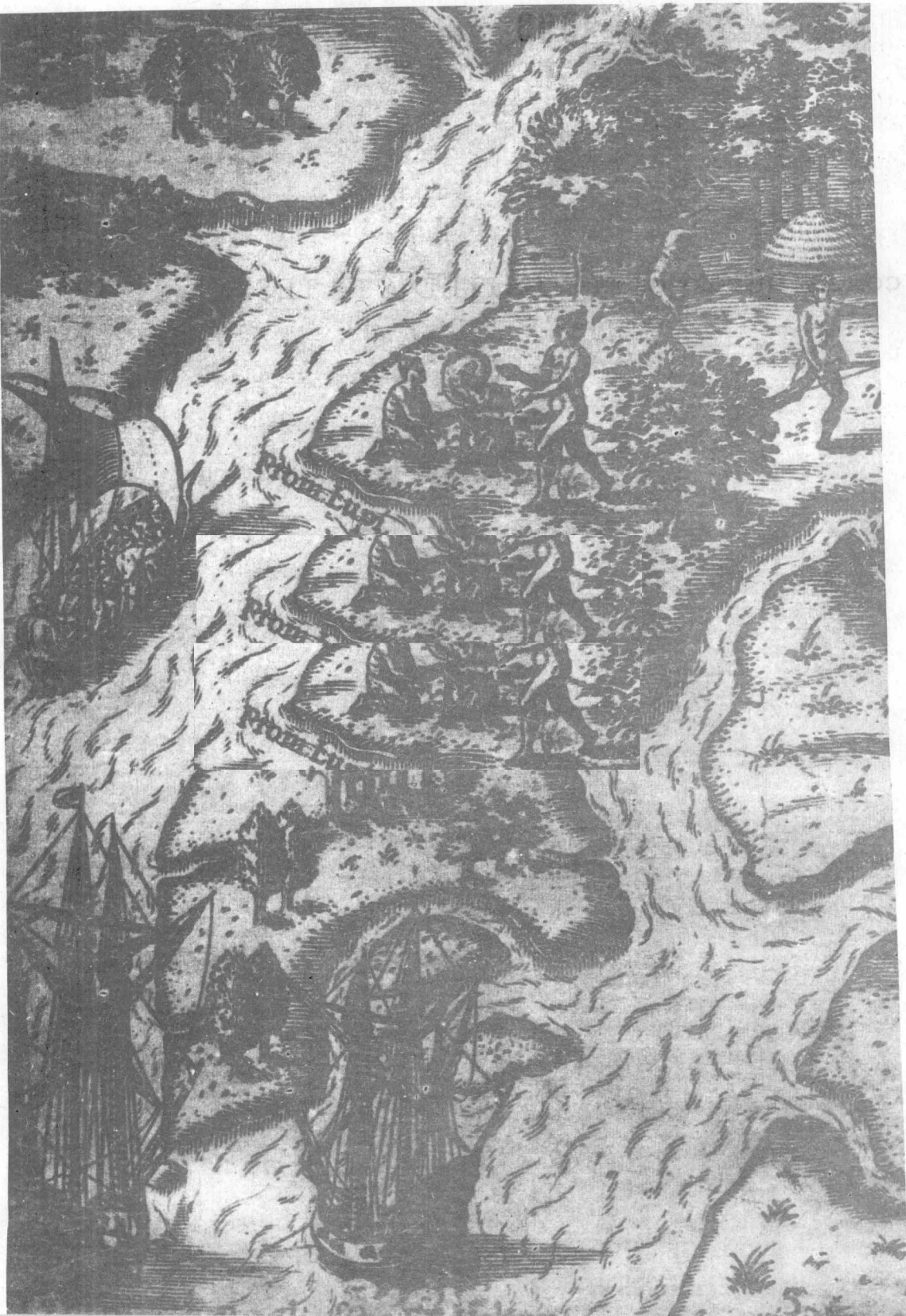


A Concise History of the
**UNITED
STATES**

ANDREW SINCLAIR



A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES



A Concise History of the **UNITED STATES**

ANDREW SINCLAIR

with 240 illustrations

LORRIMER PUBLISHING

For Mrs Patrick Eve

All rights reserved including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form

Cover design: Fred Price

Frontispiece: Jean Ribaut's expedition in 1562
to what is now South Carolina.

Copyright © Andrew Sinclair 1984

Revised edition published by Lorrimer Publishing Incorporated 1984

ISBN 0 85647 002 3 UK

0 930621 255 USA

Distributed exclusively in the United Kingdom and
Commonwealth by Lorrimer (Sales) Limited

Inquiries should be addressed to Lorrimer

Publishing Limited, 16 Tite Street, London SW3 4HZ

Distributed exclusively in the United States of America,
its territories, possessions, protectorates and places
mandated to it, the Philippines and the Dominion of
Canada by Frederick Ungar Publishing Company Incorporated,
36 Cooper Square, New York, N.Y. 10003.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or
otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in
any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is
published and without a similar condition including this
condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd, Guildford and King's Lynn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges with thanks the kind permission of the Bodley Head Ltd to quote
from Archibald MacLeish's *Brave New World* and of Jonathan Cape Ltd to quote from
Robert Frost's *The Gift Outright*.

Contents

1 THE NEW WORLD AND THE COLONIES

page 9

Geography / America before 1492 / Columbus discovers the New World for Spain / division of the spoils / colonial exploitation / early explorers and settlers / Captain John Smith and the founding of Jamestown / the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritan heritage / confrontation between England and France / their respective merits as colonial powers / the Dutch in America / slavery / the New World as El Dorado / Pontiac's rebellion and the Indian question / the American Revolution, its causes and its leaders / the Boston Tea Party

2 THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE VIRGINIA DYNASTY

page 41

Declaration of Independence / the American Revolution / military tactics of the combatants / George Washington, soldier and politician / Shays's Rebellion / the Constitution, its aims and its weaknesses / James Madison and Alexander Hamilton / the birth of political parties / John Adams / the Alien and Sedition Acts / the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions / Thomas Jefferson and the 'American System' / exploration and expansion / Lewis and Clark / the Louisiana and Florida Purchases / westering / Tippecanoe / renewed war with Britain / conflict among the states / suppression and deportation of the Indians / James Monroe and the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 / John Quincy Adams

3 THE COMING OF DEMOCRACY

page 75

Commercial and agricultural expansion / canals and turnpikes / urban development / the plantation system versus free farming / causes and fads / conflict between the West and the East / the autocratic rule of Andrew Jackson / his feud with Nicholas Biddle / the formation of the Whig Party / Henry Clay / Martin van Buren / William Henry Harrison and his doctrine of the weak Executive / John Tyler / commercial exploitation in the North / James Polk / 'Manifest Destiny' and the Mexican War / the Fugitive Slave Law / the Kansas-Nebraska Act replaces the Missouri Compromise / John Brown and other abolitionists / *Uncle Tom's Cabin* / the Dred Scott case / Harpers Ferry / political fragmentation / the rise and fall of the Know-Nothing Party / the formation of the new Republican Party / Governor Frémont

4 CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION AND REUNION

page 97

Prelude to war / Abraham Lincoln, his beliefs and his policies / the Democratic split / Jefferson Davis heads the Government of the Confederate States of America / Fort Sumter / the Emancipation Proclamation / Civil War / the strength of the respective armies / Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House / the Thirteenth Amendment / death of Lincoln / the failure of Reconstruction / the Homestead Act / attempted dismissal of Andrew Johnson / the Black Codes / election of General Grant / chaos in the South / carpetbaggers and scalawags / the Ku Klux Klan / corruption and compromise / big business / the Mormons / Greenbackers and Grangers / agricultural problems / the rise of the trade unions / 'Boss' Tweed / the Ohio dynasty of Presidents / American literature / America as a colonial power

5 THE COMING OF REFORM

page 127

The railroads / Populists and Progressives / immigrants change the balance of American society / Theodore Roosevelt / Woodrow Wilson defeats Taft, Debs and Roosevelt / social and economic reform / overseas involvement and restrained imperialism / 'dollar diplomacy' / spread of communications

6 UNWILLING INVOLVEMENT

page 141

America's attitude to the First World War / America enters the war / the new society / the Fourteen Points / Wilson and the League of Nations / Henry Cabot Lodge / 'one hundred per cent Americanism' / Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge / the imbalance of wealth / the agricultural question / Prohibition / industrial expansion / the Wall Street Crash / the Depression / Herbert Hoover

7 NEW DEAL TO WORLD POWER

page 155

Franklin D. Roosevelt / the Veterans' March / Huey Long and Father Coughlin / the New Deal / Works Progress Administration / Roosevelt attacks the Supreme Court / Tennessee Valley Authority / isolationism / America's attitude to the Second World War / Lend-Lease / Roosevelt defeats Wendell Willkie / Pearl Harbor and war / American policy / the cost in men and money / the boundaries of post-war Europe decided at Yalta / death of Roosevelt / Harry S. Truman / Hiroshima and Nagasaki / the capitulation of Japan / the social effects of the war

8 THE ROAD TO THE GREAT SOCIETY

page 177

Truman's Fair Deal / the regressive Taft-Hartley Act / Truman defeats Dewey / the policy of social progress / the United Nations / the cold war / NATO / Senator McCarthy and the committee on un-American activities / the Korean War / the dismissal of General Douglas M. Arthur / Dwight D. Eisenhower defeats Adlai Stevenson / John Foster Dulles / SEATO / Richard Nixon / John F. Kennedy and the New Frontier / the changing society / the Bay of Pigs and the Cuba crisis / Civil Rights / the assassination of President Kennedy / Lyndon Johnson, the great persuader / Barry Goldwater / intervention in the Dominican Republic / the American way of life / the new urbanism and its effect on art

MAP

page 208

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

page 210

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

page 212

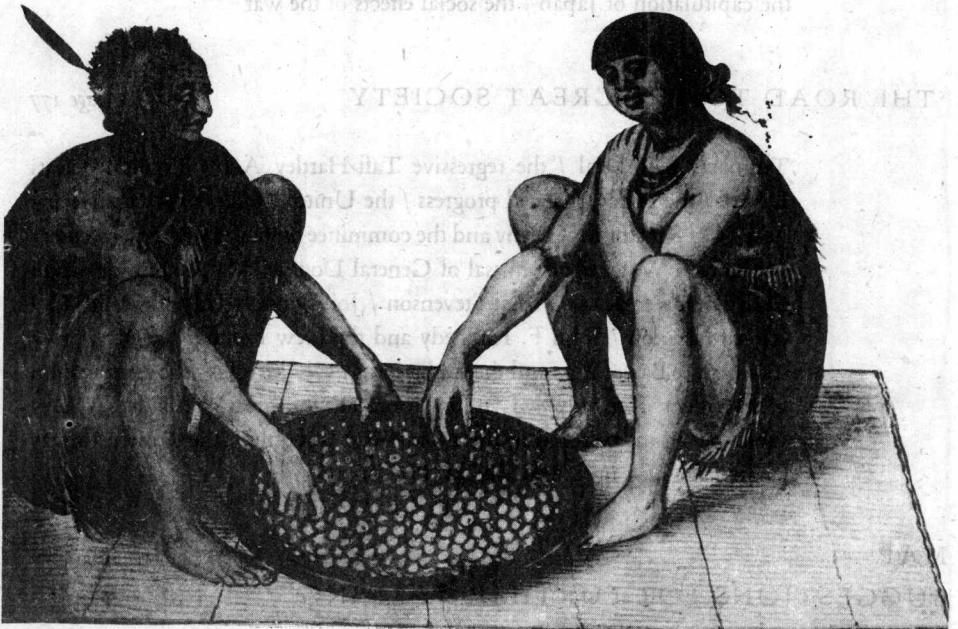
INDEX

page 218

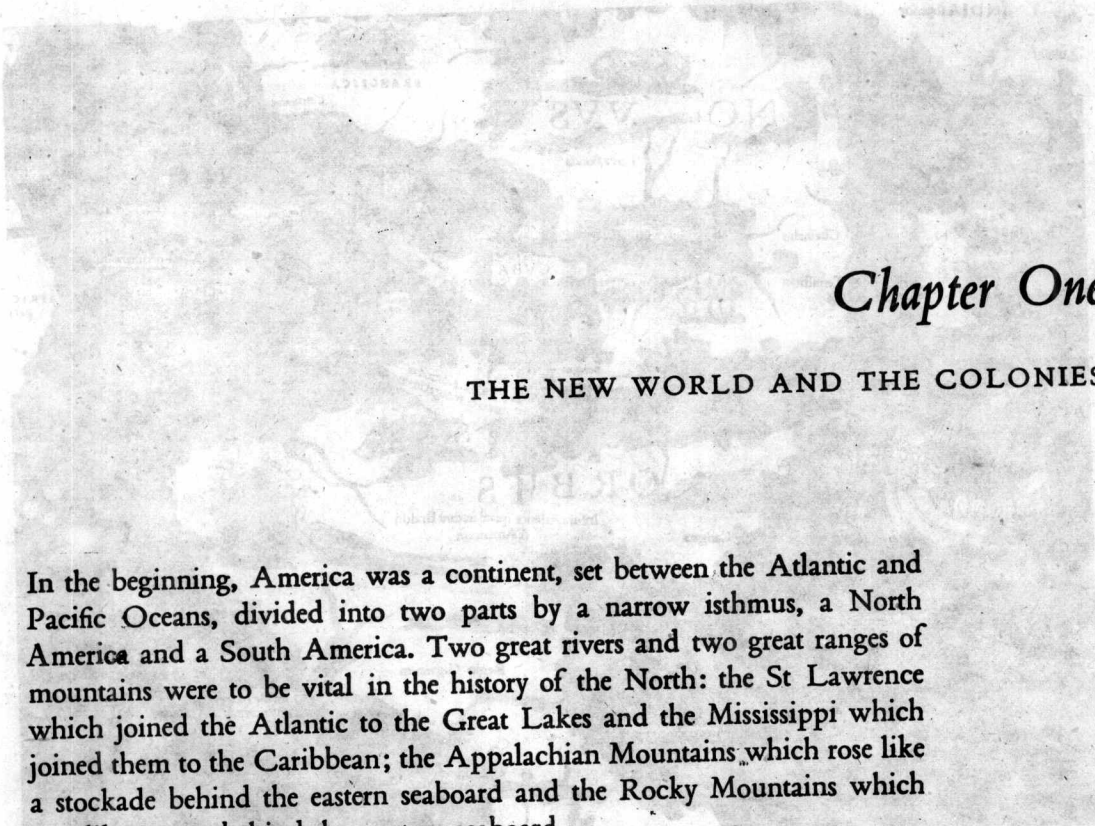
If we seek examples for our country and for ourselves, let us resort to the new-created West. There the fountains are uncorrupted. There civilization meets nature unimpaired. There we can behold how the young armed American grapples with the wilderness, and thence we can return and imagine how our fathers lived. Europe presents much to our view, but America still more. . . .

We can do much for Europe by doing more for ourselves. We must perfect our system, and show what liberty is worth: we must convince the rich and the poor that it is the fountain of justice, the source of prosperity, the safeguard of the citizen, and the foundation of National Perfection.

WILLIAM F. OTIS, 1831



Indians. Watercolour by John White, who was sent by Queen Elizabeth I as draughtsman to S Walter Raleigh's second expedition to Virginia in 1585.



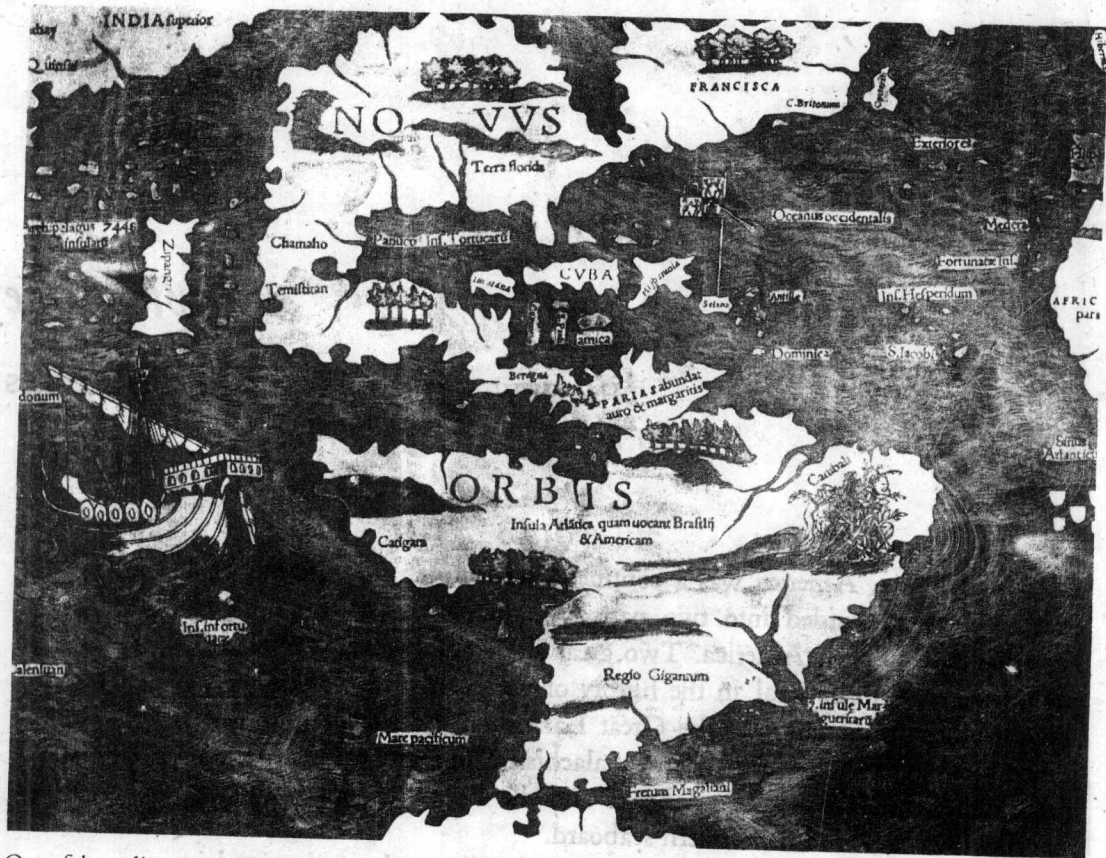
Chapter One

THE NEW WORLD AND THE COLONIES

In the beginning, America was a continent, set between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, divided into two parts by a narrow isthmus, a North America and a South America. Two great rivers and two great ranges of mountains were to be vital in the history of the North: the St Lawrence which joined the Atlantic to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi which joined them to the Caribbean; the Appalachian Mountains which rose like a stockade behind the eastern seaboard and the Rocky Mountains which rose like towers behind the western seaboard.

Outside of Mexico and Peru, the tribes of Indians who first existed in this vast mass of land were scattered sparsely across the prairies and the forests, and, in the cold regions of the Arctic, men were as rare as game above the ice. The first Europeans to reach America, the Norsemen, died of the winter, for nature was the ruler of the earth and there was no appeal to other men. At the time of the landing of Columbus, perhaps 500,000 Indians lived in all the continent above the Rio Grande, a handful of tribes at war with one another, living uneasily on the abundant produce of the wilderness.

When Columbus discovered the New World for Spain in 1492, he was searching for a *new* world to discover. He was a Utopian, and he described his explorations in terms of the dreams of the European mind. His letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella after his third voyage talks of an 'earthly paradise' near the Orinoco River, and his journal is full of the chant of nightingales (which do not exist in the Americas), of everlasting spring, of green trees, and of innocent and noble savages. The New World was 'a land to be desired, and, once seen, never to be left'.



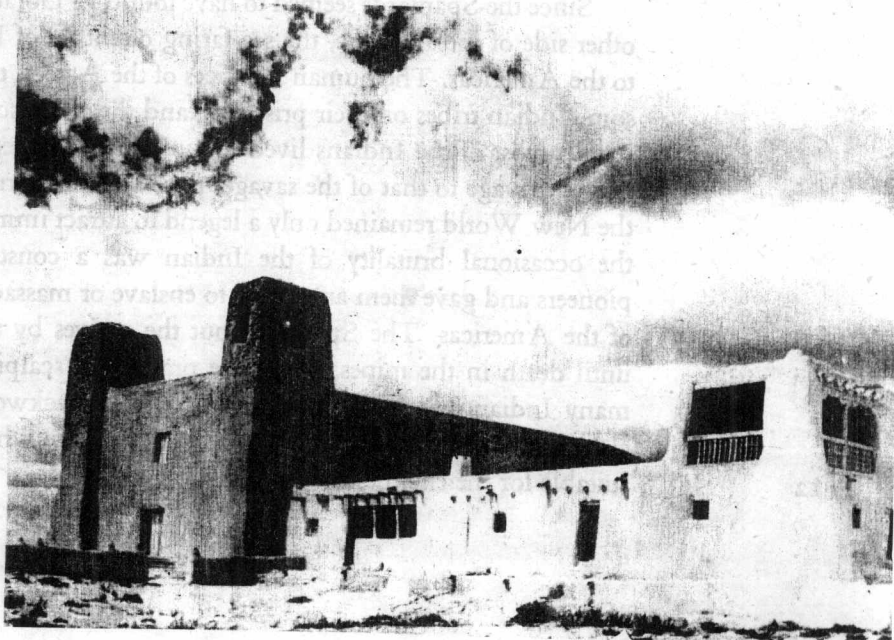
One of the earliest maps of America was Sebastian Münster's *Novus Orbis*, 1540. The first version of the map (without the ship) appeared in 1532, forty years after Columbus landed in the West Indies.

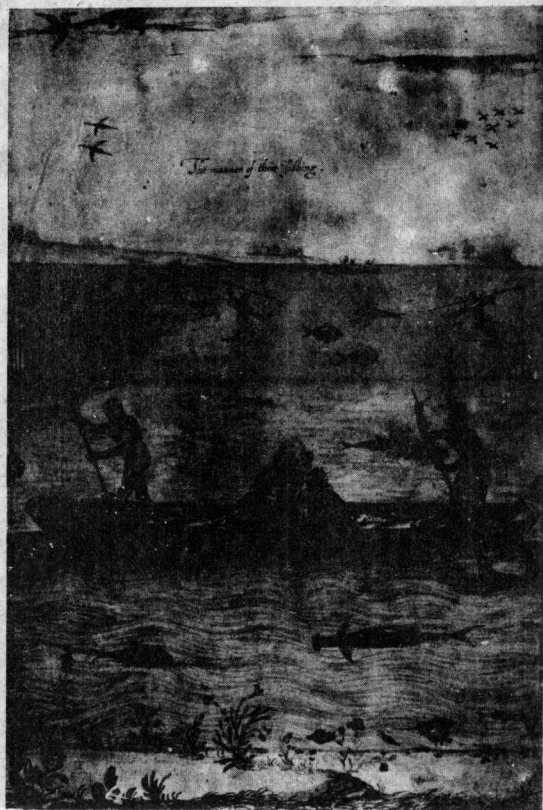
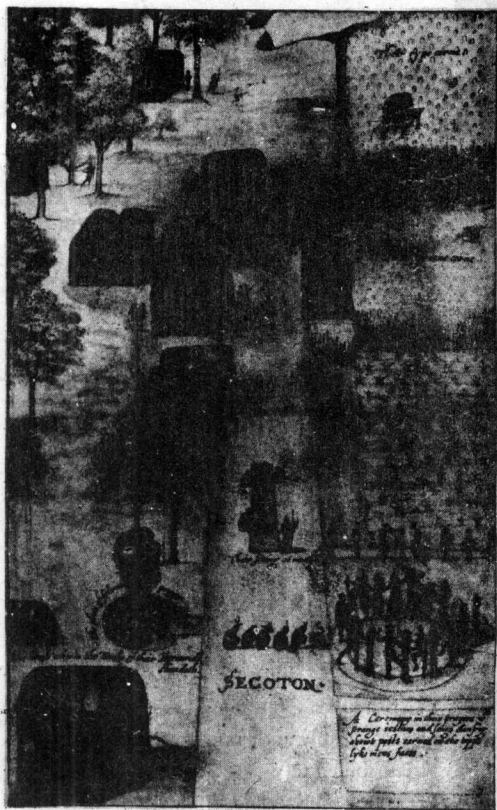
Yet Columbus had meant to find China; his discovery of the Americas was less an advantage to him than an obstacle. The Orient was cut off from Europe by this new continent, which passed under the control of Spain by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. By this treaty, which split the unknown world between Spain and Portugal, Spain took the West and most of the Americas while Portugal took the East and the Spice Islands; a later treaty extended Spanish influence as far as the Philippine Islands. The discovery of the gold of Mexico and the silver of Peru compensated the Spaniards for the loss of the silk and spice trade to Portugal – a country which they were soon to absorb. Their plunder of the Aztec and Inca empires allowed them to finance a war of conquest in Europe that lasted for a century. The abundance of the New World, for the first of many times, was used to intervene in the wars of the Old.



Christopher Columbus.
This possibly authentic portrait
is attributed to
Ridolfo Ghirlandaio.

The Franciscan mission of San Estévan in Ácoma, New Mexico, built c. 1642. In spite of the advantage Columbus had given them, the Spanish were poor colonists. Though by 1624 there were 20 friars, 43 churches and 34,000 Christian Indians in New Mexico, even at the end of the century there were still only 2000 Spanish settlers.





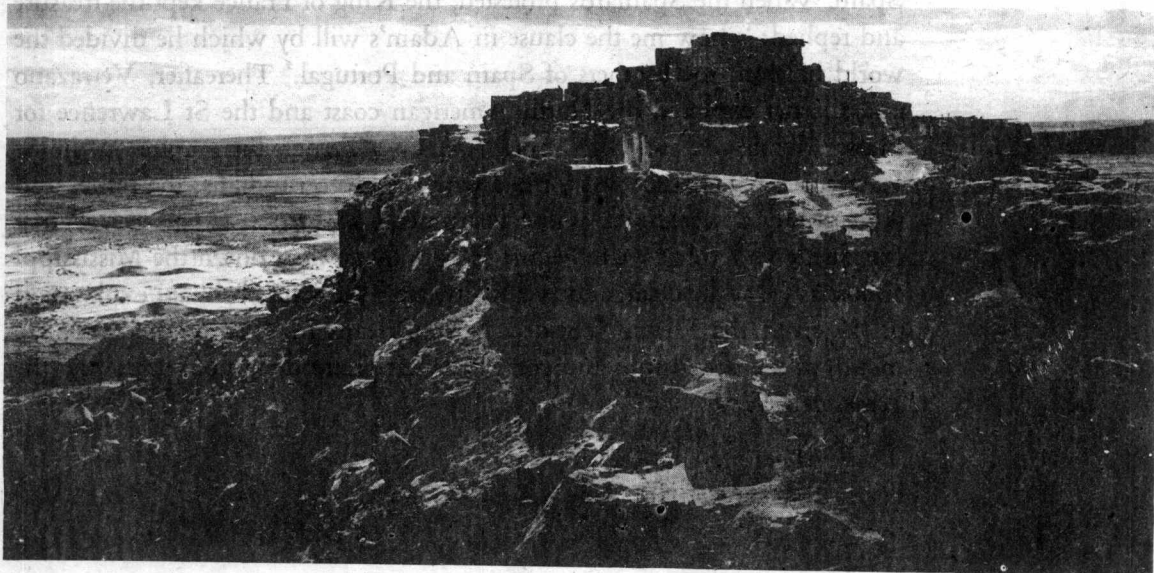
An Indian village and Indians fishing. Two watercolours by John White 1585-7.

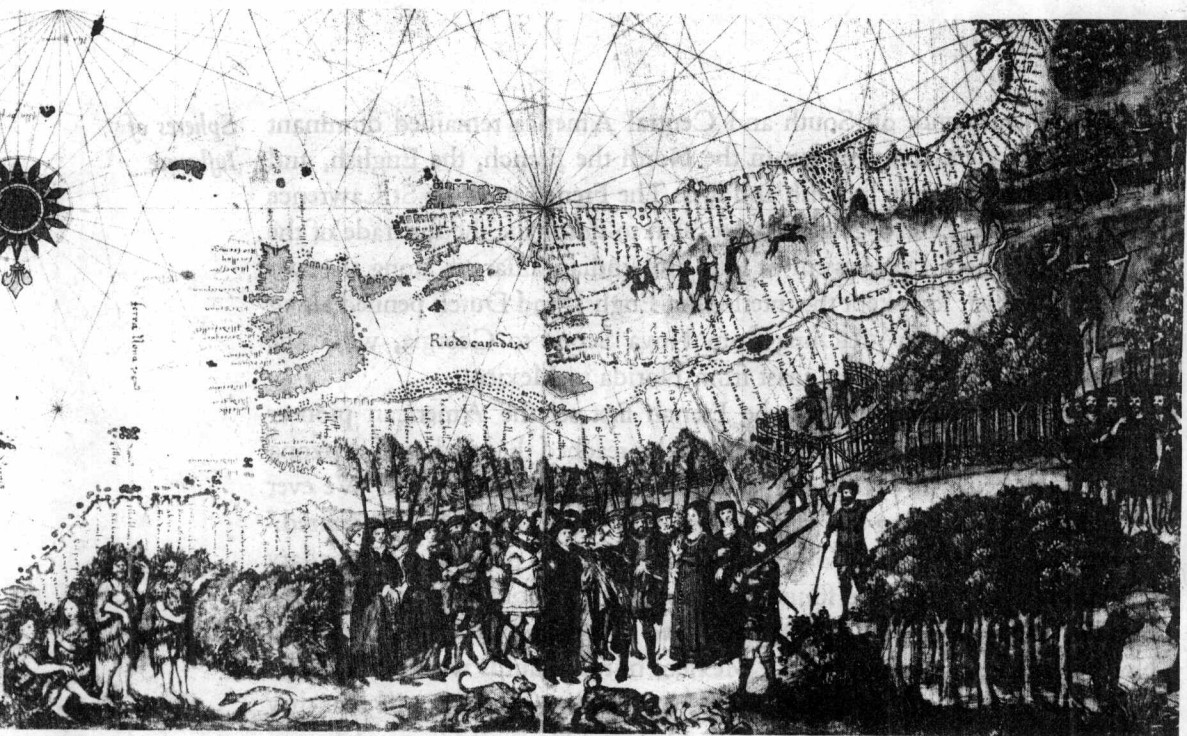
Since the Spaniards seemed to have found El Dorado, if not Eden, on the other side of the Atlantic, the sea-faring countries of Europe followed them to the Americas. The human sacrifices of the Aztecs, the tortures inflicted by some Indian tribes on their prisoners, and the promiscuity and nakedness in which most of the Indians lived soon changed the explorers' picture of the Noble Savage to that of the savage, pure and unadorned. The innocence of the New World remained only a legend to attract immigrants from the Old; the occasional brutality of the Indian was a constant fear to European pioneers and gave them an excuse to enslave or massacre the first inhabitants of the Americas. The Spaniards put the natives by their millions to work until death in the mines, while the practice of scalping was introduced to many Indian tribes by French and English backwoodsmen; missionaries also brought in the idea of crucifixion – a torture which the Indians found suitable for the enemies they could not forgive.

Spanish influence on South and Central America remained dominant until the twentieth century; but in the North the French, the English, and the Dutch came in search of fish and furs. The French used the St Lawrence and the Mississippi in a great strategic plan to dominate the fur trade of the northern continent by a system of forts and Indian alliances along the two vital rivers. Their forts kept the interloping English and Dutch penned along a narrow coastal strip stretching from Nova Scotia to Georgia, while the Spanish held the Caribbean coast from Florida to Mexico.

In fact, the Spaniards and the French first set the American pioneer tradition of westering. Cabeza de Vaca, who reached the borders of Arizona and New Mexico in 1536 along with the Negro Estéban, wrote: 'We ever held it certain that going towards the sunset we would find what we desired.' Coronado, the conqueror, followed after de Vaca to plunder the legendary Cíbola five years later; he found only the seven pueblo cities of the Zuñi Indians, unquestionably the most developed urban civilization on the whole North American continent above Mexico; but the Zuñis were rich only in grain and dignity and peace and arts rather than in gold. 'Granted that they did not find the riches of which they had been told,' one of Coronado's men wrote of his companions, 'they found a place in which to search for them, and the beginning of a good country to settle in, so as to go farther from there.' The Spaniards, indeed, went farther west and left colonies and missions as far as California.

The Hopi pueblo of Walpi, Arizona. Coronado sent Pedro de Tovar here after he had taken Cíbola in 1540 without finding any sign of the legendary treasure.





Though Jacques Cartier landed at Gaspé in 1534, the French made no real attempt to establish an empire there till the next century.

The French trappers and Jesuits also pushed beyond the Great Lakes into the Northwest. The French had been the first to refuse to recognize the Treaty of Tordesillas. In 1523, a French pirate had intercepted some of the treasure ships bringing back the gold of the Aztec emperor, Montezuma, to Spain. When the Spaniards protested, the King of France kept the treasure and replied: 'Show me the clause in Adam's will by which he divided the world between my brothers of Spain and Portugal.' Thereafter, Verrazano and Cartier explored the North American coast and the St Lawrence for France, while the great Champlain set up a French fur empire on the St Lawrence. An alliance was formed with the Huron Indians; the Jesuits and the fur-traders were used as the instruments of French expansion. Father Marquette and Joliet were the first Europeans to float down the Mississippi almost as far as the delta, and eventually, after La Salle's brilliant exploration of the river, the French founded New Orleans in 1718 to dominate the mouth of the Mississippi and complete their grand design of controlling the American West.

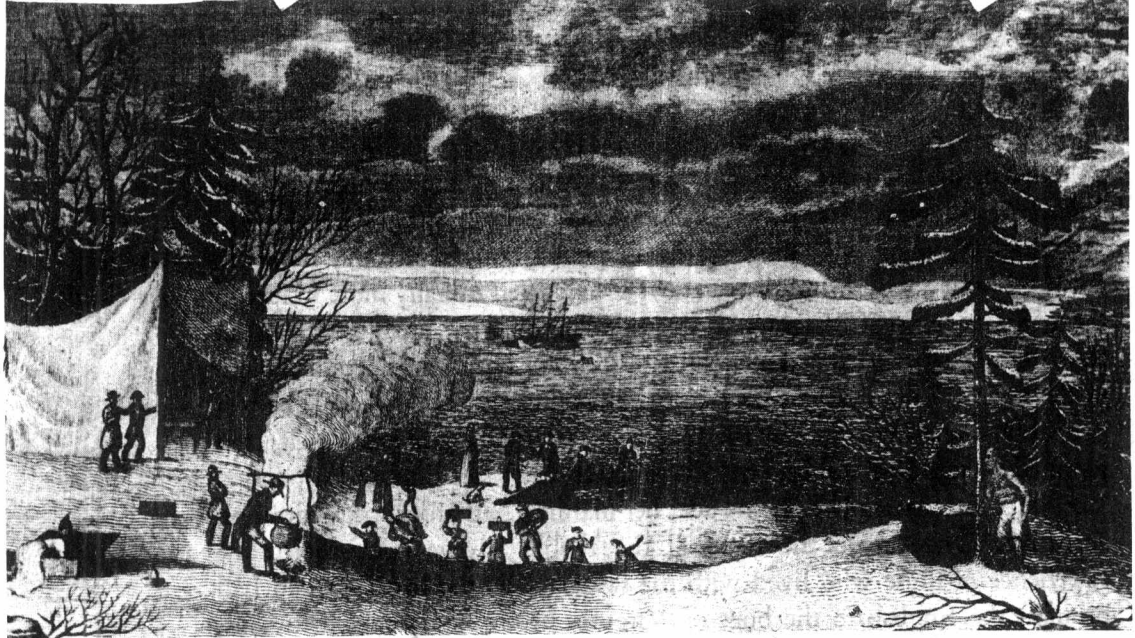
Between the two great continental rivers lay the new English and Dutch colonies of the Atlantic seaboard; for the success of the Spanish and the French in the New World had brought over their European enemies. The first English colony was founded by Captain John Smith and others in swampy Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. It prospered initially more in legend than in fact, even if Virginia was later to become the leading American state in the years after the American Revolution. The legend of Pocahontas as the saviour of the gallant Captain Smith's life from her Indian tribe was probably a later invention by the Captain; the Indian princess herself, later glorified as dignified and innocent, was described by her English husband as 'one whose education hath been rude, her manners barbarous, her generation accursed'. Once again the myth of the Noble Savage contradicted the experience of those who lived with the savage. Yet, the myth of gold had brought the English to the bogs of Virginia in the first place; there was, Captain Smith complained, 'no talk, no hope, no work, but dig gold, wash gold, refine gold, load gold'. Until the shrewd discovery that tobacco, grown by Negro slaves, was as good as gold and that slaves breeding slaves were black gold coining black gold, the colony of Virginia seemed likely to be no more than a malarial nightmare.

Captain
John Smith



The only known likeness of Captain John Smith is an inset to this map from his *A Description of New England*, published in 1616. Smith saved Jamestown, but the legend of Pocahontas (above) is now thought to have been largely his own invention.





Plymouth, where the Pilgrims landed on 2^d December 1620, was so named by Captain John Smith in 1614 (see map on p. 15).

The Pilgrim Fathers

The *Mayflower* landed the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1620; but the colony there barely survived. More important was the landing of the *Arbella* in Boston Bay ten years later. By the end of the year, a flourishing colony of two thousand immigrants had been established; it soon absorbed the struggling Pilgrims inside the new Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Nothing can be more eloquent of the speed and the spirit with which the Puritans set up their good life in the New World than the simple description of the founding of Harvard College in the mere seventh year of the new colony. 'After God had carried us safe to *New England*, and we had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government: One of the things we looked for, and looked after was to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to Posterity.' Such rapid progress showed a revolutionary urge to construct from nothing a society for the moment and for ever.

The rigour of the wilderness forced the resourceful into a race against time, if they were to preserve any form of civilization on the rim of barbarism. The immediate temptation of virgin land and savage life outside the tiny area of European settlement provoked a counter-attack of moralism. The harshness of the Calvinists, indeed, was born in their own sufferings at the hands