

Unit 1 -- Our Colonial Heritage

Chapter 2 – New Empires in the Americas

Section 1 – Europeans Set Sail

VIKING SAILORS REACH NORTH AMERICA

- Vikings (from Scandinavia) -- first Europeans to make contact with North America
- Developed longship – curved up at both ends; traveled Atlantic seas better because it was more stable
- Raided European countries, but also developed trading networks
- Sailed west into North Atlantic; founded Iceland and Greenland (the latter by Erik the Red)
- 1000 – Erik the Red’s son, Leif Eriksson, blown off course and landed on North American coast (Canada’s Labrador Peninsula)
- Vikings then sailed south to Newfoundland, and perhaps New England
- Eriksson settled in Vinland, a coastal area, but soon left, because of Native American attacks, and because the settlement was too far from other Vikings
- No Europeans returned to North America until the 1400s

PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR

- Early 1400s, Portugal – builds observatory, starts school of navigation to teach better sailing methods, finances research by mapmakers and shipbuilders, pays for expeditions to explore Africa’s west coast

Riches in Asia

- Europe wanted to explore the world because:
 - They wanted Asian spices, and wanted to find a direct route in order to bypass merchants that held monopoly (economic control) on products reaching the Mediterranean
 - European Christians wanted to convert people
 - Many Europeans wanted to learn about Asia and its cultures

Technological Advances

- Astrolabe – navigators learned their ship’s location by charting position of the stars
- Better instruments meant landmarks not as necessary to guide sailors
- New Portuguese ships were smaller, lighter and easier to steer
 - Caravels – triangular sails allowed ships to sail against the wind; large central rear rudder good for steering; smooth, rounded hull handled high seas well

A SEA ROUTE TO ASIA

Rounding Africa

- Sailing on the open seas was still dangerous and difficult
- 1488 – Bartolomeu Dias leads expedition toward African coast
 - Storm blows his ship around southern tip of Africa (Cape of Good Hope)
 - Supplies were low, so Dias turned back
- 1497 – Vasco da Gama leaves Portugal and arrives in Calicut the next year
 - Muslim traders spoke Portuguese to him; they and Italian merchants were trading with Indians
 - Returned twice to India, and governed small colony there

Results of Exploration

- Portuguese negotiated for gold, ivory and slaves when they explored Africa's west coast
- Slave trade was devastating for Africa
 - Led to increased warfare among kingdoms
 - Broke up many families
- Portuguese sent enslaved Africans to Europe, and islands in Atlantic, where they lived and worked under brutal conditions
- New trade routes were bringing increased wealth and power to Portugal
- Other European nations followed suit and launched their own voyages to find water routes to Asia