

Chapter 3

European Quest for New Land

Chapter Preview

TERMS

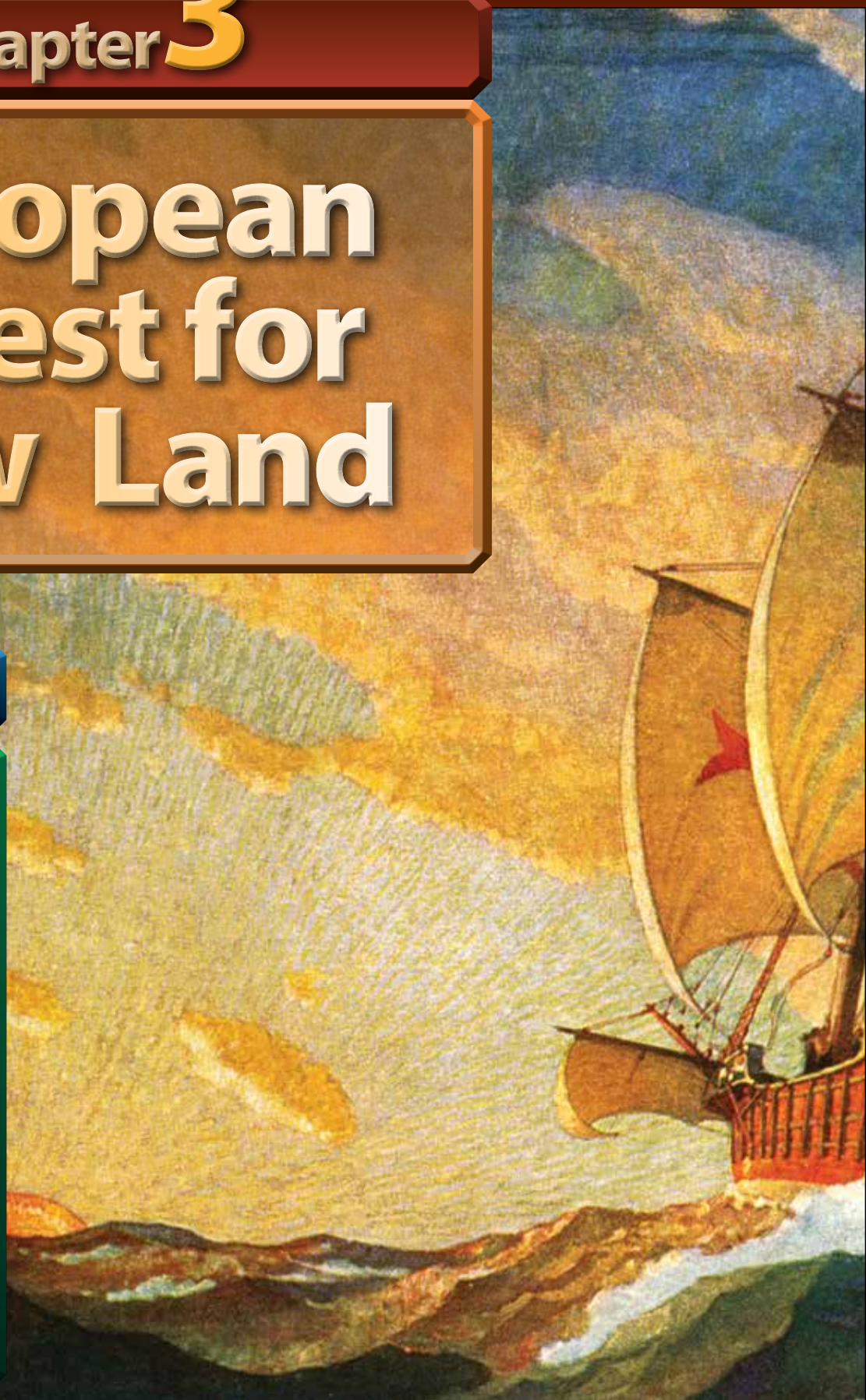
middleman, expedition,
cartographer,
Northwest Passage,
isthmus, conquistador,
skirmish, missionary,
colony, alliance,
economy, calumet,
immunity

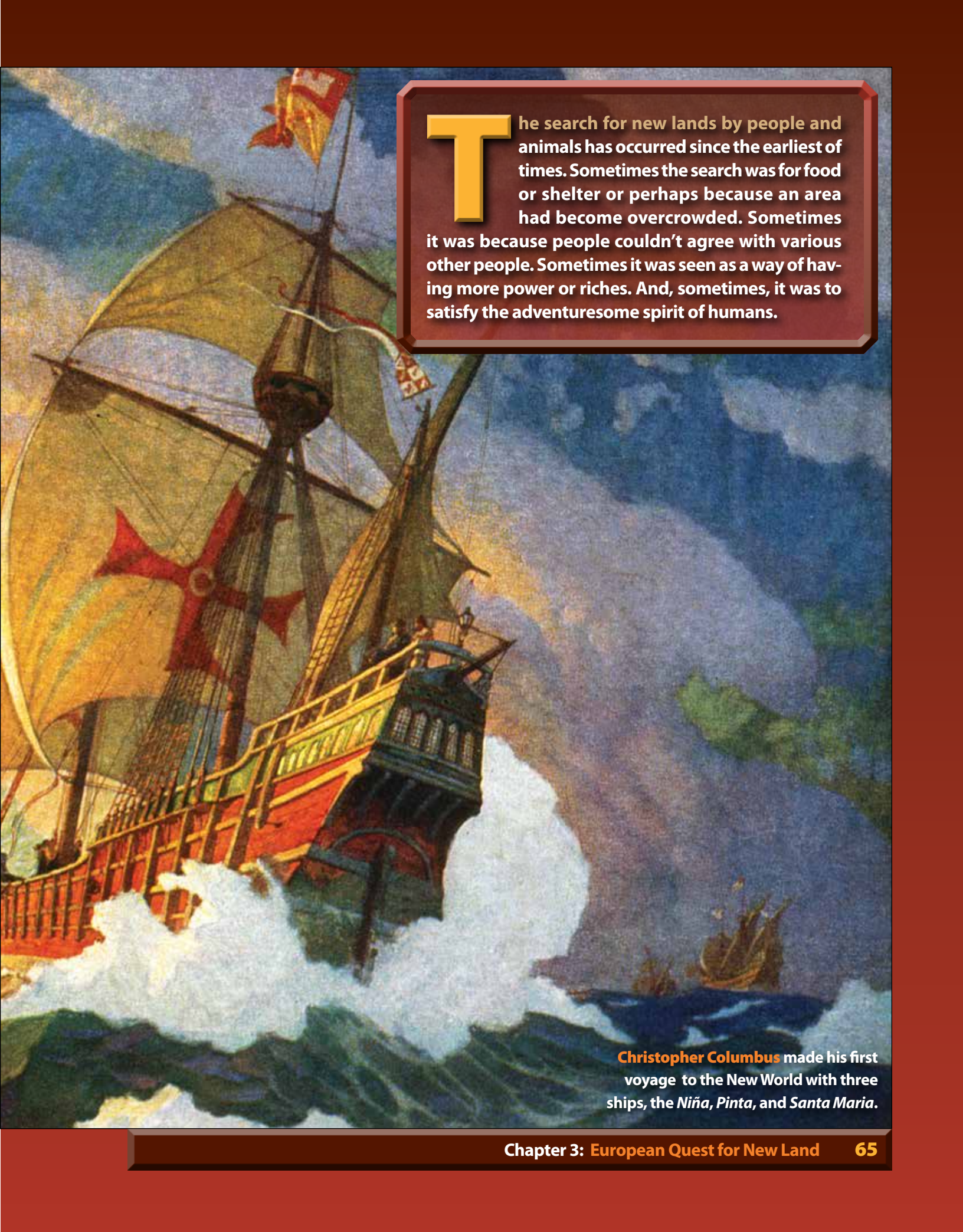
PEOPLE

Christopher Columbus;
Francisco Vasquez de
Coronado; Hernando
de Soto; René Robert
Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle;
Bernard de La Harpe

PLACES

Quivira





The search for new lands by people and animals has occurred since the earliest of times. Sometimes the search was for food or shelter or perhaps because an area had become overcrowded. Sometimes it was because people couldn't agree with various other people. Sometimes it was seen as a way of having more power or riches. And, sometimes, it was to satisfy the adventuresome spirit of humans.

Christopher Columbus made his first voyage to the New World with three ships, the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*.



Signs of the Times

POPULATION

By 1600, the estimated world population was 560 million. The number of colonists on the East Coast was about 5,700, and estimates of Native American numbers varied widely.

MUSIC, ARTS

The Vienna Boys School and Choir in Austria was founded in 1498. In 1604, William Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello* was first performed at Whitehall Palace in London.

PEOPLE

Peregrine White, born in November 1620 aboard the *Mayflower* ship in Massachusetts Bay, was the first child of English parents in present-day New England.

INVENTIONS

Leonardo da Vinci designed the first parachute in 1485 and theorized about flying machines in 1492. Galileo invented the thermometer in 1603. Bartolomeo Cristofori invented the piano in 1709.

EDUCATION

In 1636, Harvard University became the first institution of higher learning in the United States by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Figure 3 Timeline: 1450–1750



Section 1

Early European Explorers

Something Extra!

Spices were highly valued because they made bland or spoiled food taste better.

As you read, look for

- early European expeditions to and explorers of the New World,
- the first Europeans to travel through present-day Oklahoma, and
- vocabulary terms **middleman**, **expedition**, **cartographer**, **Northwest Passage**, **isthmus**, **conquistador**, **skirmish**, **missionary**, **colony**, and **alliance**.



This painting imagines Leif Ericsson's discovery of North America about AD 1000.

Scandinavian Vikings were

possibly the first Europeans to visit the Americas. Archaeological evidence of a Viking village from about AD 1000 has been found in Newfoundland, Canada. This corresponds with the time Viking Leif Ericsson attempted to establish Vinland in the same area. Theories have varied on the possibility of Vikings traveling as far inland as what is now Heavener, Oklahoma, in AD 1012. For unknown reasons, the Vikings didn't continue exploring the New World.

The Search for New Trade Routes

Somewhat later, in the 1400s, several European countries set their sights on finding new trade routes to the Orient (eastern Asia). Trade between Europe and Asia had been going on for centuries. The Europeans treasured such goods as Oriental silk, perfumes, drugs, gold, jewels, dyes, teas, and spices such as pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Mediterranean ports such as Venice and Constantinople and a land route known as the Silk Road were important in this exchange of goods. The long journey involved a number of **middlemen**, or traders

Oklahoma Mysteries

The Heavener Runestone

About AD 750, a daring group of Norwegian warriors—the Vikings—began to raid nearby countries by sea. By AD 840, they controlled the Atlantic Ocean. In 874, the Vikings landed in Iceland and set up a permanent colony; in 986, they set up another colony on Greenland. From there, Leif Ericsson sailed west in AD 1000 to a land he called Vinland, today's Newfoundland on the eastern coast of Canada. Unfriendly natives sent the Norsemen packing.

About eight years later, Thorfinn Karlselfni led four Viking ships to the east coast of North America to set up a colony. Something went wrong, and they decided to return to Norway. One ship reached Greenland, another made it to Ireland. A third was infested with ship worms and sank. The fourth was never heard from again.

According to legend, on board the lost craft were Karlselfni and a Benedictine monk. One legend has it that the ship made its way south along the North American coast, sailed around Florida into the Gulf of Mexico, and then turned north into the Mississippi

The origin and meaning of the Heavener runes are shrouded in mystery. The Choctaw Indians, who discovered the stone in 1830, considered it ancient and sacred but did not know what the symbols meant.

River. One of the tributaries of the Mississippi River is the Arkansas River, and one of its tributaries is the Poteau River. A mile from the river is Poteau Mountain (near today's Heavener). On the mountainside are eight strange figures carved on a great sandstone slab.

Many theories about the origin of the carved figures have been formulated and discussed over the years. Some people strongly believe the figures were indeed carved by the lost Vikings. Other people think the carvings were a much more recent addition to the huge rock known as the Heavener Runestone.

The origin and true meaning of the carvings may never be known. The Heavener Runestone Park & Historic Site provides a beautiful place to visit and think about the possibilities.

Something Extra!

Christopher Columbus kept two sets of logbooks on his voyage to the New World. One logbook was public, the other was private. Columbus believed that the crew would panic if they knew how far they were actually sailing.

who bought goods from producers and then sold them to other traders or consumers. The costs of moving the items from the Far East to Europe were high. A shorter route would lower prices, and it would provide an edge in the constant struggle for world power. Exploration of new seas and lands was about to begin.

Marco Polo was a merchant born in Venice, Italy, about 1254. At the age of seventeen, he traveled with his father to the Far East, an adventure that lasted twenty-four years. As they traveled throughout China, they encountered civil war, crossed the Gobi Desert, and met the great Kublai Khan, ruler of Beijing. In 1299, Polo dictated the story of his journey to the writer Rustichello of Pisa. The book *Travels of Marco Polo* was widely published and translated into many languages. The book proved to be a major influence on European exploration and on Christopher Columbus.

During the early 1400s, Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal sent ships south along the western coast of Africa in an unsuccessful search for an eastern passage to the Indian Ocean. In 1488, long after Prince Henry's death, another Portuguese explorer, Bartholomew Diaz, rounded the southern tip of Africa, called the Cape of Good Hope. Diaz was confident India could be reached by this route, but he turned back.



Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus, an Italian sea captain, believed that the best route to the Far East lay to the west. Like other experienced navigators of his day, Columbus believed that Earth was round. He calculated that the distance from Portugal to Japan was less than 3,000 miles. (It is actually 12,000 miles.) He also believed the route to the Far East would be free of land obstacles. Columbus tried to get support for his **expedition** (a journey for a specific purpose, such as exploration) from the rulers of France, Portugal, and England. Finally, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain agreed to finance his voyage.

Columbus gathered crews for the three ships that would make the journey: the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. Food, water, weapons, and live animals were put on board, and on August 3, 1492, they set sail from Palos, Spain. After many days at sea, some of the crew wanted to turn back, but Columbus convinced them to continue.

Finally on October 12, 1492, the ships landed on an island Columbus named San Salvador. Today we call this land east of Florida the Bahama Islands. Because Columbus believed he was just off the coast of India, he called the people living there Indians. He wrote, "They do not kill or capture others and are without weapons." Columbus assured Queen Isabella that the Indians would make good Christians and faithful subjects.

Christopher Columbus's accounts of his voyage to the New World encouraged other explorers.



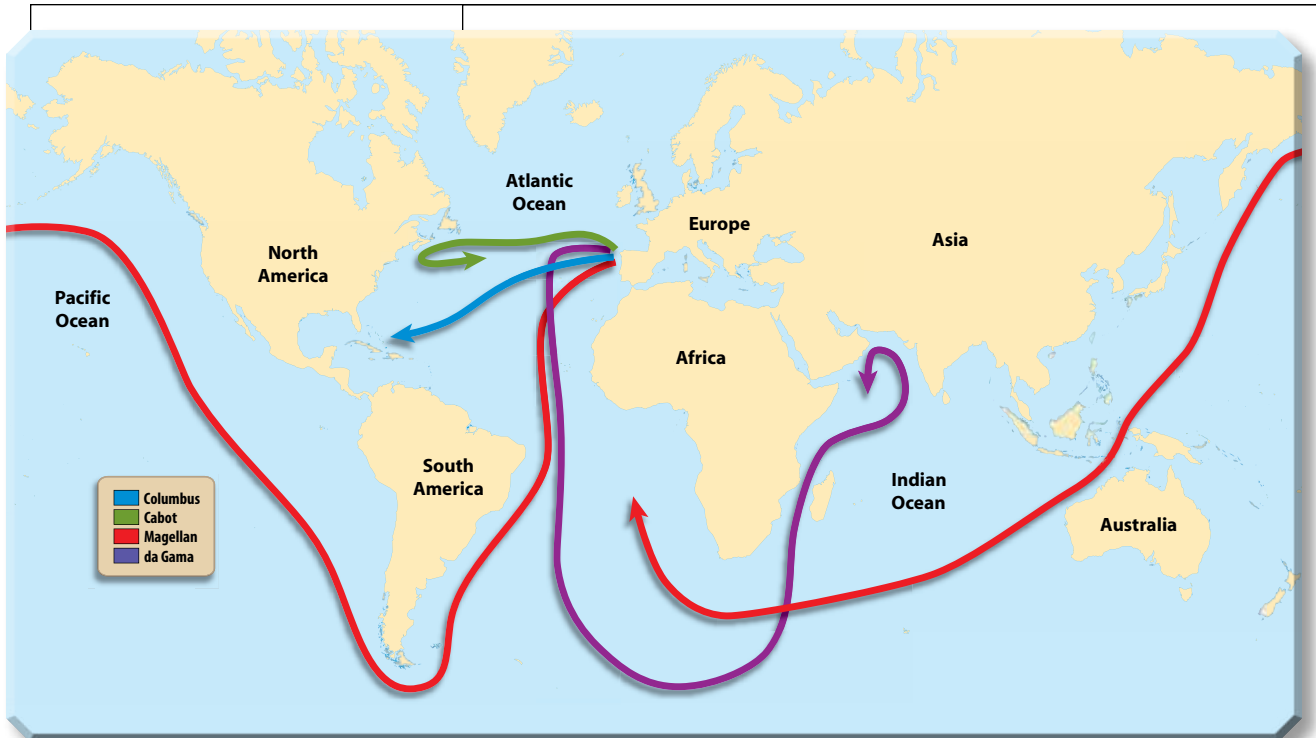
Columbus made three more voyages to the western hemisphere in 1493, 1498, and 1502. In later voyages he explored the coasts of Central and South America, discovering Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and the Virgin Islands. In his reports, he described the extraordinary beauty of the “New World” he found. When he died in 1506, Columbus still believed he had found the route to the Far East riches, and that gold and spices were very near. Other explorers took up the challenge of finding that shorter trade route.

Other Early Explorers

Italian Giovanni Caboto, better known as John Cabot, also sailed west but under an English flag. In 1497, he landed at Newfoundland in present-day Canada. He is credited with being the first European to reach the North American mainland after the earlier Viking contact.



Following his first voyage (top), Columbus returned to the court of Ferdinand and Isabella with gifts from the New World (above).



Map 12 Early Explorers and Their Routes

Map Skill: How many voyages are shown on this map?



Above: This detail from a map by Abraham Ortelius shows Magellan's ship Victoria..

The ocean trade route from Europe to India was finally discovered by Vasco da Gama, a 20-year-old Portuguese navigator. In 1498, he succeeded in sailing around Africa. When he returned to Portugal, he was given the title "Admiral of the Indian Ocean," along with a fleet of twenty warships.

In 1499, Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian navigator, sailed along the coast of South America and became convinced that it was a new continent. His journals caught the attention of the German **cartographer** (mapmaker) Martin Waldseemüller, who on his 1507 world map named the new land America in honor of Vespucci.

In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer who sailed for Spain, set sail with five ships. He sailed west, hoping to find a shorter route to the Far East. Magellan did find a passage through the southern part of South America, which he named All Saints' Channel (now known as the Strait of Magellan). Magellan died in the Philippines in 1521, but one of his ships made it back to Spain in 1522. It was the first expedition to circumnavigate, or circle, the globe.

Although Magellan did reach the Far East by sailing west, his route was long and dangerous. Europeans wanted a shorter route. They hoped to find a water route to Asia through the North American continent. They called the hoped-for route the **Northwest Passage**.

Spain in the New World

Spain continued to send explorers in search of the Northwest Passage and wealth. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon landed at what is now Florida, and Vasco Nuñez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama



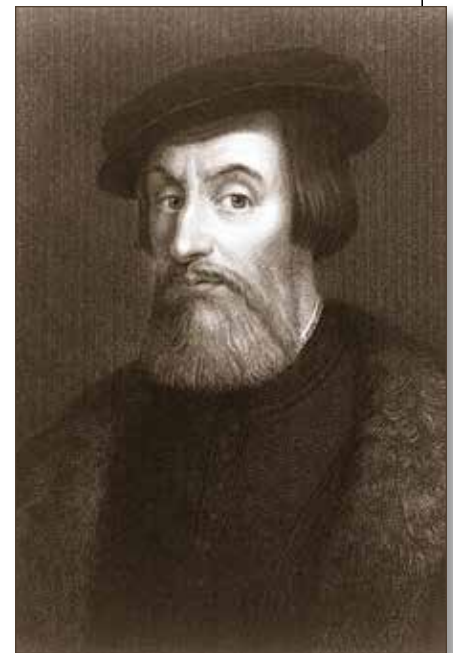
to reach the Pacific Ocean. (An **isthmus** is a narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas.)

In 1519, the daring **conquistador** (Spanish conqueror) Hernando Cortés landed in present-day Mexico. By 1521, he had conquered the Aztec Indians, killed their ruler Montezuma, and claimed a treasure of gold and silver for Spain. Stories of great treasures in the Americas were fueled in 1535 when Francisco Pizarro defeated the Inca in Peru and captured the richest silver mines in the world.

In 1527, Pánfilo de Nárvaez set out to conquer the territory from the Rio Grande to the Cape of Florida. The unsuccessful expedition included several disasters and Nárvaez's death. Eventually only four men survived: Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, Nárvaez's African-born slave Estevanico, and Alonso Castillo Maldonado. These men were among the first Europeans to see the southwestern United States. Cabeza de Vaca wrote of his travels and the Indians, land, flora, and fauna he saw. His account of powerful villages sparked further Spanish interest in that part of the continent.

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado

Reports of the "Seven Cities of Cibola," where houses were made of gold and turquoise, led to another expedition. Mexican Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza appointed Francisco Vásquez de Coronado to conquer the area north of Mexico in 1540. Coronado seized the opportunity to add to his wealth and began assembling his expedition. The entire expedition included one thousand men, fifteen hundred horses and mules, and numerous cattle and sheep. The group traveled for several



Top: Before the coming of the Spanish conquistadors, the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan was a thriving city of 100,000 people. Smallpox greatly weakened the inhabitants.
Above: In 1519, Hernando Cortés landed in what is now Mexico.



El Turco led Coronado and his men out onto the Central Plains.

Something Extra!

The Thanksgiving tradition may not have originated in New England. In 1541, Coronado led a “thanksgiving communion” celebration in west Texas.

months over parts of Arizona and New Mexico. They encountered Zuni, Pueblo, and Hopi villages, often resulting in **skirmishes** (minor, short-term fights), but no gold. A Pawnee Indian captive called El Turco, or the Turk, told Coronado of the wonderful Quivira Province. The Coronado expedition split up in 1541. The main group stayed in the Texas Panhandle area, while Coronado took a small group and continued north in search of Quivira. El Turco led the party eastward through the High Plains of Texas, where they turned north and east across Oklahoma and Kansas.

About the Central Plains, Coronado wrote, “There was not a stone, nor a bit of rising ground, nor a tree, or a shrub, nor anything to go by.” They had little water “and often had to drink it so poor that was more mud than water.” They tried to kill buffalo but instead lost several horses. They cooked their food over cow-dung fires “because there is not any kind of wood in all these plains, away from the gullies and rivers, which are very few.” Men went hunting and got lost, “wandering about the country as if they were crazy. . . . Every night (we) took account of who was missing, fired guns, and blew trumpets, and beat drums, and built great fires, but yet some of them went off so far and wandered about so much that all this did not give them any help.”

Eventually Coronado and his exhausted men arrived at the supposed location of Quivira on the Arkansas River. They were extremely disappointed in what they saw. There was no gold or turquoise or any other things they may have deemed valuable. The Wichita Indian village included humble dome-shaped grass houses and patches of corn, beans, squash, and pumpkin, and “they wander around with the cows.” The long, grueling expedition was a financial disaster. Coronado was



furious with the Turk, who admitted he had simply wanted to get the Spanish out of the settlements along the Rio Grande. The soldiers were outraged, and they strangled the Turk to death. Coronado demanded the Wichita chiefs swear an oath of allegiance to the king of Spain, and he claimed the territory for the Spanish empire. Coronado and his worn-out troops headed toward the Rio Grande, following a route that went through the Oklahoma Panhandle.

Juan de Padilla

Friar Juan de Padilla had traveled with the Coronado expedition as an ordained priest. Padilla chose to return to the Wichita village (Quivira) to continue missionary efforts among the Indians. A **missionary** is one who is sent on a religious mission. Others who stayed with him were two lay brothers, Luis de Escalona and Juan de la Cruz; three blacks, one of whom had his family with him; a Portuguese soldier named Andrés do Campo; and several Indian converts. They were warmly received at Quivira.

After about two years, they wanted to expand their ministry to other tribes, but they were ambushed by Kaw Indians. Padilla was killed, but do Campo and the lay brothers were held captive for almost a year. They finally escaped and made their way south on foot across what is central Oklahoma to the Gulf Coast, a journey that took five years.

In their sorrow over Padilla's death, they vowed to carry a heavy wooden cross on their backs. Their only companion was a dog that joined them and helped them catch small game for food. Their trail directly south between Quivira and the Spanish settlements was called the do Campo route.

Map 13 Coronado's Expedition, 1540-1542

Map Skill: What part of Oklahoma did Coronado pass through?



Above: Statue of Juan de Padilla.



When de Soto reached the Mississippi River, he claimed it and all the land—including most of what is now Oklahoma—for Spain.



Hernando de Soto

Another Spanish navigator and conquistador who had read Cabeza de Vaca's report was Hernando de Soto. De Soto hoped to be the first to find the gold and wealth. De Soto's 1539 expedition included some seven hundred men, over two hundred horses, dogs, and equipment for colonizing. He explored Florida and other areas in the Southeast, often leaving a trail of destruction. De Soto's expedition spent the winter of 1542 on the Arkansas River in Arkansas. He died later that same year, without discovering gold or wealth on the journey.

While de Soto probably did not travel into Oklahoma, his expedition added to Spain's claim to the land north of Mexico. His expedition is also credited with bringing a number of infectious diseases to the Indians he encountered.

Juan de Oñate

The legends of gold brought Spanish explorer Juan de Oñate to the land of Oklahoma in 1601. Oñate was charged with settling New Mexico in 1595, mainly to spread Catholicism, but many of his group hoped to find silver and get rich. This group of explorers, missionaries, and colonists traveled up El Camino Real, or the Royal Road, from Mexico. In 1598, he established San Juan de los Caballeros, the first

Map 14 Route of the de Soto Expedition

Map Skill: Why do you suppose there are so many twists and turns in de Soto's route?

Spanish settlement in Nuevo Mexico, a province of New Spain. In 1601, Oñate went in search of Quivira and fortune across the Texas Panhandle, through part of Oklahoma, and on into Kansas. This expedition saw some of the same things Coronado had seen sixty years earlier—the strange cattle, tall grasses, Plains Indian tribes, and the Wichita. Oñate found the same thing at the Quivira villages as Coronado had—nothing of monetary value.

Although the Coronado and Oñate expeditions were considered failures since they found no riches, they did have an impact on the area. The explorers left writings of their impressions of the vast territory they visited and the people they encountered. They further opened the door to the multitude of changes that were to come.

Juan Martinez de Montoya founded a settlement that would become Santa Fe in 1607. In 1610, it became the capital of Nuevo Mexico. Santa Fe (in present-day New Mexico) became a commercial hub for trade between there and Mexico City. Many future explorations of Oklahoma were undertaken to establish trails to Santa Fe.

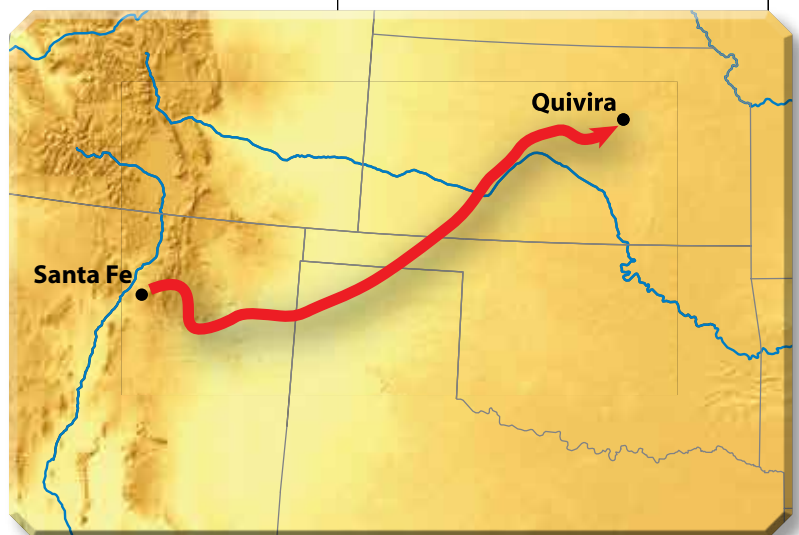
France in the New World

While the Spanish came to the New World looking for silver and gold, the French came looking for furs and trade. Frenchmen and natives in the Newfoundland area of Canada had bartered food, furs, and other items for years. Eventually the French founded Quebec on the St. Lawrence River as a **colony** in 1608. (A colony is a group of people who settle in another land but who are still under the rule of their native land.) The French did not try to conquer the Indians and take their land. They treated them with dignity.

France wanted to expand its trading area in the New World by finding the Northwest Passage. Hoping to find the fabled route through the continent, Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit missionary, led an expedition down the Mississippi River in 1673. In birchbark canoes, they traveled as far south as a Quapaw village at the mouth of the Arkansas River. There they learned of powerful tribes and Spanish soldiers further south. After determining that the Mississippi was not the Northwest Passage, they decided to return to Quebec.

La Salle

René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, had a trading post in Canada. He hoped to establish a string of trading posts down the Mississippi River. La Salle set out with his assistant Henri de Tonti, soldiers, priests,



Map 15 Oñate's Expedition, 1601

Map Skill: Why did Oñate not continue to follow the Canadian River?

Something Extra!

El Camino Real stretched from Santa Fe to Mexico City. It was the first road established by Europeans in what is now the United States.



Above: René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle. **Right:** When La Salle learned of the exploration of Jolliet and Marquette, he began his own adventure down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico in 1682. La Salle held a formal ceremony claiming the Mississippi valley for France.



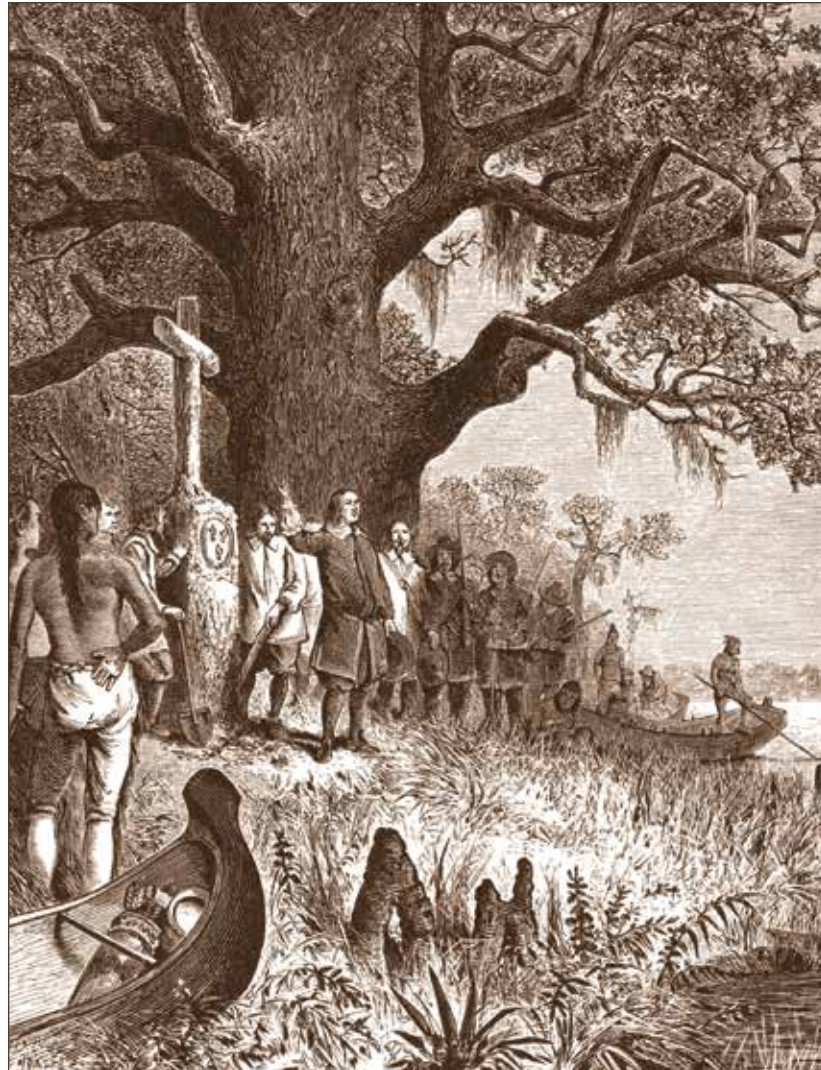
Above: Coat of Arms of René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle.

and Indians with their families. They reached the upper Mississippi River in February 1682. By April 9, they had canoed to the mouth of the river. La Salle claimed all the land drained by the Mississippi River for French King Louis XIV, naming it Louisiana (which means “Land of Louis”) and marking it with a log cross.

La Salle returned to France and was rewarded with ships and three hundred colonists. He was told to establish a colony on the Gulf of Mexico, but his return trip ended in disaster. Many colonists died at sea, and the remaining group missed the mouth of the Mississippi and landed at the wrong bay. La Salle then decided to lead the others overland to Canada, but the frightened and frustrated colonists mutinied and murdered him.

La Salle did not establish a colony on the Gulf of Mexico, but his vast land claim for France set off a chain of events that led to the first French colony. In time, that led to exploring the territory of Oklahoma.

When Spain and England heard that France had claimed the Mississippi, they believed their own colonies and plans were threatened.



To protect those colonies, both Spain and England wanted to build forts along the Gulf Coast. French King Louis XIV sent two military commanders to establish a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi River. They established several forts. In 1714, the French built Fort St. Jean Baptiste (now the city of Natchitoches, Louisiana) on the Red River to further trade with the Spanish. In 1718, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, founded New Orleans.



La Harpe

In 1719, Jean Baptiste Bernard de La Harpe established a trading post along the Red River. He bought the site from the chief of the Nassonite (a tribe in the Caddo Confederacy) for thirty pistols and some merchandise. From that post, he explored the Red River, as well as the Mississippi and Sulphur rivers, hoping to establish more trade for France in New Mexico.

La Harpe and a small party explored much of eastern Oklahoma. They encountered thousands of Indians, some who lived in established villages and some who were in "roving nations" (tribes that moved around following buffalo). Some of the Indians lived in their villages from March through October and grew maize, beans, and pumpkins. They left to hunt during the winter months.

The French party traveled through chestnut and walnut groves, mulberry thickets, tall forests, swamps, meadows, hills and prairies, and around mountains. They found rock crystal, coal, and large pearls from mussels. Game was plentiful and included buffalo, deer, bear, wolf, partridge, geese, woodcock, and plover.

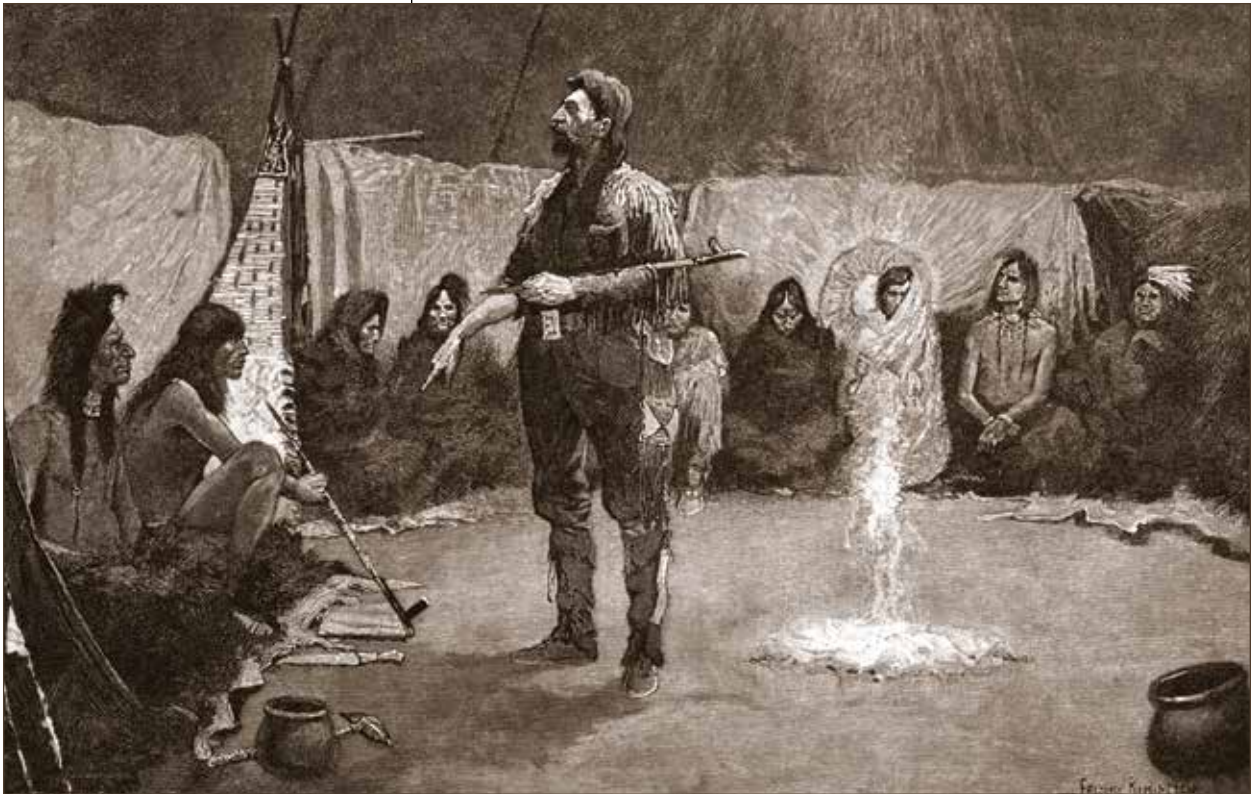
La Harpe wrote, "These nations raise very good horses being unable to do without them either in war or hunting. They have saddles, bridles which are very well made and even wear breastplates of leather to protect their flesh; their cabins are raised higher the most part built of straw and of reeds covered with earth forming a dome; over each door each of the nation has his arms painted on a piece of brown leather." He noted that the chief of the Touacara (Wichita) nation was most respected. When his food was given to him he would take a part of it, then share the rest. Their plates were made of tightly woven reed.

La Harpe was impressed with the land. "There is not in the whole colony of Louisiana an establishment more useful to make than on the branch of this river not only because of the mild climate, the

Fort St. Jean Baptiste has been reconstructed near Natchitoches.

Something Extra!

In the late 1600s, there was a great deal of demand in Europe for furs. A single canoe load of beaver skins could make a man wealthy.



The French hoped to establish trading relationships with the Indian tribes. Smoking the calumet was a way to seal that relationship.

fertility of the land, the richness of the minerals, but also because of the possibility of trade that one might introduce with Spain and New Mexico." He felt that animals and goods could be easily transported and traded for hides, pelts, and furs.

Chief Touacara and other Wichita chiefs welcomed a trading partnership with the French. The Indians wanted guns and ammunition to defend their villages and such French trade goods as metal tools, cloth and woven blankets, mirrors, and beads. In turn, the French wanted the furs of beaver, otter, mink, and muskrat and the hides from buffalo. The Indians agreed to provide safe passage for the parties of the French. The (coat of) arms of the king and date were carved on a post that was planted in the middle of the village. "I told them it was to mark the alliance we had made with them," La Harpe wrote. An **alliance** is a close association to advance the common interests of the parties, in this case trade.

La Harpe's visit marked the beginning of French trade activities in Oklahoma. His journal provided the first written description of the lands in eastern Oklahoma. La Harpe and his party returned to Louisiana, where he continued to play an important role for several years.

Other French Explorers

The importance the French placed on Oklahoma was shown by other expeditions. While La Harpe approached Oklahoma from the southeast, another Frenchman, Claude-Charles Du Tisne, entered the

territory from the north. He left Illinois country and traveled up the Missouri River to the Osage River, where he began traveling on land, and eventually arrived in northeastern Oklahoma. He made an alliance with the Wichita in 1719 and raised a white flag in their village.

French explorers in the mid-1700s included brothers Pierre-Antoine and Paul Mallet and Andre Fabre de La Bruyere. They explored the Canadian River while trying to open trade routes to Santa Fe.

The early French influence is evident today in the names of rivers, geographical features, and communities in eastern Oklahoma. Kiamichi, Sans Bois, Chouteau, and Poteau are a few examples. French men sometimes married Indian women, and French surnames are still found in some Oklahoma families.

England in the New World

John Cabot's 1497 voyage to the New World gave England a claim to North America. Once England gained control of the seas after defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588, it was more inclined to explore the New World. A number of English explorers tried unsuccessfully to find the fabled Northwest Passage.

Believing that the country that controlled North America would become even more powerful, England began settling the east coast in the 1600s. By the end of the 1600s, England had twelve colonies along the Atlantic Coast. The European influence soon affected many aspects of the Indians' way of life.



Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement in the New World. This man is a reenactor at the Jamestown reconstruction.

It's Your Turn

1. Why did Columbus name the natives he found Indians?
2. What was the name given to the all-water route Europeans hoped to find through the North American continent?
3. Why were the French exploring south of Canada?



Virginia quarter commemorating Jamestown.

Section 2

European-Indian Contact

Something Extra!

The French fur traders and trappers were called *coureurs de bois*, which means “runners of the woods.”



As you read, look for

- the reasons for the decline of the Indian population in the Americas,
- vocabulary terms **economy**, **calumet**, and **immunity**.

Archaeological discoveries have proven that many Indians were involved in trade networks for centuries. Beads, shells, pearls, stones, and spear and arrow points were some of the items traded from other areas. Some tribes were very skilled at trading by the time the Spanish and French arrived, but changes in trading were about to happen. Many tribal economies began to change with the arrival of the Europeans. An **economy** includes all the activities involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. We often don't think of the American Indians as having an economy, but they had a simple barter economy.

Indians had primarily hunted for food, clothes, and shelter for their own use. When Indians traded with other Indians, they maintained a traditional balance. As mentioned earlier, there was a great demand for furs and hides. That was because one of the most fashionable items of the day was the tall beaver hat. The Indians saw the European desire for furs and hides as a way to get guns and ammunition for protection and fighting, as well as other items they didn't have.

Very often, tribes around the country became dependent on the items they were trading for. They spent so much time hunting for animal hides and furs to meet the high demand that they had to rely on other sources for food, tools, or weapons.

Horse Sense

Perhaps the one thing that had most immediate and significant impact on Indian life was the horse. Indians were amazed when the Spaniards marched into the Plains on the large animals. They called the creatures “magic dogs” and “wonder dogs.” Spaniards mounted on horses had a decisive advantage over the Indians who were traveling on foot. The Spanish horses were strong, could live on small amounts of



grass, and were well suited to North America. Coronado and other conquistadors lost a few horses during their expeditions—or perhaps they were stolen. Sometimes horses were traded to Indians. However a tribe acquired horses, they soon became an essential part of life on the Plains.

The horse changed Indian life drastically and quickly. A horse could transport many times what a dog or a woman could carry. Traveling by horse, the Indians could venture further in search of game and return to the village after hunting. This allowed them to build more permanent villages. It also meant the Indians were more likely to cross paths with enemy tribes, which opened the opportunity for more skirmishes and wars.

By the time the French traders made their way onto the Plains, the Indians had become skilled horsemen and had crafted saddles and bridles. A man's wealth and standing within the tribe were often measured by the number of horses he owned. Horses were sometimes included in trading deals. It was even said that Apache women rode like centaurs (mythical creatures that were half human, half horse) and handled guns with deadly skill.

When they set out to establish colonies, the Europeans took everything they needed with them. This included domestic animals such as pigs, chickens, sheep, and goats. Just as with the horses, these animals were sometimes lost, stolen, or traded. They quickly spread throughout the Plains and were used by the Indians for food and clothing.

George Catlin was the most important artist depicting the lives of Native Americans during the mid-nineteenth century. This painting is called *Comanche Feats of Horsemanship*.

Something Extra!

By 1700, almost every tribe on the southern Plains had horses.



The turkey is one of only two domesticated birds native to North America. This print of the wild turkey was included in John James Audubon's famous book, *Birds of America*.

Something Extra!

Maize, the corn so valuable to the American Indian, is not a simple crop. Today, there are over three hundred kinds of corn.

The European explorers also took back to Europe various birds and small animals native to North America. One of these was the turkey, which became a fad among the European aristocracy.

Plants

Over millions of years, different forms of plant life developed in different places around the world. Plant foods native to the New World included maize (corn), beans, potatoes, squash, and pumpkins, as well as cacao (the source of chocolate), tomatoes, bell peppers, peanuts, passion fruit, sunflowers, and almost fifty varieties of berries.

The Europeans brought some plants from the Old World (Europe) to the New World. These included rye, radishes, beets, sugarcane, rice, peaches, oats, melons, onions, coffee, and wheat. These plants adapted well to their new growing conditions and are still widely grown in America today.

European explorers were fascinated by the "sticks" (pipes) the natives carried with them at all times and the weed they smoked. American Indians had been growing, chewing, and smoking tobacco for thousands of years. Tribes often used tobacco in trading.

Tobacco was pressed into flat loaves for storing or trading. Smoking a **calumet** (a long ceremonial pipe) was an honored ritual. Even though Europeans distrusted some native customs, they soon began to use tobacco for medicinal purposes and for enjoyment. Later, tobacco became a major export from the English colonies in North America.

Disease

No one knows how many people were living on the North American continent when the first Europeans arrived. There were perhaps ten million in central Mexico alone. A century later, fewer than one million remained. Many Indians were killed by the explorers, but many more were victims of diseases brought by Europeans. Native Americans had no natural **immunity** (resistance) to these diseases, which they had never encountered.

One Frenchman wrote "since the French mingle with [the Canadian Indians] and carry on trade with them, [the Indians complained that] they are dying fast and the population is thinning out." Even before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts, fishermen infected local tribes with what may have been chicken pox. The Indians "died on heapes, as they lay in their houses." To the south, it was smallpox that devastated tribes. The Aztec were eventually defeated by Cortez only after they had been weakened by smallpox.

Something Extra!

The World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared smallpox eradicated—completely wiped out—in 1980.

Smallpox spread to the Plains tribes in the early 1800s. Once the deadly smallpox had been introduced into a tribe, it moved swiftly. Reverend Isaac McCoy, a missionary, wrote that he saw more than “three thousand carcasses cast upon the open field” as Pawnee, Otoe, Ponca, and Omaha died from the terrible disease. Reverend Cyrus Byington, another missionary, found himself preaching more funerals than sermons.

In time, the Indians acquired enough immunity to survive the European diseases. But by then, European expansion and the Indians’ overwhelming population losses had reduced the natives to a minority in their own homeland.

Focus on the Economy



Fur Trade

The Plains Indians exchanged beaver pelts and buffalo hides with fur traders for European goods. Often the exchange of goods was made at trade fairs at villages along the rivers. Indians would trade furs, hides, horses, beans, squash, and corn for guns, whiskey, metal goods, and trade beads.

Traders liked Indian beaver robes that had been worn for several months because they made the best hats. Beaver hats weren’t made from the lush outer fur, but from the fibrous under-fur, which was treated with mercury, mashed, and pounded into felt. (Breathing the toxic mercury fumes led to the saying “mad as a hatter.”) Although the French led in the fur trade, most beaver hats were actually made in England. The hats became status symbols for the wealthy.

It’s Your Turn

1. How did European-Indian contact change the diet of both?
2. Why was it so easy for the Indians to get the European diseases? What happened to the Indian population as a result?

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary

- There were many reasons and causes that led to the European quest for new land.
- Scandinavian Vikings were possibly the first explorers of the New World.
- Many countries explored the New World, including Spain, England, and France. They were looking for gold and silver and for new trade routes to the Far East.
- In 1540-1541, Spanish conquistador Coronado traveled through present-day western Oklahoma searching for gold. De Soto and Oñate also explored in and near Oklahoma.
- French traders and trappers explored the Mississippi River valley. One of them, La Harpe, explored much of eastern Oklahoma. The early French influence is evident today in the names of Oklahoma's rivers, geographical features, and communities in the eastern part of the state.
- The European influence expanded the Indian's way of life through trade and bartering. The introduction of the horse to North America by the Spanish brought immediate changes to the Indian lifestyle.
- Europeans brought to the New World a variety of new plants, animals, foods, and diseases. In return, they carried plants, foods, and animals they found in the New World back to Europe.

Vocabulary

Create a word search using at least ten of the following words. Beneath the puzzle, include a sentence definition for each word you have chosen and leave a blank space for the word.

1. alliance

2. cartographer

3. colony

4. conquistador

5. economy

6. expedition

7. immunity

8. isthmus

9. middleman

10. missionary

11. Northwest Passage

12. skirmish

13. smallpox

Understanding the Facts

1. List three reasons people search for new lands.
2. Give evidence showing why some people believe that Vikings traveled in Oklahoma.
3. Name three early explorers and the areas where they explored.
4. What had the Spanish hoped to find in the Central Plains?
5. How did the Coronado and Oñate expeditions impact Oklahoma?
6. What was the single most important thing brought to the New World by the Spanish?
7. What was probably the deadliest disease for the Indians after their contacts with Europeans?

Developing Critical Thinking

1. Middlemen help get goods from one place to another, from the producer to the consumer. Who are today's middlemen?

2. “Gold, glory, and gospel” are sometimes said to be three factors that attracted European exploration and settlement of the North American continent. How do you think these factors affected European voyages to the Americas?
3. How would Native American society be different if Europeans had never brought horses to the North American continent?

Applying Your Skills

1. On a globe, locate the narrowest east-west point in the North and South American continents. Identify the two large bodies of water separated by this point. What great canal was cut through this area? When?

2. Imagine you are a leader of a Spanish expedition trying to establish a new colony on the Great Plains. Make a list of at least ten items you think you would need and explain why you have chosen each one.

Exploring Technology

1. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation showing the routes of Spanish and French explorers in Oklahoma and a short description of what each explorer found.
2. Using your favorite search engine, type in “smallpox.” Write a short paper on the effects of the disease and how it has been eradicated in the world.

Building Skills

Finding Information

As you continue your study of the history of Oklahoma, your teacher may assign topics for you to research. In addition to the Internet, there are a number of reference books and other sources available to you. These include the following:

Almanacs: Contain facts and general information on important events, politics, geography, and so on

Atlases: Give map and place information

Road Maps: Provide locations of roads, cities and towns, counties, rivers, and national forests

Biographical books: Provide general information about notable individuals

Dictionaries: Give meanings, spellings, and pronunciations of words

Encyclopedias: Summarize information on a wide variety of subjects

Read the following descriptions of information needed and determine in which reference source you would find the information. Some information can be found in more than one reference source or in reference sources that are not included in the above list.

1. The capital of Oklahoma
2. The date Oklahoma became a state
3. The average annual rainfall in Oklahoma
4. The distance between Oklahoma City and Tulsa
5. The definition of *boomer*
6. An explanation of the Indian Wars
7. The correct pronunciation of *buffalo*
8. The location of Oklahoma’s Antelope Hills
9. Another word for *liberty*
10. A list of the major works of Angie Debo
11. A map showing the counties of Oklahoma
12. A list of the Oklahoma Indian tribes
13. A biography of Will Rogers
14. Major crops grown in Oklahoma
15. The dates of the land runs