

# Period 1: 1491–1607

## The Meeting of Three Peoples

# 3

### TIMELINE

- 1492 Christopher Columbus (Italian, sailing for Spain) arrives in the New World, beginning era of European colonization of the Americas
- 1498 Vasco da Gama (Portugal) sails to India
- 1517 Martin Luther challenges Roman Catholic beliefs and practices; initiates Protestant Reformation
- 1521 Spanish forces, led by Hernan Cortes, defeat the Mexica people, led by Montezuma
- 1530 John Calvin breaks with the Catholic Church
- 1532 Spanish forces, led by Francisco Pizarro, defeat the Inca people
- 1542 Bartolomé de Las Casas writes *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*
- 1549 The *repartimiento* reforms begin to replace the *encomienda* system
- 1587 Founding of the “lost” British colony of Roanoke
- 1588 British defeat of the Spanish Armada
- 1597 Juanillo’s Revolt in Florida
- 1598 Acoma Pueblo Massacre in New Mexico

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he meeting of three peoples—American Indians, Europeans, and West Africans—on land held by American Indians on the North American continent created a new world.

A remarkable series of events, occurring between the 1200s and the 1500s, led to a broad transformation of much of the world, bringing peoples together from far-flung corners of the globe. The local and regional systems of an earlier era gave way to a global system. This reordering of the world created great wealth for some and utter destruction for others, as peoples from three regions—the Americas, Europe, and Africa—encountered one another. Out of these encounters developed new settlements and colonies in the New World.

### KEY CONCEPT 1.1 PRE-CONTACT NORTH AMERICA

A wide variety of social, political, and economic structures had developed among the native peoples in North America in the period before the arrival of Europeans. These structures grew, in part, out of the interactions among native peoples and between native peoples and the environment.

## **I. Adaptations to Diverse Environments**

As settlers migrated across North America over time, they developed a great diversity of complex social structures. These settlers both adapted to the environment and transformed it.

### **A. SOCIETIES OF THE WEST**

Maize (corn) cultivation was common in many areas from present-day Mexico into the American Southwest. The cultivation of maize fostered economic development and social diversification among the peoples of this region. Farther north, societies in the Northwest and in areas of California also experienced economic development and social diversification, developing a mix of foraging and hunting.

#### **The Pueblo People of the Southwest**

The Pueblo people lived in areas that are part of the current southwestern United States. The Pueblo were named by the Spanish because many lived in small towns, or *pueblos*. Ancestral Pueblo culture developed around the year 900 AD in the area that is today known as the Four-Corners region of the Southwest—the area where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet. These early Pueblos, sometimes called the Anasazi people, became increasingly dependent on the cultivation of maize. These settled communities developed complex, technologically advanced societies. Many lived in architecturally sophisticated structures, including structures in the Chaco Canyon of New Mexico, some of which contained hundreds of rooms.

Because of climatic change, including volcanic eruptions and severe drought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Pueblo people began to disperse from the complex settlements around the Four-Corners region. This dispersal led to conflict with neighboring peoples. Some Pueblos united with Zuni and Hopi in western New Mexico. Some joined with settled communities in the Rio Grande valley. This movement, known as the Great Migration, led the Pueblo to abandon the sophisticated towns they had developed over hundreds of years of civilization and to join other groups in the Southwest. This development weakened Pueblo communities just on the eve of European contact.

#### **Chinook People of the Pacific Northwest**

In the Pacific Northwest, the Chinook people lived along the Columbia River in present-day Washington and Oregon. The Chinook people consisted of several groups, all speaking related languages. These groups practiced foraging, hunting, and fishing, and tended to live in settled communities. Chinook communities had a high degree of economic development and social stratification. A higher caste of Chinook people—shamans, warriors, and successful merchants—lived in relative isolation from Chinook commoners. Many Chinook people lived in longhouses, which contained up to fifty people.

### **B. SOCIETIES OF THE GREAT BASIN AND GREAT PLAINS**

The peoples of the Great Basin and the western Great Plains tended to develop mobile lifestyles in response to the lack of natural resources.

## **The Shoshone, Piute, and Ute People of the Great Basin**

The Great Basin refers to the 400,000-square-mile area between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Mountains. The area has a great deal of environmental diversity but is characterized by a pronounced lack of natural resources. This dearth of resources was especially severe after a rise in temperatures, approximately 5,000 years ago, created hot, arid conditions, leading to a series of droughts that struck the American West from approximately 900 to 1400 AD. Historians and archeologists refer to a "desert culture" that was common among most of the pre-contact American Indian tribes of the Great Basin. "Desert culture" was characterized by seasonable mobility, as hunters and foragers searched for food throughout the year. "Desert culture" peoples often developed basket making, whereas more sedentary groups often developed pottery. Three large groupings of native peoples of the Great Basin are the Shoshone people, the Piute people, and the Ute people.

## **American Indians of the Great Plains**

The Great Plains refers to the vast stretch of land in the United States and Canada that stretches from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. The Plains Indians are the native groups most commonly stereotyped in images of Indians in American popular culture. The stereotype often involves Plains Indians riding horses, wearing feathered headdresses, and hunting buffalo. In the minds of many Americans who know this stereotype from movies and television shows, this image represents not just Plains Indians, but all American Indians. The stereotype has little validity even in regard to Plains Indians. Although many Plains Indian groups, especially those of the western Great Plains, did depend on the buffalo for survival, it was not until European contact that horses were introduced into Plains Indian cultures. Before that, many American Indian cultures of the Great Plains, such as the Sioux, the Blackfoot, the Arapaho, and the Cheyenne, hunted for buffalo by foot, maintaining a mobile lifestyle. Some American Indian groups of the Great Plains, especially the eastern Great Plains closer to the Mississippi River (such as the Osage, the Wichita, and the Omaha) developed more sedentary, agrarian lifestyles.

## **C. SOCIETIES OF THE EAST**

Along the Atlantic seaboard, many societies developed a mix of agricultural and hunter-gatherer economies. These economic developments fostered the development of permanent settlements.

### **The Algonquian Peoples**

The Algonquian language group included hundreds of American Indian tribes along the east coast of the present-day United States and in the interior of the continent, around the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. The Atlantic coast Algonquians hunted, fished, and grew corn. In northern New England and the upper Great Lakes region, the colder climate tended to make agriculture impractical, forcing Algonquians in these areas to rely on hunting and fishing.

## **The Iroquois Great League of Peace**

In present-day New York State, groups of Iroquoian-speaking peoples formed a confederation made up of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. (Later, in 1720, a sixth group, the Tuscaroras, joined the Iroquois League). The founding of the League dates back to perhaps the fifteenth century (although some oral traditions assert an earlier founding date). The League formed in order to end infighting among the groups. Over time, the cohesion of the five nations grew and the Iroquois League became one of the most powerful forces in the pre-contact Northeast.

The Iroquois lived in settled, permanent villages. They relied on farming, gathering, hunting, and fishing for their sustenance, but the majority of their food came from farming. Their three most important crops were corn, beans, and squash, called the three sisters of crops and common to many agrarian American Indian societies. The Iroquois are, traditionally, a matrilineal society—inheritance and descent pass through the mother's line.

## **KEY CONCEPT 1.2 EXPLORATION AND THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE**

In the late 1400s and 1500s, European overseas exploration and settlement resulted in a series of interactions and adaptations among societies called the Columbian Exchange.

### **I. Contact, Conquest, and Transformations**

European exploration, settlement, and conquest in the New World in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ushered in momentous demographic and social changes in Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

#### **A. THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE MODEL**

The first explorers and settlers in the New World were sponsored by Spain and Portugal. Their presence in the New World led to deadly epidemics that decimated native populations. Over time, a racially mixed population developed in the Americas. This society was characterized by caste distinctions that grew out of the intermixture of Spanish settlers, African slaves, and American Indians.

#### **Portugal and Spain Lead the Way**

Portugal, with the encouragement and guidance of Prince Henry the Navigator, embarked on a search for new trade routes to Asia that would bypass the Italian city-states that controlled Mediterranean trade. Portuguese explorers moved down the coast of Africa with the goal of rounding the Cape of Good Hope and crossing the Indian Ocean to arrive at India and China. Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 and Vasco da Gama reached India by 1498.

Spain also sought new trade routes. The Italian sailor Christopher Columbus convinced the Spanish monarchs, Isabella and Ferdinand, to fund a venture west, across the Atlantic, to reach the East. Columbus argued that the diameter of the earth was smaller than cartographers believed and that a venture in a westerly direction was both possible and feasible. (Most educated Europeans, including Columbus, believed the earth was round.) Columbus's three ships, the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*, set sail in 1492, and, six weeks later,

reached a Caribbean island that he named San Salvador. Columbus assumed that he had reached the East Indies, and he named the Taino people he encountered, "Indians." The misnomer stuck. Columbus made two more voyages but never fully realized that he had voyaged to an entirely new continent. Others who followed in his footsteps made that realization, paving the way for a century of exploration, conquest, and riches.

### **Disease and Death**

The peoples of the New World, having evolved and adapted separately from the peoples of the Old World, had no immunities to many of the germs and the infectious diseases that were inadvertently brought to the New World by explorers and settlers. These diseases included bubonic plague, cholera, scarlet fever, and, most important, smallpox. It is estimated that between 50 and 90 percent of the native peoples of the Americas died between 1500 and 1650.

#### **THE IMPACT OF DISEASE**

Remember that the main cause of the massive die-off of American Indians in the 1600s was disease, not warfare. Warfare was brutal, but it could not have affected the large number of people that disease did.

### **Spanish and Portuguese Ambitions**

Spain was able to secure a dominant role in the New World following the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) between Spain and Portugal. The treaty settled the competing claims of the two countries to the newly explored lands outside of Europe. The treaty drew a longitudinal line through the Atlantic Ocean and South America. Portugal was granted lands to the east of the line, including Brazil in the Western Hemisphere and Africa. Spain was granted the rest of the lands of the Americas. Spanish explorers made those claims real by establishing settlements throughout Central and South America. Spanish explorers even made it as far north as California and New Mexico, the area around the Mississippi River, and Florida. Ponce de Leon reached Florida in 1513. Spaniards later established the first permanent European settlement in what would become the United States at St. Augustine, Florida (1585).

### **The Conquistadores and the Defeat of Native Peoples**

Within a generation of Columbus's first journey to the New World, Spanish forces wrested control of much of Central and South America from the native inhabitants, transforming the economic and social structures of the region, and devastating the native population.

The sixteenth century saw brutal fighting in the Americas as Spain extended its hegemony over much of Central and South America. One of the more brutal episodes of violence between the Spanish conquistadores and native peoples was the defeat of the Mexica people (also known as the Aztecs), led by Montezuma, by Spanish forces led by Hernan Cortes (1518–1521). The Incas of South America were defeated by Spanish forces led by Francisco Pizarro (1532).

### **B. SPAIN, PORTUGAL, AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE**

Soon after European settlement in the Americas, a system of slavery developed. Spanish and Portuguese merchants worked with coastal West Africans to force other Africans into the slave system.

## SLAVERY IN HISTORY

It is true that slavery has existed since ancient times. However, be prepared to discuss the aspects of modern slavery that differentiate it from ancient slavery.

## The Impact of the Slave Trade

Even before the settlement of the New World, Europeans began taking Africans from their villages and forcing them into slavery. Slavery has existed since ancient times, but the concept of slavery changed in the 1500s. Africans were thought of as slaves for life; it was not a temporary condition. Also, the children of slaves would now be considered slaves

as well. This too was a break from tradition. African slaves were considered property, with no rights, as opposed to people who were enslaved for a period of time.

There are two main impacts of the slave trade on Africa from the 1500s onward. First, entire generations of strong, young people were kidnapped and taken out of the country. These would otherwise have become the leaders of their tribes or villages. Second, the introduction of European manufactured items undermined the traditional African economy.

## C. THE "COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE"

One major impact of Spanish settlement in the New World was the introduction of new crops and livestock. These new organisms had a major impact on transforming the ecology of the New World and on the social, economic, and political development of the New World. Further, these new organisms had long-term effects on native settlement patterns.

### The "Columbian Exchange" Transforms the Americas

Historians refer to the introduction of new products on each side of the Atlantic as the "Columbian Exchange." The Europeans introduced to the New World: horses, goats, cows, chickens, coffee, lettuce, and wheat, to name just a few. By far, the most important organisms brought from Europe to the New World were germs, which caused widespread disease and death (see page 37).

## D. SPANISH EXPLOITATION OF NEW WORLD RESOURCES

Spaniards first turned to the labor of native Indians in a system known as the *encomienda*. This exploitative system was used in plantation agriculture and in the extraction of precious metals. Over time, native labor was replaced by African slavery.

### Silver and the *Encomienda*

Upon gaining control of much of the Americas, Spain created a system to extract gold and silver and ship it to Spain. Spain soon became the wealthiest country in Europe with the influx

of New World precious metals. Spain developed the *encomienda* system in order to exploit the labor of native peoples. In this system, the initial Spanish settlers were granted tracts of land and the right to extract labor from local inhabitants. In many ways, this system of New World colonization resembled Old World feudalism. Acting as feudal lords, the *encomenderos* had a free hand to run their holdings, as long as a percentage of gold and silver was sent back to the monarchy.

## PARALLELS

There are many parallels between Spanish and English colonial systems. In both cases, the crown initially gave local governors a free hand in the New World. Subsequently, in both cases, the crown exercised direct control over its New World holdings. In New Spain, we can look at the *repartimiento*; in New England, we can look at the creation of the Dominion of New England.

The *encomienda* system led to brutal exploitation. Spurred by Spanish critics such as Bartolomé de Las Casas, the crown issued a series of reform to the governance of Spain's New World colonies known as the *repartimiento* (1549). Treatment of native peoples did not improve appreciably, but control of Spanish America came to be exercised more directly by the crown (see Period 2).

## **II. Europe and the Age of Exploration and Conquest**

European expansion into the New World was fueled by a variety of factors. In time, the impact of conquest and settlement in the New World was felt in the Old World. Expansion in the Americas resulted in increased competition among the nations of Europe as well as the promotion of empire building.

### **A. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EUROPEAN EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST**

A variety of factors help to explain why the age of exploration and conquest took place when it did. These factors include a desire for new sources of wealth, competition for power and status, and a push among Christian sects for new converts. Several important changes in Europe set the groundwork for exploration and conquest.

#### **The Crusades and the Revival of Trade**

The series of religious wars known as the Crusades shook the stability of European feudal society and whet the appetites of Europeans for foreign trade goods. The wars, with the goal of securing Christian control of the "Holy Land," occurred primarily in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The relatively self-sufficient manorial world of feudal Europe began its long demise during this period, as trade routes and regional and international economic activity shifted power and priorities. Europeans became interested in circumventing the Italian city-states and finding new trade routes with the East.

#### **The Black Death and the Decline of Feudalism**

The Black Death, probably caused by a pandemic outbreak of bubonic plague in the fourteenth century, reduced the European population by anywhere from 30 to 60 percent and also played a role in weakening the feudal system.

#### **The Impact of the Renaissance**

The Renaissance spirit of curiosity about the world inspired people to explore and map new areas. Universities and scholarly books—also infused with the spirit of Renaissance humanism—spread these new discoveries.

#### **The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-reformation**

Religious movements in the sixteenth century renewed many people's religious zeal and their desire to spread their gospels. The most important religious movement was the Protestant Reformation. Theologians Martin Luther and John Calvin both led breaks with Rome over church practices and beliefs. Both believed that the church had drifted from its spiritual mission. The Catholic Church's abuse of the practice of selling indulgences—or remissions of sin—was especially galling to Luther.

In England, King Henry VIII also led a break with Rome, but his break was more political than theological. The event that precipitated the break was the Pope's refusal to grant Henry a divorce. Some English Protestants, the Puritans, believed that the English Protestant Reformation did not go far enough. Motivated by Calvinist thinking, the Puritans argued for a complete reformation in England (see Period 2 for more on the Puritans).

The Catholic Church itself underwent a reform in the sixteenth century. This counter-reformation focused on a renewed sense of spirituality within the Catholic Church. Out of this movement came the Jesuits, a Catholic order devoted to spreading their gospel throughout the world.

### **Technological Advances and a Revolution in Navigation**

A series of technological developments encouraged exploration. Johannes Gutenberg's printing press (developed in the 1440s) helped spread information and stimulated interest in new discoveries. The compass, the astrolabe, the quadrant, and the hourglass all aided navigation, helping sailors plot direction, determine speed, and assess latitude. *Portulanos*, detailed maps, also helped navigators. Portugal developed a quick, sturdy sailing ship called the caravel.

### **B. THE IMPACT OF EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST ON EUROPE**

The introduction of new sources of wealth in the form of precious metals transformed the European economy and helped facilitate the ongoing transition from feudalism to capitalism. In addition, new crops and livestock contributed to population growth in Europe.

#### **The Impact of the "Columbian Exchange" on Europe**

A variety of new crops and livestock that were native to the Americas were introduced to Europe in the 1500s. The list of organisms brought by Europeans back to the Old World included turkeys, corn, potato, sweet potato, cacao (cocoa), and tomatoes. These foods, over time, revolutionized culinary traditions in Europe and supplemented the meager diets of the European peasantry. In addition, Spanish sailors brought syphilis back to Europe with them—the result of sexual encounters with women in the New World. Tobacco was introduced and created a craze among Europeans.

#### **The Economic Impact of Conquest**

It is assumed that since conquest brought so much hardship to American Indians as well as to Africans, it must surely have brought improvements to the status of Europeans. However, that, for the most part, was not the case. The position of ordinary Spaniards declined during the age of exploration and conquest; in many ways, ordinary Spaniards did not recover from this period until the nineteenth century. For one, the influx of silver and gold into Spain set off a wave of inflation in the 1500s that made many ordinary items considerably more expensive. Second, taxes went up in Spain, more than fivefold in the 1500s, so that the monarchy could pay for the military expenditures necessary to secure its New World empire. Third, Spain went into debt as it borrowed more and more from European banks to maintain its empire. The interest on this debt also depressed the Spanish economy.



## **C. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND NEW ECONOMIC STRUCTURES**

New forms of technology and new business models facilitated extensive changes in both the economy of Europe and the economy of the Americas.

### **The Joint-stock Company**

The joint-stock company model was developed in Europe in the 1500s and became an important engine for exploration and colonization in the New World. In a joint-stock company, shareholders own a portion of the company in proportion to the number of shares they own. The joint-stock company model was embraced by many of the European nations embarking on risky expeditions of exploration, colonization, and trade because the risks involved would be spread out among multiple investors. Another advantage of the joint-stock company is the concept of limited liability; the shareholders can be held liable for company debts, but their liability is limited to the face value of their shareholding.

## **KEY CONCEPT 1.3 CHANGING WORLDVIEWS IN THE AGE OF EXPANSION AND CONTACT**

The changes that were ushered in by the age of exploration and conquest included changes in the worldviews of those involved.

### **I. Changing European Worldviews**

In the age of exploration and conquest, the worldview of Europeans began to change. They began to see the relationships that had developed between themselves and nonwhite people in a new light.

#### **A. DEBATES AROUND PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN INDIANS**

Most Europeans had little or no knowledge of people who were different from themselves before the age of exploration. Initially, Spanish and Portuguese explorers did not know what to make of the people they encountered in the Americas. Over time debates occurred around how civilized these peoples were compared with Europeans ideals.

#### **Debates over Spain's Actions in the New World**

As reports of the actions of the Spanish *conquistadores* and officials in the *encomienda* system reached Spain, a heated debate ensued about Spanish behavior in the New World. The priest Bartolomé de Las Casas roundly criticized Spanish actions as being among "the most unpardonable offences committed against God and mankind." His book, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (written in 1542; published in 1552), chronicled atrocities against native peoples in the New World. He has been criticized as paving the way for the enslavement of Africans, in order to replace American Indian laborers. He did advocate such a transition, but later came to believe that all forms of slavery were morally wrong.

Las Casas was challenged by another Spanish theologian, Juan Gines de Sepulveda. Sepulveda defended the treatment that the Spaniards meted out to the native peoples of the Americas. He asserted that American Indians were beings of an inferior order. Because they could not be expected to perform duties beyond manual labor, he argued that they were "natural slaves." He followed in the footsteps of philosophers and theologians who argued

for the existence of “natural law.” He insisted that the battles of conquest in the New World were “just wars.” His justifications for taking native peoples’ lands and for destroying their culture—including the assertion that it was in their best interests—would resonate with Spanish policymakers in the coming centuries.

## **B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BELIEF IN WHITE SUPERIORITY**

As Europeans solidified their control over the New World and brought more American Indians and Africans under their control, a set of racist ideas developed to justify the continued subjugation of non-white people.

### **Race in the New World**

The various European powers developed racist ideas to justify their conquest of American Indians and their enslavement of Africans. These racist ideas often grew out of earlier notions of race that had existed in Europe. For the Spaniards, for instance, these included traditional notions about “pure blood” (*limpieza de sangre*). In Spain, this description was used for those without Jewish or Muslim ancestry. The idea that “pure blood” was superior shaped Spanish understandings of race in the New World. As miscegenation—the mixing of races—occurred in the New World, Spaniards erected an elaborate hierarchy of racial classes. The degree of “pure blood” determined one’s place in this hierarchy. Indians and Africans were at the bottom. This model drew on traditional Spanish beliefs and adapted them to a New World setting. The model was useful to the Spanish because it justified their position at the top of the hierarchy and the continued subjugation of those at the bottom.

## **II. Cultural Resistance by American Indians and Africans**

In the face of enslavement, subjugation, and defeat, Africans and American Indians attempted to maintain a sense of political and cultural autonomy.

### **A. AMERICAN INDIAN RESISTANCE TO EUROPEAN CULTURE**

A clash of cultures occurred in the Americas of the 1500s. As Europeans attempted to impose their ideas about culture, propriety, gender roles, family structure, religion, and the natural world, native peoples developed strategies for resistance and contestation.

#### **Resistance and Adaptation in New Spain**

The responses of American Indians to the catastrophe of conquest were varied. Some fled from the invading Spaniards, abandoning their ancestral homelands. These migrations led to population pressures and conflicts elsewhere in the Americas. Some made accommodations with the Spanish, adopting Christianity and adapting it to fit their needs and circumstances. Some native peoples adopted Catholicism whole cloth, while others incorporated certain Spanish spiritual beliefs into traditional religious practices.

#### **Violent Resistance**

Native people engaged in violent resistance as well as more passive cultural resistance. The Guale people lived near the Spanish mission in St. Augustine—one of four missions in Spanish Florida in the sixteenth century. As missionaries tried to bring Guale Indians into the

mission system, a revolt, known as Juanillo's Revolt, occurred in 1597, resulting in the deaths of several missionaries.

### **Juan de Onate and the Pueblo People**

In the western reaches of Spain's New World empire, a violent confrontation occurred among the Pueblo people in modern-day New Mexico. The Spanish *conquistador*, Juan de Onate, and his soldiers had, in the 1590s, occupied land held by the Acoma Pueblo people. In 1598, the Acoma people resisted an order by the Spaniards to hand over certain supplies that the Acoma needed to survive the upcoming winter. They attacked the Spanish occupiers, killing fifteen Spaniards, including the nephew of Onate. Onate responded by firing cannons from a mesa above the Acoma people, killing over 800 native people. The survivors were put on trial by the Spanish, whose punishments included the cutting off of one foot for males over the age of twenty-five. As many as eighty men had one of their feet cut off. The remaining 500 Acoma people were enslaved by the Spaniards.

## **B. CULTURAL ADAPTATION BY AFRICANS**

As Africans were brought into the slavery system, they developed forms of cultural resistance that attempted, against great odds, to preserve traditional cultural patterns and to maintain a sense of autonomy.

### **Maroon Communities**

Maroons were Africans who escaped from slavery in the New World and established independent communities. These communities existed throughout the New World, with many in the Caribbean and Brazil. Often these communities were formed by slaves who were the first generation brought out of Africa. These Maroons, with memories of Africa, were in the best position to preserve African traditions in the New World. These traditions included the use of medicinal herbs, often combined with special drumming and dancing as part of healing rituals. Other African healing traditions and rites have survived through the centuries through the descendants of these original Maroons. One of the most significant Maroon communities was Palmares, established in Brazil in the early 1600s. It had more than 30,000 residents and remained an independent community until it was conquered by the Portuguese in 1694. When the English took over Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, many enslaved Africans fled into the interior and joined communities of Arawak Indians. Over time, the Maroons came to control large areas of the Jamaican interior.

## **SUBJECT TO DEBATE**

Most American history textbooks provide vivid accounts of the brutality of the Spanish conquistadores toward American Indians. That the Spaniards were often cruel to the native peoples of the Americas is not in question; however, recently historians have begun to question the extent of Spanish brutality. The term, "Black Legend," was coined by a Spanish historian in 1914 to describe the anti-Spanish propaganda written by English, Italian, Dutch, or other European writers. Although English sources, say, from the 1500s onward should not be discounted, it would be prudent for the student to take into account the origin of these sources. English writers might have been trying to demonize Spanish behavior in order to portray British behavior in the New World in a more favorable light. The British portrayed themselves

as altruistic, bringing God and civilization to the inhabitants of the New World, while the Spanish were portrayed as greedy and cruel. Of course, the historical record demonstrates that the British committed their share of atrocities in the New World, probably comparable to those committed in New Spain. The controversy provides us with a cautionary lesson: Look carefully at the source of documents as you use them to write about the past. The documents in the document-based question on the Advanced Placement exam clearly indicate their source. Do not ignore this information.

## Practice Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions:** Pick the letter that best answers the following questions.

QUESTIONS 1–3 REFER TO THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE:

“The gold and silver mined with forced labor in Mexico and what is now Bolivia constituted a windfall that could have been used to develop Spanish agriculture, industry, and commerce. It could have helped the country catch up with northwestern Europe’s more developed economies. . . .

“But Spain [in the 1500s] was in the grip of a tiny ruling class of royalty, Catholic Church hierarchy, and landed aristocracy. Two to three per cent of the population owned 97 per cent of the land in Castile, Spain’s heartland. The great landowners had no incentive to modernize Spain. They just wanted to raise more sheep and sell more wool. The environmental degradation that overgrazing vast numbers of sheep entailed seems to have bothered the ruling class no more than the cutting of forests for timber to build ships and provide charcoal to smelt domestic Spanish silver ore. And so, what if the wool went to Holland to be manufactured into cloth rather than being processed in Spain itself.

“Meanwhile, successes in the New World swelled the Spanish monarchy’s ambitions in the Old. The bonanza of bullion from the Americas encouraged Spain’s rulers to build up the army into Europe’s largest military force, setting off an arms race that forced rivals to multiply their armed forces as well. Spain hired German, Italian, and Irish mercenaries, building and buying a vast fleet of heavily armed ships. Hegemonic wars against the French, Dutch, and English followed. . . .

“The most lasting and far-reaching effect of the increase of money in circulation was to set off a long wave of inflation that spread throughout Western Europe. To be sure, deficit spending on unproductive armies, navies, and wars as well as debasement of coinage by monarchs in search of additional royal revenue contributed to the run-up in prices.”

—A. Kent MacDougall, University of California, Berkeley, March 1992.

1. Which of the following best describes a central point of A. Kent MacDougall's argument?
  - (A) During the age of exploration and conquest, a growing divide developed in Spain between the Catholic church and the monarchy over the treatment of American Indians.
  - (B) The large-scale migration of Spanish peasants to the New World left Spain with a scarcity of workers and a depressed economy.
  - (C) Spanish conquest of the New World led Spain to focus its military and diplomatic efforts toward subduing resistance in the New World and removing itself from the conflicts of Europe.
  - (D) The successes of Spanish conquest in the New World did not result in a general economic improvement in Spain itself.
  
2. The description of Spanish actions by A. Kent MacDougall, excerpted on page 44, contributes to an understanding of which of the following developments beyond the 1500s?
  - (A) The industrial growth of Spain in the seventeenth century
  - (B) The growing gap between the wealthy and the poor in the seventeenth century
  - (C) Spanish military domination over its European rivals in the seventeenth century
  - (D) The success of independence movements in Spanish America in the seventeenth century
  
3. Concerns raised in Spain in the 1540s about "forced labor in Mexico and what is now Bolivia," mentioned in the first paragraph of A. Kent MacDougall's article, led to which of the following changes?
  - (A) Limits being placed on the *encomienda* system and a shift toward African slavery
  - (B) The growth of the Spanish abolitionist movement and a royal decree ending slavery in the New World
  - (C) A shift in Spanish economic activities in the New World from export-oriented activities toward production for local consumption
  - (D) The establishment of a line of demarcation in Spanish-held territories in the New World between areas for American Indians and areas for Spanish colonists

## Answers and Explanations to Multiple-Choice Questions:

1. **(D)** The successes of Spanish conquest in the New World did not result in a general economic improvement in Spain itself. The article focuses on the shortsightedness of the wealthy class and the impact of ongoing warfare. The elite class in Spain did not try to improve infrastructure or develop new forms of processing and manufacturing.
2. **(B)** The article is attempting to account for a curious outcome. With all the gold and silver coming into Spain in the 1500s, why did the standard of living for most Spaniards decline from the 1500s until, according to the article, the late 1800s. MacDougall argues that the wealth was squandered rather than reinvested. Further, taxes and inflation both increased, putting the peasantry in a deeper hole. The author states, in another part of the article excerpted on page 44, "Super-exploitation of labor on the periphery of the world capitalist economy leads to increased exploitation of workers at the core."
3. **(A)** The article focuses on the impact of Spanish colonization on Spain itself, rather than on the Americas. However, it does allude to "forced labor in Mexico and what is now Bolivia." The super-exploitation of indigenous peoples by the Spaniards was raised in the 1540s by the Dominican Friar Bartolomé de las Casas. He described the brutality of slavery under the *encomienda* system. He asserted that Indians were free people in the natural order and deserved the same treatment as others. He also suggested replacing Indian labor with African labor. In the coming decades, Spain shifted toward a reliance on African slavery for labor in its New World Empire.