

# 3 The Impact of Colonization

## TERMS & NAMES

encomienda  
plantation  
slavery  
African Diaspora  
middle passage  
racism  
Columbian Exchange

### MAIN IDEA

Spanish rule in the Americas had terrible consequences for Native Americans and Africans.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The effects of slavery, including racism, helped shape attitudes and social conditions in the United States.

## ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

Huamán Poma, a Peruvian Native American, was angry about the abuse the Spanish heaped upon Native Americans. He wrote to King Philip III of Spain to complain about the bad treatment.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

It is their [the Spanish] practice to collect Indians into groups and send them to forced labor without wages, while they themselves receive the payment for the work. . . . The royal administrators and the other Spaniards lord it over the Indians with absolute power.

Huamán Poma, *Letter to a King*

In his letter, Poma asked the king to help the Native Americans and uphold the rule of law in Peru. Regardless, the Spanish colonists continued to mistreat Native Americans as the Spaniards expanded their empire in the Americas. In time, colonists from Spain and other European nations would import millions of Africans to the Americas and enslave them as well. For the members of these subjected groups, American colonization was devastating.

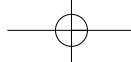


A Spanish priest forces a Native American woman to work at a loom.

## Life in Spanish America

The Spanish Empire grew rapidly, despite efforts by other European countries to compete with Spain. By 1700, it controlled much of the Americas. Spain took several steps to establish an effective colonial government. First, it divided its American empire into two provinces called New Spain and Peru. Each province was called a viceroyalty. The top official of each viceroyalty was called the viceroy. He ruled in the king's name.

The Spaniards made sure that people with Spanish backgrounds held power in the colonies. Just below the Spanish were the Creoles—people of Spanish descent who were born in the colonies. The next step down



the social order were the *mestizos*. *Mestizos* are people of mixed Spanish and Native American ancestry. The people with the least power and fewest rights were Native Americans and enslaved Africans.

The Catholic Church played an important role in Spanish colonial society. In places like New Mexico and California, the church built missions, settlements that included a church, a town, and farmlands. The goal of the missions was to convert Native Americans to Christianity. The missions also increased Spanish control over the land.

Some Spanish colonists received *encomiendas* to help them make the colonies productive. An *encomienda* was a grant of Native American labor. The Spanish rulers also created large estates, called *haciendas*, to provide food for the colony. *Haciendas* often became **plantations**, large farms that raised cash crops, such as sugar, coffee, and cotton, which were in great demand in Europe. The Spanish forced Native Americans to work on these plantations.

Most Spaniards treated the Native Americans as little more than beasts of burden, forcing countless numbers of them to work in the fields and mines. Even the church mistreated them. The missionaries often worked the Native Americans terribly hard. They also tried to replace Native American religions and traditions.

Not all Spaniards approved of this treatment. One man in particular fought for better treatment of Native Americans. His name was Bartolomé de Las Casas. Las Casas, a Catholic priest, fought against the abuse of Native Americans, earning the title “Protector of the Indians.” Due largely to his efforts, Spanish authorities passed laws providing greater protection for Native Americans. Most colonists, however, ignored the laws.

In 1680, a man named Popé led the Pueblo Indians in a rebellion against the Spanish. His forces surrounded the Spanish settlement at Santa Fe, in present-day New Mexico, and forced the colonists to flee temporarily from the region.

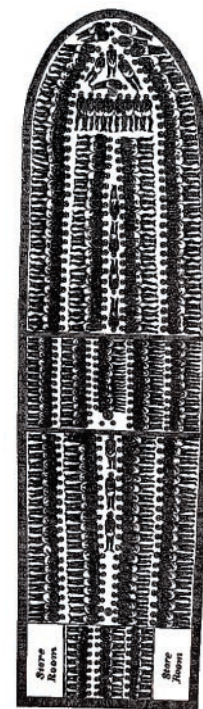
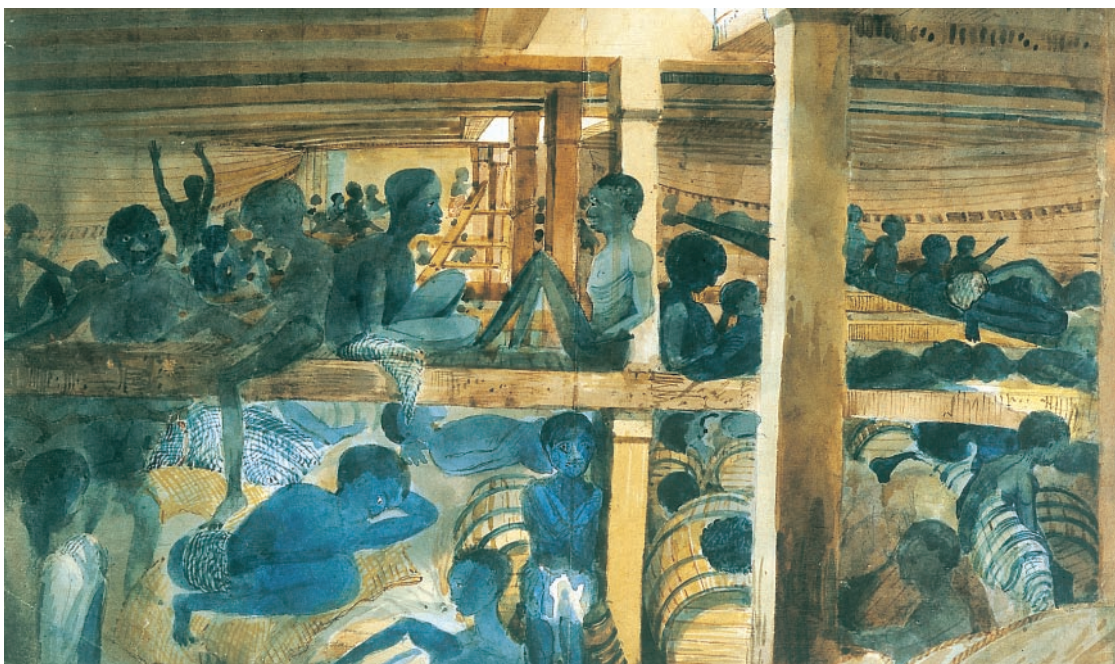
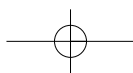
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## The Emergence of American Slavery

As more and more Native Americans died from overwork and European diseases, the Spanish and Portuguese turned to another source for labor: enslaved Africans. **Slavery** is the practice of holding a person in bondage

### Reading History

**A. Summarizing**  
In what ways did the Spanish mistreat Native Americans?



The images above show how slave traders packed enslaved Africans onto slave ships for the middle passage.

for labor. The Europeans enslaved Africans for four basic reasons. First, Africans were immune to most European diseases. Second, Africans had no friends or family in the Americas to help them resist or escape enslavement. Third, enslaved Africans provided a permanent source of cheap labor. Even their children could be held in bondage. Fourth, many Africans had worked on farms in their native lands.

In the early 1500s, European traders began bringing Africans to the Americas for slave labor. This forced removal has become known as the **African Diaspora**. Before the slave trade ended in the late 1800s, approximately 12 million Africans had been enslaved and shipped to the Western Hemisphere.

**Vocabulary**  
**diaspora:** the scattering of people outside their homeland

The voyage of the slave ships from Africa to the Americas was called the **middle passage**. The voyage was given this name because it was the middle leg of the triangular trade. The triangular trade refers to the movement of trade ships between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. You will learn more about the triangular trade in Chapter 4.

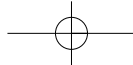
Olaudah Equiano (oh•LOW•duh EHK•wee•AHN•oh) was one of these kidnapped Africans. He made this journey in the 1700s. He was about 11 years old when he was sold into slavery. Later, after he bought his freedom, he wrote his life story and described the terror of the middle passage.

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast, was the sea, and a slave ship . . . waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, when I was carried on board.

Olaudah Equiano, quoted in *Great Slave Narratives*

It is estimated that perhaps two million Africans died during the middle passage. Those who survived faced a hard life in the Americas. Some were taken to large homes where they worked as servants. Most were forced to do hard labor in *haciendas* or mines.



Many slaves resisted slavery by running away or rebelling. To prevent rebellion, the Spanish government passed slave codes, laws to regulate the treatment of slaves. Some of these laws tried to soften the harsh conditions of slavery, but most were designed to punish slaves and keep them in bondage.

Over time, Europeans came to associate slavery with black Africans. To many Europeans, dark skin color became a sign of inferiority. Slavery, which developed to provide a labor force, led to racism. **Racism** is the belief that some people are inferior because of their race.

The slave trade lasted 400 years, from the 1500s until the 1800s. By the 1700s, all the American colonies of European countries had African slaves.

Despite the horrors of slavery, Africans survived in part by clinging to their African cultures, including their artistic heritage of dance, music, and storytelling. The slave trade brought together people from different parts of Africa with different cultural traditions. The experience of slavery helped create a common African-based culture in the Americas. African culture would become one of the forces that shaped life in the American colonies.

### ReadingHistory

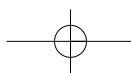
**B. Analyzing Causes** What could have caused slave traders to treat other humans with such cruelty?

## The Columbian Exchange

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas brought more than a clash of peoples and cultures. It also brought a movement of plants, animals, and diseases between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. This movement of living things between hemispheres is called the **Columbian Exchange**.

One result of the Columbian Exchange was the transfer of germs from Europe to the Americas. When Europeans came to America, they brought with them germs that caused diseases such as smallpox, measles, and influenza. Native Americans had no immunity to them.





**ReadingHistory**

**C. Making**

**Inferences** What might have happened if Native Americans had been immune to European diseases?

Although exact numbers are unknown, historians estimate that diseases brought by Europeans killed more than 20 million Native Americans in Mexico in the first century after conquest. Many scholars agree that the population of Native Americans in Central America decreased by 90 to 95 percent between the years 1519 and 1619. The result was similar in Peru and other parts of the Americas. A Spanish missionary in Mexico described the effects of smallpox on the Aztecs.

**A VOICE FROM THE PAST**

There was a great havoc. Very many died of it. They could not walk. . . . They could not move; they could not stir; they could not change position, nor lie on one side; nor face down, nor on their backs. And if they stirred, much did they cry out. Great was its destruction.

**Bernardino de Sahagún**, quoted in *Seeds of Change*

Other effects of the Columbian Exchange were more positive. The Spanish brought many plants and animals to the Americas. European livestock—cattle, pigs, and horses—all thrived in the Americas. Crops from the Eastern Hemisphere, such as grapes, onions, and wheat, also thrived in the Western Hemisphere.

The Columbian Exchange benefited Europe, too. Many American crops became part of the European diet. Two that had a huge impact were potatoes and corn. They helped feed European populations that might otherwise have gone hungry. Potatoes, for example, became an important food in Ireland, Russia, and other parts of northern Europe. Without potatoes, Europe’s population might not have grown as rapidly as it did during the last five centuries.

By mixing the products of two hemispheres, the Columbian Exchange brought the world closer together. Of course, people were also moving from one hemisphere to the other. The next chapter discusses the movement of the English to the Americas and their efforts to build an empire.

**Section 3 Assessment**

**1. Terms & Names**

**Explain the significance of:**

- *encomienda*
- plantation
- slavery
- African Diaspora
- middle passage
- racism
- Columbian Exchange

**2. Taking Notes**

Use a diagram like the one below to compare the experience of Native Americans and Africans under slavery.

Native Americans	Africans

**3. Main Ideas**

- a. What were the four levels of Spanish colonial society?
- b. Why did Europeans bring Africans to the Americas?
- c. How did enslaved Africans respond to their enslavement in the Americas?

**4. Critical Thinking**

**Recognizing Effects** What were the positive and negative effects of the Columbian Exchange?

**THINK ABOUT**

- disease
- food
- livestock

**ACTIVITY OPTIONS**

**ART**  
**MATH**

Research some aspect of the slave trade, such as the middle passage or the number of people enslaved. Paint a **picture** or draw a **graph** to show what you learned.