

Chronology of Key Dates

The following chronology situates some of the texts, authors, and events that occupy a key place in this book within a broader historical and geographical context. Although purposefully eclectic, the summary outlines the larger themes of the fluidity of borders in the Amazon region, the competition among European and then Latin American nations for control of its riches, Amazonia's legacy of boom-and-bust cycles, and the continuing conflicts between longtime residents and newcomers.

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| 600 million B.C. | The giant intracratonic Amazon basin has its origin along an ancient zone of weakness within the Precambrian Shield. |
| 9000 B.C. | Early human groups leave pictographs at Pedra Pintada, a series of rocks on the floodplain to the west of what is today the city of Monte Alegre in the Brazilian Amazon. Other cultural remains found at the site may be as much as five thousand years older. |
| Late 1400s | Prosperous chiefdoms along much of the Amazon River and the adjacent uplands and interior mark the success of native societies in adapting to the Amazonian environment. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that a number of these societies were densely populated and culturally advanced, with intensive agriculture, well-developed trade networks, and sophisticated forms of artistic expression. |
| 1492–93 | Christopher Columbus makes his first journey to the Americas. In his diaries and letters, he notes native reports about a group of women without men on the island of Matinino, whom he describes as “Amazons.” |
| 1494 | The Treaty of Tordesillas divides South America between Spain and Portugal. |
| 1500 | Vicente Yáñez Pinzón, ex-commander of the caravel <i>Niña</i> during Columbus’s first New World voyage, enters the mouth of the Amazon River, which he calls “Santa María de la Mar Dulce” (Saint Mary of the Freshwater Ocean). |

- The river is also initially known as the “Rio Grande” or the “Marañón” [“Maranhão”]). In the same year, Pedro Alvares Cabral claims the northeastern coast of Brazil for Portugal.
- 1508 The first chivalric novel in the widely popular ten-volume “Amadís de Gaula” series appears. *Las sergas de Esplandían*, which features the Amazon queen Califia, follows two years later.
- 1531 Convinced that a sun-colored gold must lie near the equator, Diego de Ordás begins to explore the Orinoco region. In the same year, Francisco Pizarro arrives in Peru and Pedro de Heredia reaches Colombia’s Atlantic coast.
- 1533 The first shipment of Inca gold arrives in Seville, whetting the Spaniards’ hunger for new treasures.
- 1536 Jerónimo de Ortal hears reports of Amazons dwelling along the Orinoco River. Hernán Pérez de Quesada will hear similar reports about Amazons living along the Magdalena River not long afterward.
- 1537 Reports of a golden king reach the Spaniards in Quito, prompting new expeditions into the Colombian interior.
- 1539 Three explorers searching for El Dorado—Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, Nicolaus Federmann, and Sebastián de Benalcázar—converge upon Muisca (Chibcha) territories in present-day Colombia. In this same year (or, according to some records, a year earlier), Pedro de Candia sets off from Cuzco in search of a golden country called “Ambaya” in what was to become the Moxos province of Bolivia.
- 1541–42 In late February 1541, Gonzalo Pizarro sets out from Quito in search of El Dorado and the Land of Cinnamon. The day after Christmas of the same year, Captain Francisco de Orellana leaves Pizarro’s expedition with orders to sail down the Napo River in search of provisions. On 12 February 1542 he enters the main arm of the Amazon. On 26 August he reaches the Atlantic Ocean, making his expedition the first to traverse the full length of the river. Friar Gaspar de Carvajal’s account of the crew’s discovery of the river—which the great sixteenth-century historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo will call “one of the greatest things that ever happened to men”—and his description of the men’s encounter with the Amazons, leads to the rebaptism of the river as “the Amazon.”
- 1559 Pedro de Ursúa sets off down the Huallaga and Amazon Rivers. He later dies at the hands of the rebel Lope de Aguirre, who eventually assumes control of the expedition.

- Aguirre's boats reach Margarita on 21 July 1561, making him the second European to descend the full length of the Amazon and the first to cross from the Amazon into the Orinoco via the Casiquiare canal.
- 1570–1630s Dutch commerce reaches the Portuguese Amazon (Rio Branco) through native intermediaries on the Essequibo River, reinforcing long-standing native links between the Caribbean and South America.
- 1580–1640 The crowns of Castile and Aragon absorb the Portuguese monarchy for a sixty-year period still known as “the Captivity.” The Dutch take advantage of the situation to begin their conquest of Portuguese holdings from Africa to the East Indies, as well as from the Caribbean to northeastern Brazil.
- 1595 Based on Spanish accounts of El Dorado, Sir Walter Ralegh mounts a search for the Golden City of Manoa, supposedly somewhere between the Orinoco and the Amazon Rivers. His *Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*, which appears a year later, remains the best-known account of El Dorado in English.
- 1612 The French establish holdings on the Portuguese Atlantic coast (Maranhão), but are subsequently expelled.
- 1617 Ralegh’s second expedition in search of Manoa fails, opening the way to his execution a year later. In this same year, the city of Belém is founded on the mouth of the Amazon.
- 1620 Maranhão and Grão Pará become a separate administrative unit from the rest of Portuguese America, which is known as “Brazil.”
- Early 1620s Cornelius O’Brien and four other Irishmen make their way up the Amazon, where they are said to have encountered a group of “masculine women” who purposefully stunt their right breasts in order better to wield bows and arrows.
- 1627 Father Pedro Simón’s *Noticias historiales* is published in Spain. Among the native legends and beliefs he recounts in this narrative is the story of the king who makes golden offerings to a “little dragon” at the bottom of a lake.
- 1637–38 Pedro de Teixeira ascends the Amazon from Belém to Quito. In 1639, he returns to Belém with the Spanish Jesuit Cristóbal de Acuña. The latter’s *New Discovery of the Great River of the Amazons* (1641) contains a wealth of detailed information about economically valuable flora and fauna that leads the Spaniards to attempt to keep it out of print.

- 1640 The ascension of the duke of Bragança to the newly independent crown of Portugal marks the beginning of serious Portuguese colonization of the Amazon. Government *tropas de resgate* (“rescue troops,” whose supposed intent is to save the Amazonian Indians from one another) mount a series of slaving expeditions. These forays accompany a growing commerce in regional products (cinnamon, wild cacao, turtle oil, sarsaparilla) known collectively as “*drogas do sertão*” literally, “backlands drugs.”
- 1650s The Jesuits establish numerous communities called *aldeias* or *reducciones* in the Amazon in order to catechize the natives, who provide the Europeans with much needed manual labor.
- 1670s First indications of the systematic cultivation that will permit not one, but two yearly harvests of cacao.
- 1682 The Bolivian missions begin a prosperous period that ends only in 1767, with the expulsion of the Jesuits from the territory of the Audiencia de Charcas.
- 1689–91 The Jesuit priest Samuel Fritz leaves Quito on a mission to the Napo-Solimões region, then goes on to Belém before returning. Happily for the Portuguese, Fritz fails to interest the Lima viceroy in the need for Spain’s incorporation of that part of Amazonia extending from the Napo to the Rio Negro.
- 1720–1820 Cacao emerges as a primary export in Venezuela, Ecuador (Guayaquil), and the Brazilian Amazon.
- 1743–49 Smallpox and measles epidemics kill twenty to forty thousand people, about a third of the total European and Europeanized population of the Brazilian Amazon. The resulting labor shortage in the region will lead the Marquês de Pombal to augment significantly the importation of African slaves into Amazonia upon his rise to power in 1750.
- 1744 The French naturalist-traveler Charles de la Condamine describes the Casiquiare Channel for a European public some two hundred years after Lope de Aguirre navigated the same trajectory. The first of a long line of northern European “scientific travelers” to visit the Amazon, la Condamine publishes an account of his travels in which he expresses his belief in the existence of both El Dorado and the Amazons.
- 1750 Spain and Portugal sign the Treaty of Madrid, which abolishes the Treaty of Tordesillas in place of the principle of *uti possedetis*, or right by possession, to settle disputed boundaries in the Río de la Plata and the Amazon.

- 1755–78 Pombal's Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão becomes the prime instrument for economic recovery and development in the Brazilian Amazon. The move toward greater royal control, revenue gathering, and the development of tropical export staples, accompanied by a rise in African and Amerindian slavery during this period, is equally visible within the Spanish-speaking Amazon.
- 1759 Voltaire mocks the lingering belief in El Dorado in *Candide*. Pombal expels the Jesuits from all Portuguese holdings. Father João Daniel takes up residence in the Lisbon jail cell where he will spend the next twenty years at work on an encyclopedic description of the Amazon that anticipates accounts by nineteenth-century naturalists from northern Europe.
- 1760 The Treaty of El Pardo annuls the Treaty of Madrid.
- 1770s The chief magistrate of Rio Branco, Francisco Xavier Ribeiro de Sampaio, complains that fantastical stories of a golden lake are continuing to inspire a series of foreign incursions into the Portuguese Amazon.
- 1777 The Treaty of San Ildefonso redraws Portuguese-Spanish frontiers in South America, confirming Spain's possession of the Río de la Plata region and Portugal's possession of the Amazon.
- 1778 José Pavón, Hipólito Ruiz, and M. Dombey's publication of *Flora peruviana* confirms the growing interest in botanical classification throughout both the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Amazon.
- 1783–93 Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, a Brazilian botanist and author of the *Viagem filosófica*, leads a Portuguese natural history commission into the Rio Negro.
- 1790s The failure of Pombal's monopoly company and of the Spanish silver-contraband trade prompts the decline of the trade route along the Madeira River and the decline of the Amazonian west.
- 1799 Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland explore the Orinoco region, going on to make their way to the Rio Negro by way of the Casiquiare canal, earlier used by Lope de Aguirre. Humboldt redefines El Dorado as a hydrographic phenomenon demanding scientific study.
- 1807–25 Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula leads to the exile of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro (1807–21) and the declaration of an independent empire of Brazil in 1822. It also prompts the French exile of the Bourbons (Charles

- IV and Fernando VII) in 1808 and subsequent revolts and wars of liberation throughout much of Spanish America.
- 1810 Pedro Ignacio Muiba, a Moxos chieftain, calls for the independence of Bolivia from Spain.
- 1821 The slave Atanásio, who had fled in government raids on fugitive slave communities on the Curuá River (western Pará) nine years earlier, heads a force of some forty slaves who found a new *quilombo* above the waterfalls on the Trombetas River.
- 1830 The Protocol Mosquera-Pedemonte establishes the Amazonian border between Peru and Gran Colombia only months after Ecuador declares its independence from the latter.
- 1835 The Prussian naturalist Robert Schomburgk voyages up the Amazon through the Rio Branco to the Guianas and Venezuela.
- 1835–39 An immense popular revolt known as the Cabanagem (from the word *cabano*, meaning hut or shack) sweeps much of the Portuguese-speaking Amazon, leaving thirty thousand people—approximately a quarter of the regional population—dead.
- 1839 Charles Goodyear sets the stage for the Amazonian Rubber Boom by perfecting the process of vulcanization.
- 1847 The American traveler William H. Edwards publishes his *Voyage up the River Amazon*. A heavily embellished popular piece, the book nonetheless does much to convince the British naturalists Henry Walter Bates and Alfred Russel Wallace to set out for the Amazon a year later.
- 1848 The Hakluyt Society reissues Ralegh's *Discoverie*, with a preface by Robert Schomburgk.
- 1852 Nine years after a steamboat navigates the Amazon for the first time, the Baron of Mauá founds the Amazon Steam Navigation Company.
- 1856 The Brazilian Empire establishes a directory of Indians for Amazonas, which includes 239 peoples, not all of whom are under official government control.
- 1858 Charles Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species* intensifies popular and scientific interest in naturalist pursuits.
- 1862 Bates publishes his *Naturalist on the River Amazons* with publisher John Murray, who had already published both Edwards and Darwin. The book is a success, and a new, somewhat shorter version appears a year later.

- 1863 The foundation of the city of Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon marks the growing financial importance of rubber, whose production triples in a single decade.
- 1866 In a journey through the Amazon, Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos transmits reports of commerce between the fugitive-slave communities on the Trombetas River and “the Dutch of Guyana” in which the blacks exchange tobacco, Brazil nuts, and sarsaparilla for guns and iron tools.
- 1872 Construction begins on the Madeira-Mamoré railroad, intended to link the rich rubber stands of the Purus and Juruá Rivers to the Bolivian coast. The initial engineer is an American, George Church, who describes the dense forests that will claim a human life for every railroad spike as “the garden of the Lord.”
- 1876 The English traveler Henry Wickham transports Amazonian rubber tree seeds to the orchid houses of Kew Gardens, from which they are taken to Southeast Asia to serve as the basis for rubber plantations.
- 1877 Father José Nicolino Pereira de Souza makes his first of three journeys to the Trombetas region, where he encounters the slave descendants.
- 1880s Amazonian rubber production doubles, following the invention of the pneumatic tire in 1877. In Brazil, rubber accounts for 10 percent of the nation’s total exports.
- 1884 The founding of Riberalta marks the beginning of the neo-colonial era of international capitalism in eastern Bolivia. Three years later, the native priest Andrés Guayocho leads an indigenous revolt against government authorities and new hordes of traders.
- 1888 The Golden Law abolishes slavery in Brazil. The newly free slaves in the Trombetas region respond by descending the area above the waterfalls and founding new communities more easily linked to commercial centers.
- 1889 Brazil ceases to be an empire and becomes a republic.
- 1896 Inauguration of the lavish Opera House in Manaus, which, in this same year, becomes the first large Brazilian city to introduce electric lighting.
- 1899 Henri and Otilie Coudreau visit the Trombetas–Cuminá (Erepecuru) region. Their accounts mention slave descendants.
- 1900 Rubber becomes Brazil’s second-leading export, after coffee, accounting for just under a quarter of the export total. A long-running boundary dispute between Brazil and French

- Guiana over the territory of Amapá is finally settled in Brazil's favor.
- 1902 Bolivia loses control over rubber-rich Acre to Brazil.
- 1904 Euclides da Cunha departs for the Amazon, where he will serve as head of a joint Brazilian-Peruvian Commission whose mission is to chart the boundaries of the rubber-rich Purus River region.
- 1907–9 Euclides publishes a series of essays about the Amazon in *Contrastes e confrontos, Peru versus Bolívia*, and *À margem da história*. The last of these volumes appears after his fatal confrontation with his wife's lover.
- 1908 With the publication of *Inferno verde*, a collection of short stories, Alberto Rangel popularizes the term *Green Hell*.
- 1909 Amazonian rubber prices double, only to collapse a year later as the entry of Asian plantation rubber onto the market destroys the Amazon's monopoly.
- 1912 An official report to the British government by Roger Case-ment documents shocking abuses of Indian laborers in rubber camps along the Putumayo River in Colombia and Peru. The Madeira-Mamoré railroad reaches completion after forty years of costly labor, just in time for the rubber bust.
- 1913 After visiting Argentina and the Brazilian south, Theodore Roosevelt joins the Brazilian colonel Cândido Mariano de Rondon in an expedition that successfully traces the course of the River of Doubt. Initially published in installments, his *Through the Brazilian Wilderness* appears in book form in the fall of 1914.
- 1913–21 The rubber merchant Tomás Funes seizes control of the provincial capital of San Fernando de Atabapo in Venezuela. He proceeds to enslave the Yekuana Indian population and rules the Territorio Amazonas as an independent fiefdom with no ties whatsoever to the central government in Caracas.
- 1922 Official inauguration of the important artistic and intellectual movement known as Brazilian Modernism. Three of the movement's most important works—Raul Bopp's long lyric poem *Cobra Norato*, Mário de Andrade's rhapsodic novel *Macunaíma*, and the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras*—will draw directly on the Amazon for inspiration.
- 1924 The Colombian writer José Eustacio Rivera publishes what will become the most famous of all early jungle novels, *La vorágine* (The Vortex). The book does much to confirm

- Amazonia's identity as a Green Hell among European and many Latin American readers.
- 1927 Henry Ford acquires land on the Tapajós River for a plantation called "Fordlândia," intended to supply his factories with rubber for tires. Microbes attack the rubber trees, which are planted too close together, forcing him to abandon the venture.
- 1930s Long a staple of the regional economy, Brazil nuts become increasingly important in the Trombetas area as the century progresses. By the 1930s, members of the regional elite have acquired legal title to most of the lands that had long been worked by descendants of runaway slaves.
- 1937 The young Claude Lévi-Strauss, who is teaching at the University of São Paulo, makes a research trip into the Amazon.
- 1940 The Brazilian dictator Getúlio Vargas visits the Amazon and pronounces the region a keystone of his "Westward March," designed to integrate outlying regions of Brazil more fully into the nation. Twelve years later he will establish a separate administrative unit for the Amazon (SUDAM) and a national institute for research on the region.
- 1941 The Rio Protocol establishes the Amazonian borders between Peru and Ecuador.
- 1942 Brazil enters World War II on the side of the Allies. In the face of Axis control over the Malayan rubber plantations, a number of poor northeasters enter national service as "rubber soldiers" in the Amazon. Some forty thousand of these forest conscripts will die of hunger and disease.
- 1955 Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes tropiques* marks a new vision of the Amazon as a precious, disappearing world.
- 1958 The Brazilian miner Nilson Pinheiro discovers gold on the Tapajós River, ushering in what will become the mammoth gold rush of the 1970s and 1980s. Pinheiro will be elected a state deputy in Pará twenty-four years later.
- 1960 President Juscelino Kubitschek moves the Brazilian capital inland to Brasília and initiates the "Highway of Jaguar" between Belém and Brasília. The opening of the Amazon to large-scale colonization finds echoes in the other Amazonian nations.
- 1964 A military coup in Brazil brings to power a group of development-minded generals.
- 1967 Military strategist General Golbery do Couto e Silva publishes a blueprint for Brazilian geopolitics in which the

Amazon plays an essential role. The American entrepreneur Daniel Ludwig acquires huge holdings in Jari, which will meet the same unhappy fate as Fordlândia. In this same year, enormous iron deposits are discovered in the Carajás mountains of southern Pará. In Bolivia, Che Guevara attempts to mobilize peasant resistance to the government in various areas of the interior, including the Amazon.

- 1968 The Brazilian dictatorship suspends habeas corpus. The center-right newsweekly *Veja* emerges and is soon publishing articles that mirror the nation's new sense of expectation about the development of the Amazon.
- 1969–76 The first stage of the vast Guri Dam in Venezuela begins. Stage II will begin in 1976 and go on for ten years.
- 1970 The Trans-Amazon highway, designed to link Brazil's "central platform" with the Amazon and the northeast, is initiated. In this same year, the American anthropologist Betty Meggers publishes *Amazonia: A Counterfeit Paradise*, which affirms the fragility of Amazonian soils and the region's ensuing unsuitability to all but small, nomadic populations. The first Earth Day is held in April of this year.
- 1970s Increased coca growing, often with ties to guerrilla movements, becomes an issue, above all in the Colombian and Peruvian Amazon.
- 1972 The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment is held in Stockholm, marking the emergence of a globalist concern for the balance between development and environmental preservation. The Amazon and tropical rain forests emerge as a focus of international concern.
- 1972–74 The discovery of a small group of leftist guerrillas in the Araguaia River region confirms the Brazilian military's worst fears about the Amazon as a threat to national security and helps bolster ongoing colonization schemes designed to "stabilize" the region. Major Curió is one of the officers sent to oversee the "War of Araguaia."
- 1973 The Middle East oil crisis raises interest rates around the world. Brazil begins to eye the Amazon as an answer to its spiraling foreign debt, and the oil-rich Ecuadorean Amazon acquires new importance as multinational firms move to exploit its resources.
- 1975 Construction begins on Tucuruí, the world's fourth-largest dam, intended to provide the electric power for the mines of Carajás. The dam will flood vast areas of tropical forest on which many Indians, *caboclos*, and migrants depend for a

- livelihood. It also will destroy some 3 million trees and shrubs.
- 1976 The collection and republication of Euclides da Cunha's Amazonian essays in a single volume called *Um paraíso perdido* (A Lost Paradise) reflects the Amazon's growing visibility within Brazil.
- 1978 The Amazon Pact Treaty is signed by Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Guyana, and Suriname.
- 1979 Gold is discovered in Serra Pelada in the south of the state of Pará, a find that will be the single richest in Amazonian history. In the same year, the discovery of a 4-billion-ton bauxite deposit in the Trombetas region—a find that will make Brazil the world's third-largest supplier of the raw material for aluminum—leads a multinational partnership to construct a giant refinery at Porto Trombetas. In an attempt to mitigate the ensuing environmental destruction, the Brazilian federal environmental agency, IBAMA, sets aside 385,000 hectares along the Trombetas River, long inhabited and worked by slave descendants, as a biological reserve.
- 1980 Concerned about security in Serra Pelada, which borders the Carajás iron ore mine and whose location near the site of the Araguaia guerrilla movement prompts unhappy memories, the Brazilian military occupies Serra Pelada. The same Major Curió who had been involved in the repressive "War of Araguaia" resurfaces as the chief government official in the enormous mine.
- 1981 War breaks out between Ecuador and Peru over the Amazonian border.
- 1985 The ascension of a civilian government has little visible effect on developmentalist policies in the Brazilian Amazon. A year later, President José Sarney announces plans for a national security program in Amazonia called the Calha Norte, or the Northern Trench.
- 1986 Conservation biologist Edward O. Wilson coins the term *biodiversity*.
- 1987 The World Commission on Environment and Development's report *Our Common Future* makes *sustainable development* a buzzword and creates pressure on the governments of Amazonian nations to link preservation with development. In Parintins—a town of seventy-five thousand people that happens to be the second-largest city in the huge state of Amazonas—the inauguration of a new stadium for the once-modest Boi-Bumbá festival marks the

- transformation of local and regional folklore into a national and international tourist attraction.
- 1988 Article 68 of the new Brazilian constitution gives land rights to descendants of runaway slaves.
- 1989 The assassination of Chico Mendes, head of the Brazilian Rubber Tappers' Union, sends shock waves around the world. The government's new Nossa Natureza (Our Nature) program is a direct response to pressures from international agencies including the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. In the Trombetas region, the slave descendants create a grassroots political association known as ARQMO and the Brazilian national forestry division creates a national forest of more than 426,000 hectares directly across the river from the already existing biological reserve.
- 1990 The archaeological work of Anna Roosevelt, a direct descendant of Theodore, initiates a new wave of studies that definitively challenge ideas of Amazonian soils as fragile and unable to sustain large populations. In Bolivia, Moxo, Sirionó, Yuracaré, and Movima, Indians engage in a thirty-four-day march from Trinidad to La Paz to protest the usurpation of their lands.
- 1991 The formation of a Yanomami Park in Brazil and Venezuela recognizes the traditional homeland of this group of some twenty thousand indigenous peoples. In the same year, the new constitution of Colombia makes sustainable development mandatory. Although clearly unenforceable, this decree marks an important change in environmental thinking.
- 1992 The publication of a U.N. report on the Amazon titled *Amazonia without Myths* precedes the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, also known as "Eco 92," which convenes in Rio de Janeiro. The Kayapó leader Paiakan is effectively disgraced on the eve of the conference. A scientific expedition sets out to retrace the steps of the original Rondon-Roosevelt expedition to the River of Doubt. Gold prices, which had begun dropping toward the end of the 1980s, continue to slide. In Ecuador, several thousand Quichua, Achuar, and Shiwiar indigenous peoples march from Pastaza province to Quito seeking land rights in the Amazon.
- 1993 A new environmental law in Colombia establishes a fund to channel part of the profits from mining and petroleum extraction to provincial and municipal governments, with environmental projects slated to receive about a third of these funds. In the same year, Brazilian gold miners stage a much publicized massacre of Yanomami Indians in Haximu.

- 1994 Lévi-Strauss publishes his elegiac *Saudades do Brasil*.
- 1995 Boa Vista, just minutes by boat from the giant Porto Trombetas refinery, becomes the first *remanescente* community in Amazonia to gain collective title to its land. An ad for Simoniz car wax that focuses on an “Amazonian Indian” named Chief Tunabi underscores the growing appeal of both sustainable development and native peoples to an international public. New armed conflicts between Ecuador and Peru break out on the Amazonian border.
- 1996 On 17 April, police massacre twenty-eight landless peasants in Eldorado dos Carajás, in southern Pará.
- 1996–98 Sixteen more *remanescente* communities in the Trombetas-Erepecuru area gain legal title to their land.
- 1997–98 Devastating fires burn through northern Amazonia, destroying vast areas of brush land in Roraima and threatening Yanomami settlements in Brazil and Venezuela. A special supplement of *Veja* devoted to the Amazon touts the possibilities of scientific research (as opposed to earlier large-scale development initiatives) for the region.
- 1998 Signing of the Ecuador-Peru Peace Agreement.
- 1999 Suriname emerges as a new focus of an extended Amazonian gold rush. Fourteen thousand Brazilian miners cross the border into Suriname, creating conflicts with Indians and Suriname Maroons involved in mining. Colombia initiates a “Green Plan” to finance the reforestation of 160,000 hectares, and new fires break out in many parts of the Amazon.
- 2000 A march by the Indigenous Black and Popular Resistance movement in Brasília marks the five-hundred-year anniversary of Cabral’s landing in Brazil. The march also signals a formal alliance of black, Amerindian, and other groups concerned with land rights in Brazil in general and in Amazonia in particular. In this same year, Brazil approves a \$45 billion federal government program called “Advance Brazil” (*Avança Brasil*), intended to build more highways, hydroelectric dams, and railroads in the Amazon. In the United States, Congress gives final approval to Plan Colombia, a controversial \$1.3 billion package of mostly military aid aimed at helping Colombia combat the flow of narcotics to the United States. Since much of the drug activity is in the Amazonian portion of the country, the plan is certain to affect the future of the Amazon.