**Chapter 1**

The Meeting of Cultures

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Six should enable the student to understand:**

1. The history of the Native Americans before the arrival of Columbus.
2. What the New World was like at the time of Christopher Columbus.
3. The ways in which the peoples of the New and Old Worlds affected each other when their societies came in contact in the late fifteenth century.
4. The changes taking place in Western Europe that resulted in widespread interest in colonization and the connections between that was happening in the Americas and what was happening in the rest of the world.
5. The colonial policies of each nation involved and the effect each had on the future of the Americas.
6. The reasons for the rivalry between Spain and England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the impact of that rivalry on international affairs.
7. The African culture from which slaves were taken and the early development of slavery.
8. The role of religion in European efforts to colonize the New World.
9. The ways in which the experiences of the English in Ireland influenced their efforts to colonize North America.
10. The first efforts of the English to establish a colony, and the reasons for their failure.

# Chapter I

# Pertinent Questions

**America Before Columbus**

1. Identify and describe the elaborate native civilizations that developed in South and Central America and in Mexico.
2. Why did Europeans consider the Indians they met to be “savages,” regardless of their cultural achievements?
3. Describe the way of life of the North American Indians – where they lived and how they supported themselves.
4. What were the three largest language groups, and where did their speakers live?
5. Describe the changes taking place among North American Indians during the century before Europeans arrived.

**Europe Looks Westward**

1. Why was there little incentive for other Europeans to follow after the initial voyage to America by the Norse sailors?
2. What changes stimulated Europeans to look toward new lands?
3. What did Columbus hope to achieve through his voyages, and what did he actually accomplish?
4. Why did the conquistadors seek to eliminate the underpinnings of existing American civilization? How was this destruction accomplished?
5. Explain how the Spanish empire was built primarily through private enterprise.
6. What were the three distinct periods that the history of the Spanish empire spans?
7. What role did the Catholic Church play in Spanish Colonization efforts?
8. What was the “demographic catastrophe” that struck the American Indians? What impact did hit have on European colonization efforts?
9. What did Europeans gain from the Indians that proved more important than gold?
10. What did the intermarriage of Spanish with North Americans reveal about the Spanish colonial system and suggest about the Europeans who administered it?
11. Describe the cultures from which African slaves were taken and brought to America.
12. How did the African slave trade originate, and how did it evolve?

**The Arrival of the English**

1. What commercial factors contributed to England’s decision to seek colonies in the New World?
2. What arguments did Richard Hakluyt present in favor of England’s settling colonies?
3. How did Martian Luther’s doctrine of “faith alone” differed from John Calvin’s doctrine of “predestination?
4. How did the English Reformation differ from that of Luther and Calvin? Why did it fail to satisfy the religious desire of many English people?
5. What did the Puritans whish to accomplish, and why did they clash with James I?
6. How did the English colonization of Ireland influence the way in which the English colonized America?
7. Where did the French and Dutch establish colonies in North America, and how did their efforts differ from those of the Spanish and the English?
8. How did nationalism inspire the English to get into the race for colonies?
9. Describe the colonization efforts of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh.
10. How did James I settle the rivalry between London and Plymouth merchants over the exploration of North America?

**Where Historians Disagree**

1. Who were the “positivists,” and why has their approach to history been rejected b most scholars today?
2. Explain the efforts that have been made to determine the population of America before Columbus.

**America in the World**

1. What were the Old World forces that influenced the settlement and expansion of America?
2. How does the concept of an “Atlantic World” encourage us to think of early American history as a vast pattern and interactions among societies bordering that ocean?

# Summary

Before European explorers arrived in the Americas, Native Americans had developed their own forms of social organizations, which differed from one another in their levels of achievement. Europeans, concerned first with exploiting the New World and its peoples, regarded the natives as savages and set out to destroy their societies and replace them with a variation of European culture. Helped in this by the biological disaster brought on by smallpox and other diseases, the Europeans were able to conquer the tribes and civilizations and impose on the Indians a number of different colonial systems. To help make up for the Indians' labor lost through conquest and epidemic, Europeans brought in African slaves, who added to the cultural

diversity of America. Conflicts in the old world spilled over into the New as different nations got into the race for colonies. By the end of the sixteenth century, the age of discovery was all but over, and the great era of colonization, especially English colonization, was about to begin.