

THE EUROPEAN WORLD IN THE TIME OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

I. A World of Separate Peoples in Separate Countries

A. The Most Important European Countries for American History

1. We know that there would be no United States of America if it were not for the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492.
2. After this discovery, Europeans started coming to North and South America.
3. Not all European countries were involved in this. The main ones were: Spain, Portugal, England, and France.

B. Why Separate Countries and Separate Languages?

1. After the fall of Rome in 476 AD, Europe was taken over by separate groups of people known as “tribes.”
2. A tribe called the Franks conquered the region we now call France. A tribe called the Angles conquered “Angle-land” (England). Another tribe known as Visigoths took over the Roman province of Hispania (today Spain) and Portugal.
3. Every region in Europe was claimed some tribe conquering other tribes and claiming the land. Eventually, the territories claimed by tribes became their countries, with settled boundaries between them.
4. In each territory that was no longer linked by the Roman Empire, peoples’ languages became more and more different. Portuguese became distinct from Spanish. English became distinct from German and French, etc.
5. It is sometimes nice that people speak different languages in different countries. It makes for different music and literature, among other things. Unfortunately, the separateness of countries and languages also shows us their people fought for so long that they could not learn to live together and speak the same language.

C. So What?

We live in a world of separate peoples speaking separate languages in separate countries. Sadly, this is because the European people who interconnected the world did not know how to live in peace themselves.