

A 1584 drawing of slaves laboring at the Potosí silver mine, Bolivia

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

A Missionary Protests

“Everything that has happened since the marvellous discovery of the Americas . . . seems to overshadow all the deeds of famous men past, no matter how heroic, and to silence all talk of other wonders of the world. Prominent amid the aspects of this story which have caught the imagination are the massacres of innocent peoples. . . .”

—Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1542

Focus Question How did Spain and Portugal build colonies in the Americas?

Spanish and Portuguese Colonies in the Americas

Objectives

- Explain how Spain ruled its empire in the Americas.
- Analyze the major features of Spanish colonial society and culture.
- Describe how Portugal and other European nations challenged Spanish power.



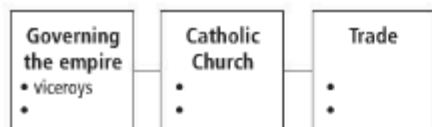
A flood of Spanish settlers and missionaries followed the conquistadors to Spain's new empire. Wherever they went they established colonies, claiming the land and its people for their king and Church. When there was resistance, the newcomers imposed their will by force. Over time, however, a new culture emerged that reflected European, Native American, and African traditions.

Terms, People, and Places

viceroy	creole
encomienda	mestizo
Bartolomé de Las Casas	mulatto
peon	privateer
peninsular	

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence Use a flowchart like this one to keep track of the steps the Spanish took to establish an overseas empire. Add boxes as necessary.



Ruling the Spanish Empire

By the mid-1500s, Spain claimed a vast empire stretching from California to South America. In time, it divided these lands into four provinces, including New Spain (Mexico) and Peru.

Governing the Provinces Spain was determined to maintain strict control over its empire. To achieve this goal, the king set up the Council of the Indies to pass laws for the colonies. He also appointed **viceroys**, or representatives who ruled in his name, in each province. Lesser officials and audiencias (ow dee EN see ahs), or advisory councils of Spanish settlers, helped the viceroy rule. The Council of the Indies in Spain closely monitored these colonial officials to make sure they did not assume too much authority.

Spreading Christianity To Spain, winning souls for Christianity was as important as gaining land. The Catholic Church worked with the government to convert Native Americans to Christianity.



Cultural Blending

Encounters with Native Americans, or stories about such encounters, influenced Spanish and Portuguese artists. This painting dating from the early 1500s places a Biblical story—the adoration of the Magi—in the Americas, with Native American figures.

Vocabulary Builder

drastic—(DRAS tik) *adj.* severe; having a strong effect

Church leaders often served as royal officials and helped to regulate the activities of Spanish settlers. As Spain's American empire expanded, Church authority expanded along with it.

Franciscans, Jesuits, and other missionaries baptized thousands of Native Americans. They built mission churches and worked to turn new converts into loyal subjects of the Catholic king of Spain. They also introduced European clothing, the Spanish language, and new crafts such as carpentry and locksmithing. Where they could, the Spanish missionaries forcibly imposed European culture over Native American culture.

Controlling Trade To make the empire profitable, Spain closely controlled its economic activities, especially trade. The most valuable resources shipped from Spanish America to Spain were silver and gold. Colonists could export raw materials only to Spain and could buy only Spanish manufactured goods. Laws forbade colonists from trading with other European nations or even with other Spanish colonies.

When sugar cane was introduced into the West Indies and elsewhere, it quickly became a profitable resource. The cane was refined into sugar, molasses, and rum. Sugar cane, however, had to be grown on plantations, large estates run by an owner or the owner's overseer. And plantations needed large numbers of workers to be profitable.

Encomienda—A System of Forced Labor At first, Spanish monarchs granted the conquistadors **encomiendas** (en koh mee EN dahs), the right to demand labor or tribute from Native Americans in a particular area. The conquistadors used this system to force Native Americans to work under the most brutal conditions. Those who resisted were hunted down and killed. Disease, starvation, and cruel treatment caused **drastic** declines in the Native American population.

The encomienda system was used in the mines as well as on plantations. By the 1540s, tons of silver from the Potosí region of Peru and Bolivia filled Spanish treasure ships. Year after year, thousands of Native Americans were forced to extract the rich ore from dangerous shafts deep inside the Andes Mountains. As thousands of Indians died from the terrible conditions, they were replaced by thousands more.

A Spanish Priest Speaks Out A few bold priests, like **Bartolomé de Las Casas** (bahr toh loh MAY deh lahs KAHS ahs), condemned the evils of the encomienda system. In vivid reports to Spain, Las Casas detailed the horrors that Spanish rule had brought to Native Americans and pleaded with the king to end the abuse.


Prodded by Las Casas, Spain passed the New Laws of the Indies in 1542. The laws forbade enslavement and abuse of Native Americans, but Spain was too far away to enforce them. Many Native Americans were forced to become **peons**, workers forced to labor for a landlord in order to pay off a debt. Landlords advanced them food, tools, or seeds, creating debts that workers could never pay off in their lifetime.

Bringing Workers From Africa To fill the labor shortage, Las Casas urged colonists to import workers from Africa. He believed that Africans were immune to tropical diseases and had skills in farming, mining, and metalworking. Las Casas later regretted that advice because it furthered the brutal African slave trade.

The Spanish began bringing Africans to the Americas as slave laborers by the 1530s. As demand for sugar products skyrocketed, the settlers



imported millions of Africans as slaves. They were forced to work as field hands, miners, or servants in the houses of wealthy landowners. Others became skilled artists and artisans. Within a few generations, Africans and their American-born descendants greatly outnumbered European settlers throughout the Americas. In the cities, some enslaved Africans earned enough money to buy their freedom. Others resisted slavery by rebelling or running away.

 **Checkpoint** What was the *encomienda* system?

Colonial Society and Culture

In Spanish America, the mix of diverse peoples gave rise to a new social structure. The blending of Native American, African, and European peoples and traditions resulted in a culture distinct to the Americas.

Cultural Blending Although Spanish culture was dominant in the cities, the blending of diverse traditions changed people's lives throughout the Americas. Settlers learned Native American styles of building, ate foods native to the Americas, and traveled in Indian-style canoes. Indian artistic styles influenced the newcomers. At the same time, Europeans taught their religion to Native Americans. They also introduced animals, especially the horse, thereby transforming the lives of many Native Americans. Africans contributed to this cultural mix with their farming methods, cooking styles, and crops. African drama, dance, and song heightened Christian services. In Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere, Africans forged new religions that blended African and Christian beliefs.

A Spanish Cathedral

A group of Tzotzil Maya women gather in front of the Cathedral of San Cristóbal in Chiapas, Mexico. The church was originally built in 1528. *How can you tell that the church is a vital part of life in the town?*

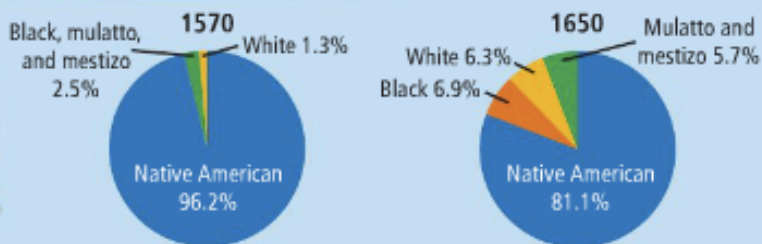


A Changing Population



The population of Spanish America changed dramatically within a century, as the two pie charts illustrate. Artist Miguel Cabrera showed this diversity in a 1700s painting of a single family made up of a Spanish father, a Native American mother, and a mestizo daughter.

Population of Spanish America



SOURCE: *Spain and Portugal in the New World*, Lyle N. McAlister

Chart Skills Study the pie graphs. Which group increased the most between 1570 and 1650? Notice that the 1650 graph includes a category that the 1570 graph does not. Explain why this is so.



A Layered Society Spanish colonial society was made up of distinct social classes. At the top were **peninsulares** (peh neen soo LAH rayz), people born in Spain. (The term *peninsular* referred to the Iberian Peninsula, on which Spain is located.) Peninsulares filled the highest positions in both colonial governments and the Catholic Church. Next came **creoles**, American-born descendants of Spanish settlers. Creoles owned most of the plantations, ranches, and mines.

Lower social groups reflected the mixing of populations. They included **mestizos**, people of Native American and European descent, and **mulattoes**, people of African and European descent. Native Americans and people of African descent formed the lowest social classes.

Lively Towns and Cities Spanish settlers generally lived in towns and cities. The population of Mexico City grew so quickly that by 1550 it was the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world. Colonial cities were centers of government, commerce, and European culture. Around the central plaza, or square, stood government buildings and a Spanish-style church. Broad avenues and public monuments symbolized European power and wealth. Cities were also centers of intellectual and cultural life. Architecture and painting, as well as poetry and the exchange of ideas, flourished in Spanish cities in the Americas.

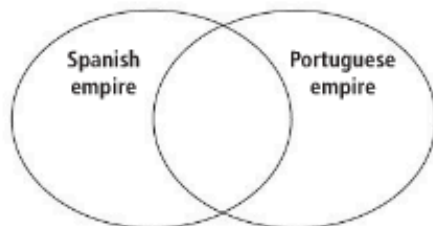
Emphasizing Education To meet the Church's need for educated priests, the colonies built universities. The University of Mexico was established as early as 1551. A dozen Spanish American universities were already educating young men long before Harvard was founded in 1636 as the first college in the 13 English colonies.

Women wishing an education might enter a convent. One such woman was Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (sawr HWAN uh ee NES deh lah krooz). Refused admission to the University of Mexico because she was female, Juana entered a convent at around the age of 18. There, she devoted herself to study and the writing of poetry. She earned a reputation as one of the greatest poets ever to write in the Spanish language.

 **Checkpoint** What was the role of the Church in colonial education?

Note Taking

Compare and Contrast Complete a Venn diagram like this one to compare and contrast the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas.





Beyond the Spanish Empire

A large area of South America remained outside the Spanish empire. By the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, Portugal claimed its empire in the east, Brazil.

Settling Brazil As in the Spanish empire, the Native Americans who lived in Brazil—the Tupian Indians—had been largely wiped out by disease. In the 1530s, Portugal began to issue grants of land to Portuguese nobles, who agreed to develop the land and share profits with the crown. Landowners sent settlers to build towns, plantations, and churches.

Unlike Spain's American colonies, Brazil offered no instant wealth from silver or gold. However, early settlers cut and exported brazilwood. The Portuguese named the colony after this wood, which was used to produce a valuable dye. Soon they turned to plantation agriculture and raising cattle. Like the Spanish, the Portuguese forced Indians and Africans to clear land for plantations. As many as four million Africans were sent to Brazil. As in Spanish America, a new culture emerged in Brazil that blended European, Native American, and African elements.

Challenging Portugal and Spain In the 1500s, the wealth of the Americas helped make Spain the most powerful country in Europe, with Portugal not far behind. The jealous English and Dutch shared the resentment that French king Francis I felt when he declared, "I should like to see Adam's will, wherein he divided the Earth between Spain and Portugal."

To get around those countries' strict control over colonial trade, smugglers traded illegally with Portuguese and Spanish colonists. In the Caribbean and elsewhere, Dutch, English, and French pirates preyed on treasure ships from the Americas. Some pirates, called **privateers**, even operated with the approval of European governments. Other European explorers continued to sail the coasts of the Americas, hunting for gold and other treasure, as well as a northwest passage to Asia.



Smuggling Brazilwood

A panel carved from brazilwood in the 1550s shows French privateers illegally cutting Portuguese brazilwood and storing it on their boats.

SECTION

2

Assessment



Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1521

Terms, People, and Places

1. Place each of the key terms at the beginning of the section into one of the following categories: culture, government, or economics. Write a sentence for each term explaining your choice.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence** Use your completed flowchart and Venn diagram to answer the Focus Question: How did Spain and Portugal build colonies in the Americas?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Identify Alternatives** How might the Spanish have solved the problem of finding a dependable labor supply without the use of slavery?
4. **Analyze Information** How did the mix of peoples in Spanish America result in a new social structure?
5. **Make Comparisons** In what ways were the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas similar? In what ways were they different?
6. **Draw Inferences** Why did some European monarchs support the illegal activities of privateers?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Make a Venn Diagram

When you write an essay comparing and contrasting two things, you first need to make clear how they are similar and different. A graphic organizer can help you outline similarities and differences. Choose two people, places, or events from the section. Then create a Venn diagram that you can use to compare and contrast them. Refer to the Venn diagram at the beginning of the section as an example.