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*The European competition for colonies in the Americas led to settlement and exploration in many parts of North America.*

## Religious Rivalries

### ***What were the religious motives behind the Age of Exploration?***

The Europeans who explored and settled in North America in the 1500s sought wealth. They also wanted to spread their Christian faith. The first to arrive were Roman Catholics—the only Christian church in the western part of Europe at that time. Not long after Columbus made his first voyage across the Atlantic, however, religious conflict shook Europe. New rivalries based on religious beliefs emerged.

### **Luther and the Reformation**

In 1517 a German priest named Martin Luther nailed a list of complaints on the door of a local Catholic church, questioning the power and authority of Catholic leaders—including the pope, the head of the Catholic Church. Luther hoped to spark reform within the Church, but Pope Leo X rejected his ideas. Others agreed with Luther. His ideas helped launch a movement called the Reformation (reh • fuhr • MAY • shuhn). The movement led to a new form of Christianity called Protestantism (PRAH • tuhs • tuhn • tih • zuhm). Among the differences between Protestants and Catholics was that Protestants did not accept the leadership of the pope. The Reformation led to widespread conflict within and between the nations of Europe.

### **Religious Rivalry in Europe**

In 1533 the English king, Henry VIII, left the Catholic Church. Later, during the rule of his daughter Elizabeth I, further reforms established England as a Protestant nation. At that time, it was common for kings and queens to insist that their subjects follow their religion. Subjects who did not could lose their lands and fortunes. In England, many people were unhappy about leaving the Catholic Church, but they had little power to resist.

England's Protestantism caused conflict with Spain. Beginning in 1585, King Philip of Spain made plans to invade England. A successful invasion could mean the overthrow of Protestantism. In May 1588, Philip sent an armada (ahr • MAH • duh), or war fleet, of 132 ships to England. With 30,000 troops and more than 2,000 guns, the Spanish Armada was the mightiest naval force in the world. Yet the smaller, faster English ships quickly gained the upper hand.

The defeat of Spain's armada marked the end of Spanish control of the seas. Now the way was clear for the English to start colonies in North America.

### **Religious Rivalries in the Americas**

Catholics from Spain and France worked to spread their faith among the Native Americans. The Spanish settled in the southwestern and southeastern regions of North America, and the French settled in the northeast. Dutch and English Protestants set up colonies along the Atlantic coast between the French and the Spanish settlements. Religious differences contributed to the rivalries between these settlements.

### **Search for a Northwest Passage**

In the 1500s and early 1600s, England, France, and the Netherlands sent explorers to map the coast of North America and, later, establish trade and colonies. Explorers also hoped to discover a Northwest Passage to Asia, a direct water route through the Americas.

England sent John Cabot, an Italian, to look for a northern sea route to Asia in 1497. Cabot probably landed on the coast of present-day Newfoundland. In 1524 France hired another Italian, Giovanni de Verrazano, to look for a northern route. Verrazano explored the coast of North America from present-day Nova Scotia down to the Carolinas.

In 1535 French explorer Jacques Cartier (kahr • tee • AY) sailed up the St. Lawrence River, hoping it would lead to the Pacific. Cartier did not make it to the Pacific, but he discovered a mountain peak that he named Mont-Royal, which means "royal mountain." This is the site of the present-day city of Montreal.

The Netherlands also wanted to find a passage through the Americas. The Dutch hired English sea explorer and navigator Henry Hudson to look for it. In 1609 he discovered the river that now bears his name. In his ship, the Half Moon, Hudson sailed north on the Hudson River as far as the site of present-day Albany, New York. Deciding that he had not found a passage to India, he turned back.

The following year England sent Hudson to try again. On this trip, Hudson discovered a huge bay—now called Hudson Bay. Thinking he had reached the Pacific, Hudson spent months looking for an outlet. His crew became impatient and rebelled. They set Hudson, his son, and a few sailors adrift in a small boat, never to be seen again.

### **Analyzing** Why did nations want to find a Northwest Passage?

## Thinking Like a HISTORIAN

### Analyzing Primary Sources

In 1639 a French woman named Marie Guyard, or Marie of the Incarnation, arrived in Quebec, New France's first colony. Later, she wrote religious books in the languages of the native peoples she met there. In a letter, Guyard wrote:

*"You will perhaps laugh that at the age of fifty years I am beginning to study a new tongue [language], but one must undertake all things for the service of God and the salvation of one's neighbour."*

—from *Word From New France*, by Marie Guyard

From her letter, what do you know about the person and character of Marie Guyard?  
For more about analyzing primary sources, review *Thinking Like a Historian*.

## French and Dutch Settlements

### *How did French and Dutch settlements compare to the Spanish colonies?*

French explorers and settlers trailed the Spanish by many years, but the French did establish settlements in North America. At first, the French were most interested in natural resources, including fish and furs. French trappers went far into the interior of North America and traded with Native Americans. France built forts to protect their trade. French missionaries followed the traders.

In 1663 New France became a royal colony. The new royal governor supported expanded exploration.

### Exploring the Mississippi River

In the 1670s, two French explorers—a fur trader, Louis Joliet, and a priest, Jacques Marquette—traveled the Mississippi River by canoe. Joliet and Marquette hoped to find precious metals. They were also looking for a Northwest Passage. When they realized that the Mississippi flowed south into the Gulf of Mexico rather than west into the Pacific, they headed back upriver.

In 1682 Robert Cavelier de La Salle followed the Mississippi all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. He claimed the region for France, calling it Louisiana in honor of Louis XIV. In 1718 the French founded New Orleans. French explorers and missionaries traveled west to the Rocky Mountains and the Rio Grande.

### New France and New Netherland

French settlement in North America advanced slowly. New France was made up of estates along the St. Lawrence River. Estate holders brought in settlers in exchange for land. These tenant farmers paid rent and worked for their lord for a set period each year.

The French got along well with the Native Americans. French trappers and missionaries lived among them, learned their languages, and respected their ways. The missionaries had come to convert Native Americans to Catholicism, but they did not try to change their customs. Because the French colony grew slowly, it did not seem to pose a threat to the Native Americans and their lands.

The Netherlands was a small country with few natural resources and limited farmland. This is why the Dutch were anxious to set up a North American colony. After Hudson's voyage in 1609, the Dutch began to explore North America.

The Netherlands also had a large fleet of trading ships that sailed all over the world. In 1621 the Netherlands created the Dutch West India Company to run its trade between the Americas and Africa. In 1623 the company took over control of the Dutch colony in North America, called "New Netherland."

The heart of the colony was New Amsterdam. The town was built on the tip of Manhattan Island. In 1626 governor Peter Minuit bought the island from the Manhattoes people for 60 guilders (about \$24) worth of trade goods.

**Explaining** What were France's goals in North America?

## LESSON 4 REVIEW

### Review Vocabulary

1. Explain the meanings of the terms *armada* and *Protestantism* by using both in a sentence.

2. Explain the significance of the term *tenant farmer*.

**Answer the Guiding Questions**

3. **Explaining** What were the key religious differences between the European nations that explored the Americas?

4. **Analyzing** What was the effect on England of the defeat of the Spanish Armada?

5. **Contrasting** How did the French attitude toward Native Americans differ from that found in the Spanish colonies?

6. **NARRATIVE** Write a letter to a relative in Europe from the point of view of an early French or Dutch settler in North America. Describe what life is like and what your goals are in North America.