

Chapter 1

The Collision of Cultures

Finn Frankis
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America Before Columbus

What were the major characteristics of pre-Columbian America?

Society began in the Americas likely after the arrival of boat-riding Japanese and Australian natives. Initially, almost all were characterized by hunting-and-gathering lifestyles, but agriculture slowly emerged, subsequently changing society and tribal culture significantly. Notable Native American hotspots include Mesoamerica, Peru, and the Southwest U.S.

What were the origins and lifestyles of the peoples of precontact Americas?

- Initial belief that all early migrations to Americas from humans crossing Bering Land bridge as result of newly developed tools
 - Referred to as "Clovis" people, originated from Mongolian stock connected to Siberia
 - Clovis established first American civilizations, eating animals and creating tools
 - Gradually expanded to warmer region
- Recent evidence has revealed that earlier Asian migrants had already arrived in South America long before Clovis
 - Likely arrived by boat (backed up by early population of Japan, Australia, Pacific)
- Early population far more diverse/ scattered than scholars originally believed
 - Some likely arrived from Polynesia, Japan; possible from Europe/Africa
 - Most American Indians most similar to Siberians: Mongolians likely dominated
- Period referred to as "Archaic Period" (\approx 8000 - 3000 BCE)
 - Larger animals driven to extinction with spear-hunting, stone tools
 - Bows and arrows unknown until 400-500 CE
 - New tools emerged, including fishing nets, traps, gathering baskets
 - Most important crop was corn, followed by beans/squash in many communities
 - Sedentary settlements slowly began to form

The earliest settlers in America, opposite to the long-held belief that they had arrived over the Bering Land Bridge, likely travelled by boat from Polynesia, Japan, and Mongolia. They arrived with stone tools but gradually developed more advanced technology, including baskets, nets, and fishing traps. Their most significant crops were corn, beans, and squash.

What defined the growth of early South American civilizations?

The most prosperous early civilizations were in fact south of the United States, mostly in Central/South America and Mexico.

The Incas built a 2000-mile empire in the Peruvian region.

- Persuaded most leaders to join forces w/ them
- Connected by paved roads, which encouraged significant trade

The expansive Incan Empire was the dominant force in South America for multiple decades, known for their well-kept paved roads.

What defined the growth of pre-Aztec civilizations in Central America?

In Mesoamerica, civilization emerged as early as 10000 BCE.

- Olmec society emerged around 1000 BCE
- Most sophisticated: Mayans around 800 CE
 - Written language, numerical system, calendar, agriculture, trade routes

The civilizations in Central America emerged far earlier than those in South America. Significant prosperity began with the Olmecs around 1000 BCE, followed by the Mayans, both of whom were known for a written language and calendar.

What were the key characteristics of the Aztec Empire?

The Mayans were gradually succeeded by the Aztecs, who called themselves the Mexica.

- Established city of Tenochtitlan in modern Mexico City
 - Became largest American city *by far*
 - Characterized by many aqueducts, public buildings, organized military
- Incorporated other neighboring groups into society
 - Rather than directly conquering, drew into elaborate tribute network enforced by military
 - Most groups maintained significant autonomy
- Religion based on human sacrifice
 - Kept historical tradition of blood-letting
 - Introduced new concept of living hearts (generally captives)

The Aztecs were the last successful native civilization in Central America. Despite having been crushed by European disease, the Aztecs were the dominant force in southern North/Central America for centuries due to their extensive tribute system and large capital city.

What characterized the early North American civilizations?

- Northern civilizations did not develop elaborate political systems, primarily basing society on hunting/gathering/fishing
- Some civilizations primarily based around hunting/fishing
 - In Arctic Circle, Eskimos fished/hunted seals/caribou/moose, travelled by dogsled
 - In PNW, focused on salmon fishing with coastal settlements
 - Far West contained numerous successful fishing communities, with some gathering
- Most elaborate agricultural society in Southwest
 - Built irrigation for dryland farming, towns as trade centers
 - Architecture primarily stone/adobe, known as pueblos
- Other farming communities in Great Plains, though some hunted buffalo
- Eastern U.S., covered with forests, inhabited by Woodland Indians
 - Enjoyed most food on continent; farmed, fished, hunted, gathered
 - Major city of trade: **Cahokia**, large mound society
 - Northeastern societies far more nomadic due to less fertile terrain
 - * Techniques designed for quick exploitation, immediately killing land
 - * Moved after a few years, dispersing in winter
 - Tribes east of Mississippi unified by linguistic roots
 - * Largest language group: Algonquian (Atlantic from Canada to Virginia)
 - * Iroquoian centered in upstate NY
 - Comprised of Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk
 - Linked to Carolinas, Georgia, Cherokees
 - * Muskogean included southernmost region
 - Included Seminoles, Creeks, Choctaws
 - Fragile connections (did not view as single group)

Early North American civilizations were characterized by vastly different traits: many fished and hunted (especially in the northwest), others focused on agriculture (mostly in Southwest w/ adobe style), and others were primarily nomadic (like in the Northeast). Finally, most tribes east of the Mississippi were unified by linguistic roots, but they rarely made connections because of this.

What were the key cultural elements of Native American tribes?

- All tribes could be characterized by growing sedentary behavior as well as growing agriculture, population
- Defined social customs began to emerge, with central point often religion based on natural environment
 - Generally gods associated with crops, game, forests, rivers, etc.
 - Many tribes used colored totems for rituals, large festivals
- Social stratification continued with division of tasks by gender
 - Women *a/ways* cared for children, prepared meals
 - Farming often restricted to men (Pueblos), but others relied on men for hunting, battles
 - Women respected for ability to keep family together while men battled/hunted
 - * Generally earned powerful role within family

By the arrival of Europeans, almost all tribes had begun to adopt a sedentary, agricultural lifestyle. Settling often led to defined religion based around their natural environment; furthermore, agriculture increased social division between men and women.

Europe Looks Westward

What influenced Europe to conquer the Americas and what were the effects of this?

- Early Norse seamen (like Leif Eriksson) had gotten glimpse at New World, but discoveries were not well-known
- Middle Ages far from adventurous w/ provincial outlook due to small duchies/kingdoms
 - Lack of centralized rule limited wealth for large expeditions
 - Focus on subsistence agriculture, local trade encouraged few to explore
 - Church, w/ limited territorial control, unable to launch large venture

What characterized Europe's initial attempts at reaching the Americas?

Except for some slight interest by some Norse seamen to explore the New World, few others cared to explore beyond their province due to the divided political state of the Middle Ages.

What incentivized Europeans to look for new lands?

- Population rebound from Black Death led to rising land value, greater merchant class seeking goods to trade, and advanced navigational technology
- New united governments seen as necessary due to weak authority of church had sufficient wealth to expand beyond Europe
- Many merchants hoped to find direct trade route with East (w/o Muslim middlemen)
 - New monarchs agreed, prepared to finance voyages
 - Portuguese initially most active as dominant maritime power
 - * Sent Henry the Navigator to explore western African coast for powerful Christian empire to fight against northern Moors
 - Reached Cape Verde
 - * Others included Bartholomeu Dias, rounding cape of Africa; Vasco de Gama, reaching India

The emergence of larger, more centralized empires in Europe provided rulers with wealth and a desire to expand their territory to find raw materials and to trade with far lands. This encouraged numerous voyages, most notably from Portugal, whose greatest accomplishment was Vasco de Gama's quick sea route to India.

What were Christopher Columbus' major accomplishments?

- Columbus, a Genoese seafarer, hoped to reach Asia by westerly route (assumed smaller world, longer Asian continent, and no continents between Europe/Asia)
- Earned support from ambitious Spanish monarchy (not Portuguese), seeking to display great power created by marriage of Isabella/Ferdinand despite lesser maritime ability
- Columbus set off for Japan in 1492, reaching Bahamas after 10 weeks
 - Believed to have reached China, returning w/ many "Indians"
 - Returned after a year with goal to find wealth of Indies, Chinese *khan*; created small colony in Hispaniola
 - On third voyage, finally realized he had discovered new, potentially large continent
 - * Continued to believe he was close to Asia (unable to check due to Panamanian isthmus)
- Columbus' strong religious sentiment influenced voyages
 - Believed to be fulfilling divine mission, biblical prophecy
 - Saw himself as messenger of new heaven/earth, appointed by God

Columbus, a deeply religious man, inadvertently found the Americas in a westerly journey hoping to reach Asia. He made three key voyages, only discovering that he was not truly in Asia by his third voyage. In summary, Columbus was the first European to reach the New World.

What was Columbus' impact on future exploration?

- Spain devoted greater resources/energy to maritime exploration
 - Eventually replaced Portugal
- Vasco de Balboa (Spain) crossed Isthmus of Panama
- Magellan found strait at southern end of South America, eventually reaching Philippines
 - Despite death in native conflict, completed first circumnavigation of globe
- Spain had also explored coasts of North America (far north as Oregon)

Columbus' voyages inspired Spain to invest a significant amount of wealth into the development of maritime exploration. Because of this, Spain was the first to reach Asia via a westerly route.

What characterized the shift from bypass to conquering in North America?

- Eventually, explorers viewed as potential source of great wealth
 - Spanish claimed entire New World, apart from Brazil (papally declared to belong to Portugal)
- Columbus' colonists settled on Caribbean islands, hoping to find gold (no luck)
- **Hernan Cortés** led 600 men to Mexico (after 14 years as Cuban official)
 - Followed stories of great treasure
 - Met resistance from Aztecs under emperor Montezuma
 - * Resistance quickly collapsed due to inadvertent exposure to smallpox
 - * Saw easy victory as vindication from God
 - Cortés earned reputation as most brutal of *conquistadores*

Spanish explorers slowly began to see the potential in the New World as a source of great wealth. They initially limited themselves to the Caribbean area, but Hernan Cortés led 600 men to Mexico, where their spread of smallpox easily defeated the Aztec Empire.

To where did other Spanish explorers travel after news of Cortés' voyage surfaced?

- Pizarro conquered Peru, wealth of Incas
- Pizarro's deputy, Hernando de Soto, led search for gold through Florida, travelling west
 - First white man to cross Mississippi River
 - Opened Southwest to Spanish conquering
- Spanish warrior story described by both military achievement and brutality/greed
 - Continual trend throughout remainder of European conquering of Americas

After Cortés reached and exploited Mexico, Spanish explorers conquered Peru and the southern U.S. Many of their voyages were characterized by immense greed and native brutality.

What were the major characteristics of America under Spanish rule?

The history of Spanish rule over America can be broken up into three distinct periods.

- First, age of discovery/exploration following Columbus' voyages
 - First to arrive primarily sought riches, extremely successful
 - Large, unexploited gold mines yielded unparalleled quantities
- Second, age of conquest with powerful military forces extending their realms
 - Conquistadores left little more than destruction
 - Settlers established civilization
- Third, once new laws prevented brutal conquests, colonialism emerged motivated by Catholic Church, pushed by Ferdinand/Isabella
 - Required sole religion to be Catholicism
 - Catholic mission extremely powerful with goal to convert natives
 - * Military garrisons prevented attack on missionaries, encourage conversion
 - Priests/friars accompanied all ventures
 - Ultimately extended throughout continents

Spanish America, broken into the three periods of discovery, conquest, and colonialism, was characterized heavily by religious missions.

What were the major characteristics of Spain's first northern outpost?

Spain's first northern outpost, established in St. Augustine, Florida in 1565, served as a military outpost, administrative center for Franciscan missionaries, and headquarters for the failed campaigns against the natives.

What were the major characteristics of Spain's Southwest outpost?

In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate departed Mexico with 500 men and claimed the Pueblo lands in modern New Mexico.

- Settlement defined by traits similar to those already existing
- Assigned *encomiendas* to settlers for native labor exploitation
 - Modeled on system exacted on Spanish Moors
- Treated natives extremely harshly, including demanding tribute (despite natives outnumbering them greatly)
 - Resulted in removal as governor (1606), leading to stronger relations w/ Pueblo, including conversion and trade
- Settlement grew despite constant threats to Spanish and Pueblo from Apache and Navajo raiders
- Little gold to be discovered, instead raising cattle and sheep on *ranchos*
- Colony nearly collapsed after Pueblo revolts in 1680
 - Sparked by priest/government suppression of tribal rituals
 - Heavily influenced by major drought, Apache raids leading to instability within natives
 - Religious leader named Pope led uprising killing hundreds of Europeans, capturing Santa Fe
 - * Drove Spanish out temporarily
 - * Soon returned (1696), crushing final revolts
- Exploitation of Pueblos continued, but Spanish understood severity and allowed natives to own land, focused on greater integration into society
 - Led to significant intermarriage
 - Pueblos began to view Spanish as allies against Apache/Navajo
- By 1750, Pueblo population had declined (disease/war/migration) while Spanish had grown somewhat

Spain's outpost in the Southwest, despite being one of their most successful northern outposts, was known for harsh treatment of the natives through forced labor, tribute, and suppression of rituals. Damaging rebellions forced the Spanish to successfully reduce their exploitation through land ownership and social integration.

What was the peak of Spanish America?

- By the 16th century, Spanish Empire had become one of largest in world history
 - Caribbean, Mexico, coastal/inland South America (to Brazil), southern North America
- Different from eventual English colonies in many ways
 - Despite initial independence from monarchy, gradual exercise of control with impossibility for independent political institutions
 - Spanish more successful in extracting wealth from surface but placed little emphasis on building agriculture/commerce
 - * Strict Spanish commercial policies (never imposed by British) w/ only one Spanish port, a few colonial ports allowed for trade, two voyages per year
 - Spanish placed considerably less effort than British, French, Dutch on peopling new society
 - * Some from mainland, others from Spanish outposts
 - * Always outnumbered by natives, attempting to impose rule over large group

Spanish America's peak realm included a large portion of the American continent group. However, their success was limited due to strict monarchical control over the economy and politics and their inability to people society significantly.

Unlike in British colonies, racial lines began to blur, but culture remained relatively distinct. Despite this, numerous exchanges occurred between natives and settlers.

- Mostly unbeneficial for natives
 - Inadvertent spread of diseases like flu, measles, chicken pox, typhus, **smallpox**
 - * Led to practical extinction of many native groups in Mexico, Caribbean islands (like Hispaniola, Mayan areas)
 - * Some more successful with less intimate European contact
 - * Far worse than Black Death
 - More deliberate decimation of populations through subjugation, extermination
 - * Reflected ruthfulness of European war
 - * Result of conviction that natives were "savages"
 - Relied on for slave-like labor system
 - * Forced to work for fixed period, unable to depart without employer consent
 - * Europeans began to value native villages over gold due to potential for great labor
- Some forms of exchange less disastrous
 - New crops (sugar/bananas), livestock (cattle/pigs/sheep), and **horse** (vanished during ice age, transforming native lifestyle)
 - * Imported solely for Europeans, but natives slowly learned how to cultivate and harness power
 - Europeans learned about new agricultural techniques, crops (corn, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers) even reaching Europe
 - Many societies involved natives in close contact with Europeans, encouraging natives to adopt European practices
 - * Led to creation of new mixed dialects
 - * Adoption of Christianity led to blend with native traditions
 - European men outnumbered women by 10:1, leading to sexual contact with native women
 - * Society became dominated by mixed-race *mestizos*
 - * Hierarchy placed Spanish at top, mixed race in middle, natives at bottom, though far more fluid than expected with "Spanish" assigned to anyone powerful

What were the key biological and cultural exchanges in Spanish America?

Exchanges between the natives and settlers were mixed in character: negative exchanges included the spread of disease and the subjugation of native populations into a slave-like labor system while positive included the mutual spread of agricultural techniques, crops, and culture.

What were the characteristics of African slave labor in Spanish America?

The decline of native population in Spanish America forced the settlers to turn to a new region for slave labor: Africa.