

## The Exploration, Discovery and Settlement of America

Archeologists believe that the first migrants arrived in America about 40,000 years ago. They crossed the Asian Land Bridge from Siberia and settled in Alaska. The first Americans – or Native Americans – adapted to varied environments of the regions that they found. They divided into hundreds of tribes, spoke different languages, and practiced different cultures. The cold northern climate influenced southward migration.

Estimated in the 1490's were that there were between just under one million to over 10 million Native Americans. (The era of the Maya and Aztec races was over 25 million).

Most Native Americans lived in semi-permanent settlements, often no more than 300 people. The men hunted and made tools while the women grew crops of corn, beans and tobacco. Some tribes were nomadic and followed the buffalo (bison) herds. Some tribes formed larger societies.

### **North American Cultures (c 1500) and their locations**

<b>Inuits</b>	Also known as Eskimos, inhabited the polar region of the northwest
<b>Kwakiutl</b>	Settled in the Pacific Northwest in British Columbia and Washington State. Known for their totem poles
<b>Anasazi</b>	300 AD. to 1200AD “cliff dwellers” of Southwestern United States (Utah, Colorado, Arizona & New Mexico). One cliff palace had more than 200 rooms and housed over 400 people. They used irrigation for their crops.
<b>Pueblos</b>	Direct descendants of the Anasazi and also settled in the southwest.
<b>Sioux, Crow, Cheyenne, Pawnee, Comanche and Apache</b>	Western Plains people who depended on the buffalo for almost all of their needs. They were nomadic and lived in tepees
<b>Iroquois</b>	Settled in the Northeast and formed a political confederacy – League of the Iroquois who fought other tribes and then the Europeans in the 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries.
<b>Delaware, Choctaw and Mohawk</b>	Lived in the Eastern woodlands. Hunted with the bow and arrow
<b>Cherokee</b>	Settled in the Carolinas and Georgia
<b>Seminole</b>	These hunters lived in present day Florida

The Native Americans did not understand the concept of private ownership of land. To them, the land belonged to all members of the tribe to be shared communally. Most tribes consisted of independent members joined loosely together under the leadership of a chief.

The first Europeans to settle in North America were the Vikings. Circa 1000 AD a small settlement, headed by Leif Ericsson was formed. However this and subsequent Viking settlements did not last more than 30 years.

**The main European settlements came due to four (4) major reasons:**

1. **The Effect of the Renaissance and Scientific Learning.**

Gunpowder and the sailing compass from China combined with the invention of the Caravelle, Cartography and the invention of the Printed Press were all causes for exploration to develop.

2. **Religious Conflicts**

(a) Spain under the reign of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella was a major Roman Catholic country that was mostly occupied by the Moors and the Ottoman empire. Isabella finally exiled the Moors in 1492 but Spain was close to bankruptcy.

(b) The Protestant Reformation gave both the protestant and catholic countries the desire to spread their religions around the world through colonization.

3. **Political Changes within Europe**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century monarchs in Western Europe were gaining power. Monarchs relied on trade for valuable income. In addition the church approved their right to rule as long as they remained in favor. This prepared the way for the nation-states of Spain, Portugal, France, England and the Netherlands to expand beyond their coastlines.

4. **Expanding Trade**

In 1453 the Ottoman Empire seized Constantinople. This prevents trade along the Silk Road and it was no longer possible to travel from Venice to China.

In 1498 Vasco Da Gama sailed around South Africa and arrived in India and into Asia. Christopher Columbus believed that there was another way, much quicker than the route followed by Da Gama.

On September 6<sup>th</sup> 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed westward from the Canary Islands and on October 12<sup>th</sup> he finally reached the Bahamas.

By 1493 the pope created an imaginary line down the “New World” giving the control to both Spain (west of the Line) and Portugal (east of the line).

In 1494 the two countries agreed to the Treaty of Tordesillas – which moved the boundary line further west, to the advantage of Spain but Pedro Alvares Cabral of Portugal claimed Brazil for his country.