



"PREPARING BREAD." GIROLAMO BENZONI (D. 1528). *LA HISTORIA DEL MONDO NUOVO*, (1572), JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC. (CHECKLIST 18).

DREAMS OF EMPIRE

The Legacies of Contact

BY SHERRY JOHNSON

The Fourth of July in Florida is truly an *American* holiday. Whether the celebration is conducted on the beaches of *Miami*, at a picnic table near *Lake Okeechobee*, or standing on the old *Barrancas* in *Pensacola*, the celebration will likely be very similar. Friends and family gather to celebrate, tables and chairs are set up awaiting the feast. A plate of *hamburgers* and *pork ribs* await preparation on the *barbecue*, a basket of whole-*wheat* buns await the finished burgers. A variety of relishes, *onion*, *pepper*, and *olives* sit beside, with a tray of *tomatoes* and *let-*

tuce. Alongside is a simmering casserole of baked *beans* flavored with brown *sugar*. Since it's summer, bags of *potato* chips and *corn* chips are ready to be torn open by eager hands. Dad lounges in a *hammock* strung between two trees while the kids go out in the *canoe*. Everyone enjoys the sunny weather, despite weather bureau reports of a far-off Caribbean *hurricane*.

At a holiday picnic, few Floridians today pause to ponder the evolution of many American traditions that are a consequence of European arrival



"METHOD OF SLEEPING IN THE GULF OF PARIA AND OTHER PLACES." GIROLAMO BENZONI (D. 1528). *LA HISTORIA DEL MONDO NUOVO*, (1572), JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC. (CHECKLIST 18).

in the Americas more than 500 years ago. Yet the legacies of Old World/New World contact surround us: in our words, foods, household objects, place names and even the values and beliefs we hold. The meeting of Old and New Worlds brought about political, social, economic, cultural, environmental and biological consequences that neither world could have foreseen.

Old World Antecedents and Contact

Contact between Europe and the Americas resulted from Old World events at the end of the fifteenth century that would set the stage for Columbus' voyage. At that time, trade to Europe

flowed from the Eastern Mediterranean region in the hands of Mongols, who, allied with Italian merchants, created a monopoly in the trade of luxury goods. Disaster struck in 1458 when Constantinople fell to Turkish (Muslim) control. The Turks allowed Italian trade to continue, but goods became prohibitively expensive. Therefore, Europeans began to search for new routes to the East.

The person most responsible for promoting exploration was Portugal's Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460). While oddly named for someone who never sailed out of the sight of land, Henry made Portugal the leading nation in maritime discoveries in the late 1400s. His main contribution was encouraging development of

navigational skills in a mariners' school in Sagres on the southern Atlantic coast. From Portuguese ports a continuing stream of ships sailed down the coast of Africa, where they set up trading posts to trade for gold with native African chiefs.

As voyagers returned successfully to Portuguese ports, cartographers drew upon their knowledge to create better maps of the Atlantic. Henry's school also supported technological innovation, improving the astrolabe and compass. Another advance was the development of more seaworthy ships called caravelles with deep-keel hulls, large sturdy rudders and improved triangular lateen sails. Portuguese advances continued through the fifteenth century when Bartolomeo Diaz reached the southern tip of Africa. Following his lead, Vasco de Gama rounded the coast of Africa and reached India, returning to Lisbon with two shiploads of precious spices. Ironically, the success of the Portuguese in sailing east to the Orient caused them to turn down the biggest opportunity of all — sponsoring the westward exploration of Christopher Columbus.

The Spanish monarchs, Isabela and Ferdinand, must have been in a good mood when Columbus, an obscure Genoese navigator and veteran of Portuguese voyages throughout the Atlantic, made one last plea for financing for a proposed voyage in search of a western passage to Cipango (Japan) and Cathay (China). Columbus was persistent; he had already sought support from the Portuguese monarch and the courts of England and France. But Spain was in a jubilant mood, having just accomplished its goal of expelling the Muslims after nearly eight centuries. Thus, in 1492, Columbus received authority to sail and financial backing to construct and outfit ships for his voyage. Columbus was an extremely lucky fellow. He clearly built on the knowledge, experience and technological advances of his Portuguese colleagues, but fortune and circumstance made him the person whose name would go down in history.

Columbus' expeditions brought together more than two different worlds. Far from being homogeneous, both Europe and the Americas were characterized by variety. In the Americas, large sedentary populations existed only in Mexico and Peru. Other settled societies of far less complexity lived in the Caribbean islands and on the Florida

peninsula. The Europeans, for their part, were characterized by heterogeneity too, based upon religion, language, culture and differing goals of imperial expansion.

Contact between civilizations occurred on the morning of October 12, 1492, in the present-day Bahama Islands. The people who greeted the Europeans, the Lucayans, a subgroup of the indigenous Caribbean Taíno, were a group of agriculturists who lived in a non-threatening environment. At first, they did not fear the Europeans; rather they expected to trade with them as they had with an extensive pan-Caribbean trading network which had been in place for centuries. Indeed, the natives



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. *DE INSULIS NUPER IN MARI INDICO REPERTIS*.
JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC.

of the circum-Caribbean area engaged in long distance trade in huge dugout canoes holding as many as fifty rowers. One of the most visible remainders of the interconnectedness of the native societies is the ball game played in some form by indigenous groups from Tikal to Tallahassee. Columbus, erroneously believing that he made it to the East Indies, named the people Indians.

The original inhabitants of the Caribbean islands and Florida peninsula are long gone, but the Europeans borrowed many of their words and habits. The ingenious idea of roasting game on a rack directly over a fire had not occurred to Europeans, and from the practice came the Spanish word *barbacoa* or barbecue. Caribbean natives ingeniously wove together fiber (probably from the ceiba tree) into a net-like structure, a *hamaca* or hammock, that was suspended between two trees. The hammock permitted the natives to sleep outside in the cool air but off the sandy ground where they would be prey to insects. By the eighteenth century, the use of hammocks for sleeping and storage had become commonplace in the British royal navy.

The name for the destructive storm, *huracán*, is still used much more often than its official scientific designation, tropical cyclone. Miami, Tallahassee, Apalachicola, Ocala and the names of innumerable other towns and villages throughout Florida are perhaps the most visible manifestation of the legacy of the Florida native people.

The Biological Revolution

As they began to colonize the Americas, the Spanish tried to recreate their familiar Old World way of life. Consequently, they usually brought with them virtually everything to duplicate what they had left behind. To begin, the Europeans needed large animals for transportation and food, and by Columbus' second voyage in 1493, they brought horses, pigs, cattle, goats, oxen and chickens. Large dogs were particularly important to the Spaniards in their warfare against rebellious native tribes. The second voyage also introduced wheat, olive trees and grape vines in an attempt to reproduce the staples of the Spanish diet: bread, wine and olives. The sandy acidic soils of the Caribbean were not conducive to European agriculture, but as Euro-

pean settlement moved outward from the initial towns on Hispaniola to the mainland, gradually European staples began to take hold. Complementary crops such as oranges, lemons, bananas, figs, radishes, onions and salad greens rounded out the Spanish dietary array. More important in terms of economic exploitation were the cash crops they introduced—sugar and coffee—that would come to represent the basis of wealth in the Caribbean where the precious metals were quickly exhausted.

The indigenous societies had survived for centuries on a very different diet. Their most important carbohydrates were maize or corn in Central America; the white potato in the Andean region; manioc in the Caribbean and Amazon basin; and the sweet potato throughout the Americas. They had many varieties of beans: string, kidney, lima, navy and butter beans were the most common. Waterfowl, fish and shellfish, and rodents supplied additional protein. The Americas also had a wide array of seasoning crops for variety. The most important were chili peppers, tomato, vanilla, cacao and pineapple.

No large animals inhabited the Americas. The closest substitute was the llama or alpaca of the high Andes, but these animals were rarely used as food and lacked the transportation benefits of horses because they would not carry packs over about 75 pounds. Their major contribution was their silky fur that was woven into cloth. Most native American societies exploited only small animals, and only in small number.

The most important nonfood crops were tobacco, cochineal and cacao. Tobacco was smoked, ground and inhaled by the Amerindians. When it was brought back to Europe, it became in instant success—so much so that it was one of the primary reasons many international territorial rivalries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Cochineal, a red dye made from the bodies of beetles that inhabit the nopal cactus in Mexico, became that area's second most important export (after silver) and fueled the textile industry in Northern Europe. Cacao, an important food crop was also important for the export trade. In its pure form, ground into powder and infused in a bitter drink, it was a status item for the Aztec. Its bitter flavor disgusted Europeans, but combined with another New World product,



"SLAVES MINING GOLD IN CUBA." N.H. CADY, *The American Continent and its Inhabitants Before its Discovery by Columbus*, ROBIN GOODFELLOW AND ANNIE C. CADY, PHILADELPHIA, GEBBIE & CO., 1983. JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC.

vanilla, and an Old World staple, sugar, it formed a delightful luxury item, chocolate, that appealed to a growing affluent European public.

Far more sinister than the corn or potatoes that became staples of the European diet, or horses and dogs that helped bring down the Aztec empire, were the disease migrations between the worlds. The American Indians had no immunity to European diseases and the results were devastating to their population. The first disease to affect Caribbean people was an upper respiratory disease, probably influenza, that arrived in 1506. Smallpox arrived in the Caribbean in 1519 and became the most effective ally of Hernándo Cortés in the conquest of Mexico. It also preceded Francisco Pizarro to Peru, where it decimated the Inca leadership and precipitated a crisis in royal succession, thus making conquest relatively easy.

Measles, tuberculosis, diphtheria, typhus and the bubonic plague all contributed to the decimation of the native populations in the Americas in the sixteenth century. Yellow fever and malaria arrived via the slave trade in the seventeenth century. European and African diseases were a major factor in the decline of American Indian societies. The New World repaid the European invaders with an equally-deadly disease, syphilis, contracted by Columbus' sailors on their first voyage and transported back to the Old World. By 1495, it had begun to spread throughout Europe.

Almost as deadly to American society was the introduction of European agricultural and land management practices. The symbol of European status was the city, and upon arrival in any area the first act was to found a town. Almost immediately, Europeans began cutting forests and clearing land. The Spanish also allowed their large animals to run wild and trample native plants. In 1493, sugar was introduced into the tropical lowlands of the Caribbean basin. The importation of European food crops, despite their failure to take hold on the Caribbean islands, nevertheless interfered with native agricultural systems. Indiscriminate mining practices caused soil erosion and native crop failure, thus contributing to significant population decline. Upon arrival in the Valley of Mexico, the Spanish drained Lake Texcoco and filled in the swampy

area surrounding the Aztec capital, causing severe ecological degradation to that area.

Social Mixture

BY THE 1470s, as they traveled around the African coast, the Portuguese established coastal settlements to provision their ships and trade for gold. As sugar spread westward across the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic islands, increasingly the available labor supply proved insufficient. The population of Africa was large, and African chiefs began trading "surplus" people to Europeans, thus initiating the practice of African enslavement by Europeans.

With Columbus' arrival in the Bahamas, European men began sexual relations with Amerindian women, through both marriage and more casual relations. While one result was the spread of syphilis to Europe, a larger consequence was a population phenomenon unequalled anywhere else in the world: the emergence of mixed-blood people called mestizos.

While the mixed-blood population grew, the native population declined precipitously. Officially, the Spanish Crown forbade the enslavement of the Indians; they were to be treated with "benign subjugation". Under the laws of the day, soldiers could enslave captives from battle if they failed to convert to Christianity. As the populations on the major Caribbean islands declined, the Bahamas and Florida became prime slave-raiding areas.

In 1502 the first permanent governor, Nicolás de Ovando, arrived on Hispaniola. He was under orders to treat the Indians well but had no specific instructions on how to deal with resistance. This expedition included Bartolomé de Las Casas, who arrived with hopes of obtaining an *encomienda* and participated in the conquest of Cuba. He would become the foremost advocate of humane treatment for the Indians. Ovando's lieutenant, Diego de Velázquez, sought to bring the Cuban Indians under control and after landing on the eastern tip of the island he began his march to the west. According to eyewitness accounts, the Cuban chiefs greeted him and his men with a banquet which the Spanish accepted. After the banquet, the Spaniards got up and slaughtered the Indians, astutely eliminating the



"LAS CASAS BEWAILING THE CRUELTY OF THE SPANISH" (SEE ILLUSTRATION CAPTION ON PAGE 25 FOR SOURCE INFORMATION). JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC.

aristocracy of Indian society and therefore the Indian resistance. Reputedly, Las Casas was so horrified by the wholesale slaughter of the naive Cuban Indians he renounced his *encomienda* and took up the cloth of the priesthood. He spent the remainder of his long life championing their interests, thus earning him the title Protector of the Indians.

One of the solutions Las Casas offered to the problem of Indian enslavement was a labor substitute, African slaves. Although the first African slaves were brought to the Caribbean in 1518, large-scale slavery was associated primarily with sugar cultivation and initially was of less importance in the New World than other forms of economic production. An event that would change this was a 1570 slave revolt that destroyed the Portuguese colony of Sao Tomé off the west coast of Africa. The Portuguese transferred their major sugar-producing areas to Brazil and with it the institution of African slavery jumped the ocean and was transplanted into the Americas. Ultimately, with the help of the Dutch, sugar production moved up the Caribbean islands to Martinique, Cuba and Jamaica. African slavery followed and as sugar expanded the last major ethnic group entered the Caribbean in large numbers. With the slave trade, plants, animals and organisms native to Africa entered the gene pools of the Americas.

Thus, one of the major legacies of contact was the biological unification of the world. Plants, animals, pathogens and people traveled in both directions across the Atlantic with dramatic consequences for both worlds.

Consequences of Contact

For the Amerindian societies the most visible change was in population. The Caribbean people disappeared rapidly and completely. By the 1560s the island societies were virtually eradicated. In the process the Taíno language did not survive and only remnants of their culture exist today. The Carib were a bit more fortunate. Because of their hostility toward the Spanish, they were able to hold out in the Leeward islands, out of the mainstream of Spanish settlement. They also formed relations with black slaves and a colony of Black Carib survives in Dominica today.

In Florida the natives held on somewhat longer, but by 1763 the last remaining Florida Indians evacuated to Cuba with the Spanish. In Mexico and Central America, the indigenous population declined initially but subsequently regained numbers after 1700. The Inca of Peru were less affected because of their isolation; the number of indigenous people in that area remains high. Other areas were relatively unaffected by Spanish influences. Some of the more remote societies—in the Amazon basin, for instance—did not come into contact with Europeans until the late nineteenth century.

Spain remained dominant in the New World until 1821. The Spanish transferred a political structure designed to incorporate American holdings into their imperial system. The economy was structured around mercantilism in which the colonies provided raw materials for the mother country and received finished goods in return, thus retarding colonial economic development. One of the most visible legacies of Spanish rule is its culture, particularly in areas where Roman Catholicism is predominant and millions of people continue to speak Spanish.

Of course, there were also consequences for Europe. In the political arena, Spain was the dominant power on the continent from 1505 until 1620. The economic consequences revolved around an influx of precious metals that changed the European economy. The arrival of so much silver into Europe had a trickle-down effect since Spain spent its silver almost faster than it received it. Two of the greatest beneficiaries were the Dutch and British. Spanish silver, it is argued, contributed significantly to the rise of capitalism in Northern Europe. Greater wealth led to better living conditions and increased population.

The areas of the New World not under effective Spanish control attracted other European nations, especially France and England, challengers of Spain's sovereignty in the Americas. In religious matters, Spain became the defender—and perhaps savior—of Catholicism in Europe. Only through the large amounts of gold and silver arriving from the New World could Spain launch a counterchallenge to the Protestant Reformation.

New World discoveries inspired an intellectual revival in Spain. As new lands were discovered, bet-

ter maps were drawn, and the recent invention of the printing press allowed the news of discoveries to spread throughout Europe. Amerigo Vespucci, a Mediterranean trader and pilot in Spanish employ, lent his name to the new continent with the help of a geographer, Martin Waldseemüller, who named the southern hemisphere of the New World *America* in his honor. Maritime voyages also led to astronomical discoveries such as the Southern Cross and to better navigational devices.

By Columbus' fourth voyage, both Portuguese and Spanish navigators were well on their way to understanding wind and water currents across the Atlantic Ocean. Advances in medicine were made possible with the discovery of new plants and healing techniques. The New World became the inspiration for a golden age in literature and drama, and the wealth of the Spanish court attracted talented men and women who sought patrons to sponsor their creations.

Contact also stimulated theological discussion, especially after the discovery of a world so completely separate from the known world at the time. Questions arose such as: Who are the Indians and where did they come from? How should they be treated? Could they and/or should they be enslaved? Were they to be free men or, as Aristotle proposed, natural slaves? The rivalry between Church and *encomenderos* for the use of Indian labor began almost with the first missionaries to the Caribbean, and the issue was complicated because of the debate over the issue of the humanity of the Amerindians. The greatest champion of the Indians, Bartolomé de Las Casas, returned to Spain where he spoke and wrote forcefully that the Amerindians were capable of converting peacefully and that forced conversion and enslavement should be stopped.

But abuse continued, despite a Papal Bull in 1537 that decreed that the Indians were indeed human, not animals. The debate reached its height during the 1560s between Las Casas and theologian Juan Gines de Sepúlveda, who promoted the Aristotelian doctrine of natural slavery based on the unnatural practices of the Indian people, particularly cannibalism. After a series of debates between the two men in the Spanish city of Valladolid in 1555, the Spanish monarch declared that conquest

should be halted, but it did little to stop the population decline. By the time of the debates, the Caribbean Indians were on their way to virtual extinction. Spain's rivals in Europe seized on Las Casas' speeches and writings and the Valladolid debates as evidence of Spanish cruelty. In particular, the British, engaged in a fierce struggle with Spain over religion and maritime supremacy, began to use Las Casas' propaganda to justify their challenges to Spain. The so-called "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty became a rationale for British actions. Five centuries later, the Black Legend persists.

Amerindian Expectations

What did the arrival of peculiar looking people with extraordinary light skin and elaborate clothing signify to the Caribbean and Florida natives? Aside from their odd appearance, the Taíno and their brethren were probably not unduly alarmed since they were used to strangers coming to their territories to trade. Throughout the Caribbean, Florida, Gulf of Mexico and Yucatan peninsula, lively trade networks had existed for centuries allowing the exchange of products and cultural innovations. Visitors were greeted with food, lodging and the sexual favors of the host village's young women.

The Caribbean hosts were clearly unprepared when their European guests began behaving in a very ungracious manner. First, they demanded gold in return for worthless trinkets. Worse still, they began to interfere with the social, cultural and political structures of native societies by demanding that the natives discard their old beliefs in favor of a new system, Christianity. Since native religion was so closely tied to political power and the social hierarchy and since the visitors were so obstinate, their arrival signified much more than the desire for trade. Eventually, the native populations came to realize that the arrival of the Europeans would challenge their very way of life. The awareness was not enough to save them.

European Dreams of Empire

Contact between the two worlds occurred during the rise of Europe's nation states, when territory and power was transferred out of hands of local nobles

and consolidated in a strong monarchical dynasty. With the marriage of Isabel and Ferdinand in 1469, Spain became one of the first European nations to embark on the course of unification. Once the power of the Spanish nobility had been curtailed, the Catholic Kings, as the pair was known, could turn to other issues, most importantly the eradication of the last Moslem stronghold in Spain, Granada. In January 1492, their efforts were successful and Granada fell to their combined armies.

The importance to the future of European-American interaction was that the 750-year effort against the Moslems had left Spain with the ideological and cultural baggage of the glorification of military service and the exploits of military heroes, as portrayed in the national epic poem, *El Cid*. Spain was also left with an unwavering belief, bordering on fanaticism, in the infallibility of Catholicism. Both of these cultural traits would shape the Spanish experience in the New World.

In response to Portugal's challenge, the political reality of the day also demanded that Spain gain legitimate title to the newly-discovered lands from the most powerful person in Europe, the Pope. A strong, political alliance between Spain and Rome emerged in the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas. In return for Spain's promise to convert the people they encountered, the Pope legitimized Spain's claim by dividing the world in two. Spain received sovereignty over the western half of the world and Portugal over the eastern portion, Africa and most of Brazil. Ever mindful of her responsibility, Spain would become the champion of Catholicism in both hemispheres. The plunder of silver from Mexico and Peru allowed her to embark upon a series of costly European wars to eradicate the Protestant challenge.

The major antagonists to such arbitrary division—France, England and ultimately Holland—refused to acknowledge Spain's exclusivity in the New World. Almost from the outset they challenged Spain's territorial rights. Reportedly, when hearing of the Papal mandate, the French king, Francis I, responded that he wanted to see the clause in Adam's will that excluded him from a share of the newly-found lands. Perhaps as early as 1504, France sent ships to the Caribbean and to Brazil; their seizure of the first treasure ships in 1523

stimulated enormous interest in the New World. Many voyages of plunder operated without government sanction, but European rulers quickly realized the utility of having private vessels harass the Spanish for private gain in the interest of national policy. So the governments of France, England and Holland began granting royal sanction to pirates, with official documents called letters of marque stating that a ship sailed with royal approval. By the sixteenth century, the French developed two mechanisms of harassment: small-scale expeditions in peacetime conducting trade and barter with out-of-the way settlements, and large-scale wartime expeditions mounted by royal warships like that of Jacques Sores that plundered and burned Havana in 1555.

The challenge to Spain also had an ideological dimension. Protestant French sailors considered their attacks a personal crusade. Religious zealots were also useful to the French queen, Catherine de Medici, who in 1565 sent them to establish a settlement in Florida. Under their famous leader, Jean Ribault, they founded the first French colony in Florida, Fort Caroline, at the mouth of St. Johns River. Spain's response was quick and brutal. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was granted permission to found a Catholic colony at St. Augustine and quickly crushed the French settlement with legendary brutality. Spain's exclusivity in the New World, for a while, was safe.

While France was busy harassing Spanish ships and settlements, England was not yet a seafaring power. The English shipped cloth, primarily woollens, to the Dutch city of Antwerp and established merchant houses there. But as the fortunes of Antwerp declined, English merchants sought other markets for their goods. They first sailed to the east to Russia, where on the treacherous North Sea they gained experience in seamanship and navigation. Once ready to test tropical waters, they branched out across the Atlantic, where they traded for cochineal, tobacco, sugar, hides and cacao, promoting new tastes and demands in England.

English population growth was resulting in the eviction of many families from their land, and the nation sought an outlet for its surplus population. Despite Spain's claim to sovereignty, the English began to colonize North America, starting with the

colony of Roanoke. English seafaring exploits also stimulated growth of a class of privateers who were the younger sons of gentry and who, because of English inheritance laws had no hope of a family fortune. With the ambition and the connections to raise capital to outfit a ship, these daring young men began to plunder Spanish treasure ships and trade illegally with the Spanish colonies.

Until 1558 England and Spain were allies, but when Protestant Queen Elizabeth I ascended the English throne, the political climate reversed. An extreme Protestant faction came to political power and saw the challenge to Spain as a reforming religious crusade. Elizabeth promoted the voyages of John Hawkins, who sailed to the Canary Islands, purchased a load of slaves, and took them to the Indies. On his fourth voyage Hawkins encountered Menéndez de Avilés who sank his ships. The most famous English privateer, Francis Drake, occupied Nombre de Dios on the Isthmus of Panama in 1572. In 1577 he sailed into the Pacific where he harassed Spain's Pacific cities before going on to circumnavigate the globe. By 1586 Drake returned to the Caribbean, plundering Cartagena, Santo Domingo and St. Augustine. His exploits, along with the settlement attempt of Walter Raleigh at Roanoke Island, pushed Spain into action. In 1588 Spain attempted a full-scale invasion of England. Off the southern English coast, the famous Spanish Armada was destroyed by the British, aided by bad weather and the Spaniards' bad judgment.

In an effort promoted by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, founder of St. Augustine and governor of Cuba, Spain sought to eliminate foreign threats to its claim of exclusivity in the Americas. Menéndez suggested implementing naval escorts for transatlantic fleets and Caribbean-based cruiser squadrons that would go on seek-and-destroy missions. He also suggested building fortifications in Caribbean cities and manning them with permanent garrisons. Throughout the Caribbean and Florida the many forts begun in the 1560s remain the hallmark of cities such as St. Augustine, Havana and San Juan. More restrictive shipping measures included a convoy system to escort twice-yearly shipping to and from Spain. While the plan was a good idea in theory, Spain was unable to support fully the needs of its colonies and their defense. As a result, Span-

ish colonists turned to contraband trade with enemy nations, weakening their nation's hold.

Adding to Spain's troubles were the Netherlands, which had been a Spanish possession until breaking away in 1567. A long series of religious wars contributed further to declines in Spanish royal fortunes. Philip II spent untold millions of silver pesos in his attempt to bring England and the Netherlands back into the Catholic fold. The Dutch, more interested in the East Indies than the West, were latecomers to the Americas and they showed little interest in settling the area. However, they did pursue contraband trade and transported a variety of New World products back to Europe.

Spain tried to crack down on the inhabitants of Hispaniola who had been trading with privateers from Tortuga, a nearby island inhabited by men and women of mixed nationalities with a common hatred of Spain. In 1605 Charles II ordered that the towns on the north coast of Hispaniola be abandoned, leading to further Spanish decline in the region and enabling the privateers to take possession. By 1607 the Spanish Caribbean was at a low ebb, an invitation to foreign powers to begin nipping at the heels of the mighty Spanish empire.

The Age of Colonies (1607–1697)

The death of Philip II in 1598 marked the beginning of the decline of Spain, overstretched in her worldwide empire and troubled, too, at home. Taking advantage of Spanish weakness, other nations began to establish colonies on the outer Caribbean islands and fringes of North America. These provided bases for raiding and smuggling to the Spanish colonies, supplying their ships, and exporting tropical products.

For the French and English the key was the expansion of tobacco cultivation; their first colonies were established as tobacco-growing centers. Spain's real trouble came from the Dutch, who early on had a different agenda. Initially they were primarily interested in salt extraction off the north coast of Venezuela at Araya, but they, of all the interlopers, were most interested in commerce. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch nation became Europe's wealthiest, engaging in the transportation and sale of the products of other nations' colonies.



"ARX CAROLINA."ARNOLDUS MONTANUS (1625?–1683). FROM: *DIE NIEUWE EN ONBENKENDE WEERLD, OF BESCHRYVING VAN AMERICA EN 'T ZUID-LAND*. AMSTERDAM, 1671. JAY I. KISLAK FOUNDATION, INC. (CHECKLIST 21).

One of Spain's biggest problems was the Dutch West India Company, established in 1621. Part commercial, part military, the company challenged Spain in the West Indies not by colonizing but by profiting from plunder and commerce. Organized fleets attacked Spanish shipping everywhere from Africa to the West Indies, contributing to Spain's downfall by overtaxing her limited resources. The Dutch West India Company's most spectacular success was the capture of an entire Spanish convoy off the coast of Cuba in 1628. Dutch admiral Piet Heyn commanded 31 ships that surprised and intercepted the entire convoy without firing a shot. The attack ruined Spanish credit in Europe and paralyzed its shipping for several years.

As a consequence of Dutch activity, England and France were able to occupy other areas. The Spanish, overtaxed everywhere, could do nothing

about it. The first permanent English settlement was at Jamestown in North America. In the Caribbean, St. Christopher (St. Kitts) was founded in 1624 and Barbados in 1627, far away from areas patrolled by the Spanish Armada. In North America, the French concentrated on Canada and the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

Later, the English and French followed the successful Dutch example of the trading company. But for a while, other nations' islands depended on Dutch shipping services. Every colony established meant more money for the Dutch. Even Spain could not resist the Dutch example; by 1648 the two nations had signed a peace treaty. Holland gave up its national policy of raiding Spanish settlements and ships in return for the privilege of supplying the Spanish colonies with slaves.

The End of an Era

The goals of European nations changed again by the mid-seventeenth century. In the early years of the century they dedicated their efforts to colonizing areas away from the Spanish Armada. By mid-century, England and France went on the offensive to take some of the territory away from Spain, exemplified in the English capture of Jamaica in 1655. From 1642 to 1660, the period of the English Civil War, that nation was ruled by a parliamentary government dominated by militant Protestants. Their attacks against Spain were a crusade against Catholicism. Spain's treasure ships were tempting, but the bottom line was the permanent acquisition of territory to establish colonies.

Hostilities between the English and Spanish continued through most of the century. Jamaica was ideally situated to be a base for privateers, and its governor encouraged them. Jamaica's major city of Port Royal was located on an excellent natural harbor. Probably the best-known privateer was Sir Henry Morgan, who, operating from a stronghold at Port Royal, led expeditions against Cuba and the settlements of Porto Bello and Maracaibo in Venezuela. His greatest victory came in Panama, where a force of nearly 1,500 French and English buccaneers devastated the isthmus. The sack of Panama represented the climax of Morgan's career, and for his service to the British crown he was knighted and rewarded with the governorship of Jamaica. Most of the cargo stolen from Spanish ships was sold in North America, particularly in Rhode Island. Meanwhile in Europe negotiations were under way to end the hostilities on both sides of the Atlantic. Finally, with the 1670 Treaty of Madrid, both nations revoked their letters of marque and, more important, Spain recognized England's right to exist in the Caribbean.

By 1670, only France remained hostile to the Spanish and the center of privateering shifted from Port Royal to Tortuga. France under King Louis XIV was the most powerful country in Europe and wanted a presence in the West Indies. Official French colonization began in 1665 with the appointment of a governor of Tortuga; from that island France began to occupy the western half of Hispaniola, St. Domingue, today known as Haiti.

Two distinct settlements arose: the rough-and-tumble buccaneers in Tortuga and the respectable planters in St. Domingue. The French royal governors stood between both societies, often walking a thin line between respectability and roguishness. Many of Henry Morgan's old cohorts, now unemployed with England's renunciation of privateering, shifted their allegiance to the French. Raids, as official government policy, took a terrible toll on Spanish port cities. At the same time in Europe, England and Holland, fearful of France gaining too much power, united and aligned against her. Hostility ended in 1697, with the Peace of Ryswick. Spain officially ceded St. Domingue to France, thus acknowledging that nation's right of New World occupation as well.

The Ryswick treaty formally ended the age of the buccaneers, yet the legacy of the colonial period in the Caribbean and Florida lives on. No one can visit a Spanish Caribbean city without being impressed by massive sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fortifications. Throughout the Caribbean, the culture—food, language, music, dress, architecture, among others—is a wonderful mixture of European, Creole and African. Culture varies from island to island, depending on the pattern of colonial settlement and control. Caribbean society is also a mixture of African, European, and some Amerindian, although the contemporary claims to be descendants of the Taíno are disputed. Spain promoted Catholicism as an exclusive religion, but once the monopoly was broken, other religions entered the area, including a variety of European and African religions. Spanish is spoken by millions of people in Central and South America and on the largest islands, but throughout the region French, English, Dutch, Creole and patois are the languages of the islands' people.

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