

2. THE FIRST GLOBAL AGE: EUROPE AND ASIA (1415–1796)

Key Facts

- The desire for spices led Europeans to seek control of the Indian Ocean trade network.
- Improvements in technology helped European explorers navigate the vast oceans of the world.
- By the late 1500s, the Dutch replaced the Portuguese as the major European power in Asia. In the 1700s, England and France vied for dominance.

Beginning in the 1500s, European powers gradually built trading empires in Asia. Thus began a period of increasing global interdependence that has continued to the present day.

The Search for Spices

Today we take spices for granted. During the Middle Ages, spices from Asia brought huge profits. Asian goods and spices flowed to Europe along complex overland trade routes. Each time goods passed from one trader to another—from Muslim to Italian merchants—the prices increased. Europeans wanted to cut out the Muslim and Italian middlemen. They wanted direct access to the riches of Asia. By the late 1400s, this desire spurred Europeans to explore the oceans.



▲ **Global Trade Network** Through trade with India and East Asia, European states grew wealthy and powerful.

Improvements in technology helped Europeans conquer the vast oceans of the world. **Cartographers**, or map makers, created more accurate maps and sea charts. Europeans also learned to use the astrolabe. An **astrolabe** is an instrument developed by the ancient Greeks and perfected by the Arabs to determine latitude at sea. The Portuguese developed the **caravel**, a ship that combined the best elements of European, Arab, and Chinese sailing designs.

Portugal led the way in exploration. Portuguese ships explored the coast of West Africa. They rounded the Cape of Good Hope to reach the great spice ports of India. Eventually, they circled the globe. Portuguese voyages spurred other

European nations to seek a sea route to Asia. In 1492, Christopher Columbus convinced the king and queen of Spain that he could reach Southeast Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic. Columbus believed he had reached islands off the coast of East Asia. But Europeans soon realized that he had found a route to two continents previously unknown to them.

Southeast Asia. When European fleets reached Southeast Asia, they came to a world that had long before developed its own cultures and trading patterns. Sandwiched between China and India, Southeast Asia was strongly influenced by its two powerful neighbors. Over time, the distinctive cultures of Southeast Asia blended with elements from Indian



▲ Astrolabe

and Chinese civilization. The key products of mainland Southeast Asia were spices including cloves, nutmeg, ginger, and pepper. Island Southeast Asia controlled the rich sea trade routes between India and China.

European Footholds in Southeast Asia and India

When the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean, their ships were small in size and number. Still, they had one great advantage: cannons. In less than 50 years, the Portuguese had seized cities and built military and trading outposts rimming the southern seas. For most of the 1500s, Portugal controlled the spice trade between Europe and Asia.

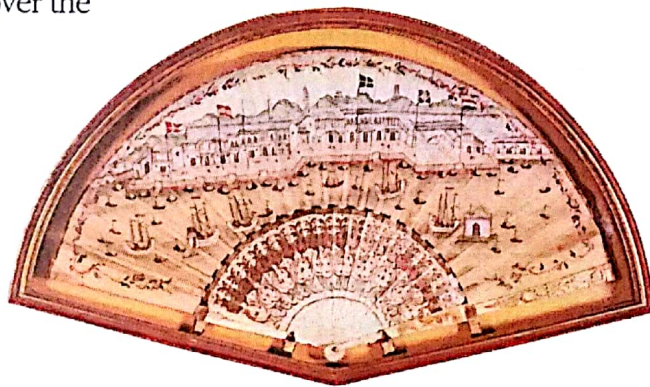
By the early 1600s, other Europeans were trying to replace the Portuguese in Asia. The Dutch were the first to challenge Portuguese fleets. By the late 1500s, Dutch warships and trading ships put them in the forefront of European commerce. Like the Portuguese, the Dutch used military force to further their trading goals. The Portuguese and Dutch set up bases on the coasts of Asia. Spain, however, took over the Philippines.

In the 1700s, the growing power of England and France contributed to a decline in the Dutch overseas trading empire. Unrest within Mughal India tempted French and

English traders to take advantage of the rivalries between Indian princes. By the mid-1700s, the British and French were locked in a global power struggle that included India. A group of wealthy English merchants formed the British East India Company. They used British and Indian troops to drive the French from their trading posts. The Company often gained its ends, not only by military force, but by winning the backing of local Indian rulers. The activities of the British East India Company set the stage for the expanding British raj, or rule.

Encounters in East Asia

The Europeans who reached East Asia in the 1500s often made a poor impression on their hosts. Portuguese sea traders who landed in China in 1514 had little to offer in exchange for silks and porcelains. European textiles, metalwork, and other goods were inferior to Chinese products. The Ming Chinese eventually allowed the Portuguese a trading post at Macao, near Canton. For many years, however, Europeans were allowed to trade only under strict supervision.



▲ Chinese fan showing foreign flags in Canton

Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese at first welcomed western traders. In 1543, the Portuguese reached Japan. Later came the Spanish, Dutch, and English. They arrived at a time when strong daimyos were struggling for power. The Japanese quickly acquired western firearms. For a time, they opened their doors to Christian missionaries.

The Tokugawa shoguns, however, became increasingly hostile toward foreigners. After learning how Spain had seized the Philippines, they may have seen the newcomers, including the missionaries, as agents of an invading force. In response, they expelled foreign missionaries. By 1638, Japan was barred to all western merchants. The shoguns also outlawed the building of large ships to end foreign trade. They forbade Japanese to travel abroad. Each year, just one or two Dutch ships were permitted to trade. Japan maintained its policy of strict isolation for more than 200 years. Not until 1853 did Japan reopen contacts with the western world—and then only by force.

Review

1. **Identify** Southeast Asia
2. **Define** (a) cartographer, (b) astrolabe, (c) caravel
3. Why did Europeans seek a trade route to Asia?
4. Why did the Tokugawa policy toward foreigners change over time?

3. THE FIRST GLOBAL AGE: EUROPE, THE AMERICAS, AND AFRICA (1492–1750)

Key Facts

- The arrival of Europeans in North and South America brought disaster to Native Americans.
- European powers built colonial empires in the Americas.
- Beginning in the 1400s, Europeans established trading outposts in Africa. Millions of slaves were imported from Africa to meet labor demands in American colonies.

During the age of exploration, European powers built colonial empires in the Americas and Africa. Not only did they bring into contact the peoples of Africa, Europe, and the Americas, but they began an exchange of plants, animals, institutions, values, and ideas that affects the world to this day.

Conquest in the Americas

A flood of Spanish explorers, settlers, and missionaries followed Columbus to the Americas. Among the first Spaniards to arrive were **conquistadors** (kahn KEES tuh dohrz), or conquerors. Wherever they went they claimed the land and its people for their king and Church. In brutal struggles, the conquistadors overthrew the Aztec and

Incan civilizations. Although Native Americans fought back, the pattern of conquest was repeated across the Americas. Meanwhile, another deadly invader was at work: disease. Europeans unknowingly carried diseases to which Native Americans had no immunity. These diseases spread rapidly, wiping out village after village.

An immediate result of Spanish conquest of the Americas was the flow of treasure to Spain. In the 1500s and early 1600s, treasure fleets sailed each year to Spain, loaded with gold and silver. The wealth of the Americas helped make Spain the most powerful country in Europe.

Remaking the Americas

In order to build an American empire, the Spanish set out to impose their culture, language, religion, and way of life on millions of people. To Spain, winning souls for Christianity was as important as gaining land. Spanish soldiers helped Roman Catholic missionaries who built churches and worked to turn new converts into loyal subjects of Spain.

The Spanish also wanted a profitable empire. Sugar cane quickly became a key resource. However, sugar cane is grown on **plantations**, large estates run by an owner or the owner's overseer. Plantations needed large numbers of workers to be profitable. At first, Spanish monarchs gave the conquistadors **encomiendas**, or the right to demand labor or tribute from Native Americans in a particu-

lar area. The conquistadors used this system to enslave Native Americans under brutal conditions. Later, settlers imported millions of Africans and forced them to work as slaves.

Over the centuries, the Spanish colonies developed a unique culture. It combined European, Native American, and African traditions. The blending of diverse traditions changed people's lives throughout the Americas.

Struggle for North America

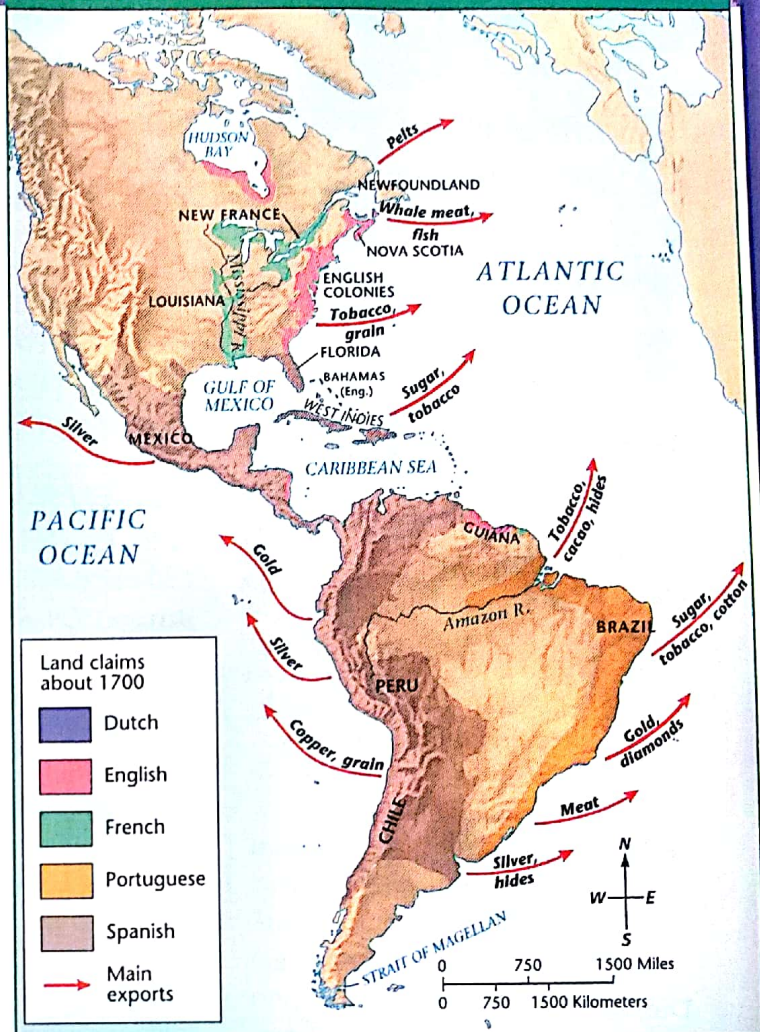
In the 1500s and 1600s, France and England joined Spain in claiming parts of North America. Although North America did not yield gold treasure, tobacco plantations, fishing, and fur trading soon turned large profits.

The French. The French built their first permanent settlement in Quebec. Fur trappers and Catholic missionaries advanced into the wilderness. By the 1700s, French forts, missions, and trading posts stretched from Quebec to the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi River to Louisiana.

The English. The English built their first permanent colony at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, individuals and groups of English settlers founded colonies. Many came seeking religious freedom. The English colonists needed workers to clear land and raise crops. A growing number of Africans were brought to the colonies and sold as slaves.

By the 1700s, Britain and

Land Claims in the Americas About 1700



GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY By the 1700s, European nations claimed vast stretches of land in both North and South America.

France had emerged as bitter rivals for power around the globe. The struggle came to a head when the Seven Years' War erupted in Europe and spread to North America. When it was over, the British had won control of Canada.

Impact on Native Americans.

The arrival of European settlers in North America often brought disaster to Native Americans. As settlers claimed more land, Native Americans resisted. Bitter fighting resulted. Disease weakened or killed large numbers of Native Americans. Still, the cultural influence of Native Americans helped shape the emerging new society.

Turbulent Centuries in Africa

The first encounters between Europeans and Africans took place in the 1400s. Europeans established trading forts along the western coast of Africa. Then, in the 1500s, Europeans began to view slaves as the most important item of African trade. For 300 years, the profitable Atlantic slave trade filled the demand for labor in Spain's American empire.

By the 1800s, when the overseas slave trade was finally stopped, an estimated 11 million enslaved Africans had reached the Americas. Another two million probably died under the brutal conditions of the voyage.

The slave trade drained countless women and men from West Africa. Some societies and small states disappeared. Other African states arose. Some new African states came to depend on the slave

trade. One large state that arose in West Africa in the late 1600s was the Asante kingdom. The Asante traded gold and slaves for firearms.

Changes in Europe

European exploration and trade between 1500 and 1700 brought major changes to the world. Columbus' arrival in the Americas sparked a vast global exchange of people, ideas, cultures, plants, animals, technology, and even disease.

New foods, such as potatoes and corn, helped feed Europe's rapidly growing populations. The migration of millions of peoples led to an enormous transfer of ideas and technologies. Because this global exchange began with Columbus, we call it the Columbian exchange.

A Commercial Revolution.

Expanded trade and the push for overseas empires spurred the growth of European **capitalism**, the investment of money to make a profit. **Entrepreneurs**, or enterprising merchants, organized, managed, and assumed the risks of doing business. European monarchs

adopted new policies to strengthen their nation's economies. In the 1500s and 1600s, Europe emerged as a powerful new force on the world scene.

Review

1. **Identify** Columbian exchange
2. **Define** (a) conquistador, (b) plantation, (c) encomiendas, (d) capitalism, (e) entrepreneur
3. **Name** two effects of the Spanish conquest of the Americas.