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HORIZONS

1488 – 1760

1488

Dias rounds the Cape of Good Hope

1492

Columbus lands in the New World

1519–1522

Magellan's fleet sails around the world

1588

Defeat of the Spanish Armada

1607

Founding of Jamestown

1500

1550

1600

1519

Cortés arrives in Mexico

1498

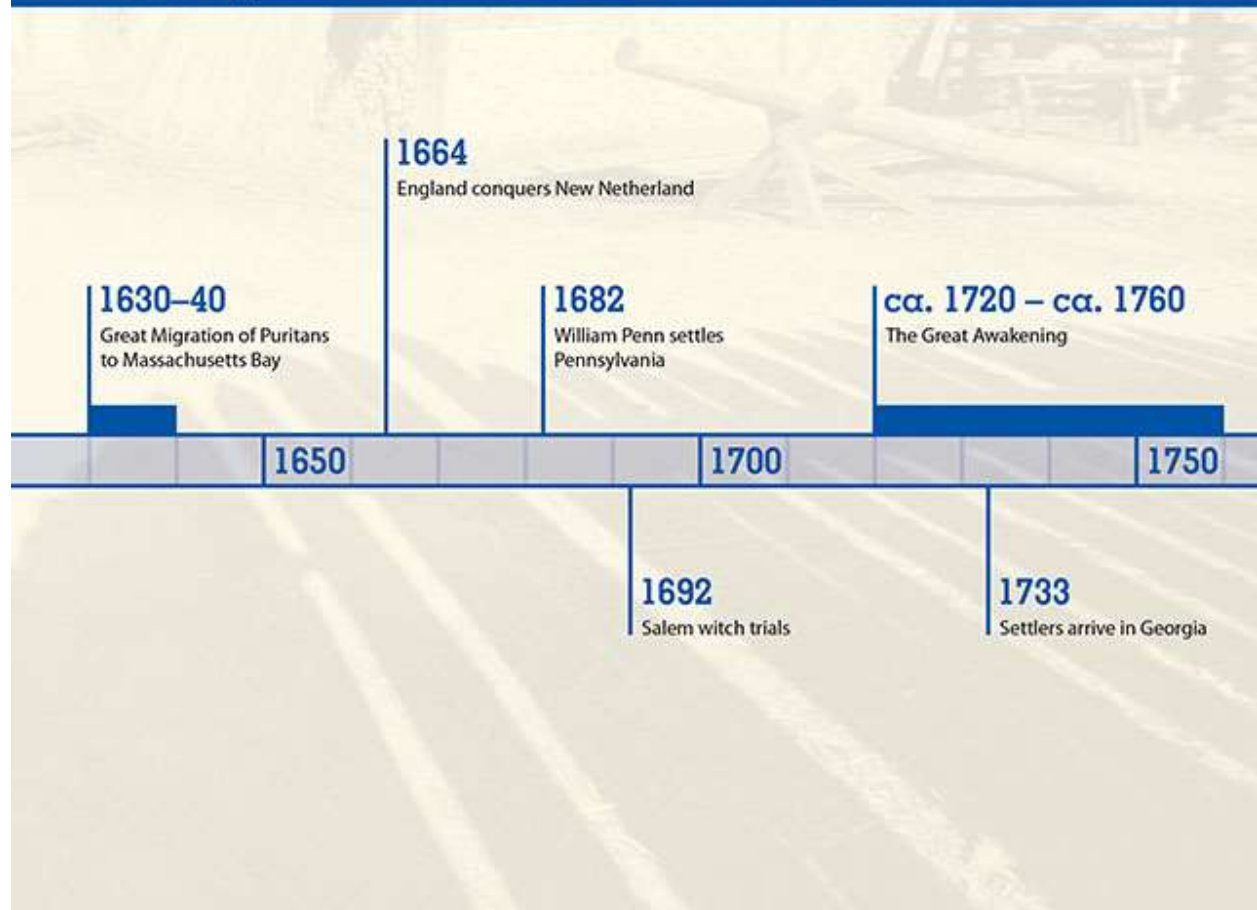
Da Gama reaches India by sailing around Africa

1620

Pilgrims come to the New World

CHAPTERS

- 1 NEW AND OLD WORLDS MEET
- 2 THIRTEEN COLONIES
- 3 COLONIAL LIFE
- 4 RELIGION IN THE AMERICAN COLONIES



1

NEW AND OLD WORLDS MEET

At two hours after midnight
appeared the land...

Christopher Columbus
October 12, 1492, Captain's Log Entry



Columbus erroneously thought he had reached Asia
when he landed on an island he called San Salvador.

Big Ideas

1. What changes in the Old World led to exploration of the New World?
2. What did Europeans discover in the New World, and what changes did they bring to the New World?

I. Changes in the Old World

II. Contacts in the New World

Iron shackles clanked in the musty prison cell as huddled forms awakened. One prisoner, gathering quill and parchments from beneath his pillow, continued his writing. In happier times he had been a writer of romances and chivalric legends who had enjoyed modest acclaim. Now, during a war in 1298, he found himself cast into prison with a living legend named **Marco Polo**.

Though a prisoner of war, Polo was still free to tell the most fantastic stories. His adventures in China had spanned nearly twenty years, during which time he had been a favorite of Kublai, the grand khan of the Mongols.

Polo described mysterious Asia as a world of shimmering silks, fragrant spices, and unlimited gold. In a land that would someday be called Japan, Polo had heard that gold was so common it was used for pavement.

In that prison cell, Marco Polo's new friend, Rustichello da Pisa, penned the words of one of history's greatest travelers, later published under the imposing title *Description of the World*. Polo's narrative became the definitive work on Asia for the next three centuries. Its vivid descriptions enticed men to see the region for themselves, and this enticement prepared Europe to experience sweeping change. Asia offered Europeans a chance to experience remarkable growth, personally in wealth and nationally in power and prestige. Seeking this growth eventually led to the discovery of another world—a world that would make all they had known seem old.



Marco Polo

I. Changes in the Old World

China, Innovations, and Mercantilism

Early European explorers saw China as the source of great riches and opportunities for their countries. The first peoples to take advantage of access to China (and the East Indies islands of South Asia) were the Muslims, who for decades held a virtual monopoly on all trade in the region. Soon, however, Europeans determined to get their share of trade in the Indies, and that area became the focus of exploration before the discovery of the New World.

Several innovations made it possible for the Europeans to compete with the Muslims and eventually to discover the New World.

Guiding Questions

1. How did Europeans become interested in the riches of Asia?
2. How did European explorers travel to Asia?
3. How did the Protestant Reformation prompt many Europeans to travel to the New World?



The astrolabe and other new navigational instruments made it easier for explorers to sail the unknown oceans of the world more accurately.



Caravel

Mercantilism Versus Free Market

Free market economics, in contrast to mercantilism, sees trade as a mutually beneficial arrangement in which both sides emerge as winners. Each side gives up something it considers less valuable to gain something it considers more valuable.

One was the development of the **compass**, which enabled sailors to know in which direction they were heading. Another invention was the **astrolabe**, which allowed them to determine their ship's latitude on the ocean.

Another important innovation was a Portuguese ship called a **caravel**. This small light ship sported two or three triangular sails that made it easy to maneuver. The swiftness of the caravel, combined with its overwhelming cannon power, enabled not only the expansion of European trade with China and the Indies but also the discovery of the New World. The confrontation between Muslims and Europeans in the Indies was the second major conflict between the Muslim and the Christian European cultures. The first confrontation was the Crusades (1095–1291). Those wars sparked an increase in trade, as the European participants returned home with products from Asia.

Perhaps as important as such innovations was a shift in economic thinking that occurred in Europe about the time explorations began, and it greatly spurred exploratory efforts. Monarchs in Europe were gradually shifting from the feudal, or manorial, economic thinking prevalent during the Middle Ages to a nationalistic economic system of thought known as **mercantilism**. Although that shift in thinking might have been a step toward free market capitalism, it most certainly was not capitalism or free trade.

Mercantilism was an economic system that was designed to enhance the wealth and power of a nation. It operated on two basic assumptions:

1. Mercantilists believed that a nation's wealth consisted of precious metals, especially gold. The value of a product, they thought, was determined by how much gold (or other precious metal) people were willing to give in exchange for it.
2. Mercantilists were nationalists who believed that a country could increase its wealth by increasing its surplus of gold. For one nation to increase its wealth (gold), they thought, another country had to lose it. Mercantilism saw a world of winners and losers. The monarchs' desire for gold led to numerous conflicts between nations, possibly accounting in large measure for the desire of France and England to separate Spain from its treasures of gold found in the New World.

Mercantilism also led to national desires to build colonial empires that would serve both as sources of riches and raw materials from which to manufacture goods and as markets for those goods once they were made in the mother country. In practice, mercantilism led to the government's granting of special charters, subsidies, and bounties for some companies or individuals while it discouraged imports and encouraged exports. Mercantilists sought to achieve a "favorable balance of trade," that is, to export more than they imported, thereby collecting even more gold. An understanding of mercantilism is necessary for understanding both the intense competition among the major European powers and the conflict that eventually arose between England and its New World colonies.

Sugar and Spice

Marco Polo's account of China in the 1200s fired the imaginations of Europe's merchants and adventurers. But the overland

route to China was costly and dangerous. Muslim merchants, who controlled the eastern silk and spice trade, choked the highways, prompting Western Europeans to find a waterway to China in order to bypass the Muslim monopoly.

The Portuguese led the way in 1488 when **Bartolomeu Dias** (DEE ahz) sailed southward along the west coast of Africa and rounded its southern cape, which he optimistically called Good Hope. A decade later, **Vasco da Gama** (dah GAH mah) followed up Dias's discovery by sailing to India. Da Gama returned to Portugal with a cargo of spices worth sixty times the cost of his expedition.

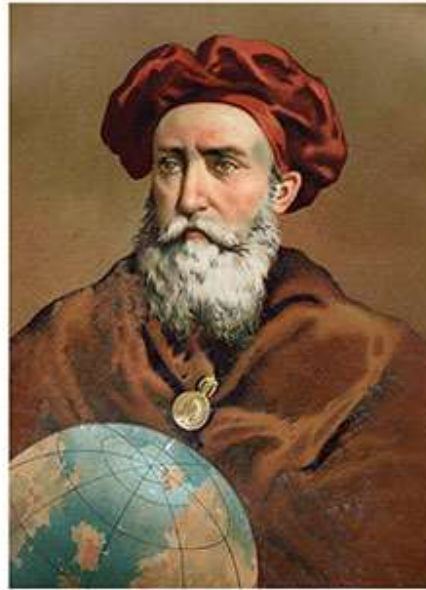
Such fantastic profits signaled the end of the Muslim monopoly on the spice trade and the beginning of the European scramble for wealth. Ships laden with cinnamon, gold, ivory, and sugar revolutionized Europe's economy, politics, and worldview.

As Portugal, Spain's neighbor, was dominating trade in the Indian Ocean, Spaniards looked in another direction for trade with Asia. Like most educated Europeans of the fifteenth century, the Italian-born **Christopher Columbus** believed that the world was round. Basing his calculations—or, as it turned out, his miscalculations—on the circumference estimates of the second-century Greek mathematician Ptolemy, Columbus reasoned that the shortest route to the East was west. Columbus and Ptolemy, though correct about the earth's shape, were incorrect about its size. Columbus figured that by sailing three thousand miles west, he could reach Japan and its fabled riches. (Actually, Japan is more than twelve thousand miles west from the coast of Spain.)

When the king of Portugal refused to underwrite a westward voyage, Columbus turned to the Spanish for help. After receiving the reluctant support of Queen Isabella, Columbus set out in early August 1492 with three ships and a letter of greeting from the Spanish crown to the king of Cipango (Japan). The letter was to be personalized after Columbus learned the name of the distant ruler.

On the evening of October 11, Columbus wrote in his ship's log, "the Admiral, at ten o'clock in the night, being on the sterncastle, saw a light. . . like a small wax candle. . . the Admiral was certain that they were near land." By 2:00 a.m. the light proved to be land, and though Columbus did not realize it, he had stumbled not onto an island of Cipango but onto a sliver of sand in the Bahamas. That day Columbus went ashore and named the island San Salvador (Holy Savior) in gratitude for the merciful ocean passage that God had given his expedition. Curious natives gathered about the strange band of pale visitors and offered gifts of parrots and raw cotton. Columbus was certain that he was on an island of the Indies, off the coast of mainland Asia; thus, he called the people *los indios*—Indians. Many more misunderstandings between the two cultures would occur in the centuries to follow.

If he were an explorer looking for new lands, Columbus could not have been in a better location, since there are literally thousands of islands in the Caribbean archipelago. But as an explorer looking for Asian riches, Columbus could not have been in a more frustrating position. He would make three more voyages to the region in a vain search for China and Japan, and it appears that he went to his grave believing he had reached the outskirts of Asia. In addition, much confusion occurred because he used the inaccurate term "Indian" for the native peoples of the region.



Vasco da Gama



Christopher Columbus

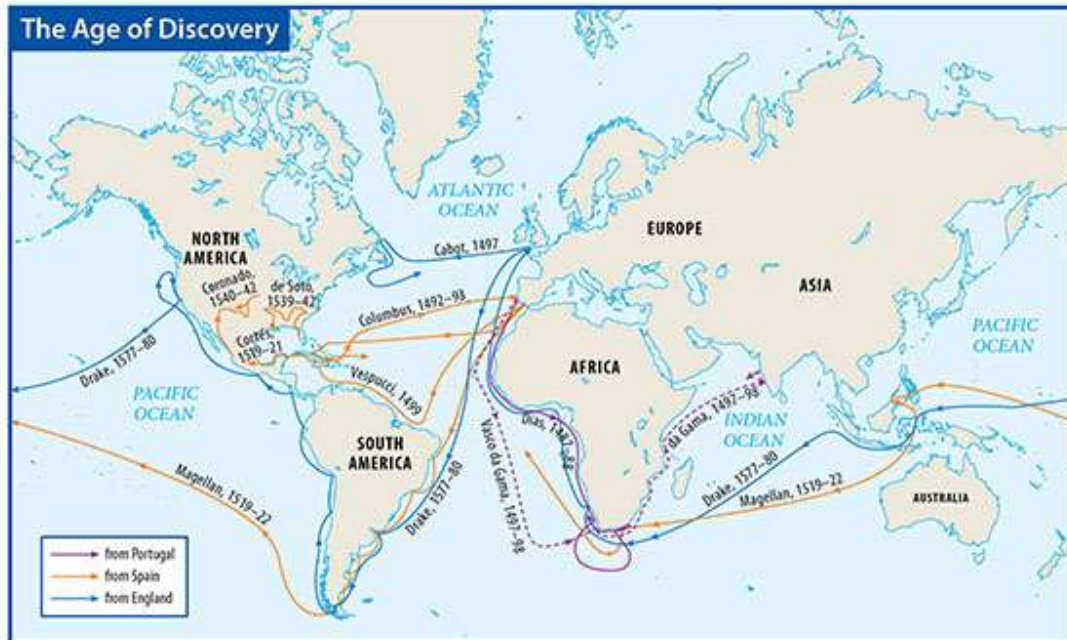


Amerigo Vespucci

Other men, however, came to realize what Columbus did not—that there was a new world across the ocean. One of those men was **Amerigo Vespucci** (vehs POO chee), who made at least two voyages to the Caribbean and South America. One of history's interesting ironies is that in 1507 a little-known German mapmaker was so bold as to name this area not Columbus, but "America" in honor of Amerigo.

England was not idle during the race for the Asian region. In 1497, the Italian explorer Giovanni Caboto—known to the English for whom he sailed as **John Cabot** (KAB uht)—reached Newfoundland in his search for a passage to China. The following year, he once again sailed west for the East, but he never returned. His fate remains a mystery; yet his initial discovery changed the course of history, for it provided the basis for England's claim to and colonization of North America.

Two continents were now added to the world map. Yet the Americas seemed more of an obstacle to sail around than a land to settle. Explorers set about finding a way to bypass it, believing riches lay just beyond the new world horizon. **Ferdinand Magellan** (muh JEHL uhn) determined that he could reach the Spice Islands of the East by sailing south around the Americas. In what would be one of the greatest sea voyages of all time, Magellan sailed from Spain in 1519 with five ships and a crew of about 270 men. While stopped on the coast of present-day Argentina, a mutiny occurred. Magellan crushed the rebellion and executed its leaders. Afterwards, one of the ships sank in a terrible storm. As he neared the area where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans converge, fierce storms and huge waves tossed the ships. The crew on one ship abandoned the expedition and returned to Spain. Unfortunately, this ship contained a large portion of the fleet's supplies.



The three remaining ships sailed through waters never before traversed by Europeans. A few years earlier, the Spanish explorer Balboa had first seen that blue expanse from a hillside in Panama, but Magellan's little fleet was now plunging through its waves. However, Asia did not lie just beyond the Americas. As Magellan continued to pursue an ever-receding horizon, provisions ran low.

For almost a hundred days the crew languished on the difficult sea. The stench of foul water and death hung heavy about the ships. Gnawing hunger drove the sailors to eat sawdust and leather from the ships' rigging. Rats became a prized dish. Although the three ships eventually reached present-day Guam, where the survivors obtained needed supplies, it was now painfully clear that a western route to Asia was impractical.

The ships sailed on to the Philippines, where a tribal squabble resulted in Magellan's death by poisoned arrows. Although he never lived to see it, one of his ships reached the Spice Islands and continued the voyage westward for home. Three years after Magellan's fleet left Spain, that ship, the *Victoria*, returned with only eighteen of the original fleet's crew. Their daring feat was stunning—they were the first to **circumnavigate** (sail completely around) the world!

Nearly five centuries later, the first circumnavigational voyage remains an incredible achievement. Magellan had revealed the size of the globe, yet for the time its vastness set limits on western trade routes. Increasingly, the focus would be on the Americas, a new world that offered new promise.

Religious Change

While Magellan's ships were making their global trek, a German monk named **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) was gaining the attention of all Europe. For centuries Roman Catholicism had dominated every aspect of European society. But by Luther's time the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church was apparent. Luther stood against these corruptions, but he was different from many others who sought reform.

Luther came to realize that the root of these problems was a false view of how people could be saved from their sins. The Catholic Church taught that God's grace flowed to sinners only through the Church's system of penance. Luther, however, preached that salvation was a work of God. God justified (declared to be righteous) those who trusted in Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection and who called out for salvation from their sin.

Eventually, Luther and others like him formed their own churches. These churches emphasized that Christians were free from the authority of Roman Catholicism. They also emphasized that Christians should not depend on others for their spiritual well-being. All Christians should learn to read the Scriptures for themselves and should know how to apply God's Word to their lives.

Luther's teaching called into question much about the Roman Catholic Church. And since the Church played a role in all aspects of European society, Luther's influence led to great changes in the culture of Europe. The movement that pressed for these changes was the **Protestant Reformation**. England, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and parts of Germany were the places most influenced by this movement. France and Spain were the most opposed to it. As the Reformation spread across Europe, theological battle lines often became actual battle lines. Some of the competition between



Martin Luther



This is an artist's portrayal of Martin Luther nailing his Ninety-Five Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.