

Conflict Over North American Lands

Cross-Curricular Focus: History/Social Sciences



The Age of Exploration lasted from the early 15th century until the middle of the 17th century. During this time period, European nations explored the world by sea. They wanted to trade goods with other people to make a profit. They also wanted to find shorter routes to their existing trade partners. Some adventurers wanted to find out information about the world. Cartographers were constantly revising maps based on the latest travels. Through the maps and journals of explorers, people of the known world improved their knowledge of geography.

Spain was the first European nation to claim land in the Americas in the 1560s. They were eager to get as much land as possible for Spain. Much of Mexico, South America, and Florida once belonged to Spain. England wanted to claim its share as well, arriving in North America in 1607. France claimed land in the area that is now Canada. Settlers from the Netherlands claimed the area that is now New York. The Spanish began claiming Californian land. They built the first mission in 1769 on the site that became the city of San Diego.

Why was there so much interest in the Americas? Many Native Americans were already living in the Americas. The area was rich in desirable resources. European nations valued the many **raw materials** that seemed to be in never-ending supply in North America. The English discovered tobacco, a crop that would finance the success of the early colonies. The Dutch from the Netherlands made a lot of money in the fur trade. They sold beaver furs at trading posts that were established along commonly traveled river and land routes. Spain claimed gold and silver from Aztec resources in Mexico.

With so many valuable resources to be had, there were many **conflicts** over North American lands. Colonies founded by different countries were located near each other. There were disagreements and fears between the settlers. Wars were fought to control areas that were particularly rich in resources. Native Americans were caught between the warring colonists. They were often seen as obstacles to be conquered.

Name: _____

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) Why did European nations send out so many explorers during the Age of Exploration?

2) Why do you think French is spoken in some parts of Canada?

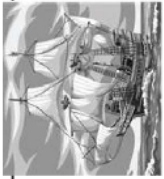
3) Who were the early settlers of New York?

4) Which European nation was the first to claim land in the Americas?

5) Why were the Americas so desirable to the Europeans?

Colonization: for Gold, God and Glory

Cross-Curricular Focus: History/Social Sciences



Historically, most explorations began as searches for new trade routes.

However, the discovery of the Americas changed all that. It created new desires in the hearts of kings, **emperors** and explorers. Land was hard to get in Europe as populations grew. Every bit of it had already been claimed.

The prospect of vast open lands in the Americas excited the sailors to action. The lands were also reportedly full of rich resources. The bountiful land also encouraged rulers to put up the money for sailing expenses in the hopes of receiving far more wealth in return.

Religion was another reason for exploration and colonization. When Protestants rebelled against the Catholic Church, calling for its reform, the Catholic Church launched the Counter-Reformation. This was a time when Catholic nations did everything they could to **convert** new believers to Catholicism. Establishing a new **colony** was an opportunity for the church to convert the natives.

Each time another explorer went to seek his fortunes, to convert natives to his religion or to make a name for himself as a brave adventurer, the face of the world changed again. **Cartographers**, the people who make maps, struggled to keep up with the new discoveries. In their hurry to publish "newer" and "better" maps, unknown areas were often filled in with things the cartographer imagined. Sometimes the cartographer decorated it with angels, spirits or demons to represent the unknown.

The world became a smaller place with each exploration. Finally, in 1519, Ferdinand Magellan began his historic voyage. He became the first explorer to realize the original dream of sailing west to Asia. In the name of Spain, Magellan's crew did something else remarkable in the process, as well. They were the first people ever to **circumnavigate** the globe. **Circumnavigation** means to sail completely around the entire world. Sadly, Magellan did not live to see the three-year journey completed. He died during battle with natives in Asia in 1521. Only one of his five ships and 18 of his 250 men returned home in 1522.

Name: _____

Answer the following questions based on the reading passage. Don't forget to go back to the passage whenever necessary to find or confirm your answers.

1) Do you think it was moral for European nations to claim lands in the Americas that were already inhabited by natives? Why or why not?

2) Why did cartographers add artistic pictures, like angels, to their maps?

3) Gold, God, and glory were three reasons for exploration. Which of these might motivate you to go exploring? Why?

4) Considering that so many died, was Magellan's voyage a success? Why or why not?

5) What does circumnavigate mean?