

The Spanish in America

- A. Patterns of Spanish Conquest
 - a. Unlike the Portuguese the Spanish came to conquer.
 - b. First the conquest of the Caribbean created the methods by which the Spanish would use in later conquest.
 - c. The Process
 - i. Capture of the leader
 - ii. Subjugation of the people on encomienda, a feudal grant of land to the conquistadors.
 - iii. They mixed with the local populations, creating a racially mixed population
 - iv. They created legal and religious institutions to control the non-European population
- B. Conquistadors
 - a. Much of the exploitation of the new world was led by freebooters, called Conquistadors.
 - b. They acted largely without oversight from the government and were often privately funded
 - c. The monarch was supposed to grant a license, known as an adelantado.
 - d. In return for their services they would be rewarded with an encomienda.
 - e. Although outnumbered, the conquistadors and subsequently later Europeans possessed numerous military advantages, including steel, guns, horses and war dogs.
- C. The Conquest of Mexico
 - a. The story of the conquest is an epic and dramatic story.
 - i. It pitted two powerful and expanding empires against each other.
 - ii. Both were relatively new empires, both were filled with religious zeal which promoted expansion.
 - b. Hernan Cortes
 - i. Was the most famous and greatest of the Conquistadors
 - ii. Born around 1484, fought in Italy and later as a teen participated in the conquest of Cuba
 - iii. He had studied law and was probably a member of the lower nobility.
 - c. Montezuma and the fall of Tenochtitlan.
 - i. In 1519, Cortes landed in Mexico and began to cultivate alliances and battle with local tribes.
 - ii. With the help of Native American allies, the Spaniards were able to attack Tenochtitlan and capture Montezuma.
 - d. Cortes' Triumph
 - i. Carlos V, the King of Spain, awarded Cortes the position of governor of Mexico.
 - ii. By his death in 1547, he was the wealthiest man in Spain.
- D. Consolidation by the Spanish
 - a. Problems with Conquistadors
 - i. Attained unprecedented levels of wealth.
 - ii. With little government oversight, they often subjugated Native Americans ruthlessly, which put them at odds with the church and the monarchy, as they were killing future converts and taxpayers.

- iii. Most conquistadors were adept at conquering and ill-suited for governance.
 - b. Hacienda and Plantations
 - i. Once the core regions of the Spanish Empire were militarily subdued the Spanish began to make their new colonies productive.
 - ii. The key feature to this was the large landed estate, which required a large labor force
 - iii. In Mexico and Peru, the Spanish used the local populations, in the Caribbean they turned to slave labor.
 - iv. Repartimeineto
 - 1. Was a method of dividing up available labor among landowners.
 - 2. After 1600, this was replaced by the wage labor system
- E. The Features of Spanish Colonialism
 - a. Colonization
 - i. In the 16th century, nearly 250,000 Spaniards immigrated to the New World and another half a million in the 17th century
 - ii. They were mostly single young men who intermarried and produced a generation of mixed children
 - iii. The Spanish colonies were the most cosmopolitan and had the largest numbers of urban centers.
 - b. Castas
 - i. A new racial hierarchy emerged
 - ii. Pure African and Indians at the bottom and those born in Spain at the top.
 - c. Governance
 - i. Distance hamper government oversight.
 - ii. It became the norm to observe the laws but not obey them.
- F. The Role of the Church
 - a. Religious conversion and military conquest went hand and hand.
 - i. For the Spanish and the Portuguese the conquest of the Americas was an extension of the long religious and military struggle against the Moors.
 - ii. In Spain and Portugal the church and the state were intertwined.
 - b. Do the Indians have souls?
 - i. The church and state wrested with this question.
 - ii. Ultimately, the crown and church decided that they were human beings, were in need of conversion.
 - c. The mixing of Religions
 - i. Old symbols were given new meanings and new meanings to old symbols.
 - ii. The creation of a folk Catholicism, a blending between Christianity and local religions.
 - d. The Mission System
 - i. The creation of missions across the Spanish Empire served dual purposes.
 - 1. It held claims on the land
 - 2. Facilitated trade with local communities
 - 3. Allowed for the conversion of the Native Americans.
- G. Gold and Silver

- a. Between 1500 and 1650, 161 tons of gold and 16,000 tons of silver were extracted from the New World
 - b. Over half of this wealth came from modern Bolivia, and its famed Potosi mine, also known as the “mountain that eats men”
 - c. Precious metals were a motivating factor for all Europeans.
 - d. Roughly one-fifth of this went to the monarch
 - e. The specie was a mixed blessing
 - i. There was dramatic inflation, which really affected the lower classes.
 - ii. Spanish goods became more expensive, and they began importing foreign goods.
 - iii. As a result, Spanish manufacturing and innovation began to lag.
 - iv. The increased state revenues allowed fostered military intervention in Africa, Italy and the Netherlands.
 - f. American silver was the lifeblood of the Spanish
- H. The Spanish fleet system
- a. A fleet was necessary to maintain the constant flow of silver from the America
 - b. By the 1560’s the Spanish fleet began to make yearly runs to the Americas, where it crossed all at to the Caribbean, the sailed to local areas
 - c. The colonist depended on the fleet to receive goods from Europe.
 - d. The fleet system forced the colonies to trade with Spain only, which resulted in economic under development
 - e. The disruption of the Spanish fleet in the 17th century led to the eventual decline of Spain.
- I. Protecting the Empire
- a. In order to protect the fleet system and colonies the Spanish settle Florida
 - b. In 1565, St. Augustine, Florida became the first European settlement in what is now the United States.