

The Impact of the European Age of Discovery

European Colonization

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- Expansion into Americas, Africa, and Asia
- Migration, Settlement patterns, cultural diffusion and social classes in colonized areas
- Columbian Exchange
- Triangular trade
- Impact of precious metal exports from the Americas on Europe.




Step Text

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Impact on Africa and Asia

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Impact on Africa and Asia

Africa
Europeans trading posts along the coast
Trade in slaves, gold, and other resources

Asia
Colonization by small groups of merchants in India, the Indies, and China
Influence of trading companies (Portuguese, Dutch, and British).

Step Text

Africa

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Narration Script

The desire to make money inspired most exploration, so merchants were instrumental in establishing colonies throughout the world. Joint-stock companies enabled people to invest money in companies engaged in exploration. These investors were a stable source of financing and the joint-stock companies played a crucial role in helping Europe establish colonies throughout the world.

The Portuguese trading posts along the coast of Africa started the slave trade, which sent Africans to the Americas to work in the plantation system in the Caribbean, Brazil, and North America.

Portuguese companies were some of the first to engage in exploration; however, other joint-stock companies such as the Dutch East India Company, the British East India Company, and the Virginia Company of London would later establish colonies in different parts of the world.

Impacts on the Americas



The screenshot shows a presentation slide with a dark border. The title bar at the top reads "The Impact of the European Age of Discovery". The slide content is split into two columns. The left column contains two images: the top one is a black and white illustration of a conquistador on a horse surrounded by indigenous people, and the bottom one is a color photograph of a large, ornate white cathedral with a dome. The right column has the heading "Impacts on the Americas" followed by a paragraph and a bulleted list.

The Impact of the European Age of Discovery

Impacts on the Americas

European colonial expansion had a number of global impacts including:

- Expansion of overseas territorial claims and European emigration to North and South America
- Demise of Aztec and Inca Empires
- Establishment of a rigid class system and dictatorial rule in Latin America
- Forced migration of enslaved Africans
- Colonies attempt to reproduce the culture and social patterns of their parent countries

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Narration Script

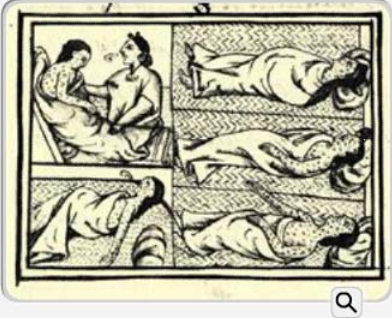
The Columbian Exchange was named after Christopher Columbus because his voyages lead to the exchange of goods, ideas, and agricultural products between Europe and the New World. As the European nations established colonies, many Europeans with limited possibilities in their own countries moved to the colonies in an attempt to seek their fortunes.

These Europeans made the colonies their permanent homes and sought to reproduce the culture and social patterns of their parent countries. The dominant religions of these colonists were Protestantism and Catholicism, and churches for both were established, although not always in the same colonies. The art and architecture that the colonies produced in the Americas are rooted in the traditions of the European homelands.

Many of these colonists never returned to Europe, but they weren't the only immigrants who ended up staying. The slaves that were brought from Africa became permanent residents as well. They and their descendants worked as slaves in the colonies and eventually made these areas their homeland when slavery was finally banned in the 1800s. The majority of the slaves lived near sources of raw materials and plantations where cash crops were grown.

Native Peoples Decimated

The Impact of the European Age of Discovery



Native Peoples Decimated
Destruction of Aztec and Inca Empires due to conquest and new diseases.

Cortez
Conquered the Aztec Civilization in what is today Mexico

Pizarro
Conquered the Incan Civilization in what is today Peru and Chile in the Andes Mountains

Step Text

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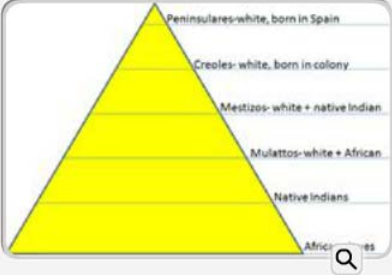
Conquered the Incan Civilization in what is today Peru and Chile in the Andes Mountains

Narration Script

The Spanish exposed the indigenous peoples to a number of new diseases to which they had no immunity. The resulting epidemics were devastating. In less than 100 years, diseases such as smallpox killed up to 90% of the indigenous populations in some areas of the New World. More than any other factor, the impact of disease enabled the Europeans to conquer the New World.

Legacies of Spanish Rule

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Legacies of Spanish Rule

Latin America

Rigid hierarchical social order based on race (select image to see order)

Dictatorial governments in post-independence countries

Step Text

Latin America

Rigid hierarchical social order based on race (select image to see order)
Dictatorial governments in post-independence countries

Narration Script


In Latin America, Spanish colonial powers instituted a rigid hierarchical social order with the Indians and slaves at the bottom, the mestizos and mulattos in the middle, and the Europeans and their descendants at the top. Native populations were not protected by the colonial powers. Because Spaniards and Creoles looked down on manual labor, they developed several labor systems to force Indians to work for Spanish landowners.

The plantation system had a drastic effect on the people in the Americas. This plantation system set up a defined role for different types of labor. Particularly in Latin America, this left a legacy of a rigid class system that continued even after slavery disappeared. The intermarriage of Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans led to a type of caste system based on race in Latin America. Under this caste system, those of European descent ranked higher than those of native or African descent.

Another legacy of these colonial governments was the establishment of dictatorial rule in a number of countries, even after they became independent nations. Some nations are still struggling under this type of rule today.

Columbian Exchange

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Columbian Exchange

- Western Hemisphere agricultural products, such as corn, potatoes, and tobacco, changed European lifestyles.
- European horses and cattle changed the lifestyles of American Indians.
- European diseases, such as smallpox, killed many American Indians

Step Text

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Narration Script

The Columbian Exchange is a term coined by historians to describe the exchange of goods, plants, ideas, diseases and human populations between the Old World and the New World that took place as a result of Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas. Trading in agricultural products had a dramatic impact on both European and indigenous peoples' lifestyles.

Europeans brought back many new agricultural products that they had never seen before including potatoes, corn, tomatoes, tobacco, and kidney beans. Potatoes and corn became important crops in Europe since they provided more calories and nutrition than the traditional European crops of wheat and rye. Larger populations could be supported by the potato than traditional staples, and potatoes became an essential part of European diets over the next few centuries. Tobacco also became a cash crop for Europe and many plantations in the New World were engaged in growing it.

The exchange was not one-sided. In the New World, the Native Americans were introduced to a number of agricultural products including wheat, multiple fruits, sugar cane, and coffee. Europeans also brought new animals on their voyages. Two of the more significant animals they introduced to the Americas were horses and cattle, which had a great impact on peoples' lives since they were excellent work animals.

Columbian Exchange - Impact

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A sugarcane plantation.
Bad for the environment,
bad for the African slaves.

Columbian Exchange - Impact

- Shortage of labor to grow cash crops led to the use of African slaves
- Slavery was based on race
- European plantation system in the Caribbean and the Americas destroyed indigenous economies and damaged the environment

Step Text

- Shortage of labor to grow cash crops led to the use of African slaves
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Narration Script

Large plantations required large amounts of labor. Since diseases had devastated the native populations, there was a shortage of labor in the colonies. As a replacement, Europeans started using African slaves for their workforce. Slavery was based on race - many Europeans thought Africans were better suited for the hot weather and they held racist beliefs that Africans were inferior to the white colonists. Colonies passed laws declaring that only Africans could be held as slaves.

Since agriculture was the basis of the colonial economies, Europeans established large plantations to grow as many cash crops as possible. These plantations had many negative impacts on the surrounding areas. The local economies based around small farms were destroyed by the large scale plantations. In time, the environment was badly damaged by these large farms, as there was considerable deforestation in order to clear land for the plantations.

Triangular Trade

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Triangular Trade

- Trade routes that linked Europe, Africa, and Americas.
- Slaves, sugar, rum and manufactured goods were trade between the continents.

Step Text

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- Slaves, sugar, rum and manufactured goods were trade between the continents.

Narration Script


The Triangular Trade route got its name from the fact that it had three legs: from Europe to Africa, Africa to the Americas, and from the Americas to Europe.

First, ships left Europe loaded with manufactured goods such as guns, swords, clothes, and rum, bound for West Africa. In West Africa, the manufactured goods were traded to local rulers for other Africans that had been captured. In addition, the Europeans would capture slaves from the interior of Africa when possible. The enslaved Africans were transported to plantations in North and South America where they would be sold. This long journey for the slaves was known as the Middle Passage. The slave traders used the money they made selling slaves to buy sugar, coffee, or tobacco, which they would bring back to Europe.

During the Middle Passage, slaves stayed on crowded ships for several weeks at a time. As the European presence in Africa grew, so did the number of slaves they took to the New World. The slave trade continued for nearly 350 years, resulting in the deaths of millions of Africans. In the Caribbean, slaves greatly outnumbered the colonists and uprisings were common. However, only one slave revolt was totally successful. In 1804, slaves on a French-controlled island rebelled against the colonial rulers and established the independent country of Haiti.

Impact of Precious Metals

The Impact of the European Age of Discovery



Impact of Precious Metals

- Gold and silver exported to Europe and Asia
- Impact on indigenous empires of the Americas
- Impact on Spain and international trade.

Step Text

- Gold and silver exported to Europe and Asia
- Impact on indigenous empires of the Americas
- Impact on Spain and international trade.

Narration Script

While the sugar plantations in the Caribbean were very profitable, Europeans also discovered that gold and silver were present in the New World.

In order to exploit these resources, they operated mines using forced local labor and slaves. The Spanish quest for gold led them to destroy the Aztec and Incan Empires, as both had huge reserves. The gold that they exported to Europe made Spain one of the richest countries in the world. The ships that they used to export the gold were known as Spain's Treasure Fleet. They faced frequent raids from pirates and privateers.

During this time, international wealth was based on how much gold reserves or bullion a country had. However, Spain imported so much gold from the Americas, that they faced inflation in Spain and other areas of Europe since the value of gold drastically decreased. This led to the downfall of Spain's economy over the long run. Inflation is just one factor that led to the decline of the Spanish Empire and its power relative to other European countries.