

High School Level STUDENT

AMERICAN HISTORY

*Observations & Assessments
from Early Settlement
to Today*

James P. Stobaugh



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This book is dedicated to this new generation of young believers whose fervor and dedication to the purposes of the Lord shall yet bring a great revival. Stand tall, young people, and serve our Lord with alacrity and courage!



Using Your Student Textbook

How this course has been developed:

1. **Chapters:** This course has 34 chapters (representing 34 weeks of study).
2. **Lessons:** Each chapter has five lessons each, taking approximately 20 to 30 minutes each. There will be a short reading followed by critical thinking questions. Some questions require a specific answer from the text, while others are more open-ended, leading the student to think “outside the box.”
3. **Weekly exams:** The final lesson of the week is the exam covering the week’s chapter.
4. **Student responsibility:** Responsibility to complete this course is on the student. Students are to complete the readings every day, handing their responses to a parent or teacher for evaluation. Independence is strongly encouraged in this course, which was designed for the student to practice independent learning.
5. **Grading:** Turn in your assignments daily or weekly to your parent/teacher.

Throughout this book you will find the following components:

1. **Narrative Background:** background on the period.
2. **Critical Thinking Questions:** questions based roughly on Bloom’s Taxonomy.
3. **Concepts/Generalizations:** terms, concepts, and theories to be learned.
4. **History Maker:** a person(s) who clearly changed the course of history.
5. **Historiographies or Historical Debate:** an examination of historical theories surrounding a period or topic.
6. **World View Formation:** An overview of historical understandings of who God is. There is also a subsection where we examine important thinkers of the period/topic.
7. **History & World View Overview:** an overview of world views.

What the student will need each day:

1. **Notepad:** for writing assignments.
2. **Pen/pencil:** for the answers and essays.

About the Author

James P. Stobaugh and his wife, Karen, have homeschooled their four children since 1985. They have a growing ministry, For Such a Time As This Ministries, committed to challenging this generation to change its world for Christ.



Dr. Stobaugh is an ordained pastor, a certified secondary teacher, and an SAT coach. His academic credentials include: BA, cum laude Vanderbilt University; Teacher Certification, Peabody College for Teachers; MA, Rutgers University; MDiv, Princeton Theological Seminary; Merrill Fellow, Harvard University; DMin Gordon Conwell Seminary.

Dr. Stobaugh has written articles for magazines: *Leadership*, *Presbyterian Survey*, *Princeton Spire*, *Ministries Today*, and *Pulpit Digest*. Dr. Stobaugh’s books include the *SAT Preparation Course for the Christian Student*, the *ACT Preparation Course for the Christian Student*, as well as *American History*, *British History*, and *World History* high school curriculum.

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Preface



Statue of George Washington at the Indiana State Capitol. Photo by Rebecca White, 2011.

The writing of history is the selection of information and the synthesis of this information into a narrative that will stand the critical eye of time. History, though, is never static. One never creates the definitive theory of a historical event. History invites each generation to reexamine its own story and to reinterpret past events in light of present circumstances.

The creation of this story is more difficult than it seems. From the beginning the historian is forced to decide what sort of human motivation matters most: economic? political? religious? social?

For instance, what caused the American Revolution? The historian Bernard Bailyn argues that ideology or the history of thought caused the American Revolution. No, the historian Oscar Handlin argues, the Revolution was caused by social upheaval (i.e., the dislocation of groups and classes of people). Sydney Ahlstrom argues that religion was an important cause of the American Revolution. And so forth. Students will look at several theories of history, primary source material, and then decide for themselves what really happened.

In other words, *American History* invites students to be historians. Students look at the sources and scholarship available and make a decision. Students must know and accept that the past is constantly changing according to new scholarship discoveries. Therefore, as new sources are discovered, and old ones reexamined, students understand that theories of history may change. *American History* enables students to commit themselves to the task of examining these theories, primary source material, and ultimately to form their own theories of history. “Every true history is contemporary history,” historians Gerald Grob and George Billias write. My students make the theories of historical events personal and contemporary.

While I know that my students can never be completely neutral about history, scholarly historical inquiry demands that they implement the following principles:

1. Historians must evaluate the veracity of sources. There must be a hierarchy of historical sources. Primary source material, for instance, usually is the best source of information.
2. Historians must be committed to telling both sides of the historical story. They may choose to lobby for one view over the other, but they must fairly examine all theories.

3. Historians must avoid stereotypes and archetypes. They must overcome personal prejudices and dispassionately view history in ruthlessly objective terms.
4. Historians must be committed to the truth no matter where their scholarship leads them. At times historians will discover unflattering information about their nation/state.
5. Finally, historians understand that real, abiding, and eternal history ultimately is made only by people who obey God at all costs.

After everything is said and done, historians are only studying the past. They cannot really change the past. Theories about the past come and go, and change with each generation. However, the past is past. It is over.

Historians will debate about history, but they can never change history. Only God can change history.

God alone can change history. When persons are reborn in Christ, their present, future, and, yes, even their past is changed. History is literally rewritten. They are new creations. That bad choice, that sin, that catastrophe is placed under the blood of the Lamb, and everything starts fresh and new. A new history for new people.

Let me illustrate. 150 years ago my great-great-great-grandfather, whose passion was to kill Yankees, was a slave owner in Eastern Tennessee. With that inheritance, like most white Southerners who grew up in the 1960s, I grew up to mistrust African-Americans. Like so many people captured by their history and culture, present and future became my past. However, when I was a senior in high school, I was saved, Jesus Christ became my Lord and Savior. My attitudes changed. It took time but prejudices disappeared. Ultimately, I married my New Jersey wife, Karen, and we adopted three African-American children—whose ancestors, by the way, may have been owned by my great-great-great-uncle!

Three of my children are African-American. Imagine! Quite literally, my history was rewritten. It has been changed irrevocably by my decision to invite Jesus Christ to be Savior of my life. In a real sense, family prejudice and death existing for generations ended in my generation. The destructive, historical cycle that was part of my history has ended. No one, nothing can do that but the Lord. History has been rewritten!

My prayer is that if you do not know this God who can change history—even your history—this history text might encourage you to invite Jesus Christ into your heart as Savior.





South façade of the White House, the executive mansion of the president of the United States, located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. By UpstateNYer, 2006 (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Chapter 1

NATIVES OF THE NEW WORLD

First Thoughts . . .

Can you imagine what it was like to be living in North or South America in the early 16th century and suddenly seeing bearded white men landing on your shore carrying strange flags and metal instruments from huge ships? Or can you imagine how it felt to be cooped up in a scurvy-ridden, drafty ship for two and a half months and then, suddenly sighting a new land? This chapter will explore the developed civilizations of native peoples who greeted the new Europeans as they first explored and then settled in the Western Hemisphere.

Chapter Learning Objectives . . .

Chapter 1 presents the beginning of European America, for there were already Native American cultures when the Europeans arrived. We invite you to understand the complexity of the task of exploration, the difficulties of colonization, and the challenge of establishing relations with Native Americans. By not merely memorizing facts, but delving into controversial topics, you will understand, analyze, and then evaluate the triumphs and tragedies that comprised the European exploration and conquest of the Americas.

As a result of this chapter you should be able to:

1. Analyze the different world views extant in colonial society.
2. Describe what it was like to be indigenous Native Americans living in North and South America.
3. Describe in greater detail the Delaware, Lenape, Powhatan, Algonquin, Iroquois, Aztec, Mayan, and Incan people groups.
4. Discuss Columbus's legacy, describing the intricacies of his controversial effect on the Native American peoples.
5. Analyze primary sources and determine their credibility.



WAR OF THE WORLD VIEWS

The Vital Nature of World View

What is a **world view**? A world view is a way that a person understands, relates to, and responds from a philosophical position that he embraces as his own. World view is a framework that ties everything together, that allows us to understand society, the world, and our place in it.

If you are a committed Christian believer, you will be challenged to analyze the world views of individuals and institutions around you. You are inextricably tied to your culture; but that does not mean you can't be in this culture but not of this culture. Furthermore, you will be asked to explain your own world view and to defend it against all sorts of assaults. It is important that you pause and examine several world views that you will encounter. You also need to articulate your own world view.

A world view helps us make the critical decisions that will shape our future. A world view colors all our decisions and all our artistic creations. In the first *Star Wars* movie (1977), for instance, Luke Skywalker clearly values a Judeo-Christian code of ethics. That does not mean that he is a believing Christian—indeed he is not—but he does uphold and fight for a moral world. Darth Vader, on the other hand, represents chaos and amoral behavior. He does whatever it takes to advance the emperor's agenda, regardless of who he hurts or what rule he breaks. It is important that you articulate your world view now so that you will be ready to discern other world views later.

Contemporary World Views

"Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans."

—Yoko Ono

"I don't think any of us really know why we are here."

—Ray Charles

"Animal liberation will come!"

—Ingrid Newkirk

"Just chill out."

—Ice-T.

"If we had no other purpose in life, it would be good enough simply to goose people once in a while."

—Garrison Keillor

"The meaning of life is felt through relationship."

—Jonas Salk

"To fulfill the purpose of life is to ignite the spark of divinity in us and give meaning to our lives."

—Michael Jackson



Seven Major World Views

Here is a short sketch of the seven major world views with examples:

1

Theism: God is personally involved with humankind. Theism argues that the universe is a purposive, divinely created entity. It argues that all human life is sacred and all persons are of equal dignity. They are, in other words, created in the image of God. History is linear and moves toward a final goal. Nature is controlled by God and is an orderly system. Humanity is neither the center of nature nor the universe, but is the steward of creation. Righteousness will triumph in a decisive conquest of evil. Earthly life does not exhaust human existence but looks ahead to the resurrection of the dead and to a final, comprehensive judgment of humanity (adapted from Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*). This was the only viable world view until the Renaissance. Examples: Homer, Virgil, C. S. Lewis, A. J. Cronin, Tolkien.

2

Deism: God was present but is no longer present. The world is like a clock wound up by God many years ago, but He is now absent. The clock (i.e., the world) is present; God is absent. Still, though, Deism embraced a Judeo-Christian morality. God's absence, for instance, in no way mitigated His importance to original creation. He was also omnipotent but not omniscient. His absence was His decision. He was in no way forced to be absent from the world. He chose to assume that role so that Socratic empiricism and rationalism could reign as sovereign king. Speculative Theism replaced revelatory biblical Theism. Once the living God was abandoned, Jesus Christ and the Bible became cognitive orphans (Carl F. H. Henry). Examples: Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson.

3

Romanticism: Once Americans distanced themselves from the self-revealing God of the Old and New Testaments, they could not resist making further concessions to subjectivity. Romanticism, and its American version, Transcendentalism, posited that God was nature and "it" was good. The more natural things were, the better. Nature was inherently good. Nature alone was the ultimate reality. In other words, nature was the Romantic god. Man was essentially a complex animal, too complex to be controlled by absolute, codified truth (as one would find in the Bible). Human intuition replaced the Holy Spirit. Depending upon the demands on individual lives, truth and good were relative and changing. Romanticism, however, like Deism, had not completely abandoned Judeo-Christian morality. Truth and the good, although changing, were nonetheless relatively durable. Examples: James Fenimore Cooper, Goethe.

4

Naturalism: If God exists, He is pretty wimpish. Only the laws of nature have any force. God is either uninterested or downright mean. All reality was reducible to impersonal processes and energy events (Carl F. H. Henry). All life, including human life, was transient. Its final destination was death. Truth and good, therefore, were also transient. They were culture-conditioned distinctions that the human race projected upon the cosmos and upon history (Carl F. H. Henry). This maturation, as it were, of the human race, necessitated a deliberate rejection of all transcendently final authority. Examples: Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane.

5

Realism: Akin to Naturalism is Realism. Reality is, to a Realist, a world with no purpose, no meaning, no order. Realism insists that personality has no ultimate status in the universe, but is logically inconsistent when it affirms an ethically imperative social agenda congruent with universal human rights and dignity. Realism, then, throws around terms like "dignity" and "human rights" and "power." What Realists mean, however, is that these concepts are real when they fulfill a social agenda that enhances human dominance over the universal. Thus, Realism believes in a world where bad things happen all the time to good people. Why not? There is no God, no ontological controlling force for good. The world is a place where the only reality is that which we can experience, but it must be experience that we can measure or replicate. Certainly pain and misery fit that category. If an experience is a unique occurrence (e.g., a miracle) it is not real. Examples: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

6

Absurdism: A modern movement where there is neither a god nor any reason to have one. Everything is disorganized, anarchy rules. There is a complete abandonment of explaining the cosmos and therefore an abandonment of being in relationship with the deity. It is not that Absurdist are unsure about who creates everything, or is in control of everything. Absurdist simply do not care one way or the other. Examples: John Barth, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

7

Existentialism: The submergence of God in overwhelming data and in experience is the first step toward putting God out to die. Truth is open to debate. Everything is relative. A very pessimistic view. Examples: Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

World View Transitions

At the beginning of the 21st century there is truly an exciting phenomenon occurring in American society: Christian Theism is experiencing an unprecedented revival. As sociologist Peter Berger accurately observes, Evangelical Christians are growing in number and maturity.

We Christians generally subscribe to two strongly held propositions: that a return to Christian values is necessary if the moral confusion of our time is to be overcome, and that the Enlightenment is to be blamed for much of the confusion of our time.

In fact, I believe that Evangelicalism is one of the most potent anti-Enlightenment movements in world history. I most assuredly did not say “anti-intellectual.” Excesses of Enlightenment rationalism have sabotaged the certitude of classicism and Christian theism that so strongly influenced Western culture long before the formidable onslaught of the likes of David Hume.

The good news is that things may be changing. Evangelical Christianity may be capturing the elite culture of America.

The Washington Post in 1993 coyly observed that evangelicals are “largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command.” And, among our own, evangelical professor Mark Noll unkindly observed, “The scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind.” Indeed. Not anymore. Today, more than ever, in the garb of Christian homeschooling and other sectors, Evangelicalism has gained new life.



By side-stepping the Enlightenment, Christian homeschooling has opened up a whole new arena for debate. So has the Christian school. While conceding that faith is not a makeshift bridge to overcome some Kierkegaardian gap between beliefs and evidence, Christian schooling, especially Christian homeschooling, posits that it still is important that we look beyond our experience for reality. Human needs and aspirations are greater than the world can satisfy, so it is reasonable to look elsewhere for that satisfaction. Worth is the highest and best reality (a decidedly anti-Enlightenment notion) and its genesis and maintenance come exclusively from relationship with God alone. Home schooling families, with their sacrificial love of one another and their extravagant gift of time to one another, offer a radical path into this new way of looking at reality.

Christian homeschooling and Evangelical Christian schooling, then, move backward in time, far back in time, when intellectualism was not separate from religion. This blows the claims of the Enlightenment to bits. Christian schooling has brought back stability into the lives of countless millions in America when the majority of Americans are living in a context of clashing activities where (as Kenneth J. Gergen explains) the very ground of meaning, the foundations and structures of thought, language, and social discourse are up for grabs; where the concepts of personhood, spirituality, truth, integrity, and objectivity are all being demolished, breaking up, giving way. And homeschoolers do it the old-fashioned way: Parents stay home

and love the kids and in the process lay their lives down for all our futures.

Christian schooling. Millions strong. Unpretentious to a fault, this new cultural revolution is inviting Americans back to traditional truths that have been with us always and others that need to be rediscovered. Christian schooling has

invited Americans to a comfortable marriage of intellectualism and transcendentalism that fares our culture and our nation well in the years ahead. In that sense, then, perhaps Christian schooling families, homeschooling and otherwise, are the new patriots, the hope for our weary nation and our dysfunctional culture. We shall see. . . .

Assignment

Oswald Chambers says, “The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man’s sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away—an infinitely more profound revelation (see Hebrews 9:26). The nature of sin is not immorality and wrongdoing, but the nature of self-realization, which leads us to say, ‘I am my own god.’ This nature may exhibit itself in proper morality or in improper immorality, but it always has a common basis—my claim to my

right to myself. When our Lord faced either people with all the forces of evil in them, or people who were clean-living, moral, and upright, He paid no attention to the moral degradation of one, nor any attention to the moral attainment of the other. He looked at something we do not see, namely, the nature of man (see John 2:25).” Paraphrase Chambers’ insight. Which world views manifest this problem?

NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE GROUPS

It is instructive and tragic that the wildly popular Charles and Mary Beard's *History of the United States* (1921) begins the American story with a discussion of European immigration, without mention of Native

Americans until page 56! Actually, between 10 million and 90 million Native Americans inhabited America at the time of the European arrivals, having traveled a land-bridge across the Bering Sound from Siberia, Russia, during the Ice Age into what is now Alaska. They had gradually migrated across the land and southward into Central America and beyond.

A stabilization in climate led to widespread migration, cultivation of crops, and subsequently a dramatic rise in population all over the Americas. One important group that emerged is the **Clovis people group**. The Clovis culture ranged over much of North America and also appeared in South America. The culture is identified by the distinctive Clovis point, a flaked flint spear-point with a notched flute, by which it was inserted into a shaft. They developed what we call "Indian head shafts" (above, by Bill Whittaker CC-BY-SA-3.0).

These were a people who owned no land, but owned all land. They worshipped no one god but worshipped all gods. Native Americans were people who belonged to no one but they belonged to everyone. They were not farmers, or doctors, or businessmen. They were hunters, warriors, and fishermen. I don't think they could have even conceived of what was heading their way.

The Native Americans of the East Coast met the new 16th- and 17th-century visitors from Europe with

nonchalance. They regarded these bearded white men as strange but were delighted with the trade goods the colonists and explorers brought: copper pots, tools, and weapons. However, the Europeans also brought measles, **smallpox**, cholera, yellow fever, and many more devastating diseases that drastically diminished the Native American population and annihilated entire villages. But they also brought the gospel and, some argue (including this author) that the Jesuit, Anglican, and other missionaries brought new hope to these indigenous people groups.

Who were the Native American people groups whom the European immigrants met as they settled along the Eastern seaboard? While there were innumerable other tribes whose lives were affected by the coming

European migration, we will examine the following: **Delaware, Powhatan, Iroquois Confederation, Aztec, and Mayan.**

Delaware Tribe

The name Delaware was given to the people who lived along the Delaware River, which had been named after Lord de la Warr, a later governor of the Jamestown colony. The name Delaware later came to be applied to almost all Lenape people. The Delaware were among the first Native people groups to come in contact with the Europeans (Dutch, English, and Swedish) in the early 1600s. These European settlers landed in New Jersey and Delaware. The Delaware were called the "Grandfather" tribe because they often served to settle disputes among rival tribes. At the same time, while they were fierce warriors, they preferred to choose a path of peace with the Europeans.

Many of the early treaties and land sales the Delaware signed with the Europeans were, in their minds, more like



rental agreements. This is true of other Native American tribes. The notion of land ownership was entirely alien to this culture. The early Delaware had no idea that land was something that could be sold and owned.

The Delaware people signed the **first Indian treaty** with the newly formed United States government on September 17, 1778. Nevertheless, the Delaware continued to lose their land and ultimately moved westward, first to Ohio, then to Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, and, finally, Indian Territory, now Oklahoma (www.delawaretribeofindians.nsn.us).

Concentrated along the rivers, which provided both food and transportation, the folk who inhabited these rivers spoke a now-extinct form of **Algonquian**, a language that was common to many native peoples from present-day New York south to Florida.

Powhatan Tribe

The undisputed ruler of 1600 Tidewater Virginia was **Wahunsonacock**, usually referred to by the title “Powhatan.” John Smith describes Powhatan as “a tall, well-proportioned man, with a sower look, his head somewhat gray, his beard so thinne, that it seemeth none at all, his age (as of 1608) neare sixtie, of a very able and hardy body to endure any labour.”

Powhatan, by 1607, ruled over 30 tribes. Each tribe was governed by a chief who owed allegiance and tribute to Powhatan. Powhatan also had an extensive family—more than 100 wives and innumerable offspring—one of whom was **Pocahontas**.

Powhatan’s people lived in villages, which could number as many as 100 homes. Some villages were protected by wooden palisades; each house boasted an extensive and carefully tended garden, in which was sown such staples as corn, beans, peas, squash, pumpkin, sunflowers, and maypops (passionflower). Tobacco, primarily used for ceremonial purposes, was grown apart from the rest of the crops. The waterways afforded a rich diet of fish, and shellfish and the woods yielded nuts, fruits, and berries. Since the dog was the only animal domesticated by the Powhatans, hunting was an important way to supplement the diet, and was a task relegated to the men of the tribe.

Although early interaction between the English and Powhatans was sometimes violent, leaders of both peoples realized the mutual benefit that could be derived from peaceful relations. The marriage of Powhatan’s favorite daughter, Pocahontas, to settler John Rolfe in 1614 ensured a few peaceful years between the Powhatans and the English. This ended in 1617 with the death of Pocahontas during a trip to England and, the next year, of her father.

On March 22, 1622, the Powhatans made the first, and perhaps most successful, attack to end European colonization on the North American continent. About 400 English settlers died and the colony received a near-fatal blow.

The short-lived peace was over. For over a decade, the English killed men and women, captured children, and systematically razed villages, seizing or destroying crops. The precipitous decline of Powhatan dominance was well underway.



The Baptism of Pocahontas by John Gadsby Chapman, 1840.

Iroquois Confederation

Perhaps no Native American tribe was more influential in American history than the **Iroquois Confederation**. The six Iroquois nations, characterizing themselves as “the people of the longhouse,” were the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Seneca.

As Encyclopedia Britannica explains, “The Iroquois Confederacy differed from other American Indian confederacies in the northeastern woodlands primarily in being better organized, more consciously defined, and more effective. The Iroquois used elaborately ritualized systems for choosing leaders and making important decisions. They persuaded colonial governments to use these rituals in their joint negotiations, and they fostered a tradition of political sagacity based on ceremonial sanction rather than on the occasional outstanding individual leader. Because the league lacked administrative control, the nations did not always act in unison; but spectacular successes in warfare compensated for this and were possible because of security at home” (www.britannica.com).



Pocahontas by Richard Norris Brooke (c1900).

Assignment

- A. “The word annihilation, the word holocaust, the word atrocity come to mind when I think of 1607,” said Adams, chief of the Upper Mattaponi tribe, in referring to the year a group of men and boys arrived in Jamestown and set up the first permanent English colony in the New World. Of the estimated 14,000 to 15,000 Native Americans who lived in the area around the Jamestown settlement in 1607, nearly 90 percent were wiped out within a century, mainly from smallpox, typhus, and other Old World diseases inadvertently brought by the colonists and to which the American Indians had never been exposed. Some also died in fighting with the settlers. For Adams and other Native Americans, these stark numbers gave little reason to celebrate as the country prepared to commemorate the quadricentennial of the settlement, with Britain’s Queen Elizabeth and U.S. President George W. Bush in 2007. “We are certainly proud to be Americans but from our perspective we don’t feel like the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement is something to celebrate or commemorate,” said Bill Miles, chief of Virginia’s Pamunkey Indian tribe, one of some 40 tribes that lived in the area in the 17th century. What, if anything, can you suggest Native Americans might want to celebrate in the 400-year anniversary of the founding of the Jamestown Settlement?
- B. Research your own community and describe what it was like circa 1500–1550. Discuss the Native Peoples who lived nearby.

SOUTH-CENTRAL AMERICAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE GROUPS

Aztecs

While the Aztec Indians seem larger than life, in actuality, they were small in stature. Women were several inches shy of five feet tall, and the men barely topped that measurement. The society was Puritanical in its moral behavior. Drunkenness and promiscuity were often penalized by death in the Aztec culture.

One of the many rules of the Aztec Indian society was the dress code. The way **Aztecs** dressed had to reflect their social strata. For instance, commoners had to wear plain clothing, no adornments. Nobility could wear colorful clothing and jewelry. If they did not abide by the dress code, they could be put to death. Homes reflected the same idea. Commoners could only live in a one-story home, but noblemen were allowed multiple stories.

Aztecs believed that **human sacrifice** was necessary to appease the gods. Fighting was also a major aspect of their lives. Aztec warriors were fierce.

Unless they were in the noble class, the way of life for the Aztec Indians was tough. They lived in fear of breaking some moral or societal code and being put to death. They worried about being singled out for human sacrifice. It was a way of life for hundreds of years until **Hernando Cortez**, the Spanish explorer, discovered the Aztec civilization. After that, their lives were changed forever, as we will see later in this chapter (www.indians.org).



Aztec Pyramid at St. Cecilia Acatitlan, Mexico State by Maunus, 2008

Mayas

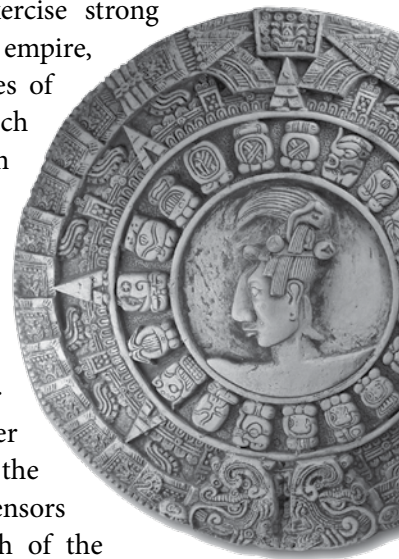
The earliest of the major Meso-American civilizations was the **Olmec culture**, which is often regarded as the fostering influence behind the Mayan, Aztec, and other later societies. The Olmec were prominent in eastern coastal Mexico between 1200 and 400 B.C. and are remembered for constructing massive earthen mounds, sculpting giant basalt heads, and building large and prosperous cities that existed for hundreds of years. As the Olmec declined, the Mayas rose to prominence.

Settlement was extensive in the Yucatán Peninsula and stretched southward into Central America. Unlike the later Aztecs, the **Mayas** did not exercise strong administrative control over an empire, but instead developed as a series of largely autonomous city-states, such as Palenque, Tikal, and Chichén Itzá. Fortified residential areas were often surrounded by meticulously cultivated farmlands.

Mayan contributions were many. They developed an advanced writing system. Their history, entrusted to cactus fiber parchment, fared poorly against the ravages of time, and Spanish censors saw to the destruction of much of the remainder. However, many Mayan carvings on stone have survived and provide much of what is known today about their civilization.

The Mayas were gifted mathematicians who independently developed the concept of zero, and astronomers who deduced that a solar year was slightly more than 365 days. Despite these achievements, the Mayas and other Meso-American cultures failed to discover the utility of the wheel.

The decline of Mayan civilization was well under way





by 1100 B.C., 2,000 years before Conquistadors arrived. The causes are uncertain, but speculation points to warfare, crop failures, and disease as leading possibilities. The society was also enervated by its religion, which emphasized that human blood was extremely pleasing to its gods. Nobles mutilated themselves and their blood flowed onto fabric, which was burned as an offering.

As time passed, those gifts were deemed insufficient, and human sacrifice became commonplace. Victims had their still-beating hearts cut from their chests and displayed to throngs gathered for these spectacles. Most of those so dispatched were captives from battles, but others were Mayan volunteers seeking to placate the gods.

By the time of the Spanish arrival around A.D. 1520, the Mayas were a starkly diminished civilization. Their great cities were abandoned, and the remnants of their population widely scattered (www.indians.org).

Incas

Elaborate, massive ancient Inca ruins at the foot of the peak of **Machu Picchu** in south-central Peru provide clear evidence that the Incas were a Native South American tribe who, at the time of the Spanish conquest in 1532, ruled an empire that extended along the Pacific coast and Andean

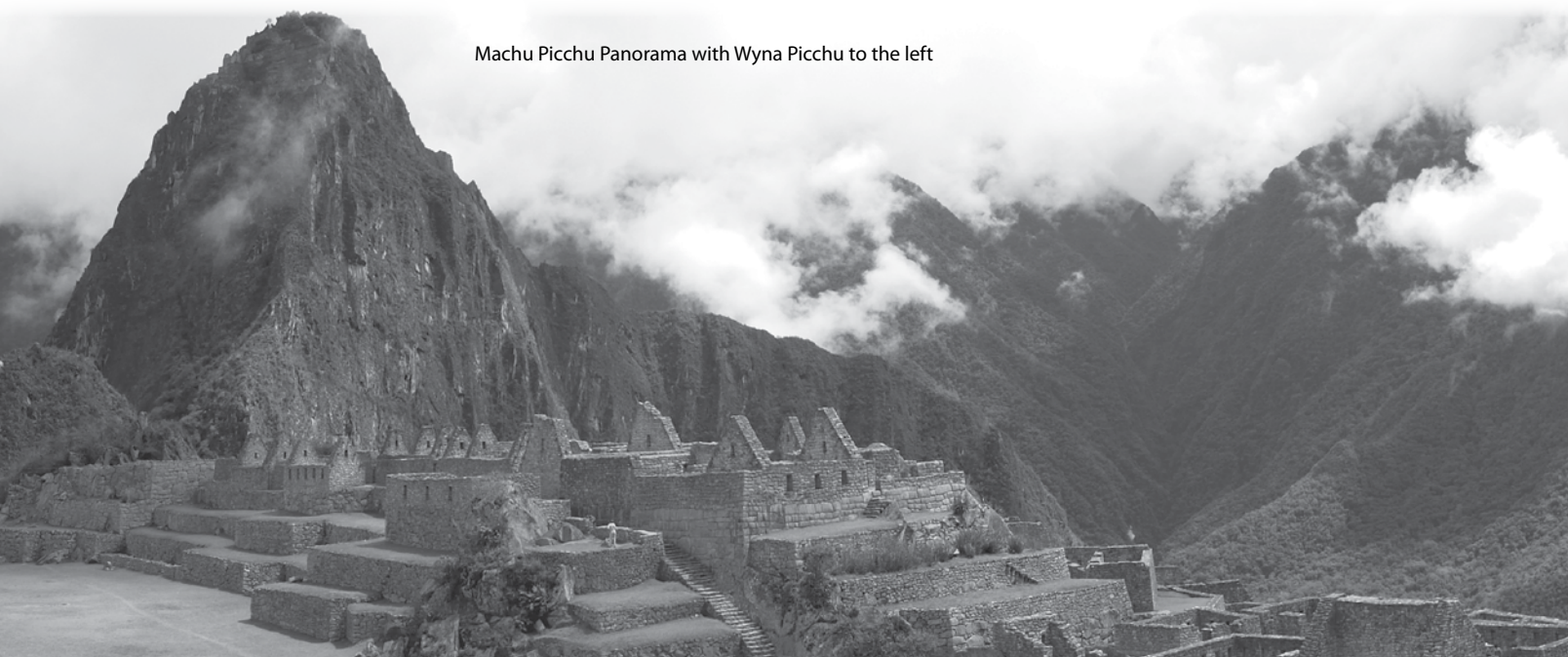
highlands from the northern border of modern Ecuador to the Maule River in central Chile. The Incas established their capital at Cuzco (Peru) in the 12th century. They began their conquests in the early 15th century and within 100 years had gained control of an Andean population of about 12 million people.

The founder of the Incan dynasty, Manco Capac, led the tribe to settle in Cuzco, which remained thereafter their capital. Until the reign of the fourth emperor, Mayta Capac, in the 14th century, there was little to distinguish the Incas from the many other tribes inhabiting small domains throughout the Andes. Under Mayta Capac the Incas began to expand, attacking and looting the villages of neighboring peoples and probably assessing some sort of tribute. Under Capac Yupanqui, the next emperor, the Incas first extended their influence beyond the Cuzco valley, and under Viracocha Inca, the eighth, they began a program of permanent conquest by establishing garrisons among the settlements of the peoples whom they had conquered.

Incan technology and architecture were highly developed, although not strikingly original. Their irrigation systems, palaces, temples, and fortifications can still be seen throughout the Andes. The economy was based on agriculture, its staples being corn (maize), white and sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes, peanuts (groundnuts), chili peppers, cocoa, cassava, and cotton. They raised guinea pigs, ducks, llamas, alpacas, and dogs. Clothing was made of llama wool and cotton. Houses were of stone or adobe mud. Practically every man was a farmer, producing his own food and clothing.

The Incas built a vast network of roads throughout this empire. It comprised two north-south roads, one running along the coast for about 2,250 miles (3,600 km), the other inland along the Andes for a comparable distance, with

Machu Picchu Panorama with Wyna Picchu to the left



many interconnecting links. Many short rock tunnels and vine-supported suspension bridges were constructed. Use of the system was strictly limited to government and military business; a well-organized relay service carried messages in the form of knotted cords (quipu) at a rate of 150 miles (240 km) a day. The network greatly facilitated the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire (www.archaeology.about.com).



Clay figurines are examples of Incan abstract traditions of sculpture.

Assignment

A. The debate over Christopher Columbus's character and legacy has continued into the 21st century. Though the United States celebrates a national holiday in his honor, much more attention has been paid in recent years to the various Spanish explorers' treatment of the Native Peoples. As a result, the word *discovery* has been replaced by *encounter* when used to describe Columbus's exploration of the Americas. Columbus died believing he had reached the shores of China, and that he was a divine missionary, ordained by God to spread Christianity into the New World. In modern society, many have made Columbus out to be a villain and a symbol for all that is evil about the colonization of the Americas by Europe. Read the following passage and argue whether Columbus was a devout Christian or a hypocrite using his faith to further his own selfish purposes.

"In order to win the friendship and affection of that people, and because I am convinced that their conversion to our Holy Faith would be better promoted through love than through force . . . they must be very good servants and very intelligent, because I see that they repeat very quickly what I told them, and it is my conviction that they would easily become Christians, for they seem not [to] have any sect. . . ."

—Christopher Columbus, Journals,
October 12, 1492

B. If the Aztecs had conquered Spain, would they have treated the Spanish people differently? Why or why not?



COLUMBUS, CONQUISTADORS, AND COLONIZATION

The Age of Exploration

Around A.D. 1000, **Danish Vikings** sailed from Greenland to North America and set up a village on the tip of what is now Newfoundland. The real Vikings were nothing like the Minnesota Vikings! For one thing, they did not wear horned helmets!

The Vikings came from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. From A.D. 800 to A.D. 1100 the Vikings raided Western Europe, from Ireland to Russia. The Vikings were a very warlike people who nonetheless had strong families and a well-developed culture. The Vikings were the first Europeans to settle in North America. No one knows why the settlement disappeared, but in less than 50 years the Vikings disappeared from North America.

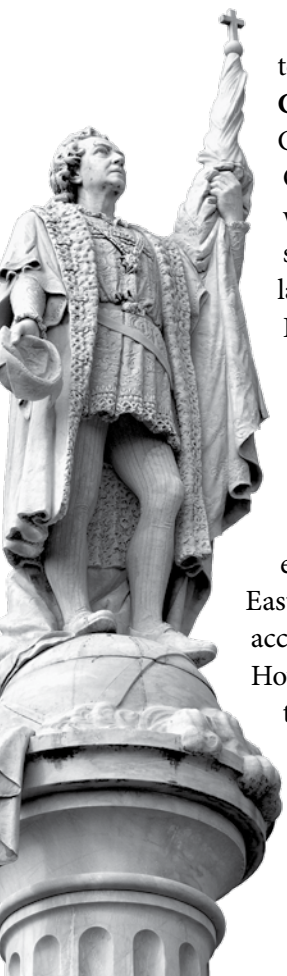
If the Vikings were the first Europeans to explore North America, **Christopher Columbus** was the most famous. Born Cristoforo Colombo, between August and October 1451, in Genoa, Italy, Columbus was the eldest son of Domenico Colombo, a small-scale merchant. Columbus was largely schooled at home. Living in Renaissance Italy, Christopher Columbus saw the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Age of Exploration.

The Age of Exploration grew out of largely economic impulses. For one thing, **Marco Polo** had introduced Europeans to exotic spices and teas from China and the East Indies. But Polo's access was a land route access from Venice, Italy, to Peking, China. However, toward the end of the 14th century, the vast empire of Kublai Kahn was breaking up; thus, merchants could no longer be assured of safe conduct along the land

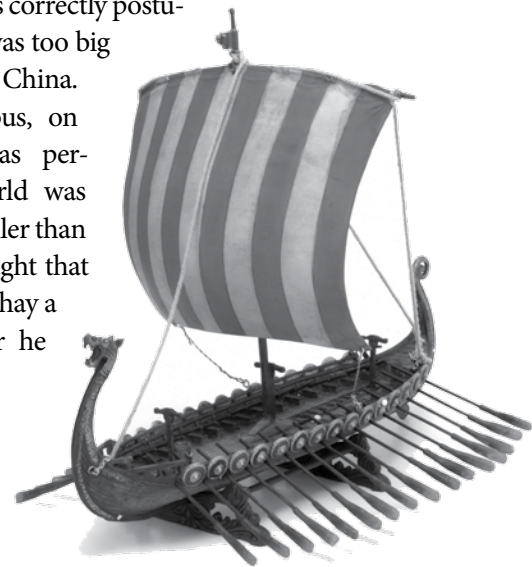
routes. Second, the growing power of Islamic Turkey blocked European attempts at trade. Still, in 1260, Marco Polo traveled east from Europe. In 1265, he arrived at Kaifeng, the capital of Kublai Khan's (also known as the Great Khan) Mongol Empire. In 1269, he returned to Europe with a request from Khan for the Pope to send 100 missionaries to the Mongol Empire, supposedly to help convert the Mongols to Christianity. The missionaries were not sent, but Marco Polo returned and set up a trade route to China.

Enormous profits could be made by traders who were able to bring even one caravan back from the Orient. At the same time, technological advances made exploration even more possible. For one thing, the Portuguese developed a new type of ship called the Caravel. The Caravel was a particularly seaworthy ship that was both fast and dependable. The development of the Caravel would be similar to the transformation of air flight from propeller-driven craft to jet airplanes. At the same time, with the further improvement of the mariner's compass, European traders were ready to leave the land behind and explore the unknown.

By the 15th century most educated Europeans believed that the world was round and that one could sail westward to reach China. Sailing there was another matter. Most scientists correctly postulated that the world was too big to sail westward to China. Christopher Columbus, on the other hand, was persuaded that the world was about 25 percent smaller than it really was. He thought that he would sail into Cathay a mere six weeks after he left Spain! Fifty years later, it actually took



Statue of Christopher Columbus located in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.



another explorer, Magellan, almost a year!

In 1484, Columbus asked King John II of Portugal to back his voyage west, but King John calculated that it was too risky. The next year, Columbus went to Spain and asked **Queen Isabella** of Castile and her husband, **King Ferdinand** of Aragon. In January of 1492, after being twice rejected, Columbus finally obtained the support of Ferdinand and Isabella. With the fall of Granada, the last Moorish/Islamic stronghold in Spain, Spanish Christians believed they were close to eliminating the spread of Islam in southern Europe and beyond. Isabella and Ferdinand felt that they were ready now to support something more risky. Finally, in 1492, Spain sponsored Columbus's trip west to find a water route to the lucrative East Indies.

As the sun rose on August 3, 1492, three small ships left Palos de la Frontera, Spain, for the East Indies. At 2 a.m. on October 12, 1492, a member of Columbus's crew sighted land.

Colonization of the New World

Columbus traveled to the New World four times. He died without realizing that he had not reached the East Indies. It is difficult to exaggerate or understate the historical

significance of Christopher Columbus. The world was never the same after his voyages. Although he failed to find a new route to China, Columbus made the lands and peoples of the western hemisphere known to Europeans, setting in motion a chain of events that altered human history on a global scale.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines **colony** as a body of people living in a new territory but retaining ties with the parent state. During the 16th century Spain alone took seriously the colonization of her territories. While other nations of Europe were contenting themselves with occasional voyages of discovery, or with slave-carrying expeditions, the Spaniards extended their dominion in the New World. Colonies were established on the coasts of South and Central America, and the Caribbean.

Vasco Núñez de Balboa (above, 1475–1519) was a Spanish conquistador and explorer who, along with his dog, was the first European to see the eastern part of the Pacific Ocean (in 1513), while crossing the Isthmus of Panama.

Poor Balboa was charged with treason against Spain (although he was innocent and had been framed by a friend, Arias de Avila). Francisco Pizarro (who later conquered the Incas) arrested Balboa. Balboa was found guilty and was publicly beheaded in Acla in January, 1519.



Emanuel Leutze, *Columbus Before the Queen* (1843). Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand supported Columbus in 1492, in search of a water-route to the lucrative East Indies, after he had been rejected by King John II (PD-US).

Hernando Cortez fared much better. In 1519 Cortez landed in the area of Vera Cruz, Mexico. By November of that year, Cortez entered into Tenochtitlan (the capital of the Aztec Empire near Mexico City) and simply arrested the emperor of the Aztec, Montezuma. Within the span of two years, Cortez dismantled the Aztec monarchy and gained control of all of Tenochtitlan and many of its surrounding territories.

Why was the Aztec Empire taken so quickly by the Europeans led by Cortez? There are many factors to consider in answering such a question. Of the most important is the time in which Cortez entered into Tenochtitlan. Prior to his arrival, the Aztecs had seen many astrological phenomena that seemed to portend the collapse of the empire itself. These portents of doom ranged from a comet seen in the daytime to the destruction of two temples. In addition to these omens of doom, Cortez arrived at harvest time, when the Aztecs were generally not prepared for war, although there were battles. Also, the Tlaxcalans helped Cortez fight the Aztecs. Outbreaks of epidemics also helped to weaken the Aztecs (www.library.thinkquest.org).

Other explorers conquered nothing but swampland. As a reward for his service to Spain, Ponce de Leon was given the right to find Bimini, one of the islands in the Bahamas. The “Fountain of Youth” was supposed to be in Bimini. Legend has it that anyone who drank from the fountain would never grow old. Ponce de Leon organized an expedition to find the fountain in March of 1513. He landed near the site of what is now St. Augustine, Florida. He didn’t realize he was in North America. He thought he had landed on an island. He named it Florida because he saw lots of flowers (*florida* in Spanish means “flowery”).

In 1527, **Francisco Pizarro** (above), who had originally set off from Spain for the city of gold entered Peru, where, with his small band of 175 men armed with an ineffective cannon, he conquered the entire Incan Empire. On May 13, 1532, he began to advance toward the empire’s capital. As Pizarro’s group advanced, they were confronted by roughly 50,000 Incan warriors within the town square of the capital city, Cajamarca, who were bent on destroying Pizarro’s band. However, the Incas did not attack. Rather, Pizarro asked the Inca leader, Atahualpa, to meet with him and his bodyguards unarmed, and both the Incas and Pizarro’s men

stood at a standstill. Accepting Pizarro’s offer was the Incas’ worst mistake.

Pizarro knew that if he had the emperor, he would have the entire Incan Empire and all the gold that it held. Shortly after his meeting with Pizarro, Atahualpa’s gold headband was torn from his head, and with the blast of a cannon, Pizarro’s men slaughtered all of the Incas within the square of Cajamarca. Atahualpa attempted to bargain with Pizarro for his life, offering him a room filled with gold (roughly 17 feet by 22 feet by 9 feet), but shortly after Atahualpa showed Pizarro the room, he was murdered (www.library.thinkquest.org).

During the late 16th century, 200,000 Spaniards migrated to South America. Quickly South America began to change, with imported plants, large sugar plantations, vast estates, and imported animals overtaking the native landscape. Bureaucracy and government also took hold quickly in South America. The Spanish established the **encomiendas**, where the government granted conquerors the right to employ groups of Indians. The encomiendas, in truth, were a form of legalized slavery. Relegated to practical slave labor within sugar cane plantations and mining caves, the native population of Peru declined from 1.3 million in 1570, to 600,000 in 1620. In Meso-America the circumstances were no different. The population of Indians went from 25.3 million in 1519, to a scant 1 million in 1605. Though forced labor played the largest part in the decimation of the Incas and Aztecs, disease was by no means minor within this time frame. Widespread epidemics of smallpox and other diseases were not uncommon, and claimed the lives of millions. On the psychological front, historians and psychologists have offered another reason for the decimation of the Incan and Aztec populations, namely that the Indians had lost the will to survive. With the extreme and quick loss of culture, accompanied by the pressure of Christian missionaries and laws preventing the practice of any form of native religion (for which there were strong repercussions, even death), Native Americans were, in effect, slaves to the Spaniard immigrants (www.library.thinkquest.org).



Assignment

Primary Sources

I. During the early 1500s, men called conquistadors led expeditions into interior North and South America. Most expected to find great riches. These men were accustomed to achieving fame and fortune through assertive strategies—including violence. At the same time, many conquistadors felt it was their moral responsibility to convert people to Christianity. With the blessing of the Spanish king and church, therefore, conquistadors wandered through the new world claiming territory and souls for Spain and God.

One famous conquistador, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, was born in Spain in 1510. Coronado set out in 1540, joined by a large expedition of 340 Spanish, 300 Indian allies, and 1,000 slaves, both native Americans and Africans. In the next two years Coronado explored most of the American West and Southwest. In 1542 he went back to Mexico by roughly the same route he had come. Only 100 of his men went back with him. Although the expedition was a complete failure, he remained governor of New Galicia until 1544, then retired to Mexico City, where he died in 1554.

The following excerpt was written by Pedro de Castaneda, one of Coronado's soldiers:

To me it seems very certain, my very noble lord, that it is a worthy ambition for great men to desire to know and wish to preserve for posterity correct information concerning the things that have happened in distant parts. . . In truth, he who wishes to employ himself thus in writing out the things that happened on the expedition, and the things that were seen in those lands, and the ceremonies and customs of the natives, will have matter enough to test his judgment, and I believe that the result can not fail to be an account which, describing only the truth, will be so remarkable that it will seem incredible . . . The army rested here several days, because the inhabitants had gathered a good stock of provisions that year and each one shared his stock very gladly with his guests from our army. They not only had plenty to eat here, but they also had plenty to take away with them, so that when the

departure came they started off with more than six hundred loaded animals, besides the friendly Indians and the servants—more than a thousand persons. After a fortnight had passed, the general started ahead with about fifty horsemen and a few foot soldiers and most of the Indian allies, leaving the army, which was to follow him a fortnight later.

- A. How reliable is this primary source? When determining reliability ask yourself these questions: Did the speaker participate in the described event(s)? How long after the incident does he mention the incident? Is it a private journal or a public piece? Private journals are normally more reliable. Does he discuss his participation in the event? Does he appear objective? Does he have anything to gain if he tells a lie? Based on the preceding passage, defend your answers.
- B. If this were the only resource you had available on Native Americans, how would you characterize them?

II. Cabeza de Vaca was, at first, part of but later became the leader of an expedition of about 300 men sent to conquer and colonize Florida. The expedition sailed into Tampa Bay about April 1528, and began an overland march to Mexico. During the next two years more than half the men died. He led a small band of survivors to an island, possibly Galveston Island, off the southwestern coast of what is now Texas, where the band was captured by Native Americans. Early in 1535, Cabeza de Vaca and the three other survivors of the expedition escaped and began a trek through what are now the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. In 1536 the four men finally reached Mexico.



Pizarro's Statue in Trujillo, Spain
(CC BY 2.0).

The following is Vaca's reminiscences of what happened:

Passage I

It was Our Lord's pleasure, who many a time shows His favor in the hour of greatest distress, that at sunset we turned a point of land and found there shelter and much improvement. Many canoes came and the Indians in them spoke to us, but turned back without waiting. They were tall and well built, and carried neither bows nor arrows. We followed them to their lodges, which were nearly along the inlet, and landed, and in front of the lodges we saw many jars with water, and great quantities of cooked fish. The Chief of that land offered all to the Governor and led him to his abode. The dwellings were of matting and seemed to be permanent. When we entered the home of the chief he gave us plenty of fish, while we gave him of our maize, which they ate in our presence, asking for more. So we gave more to them, and the Governor presented him with some trinkets. While with the cacique at his lodge, half an hour after sunset, the Indians suddenly fell upon us and upon our sick people on the beach. They also attacked the house of the cacique, where the Governor was, wounding him in the face with a stone. Those who were with him seized the cacique, but as his people were so near he escaped, leaving in our hands a robe of marten-ermine skin, which, I believe, are the finest in the world and give out an odor like amber and musk. A single one can be smelt so far off that it seems as if there were a great many. We saw more of that kind, but none like these.

Passage II

To this island we gave the name of the Island of Ill-Fate. The people on it are tall and well formed; they have no other weapons than bows and arrows with which they are most dexterous. The men have one of their nipples perforated from side to side and sometimes both; through this hole is thrust a reed as long as two and a half hands and as thick as two fingers; they also have the under lip perforated and a piece of cane in it as thin as the half of a finger. The women do the hard work. People stay on this island from October till the end of February, feeding on the roots I have mentioned, taken from

under the water in November and December. They have channels made of reeds and get fish only during that time; afterwards they subsist on roots. At the end of February they remove to other parts in search of food, because the roots begin to sprout and are not good any more. Of all the people in the world, they are those who most love their children and treat them best, and should the child of one of them happen to die, parents and relatives bewail it, and the whole settlement, the lament lasting a full year, day after day. Before sunrise the parents begin to weep, after them the tribe, and the same they do at noon and at dawn. At the end of the year of mourning they celebrate the anniversary and wash and cleanse themselves of all their paint. They mourn all their dead in this manner, old people excepted, to whom they do not pay any attention, saying that these have had their time and are no longer of any use, but only take space, and food from the children. Their custom is to bury the dead, except those who are medicine men among them, whom they burn, and while the fire is burning, all dance and make a big festival, grinding the bones to powder. At the end of the year, when they celebrate the anniversary, they scarify themselves and give to the relatives the pulverized bones to drink in water. Every man has a recognized wife, but the medicine men enjoy greater privileges, since they may have two or three, and among these wives there is great friendship and harmony.

- C. Pretend that you are a public official in Spain in the early 1500s. Based on the three preceeding passages, speculate what the Native Americans are like and design a strategy to convert them to Christianity.
- D. When two different cultures meet they have four choices: accommodation, amalgamation, assimilation, or extermination. State which process was employed in New Spain, and the result.
- E. The technology of the Native Americans was simpler than that of the Europeans. Europeans, for instance, had more effective construction technology. Their health practices were also advanced. Did this give the Europeans the right to conquer the Native Americans? Why or why not?