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*Dawn of the American Conquest*

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IMMEDIATELY upon the return of Columbus to Barcelona, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella sent an ambassador to Rome to obtain a grant to them by the Pope of the newly discovered land in the West.

The Pope, Alexander VI, a Spaniard, on May 3, 1493 issued a bull granting to Ferdinand and Isabella all lands discovered or to be discovered on the western ocean and threatened excommunication of any person who should disregard this declaration.

This grant, the Pope announced, was made "out of our pure liberality, infallible knowledge, and plenitude of apostolic power, and by virtue of the authority of omnipotent God granted to us in St. Peter, and of the Vicarship of Jesus Christ which we administer upon the Earth."

To avoid a quarrel between the monarchs of Spain and Portugal, the Pope, on the following day issued a second bull, which decreed that all lands discovered or to be discovered to the west of a meridian a hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands should belong to the Spanish monarchs.

This was not satisfactory to King John of Portugal, and in June, 1494, the treaty of Tordesillas was concluded between Spain and Portugal, stipulating that the Spanish monarchs should have all land discovered west of a straight line drawn from the Arctic pole to the Antarctic pole at a distance of 370 leagues (1,110 miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands, while all land east thereof should belong to the King of Portugal. Owing to the treaty makers' lack of geographical knowledge, this line

ran through the eastern part of Brazil, giving a small part of that country to King John, while Ferdinand and Isabella were assigned the main part on the west; thus arose the expression, "the Brazils."

A proclamation by the Spanish sovereigns in April, 1495, gave to all Spaniards the privilege of voyaging to, and trafficking with, the natives in the newly discovered "Indies," and those who settled there were to be granted land. Columbus protested the proclamation, claiming a monopoly of the land and trade in that region.

Columbus' claim was not justified by the terms of the royal authority granted him. The license to Columbus by Ferdinand and Isabella, dated April 30, 1492, was to sail to the westward on a voyage of discovery. He was granted the title of Admiral and Don; to be perpetual governor and to have all salaries, perquisites and honors. Nothing was contained therein respecting land.

Shortly thereafter, John Cabot, a native of Venice who had lived in Bristol, England, for many years, applied to King Henry VII of England for authority and aid for an expedition to discover, by sailing to the West, a route to the source of the spices and rich silks of the East.

The king offered no financial help, but in March, 1496, issued to Cabot and his three sons a patent for the discovery of new and unknown lands, of which the following is an excerpt:

"Be it known that we give and grant for us and our heirs to our well beloved John Cabot citizen of Venice, to Lewis, Sebastian and Sancius, his sons and to their heirs full leave to sail to all parts with five ships at their own cost and charge to discover islands and continents, and give them license to set up our banners therein, getting to us the rule, title and jurisdiction of the same; yet so that the aforesaid John, his sons and heirs, be holden of all the fruits and profits growing out of such voyage, paying to us in wares or money the one-fifth part of the capital gain so gotten. . . . We give to them and their heirs all the land they shall find."

Financed by Bristol merchants as participants in the prospective profits, Cabot sailed from Bristol in May, 1497, in the ship

"Matthew," with a crew of eighteen. He sighted Newfoundland and adjacent islands, for which, upon return of the voyagers to England, Henry gave Cabot £10, and an annual pension of £20.

Another voyage was made the following year with perhaps as many as six ships. To avoid the Spaniards, whose claim to the Western Hemisphere by the bull of Pope Alexander was recognized by the British monarch, Cabot's explorations were limited to the northeast and west of England. He is variously reported to have sailed as far south as  $38^{\circ} 67'$  (Delaware Capes), or  $38^{\circ}$  (Cape Hatteras), and occasionally to have seen land at a distance, the sovereignty of which he claimed for the English king.

These voyages of Cabot are the basis on which British monarchs subsequently, with force of arms, claimed sovereignty and exclusive ownership of all the land between Florida and the eastern boundary of Maine.

Francis I of France had slight reverence for the bulls of the Pope parceling out the Earth between the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs. Twenty-three years after the discovery he sent to Charles V, King of Spain, asking by what right he and the King of Portugal undertook to monopolize all the land on Earth? Had our first father, Adam, made them his sole heirs? If so, it would be more than proper for them to produce a copy of the will. Meanwhile he should feel at liberty to seize upon all the land he could get.\*

During the sixteenth century numerous voyages of exploration were made to North America from England, France, Portugal and Spain, and during the seventeenth century, from Holland and Sweden. Some of these voyages were under the patronage of monarchs with a view to extending their dominions, while others were made by individual adventurers, or by companies of merchants. All sailed in hope of gaining sudden wealth and fame by obtaining land and a share of the rich commerce which promised soon to be opened to the world, or by finding a northwestern passage to the East Indies. Many of those voyagers from the four countries first named captured Indians to sell as slaves or for proof of their voyage to America.

Of the voyagers: In 1501, Cortereal, under the patronage of the

\*Bernal Diaz

King of Portugal, made, with two ships, a second voyage to Labrador, where he enticed aboard fifty Indians whom he sold as slaves in Portugal. [5]

In 1502 Columbus made his fourth and last voyage to the West Indies, and died four years later.

In 1504 French fishermen discovered the Grand Banks and Cape Breton Island.

In 1506 Jean Denys of Normandy, sailed to and charted the St. Lawrence River, prompting venturesome Frenchmen to engage in the fisheries and fur trades. With the later-arriving English, they introduced to the natives the corruptions of European civilization. [58]

In 1508 Thomas Aubert, a Frenchman, sailed with two vessels 240 miles up the St. Lawrence, and took back to France seven Indians. [49]

In 1513 Ponce de Leon discovered Florida; and from the Isthmus, Balboa sighted the Pacific Ocean.

In 1519 Pineda, a Spaniard, is said to have been the first European to explore the mouth of the Mississippi River; the same year Magellan discovered the strait which bears his name.

In 1520, Alvarez Fagundes, a Portuguese, explored the Gulf of St. Lawrence and was granted land there by the King of Portugal.

In 1520 d'Ayllon, of Spain, obtained from King Charles V a grant of land in the Chesapeake Bay region, and two years afterward made a settlement on the James River eighty-one years before the English settled there. His colony included six hundred men and women and one hundred horses, but upon his death shortly after founding the settlement, it was abandoned.

In 1524, eighty-five years before Henry Hudson, Verrazzano, a Florentine in the service of King Francis I of France, seeking a northwestern passage, sailed into the Hudson River and thence to the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Ten years later Jacques Cartier voyaged from France and erected crosses on Prince Edward and Anticosti Islands. On the basis of these voyages, France claimed all the country between the latitude of Philadelphia and a line north of Montreal.

In 1539, with 9 vessels, 570 men, 223 horses, 300 hogs, and cattle and bloodhounds, DeSoto, a Spaniard, landed presumably

at Tampa Bay. During the following three years he traveled over parts of Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi, and crossed the Mississippi River into Arkansas.

But, as with Pineda twenty years earlier, the sighting of that river added nothing to geographical knowledge. The Mississippi remained unknown to the world until LaSalle, 143 years later, explored and made it known. Coronado, another Spaniard, was exploring the country between Mexico and Kansas at that time and reported seeing cows, which no doubt were buffalo.

On a globe made in Spain in 1540, was traced Chesapeake Bay. That year French fur traders had a fort on the Hudson River below Albany and two years later, a fort on Manhattan Island.

The name North America appeared on a map published in 1522, but not until forty-nine years after the discovery of the West Indies were the names North and South America shown, and the theory that these were a part of the east coast of Asia finally exploded. [37]

The Pope's authority in granting land lost its efficacy after a while; both because he had made, from what did not belong to him, a donation of infinite extent, and because such gifts became injurious restrictions on international commerce and enterprise. Also, with justice, it began to be denied that any nation had the right to exclude all others from vast and undefined regions which it could not itself people nor cultivate. No longer was territory to be claimed merely by gift, or priority of discovery, without such possession being taken of the land as implied a permanent occupancy. The rights or desires of the natives of the newly discovered lands were, of course, not considered by the rival European monarchs. [126]

Henry VIII of England, about 1533 changed his policy, divorcing Catherine, his Spanish wife, and thus divorcing himself from the King of Spain and the Pope of Rome.

For fear of the mighty power of the Spanish and Portuguese navies guarding the South Atlantic routes, British commerce could not be extended to the Far East by way of the Cape of Good Hope. A company was formed in England in 1553 with the corporate name, "The Mysterie and Companie of the Merchant Adventurers for Discoverie of Regions and Dominions,

Islands and Places Unknown," which became known as the Russian or Muscovy Company. Sebastian Cabot was recalled from Spain by Edward VI and made governor of the company for life. It was given a charter similar to the Cabot charter of fifty-seven years previous, but this later charter omitted restrictions on explorations beyond the limit fixed by Pope Alexander.

King Philip II of Spain seemed determined, in 1558, to claim as widespread an area as possible in America, to forestall the monarchs of other European nations. Because of extensive explorations along the North Atlantic coast, all America south of 44° (Kennebec River, Maine) was then generally recognized as Spanish. [17]

In 1570 a Jesuit mission was located at Occoquan, on the Potomac River, about twenty miles below Washington; this was fourteen years before the Raleigh colony located at Roanoke, and thirty-seven years before the English settled at Jamestown. The mission was destroyed by Indians. An exact description of Chesapeake Bay, with Spanish place-names, was written soon after, presumably by one of this expedition. [153]

From these voyages arose the conflicting claims of the sponsoring monarchs to various portions of North America. Repeated fights took place between the British, French, Spaniards, Dutch and Swedes. The land was not claimed for the people of those nations, but for the reigning monarchs personally, or for some incorporated company. More than a hundred years passed between the time of the first discovery and the establishment by Europeans of any permanent settlement north of Florida.

All grants for overseas adventures issued by European monarchs to their subjects, prior to Queen Elizabeth, had been to establish royal sovereignty, or for the avowed purpose of seeking wealth through finding gold, or of extending trade by discovery of a route to the source of the spices. But with the grant by Elizabeth to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1578, desire for profiteering by land ownership made its appearance and a quarter of a century later, English settlement in America began. An excerpt from the grant read:

"Elizabeth by Grace of God, Queen of England; to all people to whom these presents shall come, greeting:

"Know ye that we give and grant to our trustie and well-beloved servant Sir Humphrey Gilbert of Compton, Devonshire, and to his heirs and assigns for ever, free license to discover remote lands not possessed by any Christian prince or people and the same to have and enjoy for ever, paying unto us, our heirs and successors one-fifth of all gold and silver discovered."

He was, furthermore, authorized to expel from the countries discovered all persons there without his permission, and to seize any ship trading there without his license, and to appropriate its cargo.

In a will made prior to embarking on a voyage, Gilbert directed his executor to grant to his widow and sons fifty square miles of the land so discovered, and twenty square miles to each of his daughters, which they might sell or rent to others.

Anyone who took, or promoted the sending of, five settlers to a colony in such discovered territory was to receive two thousand acres, on which they were to pay to Gilbert, or his heirs and assigns, an annual land rent of 20s on each thousand acres. Each of the five settlers was to receive 120 acres on rent. This seems like "counting chickens before they are hatched," and it was the first recorded instance of an annual land rent, or price of any kind, being exacted for the right to hold land across the seas.

Gilbert thus was the forerunner of Sir William Alexander on Long Island; Ferdinando Gorges in Maine; Cecilius Calvert in Maryland; George Carteret in New Jersey and Carolina; and William Penn in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Gilbert, planning a voyage of discovery, solicited expense funds. For every £5 subscribed he would grant land at a perpetual annual land rent of 10s per thousand acres.

He encouraged some of his friends to establish, upon that basis of rent to him, subsidiary proprietories within his prospective domain; among them were Sir Thomas Gerrard and Sir George Peckham—to each of whom he granted 1,500,000 acres to be located between Florida and Cape Breton; and Sir Philip Sidney, who was granted 3,000,000 acres. [112]

Gilbert, with four or five ships and 260 men set sail, and reached Newfoundland in June, 1583. Upon arrival there he proclaimed to the assembled fishermen of several nationalities his

ownership, by royal grant, of all land within six hundred miles. He granted various tracts of land in and about St. John's to the astonished fishermen, to be held by them so long as they paid him rent for the land, the use of which hitherto had been "free to all the children of men." On his homeward voyage his ship, the "Squirrel," foundered, and Gilbert, with all on board, was lost.

[112]

With Gilbert dead and his grant expired, Queen Elizabeth in 1584 reissued it to Gilbert's half-brother, Walter Raleigh. It gave him, his heirs and assigns, land which he might discover, the same to have, hold and enjoy for ever thereafter, reserving to Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, one-fifth part of all gold and silver discovered.

Although Raleigh, now a knight, was aware that Spain claimed all America by virtue of the bull of Pope Alexander ninety-two years previously, he sent a fleet of seven vessels with 120 men across the Atlantic, in command of Sir Richard Grenville and Captain Ralph Lane. Raleigh never was in North America.

Grenville and Lane, arriving on the American coast, unfortunately entered an inlet of Pamlico Sound, North Carolina. This was the least desirable spot for harboring on the entire coast, difficult and generally impossible of ingress or egress by ocean-going vessels. They left settlers on Roanoke Island, who remained one year, and were then returned to England.

Another Raleigh colony of 118 men and women was left at Roanoke in July, 1587, and Virginia Dare was born there. When, a few years afterward, the settlers were sought, they could not be found. Many stone tablets found in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia during recent years and now in possession of Brenau College, Gainesville, Georgia, tell of the wanderings for sixteen years and final death of many of the colonists. The authenticity of these stones is doubted by some persons.

Although the naval power of Spain had long restricted the commerce and maritime adventures of other nations, Spanish ships were often taken by the British and, in later years, by the Dutch. In fact, the popular sport of naval and maritime captains seems, during the 1500's and early 1600's, to have been capturing or sinking the ships of one another.



To clear the ocean of British ships and prevent further capture by them of Spanish commerce and treasure ships from Panama, Spain sent to the English Channel in July, 1588, the mighty Spanish Armada, composed of 132 ships, with 30,000 men, 3,000 cannon and 90 executioners with implements of torture.

To meet them, the British had almost as many ships and, though smaller, these were speedier, with fewer but longer range guns. From the fight and the terrific gale, which the remnant of the fleet encountered in returning home north of Scotland, the Spaniards lost seventy-seven ships and twenty thousand men, while the British, with sixty-eight men killed or wounded, did not lose a vessel.

The final blow to the Spanish navy occurred eight years after the defeat of the Armada, when the British destroyed at Cadiz what remained of the fleet. This victory cleared the North Atlantic of the Spanish navy and, for the first time, made possible uninterrupted European settlement in America.

Numerous other British and French expeditions sailed to the Western Hemisphere during the sixteenth century, but The Netherlands, which had thrown off the yoke of Spain, were soon to be reckoned with.

The Portuguese had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and were profitably importing spices and luxuries from the East Indies. The demand for spices and East Indian products was increasing, and the Dutch decided to make an effort to discover a route to the East.

Several important joint stock companies were formed both in England and The Netherlands at the beginning of the seventeenth century; among them, the East India Company of each country. Some vessels of these companies rounded the Cape of Good Hope, while others were sent to America in search of a northwestern passage to the Far East.

Bartholomew Gosnold, one of Raleigh's captains, with thirty-two men, of whom eight seamen and twenty others were to settle in America, sailed from England in 1602, over the usual course via the Azores. In seven weeks he reached the Kennebec River, Maine. There he found a French-built shallop, but Gosnold is believed to have been the first Englishman ever on that

coast. From there he sailed to, and named Martha's Vineyard, Buzzard's Bay and Cuttyhunk. At the last named place he made a settlement, but soon abandoned it and returned to England.

In 1603 Martin Pring of England, aged twenty-three years, commanded an expedition to Penobscot Bay, Maine.

While the destruction of the Armada, and these several voyages, stimulated preparations for, and made possible, colonization in America, it is doubtful if at the close of Elizabeth's reign, in 1603, a single Englishman remained in North America. [105]

Some French merchants at Rouen formed a company in 1603 for adventuring in America. Henry IV of France granted to a Huguenot member of his suite, Pierre du Gast, Sieur de Monts, all the land in North America between 40° and 46° N. lat. (Philadelphia-Montreal) and created him Lieutenant-General in New France. To assure him an armed garrison, de Monts was permitted to impress for the expedition vagabonds, idlers and masterless men, and all criminals condemned to banishment. [72]

This was three years before James I granted to the shareholders of the Virginia Company all the land between and including Maine and North Carolina, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the South Sea.

With the financial aid of the Marchioness de Guerchevilles, a devout Roman Catholic, wife of the governor of Paris and the first equerry of the king, the expedition of two ships sailed from Havre in April, 1604, taking a Protestant minister, a Catholic priest, and a large number of Jesuits. Samuel de Champlain du Brouage, a French naval officer, known to history as Champlain, was of the party.

One ship reached the present location of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, where a French captain, Rossignol, was discovered to be trading in furs and his ship confiscated. The other ship, in command of de Poutrincourt, arriving later made a landing and set up the French standard at the Island of St. Croix, in Passamaquoddy Bay. [80]

De Poutrincourt also built a fifteen ton pinnace, probably the first American built vessel, and the next summer used it to explore the coast between Maine and Long Island Sound, entering the Penobscot, Kennebunk and Saco Rivers, before returning to Acadia. [80]

By the favor of de Monts, Poutrincourt became possessed of the site of Port Royal (now Annapolis), Nova Scotia. In 1606 it was decided to make a permanent settlement at Port Royal, and no further attempt was made under this charter to plant colonies within the present limits of Maine.

Madame de Guerchevilles bought of de Monts all that had been granted to him in New France except the site of Port Royal. Whereupon Louis XIII, after the assassination of Henry IV in 1610, granted to her all the land in New France between the Great River (St. Lawrence) and Florida. She was the only woman ever possessed of sovereignty in America. [72] Further development under this grant appears in the chapter on New England.

Captain Weymouth, failing in his search for a northwestern passage, sailed from England in 1605, with a company of twenty-seven men. After a ten weeks' voyage he arrived at Monhegan Island, Maine, and explored the Maine coast. To prove that he had been to America he kidnapped five Indians and took them to England.

Ferdinando Gorges, commander of the fort at Plymouth, learned from Weymouth of the great expanse of land in Maine uninhabited by any civilized people, and with Lord Chief-Justice Popham, laid plans to get possession of an extensive part of it. They became in 1606, two of the land grantees under the Virginia grant, from which sprang the London (southern) and Plymouth (northern) companies, and the beginning of permanent English colonization in America.

James I, King of England, claimed by royal edict (as did all succeeding British monarchs prior to the American Revolution), all the land in America between the French settlements in the St. Lawrence region and the Spanish settlement in Florida. Each reigning British monarch considered his American territory personal property to do with as he pleased.