ENCOUNTERING THE NEW WORLD
1493–1800
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The publication of this catalogue has been made possible by a major grant from FIDELITY INVESTMENTS through the FIDELITY FOUNDATION, and by the support of the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, an independent agency of the federal government.
ENCOUNTERING THE NEW WORLD 1493 TO 1800

Catalogue of an exhibition by Susan Danforth
With an introductory essay by William H. McNeill

THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
1991
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THE COMMEMORATION now beginning in the United States of the fifth century of Columbus’s historic voyage to the West has evoked startling controversy. Some descendants of the native inhabitants of the Americas in 1492 would prefer that the anniversary on October 12th be a day of lamentation rather than a prideful celebration. Others, whose primary concern is the protection of the global environment, see in the European conquest of the Americas the beginning of a tendency, made possible by European technological and industrial progress, toward horrific and irreparable despoliation of the beauty and resources of the earth.

Who can doubt that the incredible European expansion across the entire globe that began, in Columbus’s lifetime, with the Portuguese explorations of the west coast of Africa and continued most spectacularly with the Spanish-sponsored voyage of discovery that led to landfall in the Americas, unleashed gigantic and unprecedented forces that have transformed the world? But such being the case, let us by all means, be as urgently, mark the day, the year, the century, and the quincentenary. Let us study and reflect upon the multifaceted meanings of the unprecedented encounter, celebrating, lamenting, or condemning as anyone may wish, but wringing from these events and their consequences every drop of understanding that we can. To exult that October 12, 1492, or October 11 in any year be condemned to the oblivion of non-rememberance would be unwise indeed.

The John Carter Brown Library, a center for advanced research and one of the world’s great repositories of printed materials contemporary with the age of European discovery and exploration and with the colonization of the New World by the Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English, is dedicated to the promotion of research and writing pertaining to the great encounter and its colonial aftermath. The Library also hopes to contribute to public enlightenment concerning the history of this fateful 350-year period, from the first tentative Portuguese ventures into the Atlantic to the revolutions for independence in the New World led by such figures as George Washington and Simon Bolivar.

The present exhibition and catalogue is one of a number of different ventures in which the John Carter Brown Library is continually immersed that concern specifically the European reaction to the discovery. In June of 1937 the Library sponsored a four-day, international scholarly conference on the subject of "America in European Consciousness: The Intellectual Consequences of the Discovery of the New World, 1492–1750," which was focused on the question of what significance it made to European thought, culture, and sensibilities, from the creation of art to the writing of theology, that the Americas had been discovered. The Library is also engaged in the publication of a six-volume chronological guide to European books about the Americas published between 1493 and 1770. Entitled European Americana, this massive work, some twenty years in preparation, will contain about 15,000 entries when it is completed early in 1953. Four volumes of the six have already been published.

The traveling exhibition "Encountering the New World" and this accompanying catalogue are somewhat different from both of the above-mentioned projects. The present exhibition and catalogue, unlike the projects mentioned above, concentrate, so far as possible, on the subject of what Europeans could know and did know of the New World visually before ca. 1600, that is, well before the era of photography or even of mass-produced lithography. The replication of visual images in this age depended upon the woodcut and the engraved copper plate, and the curators of the exhibitions, Miss Susan Danforth, took it upon herself to select the John Carter Brown Library collection to answer the question of what was actually available to Europeans in the way of pictures of peoples, plants and animals, urban settlements, landscapes and landscapes in the Americas. The analysis of such images, of almost any one of them, could be the...
INTRODUCTION

The Legacy of Columbus, or How by Crossing the Oceans He Shaped the Modern World

Columbus’s famous voyage, whose five hundredth anniversary we celebrate in various forms, was a process of interaction across the oceanic spaces of the earth that is still in train. He made the world one as never before; and that is why his voyage was, and still is, so important. Others had crossed the Atlantic before—Leif Ericsson, for certain, along with others whom we do not know by name. A few Vikings, actually settled in Newfoundland, and humble fishermen from Europe probably had been catching cod off that island for a generation or more when Columbus set sail, though they kept the Grand Bank’s treacherous fishing too secret for us to know. But since none of the earlier crossings led to continuous linkages between the Old World and the New, they are merely historical curiosities, and not the epoch-making event that Columbus’s voyage turned out to be.

Why did the recently discovered Viking settlement in Newfoundland die out without making any difference to America or European life, and why did Columbus’s report of his first voyage trigger such a world-changing consequence? The answer lies in the different scale of follow-up that the two enterprises provoked.

When Leif Ericsson sighted North America, soon after the year 1000, his discoveries circulated only by word of mouth among a small population of Scandinavia’s seafarers. For a brief time a handful of them actually tried pioneering in Newfoundland, but most who heard the news were busy with subsistence, seasonal voyaging, and saw no advantage in crossing wide and treacherous seas to settle far away. Even when, centuries later, written sagas put a report of Leif’s discovery into more permanent form, only a few literate Scandinavians could understand them.

No one thought of doing anything about it then, for Leif’s homelands in Greenland had fallen on hard times and was about to disappear, owing largely to a change of climate that made a European style of life in Greenland all but impossible.

By contrast, in 1492, when Columbus returned from his first voyage, his report was printed at once and translated into several languages. His news attracted wide attention. Important people quickly decided to organize new and better equipped voyages across the ocean. Queen Isabella, who had backed the first voyage, was no longer alone in favoring Columbus. Instead, the full resources of the Spanish crown were put behind the overseas adventure. Officials of the government confidently called on Genoese bankers to finance further voyages, expecting spectacular profits from trade and conquest in the Indies. Even when Columbus’s initial hopes proved false, and the fabulous wealth of the Indies turned out to be far across another and far wider ocean, the Pacific, the Spanish government continued to lavish ships, men, animals, plants, tools, and weapons across the Atlantic. The adventurers whom they arrived in the New World soon managed to some spectacular amounts of gold and silver, first in Mexico (1521) and then in Peru (1532). News of their teams assumed streams of sudden wealth throughout Europe, and persuaded sober men of affairs to keep on sending men and supplies to America, even though most ventures failed to repay the cost of doing so. But the fees that did succeed brought such booms that the ships kept coming. As a result, Columbus’s voyage triggered a continual movement that has lasted down to the present.

Windfalls of gold and silver soon gave way to mining and to plantation agriculture as the main forms of European enterprise in the New World, but agricultural settlements, which recreated European styles of life across the Atlantic as fully as local conditions permitted, also eventually established themselves. Little by little the drastic initial differences between the two sides of the
Atlantic Ocean diminished, without ever disappearing entirely. That, in a nutshell, is the history of the Western world across the past five hundred years. Columbus was not the only one, but there was no one else as remarkable about his achievement. It is true that he crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, but other European explorers would surely have done so very soon afterwards. Columbus was not the only ship captain who understood the wind patterns of the Atlantic, which made sailing west and east at will easy to arrange. By sailing south to the trade wind zone, as Columbus did, a following wind carried sailing ships, westwardly, and by heading north into the zone of prevailing westerlies, as Columbus also did, the return voyage could also extend on generally favorable, though sometimes storms, winds. Under the circumstances, and given the seafaring skills that Europeans had developed by 1492, it was safe to say that the first transatlantic voyage was only a matter of time. Proof is the fact that after Columbus, Cabot, a Portuguese captain heading for India along the route Vasco da Gama pioneered in 1497, ventured into the coast of Brazil in years simply by taking a westerly course from Cape in the distance.

The really surprising aspect of the European discovery of America, therefore, was not the voyage itself but the relentless way it was followed up. By 1492, Europe's political, economic, and intellectual organizations were ready and able to focus relatively vast human and material resources on overseas enterprises. They paid off so handsomely that a feedback loop came into action wherein the growing experience in the Americas sustained and reinforced Europe's capability for further overseas enterprises. It was, or so seems, a self-reinforcing process. We have hints of that post-Columbian process, still struggling to understand where it was, and how and when it will continue into the future.

For a closer look at Columbus's legacy, it is convenient to separate it into geographical consequences, political and social phenomena, intellectual and cultural changes, and economic and social phenomena. We will examine the geographical consequences first, as it is convenient to do so in this context.

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those which had escaped remarkably minor pressures.

The resulting ecological imbalance went a long way to define the course of the encounters between the Old and New Worlds. Yet at the time no one understood what was happening, and the handful of ruthless adventurers who sailed and then ruled the vast empires of Mexico and Peru did not even wonder why it was possible for them to prevail so easily, or subsequently to spread their religion, their language, and their literal culture far and wide. They knew it was God's will, and for centuries this simple explanation distracted attention from the cloud of disease germs and other organisms they brought with them to the Americas. But historians today do not think that God plays favorites, and are coming to believe that horses and (very inefficient) guns were not enough to assure Spanish victory. Instead, it was ecology that made the difference, upsetting pre-existing biological and ecological balances completely and allowing the human intruders to prevail because the ecosystem of which they were a part was prevailing as well.

Yet, as in any ecological encounter some American organisms held their own easily enough and soon found new niches in the Old World as well. Aside from syphilis, whose American origin is not certain, American food crops constitute by far the most notable example of this reverse flow. Potatoes, maize, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, cacao, cotton, and sugar cane were all cultivated by the Americans with crops the Europeans brought with them; and indeed, white pioneers prospered in North America long before learning to rely on maize as their principal crop. Maize and potatoes also spread widely in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Their fundamental attraction for Old World farmers was that they could be grown in soils and climate these crops yielded for rice and for cereals per acre more than any of the Old World grains, with the exception of rice. Accordingly, when population growth made it worthwhile the extra effort required for hoeing potatoes and maize fields, these crops entered Old World crop rotations, and in some regions actually displaced older staples. This was true, for instance, in southern Africa, where the so-called Southwest Trek from 1838 to 1840, where maize soon replaced the ancestors; in southern Europe, where potatoes became more important than rice, which was the only grain that had ripened well in the wet climate of the northwestern parts of the continent. By deliberate borrowing from the Americans, Old World peoples were then able to benefit very substantially, and escaped nearly all of the ecological disasters that the opening of regular contact across the oceans brought to the plants, animals, and human populations of the Americas. To be sure, Europeans did have a few brushes with diseases, most notably typhus fever, which was imported from Peru, destroyed the potato crop in Ireland and in much of Europe in 1845 and 1846. Up to 1 million persons died as Ireland was ravaged famine, but this catastrophe, severe though it was, pales in comparison with the repeated disasters that struck the native populations of the Americas after 1500.

So much for the ecological disturbances provoked by the opening of contacts across the oceans. Obviously, ecological upheavals constituted an essential background for political, social, and intellectual sides of the European enterprise overseas, since it gave Europeans and Africans an overwhelming advantage in their encounters with native peoples. What they made of that advantage continues to vex us.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, it is true, as in politics and society, in the United States have long cherished a very widespread view of how settlers from Europe responded to American circumstances. The ravages of lethal disease meant that very soon after the initial European landings in the New World, manpower shortages became general. Europeans knew very well how to farm, how to dig on and refine precious metals, and how to organize a vast array of other activities that were essential for civilized life as practiced in Europe. But few white people actually crossed the ocean since that was always a costly undertaking. Europe's poor could not afford passage, unless somebody could pay the fare, or the ship's crew would work required to maintain the fabric of civilized society.

In Europe, birth and death rates maintained an abundant supply of poor laborers who took on many jobs simply to get food enough to keep themselves and their families alive. But in the Americas, nothing of the kind was possible. Contemporaries' death rates among the native population meant that manpower needed for village routines was already short. No one would willingly leave home to work at new tasks under alien masters. When a young man who worked for 10 years to produce enough food had an additional child.

Africans were far more resistant to the diseases that ravaged American Indians so cruelly, and when this became clear, an organized slave trade that carried millions of Africans across the Atlantic. They worked for white masters producing goods for the distant markets of Europe. Sugar became the most important product of enslaved labor in the Americas but cotton and other commodities, like tobacco and indigo, were also developed extensively to enrich the African slaves and their descendants.

Provision had a similar effect. Spanish officials and landowners in Mexico and Peru acquired or assumed the legal right to control Indian labor, and used it to work technically very efficient silver mines, to erect churches and government buildings, and to manage ranches and agricultural estates. Spanish authorities were able to create a simulacrum of European cities in the New World with astonishing rapidity when their empire was once more but as the supply of labor diminished, maintaining the full panoply of urban life became difficult. Naturally self-sufficient estates, where ranching was being more important than village, multiplied, and cities with the touch of the homeland and with European culture in a way that rude backwoodsmen and pioneers were quite unable to do.

In Brazil and the Caribbean, where sugar was king, slave plantations fell far short of the aristocratic and official elegance that became central in Latin America. In Brazil and the Sugar Islands, as also in Virginia and the Carribean Islands, tobacco and cotton were the major crops, slave labor supported a class of plantation owners and managers who sold their products on the European market and shared the culture of their ancestral homelands almost as fully as did the officials and elites of the Spanish empire.

The New World thus became the home of both what political and social historians call the "cultural transplants" and the "cultural exchanges." The former spread from Europe to North America; the latter flowed the other way. The "cultural transplants" were the first to arrive, just as they had been in the sixteenth century. But the "cultural exchanges" were the more significant. They were the first to arrive, but the second were the most important, because they were the ones that lasted longer and became the dominant pattern of cultural relations between the Old World and the New.

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colonies from Europe before 1600 came as indentured servants. They may have come in hope of winning freedom and equality, but their initial experience was harsher than was normal in England, where indentured labor was the fate only of youthful apprentices.

Thus, if we look at the colonial era in all parts of the New World into consideration, our cherished national image of America as a blessed haven of freedom and equality is somewhat inaccurate. New barbarism existed, but was far outweighed by the achievements of legally enforced social hierarchies. The Puritan policy and society of New England, which pathetic United States history treats as typical of the New World, was, in fact exceptional and not so very free. Ministers and clerical officials enforced a severe discipline to matters of deportment and religion. A vigorous merchant class soon established itself in Boston and other sea ports, trading extensively with the Caribbean and with Europe, but paid higher wages than were common in Europe, but demanded and got extra effort in return. Social subordinations were therefore real even though the gap between rulers and ruled was far less in New England than in other parts of the New World.

A balanced view of American society and government in the first three post-Columbian centuries therefore must recognize the prevalence of compulsory labor in the New World. That was the only way colonists could produce goods for export to Europe and maintain the fabric of civil society and government, with all the discrimination of skills and social roles that civilization required. Yet a society built upon compulsory labor was different from one in which the balance of supply and demand in the labor market insured social subordinations and differentiation of roles. And, of course, the egalitarianism that prevailed among remote and unorganized frontiersmen was also different from the social hierarchy of Europe, but in the opposite direction.

In other words, American society and government that we see in comparison to Western Europe; the same was true on the eastern frontier of European civilization, and for the same reasons. For in Russia, as in the Americas, beginning about 1550, a non-barbarous, subsistence style of egalitarianism in Siberia and along the southern frontier competed with the compulsory labor of newly entered peasants, who obeyed their social superiors by producing grains and other commodities for export. And, as in the New World, until population growth made the abolition of serfdom in the nineteenth century seem practicable to Russia's rulers, persistent


case studies on sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil did not reproduce themselves as long as the slave trade continued unchecked, presumably because plantation managers preferred to buy a work force that had grown instead of meeting the costs of childrearing. Climate and diet were also probably less stressful than on the North American mainland, where by the time of the American revolution slave populations had been made to grow almost as fast as the white population was doing. In towns of lands, the arrival of African diseases with the slave trade made it difficult for enslaved workers to thrive. As a result, descendants of African slaves eventually came to dominate most Caribbean islands and wherever sugar plantations were established on the mainland.

Discussions of European immigrants multiplied rapidly in cooler climates; and towards the end of the eighteenth century their numbers were large, so that the open frontier had moved sufficiently far inland that land appreciated in value and a labor market even as it had compelled some people to work for others. In due course, a temporary effect of European immigration seemed to promote growth along the North American coast as well as elsewhere, and occupational specialties were successfully transplanted to emerging cities. The fact that labor remained comparatively expensive encouraged efficiency and ingenuity
in its application to similar tasks. This had a toxic effect on American economic efficiency, which in the course of the nineteenth century resulted in the rapid and often unexpected expansion of Europe had achieved.

In time, the rise of the United States to its contemporary world power position resulted, and shook at the resolution of the colonial past that filtered out the competition of labor they had played so prominent a role in early centuries, and glorified the original American way beyond their just deserts. Yet, as we all know, slavery in the United States was abolished only in 1863 and lasted in Brazil until 1888. Slavery disappeared from Mexico in the course of the nineteenth century, though it lingered in some Andean regions into the twentieth. Moreover, race discrimination persists to the present throughout the Americas, despite legislation to the contrary. This shows that freedom and equality, however noble and attractive as ideals, are only one side of the heritage from colonial times. They were not dominant in New World society in the deeper past, and in spite of political rhetoric, these ideals are still only struggling to prevail among American governments and peoples today.

Yet the separation for freedom and equality is monumentally attractive to the poor and downtrodden of the earth. For that reason, reworking actual practice with the public commitment of the United States to freedom and equality will remain difficult. As one country enters into closer connection with a global process of political, economic, and cultural interaction, the peoples in Asia, Africa, and South America will affect the domestic and foreign affairs of the United States far more powerfully than they did in the past. Indeed, how to deal with the population explosion in the world’s poor countries and with the pressures for emigration that result will probably become the central question of politics in the twenty-first century, as Europe is in the United States.

This means that the push towards new patterns of polity of great foreign influence, and nowhere may not readily achieve equality of rights with other inhabitants, especially if they arise as illegal immigrants. The long-drawn-out New World experience of how to cope with racial and cultural pluralism is likely to become influential in Europe, Japan, Australia, and South Africa. But American examples can be followed, as we saw. Choosing between those will probably become a central question for the politics of the twenty-first century.

If New World patterns of racial and cultural coexistence do affect Old World politics in time to come, it will be by changing ideas about what is right and possible. That would then constitute another chapter in the story of how the discovery of America by Europeans affected intellectual and cultural affairs in Europe and the world. Yet this, my third theme, is very difficult to disentangle from the complexity of other influences playing upon human consciousness. Who can say what would have happened without the Americas? And who can tell how much of what did happen was due to the discovery of the Americas and the increasing information about the New World?

As an aid in approaching this question, let me invoke the words of a fellow historian, John H. Elliott, who once wrote: "In discovering America, Europe discovered itself!" This liquidy sentence comes close to the heart of what the discovery of America did for the Old World. It seems to me, for just as an Englishman by studying French, seeing language from the outside, so to speak, and discovering that it was not as natural as breathing, so Europeans discovered that their way of doing and thinking was not normal, inevitable, and universal, as they had formerly supposed, and instead had serious gaps in it that had to be repaired.

Since cultural and geographical variability was just as real in the Old World as in the New, who should the discovery of America have made any special difference? The answer to this question, I think, is that Europeans (and all the other peoples of the Old World) had fixed ideas about one another and the distant lands different peoples inhabited. Centuries of contact and conflict had sharpened perceptions of what people were like when contacts intensified. Thus, Vasco da Gama's famous voyage brought India closer to Europe and vice versa, but it did not require either party to alter older ideas about each other in any important respect. The same was true for China and Japan and the lands between. As far as Africa, except in the extreme north, lethal forces made it impossible to outstrip before 1850. But the Americans were both easily penetrable and utterly new. In Columbus's wake, people and goods crossed the Atlantic, laying far greater cultural and ecological losses than anything that could be experienced within the confines of the Old World. Europeans therefore had to structure their minds to fit the New World into their inherited notions of reality and truth, and by doing so they opened unfathomable further avenues for reorienting received ideas of ever sort.

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To be sure, the early voyagers from Europe were not careful observers, and had no vocabulary to describe what they saw accurately. But enduring misconceptions provoked a persistent effort to fit the new into familiar frameworks until the weight of too much newly forced old ideas and preconceptions to give way. As that happened, European culture underwent a fundamental metamorphosis, Old ceremonies and assumptions could no longer be taken for granted. Truth was no longer to be sought primarily or exclusively in ancient, authoritative texts. Instead, prolonged and repeated experience of the unfamiliarity of America (and elsewhere) compelled thoughtful persons to change their minds about all sorts of things, and to endure far more uncertainty than before.

This distressed many people. A common response to intensified uncertainty was (and still is) to reaffirm important traditional beliefs with emboldened vigor. It is not surprising therefore that the Reformation and Counter Reformation dominated the intellectual scene in western Europe for more than a century after the discovery of America. But intensified religious convulsions did not prevent new and significant reflections from pouring into Europe from the New World and other parts of the globe. To make sense of this data, new and autonomous sciences arose, and in spite of scientists' best efforts to capture empirical truths (in words and mathematical formulae), radical new ideas had to be invested from time to time to take account of the new information. Something new had been kept on coming.

Eventually, after three and a half centuries of sporadic revision of received notions, an evolutionary vision of reality took form. The discovery of America and the ensuing surge of information from the New World accelerated this metamorphosis for sure and may have made it more likely. If so, this intellectual reassessment of the nature of things may well be considered as the greatest, most abrupt and universal consequence of Columbus's famous voyage. On the other hand, much of the impetus to intellectual change came from within European society itself, and was facilitated by long-standing discrepancies of Europe's Christian and Classical heritages. Individual thinking played a part, too, and so did communication networks that stimulated individuals to think new thoughts. American revolutions were only part of the scene in which modernity occurred, and there is no way to see what might have occurred without all the disorderly news from the New World that required learned men of Europe to rethink themselves.

The eventful all-embracing metamorphosis of Europe's intellectual posture was, of course, a result of many lower revisions of established truths. To begin with, cartography was in the coming stage. Accurate maps were needed by sailors and by imperial administrators; and map makers already knew how to incorporate scattered new data, including mathematicians who gave names to the different biomes and management of farmland. A real breakthrough in cartography was the development of the map, the first systematic and comprehensive map of the earth's surface that took into account not only the geographical features but also the political and economic conditions.

As the result of the unknown faded from world maps, it became impossible to doubt that modern men had surpassed the ancients in matters of geography. The same happened to the heavens when, in the sixteenth century, Galileo used his newly invented telescope to see the mountains on the moon and to discover the moons of Jupiter. During the ensuing eight years, astronomers discovered the new moons and their periods. Then, in 1609, by the use of the telescope, Galileo was able to observe the phases of Venus and to determine the relative sizes of the moons.

But the discovery of the unknown was not limited to the heavens and the earth covering both the same laws of motion, and provided Europeans with a universal, mathematical, and predictive model of the universe to be expected.

The Americas had nothing whatever to do with this remarkable development of European thought, but it is interesting to realize that when in the sixteenth century the New World's machine was transformed in the first serious intellectual change, America returned to the languishing, playing a critical, central role in the emergence of the new world view that prevails today. It all began with cartography, which underwrote a remarkable expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before astronomical studies began to dominate European consciousness. From Columbus's voyage to the three voyages of Cartagena's capture, and on to the later voyages of the earliest cartographers and cartographers, Europe was eager to learn about new and curious plants. Early
in the seventeenth century, some of them conceived the idea of recreating the Garden of Eden by assembling all the different plants of earth in a great botanized garden. These enthusiasts tried hard to make new species of plants grow on European soil and in many instances, they succeeded. As the variety of plants known to the learned botanists of Europe multiplied in this fashion, they faced the question of how to classify them all. The botanical scheme, deriving from De Preparatibus (507, 372–387 B.C.) writings about plants, proved to be entirely inadequate. Eventually a new system was introduced by Carolus Linnaeus in 1753 which is still in use. Like the cartographers' newly-perfected world maps, it became an essential guide to the world's flora and proved again that modern botanists had left the ancients behind when it came to understanding the world.

Other forms of life were difficult to transport by sailing ships and much harder to accommodate for study in botanical books. Initial reports by intrepid explorers propagated much misinformation and prompted much confusion. Only when learned Europeans decided it was necessary for them to visit strange and distant parts in order to see things for themselves did steadily visited and relatively complete information about animals and birds, together with geological studies of the New World become available. The voyage of Alexander von Humboldt, 1799–1804, followed by twenty years devoted to reading and publishing the new data he had gathered, constituted the first great landmark of this advance. Even more significant was the voyage of Charles Darwin on the Beagle, 1831–35. Darwin needed a little more than twenty years for digesting his observations before he published his famous book The Origin of Species in 1859, thus radically challenging older notions about how God had created the natural world. Taken together, the work of Humboldt and Darwin constitute a remarkably clear example of how careful study of American data, and prolonged effort to fit the novelties into existing knowledge, induced a basic transformation of inherited understandings and a rather reluctant recognition of the universality of change.

Similar adjustments became necessary in other realms of knowledge too, though less dramatically so, and with stronger carriers from pre-Columbian idea systems. The concept of human kind derived from the Bible meant that natives of the New World had to descend somehow from Shem, Ham, or Japheth. This was potentially problematic, but if American Indians did not fit the scheme, the Bible itself would be discarded.

peoples were extremely hostile to admit such a possibility, and debate about the descent of American Indians was not seriously joined before Darwin published his book in 1859. What Europeans did instead was to prefer a classification of human kind derived from pagan Greeks, whereby peoples were classified as savage, barbarous, or civilized. This left plenty of room for discussion as to where American Indian peoples fitted into the pattern, and in any case, the ways in which Europeans made sense of the human scene in the New World until the 1890s. Thereafter, Darwinian ideas about human evolution opened up debates on the Biblical story of human origins, making the question of how American Indians and all the other new-found peoples of the earth could possibly be traced back to Noah particularly critical. Simultaneously, Lewis Henry Morgan took a closer look at the customs of the Inuits, thereby helping to originate social anthropology and inaugurating a far more sympathetic understanding of the cultural differences that separated whites from surviving Indian peoples.

Other aspects of human affairs and the ideas that detected them tended to run strongly one way, from Europe towards the new colonial domains. Thus Spanish victory and lesser official virtue had to fit the New World realities into the legal forms prescribed by the Catholic church and by the royal government of Spain. Other colonizers did similarly, though with less rigid central direction. Discrepancies could not be avoided, nor completely disguised, as we saw in the case of passage and slavery. But in general, the Americans were and successfully absorbed into an expanding European system of law and international practice. This was especially true of transoceanic trade and of the war and diplomacy that enveloped it. But the same held true of the law enforced in local courts within colonial jurisdictions. Together with Christianity, propagated for and wide among the Indians by pioneering missionaries, European authorities drove most of the high culture of Indian peoples underground and destroyed many Indian institutions entirely. Carriers from pre-Columbian past were possible at a family and village level, and remain very much alive in parts of rural Mexico, and in Central and Andean America as well. But for the most part the Indians were subjected and their culture fragmented and distorted by the outside pressures of imported European institutions and ideas.

Some of their own superiority, white immigrants and their descendents adhered to the aspects of the European hierarchy that worked reasonably well in the new environment, and modified what did not, sometimes by borrowing something from the Indians - like moccasins or maize - but more often by improving and inventing ways of cutting corners.

Nevertheless, for Europe and the expanding Western world in a whole, the fact that a familiar legal and social system prevailed with only marginal modifications, does not invalidate Elliott's claim that "in discovering America, Europe discovered itself." For the contrast between themselves and the native inhabitants of America was a constant reminder of the fact that European civilization was only now among a number of different ways of life. To be sure, few successes in the New World reinforced the ethnocentrism that had previously reigned undisputed everywhere, but just because they were sure their own ways were best, Europeans could afford to be curious and examine other people's behavior with a medocrity of detachment and respect. At first this capability had more scope in Asia and specifically in European encounters with Japan and China, than it did in the Americas. But the ethnic economies of the New World also contributed to the eventual, more sensitive exploitation of cultural pluralism, beginning with the work of Lewis Henry Morgan.

America's impact on Europe's consciousness of itself was far stronger in a different sense, for, as we just saw, the exploitation and exploitation of America swiftly demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that contemporaries knew more and could do things that their predecessors had been incapable of. By the mid-eighteenth century, the idea of progress - in knowledge and technolog-
ENCOUNTERING THE NEW WORLD
1493–1800

The European discovery of the Americas was a geographical event of stupendous magnitude. The publication in 1493 of Columbus’s letter to the Spanish court announcing the discovery of what he believed to be a new route to the Eastern spices, was the beginning in Europe of the realization that the perimeters of the "known" world were changing dramatically and irrevocably.

The encounter of the Old World with the New was the first event of world-shaping importance for which the appropriate technology was in place for relatively rapid dissemination of information about many facts. Some old theories and legends appeared to come true with the discovery; others were abandoned or revised as new realities that were even more astounding than the fruits of the medieval imagination.

The prints, maps, and books in this exhibition make it evident that people of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had the same love of adventure, fear of the unknown, and curiosity about the world as people today. Encountering the New World, 1493–1800, reveals literally how Europeans pictured the Americas.

I. Beginnings

The world of medieval Europe was circumscribed by boundaries of many kinds. A strict social hierarchy preserved order among men; walled cities protected those within from hostile neighbors and encroaching strangers; and according to the most authoritative views, the habitable world of Europe, Asia, and Africa was surrounded by an ocean that separated civilization from the threat of the unknown. The centers of the sea and the heart of legend occupied the borderlands—the very edges of man’s mental map of the world, beyond the boundaries lay a Promised Land, a precious land fulfill.

Medieval mariners developed both the nautical chart (portulan) and written sailing directions (mariners’ or nautical) as practical guides to known waters. To them, the Atlantic was the edge of an outer ocean that marked the western boundary of the habitable world as they knew it. But to seafaring men of southeast Europe the Atlantic had long been a highway used by Venetians, by other traders of the eastern Mediterranean, and by the hardy, hungry seafaring adventurers who had crossed in search of gold and in quest of rum. By the beginning of the seventh century A.D., Scotland, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands had been settled; before A.D. 800, Iceland; and by A.D. 1066 Norwegians had set eyes on Labrador.

Stories of islands to the north spread throughout Europe as stories and in manuscripts, but since the northern peoples were not in close cultural contact with southern centers of learning, this information was not incorporated into the body of accepted geographical "fact." However, the existence of islands in the Atlantic was hardly unsettling, for medieval navigators had always placed them in the fringes of an ocean that lay along the western edge of the habitable world.

In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese began to explore systematically the west coast of Africa and to settle Atlantic island groups such as Madeira and the Azores. When Bartolomeu Dias rounded the southern tip of Africa in 1487 and entered the Indian Ocean, chronicles were forced to consider the limits of Portuguese geography that had presented that body of water as a land-locked sea. (Fig. 1.)

Had the new geographical information been merely an advance in theory, it would probably have remained the province of scholars and cosmographers, who debated such things. But this new knowledge had practical implications of the highest order, for the water route around Africa gave Portugal the means to enter the lucrative spice trade with the East Indies. No longer was it neces-
var for her to be subject to the demands of the endless stream of middlemen who traditionally controlled the trade on the long overland routes through Asia to distribution centers in the Indian city-states.

**A Wider World**

Although Portuguese success in utilizing exploration to develop new trading contacts with the East was obvious and enviable, Spain was in a unique position to undertake costly exploratory ventures until the country was unified as a Christian nation-state under Ferdinand and Isabella, the crowns of Aragon and Castile. After the defeat of the Moors at Granada in 1492, Spain was able to look outward, and Christopher Columbus, who had long tried to interest a backer in his plan to sail west to reach the East, appealed to the Spanish sovereigns at an opportune time.

Columbus made landfall on an island in the Bahamas that he named San Salvador, the actual location of which is the subject of lively debate even today, where he was not by people "who went about naked with little shame." (Fig. 3). In the questions of where he was and who those people were the Discoverer did not hesitate in answering that he was on an island off the shore of Asia, and that the people were, undoubtedly, Indians from the Spice Islands (even though they were not quite as he had expected them to be). That neither answer was correct became apparent to others, if not to Columbus himself, fairly soon. Columbus' confusion is indicative of the difficulty Europeans initially faced in assembling new information and relating it to their conventional world-view.

Christopher Columbus would much rather have encountered sophisticated societies than the "children of nature" who met him with guilelessness, generosity, and a few gold ornaments, but his missionary enthusiasm and his practical outlook made him see the reverse side, observing, "how easy it would be to convert these people... to make them work for us." (Fig. 3).

However, the native population was not as he supposed. When Columbus returned on his second voyage he discovered that the countrymen he had left behind had apparently been killed by some Indians who had erected them with such insidiousness on his arrival. In time, the Spaniards began to differentiate between the tribes that inhabited the area, the gentle Arawaks and the aggressive Caribs. It has been suggested that this distinction was not necessarily founded upon perceived ethnic differences, but was instead based on the Arawak's retention in the Spaniards'--private Indians were were Arawaks, and hostile Indians were Caribs.

Of the ideological equipment that Europeans brought with them to America, religion was the most important. More than color or national sentiment, it was religion that made Europeans feel distinct from and superior to those peoples they met outside their own continent. Centuries of Christian crusades and the Holy Land from the infidel had suffused this attitude and placed the question of religion uppermost in the minds of Europeans who came in contact with alien cultures. The Indians of America presented a special problem. Were they Indians, in truth, for conversion, lived in a Garden of Edens as before the Fall? or were they pagans of God's rule by the Devil? Matters of great practical importance concerning the treatment of the Indians hinged on the answers to these questions, (Fig. 4).

From long tradition Europeans accepted the existence of strange animals and beasts semi-human creatures. (Figs. 5, 6). As the boundaries of man's "mental map" of his world were extended in this era of discovery, many of those monstrous inhabitants were. Explorers told "true tales" of monsters with unusual peoples and animals, and while many of these stories were considerably embellished or invented, it is a fact that communication between newcomers and natives was rudimentary at best, giving rise to numerous possibilities for misunderstanding on both sides. Thus, too, observations were often filtered through the screen of traditional European imagery, and many people saw what they expected to see. (Figs. 7, 8).

**The New World Emerges**

Incorporating the lands of the western hemisphere into the medieval view of the world posed serious problems for the cartographers. Columbus claimed he had found an off-shore island wheel while others, like Amerigo Vespucci, proclaimed it a New World. (Fig. 9). Fragmentary and conflicting information filtered back to the centers of Europe, and navigators faced the task of fitting the pieces together. (Fig. 10). Beginning as the dream of Asia realized, North and South America gradually came to be viewed by some as a new continent in the extreme corners of the Earth. (Fig. 11). Magellan's discovery of a southern passage to the Pacific was an event of the greatest significance, but the difficulty of this route convinced other nations that the location of a passage in more northern latitudes was of the utmost importance. (Figs. 12, 13). By the middle of the sixteenth century this had become a prime target of New World exploration.
Paras, actions, beliefs, attitudes, and other traits of New World peoples. It would be strange if the people, likesects, the nation of all Indians were held into captivity.

Certain elements in the Aztec system that caused the impression that they were in association with devils, a natural consequence of the belief that was acquired the characteristics of the final one. This seemed to be endorsed by the fact that many native peoples conformed to ideas, beliefs, traditions, prouns, music, and other "Witches.' With horror in mind, it was noted that American are "antimia serpents in the same ways," and that serpents were seen instead of bread.

(Footnote 15)

FIG. 1 (Galen's Be Bes) 
ENGRAVING PERIODIC IN 
CARTOONS. STRASBURG, 1537. 
Carpenters, called 
architects by the Greeks, were traditionally 
located at the edge of the inhabited world. Although 
were not considered to exist in certain areas of the 
Americas, the purposes and 
meanings that are very 
difficult to interpret, the 
realms often merged with the 
old legends. 

The text below the illustration reads: The carpenters and builders, as here shown, were considered to exist at the edge of the inhabited world. Although they were not considered to exist in certain areas of the Americas, the purposes and meanings that are very difficult to interpret, the realms often merged with the old legends.
The author of this monograph on America (Fig. 5) was a careful observer, but his work has been marred by an oversight. The figure shown here is a portrait of a native American, but it appears to be a composite of two individuals.

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The arrival of Columbus in the New World, as depicted in the illustration on the left, is captured in the foreground as a distinct icon. The depiction of the native American on the right adds a sense of drama and wonder that permeates the narrator's account of early explorers.
Envisioning the New World

![Map of the world by Henricus Martellus, 1491.](image)

1. The word "America" first appeared in 1507 in a pamphlet by the German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller, in which he suggested that the New World be named for Amerigo Vespucci, the author.

2. Some maps from the 15th century were named for women and it was only fitting that this one be named for the woman who discovered it. Waldseemüller's pamphlet about the priority of the discovery was due to Columbus having claimed only that he had found a new route to the East Indies, whereas Vespucci stated that he had discovered a new world.

3. This map, prepared about 1507, is one of the very earliest attempts to use the word "America." It has been suggested that Waldseemüller later realized his mistake, for the name is no longer present on the map he drew in 1513. (Bartholomew, 34).

![Map of the world showing the Crown Real and of the King of Portugal.](image)
This hemisphere, copied from the maps on a large wall map drawn by Martin Waldseemüller in 1507, attempts to cope with problematic cartographic problems—the incorporation of new information into a standard body of accepted "truths," and the consolidation of small area sketches and verbal information into a broad picture of the world. While the mapmaker presents a Columbus view of the discovery (America is off-shore Asia), the Americas are divided into three North and South American continents connected by an insular gulf, similar at this time to previous land massed along the western coast. (see fig. 14).

For over two decades, Girolamo Gastaldi was the leading printer of both, both for his technical expertise in innovation and for the information he assembled and interpreted. The maps shown here (both of which were in circulation during the same period of time) demonstrate the problems faced by the cartographer who had to reconcile often vague or contradictory information from many sources. One shows a narrow body of water, the "Streitscheln Meer," between Asia and America before 1570. The same area named for Vitus Bering was not "discovered" until 1741, but Gastaldi had gained an unusual view (see fig. 15).
II. Expanding Horizons

THE WONDERS OF MEXICO

When Hernán Cortés and his band of conquerors set foot on the Mexican mainland in 1519 it became obvious to them fairly quickly that this was not a land of simple people in a New World Eden. (Fig. 1.) Even to European eyes, the Aztecs were "civilized," and all the more confusing because of it. (Figs. 15, 16). The initial puzzlement of the Spaniards, however, did not long deter them from their overriding goal—gold and glory. (Fig. 17.) Cortés's vision of a new Spanish Empire, in combination with the Church's mission of conversion, led inevitably to the shattered of indigenous Mexican culture. (Figs. 18–20).

SOUTH AMERICA REVEALED

In order to settle rival claims and to prevent future conflict between Spain and Portugal, Pope Alexander VI (the Spanish Pope) issued the Papal Bull of 1493 that established Spain's sovereignty over all lands west of a longitudinal line drawn six leagues west of the Azores. With this seeming presence, Portugal did not accept this arrangement, although seven more years were to elapse before Pedro Cabral "discovered" Brazil. Spain responded to a new agreement, made without papal intervention, that rezoned the demarcation line 150 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, leaving to Portugal wherever territory might be east of the line. This was done in the treaty concluded at Tordesillas, Spain, in 1494, which effectively divided South America between Spain and Portugal. (Figs. 21, 22).

LOWLAND RAINFORESTS AND ANDES RICHES

Obsessed by the widely accepted theory that gold and other precious metals and gems were to be found in southern latitudes, European explorers encountered the rivers and streams, rainforests of the Amazon, seeking legendary golden cities and fabulous wealth. (Figs. 23–25). In the early 1530s, Francisco Pizarro succeeded in conquering the Inca empire of Peru. Throughout the sixteenth century, the combined wealth of Mexico and Peru poured into the coffers of Spain to make her the richest and most powerful country in Europe. (Figs. 26–27).

This volume, the first published view of that city destroyed by Cortés, looks like a modern European metropolis on the ground; the German illustrator's attention to accurate detail makes the city appear as if it could be any modern city in Europe.
The illustration shown here is a map of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan. The map is divided into two main sections:

1. **Plan of Mexico City and the City of Mexico**: This section illustrates the layout of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, as it was in the 16th century.

   - **Top Left**: Map of Mexico City, showing the major streets and landmarks.
   - **Top Right**: Map of the City of Mexico, highlighting the central areas.

2. **Map of the Aztec Empire**: This section focuses on the Aztec Empire, showing its territorial extent and major cities.

   - **Bottom Left**: Map of the Aztec Empire, including the city of Tenochtitlan and other major cities.
   - **Bottom Right**: Map of the Aztec Empire, showing the kingdom's boundary and major cities.

The map was created by an unknown artist and published as a part of a series of maps in the 'Atlas of Mexico' by the Spanish cartographer Joseph de la Cueva. The illustration is an adaptation of an original map, likely created during the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire in the early 16th century. The map provides a detailed view of the Aztec capital, including the central market square, the floating gardens, and the surrounding lake system. The map is a valuable source for understanding the layout and organization of the Aztec city, which was built on an island and was known for its unique architectural and engineering feats.
FIG. 29
A ritual dance performed by Aztec nobles and priests. In: Juan de Torquemada, "Historia de la Religión de los Indios," Mexico, 1589. (p. 425)

FIG. 30
[Blank page]

FIG. 31
[A page from a document discussing the history of the Aztecs and their religious practices.]

FIG. 32
[Map of the Americas with annotations and descriptions.]

[Text on the left page discussing the history and practices of the Aztecs, and the expansion of European influence in the Americas.]

[Further text on the right page discussing the exploration and settlement of the Americas, with a brief mention of cartographic representations and colonial expansion.]
A la espada y el compás, más y más y más.

FIG. 22. As an extension of the concept that North American exploration was driven by the desire for land and resources, the image of the conquistador with a map and a compass symbolizes the expansion of Spanish influence. The conquistadors' exploration of the New World was guided by the desire for treasure and the expansion of the Spanish empire.

FIG. 32. The landscape scene illustrates the vastness of the American continent, highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by the conquistadors. The image shows the conquistadors' bravery and determination as they ventured into uncharted territories.

The land and the beasts that inhabited it took on an almost mystical character in explorers' tales. Through encounters with these untamed subjects, conquistadors found inspiration and verified the richness of their new world.
Page 24

Portait of Christ Before the San-Germain, in Jeune de Léry, HISTOIRE D'UN VOYAGE FAIT EN LA TERRE DU BRESIL, GENÈVE, 1556.

Page 25

Francois Carpentier and Louis Marie de Claude de La Brosse, 18th century. MANUSCRIPTS XVII. MAISON DES PERES CARMES, TOULOUSE, FRANCE, 1806.

A "belief and duty" proposal of Christian conversion. Native Americans were taken back to Europe on a regular basis beginning with Columbus, and always with the intent to "civilize" them and convert them to Christianity. Many of them were forcibly converted and died from the diseases they brought with them. Some were given land and allowed to live as if they were free men. Others were made to work for wages or as slaves. Some were even executed for attempting to practice their own religion.
In 1636 Maria Sibylla Merian and her daughter traveled on a journey to Surinam, where they concentrated on painting the indigenous plant and insect life. Merian's accuracy, technical expertise, and vibrant artwork, all along with her noteworthy research in natural history, caused her a solid reputation in scientific circles (ibid. no. 130).
III. The Lure of North America

EMPERIALS OF NATURAL BOUNTY

The experience of Spaniards in Mexico and Peru seemed to prove the commonly-held European theory that mineral wealth was located primarily in southern latitudes. Those lands were preempted by Spain and Portugal. However, and the countries of northern Europe with imperial ambitions were excluded from any possibility of sharing in the bounty by rightful possession. Circumstances forced them to look northward.

No golden cities and “advanced” civilizations awaited explorers who set foot on the Atlantic coast of North America. But, after initial disappointments, the French, the Dutch, and the English, who were active in this region, began to appreciate the possibilities of a country that was extraordinarily rich in natural resources and also free from the extreme climate of the southern lands. These northern Seminole Indians seemed to live a simple, unstructured life, nurtured with ease by a fruitful land in a climate similar to that of Europe. That these initial perceptions were simplistic and often inaccurate would be the source of hardship and of future conflict between the newcomers and the native populations. (Figs. 32, 33.)

RESOURCES, DEVELOPMENT, AND TRADE

It became apparent that North America had something to offer other than precious metals. Resources such as wood and fish were in high demand in Europe, and trade with the Americas could be developed for fur. Outposts established to ensure these businesses could serve also as plantations to grow crops desirable in the Old World economy. (Figs. 34, 35.) Coastal settlements were envisioned as extensions of European empire and as way-stations for expeditions in the ongoing search for a passage through the continent to the extreme of the Pacific.

Early explorers took note of native plants and animals and the ways in which they were used by the Americans, especially for medicinal purposes. (Figs. 36, 37.) The perceived similarity in climate between North America and northern Europe allowed for the possibility of cross-cultivation—plants unique in Europe could be brought from the Western Hemisphere for cultivation in the Old World, and crops in short supply in Europe could be grown extensively in America.

The European governments that organized or sponsored New World settlement were interested primarily in the economic value of colonies. (Figs. 38, 39.) Although there were important exceptions, the profitable exchange of goods and the exploitation of natural resources were the primary motives that sent men across the oceans and made their contact with the land and its inhabitants continuous and systematic.

Economic development of the New World required settlers, and all of the European colonial powers promoted immigration. (Fig. 40.) The vast tracts of undeveloped land created opportunities at various places and times for whole communities of the persecuted or the disadvantaged to emigrate. For some—English Catholics in Maryland, Spanish and Portuguese Jews in Dutch Brazil, and in New York, and Protestant sectarians in many places—America was, above all, a refuge. (Fig. 41.)

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FIG. 32

Coup de Commerce in America

Franklin, 1758.

FIG. 33

Seminole Indian Harvest, in

The American Frontier, W. C. G. H. Drayton, 1890.

Some ordinary Americans 

living in the country 

states a strange enough 

story, and yet it is true. 

The “satisfactory” 

juice is 

serving on the ground to eat. 

In this illustration from 

Abbey, the emigrants 

abandoned the position of the 

legs drawn in John White’s 

original painting as more 

comfortable” by European standards.

(Historians, 77 and 78.)
FIG. 54
This is the first published picture of the maize plant as distinguished from the sweet potatoes, both of American origin, a plant that eventually became a staple in European diets.

In 1525 one species of maize was brought to England by Sir Francis Drake, who had discovered the tubers in this rich Spanish country in Peru. (Ibid, p. 218.)

FIG. 55
"It is yet true that the first maize ever presented to the world," it has been said, "it would deserve nothing else. For it has become one of the most important foods to man and beast. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was widely grown and staple in Spain, France, Italy, and in Africa. However, the maize was introduced to most Europeans by the Turks after its spread east across the African coast of the Mediterranean and was originally called "Turkey" or "Turkish" when.

(Fig. 56)
"No one of North America made a more pronounced impression on Spanish explorers than the maize. Triumphantly, unknown to Europeans, they were found in huge bunches on the great plains between the Mississippi and the Rio Grande. Descriptions by the chronicles of some of the early Spanish explorers are vivid: "and they have figures of two men on ogly, Roch of Hays, which falls upon their face, and makes them look handsome." (Ibid, p. 477.)

FIG. 57
"The maize, and its Friends," as Steele described it, "is a great advantage in these parts." (Ibid, p. 218.)

Medicinal use was found to both red and native American maize. The husks of the maize plant were ground into a powder and used as a substitute, some claimed that diabetes could be cured as well. The maize was also used as a natural tobacco substitute. (Ibid, p. 218.)

This illustration, by the English poet and artist William Blake, shows "White" Europe supported by the resources of "Black" Africa and "Indian" America. vast amounts of labor were required to ensure that the wealth of the New World flowed regularly and in ever-increasing streams back to the homeland. (See fig. 38.)

Early in their occupation, the Spaniards had to face the fact that Indians were difficult to retrain. Amonger who refused, it was not easy for them to escape back into their surrounding societies. Moreover, the loss of Indian tribes was often a necessity for the European's survival. The Spaniards looked to Africa to solve their labor shortage, and the Atlantic slave trade began, in which the Dutch, French, Portuguese, and English were also active participants. In the tradition of the "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty in the New World, this illustration shows Americansconvicting Indians rather than forced deportations by the Spanish. (See fig. 38.)
Although the manuscript account of a voyage to the Spanish west Indies, attributed to Samuel de Champlain, focuses mainly upon the indigenous flora and fauna, the author gives some information about the lives of the Indians under Spanish rule. According to him, the harshness of the plantation caused the Indians to flee to the hills. The Spaniards, who followed them, captured and enslavement. At the time of this writing, the Indians had not recovered, and the author states that the Spaniards continued to be harvest the Indians according to the figure of the baptism, they were all have died by fire. (Johann, 148).

The fate of North America.
The figure represents the
process of silk making in
Virginia. Although textiles
were imported from India
and China, the English
adapted and
innovated to
establish a silk industry in
Virginia. The process
generated a silk fabric
that was highly prized and
exported. This silk was
often used as a symbol of
wealth and status.

A similar illustration
shows a landscape
view of the
Virginia
region, highlighting
the natural
beauty of the
area. The
mountains and
forests were
rich sources
of
resources and
influenced the
development of
settlements in the
region.
IV. Settlement Brings Conflict

CONFLICTS OF CULTURE

Most Europeans came to the New World convinced of their religious and cultural superiority and were often ill-equipped to understand or to accept the cultures they encountered. Early explorers attempted to follow traditional Old World diplomatic practices in their contact with American Indian societies, especially those that were perceived to be heathenish. This often consisted of identifying a “king” and persuading him to swear allegiance to a more powerful Christian, European monarch. Many times hierarchies were assumed that did not, in fact, exist within Indian societies (Fig. 44).

Throughout the period of discovery and exploration, illustrations of American Indians were often used in symbolic fashion to underscore the perceived differences between Old and New World cultures. Subtly or blatantly, these pictures informed European ideas and biases. Indians were variously depicted as threatening—cannibals who lured men to their doom, forces of anarchy that undermined the foundations of society—or, sometimes, as children who dreaded the guiding hand of European civilization (Fig. 45).

Compared with the English, the Dutch appeared to be more successful in their dealings with the North American Indians. The traders and “commandeurs de bens” that ranged through the interior were not immediately followed by large numbers of colonists in search of land to settle, reducing opportunities for direct conflict with American Indian culture (Fig. 46, in period of early contact, at least).

The missionaries were sent from France to win souls to the extent of the native population by their willingness to live alongside them and to share in their lives. The Catholic religion they brought with them possessed a rich iconography and liturgies that provided a moral focal point for the potential converts, which was, perhaps, more appealing to some Indians than the Bible-based, textual proselytizing of English Protetants.

If French explorers and traders had little immediate impact on the land and its native peoples, the same could not be said for the English settlers that arrived in ever greater numbers throughout the seventeenth century (Fig. 47).

On numerous occasions American Indians tried to rid themselves of the unwanted presence of Europeans by attacking their settlements. In the short term these measures were often successful, as the French showed the advance of settlement for a time. King Philip, chief of the Wampanoag, a tribe in southern New England, led an uprising against the English colonists in 1675. After initial successes the Indians gradually succumbed to the settlers, and in August, 1676, King Philip was himself trapped and killed (Fig. 48).

CONFLICTS OF EMPIRE: CHALLENGES TO SPAIN

Colonial rivalry was especially intense in the Caribbean. Although war between Spain and England was not declared until the attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588, there had been hostilities from the time of Queen Elizabeth’s invasion of the Spanish Main between 1585 and 1600; the attacks of English sea rovers (most notably Sir Francis Drake) on Spanish colonies and shipping in America were a constant source of ill will between the two powers (Figs. 49-50). Dutch expeditions were largely the result of the war between Spain and the Netherlands (1568-1648), the New World focus of which was Dutch trading and settlement rights in the Caribbean.

Sixteenth-century religious wars, in the wake of the Reformation, spread across the Atlantic. The earliest French settlements in North America were sponsored by Huguenots (French Protestants) between 1619 and 1628 near what is now Jacksonville, Florida. Catholic imperial Spain believed that this settlement of heretics was intended dangerously close to the main the plate fleet followed in the first leg of its cross-Atlantic voyage and took immediate steps to destroy the young French colony (Fig. 51).

In those tumultuous times, both state-sponsored and unofficially encouraged privateering against “enemy” shipping often degenerated into unlicensed piracy for private ends.

VIVID FOR NORTH AMERICA

Almost as soon as the Hudson River was explored in 1609, the Dutch arrived in trade in furs, establishing posts at Fort Orange (Albany), Fort Nassau (near Philadelphia), and New Amsterdam. However, these trading settlements were not supported by extensive immigration, an important factor in their eventual overthrow by the English in 1664 (Fig. 52).

Unlike the English, whose settlements haggled the coast, French traders and missionaries immediately
pushed toward the interior of the country in search of
food and resources. (Fig. 77). While the rivers were
highways for daily business, there was also the hope
that there would eventually be found a water route leading
through the continent to the Pacific Ocean.

Rivalry between France and England escalated
throughout the eighteenth century, but not all skirmishes
between the two powers took place on the battlefield.
(Fig. 14). Cartography provided a public forum for ques-
tions of empire that was less bloody, perhaps, but no less
intense than military action. (Figs. 15-16).

**Indian Allies**

A great site was named in English court circles in the
spring of 1750 when four "Indian Kings" from North

![Image](image_url)

**Fig. 48.** Plan of an American New Chartered town. In: Patrick
Campbell, Travels in the interior inhabited part of North America,
Edinburgh, 1795.

The native American
population in the north
allowed the French, British,
and Spanish to establish
settlements and trade.
During the French and
Indian War (1754-1763),
the British made significant
advances in the region. (Fig.
78).

**Fig. 49.** The Figure of the Indian. Fort at Pemaquid on New

In the year 1750, the British
settlements were still
dependent on trade with
the Native Americans.
(Fig. 78).

**Fig. 50.** The Figure of the Indian. Fort at Pemaquid on New

In the year 1750, the British
settlements were still
dependent on trade with
the Native Americans.
(Fig. 78).

The Native Americans
played a crucial role in
the early colonies, pro-
viding resources and
support in the face of
European expansion.
(Fig. 78).
John Husen, A Map of New England, Engraved by William Faithorne, A Navigator, or
the Housetothesheepest in New England.
Boston, 1677.

This map, the first to be drawn, cut, and printed in America, is a "rose map,"
leant by number to show the borders of King Philip's War. The map is oriented
north at the right. Shown
here is the ancient, or "White
Hills," version. When it was
enlarged in London later that
same year, the woodcutter
repeatedly identified the
"confrontation on the right as
"White Hills," (Jewett, 145).
wealth would be a rich one, although his expectations were often beset with problems—by accident of time, cities yielded no ransom, contact was hard to achieve, and treasure slipped through his fingers. Drake was a great sailor, however, and the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. His daring led him to the status of hero.

This map traces Drake's route from the Cape Verde Islands to Santa Domingo, Caraguata, and St. Augustine in an expedition undertaken against the Spanish in 1577. On the way home, his fleet stopped in Virginia to check on English colonists put ashore ten months before. (Henn, 124.)

In 1578 St. Augustine was burned by the French, and the settlement was destroyed. The French occupied the site for a few years, but in 1586 the English returned and established the settlement of Florida, which was renamed St. Augustine. The French occupation came to an end in 1586, and the English colonists were able to establish a permanent settlement. (Henn, 127.)
Long Island, its shape determined by the ascendency upon which it was drawn, is impressive for its beauty as well as for its accuracy. Based upon a draft of the first extensive survey of the area, it was made by English administrators after the defeat of the Dutch in 1671.

FIG. 12

Descriptive, generalized maps may have served the needs of archaic travelers, but colonial administrators needed more precise information for the business of government and often contacted local surveyors to produce accurate reconnaissance maps. This English manuscript map of Long Island is one of several copies that were made at the time. This is one of the earliest representations of the course of the Mississippi. Away from the more accurately measured by Joliet, however, it is a fairly poor geographical view. Among other things, the map shows the locations of various Indian nations. Information that was of vital interest to French traders and colonizers.

FIG. 13
"[Louis Joliet]." "Descrip'tive de la découverte de plusieurs nations dans la Nouvelle France." (New York, ca. 1652).

In 1671, the French fur trader Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit missionary, explored the Mississippi River but recorded the map over the map on the map. Upon his return to Quebec, Joliet drew a map from memory and the manuscript shown here is one of several copies that were made at the time. This is one of the earliest representations of the course of the Mississippi. Away from the more accurately measured by Joliet, however, it is a fairly poor geographical view. Among other things, the map shows the locations of various Indian nations. Information that was of vital interest to French traders and colonizers.
fig. 14
Thomas Johnson, Quebec, the Capital of New France. [London, 1756]
There are only two maps that depict Quebec between its founding in 1666 and the English taking it in 1759. This latter event, however, occasioned many commemorative and "heroic" views. The siege of Quebec was of great interest to English colonists in the north—interest had been piqued as the military actions for New France were
close enough to be perceived as a direct threat.
This print, by the London engraver Thomas Johnson, is the earliest American engraved view of Quebec. Although the advertisement proclaimed that it was done "from the most and most authentic French original," it is actually based on an image from a French engraving published forty years earlier.

fig. 15
S. G., Vue de Longchamps.
Carte des Possessions Françoises et Anglaises.
Paris, 1749.
The French view of North America. (p. 127)
Fig. 37
John Made, as a youth
Qua Perli! Tow King of
The Mohegans. (London,
1771)

As a youth, Qua Perli
was respected by his
people and is
identified as a great
leader.

The map below shows his
residence and his efforts
to maintain peace.

Fig. 38
The Native Americans
The Great Sachem or
Chief of the Mohawks.
(London, ca.
1730)

The map also
shows the
interventions
of the English
missionaries.

Settlers and
Settlements
Conflict
v. Europeans Become Americans

settling in

By the middle of the eighteenth century, North America was no longer a land of newcomers who looked upon themselves as Europeans. Many families had been here for two or three generations, and the lands they had settled were no longer outposts of Old World civilization, but bustling towns built by those who now considered North America their home. It is often assumed that American towns "just grew." Many of them, however, were carefully planned, although bursts of economic activity and population growth rapidly obscured the lines and logic of the initial designs. (Figs. 55-61)

breaking away

Although British colonists grew to consider North America their home, ties to the Old World were strong. As the colonies developed, their ties to the mother country increased, and economic and legal disagreements between the mother country and her overseas provinces increased as well. The loss of communication that had been so widespread throughout the eighteenth century was vastly expanded by the development of newspapers and pamphlets. (Fig. 62) With the Massachusetts militia at Lexington, proceeding to Concord to attack them, the minutemen, the British troops were forced to retreat, first to Lexington and then to Boston.

The conflict had become a war, and European publishers responded to the demand for news and information. (Figs. 64-65) In Germany, Balthasar Leitzel and Francis Hohenemmes added views of American cities to their standard stock of optical views, which were engravings. (Figs. 66-67) Printmakers in England, France, and the Netherlands addressed political issues in addition to responding to specific events. Their pictorial assessments of the relationship between England and America give a sense of the ways in which the colonies were perceived by a contemporary European audience.

the promise of America

The Age of Enlightenment was born of a new view of the world, nourished by exploration and travel and supplemented by scientific discoveries and insights into the structure of the natural world. (Figs. 68-69) In harmony with the ideas of the English philosopher John Locke, the Americans had succeeded by means of a "political contract" in bringing forth a new, comprehensive political structure on republican principles. Having declared their independence on the basis of human rights, the Americans had gone on to fight for independence, and ended by creating a new political community.

Two men, Benjamin Franklin, the pragmatic scientist and "simple" man of the people, and George Washington, a man of dignity, self-control, and innate nobility, personified the promise of America. In fact, at the close of the eighteenth century, men were presented by many to be "American" itself. (Figs. 70, 71) But America was no longer an idea or myth; it was a new country that had to prove itself in terms of material achievements within the community of states and nations, and many European observers traveled through the new country and reported on its progress and its problems. (Figs. 72-73. If the Age of Enlightenment had made models of the Americans, it was up to the Americans to see that the model became reality. (Fig. 74.)
Fig. 62
Nicholas Scull and George Heap, A Map of Philadelphia, and Parts Adjacent, with a Perspective View of the State House, [Philadelphia, 1751].

This, the most popular early map of William Penn's "Gracious Country Towne," has two claimants to primacy. Published in 1751, it is the first printed map to show how Philadelphia developed from the original plan. It also omits the first view of the State House, or Independence Hall. The building had not yet been completed, which accounts for the presence in which Heap drew the as-yet unfinished hall.

By the end of the century, pictures of public buildings often appeared as decorations on maps, sometimes as a guide to the achievement of those who had made North America their home.

(See nos. 135.)

Fig. 63
Thomas Howells: A Sober View of the City of New York, [London, 1765?—95].

This picture of New York was drawn about 1784 by Captain Howells, as a site near the East River presently occupied by public housing projects. The particular view of lower Manhattan shown by the artist is now obstructed by the East River and the approaches to the Manhattan Bridge. (See no. 136.)
FIG. 64
John Carvertham, A southern view of the city of Boston in North America, London, [ca. 1740].
This print of Boston harbor was based upon a view by William Pingeon, drawn above 1732.
(Reprint no. 135).

FIG. 65
The Bostonians ejecting the exile men, or taking & fasting, London, 1774.
The Liberty Tree provides a backdrop for this popular satire depicting the brutish treatment accorded to John Malcolm, Governor of Customs, for attempting to collect duty in Boston. Malcolm was tarred and feathered, made to drink enormous quantities of tea, and threatened with hanging.
(Reprint no. 143).

FIG. 66
Bostonians. An exact view of the late battle at Charlestown, June 1775, Philadelphia, 1776.
Bostonians—soldiers, inventors, cartographers, and historians—were responsible for an important group of maps of the Revolutionary period. In 1774 and 1775 he won in Boston and eschewed this decision account of the battle of Bunker Hill showing the towns of Boston and Charlestown. The outcome of the battle was meant to a European audience and this view was reprinted in England for British circulation in the following year.
(Reprint no. 179).
FIG. 66
Balthasar Friedrich Ladle.
VIE DE LA NOUVELLE
VANCE, ANSPACH, JUN.
1770.

FIG. 67
Balthasar Friedrich Ladle.
VUE DE PHILADELPHIE, ANSPACH.
1770.

Many early views of American towns, such as these, were adapted from pictures of European cities. Nevertheless, their wide distribution transformed an image of urban America to a vast audience eager for news. They can best be appreciated, perhaps, as contemporary manifestations of the earlier tendency to "make do" with the "idea" of a place rather than with an accurate description.

Although these prints claim to depict New York and Philadelphia, they are actually copies of engravings of Deptford, England—one half of the original serves as New York, the other half as Philadelphia.

(see nos. 172, 173.)
FIG. 68

FIG. 69
Pilgrims against Barrenness. In: Mark Catesby, The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands. Vol. I, London, 1754. Mark Catesby, an eighteenth-century English naturalist and traveler, strives to provide a complete and accurate visual record of the flora and fauna of the southeast of North America and the Bahamas. In a remarkable move de Fossa, Catesby single-handedly observed, drew, engraved, and finally published his observations in two folio volumes, with some two hundred plates. He was the first to paint North American birds in their natural settings. (Figs. nos. 150 and b).

FIG. 70
Mount Vernon in Virginia. The seat of the late George Washington, Custos dominorum, at the capital of the United States. (From the arms of his estate, taken from the then residence of Washington, Mount Vernon, in Virginia.) (Fig. no. 190).
Fig. 70
A Display of the United States of America

In 1808, during Washington's term as President, a new version of this panoramic display was printed, particularly bringing to light the names of cities and territories, and their statistics, up to date. This, the fourth state of the engraving, shows Washington in uniform above, embracing the second decade of 1790. All the others show him in civilian garb.

Fig. 71
An American stage coach. (From Isaac Weld, Jr., Travels through the States of North America, 4th ed., London, 1806.)

Weld describes a stage coach: "The coach is a carriage peculiar to America; the body of it is rather longer than a coach; but of the same shape. In the front it is left quite open, and the driver sits on a bench under the roof of the carriage. There are two seats for the passengers, who sit with their backs towards the horses." (Weld vol. 1: 147.)
FIG. 74

A major cartographic priority during the last decade of the eighteenth century was the mapping of towns and cities. The city of Washington, D.C., was designed by the engineer and architect Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who also used this map for his own land speculation. Andrew Ellicott, in assistance to L'Enfant, drew the first official plan of the city, which was published in 1794. (ext no. 113).

FIG. 75

The Finch views of Philadelphia provide visual documentation of the burgeoning of an American way of life. John Rich executed twenty-eight views of Philadelphia with the intention of recording a complete cross-section of the city that at the time represented the zenith of American urbanism and achievement. He recorded both public and private buildings and also included details of street life that had not yet been recorded in America. A sense of formal stilt and pride is reflected in these images of the American city. (ext no. 117).

FIG. 76

At the close of the eighteenth century the “American” received a Classical presentation, visual evidence of the intellectual success of the “noble experiment” of American democracy—Reason is in harmony with Nature. (ext no. 206).
ENCOUNTERING THE NEW WORLD
1493 TO 1800

designed by Gilbert Associates
was printed by Meridian Printing
on Glocagle paper.
The typeface is Sabon,
designed by Jan Tschichold in 1966.
It is a variation of the Garamond style
and was named after Jacob Sabon,
a punchcutter from Lyon
who is thought to have brought
some of Garamond's matrices
to Frankfurt.
The book was bound by The Riverside Group,
1250 softcover and 250 casebound copies
for the John Carter Brown Library
December 1991