CH 25
New Worlds: The Americas and Oceania
Introduction

➢ Until 1492, the peoples of the eastern and western hemispheres had few dealings with one another.

➢ After 1492, there was permanent and sustained contact between the two.
  ● Profound and often violent change to both American and Pacific lands
Introduction

- Technological advantages of the Europeans:
  - Military weapons
  - Horses
  - Sailing ships
- Europeans also had greater immunity to disease
- Europeans were able to exploit the divisions that already existed between indigenous peoples
Colliding Worlds

➢ The Spanish Caribbean

(first interactions)

- Indigenous peoples were the Taino (aka Arawaks)
  - Lived in small villages under authority of chiefs
  - Showed little resistance to European visitors and were interested in the glass, beads, and metal tools of the Spanish mariners.
Colliding Worlds

- Columbus built the fort of Santo Domingo, capital of the Spanish Caribbean, on Hispaniola (modern day Haiti and the Dominican Republic)
  - Spanish quickly realized there weren’t silks or spice for European markets – had to make a living another way
  - Looked to mining gold and conscripted the Taino to mine it
  - *Encomiendas*: land grants to Spanish settlers with total control over local people
  - Responsible for their workers’ health, welfare and conversion to Christianity
Colliding Worlds

- Brutal abuses plus smallpox brought decline of Taino populations
  - Occasional rebellion with bows, arrows, and slings had little effect against horse-mounted forces with steel swords and firearms
  - Taino words that have survived: canoe, hammock, hurricane, barbecue, maize, tobacco
  - Caribbean became less important when silver was found in Mexico and Peru until European realized the benefit of using the islands to establish sugar (and later tobacco) plantations
  - Lack of labor led to millions of African slaves being imported
The Conquest of Mexico and Peru

• Aztec and Inca Societies
  • Wealthier and more complex than Caribbean societies
  • Agricultural societies with large cities and governments
  • Clear political authority with the means to mobilize massive populations, collect taxes or tribute to maintain their societies, and recruit labor for public works projects.
The Conquest of Mexico and Peru

- Hernan Cortés
  - With 450 men, Cortés conquered the Aztec empire, 1519-1521
  - Their search for gold brought them to Tenochtitlan, the beautiful island city that was the Aztec capital.
  - After initial skirmishes, Cortes used a small fleet of ships to lay siege to the city and starve them into surrender.
• Advanced weaponry alone did not allow his forces to overcome a large, densely populated society.
• With the aid of Dona Marina, the conquistadores forged alliances with peoples who resented being dominated by the Aztecs. Native allies provided additional warriors and logistical support.
• Epidemic disease (smallpox) also aided Spanish efforts. The massive depopulation caused by smallpox was likely to be the largest contributing factor to the success of the conquest.
The Conquest of Mexico and Peru

- Francisco Pizarro
  - Led a small band of men (600 total) and toppled the Inca empire, 1532-1533
  - Called the Inca ruling elites to a conference and murdered all but one who they required to give a large quantity of gold to the conquistadors before brutally murdering him.
The Conquest of Mexico and Peru

- Pizarro was aided by internal struggles.
- Many subjects of the empire despised the Incas as overlords and tax collectors and therefore did not resist Spanish forces.
- Smallpox had already decimated the population.
- By 1540 Spanish forces controlled all the former Inca empire
Iberian Empires in the Americas

- Initially the conquistadors held their own authority in the Americas.
- Spanish colonial administration was formalized by 1570.
- Bureaucrats charged with implementation of royal policy and the administration of royal justice replaced the soldiers of fortune who had conquered Mexico and Peru.
Iberian Empires in the Americas

• Administrative centers in Mexico (New Spain) and Peru (New Castile) governed by viceroyos who was responsible to the king
• Viceroyos were reviewed by audiencias, courts appointed by the king; often university-educated lawyers
• Viceroyos had sweeping powers within jurisdictions; however, transportation and communication difficulties made governing a challenge – could take two years for communication between Spain and a viceroy or audiencias
Iberian Empires in the Americas

- Portuguese Brazil: given to Portugal by Treaty of Tordesillas (divided the world into east and west)
Iberian Empires in the Americas

- Initially not much interest in settlement until other countries showed curiosity
- Portuguese king granted Brazil to nobles, with a governor to oversee
- Sugar plantations by mid-sixteenth century
- European-style society in cities, indigenous way of life persisted outside of urban areas
- Spanish and Portuguese looked to exploit and administer the land, not settle and colonize
- Still, many Iberian migrants settled in the Americas, 1500-1800
Settler Colonies in North America

- Foundation of colonies on east coast, exploration of west coast
  - France and England came seeking fur, fish, trade routes in the early seventeenth century
  - Early settlements suffered isolation and food shortages because they relied too much on European supply ships

- Colonial government different from Iberian colonies
  - North American colonies controlled by private investors with little royal backing
  - Royal authority and royal governors, but also institutions of self-government
Settler Colonies in North America

- French and English migrants did not find large, centralized states or densely settled societies
- Relations with indigenous peoples
  - Settlers' farms interrupted the migrations of indigenous peoples who still relied on hunting
  - Availability of fertile farmland brought English, French, German, Dutch, and Irish settlers
  - Settlers seized lands, then justified with treaties
  - Settlers did not see hunting as a way of life, only a sport or hobby
Settler Colonies in North America

- Natives retaliated with raids on farms and villages
- Attacks on European communities brought reprisals from settlers
- Epidemic disease and violent conflict reduced the population - between 1500 and 1800, native population of North America dropped 90 percent