

# Worlds Transformed

## Lesson Overview

### Learning Objectives

1. Explain the changes taking place in Western Europe that stimulated interest in overseas expansion and colonization.
2. Analyze the ways in which the peoples of the New and Old Worlds affected each other when their cultures met, with specific emphasis on the "Columbian exchange."
3. Describe the geographic revolution that took place in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.
4. Analyze the development of Spain's New World empire and how it affected both Europe and the Americas.

### Video: Columbus the Invader?

The "discovery" of the New World set changes in motion that affected the world forever. The debate over whether Columbus Day should be a national holiday in the United States provokes thought about these changes. Where do you stand on the issue?

#### Video script:

Male Protestor: We're all, pretty much, told one story in school and it's not necessarily what's true.

Stuart Schwartz, Yale University: A hundred years ago, Columbus was the great hero because he was the one who essentially opened the New World to the colonization by Europeans. By the end of the twentieth century, we were less sure that that was such a good thing.

Al Crosby, University of Texas at Austin: If William the Conqueror had come ashore in England in 1066 and said, "look at me, I'm discovering England," the Saxons would have said, "That's ridiculous. You're invading the place." Which is what Columbus did in the West Indies.

Narrator: For better or worse, Columbus' voyage had epic consequences. His so-called "discovery" of the New World ushered in an era of opportunity for Europeans, and one of defeat and near extinction for the people he called "Indians."

After Columbus, the world would never be the same.

End of video.

## Lesson Focus Points

Look for answers to these questions as you study the lesson:

- What was happening in Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that explains the urge to look outward?
- What trade goods were being exchanged between Europe and Asia? What was the incentive to secure a water route from Europe to Asia?
- How and why was Portugal exploring ways to get access to Asia? What were the effects of the Portuguese explorations?
- How did Columbus's voyages and those of other European explorers bring about a geographic revolution?
- Who were the early European explorers? What countries did they represent? Where did they go?
- What major areas of North and South America composed the Spanish empire in America?
- What is the significance of the *encomienda* system in Spanish America? In what ways was this system changed by the *repartimiento*? What were the effects of both systems?
- What was the toll of Spanish conquest and colonization on the Indians? How does exposure to a new culture affect identity?
- How did the Spanish empire in America affect Spain and other European countries?