dirt were last exposed to sunlight. That test dated the site to 15,500 years or older. Discovery of a similarly dated settlement in Chile uncovered the footprint of a child next to a hearth. Scientists date charcoal from the hearth at about 14,500 years old. Archaeologists say these sites raise new questions about how the original Americans moved into the Americas from Northeast Asia. Did they all go across an Ice Age land bridge called “Beringia,” located at the Bering Strait, and move southeast

across the continent? Or did some travel on boats hugging the Pacific Coast, entering the Americas from points farther south? We don't know for sure, but there is little disagreement that most of the first Americans came from Northeast Asia. They established societies here long before Christopher Columbus "discovered" America.

Eventually Beringia disappeared due to rising ocean levels. The new people of the Americas became cut off from Asia as well as from the European and African continents that would so heavily shape America's future. By the time of Columbus's arrival in the late 1400s, the Americas had hundreds of indigenous societies with different religions, languages, and governments. These societies did not see themselves as "Indians"—that term would have made no sense to these disparate tribes. It was Europeans who lumped all Native American people together as one common ethnicity.

Native Americans and the "Three Sisters" of Farming

The earliest Americans were nomadic and hunted massive mammals with stone-tipped spears. Over time the great mammals died out due to overhunting and climate change. The first kinds of prey included mammoths, camels, and giant armadillos that could weigh up to a ton. Now the hunters went after smaller animals, more reminiscent of today's typical game. Others fished and gathered seeds, nuts, and berries. But the critical change came with the switch to agriculture around 5000 BC. Caves in Mexico have yielded corn cobs scientists have dated as 6,000 years old, or even older.

Corn, squash, and beans—the "three sisters"—were the cornerstone of ancient Native American agriculture. This was especially the case in Central America, where great societies, including the Mayas and the Mexicas ("me-SHEE-kas," called "Aztecs" by Europeans) thrived on farm crops.

Farming and its accompanying stability allowed the Mayas and Mexicas to leave a deeper cultural imprint than hunter-gatherers had. Their populations grew, they developed written languages, and they left impressive works of art and architecture. Much of that cultural heritage was significant in Mayan and Mexican tribal religion. Around AD 800 a Maya artisan fashioned and decorated a cup for drinking hot chocolate, known today as the Vase of the Seven Gods. Divine figures on the vessel depict multiple levels of the cosmos, and an inscription explains that the god who "gave the open space its place, who gave Jaguar Night his place, Was the Black-Faced Lord, the Star-Faced Lord."

Agriculture, particularly the cultivation of corn, spread northward into the American Southwest shortly after the time of Christ. By about AD 1000, major Native American farming settlements had sprung up in the Southwest (in modern-day New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado). Illustrating their prodigious architectural skills,



Figure 1.1. *Mundo Perdido pyramid, Temple 5C-54 (the Lost World Pyramid), part of a large complex dating to the Preclassic. Tikal, Peten, Guatemala. Restored west face.*

the Anasazi and other Southwest Indians built impressive cliff dwellings and apartment-like pueblos, including the massive, multistory Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. That pueblo required 30,000 tons of sandstone blocks to build. The Anasazi also constructed vast networks of irrigation channels to sustain their farms in the arid environment. But extended drought conditions as well as aggression by other native groups led to the demise of the Anasazi by about AD 1300.

The Mound Builders

Native settlements also spread up the length of the Mississippi River Valley. Many early Indians erected remarkable earthen mounds that continue to mark the landscape today. Among the most impressive, and oldest, were at Poverty Point, in Louisiana. Construction began there around 1400 BC. Poverty Point's "Bird Mound," named for its shape, stands seventy-two feet high, jutting above the flat surroundings of the Mississippi Delta. Recent discoveries suggest that this enormous, pyramid-like mound

probably went up in a few months with thousands of workers hauling some 27 million basketfuls of dirt. It was one of the great architectural feats of ancient history, but how ancient Indians built and used the Bird Mound remains a mystery.

Around the middle of the eleventh century AD, long after the massive mounds appeared at Poverty Point, a great Mississippian Indian town arose at Cahokia, across the Mississippi River from what is now St. Louis, Missouri. By the 1100s, 15,000 to 20,000 people lived at Cahokia, making it at least as large as Rome or London during the same era. It was the largest town in North America at that time. Cahokians also built mounds in the form of more than 100 earthen pyramids, capped by temples. Excavations have suggested that some mounds were used for burials and ritual human sacrifice. Weather changes and the heavy concentration of people at Cahokia may have contributed to its downfall. By the mid-1300s, few people were left in the once-thriving town.

The native peoples of the Eastern Woodlands were among the first to encounter Europeans and Africans in the early 1600s. The Eastern Woodland societies were seminomadic and less focused on agriculture. The Algonquians, for example, were a widely dispersed people sharing a common form of language. They included regional tribes such as the Mohegans of New England and the Powhatans of Virginia. They lived in areas covering much of what is now the eastern United States, from Maine to the Carolinas. Leaving few permanent marks on the landscape, Algonquians often lived in wigwams or longhouses, and they moved with the seasons. The three sisters of beans, squash, and corn did play important roles in the Algonquians' diet, but these American Indians typically hunted animals such as deer and bear and gathered berries and nuts. The Algonquians often managed forests by controlled burning to improve land for gardening and to enhance deer habitats.



Figure 1.2. Image of Aztec gods.



Figure 1.3. Chaco Canyon was a major center of Puebloan culture between AD 850 and 1250. The Chacoan sites are part of the homeland of Pueblo Indian peoples of New Mexico, the Hopi Indians of Arizona, and the Navajo Indians of the Southwest.

The Iroquoian-speaking Indians were another major group in the Eastern Woodlands. Living to the west of the Algonquian groups, the tribes that would eventually comprise the Iroquois League included the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and, by the 1700s, the Tuscarora Indians. Similar to the Algonquians, they were hunter-gatherers as well as small farmers, but the Iroquois often lived in larger towns of several thousand people.

Before, and even after, the coming of Europeans, these Indians did not intuitively see themselves as sharing ethnic unity. Iroquoian- and Algonquian-speaking peoples frequently fought each other, just as they would after the arrival of the European powers. The precontact Indian wars could be vicious, even if the scale of death was minuscule compared to the effects wrought by European diseases and weapons. Sometimes Indians took captives and “adopted” them into their tribes; other times captives were tortured or summarily executed. As illustrated by the rise and fall of great Indian societies, Native Americans’ worlds were constantly changing *before* the arrival of unfamiliar peoples from across the Atlantic Ocean.

The Coming of Europeans

As much as Native Americans inhabited a world in flux, the beginning of European exploration and conquest in the Americas, and the advent of the transatlantic trade in African slaves, marked fundamental turning points in American history. Until then, Native Americans had largely been cut off from the populations of Europe and Africa (as well as Asia). The “Columbian Exchange” of animals, crops, and diseases that followed Columbus’s voyages to the Caribbean in 1492 would have transformative effects on four Atlantic continents, and devastating consequences for many Native Americans and Africans in particular.

What drove Europeans to start exploring and colonizing the west coast of Africa and the east coast of the Americas? Factors including improved seafaring technology, dire living conditions in Europe, and the simple desire for land and treasure all played a role. Europeans had traded with far-flung peoples in the Mediterranean world and into Asia for centuries before 1492, bringing sugar, spices, jewels, and fabrics back from the East. The Italian Marco Polo’s account of his journey to China in the late 1200s had stoked many Europeans’ imaginations about the sources of wealth outside of Europe.

Trade with the East introduced gunpowder, cannons, and aids to seafaring such as the compass. (Europeans probably learned about navigational compasses from the Chinese and Arabs.) Overland travel, like Marco Polo’s from Europe to Asia, was inefficient and dangerous, but ship travel in the medieval era was not much more reliable. Portuguese shipbuilders crafted new ships called *caravels*, which were faster than previous models. The caravels facilitated ambitious journeys for exploration, colonizing, and trade. Vikings had explored much of the North Atlantic rim in earlier centuries, with settlements reaching as far as Newfoundland in far eastern Canada by about AD 1000. But the Portuguese helped Europeans to envision oceanic and global seafaring for the first time.

The Emergence of the Slave Trade

The Portuguese pioneered the Europeans’ ventures on the West African coast. Muslim traders from North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, seeking gold and slaves, had developed caravan routes into sub-Saharan West Africa earlier in the medieval period. The initial European explorers were also looking for precious metals. That is why they named the area around the coast of present-day Ghana the “Gold Coast.” But Europeans determined that the primary treasure to extract from West Africa was human, in the slave trade. The Portuguese founded the port of Elmina on the Gold Coast in 1482, a decade before Columbus’s voyage to the New World. It would go on to become the

largest colonial town in West Africa and a common point of embarkation for countless African captives caught up in the Atlantic slave system.

Europeans tended to buy slaves from African slave merchants in ports such as Elmina. In the interior, powerful African states, including Benin, Kongo, and Mali, controlled access to gold and slaves. The African interior was daunting for Europeans because of the power of these nations and the dire threat of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. African slave traders acquired male and female slaves mostly as war captives, originally selling them to caravans bound for North Africa or the Middle East, and later to Europeans. Before the advent of the transatlantic slave trade, Europeans sometimes sent African slaves to work in households in Mediterranean lands or to work on the sugar farms of the Canary Islands or Madeira, both off the northwest coast of Africa.

The development of these African sugar colonies helped spark the European concept of chattel slavery and the plantation system. In that system masters and traders treated slaves as movable pieces of property who would work large farms of cash crops meant for export to European and global markets. These cash crops, including sugar, rice, and tobacco, would become the keys to colonial wealth in the Americas. The



Figure 1.4. Elmina Castle.

plantations would, in time, precipitate the largest forced migration of people in human history. Although European immigrants still receive the lion's share of attention in histories of early America, forced African immigration across the Atlantic far outpaced that of Europeans from the time of Columbus to the 1820s. During that period probably 80 percent of all transatlantic immigrants were from Africa, not Europe.

Christopher Columbus

European vessels were going even farther afield than West Africa. Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa for the first time in 1488, while his countryman Vasco da Gama sailed from Portugal to India in 1497–98. The point of these expeditions was to open waterborne trade routes to China, Japan, India, and the East Indies. Some wondered if, instead of sailing around Africa, they could find a western route to China and the Indies. This notion fueled Christopher Columbus's quest in 1492.

Columbus, an Italian and a Roman Catholic, was a man of intense religious convictions. He believed his voyage into the West might represent a fulfillment of biblical prophecies about the spread of the gospel around the world. The year 1492 itself may have helped stoke those beliefs as it opened with the Spanish conquest of Granada, the Muslim-controlled region of southern Spain. In addition to this defeat of Muslim power, Spanish authorities expelled all of its Jews who would not become Christians. Columbus hailed the Spanish king and queen who commissioned his journey as “enemies to the doctrine of [the Muslim prophet] Muhammad, and of all idolatry and heresy.”

What would Columbus find in the West? Contrary to common myths, few Europeans at the time believed the world was flat. Columbus did not worry that his ships might fall over the edge of the world. But he was wrong about one important detail: the earth's circumference, and how far one would have to travel west to get to the Indies. He simply did not realize the Americas were in the way. When he came to the Caribbean islands, Columbus figured he must be getting close to Japan or China. He and many Europeans called Native Americans “Indios,” or “Indians,” meaning natives of the East Indies. The misnomer stuck. Columbus would visit the New World four times, and he never could shake the conviction that he had reached Asia. It fell to Amerigo Vespucci, another Italian explorer, to popularize the notion that the Americas were not part of Asia. In 1507, a German mapmaker began calling this in-between land “America.”

Columbus first arrived at an island in the Bahamas, then moved on to Cuba and Hispaniola (present-day Dominican Republic and Haiti). On Hispaniola his men

founded a small settlement called La Navidad (because they had landed there on Christmas). Columbus soon returned to Spain with fantastic reports of the abundant wealth of the islands and the gentle people who lived there. He predicted that the “Indios”—or Tainos—would readily accept Christianity and Spanish rule.

The Tainos were among the first native societies of the Americas to face the onslaught of epidemic disease that the coming of Europeans unleashed. Not that the Spanish on Hispaniola thrived. Like many early European settlers in Africa and the Americas, the Spanish who went to Hispaniola died in droves from disease and poor supplies. But for the Tainos, the Spaniards’ arrival wrought unspeakable destruction. About 300,000 people lived on Hispaniola in 1492. Fifty years later only about 500 native survivors were left. Most died of disease, but Columbus also ordered the Spanish to take hundreds of Tainos as slaves and ship them back to Spain. Spain’s Queen Isabel rejected the mass enslavement of Indians, however, on the condition that the Indians accept Christianity and peacefully live under Spanish rule. In practice, Spanish rulers and landowners ran an *encomienda* labor system, which forced natives to work as serfs even if they were not technically slaves.

Almost immediately upon Columbus’s return to Europe, officials in Spain, Portugal, and Rome realized they needed to reach an agreement about which powers would colonize what sections of the new lands around the Atlantic rim. Brokered by Pope Alexander VI, who was a Spaniard by birth, the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) granted Spain much of the Western Hemisphere. Africa and Brazil (the easternmost part of South America) fell under Portuguese control. This ensured that the Portuguese would remain key players in the African slave trade for centuries, but their colonial presence in America was limited to the South American continent. The Treaty of Tordesillas also illustrated how important Catholicism was in Spanish and Portuguese (as well as French) colonization in the New World. As the Reformation unfolded in the coming decades, Protestant nations, including England, worried that Catholics would exercise unchallenged sway over the Americas. Even before the Reformation came to England, the English king commissioned the exploration of Italian sailor John Cabot. In 1497, when he visited Canada, Cabot became the first recorded European voyager to land in North America.

Spain did most of the early work in the European conquest of the Caribbean, Central America, and what would become the southern and southwestern United States, however. Columbus’s discoveries created a new class of *conquistadores*, soldiers of fortune looking for the treasures hidden in the New World. The conquistadores first overran the Caribbean islands. The conquest of the Caribbean did precipitate some criticisms from among the Spanish. The most famous critic was the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas, who had once assisted in the subjugation of the people of Hispaniola and

Cuba. Las Casas later repented of his role in the conquest and began writing defenses of the Caribbean natives. He portrayed the islands' inhabitants as gentle sheep torn by vicious Spanish wolves, who did nothing but "dismember, slay, perturb, afflict, torment, and destroy the Indians." Las Casas's criticisms convinced Pope Paul III to issue a 1537 order that the Spaniards stop abusing the Indians, lest they drive them away from Christianity. Las Casas's book *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* spread throughout Europe in many translations. His writing became a staple of anti-Spanish Protestant polemics and undergirded what historians have called the "Black Legend" of an exceptionally vicious Spanish colonization of the Americas. The conquistadores were often vicious, to be sure, but instances of barbaric violence were committed by virtually all groups in this era.

The Conquest of the Americas

By the early 1500s, some Spaniards began to fix their sights on the Central American mainland, having heard rumors of even greater wealth there. Hernán Cortés, a wealthy veteran of the subjection of Cuba, led Spanish forces in 1519 against the great Mexica (Aztec) capital of Tenochtitlán and its ruler, Moctezuma II. The city was the Americas' largest at the time, with about 200,000 people. Cortés and his army of 500 occupied the city, demanded gold in tribute, purged the city's central pyramid of its native icons, and erected a statue of the Virgin Mary instead. The Spanish held Moctezuma prisoner, and eventually the Mexicas revolted against Cortés and drove his army out of the city. Many Spaniards and Mexicas (including Moctezuma) died in the rebellion. Cortés bided his time and gathered allies among the Mexicas' native enemies. In 1521, a smallpox epidemic ravaged the remaining Mexica population, but most of Cortés's men were immune from childhood exposure to the disease. A Spanish historian described the scene in the decimated city: smallpox "pustules that covered people caused great desolation; very many people died of them, and many just starved to death; starvation reigned." The Spanish army laid siege to Tenochtitlán, cut off food supplies, and systematically leveled its buildings.

Tenochtitlán fell to the Spanish. Native Americans put up fierce resistance against European conquest, but too many factors weighed against them. Europeans brought superior war-making technology, including ships, cannons, and armor. Their most important ally was their inadvertent partner, epidemic disease. Smallpox was often the deadliest. Because the Native American population was cut off from Europe by the ocean, they were not seasoned to withstand these diseases, some of which (including smallpox) tended to be less deadly among children than adults. A case of childhood

smallpox granted lifetime immunity against it, assuming a person survived the original illness. Many people of European background (including George Washington) bore scars from surviving an early case of the disease. Africans who wore such scars were more valuable on the slave market. But at first contact such epidemics often swept through Native American populations, unleashing massive death rates.

Smallpox spreads through contact with infected persons, who can pass it to others by coughing. Coupled with the duress of occupation, war, and hunger, the effects of such diseases were even more severe. In central Mexico around 8 million native people died of smallpox within a decade of the Spaniards' invasion. This was likely a third of the population, or more. Native American societies were capable of stout defenses against European incursions, but the diseases badly undercut their power to resist. After conquering both the Mexicas and the Incas of Peru, the Spanish had established formal control of much of the Caribbean and a vast 8,000-mile stretch from southern South America to the North American Southwest.

The Spanish successes spawned exploration into new portions of what would become the southeastern United States. One of the most fantastical episodes involved a Spanish expedition to the Florida Gulf Coast in 1528. The Spanish explorers came under attack from local Indian tribes, and the beleaguered men headed west along the coast. Their numbers dwindled until just four survivors came ashore in Texas. One of them, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, penned a remarkable account of the Spaniards' trek from Texas across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. Cabeza de Vaca explained that the stranded Spaniards improbably developed reputations as shamans and healers. When Texas Indians pleaded with Cabeza de Vaca to heal their sick, he made the sign of the cross, prayed over patients, and seemed to have some success. He even reported that his prayers raised a man from the dead. Like Bartolomé de las Casas, Cabeza de Vaca was disgusted at the way the conquistadores treated the Indians he encountered in northern Mexico. He told Spain's king that the natives would never truly become Christians if they had to endure such abuse.

Still, Spanish oppression of Native Americans continued as exploration moved forward. Hernando de Soto, who had participated in the conquests of the Incas in Peru, followed up earlier efforts to subdue Florida. He and 600 men landed near Tampa in 1539. De Soto's expedition included a few priests, and his men carried chains and iron collars with which to bind Indian prisoners. They met any native resistance with ferocious punishments, including burning people at the stake. Disease again followed this Spanish expedition, possibly exacerbated by the herds of pigs Soto brought along to feed his men. The pigs may have been carrying pestilences such as tuberculosis or anthrax. Whatever the case, the arrival of Soto and other European incursions into the

Southeast fundamentally refigured the area's populations. Over the next couple of centuries, the native population plummeted. Some tribes ceased to exist while others, such as the Cherokees and Catawbas, rose as new conglomerations of once-separate peoples.

The Spanish sought to establish the *encomienda* system wherever they went, and they made fleeting efforts to build European-style settlements on the American mainland. In 1565, they founded St. Augustine, Florida, which became the first continuously settled European town within the future United States. The Spanish had competitors on the Atlantic coast, however. They crushed a French Protestant (Huguenot) colony in northeast Florida that had been founded a year before St. Augustine. The Spanish established missionary stations and villages up the Atlantic coast as far as the future site of the English colony at Jamestown. But with the coming of new French and English colonies in the 1600s, the Spanish found it increasingly difficult to control eastern North America anywhere north of Florida.

Spanish officials sought to bring Christianity to the natives of the Americas, often through the work of the Franciscan missionary order. Conquistadores such as Cortés and Soto typically brought priests with them to participate in the rites of conquest. But as suggested by Bartolomé de las Casas, there seemed to be an inherent contradiction between subjugation and evangelization of the Indians. Catholic and Protestant missionaries alike would struggle to convince many Native Americans to do much more than affiliate with the missions. Some Indians lost faith in native religions and shamans, who could not protect them from disease and conquest. But widespread devotion to Christianity required "indigenization," or the sense that the faith was Native Americans' own, not just an imposition of the colonizers.

A key moment in the process of indigenizing Catholic Christianity in Spanish America came in 1531, when a new Christian convert named Juan Diego (his Mexica name was Cuauhtlatoatzin) said that he had a vision of the Virgin Mary. As tradition has it, Juan Diego saw an apparition of Mary on a hill that the Mexicas had dedicated to Tonantzin, the mother of their gods. She told him to erect a shrine there and promised her "love, compassion, help, and protection" to the people of the newly conquered land. Juan Diego advised the bishop of New Spain (a viceroyalty created by the Spanish monarchy to govern Spain's subjugated lands in the New World) about his experience, but the bishop did not believe him. The Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego again, instructing him to put roses in his cloak (he would find roses, even though it was winter) and return to the bishop. When Juan Diego opened his garment before the bishop, the roses fell out, and a dark-skinned image of the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared in his cloak. To the Spanish this seemed to confirm the legitimacy of the conquest of Central America. To many of the indigenous people of Mexico, Mary's visitation affirmed their place within

the religious and social order of New Spain. Over time the Virgin of Guadalupe would become the most powerful religious symbol of Mexican identity. Pope John Paul II canonized Juan Diego in 2002, making him the first indigenous saint from the Americas.

Spanish immigration to the Americas in the colonial era was slow but steady. Out of a Spanish home population of around 8 million, some 250,000 Spaniards came to the New World in the sixteenth century, another 200,000 from 1601 to 1650, and 250,000 from 1651 to 1800. Most of the early colonists, as was the case throughout the Americas, were men and boys. They came largely from poorer farming communities in Spain. Because there were so few Spanish women in the early decades of conquest, Spanish intermarriage with Africans and Native Americans became common. The children of these unions were designated with a host of racial categories, including mulattos (mixed-race Spanish and black) and mestizos (Spanish and Indian). By the 1700s, mestizos represented a majority of the population in Mexico, including its northern territory of New Mexico. Race relations in New Spain tended to be more fluid than in the English colonies.

New Mexico

Exploration into the American Southwest followed rumors of golden cities and unfathomable wealth. In the early 1540s, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led an expedition to find the Seven Cities of Gold in present-day New Mexico. Brutal attacks on Pueblo villages yielded few treasures. But an Indian slave called “El Turco” assured Coronado that if they just kept moving northeast, they would find one of the golden cities. This fool’s errand took Coronado and his army deep into the American interior, as far as Kansas. The golden city El Turco had promised turned out to be one more Indian village with no precious metals to be seen. The disgusted Coronado had El Turco strangled. Before turning back, Coronado’s men planted a cross on the Great Plains. It signaled that Spaniards had journeyed close to the center of the future United States by the mid-sixteenth century.

But actual Spanish settlement in the lonely northern reaches of the Kingdom of New Spain remained sparse into the seventeenth century. In 1598, a caravan led by Juan de Oñate crossed the Rio Grande at the future site of El Paso. In an elaborate ceremony, Oñate claimed *El Paso del Norte* (“the pass of the North”) for the Spanish kingdom. He proceeded north, beyond the site of present-day Santa Fe. To the Indians he encountered, Oñate proclaimed the earthly and eternal benefits of coming under the authority of the Spanish. The Spanish typically reported that the Indians “spontaneously” accepted their new Spanish rulers and the Christian God.

The Spanish called these Indians “Pueblo,” meaning “village,” because of the Pueblos’ distinctive multilevel residences (such as those at Chaco Canyon). Thus, the word *pueblo* could refer to a people, their towns, or their homes. In fact, the Pueblos were a diverse, scattered group of irrigation farmers, including tribes such as the Acoma, the Hopi, and the Zuni. Often the Pueblos’ villages featured subterranean chambers called *kivas*, which to them represented the underground origins of humanity at the beginning of time.

Relatively few Spanish settlers ever came to *el Norte* (the North), but Franciscan missionaries found the Pueblos a promising group of potential converts. The Franciscans sought to have the Christian Indians live near the mission communities so they could have ready access to the Catholic Mass and other religious services. The missionaries often clashed with political officials and soldiers over the proper treatment of mission Indians. From the first, some Pueblos resented the presence of the Spanish. In the late 1590s, residents of the mesa-top pueblo at Acoma attacked the Spanish shortly after the arrival of Juan de Oñate’s army, killing eleven soldiers. The Spanish army retaliated, wrecking Acoma pueblo and killing some 800 men, women, and children. Many of those who remained alive were tried for rebellion and murder. Oñate condemned younger Acomas to twenty years of servitude. Dozens of Acoma males over the age of twenty-five had one of their feet cut off in a public display of retribution. Finally, Oñate removed children twelve years and younger from their families and placed them under the tutelage of the Franciscans. Although Mexico City officials eventually dismissed Oñate from his position for abusing the power of his office, such treatment of Indians—especially those who resisted—was not unusual.

The Pueblo Revolt

Following the Spanish occupation, the Pueblos experienced the all-too-typical decline in population from duress and disease. Over the middle decades of the seventeenth century, the Pueblo population in New Mexico dropped from about 40,000 to 17,000. Periodic famine and attacks from other Indians such as the Apaches made conditions even more grim.

Christian missionaries typically seek conversions of non-Christian people from one religion (or no religion) to Christianity. But with the Pueblos, the results of the Franciscans’ work were usually not so tidy. The Franciscans hoped some of the Pueblos were making genuine professions of faith in Christ. Indeed, the mission Indians did affiliate with Christianity and its practices, and for some this change was undoubtedly heartfelt. But for others, language barriers and lingering resentments prevented

a wholesale embrace of the Franciscans' message. By the mid-1600s, the missionaries employed roughly one priest for each Pueblo village in New Mexico. But the priests often did not learn to speak the Pueblos' dialects. The missionaries and mission Indians were at constant risk of Apache attacks. One Franciscan in 1669 lamented that all of New Mexico was "at war with the widespread heathen nation of the Apache Indians." Furthermore, the Franciscans knew that many Indians resented the Spaniards' presence and would rise up against them if given the chance.

Predictably, a number of Pueblos who had come to the missions concluded that the Franciscans' gospel had not brought much worldly benefit. Some turned back to native religious practices, or at least Spanish authorities accused them of doing so. In 1675, the Spanish executed three Pueblos and had another forty-three whipped for acts of sorcery. One of those who endured the whipping was a spiritual leader named Popé. (His name meant "ripe plantings.") The embittered Popé made his way to Taos, New Mexico, where he began to plan a massive Pueblo uprising. As he meditated in a kiva, Popé allegedly received spirit revelations confirming the plan and condemning the "God of the Spaniards" as nothing but "rotten wood" (referencing the Catholics' icons).

Popé's elaborate scheme against the Spanish resulted in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, the most devastating Indian uprising against European power during the American colonial era. The Pueblos forced the Spanish to evacuate the missions and New Mexico's capital at Santa Fé (founded in 1610). Although the Pueblos sought to drive all vestiges of Spanish power out of the land, they directed special fury at the missionaries and symbols of Christian authority. Twenty-one of New Mexico's thirty-three Franciscan missionaries died in the uprising. Popé was said to have ordered the rebels to attack the mission chapels, destroying all the icons and crucifixes. Some Pueblos reportedly bathed themselves in rivers as a means to reverse their Christian baptisms. The surviving Spanish settlers fled south along the Rio Grande to El Paso. The Pueblos' victory was so complete that the Spanish would not return to New Mexico for thirteen years.

Aside from its political and religious ramifications, one of the most important outcomes of the Pueblo Revolt was the proliferation of horse trading among Southwest Indians. Hernán Cortés's expedition in 1519 had first introduced European horses to the American mainland. (The horses of ancient North America had gone extinct thousands of years earlier.) Realizing the commercial and military potential of horses, the Spanish had tried to limit Native American horseback riding to Christian Indian converts on Spanish farms. But in the Pueblo Revolt, Indians took hundreds of horses from the Spanish, which led to pervasive Indian dependence on them for travel, trade, and raiding. Horses were perfectly suited to live in the vast expanses of the Great Plains, a region that makes up much of the territory from the panhandle of present-day Texas

to the Canadian province of Alberta. The advent of horse culture set the stage for the emergence of more powerful Indian tribes, especially the Comanches, who were evenly matched with European power for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Horses were one of the most obvious zoological transformations wrought by the Columbian Exchange, but few areas of life in America were left untouched by the animals and diseases introduced by Europeans. Conversely, one of the most obvious ways the Americas changed Europe was through the introduction of crops native to the Western Hemisphere, including potatoes, corn, and tomatoes. Africans likely brought the strain of rice that became a staple in America and a great engine of profit for planters in the Lower South.

It is tragically strange that the disease exchange between Europe and America was so imbalanced. The most notable ailment that passed from the Americas to Europe was syphilis, which can be transmitted sexually or from mother to child. (Columbus's sailors may have brought syphilis to Europe for the first time on one of their return voyages from the Caribbean.) While untreated syphilis can be fatal, and it became common in early modern Europe, it is not as contagious or deadly as Europe-to-America diseases such as smallpox.

French Colonization

The French and English lagged behind the Portuguese and Spanish in establishing colonies in the Americas. Still, in the 1520s, the French monarchy began to commission explorations into the West, trying to find the elusive water route to the East Indies. The French sent Jacques Cartier on such a mission in 1534. Cartier was dismayed by the cold, rugged terrain of Labrador, in northeastern Canada. He imagined that it might be the land God assigned to Cain after he murdered his brother Abel in the book of Genesis. Still, Cartier, like Columbus before him, saw his expedition as a turning point in the spread of the Christian gospel to the West. Cartier explored and mapped the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River as far west as the future site of Montreal. However—also like Columbus—Cartier was disappointed in his failure to find a way to China.

Samuel de Champlain established the settlement at Quebec in 1608, pioneering French colonization of Canada (New France). Although Spanish colonies in the Caribbean had preceded Quebec by more than a century, Quebec, Santa Fé, and Jamestown, Virginia, were all founded within three years of each other. This signaled a new phase of European aggression in North America. French colonization was, on balance, less disruptive to Native American societies than that of the Spanish or English.

This was because French immigration remained low. Almost fifty years after its founding, just over 3,000 French people lived in Quebec. The focus in Canada was more on the fur trade than on large farms. French fur traders depended on Indian hunters and traders. The French traders ventured deep into the Great Lakes region and beyond, getting to know Indian languages and sometimes marrying native women.

The Jesuit order of Catholic missionaries carried most of the evangelistic burden among the Indians of New France. The Jesuits were relatively successful at learning native dialects, too, and they probably enjoyed the greatest success of any European evangelists in seventeenth-century America. Although the Jesuits viewed Indian societies as barbaric, they still believed that, as human beings created in God's image, Native Americans had the same rational faculties as Europeans did. Indians had "in their hearts a secret idea of the Divinity," one Jesuit said. The Hurons, or Wendats, became the Jesuits' primary focus of ministry. The central Jesuit mission in New France was at Sainte-Marie, in northern Ontario.

In spite of the light French presence, the usual rounds of disease swept through Canada's Indian people, including the Wendats. As Wendats lay dying from smallpox or the flu, priests would baptize them, hoping to secure forgiveness of sins for them in the next life. Many Indians realized that the coming of the French had somehow unleashed these plagues, but their medicine men and shamans seemed powerless to stop the destruction. The French trade in furs also exacerbated conflict between the Wendats and tribes of the Iroquois League, who competed for hunting land and profits in pelts. In 1648–49, the Iroquois decimated Wendat towns and Jesuit missions, including Sainte-Marie. The Jesuits baptized as many Wendats as they could before death came, and they evacuated and burned the Sainte-Marie mission to save it from the Iroquois. Some of the Jesuits were tortured and executed when the Iroquois overran the missions.

In spite of this pervasive destruction and instability, some indigenous people did accept the Jesuits' message about salvation through Jesus. With the decimation of the Wendats, the Jesuits redirected their efforts toward Iroquois tribes, especially the Mohawks. One of the best-known Indian converts anywhere in the colonial period was Catherine Tekakwitha, a Mohawk whose parents had died from smallpox in the 1660s. In the 1670s, she came under the influence of Jesuit missionaries in upstate New York, not far from New France. She received Christian baptism in 1676 and soon moved with other Catholic converts to a new mission station south of Montreal. Catherine joined a Catholic women's fellowship that implemented a radical program of devotion to Christ. In order to deny the flesh, they took ice baths, wore iron girdles and hair shirts to induce constant discomfort, slept on beds of thorns, and whipped themselves. Some of

the Jesuits worried that these practices were extremist. But many Mohawks and even some of the missionaries admired the women's intense devotion. When Catherine died in 1680, some devotees claimed that Catherine was a saint who could heal those who prayed for her help. The Catholic Church formally canonized Catherine Tekakwitha in 2012, ten years after her fellow indigenous American saint, Juan Diego.

The French kept probing into the interior of the American continent, west from Quebec to the Great Lakes, and then south along the Mississippi River to the Gulf Coast. By the late 1600s, the English had consolidated their colonial holdings along the East Coast, so French settlements tended to wrap around those of the English, in a west-south angle framed by the St. Lawrence and Mississippi rivers. Father Jacques Marquette and explorer Louis Joliet navigated the Mississippi in 1673–74, making it to present-day southeast Arkansas before returning north to Lake Michigan. Further anchoring their colonial presence in the Great Lakes, the French founded Fort Detroit, north of Lake Erie, in 1701. Similarly, they established the southern port of New Orleans (La Nouvelle-Orléans) in 1718. We do not often associate the French with American slavery, but they did buy and sell thousands of slaves—most of them Native Americans—in Canada.

New France illustrated again how colonization transformed the fauna of North America and drew the Indians into a globalized economy. Fashionable Europe was hungry for fur accessories, including beaver hats and coats. So the French brought guns, tools, and cloth to New France to bargain with Indian beaver hunters. This encouraged the overharvesting of beavers in the East so that the fur trade extended ever further into the American interior.

France, Spain, and England drew upon a colonial philosophy of *mercantilism*, the idea that growing nations should secure colonies in order to extract their wealth of raw materials, including precious metals, furs, agricultural products, and (in the case of slavery) human beings. Those nations could send manufactured products—firearms, clothes, tools, and more—to sell in the colonies. These new markets, and new sources of raw goods, were indispensable to the European nations who wished to expand their global imperial reach.

The Protestant Reformation and England's Colonies

Columbus's voyages preceded the beginning of the Protestant Reformation by a quarter century. But the Reformation would mark the course of the American colonial era as much as any other European factor. The "protests" of the Reformation began in 1517

when German Catholic monk Martin Luther insisted that the Roman Catholic Church had corrupted biblical teaching about salvation by God's grace alone. The Catholic Church supplemented its riches by the sale of "indulgences," implying that people could help secure forgiveness by donating to the church. Luther's protests initiated a chain reaction across western Europe, with monarchs and states faced with a new choice: whether to remain Catholic or to join forces with the Protestant movement of Luther, the French reformer John Calvin, and others.

England, formally Catholic into the early 1500s, had allied with Spain after Columbus's explorations, which had limited England's options of colonization in the Americas. But beginning in the 1530s, England endured twenty-five years of bloody controversy over its national religious affiliation. When Elizabeth I succeeded Mary I as queen in 1558, however, she secured England for the Protestant cause. Her long tenure as queen ensured that Protestantism would gain a stronger grip on England's religious culture. Elizabeth I also challenged Catholic Spain in an imperial rivalry shaped by the furor over the Reformation. She commissioned "privateers," essentially state-sponsored pirates, to capture Spanish vessels carrying silver and other treasures back from the Americas. The Spanish king, Philip II, decided to put an end to the Protestant reign in England in 1588. But the expedition of the fearsome Spanish Armada fell victim to nimble English ships and terrible storms. Many in England believed God had brought judgment on the navy of the hated Spanish Catholics.

Even before the stunning defeat of the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth had begun to reignite English interest in American colonies. Geographer Richard Hakluyt, one of England's key advocates for colonization, argued that Protestants must engage in the great quest of evangelization lest they leave Native Americans vulnerable to Catholic violence and deception. "The people of America cry out unto us . . . to come and help them, and bring unto them the glad tidings of the gospel," Hakluyt said, citing a story from the book of Acts. Many of the sponsors of colonizing the Americas already had experience in the English conquest of Catholic Ireland beginning in the 1540s.

One of these veterans was Walter Raleigh (often spelled Raleigh), whom Elizabeth commissioned to seek out a good location for an American colony. In 1585, Raleigh and about 100 settlers went to Roanoke Island, part of the Outer Banks along the coast of North Carolina. Typical resentments and violence transpired between the Roanoke colonists and local Indians, but Raleigh sent more settlers in 1587. Organizers lost contact with the colony in the aftermath of England's defeat of the Armada. When they returned to Roanoke Island in 1590, no one was left. Someone had cryptically carved the word *CROATOAN* into the bark of a tree. Otherwise there was no sign of what

had become of these first English colonists. Some have speculated that they moved to another island or to the mainland. They may have fallen victim to famine or attacks by the Spanish or Indians. We will likely never know for sure.

The first effort by the English to establish a foothold in America had failed. But twenty years later they would return with a permanent settlement at Jamestown. By 1607, the future of Europe's American colonies was colored not only by the desire for riches and a sea route to the East Indies but also by religious rivalry. The world of indigenous Americans, like those who lived at the Buttermilk Creek site in Texas, had never been placid. But the arrival of Europeans in West Africa and in the Americas had brought the Atlantic world into an era of unprecedented turmoil and change. The beginnings of English colonization would only accelerate those dramatic transformations.

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