

# South America: History and Culture

Chapter 12 Section Two



# Early Peoples of So. America

- It's likely that people first entered So. America from the north about 12,000 years ago.
- The first settlers were hunter/gatherers
- Farming began in the region more than 5000 years ago
- For several thousand years kingdoms rose and fell in South America
- In the Colombian Andes the Chibcha ruled and developed gold-working skills



# The Inca

- The Inca were So. America's greatest early civilization
- The Incan Empire stretched from what is now Ecuador to Central Chile
- The Inca built paved roads and suspension bridges to connect their empire from the Pacific coast to the Amazon lowlands
- Terraced fields built by the Inca are still used for farming
- When Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro heard about the Inca Empire he set out to conquer it
- Unrest in the Incan empire made it easy for Pizarro during the 1530's
- The Spanish looted and destroyed Incan cities and then built churches, government buildings and Spanish style plazas on top of the ruins
- The Spanish established a new capital city, Lima near the coast



# Spanish Settlement

- The Spanish focused their settlement efforts on the western part of the continent
- In 1494 a treaty signed by Spain and Portugal divided South America between the two countries.
- Spain got the right to lands west of the treaty line and Portugal got rights to the lands east of the line.
- The Spanish also focused on settling the west because the Incas lived there and they had lots of gold and silver.
- The west was also agriculturally productive and could provide the Spanish with labor.
- The Spanish colonists took over So. American Indian lands and established a system of huge estates called latifundia and forced the Indian people to work the land
- The Spanish introduced animals and agricultural products like cattle, horses, sheep, sugar cane and wheat from Europe
- The colonists eventually adopted So. American products like beans, chiles, corn, potatoes, and squash and took them to Europe, Asia, and Africa



# Impact on the indigenous people

- The Spanish carried new diseases to So. America that killed millions of indigenous people
- Many more indigenous people died in battles for conquest
- Many indigenous people who labored in mines and on ranches and plantations were worked to death.
- Only a fraction of the original indigenous population remained by the late 1500's



# Spanish influence spreads

- After becoming established in Peru, Spanish influence spread across the altiplano into what is now Bolivia
- The Spanish expanded the Incan gold and silver mines
- The Spanish colonized central Chile in the 1540's and later spread south eastward herding cattle in what is now Paraguay and Argentina
- The indigenous people of eastern Paraguay were called the Guarani- the Spanish used the labor and food production skills of the Guarani to expand settlement of the region.



# Portuguese settlement

- Portuguese settlement began in the 1530's along the eastern coast of what is now Brazil
- Portuguese nobles received royal land grants to set up large plantations
- The first important crop produced on the plantations was brazilwood which was used to produce red and purple dye
- Sugarcane eventually became the key crop
- Cities grew up around the sugar industry like Natal and Salvador
- After the decline of the indigenous population the Portuguese brought in enslaved Africans to work on the plantations.
- The Portuguese spread cattle ranching inland and then discovered rich mineral deposits that contributed to the growth of cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro



# Independence in So. America

- The Spanish colonies of South America gained independence between 1810-1830
- Wars in Europe had weakened Spain and Spanish authorities in So. America fled the colonies after a period of unrest and minor military battles.
- The independence of the United States inspired colonial leaders in So. America
- After the Spanish left several different countries were formed in So. America.
- Most of the boundaries for the new countries were drawn along colonial boundaries.
- Uruguay developed as a buffer state between Argentina and Brazil
- Buffer state- a small country surrounded by two larger more powerful countries.





# Independence for non-Spanish colonies

- European wars forced the Portuguese royal family to flee to Rio de Janeiro in 1808
- After the king returned to Portugal in 1822 Brazil declared its independence
- The British granted British Guiana (Guyana) independence in 1966
- Dutch Guiana became Suriname when it gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975
- French Guiana still remains a part of France



# Revolutions and Coups

- Revolution often changed governments in the new So. American countries.
- The result was mostly that one wealthy ruling family replaced another wealthy ruling family.
- The lives of the people changed little as government changed hands.
- Usually a dictator (one strong ruler) would rule with the support of wealthy colonial families
- Sometimes a group would take over by force in a military coup
- Bolivia has had nearly 200 military coups since gaining independence in 1825



# Ethnic Makeup of So. America

- Countries in South America vary widely in ethnic makeup
- 97% of Argentines are European in ethnicity
- Only 7% of Ecuadorians have European ancestry
- 55% of Bolivia's population is So. American Indian
- 95% of Paraguayans are mestizo
- Asians have immigrated to So. America-in Guyana 1/2 of the population is descended from workers who came from India



# Languages in So. America

- Most people in So. America speak Spanish
- Most Brazilians speak Portuguese
- English, Dutch and French are official languages in Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana
- 10-13 million people in the Andes speak Quechua- the language of the Incas
- Many Paraguayans speak Guarani
- Along the Paraguay/Brazil border the people speak a mix of Spanish and Guarani called Portunal



# Religion and Culture in South America

- The Spanish and Portuguese were Roman Catholic so that religion is widespread in So. America today
- So. Asians and Indonesians in the Guianas have built Hindu temples and Islamic Mosques
- The indigenous people living in the rainforest follow their traditional religions and culture
  - Raise bananas, yams, manioc
  - Hunt with bow and arrow or blow guns and darts
  - Maintain very little contact with the outside world
- On the Venezuelan Llanos ranch hands still live like old west cowboys called Llaneros
- Argentine cowboys called gauchos still wear traditional clothing worn in the 1700's and 1800's