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Chapter 01 - New World Beginnings

I. The Shaping of North America

1. Recorded history began 6,000 years ago. It was 500 years ago that Europeans set foot on the Americas to begin colonization
2. The theory of **Pangaea** exists suggesting that the continents were once nestled together into one mega-continent. They then spread out as drifting islands.
3. Geologic forces of continental plates created the Appalachian and Rocky Mountains.
4. The Great Ice Age thrust down over North America & scoured the present day American Midwest.

II. Peopling the Americas

1. The Land Bridge theory.
 - As the Great Ice Age diminished, so did the glaciers over North America.
 - The theory holds that a **Land Bridge** emerged linking Asia & North America across what is now known as the Bering Sea. People were said to have walked across the "bridge" before the sea level rose and sealed it off; thus populating the Americas.
 - The Land Bridge is said to have occurred an estimated 35,000 years ago.
2. Many peoples
 - Those groups that traversed the bridge spread across North, Central, and South America.
 - Countless tribes emerged with an estimated 2,000 languages. Notably:
 - Incas: Peru, with elaborate network of roads and bridges linking their empire.
 - Mayas: Yucatan Peninsula, with their step pyramids.
 - Aztecs: Mexico, with step pyramids and huge sacrifices of conquered peoples.

III. The Earliest Americans

1. Development of corn or **maize** around 5,000 B.C. in Mexico was revolutionary in that:
 - Then, people didn't have to be hunter-gatherers, they could settle down and be farmers.
 - This fact gave rise to towns and then cities.
 - Corn arrived in the present day U.S. around 1,200 B.C.

2. Pueblo Indians

- The Pueblos were the 1st American corn growers.
- They lived in adobe houses (dried mud) and pueblos ("villages" in Spanish). Pueblos are villages of cubicle shaped adobe houses, stacked one on top the other and often beneath cliffs.
- They had elaborate irrigation systems to draw water away from rivers to grown corn.

3. Mound Builders

- These people built huge ceremonial and burial mounds and were located in the Ohio Valley.
- Cahokia, near East St. Louis today, held 40,000 people.

4. Eastern Indians

- Eastern Indians grew corn, beans, and squash in **three sister** farming:
 - Corn grew in a stalk providing a trellis for beans, beans grew up the stalk, squash's broad leaves kept the sun off the ground and thus kept the moisture in the soil.
 - This group likely had the best (most diverse) diet of all North American Indians and is typified by the **Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw** (South) and **Iroquois** (North).

5. Iroquois Confederation

- **Hiawatha** was the legendary leader of the group.
- The Iroquois Confederation was a group of 5 tribes in New York state.
- They were matrilineal as authority and possessions passed down through the female line.
- Each tribe kept their independence, but met occasionally to discuss matters of common interest, like war/defense.
- This was not the norm. Usually, Indians were scattered and separated (and thus weak).

6. Native Americans had a very different view of things as compared to Europeans.

- Native Americans felt no man owned the land, the tribe did. (Europeans liked private property)
- Indians felt nature was mixed with many spirits. (Europeans were Christian and monotheistic)
- Indians felt nature was sacred. (Europeans felt nature and land was given to man by God in Genesis to be subdued and put to use).
- Indians had little or no concept or interest in money. (Europeans loved money or gold)

IV. Indirect Discoverers of the New World

1. The 1st Europeans to come to America were the Norse (Vikings from Norway).
 - Around 1000 AD, the Vikings landed, led by **Erik the Red** and **Leif Erikson**.
 - They landed in **Newfoundland** or **Vinland** (because of all the vines).
 - However, these men left America and left no written record and therefore didn't get the credit.
 - The only record is found in Viking sagas or songs.
2. The Christian Crusaders of Middle Ages fought in Palestine to regain the Holy Land from Muslims. This mixing of East and West created a sweet-tooth where Europeans wanted the spices of the exotic East.

V. Europeans Enter Africa

1. **Marco Polo** traveled to China and stirred up a storm of European interest.

2. Mixed with desire for spices, an East to West (Asia to Europe) trade flourished but had to be overland, at least in part. This initiated new exploration down around Africa in hopes of an easier (all water) route.
3. Portugal literally started a sailing school to find better ways to get to the **Spice Islands**, eventually rounding Africa's southern Cape of Good Hope.
4. New developments:
 - **caravel**: a ship with triangular sail that could better tack (zig-zag) ahead into the wind and thus return to Europe from Africa coast.
 - compass: to determine direction.
 - **astrolabe**: a sextant gizmo that could tell a ship's latitude.
5. Slave trade begins
 - The 1st slave trade was across the Sahara Desert.
 - Later, it was along the West African coast. Slave traders purposely busted up tribes and families in order to squelch any possible uprising.
 - Slaves wound up on sugar plantations the Portuguese had set up on the tropical islands off Africa's coast.
 - Spain watched Portugal's success with exploration and slaving and wanted a piece of the pie.

VI. Columbus Comes upon a New World

1. **Christopher Columbus** convinced **Isabella** and **Ferdinand** to fund his expedition.
2. His goal was to reach the East (East Indies) by sailing west, thus bypassing the around-Africa route that Portugal monopolized.
3. He misjudged the size of the Earth though, thinking it 1/3 the size of what it was.
4. So, after 30 days or so at sea, when he struck land, he assumed he'd made it to the East Indies and therefore mistook the people as "**Indians**."
5. This spawned the following system:
 - Europe would provide the market, capital, technology.
 - Africa would provide the labor.
 - The New World would provide the raw materials (gold, soil, lumber).

VII. When Worlds Collide

1. Of huge importance was the biological flip-flop of Old and New Worlds. Simply put, we traded life such as plants, foods, animals, germs.
2. Columbian Exchange:
 - From the New World (America) to the Old
 - corn, potatoes, tobacco, beans, peppers, manioc, pumpkin, squash, tomato, wild rice, etc.
 - also, syphilis
 - From the Old World to the New
 - cows, pigs, horses, wheat, sugar cane, apples, cabbage, citrus, carrots, Kentucky bluegrass, etc.
 - devastating diseases (**smallpox**, yellow fever, malaria), as Indians had no immunities.
 - The Indians had no immunities in their systems built up over generations.

- An estimated 90% of all pre-Columbus Indians died, mostly due to disease.

VIII. The Spanish Conquistadores

1. **Treaty Line of Tordesillas** 1494: Portugal and Spain feuded over who got what land. The Pope drew this line as he was respected by both.
 - The line ran North-South, and chopped off the Brazilian coast of South America
 - Portugal got everything east of the line (Brazil and land around/under Africa)
 - Spain got everything west of the line (which turned out to be much more, though they didn't know it at the time)
2. **Conquistadores** = "conquerors"
 - **Vasco Balboa**: "discovered" the Pacific Ocean across isthmus of Panama
 - **Ferdinand Magellan**: circumnavigates the globe (1st to do so)
 - **Ponce de Leon**: touches and names Florida looking for legendary **Fountain of Youth**
 - **Hernando Cortes**: enters Florida, travels up into present day Southeastern U.S., dies and is "buried" in Mississippi River
 - **Francisco Pizarro**: conquers Incan Empire of Peru and begins shipping tons of gold/silver back to Spain. This huge influx of precious metals made European prices skyrocket (inflation).
 - **Francisco Coronado**: ventured into current Southwest U.S. looking for legendary El Dorado, city of gold. He found the Pueblo Indians.
3. **Encomienda system** established
 - Indians were "commended" or given to Spanish landlords
 - The idea of the encomienda was that Indians would work and be converted to Christianity, but it was basically just slavery on a sugar plantation disguised as missionary work.

IX. The Conquest of Mexico

1. **Hernando Cortez** conquered the Aztecs at Tenochtitlan.
2. Cortez went from Cuba to present day Vera Cruz, then marched over mountains to the Aztec capital.
3. **Montezuma**, Aztec king, thought Cortez might be the god Quetzalcoatl who was due to re-appear the very year. Montezuma welcomed Cortez into Tenochtitlan.
4. The Spanish lust for gold led Montezuma to attack on the noche triste, sad night. Cortez and men fought their way out, but it was smallpox that eventually beat the Indians.
5. The Spanish then destroyed Tenochtitlan, building the Spanish capital (Mexico City) exactly on top of the Aztec city.
6. A new race of people emerged, mestizos, a mix of Spanish and Indian blood.

X. The Spread of Spanish America

1. Spanish society quickly spread through Peru and Mexico
2. A threat came from neighbors:
 - English: **John Cabot** (an Italian who sailed for England) touched the coast of the

current day U.S.

- France: **Giovanni de Verrazano** also touched on the North American seaboard.
 - France: **Jacques Cartier** went into mouth of St. Lawrence River (Canada).
3. To oppose this, Spain set up forts (presidios) all over the California coast. Also cities, like St. Augustine in Florida.
 4. **Don Juan de Onate** followed Coronado's old path into present day New Mexico. He conquered the Indians ruthlessly, maiming them by cutting off one foot of survivors just so they'd remember.
 5. Despite mission efforts, the Pueblo Indians revolted in Pope's Rebellion.
 6. **Robert de LaSalle** sailed down the Mississippi River for France claiming the whole region for their King Louis and naming the area "Louisiana" after his king. This started a slew of place-names for that area, from LaSalle, Illinois to "Louisville" and then on down to New Orleans (the American counter of Joan of Arc's famous victory at Orleans).
 7. **Black Legend**: The Black Legend was the notion that Spaniards only brought bad things (murder, disease, slavery); though true, they also brought good things such as law systems, architecture, Christianity, language, civilization, so that the Black Legend is partly, but not entirely, accurate.

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