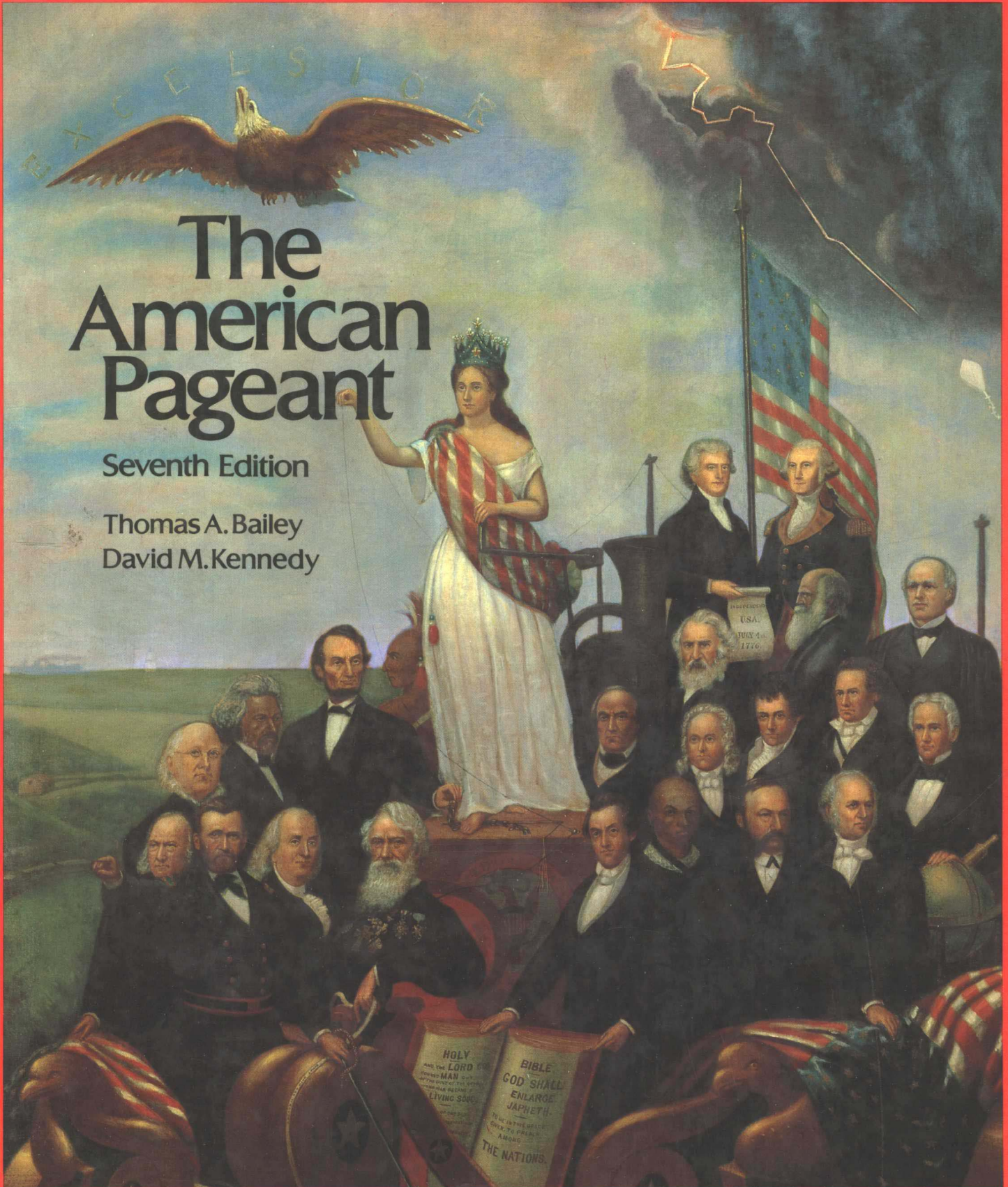




The American Pageant

Seventh Edition

Thomas A. Bailey
David M. Kennedy



7th Edition

The American Pageant

A HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC

Thomas A. Bailey

Stanford University

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~~Stanford~~ University

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New World Beginnings

*... For I shall yet live to see it [Virginia] an
Englishe nation.*

SIR WALTER RALEIGH, 1602

Planetary Perspectives

Several billion years ago that whirling speck of dust known as the earth, fifth in size among the planets, came into being.

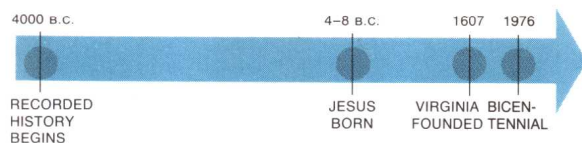
About six thousand years ago—only the day before yesterday geologically—recorded history of the Western world began. Certain peoples of the Middle East, developing a primitive culture, gradually emerged from the haze of the past.

Nearly five hundred years ago—only yesterday—the American continents were stumbled on by Europeans. This epochal achievement, one of the most dramatic in the chronicles of mankind, opened breathtaking new vistas, and forever altered the future of both the Old World and the New.

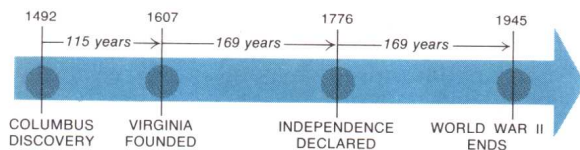
The two new continents eventually brought forth a score of sovereign republics. By far the

most influential of this brood—the United States—was born a pygmy and grew to be a giant. It was destined to leave a deep imprint upon the rest of the world as a result of its refreshingly liberal ideals, its revolutionary democratic experiment, and its boundless opportunities for the common folk of foreign lands. The enormous output of its robust economy ultimately made it a decisive weight in the world balance of power. Its achievements in science, technology, and culture shaped people's lives in every corner of this planet.

Fascinating though it is, the pageant of the American people does not loom large on the time chart of man's known past. But the roots of the United States reach down into the subsoil of the formative colonial years more deeply than is commonly supposed.



The American Republic, which is still relatively young when compared with the Old World, was from the outset richly favored. It started from scratch on a vast and virgin continent, which was so sparsely peopled by Indians that they could be eliminated or shouldered aside. Such a magnificent opportunity for a great democratic experiment may never come again, for no other huge, fertile, and relatively uninhabited areas are left in the temperate zones of this crowded planet.



Despite its marvelous development, the United States will one day reach its peak, like Greece and Rome. It will ultimately fall upon evil days, as they did. But whatever uncertainties the future may hold, the past at least is secure and will richly repay examination.

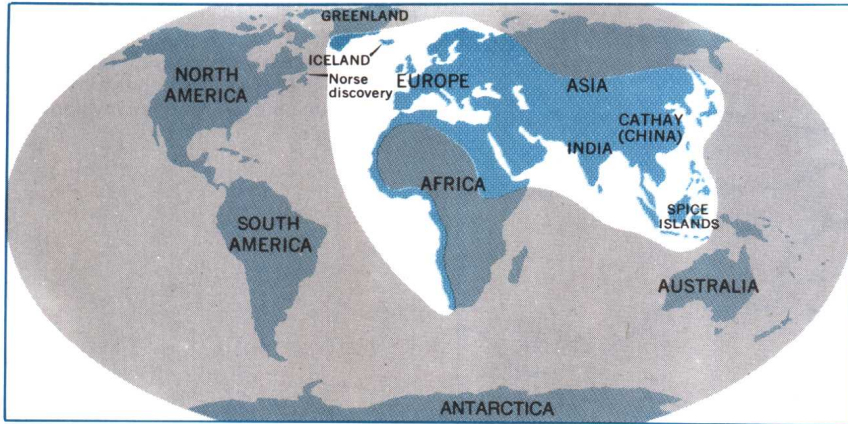
Indirect Discoverers of the New World

The American continents were slow to yield their virginity. The all-conquering Romans, a half century after the birth of Christ, expanded their empire northwestward as far as Britain. But for nearly fifteen hundred years thereafter, the New World lay unknown and unsuspected to Europeans, awaiting its discoverers. It is true that about the year A.D. 1000, blond-bearded Norsemen from Scandinavia chanced upon the northeastern shoulder of North America, at a place abounding in wild grapes, which they named Vinland. But their settlements were soon abandoned, and the discovery was forgotten, except in Scandinavian saga and song.

America was to be a child of Europe, not of a specific country, such as England. One must seek in the Old World that momentous chain of events which led to a drive toward the Far East—and a completely accidental discovery of the New World.

Christian Crusaders must take high rank among the indirect discoverers of America. Tens of thousands of these European warriors, clad in shining armor, invaded Palestine from the 11th to the 14th Century. Whatever their true motives, they were avowedly attempting to wrest the Holy Land from the polluting hand of the Moslem infidel. Foiled in their repeated assaults, these Christian soldiers did manage to come into closer contact with the exotic delights of Asia—delights already introduced to Europe on a limited scale. European “barbarians” learned more fully the value of spices for spoiled and monotonous food; of silk for rough skins; of drugs for aching flesh; of perfumes for unbathed bodies; and of colorful draperies for gloomy castles.

But the luxuries of the Far East were almost too expensive in Europe. They had to be transported enormous distances from the Spice Islands (Indonesia), China, and India, in creaking ships and on swaying camel back, to the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. Moslem middlemen exacted a heavy toll en route. By the time the strange-smelling goods reached the Italian merchants at



THE WORLD KNOWN TO
EUROPE, 1492

Venice and Genoa, they were so costly that purchasers and profits alike were narrowly limited. Consumers and distributors of Western Europe were naturally eager to find a less costly route to the riches of Eastern Asia—one that would also break the monopoly of the Italian cities.

European appetites were further whetted when foot-loose Marco Polo, an Italian adventurer, returned to Europe in 1295, after a stay of nearly twenty years in China. Several years later, while a war prisoner, he dictated a classic account of his travels. He too must be regarded as an indirect discoverer of the New World, for his book, with its descriptions of rose-tinted pearls and golden pagodas, stimulated European desires for a cheaper route to the treasures of the Indies.

An urge to find a shortcut waterway to Eastern Asia was strong, but success awaited new horizons and new facilities. Fortunately the Renaissance, which dawned in the 14th Century, shot hopeful rays of light through the mists of the Middle Ages. Better maps reduced superstitious fears of the unknown. The mariner's compass, possibly borrowed from the Arabs, eliminated some of the uncertainties of navigation. Printing presses, introduced about 1450, facilitated the spread of scientific knowledge. An atmosphere of rebirth also accompanied the Renaissance and created a healthy spirit of optimism, self-reliance, and venturesomeness.

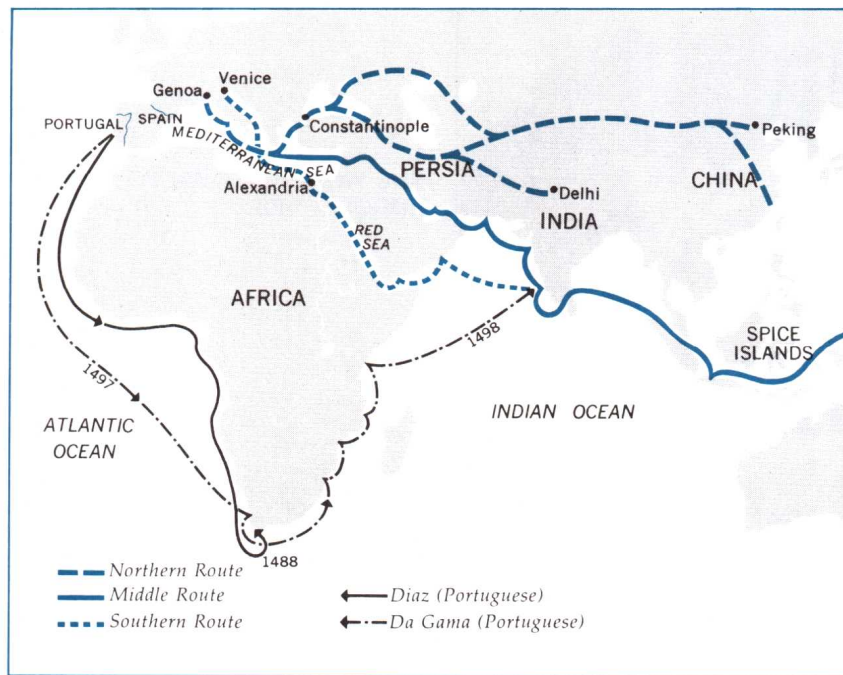
Portuguese Pathfinders

As the kings gradually subordinated the nobles, the modern national state emerged in Western Europe from the feudalism of the Middle Ages. This new type of government alone had the unity, power, and resources to shoulder the formidable tasks of discovery, conquest, and colonization.

The first nations to unite were the first to flourish as colonial empire builders—Portugal, Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands. Those countries that did not achieve unity until the 19th Century, notably Germany and Italy, were left with crumbs dropped by the early feasters.

Little Portugal took the lead in discovering what came to be the coveted water route to the Indies. A courageous band of Portuguese navigators, edging cautiously down the pistol-handle coast of Africa, pushed southeasterly in the general direction of Asia. In 1488, four years before Columbus chanced upon America, Bartholomeu Diaz rounded the southernmost tip of the Dark Continent. Complete success crowned Portuguese efforts in 1498 when Vasco da Gama finally reached India (hence the name "Indies," given to all the mysterious lands of the Orient). He coaxed few jewels and spices from the natives, but later voyagers reaped lush profits from this treasure trove.

Portuguese empire builders ultimately estab-



TRADE ROUTES WITH THE EAST

Goods on the early routes were passed through so many hands along the way that their ultimate source remained mysterious to Europeans.

lished flourishing trading stations in India, Africa, China, and the East Indies. Immense wealth flowed to European coffers from these varied ventures. In turn, the ballooning prices of Asian products collapsed, and the monopolistic grip of the Italian commercial cities was broken.

Brazil, by sheer accident, was unveiled in 1500. An India-bound Portuguese navigator, Pedro Cabral, touched upon the giant bulge of South America eight years after the first voyage of Columbus. Portugal subsequently erected a huge empire in the Brazilian wilderness. But the net return from this New World outpost was only a small fraction of the profits that the Portuguese garnered from exploiting their water route to the riches of the Indies.

Columbus Stumbles Upon a New World

The Kingdom of Spain became united—an event pregnant with destiny—late in the 15th Century. This new unity resulted primarily from the marriage of two sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella,

and from the brutal expulsion of the “infidel” Moslem Moors. Glorifying in their new strength, the Spaniards were eager to outstrip their Portuguese rivals in the race for the fabled Indies.

Christopher Columbus, a skilled Italian seaman, now stepped upon the stage of history. A man of vision, energy, resourcefulness, and courage, he finally managed, after heartbreaking delays, to gain the ear of the Spanish rulers. Like all of his informed contemporaries, he was convinced that the world was round. Then why not find the way to East Asia by sailing directly westward into the darkness of the Atlantic, instead of eastward for unnecessary miles around Africa?

The Spanish monarchs at last decided to gamble on the persistent mariner. They helped outfit him with three tiny but seaworthy ships, manned by a motley crew. Daringly, he spread the sails of his cockleshell craft. Winds were friendly and progress was rapid, but the superstitious sailors, fearful of sailing over the edge of the world, grew increasingly mutinous. Nearly six long weeks passed and failure loomed ahead when, on Octo-

ber 12, 1492, land was sighted—an island in the Bahamas. A new world thus swam within the vision of Europeans.

Columbus's sensational achievement has obscured the fact that he was one of the most successful failures of history. Seeking a new water route to the fabled Indies of the East, he had in fact bumped into an enormous land barrier blocking the ocean pathway. For decades thereafter explorers strove to get through it—or around it. The truth gradually dawned that sprawling new continents had been discovered. Yet Columbus stubbornly maintained until his death in 1506 that he had skirted the rim of the “Indies.” So certain was he that he called the near-naked natives “Indians,” a gross geographical misnomer that somehow stuck.

Ironically, the remote ancestors of these Native Americans were the true discoverers of America. Some 10,000 to 20,000 years earlier they had ventured across the narrow waters from Asia to what is now Alaska. From there they roamed slowly southward as far as South America. Over the centuries they had split into hundreds of tribes and language groups. Some of these aboriginal peoples had evolved stunning civilizations. Incas in Peru, Aztecs in Mexico, and Mayans in Central America

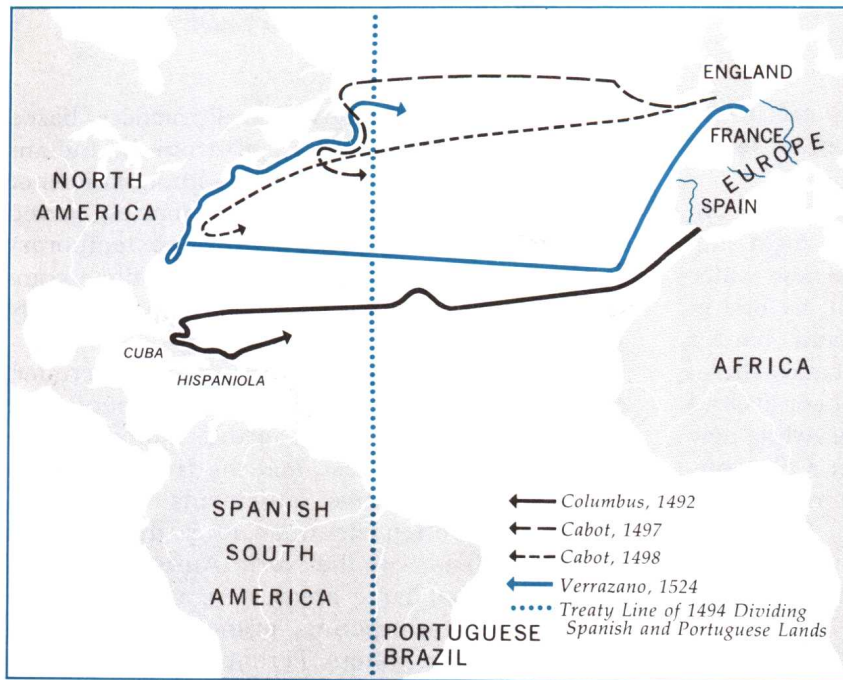
developed advanced agricultural practices, based on the cultivation of corn (a gift from the Indians to the Old World), that supported populations of millions. They erected bustling, elaborately carved stone cities, rivaling in size those of contemporary medieval Europe. They carried on far-flung commerce, studied mathematics, and made strikingly accurate astronomical observations.

Indian life in North America was cruder, though high levels of cultural development were found among the Pueblos in the Southwest, the Creeks in the Southeast, and the Iroquois in the Northeast. Most native settlements were small, scattered, and often impermanent. So thinly spread across the land was the North American Indian population that large areas were virtually uninhabited, with whispering, primeval forests and sparkling, virgin waters. Perhaps one million Indians dwelled in all of the present-day United States at the time of Columbus's discovery. They ate corn, fish, wild game, nuts, and berries. Private property, especially private landholding, was a concept almost unknown to the Indians until the white Europeans moved in on them. Political organization was equally unfamiliar; loose, independent tribal structures served the Indians well until they clashed with the powerful governments



NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES AT THE TIME OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION

This map illustrates the great diversity of the Indian population—and suggests the inappropriateness of identifying all the Native American peoples with the single label “Indian.” The more than 200 tribes were deeply divided by geography, language, and life-style.



PRINCIPAL VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

Spain, Portugal, France, and England reaped the greatest advantages from the New World, but much of the earliest exploration was done by Italians, notably Christopher Columbus of Genoa. John Cabot, another native of Genoa (his original name was Giovanni Caboto), sailed for England's King Henry VII. Giovanni da Verrazano was a Florentine employed by France.

of the whites. Europeans encountered only a handful of Indian institutions larger than the tribal unit, such as the Iroquois Confederacy in the region of present-day New York, and the Powhatan Confederacy in Virginia.

The Spanish Conquistadores

Gradually the realization sank in that the American continents held rich prizes of their own—especially the glittering gold of the advanced Indian civilizations in the southern continent. Spain secured its claim to Columbus's discoveries in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), dividing with Portugal the "heathen lands" of the New World. The lion's share went to Spain, but Portugal received compensating territory in Africa and Asia, and also title to lands that would one day be Brazil.

Spain now became the dominant exploring and colonizing power in the 1500s. Love of God joined with the lure of gold in spurring the Spaniards on, as zealous priests sought to convert the pagan natives to Catholic Christianity. On Spain's long roster of heroic deeds two spectacular exploits must

be headlined. Vasco Nuñez Balboa, hailed as the discoverer of the Pacific Ocean, waded into the foaming waves off Panama in 1513 and claimed for his King all the lands washed by that sea! Ferdinand Magellan started from Spain in 1519 with five tiny ships. After discovering the storm-lashed strait off South America that bears his name, he was slain by the natives in the Philippines, but his one remaining vessel creakily completed the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1522.

Exploratory beginnings were launched by other adventuresome Spaniards in what was destined to be the United States. In 1513 Juan Ponce de León discovered Florida, which he thought an island. Debauched by high living, he was seeking the mythical Fountain of Youth. He found instead death—from an Indian arrow. Francisco Coronado, in quest of golden cities that turned out to be primitive pueblos, wandered in 1540–1542 with a clanking cavalcade through Arizona and New Mexico as far east as Kansas. His expedition discovered en route two impressive natural wonders: the Grand Canyon of the Colorado and enormous herds of buffalo (bison).

Hernando de Soto, with six hundred armor-



Typical Spanish Conquistador.

By Frederic Remington, artist of the West.

plated men, undertook a fantastic gold-seeking expedition during 1539–1542. Floundering through marshes and pine barrens, from Florida westward, he discovered and crossed the majestic Mississippi north of the Arkansas River. After cruelly misusing the Indians with iron collars and fierce dogs, he at length died of fever and wounds. His remains were secretly buried at night in the Mississippi,

lest the Indians abuse the dead body of their abuser.

All these meanderings had little impact upon the events that gave birth to the United States, with two noteworthy exceptions. Hernando Cortés, with seven hundred men and eighteen horses (which awed the horseless natives), tore open the coffers of the Mexican Aztecs in 1519–1521. Francisco Pizarro, an iron-fisted conqueror, crushed the Peruvian Incas in 1532, and added another incredible hoard of gold and silver to the loot from Mexico. The Spanish invaders not only robbed the Indians, but subsequently enslaved them and put them to work digging up precious metals. By 1600, Spain was swimming in New World silver, mostly from the fabulously rich mines at Potosi, Peru.

The Spanish conquerors (*conquistadores*), curiously enough, were indirect founding fathers of the United States. Their phenomenal success excited the envy of Englishmen, and helped spur some of the early attempts at colonization. Moreover, the dumping of the enormous Indian treasure chests upon Europe inflated the currency and drove prices upward. The pinch further distressed underpaid English toilers, many of whom in turn were later driven to the New World. There,



PRINCIPAL SPANISH EXPLORATIONS AND CONQUESTS

Note that Coronado traversed northern Texas and Oklahoma. In present-day eastern Kansas he found, instead of the great golden city he sought, a drab encampment, probably of Wichita Indians.

ironically, they challenged Spanish supremacy.

These plunderings by the Spaniards unfortunately obscured their substantial colonial achievements, and helped give birth to the “Black Legend.” This false concept meant that the conquerors merely tortured and butchered the Indians (“killing for Christ”), stole their gold, infected them with smallpox, and left little but misery behind. The Spanish invader did kill thousands of natives and exploit the rest, but he intermarried with them as well, creating a distinctive South American culture of *mestizos*—people of mixed Indian and European heritage. He erected a colossal empire, sprawling from California and the Floridas to Tierra del Fuego. He transplanted and engrafted his culture, laws, religion, and language, and laid the foundations for a score of Spanish-speaking nations.

The bare statistics of Spain’s colonial empire are alone impressive. By 1574, thirty-three years before the first primitive English shelters in Virginia, there were about two hundred Spanish cities and towns in North and South America. A total of

160,000 Spanish inhabitants, mostly men, had subjugated some 5 million Indians—all in the name of the gentle Jesus. Majestic cathedrals dotted the land, printing presses were turning out books, and literary prizes were being awarded. Two distinguished universities were chartered in 1551, one at Mexico City and the other at Lima, Peru. Both of them antedated Harvard, the first college established in the English colonies, by eighty-five years.

It is clear that the Spaniards, who had more than a century’s head start over the English, were genuine empire builders in the New World. As compared with their Anglo-Saxon rivals, their colonial establishment was larger and richer, and it lasted more than a quarter of a century longer.

The Gilbert and Raleigh Fiascos

Feeble indeed were the efforts of England in the 1500s to compete with the sprawling Spanish empire. Sir Humphrey Gilbert tried to plant a colony



North Carolina Indians “Sitting at Meate.” Painted by John White, a member of Sir Walter Raleigh’s second expedition, 1585. Indians such as these may have absorbed the more than one hundred “lost colonists” from Sir Walter Raleigh’s ill-starred venture on Roanoke Island. In one nearby county of present-day North Carolina, blue-eyed and fair-haired characteristics have persisted among the Indians, along with Elizabethan words and the family names of forty-one Roanoke colonists. (Library of Congress.)