

AMERICA ARRIVES!

In this part of the course, we will study the story of colonization and the birth of the United States. As the Age of Discovery came to an end, Europeans, and Englishmen in particular, started coming to America to begin new lives. America ceased to be merely an obstacle in the way of getting to Asia in their eyes. It became a place to settle and build a new life. English colonies grew up on the east coast of America, with Spanish colonies to the south, and French colonies to the north. Not surprisingly, these colonies fought each other in colonial wars as their home countries fought in European ones. Finally, however, with the English king treating his colonists around the world as disposable human beings to be taxed in any way he pleased, his American subjects rebelled in the name of their natural rights—to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The United States of America was born!

II. English Efforts at Colonization Begin

A. What about America?

1. For nearly 100 years after Columbus’s discovery of America, the people of England viewed America as an *obstacle* on their way to reaching Asia, rather than a place to settle.
2. In 1576, Sir Humphrey Gilbert wrote his “Discourse on a Discovery a New Passage to Cathay.” His goal was to convince Queen Elizabeth of England to fund voyages to find a “Northwest Passage,” which she did, sending Martin Frobisher.
3. Then, around 1584, only eight years later, the priorities had changed. Queen Elizabeth was now sending explorers to America, not merely to get around it, but to create permanent English settlements. What changed?!

B. Sir Francis Drake

1. In 1577, Queen Elizabeth sent one of her “sea dogs” (English pirates), Francis Drake, to attack Spanish ships in the Pacific Ocean.
2. Drake followed Magellan’s path to the west coast of America, and then captured a Spanish treasure ship.
3. To return to England, Drake tried to sail over America (through the “Northwest passage”) but he found that North America grew wider as he headed north, and he gave up.
4. Drake opted to sail West back to England, and in 1580, after a three year voyage, he became the second man to circumnavigate the world.
5. Upon his return to England, English priorities began to shift away from trying to reach Asia toward actually making use of America.

C. The Idea of Colonization

1. In 1584, an English writer named Richard Hakluyt wrote “A Discourse on Western Planting”. It was an essay written to convince Queen Elizabeth to “plant” a colony in America.
2. In his essay, Hakluyt presented many reasons for creating a colony. These included:
 - a) to create a base for further exploration
 - b) to create a base for fishing
 - c) to create a base for attacking Spanish colonies

- d) to begin spreading Anglican Christianity among the primitive people of the New World
- 3. Hakluyt's main reason had to do with avoiding trade with other European countries.
 - a) Up to that point English merchants were used to buying goods from other countries, which they paid for in gold (and silver).
 - b) They also sold English goods to merchants from other countries, and received gold (and silver) for them.
 - c) English merchants tended to buy more than they sold, and this meant that they give away more gold than they received.
 - d) The problem that Hakluyt and others saw in this was that this meant that the kings of other countries would be able to tax that gold from their citizens in case of war with England, but the English king would not have the same chance.
 - e) If colonies could be created to produce and obtain goods in place of the goods usually purchased by other countries, they could avoid the problem of losing gold.
 - f) It would also allow Englishmen to sell more goods (from the colonies) to other countries, thus bringing more gold into England.