




吴军赞 朱葵 秦岭 编著

# America In the Past

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**Christorpher Columbus**

## **Chapter One    Discovery of the New World and Settlements of America( 1492-1765)**

### **The Exploration of Dias , Columbus and Cabot**

In December 1488 , Bartholomeu Dias's two sailing ships returned to Lisbon Harbor and brought the startling news that he had succeeded in rounding the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. He found the sea route to the riches of India and the Spice Islands of Asia for Portugal. By sailing east, Dias achieved his goals.

The Portuguese had been exploring along the coast of Africa for a century. Prince Henry the Navigator had established a world famous school to bring together all the elements of seamanship, mapmaking ,

piloting, and navigation. Henry sent out as many as fifteen expeditions to Cape Bojador, but with the results of the shallow waters and fierce currents making that point impassable. Finally, Henry ordered Gil Eannes to sail beyond the cape and he passed the dreaded cape. Ten years later, the same Eannes brought back the first shipload of two hundred African slaves. Gomes Eanes de Iurara, Eannes's contemporary, described that desperate African mothers would "clasp their infants in their arms, and throw themselves on the ground to cover them with their bodies, disregarding any injury to their own persons so that they could prevent their children from being separated from them".

In 1492, the Spanish rulers succeeded in freeing Spain of seven hundred years of Moorish domination. Spain's monarchs — Ferdinand and Isabella — viewed the victory as a gift from God, so they styled themselves "their most Catholic majesties." Christopher Columbus's devout religious faith clearly helped him in his appeals to the Spanish rulers for aid and his first name meant "bearer of Christ". He pleaded for the chance to carry Christianity to the lands beyond the sea.

On August 2, 1492, Columbus's sailing group set out. Soon, Columbus's Spanish sailors began to complain. Spanish's centuries' foreign occupation had led these sons of Spain to be deeply suspicious of the outsiders, and Columbus sensed the muting from them. He had to deceive his sailors by keeping the double logs of the ships' daily distance covered, which persuaded the sailors to believe that they had gone farther west than anyone had ever gone before. Columbus was forced to promise his captains on October 9 that if they failed to sight land within three days, they would all turn about and head back to Spain. Fortunately, stiff breezes sped the ships way and the crew began to see clear signs of land ahead. Flights of migrating birds covered the moon. Tree branches with still-green leaves floated by, giving assurances of land just over the horizon. At last they made a landfall, and they knelt in the sad, prayed, and gave thanks to God for their safe passage.

Soon, Columbus and his men were exploring — naming and claiming — the islands in the Caribbean. When the natives appeared, docile, nearly naked, and eager to trade with the Europeans, Columbus

named them Indians. If not India proper, he was certain that he landed somewhere in Asia — though the language and manners of the people did not correspond with anything travelers since Marco Polo had reported of the Orient. We all know today that Columbus made a big mistake.

In the April of 1493, Columbus came back to the Alcazar, the royal palace, to formally make his report to Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish king and queen, and he was given the great honor of a seat at Isabella's side. But Columbus did not stop, and he proceeded to lead a second, third and fourth voyage to the New World. Columbus added immeasurably to mankind's store of knowledge. Yet he never quite realized that the land that he discovered was not, in fact, a part of Asia, but an entirely new continent.

The news of Columbus's discoveries spread throughout Europe — aided by the recent invention of the printing press — the other rulers realized that they would also have to seek new trading routes to the Indies unless they were willing to see that lucrative traffic monopolized by Spain and Portugal. So the Portuguese continued their drive eastward, and succeeded in 1498 in reaching India by an all-water route. The voyage of Vasco da Gama returned to Lisbon in 1499 with the true spices and real contact with the rulers of India that Columbus had markedly failed to achieve.

John Cabot tried to do for England's Henry VII what Columbus had done for Spain's monarchs. Cabot, also a native of Genoa as Columbus, persuaded the notorious stingy first Tudor King to back his attempt to find a Northwest passage to the Indies. In 1497, he landed in North America at what he called the New Found Land. Although he stayed there less than a month, established no permanent settlement, and brought back no riches, Cabot's claim would form the basis of late English dominance of the continent. And gradually, Europeans realized that the New World was not a part of Asia, but an entirely new land mass, two new continents.



## **The Exploration of Magellan and Drake**

A generation after Columbus, another foreign mariner was about to add luster to the annals of Spanish exploration and discovery. Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese. “God gave the Portuguese a small country to live in but a wide world to die in” goes the old adage, and Magellan was to dramatize it by sailing around the world. Rejected by the king of Portugal, just as Columbus had been, Magellan sought and received support from Spain’s ruler, Emperor Charles V. Setting out in 1519, with a flotilla of five creaking ships and 250 crews, Magellan was bound for the Spice Island ( modern-day Indonesia) by going west. There he expected to find supplies of clove, peppercorn, and nutmeg. Virtually unavailable in any other place on earth, their scarcity made their trade highly lucrative.

Magellan planned to find a strait at the extreme southern tip of South America. Wintering over on the coast of Argentina, his men began to grumble. Fortunately, he controlled the situation. Pressing on, after the loss of one of his ships, Magellan finally entered “the strait that shall forever bear his name”. In October and November of 1520, Magellan carefully made his way through the hazards of these uncharted waters. Strong currents and sudden storms make it one of the most dangerous passage on earth even today. The strait is anything but straight; it is a maze of treacherous waters and dangerous rocks. Magellan’s task was like threading of a number of needles. However, Magellan and his men headed out into the sea he named Pacific. Finally, landing on Guam on March 6, 1521, the ships stayed only long enough to resupply and then made for Spice Island. Within a week, Magellan reached the Philippines in the region of Leyte Gulf. Unfortunately, he was killed in the battle against the natives. Magellan made glorious contribution to Spain’s unchallenged leading sea power of the world.

As far as the discovery of America is concerned, one key country can not be left out, that is England. In 1558, Prince Elizabeth came to the throne, and strongly expected to bring an end to religious turmoil. In

England Elizabeth had an amazing knack ( skill) for politics and public relations. She turned her greatest liabilities — that she was a woman and unmarried — into her great strengths. She cultivated her image as “the virgin Queen”, and fostered a cult of personality. English arts and letters flourished under her rule. Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Spenser made their everlasting contributions to the world literature. Elizabeth created a lightened sense of English nationalism and remained highly popular throughout her reign ( 1558-1603) . To undermine the power of Spain and France, she financed rebellions against Spanish rule in Netherlands and gave aid to the French protestants, the Huguenots. Queen Elizabeth encouraged the explorations and the colonization schemes. Famous Francis Drake resolved to equal Magellan’s great feat and challenge Spain’s rule of the seas in the process. Sailing in his flagship, he led his flotilla southwest to the coast of Argentina, raided the Chilean coast, seizing silver and gold and capturing Spanish vessels laden with rich cargoes. Drake led his “sea dogs” on a merry adventure. He did not, however, hesitate to burn Spanish town and loot magnificent Catholic churches. He chased Spanish treasure ship and grabbed another prize that yielded a golden crucifix and a clutch of emeralds that would later appear in Queen Elizabeth’s crown. Drake explored the coast of California before setting off across the Pacific. By duplicating Magellan’s feat, Drake gave a great boost to English self-confidence. He returned to London in November 1580, following three years at sea. Queen Elizabeth showed her great favor by knightling Drake on the deck of his flagship, in 1581.

In 1588, Spain’s king Philip II assembled the greatest war fleet in history — the Armada. One hundred thirty ships and thirty thousand men proceeded up the English Channel. They were set upon by English sea dogs. Drake and his fellows attacked the great and ponderous ships of Armada with fire ships. Less maneuverable, burdened by horses and cattle and great masses of supply, the Spanish ships were helpless against these fierce English warships. When a great storm came up, the Spanish Armada was dispersed. The world-famous Armada was destroyed.

The victory of the English against the Armada broke the back of

Spain's sea power, and the empire began its centuries-long decline. This clash marked the transfer of admiralty from Spain to England. English sea dogs could go where they wished with confidence, which assured that England in the next century would be able to send more and more colonists to North America.

## The Virginia Settlement

The first English permanent settlement was found in 1607 in Virginia. By 1607, the Virginia Company of London had cobbled together enough investors who would risk the overwhelming odds in hope of reaping profits from new settlements in America. They financed three ships to make the dangerous passage across the Atlantic in midwinter. Under the command of Captain Christopher Newport, with a crew of 120 men, the English ships sailed west.

They made land, but the start was inauspicious. Naming their first settlement with their king, in the spring of 1607, the Jamestown settlers began building a village that could be defended against both Spanish raiders and Indians. Few of the first settlers in this stronghold on the James River had any knowledge of farming, and the first attempts at communal sharing of all food and supplies resulted in near starvation. Diseases were the direct result of locating the settlement on marshy, swampy land. With many deaths and discipline breaking down, it seemed this attempt would fail. These early years were to be known as Jamestown colony's "Starving Time!"

Then came Captain John Smith. He quickly imposed firm discipline on the colony, discarding the ineffectual sharing system and replacing it with incentives for hard work. He persecuted the colonists to raise maize, which offered a solution to the food shortage. When Captain Smith returned to England because of an injury, he was succeeded by less able men. In short order, the Jamestown colony sank into near collapse. It was Rolfe who saved the colony this time — by introducing yet another important New World crop in 1612: tobacco.

However, James King hated tobacco greatly, condemning its use:

“a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs”. Thus James became one of history’s first antismoking crusaders. But money is money, and nothing, even King James’s unyielding opposition, appears to have had any impact on the thriving tobacco trade. Within a decade, the Virginia colonists were exporting as much as forty thousand pounds of tobacco-leaf back to England.

Tobacco culture would have a profound influence on the development of Virginia and the South. Young men and women from the English Isles and Europe were so eager to get a new start in America, so they would sign up for a period of five or seven years’ labor as indentured servants in the New World, in return for their passage across the ocean. The vast majority of early settlers in Virginia in the 1600s were white indentured servants. But tobacco requires intensive cultivation. Once their indebtedness was over, these indentured servants were eager to escape from the intense heat and backbreaking labor. This turnover would increase the desire for a more permanent sort of labor — slave from Africa. That’s why within a few decades, slaves would begin to outnumber the indentured servants from England.

In 1619, three events occurred that would shape the future of Virginia, for that matter, the future of America. ① English women arrived at Jamestown to begin the translation from mere trading outpost to a genuinely self-sustaining community. ② Twenty black Africans disembarked from a Dutch vessel to begin their people’s long years of “unrequited toil” in America. ③ On instruction from the Virginia Company in London, the colonists elected representatives for the first colonial assembly in the New World. The Virginia House of Burgesses met on 30 July 1619. The twenty-two members had been elected by all the free male colonists aged seventeen and older. For its time, this was an extraordinary democratic procedure. From this point, Virginians would be governed under English common law largely by lawmakers of their own choice. The last two events combined constituted a unique American phenomenon. On one hand, the English and other Europeans went to North America to seek freedom. On the other hand, these white

people who were seeking and fighting for their own freedom deprived black Africans of their freedom. For example, George Washington was a great fighter for American freedom, and Thomas Jefferson was a chief author of the Declaration of Independence, and yet both of them were slave owners, each with over 200 black slaves.

## **The New England Settlement**

Queen Elizabeth's long reign (1588-1603) had meant that England would be protestant. Her success in holding Spain gave her an unchallenged standing at home. Her defeat of the Armada was Protestantism's greatest world victory. When the great wind blew and shattered the Spanish war fleet, Englishmen saw the hand of Provident in it.

With James I's accession, the division within the English Protestant community began to shake the unity of the realm. James attempted to bring all Protestants under the "big tent" of the Church of England. He threatened those who dissented with his words of "They will conform, or I will harry them out of the land". Puritans were persecuted throughout the land. The puritans sought to "purify" the church of what they saw as its corruptions, and they saw the Church of England as hopelessly corrupt. Puritans tended to be more highly educated. They were especially strong in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, more successful as merchants in the City of London, and in general, a great stake in English society. It would not be uncommon for Puritan leaders to be able to read and write Latin and Greek, they also had extremely high levels of literacy in English, absolutely necessary for Bible reading.

Harassed by the king's forces, a group of Separatists departed England for Holland in 1609. After a decade, however, these English exiles began to fear that they were losing their identity. They began to consider the possibility of founding a holy commonwealth of their own in the New World. The small Separatist community, who now called themselves Pilgrims, set sail for America on a tiny English ship Mayflower.

Blown off course by fierce storms, they landed south of present-day Boston on the coast of Massachusetts. Soon this region was called New England ( including today's Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine and Rhode Island) . Anchoring offshore on 11 November 1620, the small company took much consideration before disembarking to sign a document known to history as The Mayflower Compact. In the very compact, the Pilgrims agreed on how they would govern themselves, and they agreed to establish a "Civil Body Politic" ( a temporary government) and to be bound by its laws. Forty-one of the Mayflower's 102 passengers affixed their signatures to this document. In it they announced their purpose in founding a colony in the New World — "for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian faith, the Honor of our King and Country". By signing the compact they pledged to covenant together to establish the rules under which they would live. This was the first effort at self-government in New England. The compact became the basis of government in the Plymouth Colony. After it was signed, the Pilgrims elected John Carver the first governor.

Several years later, the Pilgrims were joined in Massachusetts by a much larger body of immigrants. The new King of England, Charles I, intensified the persecutions of all dissenters, especially the Puritans. So in 1630, seventeen ships and a thousand men, women and children set sail for America. This would become known as The Great Migration. This group not only brought educated dissenters together, but knew their errand into the wilderness would have world significance. "We shall be as a city upon the hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. " Before they had even set foot in the New World, these Puritans were assured that their new "Bible Commonwealth" would make them the center of attention of the world. They applied Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount to themselves. Puritans hoped to build "a city upon hill" — an ideal community. Since that time, American have viewed their country as a great experiment, a worthy model for other nations. The sense of mission has been very strong in the minds of many Americans.

Soon after landing in 1630, the Puritans transferred the charter of their Massachusetts Bay Company across the sea to their new home. This

was the early move toward independence. By 1634, the number of those who could vote for the General Court — legislature — was broadened to include virtually all adult male church members. Thus, from the start, Americans were developing the habits and experience of self-government.

Boston soon became the largest city in America, large enough to support a university. Harvard, founded in 1636, was expected to prepare young men for the ministry, schooling them in Latin and Greek and making sure that the Puritan ideals were upheld. The Puritans knew that their highly intellectual form of Protestantism needed a strong scholarly foundation. Reading and understanding and interpreting the Bible required intense preparation. It would be Harvard's responsibility to transmit these holy truths to the rising generation. Thus, Harvard's motto — Truth — meant the truth of salvation that sets men free. In 1647, a key law — The Old Deluder Law — was passed, which required townships of fifty or more families to hire a tutor to make sure the children would learn to read and write; towns of one hundred families or larger were required to support a grammar school. "The Old Deluder" was how the Puritans referred to Satan. And it was to keep their children safe from this demon that "The Old Deluder Law" was passed. Thus from the earliest days, Massachusetts set a high standard for literacy and learning.

## **The Maryland Settlement**

Massachusetts Bay was not the only colony to banish religious dissenters. When Sir George Calvert, the first lord Baltimore, converted to Catholicism, the Virginia authorities forced him to leave. Because of his good personal relationship with the English King Charles I, he appealed to the King for a charter to set up a colony in today's Maryland. Although Lord Baltimore died before the charter for Maryland could be approved, it was finally granted to his son, the second Lord Baltimore, in 1634. Planned as a profit-making enterprise, Maryland was also intended as a refuge for Catholics. Despite this, however, the

majority of Maryland colonists were Protestants. Early attempts by the Calverts to assure religious liberty in the form of an Act of Toleration — a measure that granted religious freedom to all Christians — had only limited results. Protestant small landholders rebelled against the rule of Catholic lords and repealed the act. At first, Lord Baltimore wished to introduce a feudal system similar to the manor system in Europe to his colony, in which people in different ranks owned different amounts of land and enjoyed different privileges. It was impossible for Lord Baltimore to have his feudal plan executed because the Protestant majority were capitalistic-minded people and refused to carry out the feudal plan, and because of the wilderness of North America provided plenty of land while labor was scarce. And the colony, like other colonies in North America, followed a capitalist development road.

## **The Pennsylvania Settlement**

From 1642 to 1648 in England, Oliver Cromwell, a local, landed leader, led an army against King Charles I because of his dictatorship, and this army was called parliamentary army. When the King was finally defeated, his head was cut off. Thus, in January 1649, England became, for a brief period, a republic. But Cromwell soon dispersed the Parliament and ruled the country as a military dictator. Later with Cromwell's death in 1658, the exiled Charles was welcomed back and England became a monarchy once again. After the restoration of the monarchy, a new religious sect arose in England: the Society of Friends, know as Quakers because some of its members felt such religious intensity that they actually quaked during worship services. Quakers faced persecution from the Church of England authorities. Quakers were pacifists, who refused to bear arms or support wars. They declined to take the oaths, cite Jesus' words, and thus ran afoul of the court system. Despite, or perhaps because of oppression (thousands had been jailed), the Quaker movement spread. When the son of the famous Admiral Sir William Penn converted to the new faith, his father was furious. But the two reconciled, and the young William Penn applied for a charter for a



proprietary colony in America. A proprietary colony was one in which the Crown granted power to a rich individual or family to establish a settlement for profit. Penn intended this land grant to be a refuge for his fellow Quakers. Penn had visited Germany and appealed to other pacifist Christian sects there to emigrate and join in his Holy Experiment in today's Pennsylvania. These Quakers, though they were Protestants, had very different religious beliefs not only from the Catholics, but also from Puritans and other Protestant sects. They denied both the church and the Bible as the highest authority. They believed that people could communicate directly with God because everyone had an inner light and God was in everyone's soul and in man's heart. They believed in God through their faith without the help of the church and priests. They did not build any churches and did not train any priests. Their religious place of worship was called a meeting place, which could be anywhere. Since everyone had a divine light in his heart, all were born equal, and all were brothers and sisters. People were not born sinful. Quakers had their own way of life too. They lived a simple life, with frugality and self-denial. They believed that God required everyone to work hard and have a productive life. Even in jail, they busily set about working at crafts. They refused all forms of war and followed a passive resistance. All those who settled in his land, Pennsylvania, would enjoy religious freedom. This was a great attraction to thousands of people with different religious backgrounds who were being persecuted for their religion in Europe. Another great appeal to Europeans, especially to those peasants hungry for land, was that he offered very easy terms for land. Anyone who would settle in his colony could get some land almost for nothing. Many Europeans were attracted to go to live in Pennsylvania — Germans, the French, the Irish, Northern Europeans as well as the English. When Penn arrived in his colony, he started to carry out what he called "the Holy Experiment".

Pennsylvania (Pen's Forest) was an immediate success. Penn's guarantee of religious freedom was then one of the most comprehensive in the world. Catholic, Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and even Anglicans (Church of England members) rushed to settle in the rich