

Chapter 1: Spaniards and Native Americans

Chapter 1, covered from prehistory to 1521; Spaniards and Native Americans. It starts explaining that Mexicans are mestizos because they are products of mixed races. During. The Romans played a big role in the acquisition of Latin and Christianity during the fourth century. Also, the moors made an impact on Iberian culture, agriculture, music and language. Actually the moors were in the Iberian Peninsula for more than 750 years. The chapter also talks about the Amerindians, the people that were living in the New World. They were called indios because Columbus thought that he had arrived to the Indians, it's a derived word. Columbus died with the misconception of his belief that he had reached Asia. The first Mesoamerican Civilizations were the Olmec that were situated in the southern lowlands of Veracruz and Tabasco. Some other civilizations that are mentioned in the book are the Mayan, Toltecs and Aztecs. All these civilizations were polytheistic. Polytheistic means they believe in more than one God. The Aztecs constructed their capital city Tenochtitlan in Lake Texcoco, which is now Mexico City. Even before reading the chapter I knew that the Aztecs use the language Nahuatl and I found it very interesting the names that they come up with and the meaning in Nahuatl. Even though Aztecs were advanced tribes they had to stay nomads until they found their homeland to which their God gave them clues to find the right place. During the conquest of Mexico, the Aztecs thought that Cortes was God Quetzalcoatl because he had mentioned to them that he was going to return and that's when Cortes and the conquistadores arrived. Moctezuma II Xocoyotzin tried to negotiate with the Spaniards by giving them gold but they did not agree so which later led to a battle between Aztecs and Spaniards. A thoughtful event is La Noche Triste (The Sad Night) where a lot of blood ran in the dark night. Mexico has the largest Catholics and also the largest Spanish Speaking population. Before reading this chapter I knew that America got the name because of Americo Vespucci. When I was reading about Christopher Columbus, I realized that last semester I watched a movie that explained all his trajectory to the new world and how he discovered it. Columbus believed that the fabled lands were full of gold, silks, spices and could be reached by sailing westward. When he started his journey he took three ships, La Nina, La Pinta and La Santa Maria. Another concept that I already knew was about how our ancestors went from a nomadic to a sedentary society. An interesting concept that called my attention was reading more about the mesoamerican civilizations. I found it very interesting how they created their amazing pyramids, the stone figures etc. The Spaniards definitely had more chances of victory because of different factors. For example, they had more weapons, cannon, crossbows, arquebuses, and steel armor while the amerindians had only primitive weapons. Another advantage for the Spaniards was the smallpox disease that killed many native

americans. I know that La Malinche was an indian girl who was Cortes interpreter and in history Mexicans see her a traitor of her own patria. I learned different concepts that I did know was the Portuguese initiated the slave trade in West Africa that at the moment created a tremendous financial profits to Europeans however, it's was very unhuman. Another concept that I relearned was that Huitzilopotlic was the God that ordered the Aztecs to look for their new place and even I already knew I feel that everytime I read about it seems it's new for me. All the civilizations had many different Gods that I forget which one is which, however I know that they would make sacrifices in order to get protection from them. After reading this chapter, I was confused with some of the terminology that Gonzalez uses and it made it for me a little hard to understand. I was not aware of the prehistory where he is talking about the Upper Paleolithic period which I believe it's because this is my first time reading about Mexicans history in English. I agree with Gonzalez's last statement that Mexicanos in the United States have a rich heritage and how the culture has a variety of influences. He mentioned that Pablo Neruda once exclaimed the beauty of our language and I totally agree with that and it definitely can become the number one language spoken in the UNited States as well, not just in Latin American and Spanish.

Chapter 2: The Spanish Frontier

Chapter 2, the Spanish Frontier from 1521 to 1821 explains that one of the greatest outcomes of the adventure into the wilderness was democracy. The idea was of Frederick Jackson Turner who was a professor from Wisconsin that entitled a presentation given by him "The significance of the Frontier American History" and his idea was that democracy was born at the frontier. The Spaniards came in search of God, Gold and Glory after their conquest of the Aztecs and destroyed their capital Tenochtitlan. There were two types of natives: the Pueblos and Indios barbaros. In the mid 1540's rich silver lodes were found in Northwest of Mexico. During the Spanish exploration Cabeza de Vaca led the first white men and a black man to what is now the American Southwest. This chapter had different important people that played a role in the exploration such as Francisco Vasquez who was one of the first explorers of North America. The entrada (incursion) was what led to the permanent settlement of New Mexico in 1590s. Some nomadic tribes kept some of the traditions of the native people of the cultural province, some of those tribes included the Apache, the Navajo, and later the Comanche. It also explains that the first missionaries in New Spain were the Franciscans, the Order of Friars

Minor who came to monopolize the religion and to maintain that hegemony on the northern frontier. The Pueblo revolt of 1680 was a result of exploitation and attempted conversion. As the Spaniards extended north it happened first in the Caribbeans shores of North America. During this time, the Spanish exploited the Indians but the church also was trying to give civilization which meant Catholic Religion. The northern colonies consisted of California Missions, New Mexico and Texas. Some of the major trends were ethnocentrism, catholicism. Ethnocentrism is Spanish, like Europeans viewed natives as inferior, and that's something I feel that still happens now in society. From chapter one to chapter two everything started to have sense in how the history developed from the exploration to the settlement. From the reading, I did not know that the last settlement was on the coast of Alta California, however I knew that during this time the father was the patriarch and marriages were arranged. A concept that I knew before reading the chapter was that some Spaniards were discouraged because of the lack of finding the gold that they came searching for. Even though I did not know about the "entrada", I associated with its meaning coming in from outside and as I was reading it made more sense of its meaning. I did not know that the New World named the "crypto Jews" marranos and they gave them the opportunity to escape if they wanted to keep their cultural and religious traditions. There were three issues that frontier life dominated; the Indian People, mestizaje and American contact. I know about mestizaje which refers to the mixture of races. On the other hand, I did not know about the American Contact which refers to the norteamericano, a foreigner. The Indian problem refers to the nomadic Indians that were committing atrocities, kidnapping, rapes. These atrocities were stopped when Teodoro de Croix was made comandante-general,(inspector of chief). We start seeing a different treatment of society, as the lower and upper class are developing. The way Manuel Gonzalez interprets the contact of the Spanish with the Mesoamerican society was in some way legitimate because there were some names that I haven't ever heard about and it seems that he leaves out some people more than others. A fact that caught my eye was the women in New Mexico were "liberated", unlike the american counterparts, hispano women were allowed to smoke, drink, and gamble and American observers considered them lascivious and immoral. Overall, I learned that there were challenges for the Spaniard when they were trying to expand. It was interesting to read about the Spanish frontier and the anglo-american frontier where the Spanish frontier was not as authoritarian and the anglo-american was not as

democratic. The frontier society by 1800 was different from the one that evolved in the Mexican interior during the eighteenth century. The life that was at the frontier was hard not just for men but for women and their children. In Mexican culture the compadrazgo, and the word Don represents loyalty and it's a way to show respect and also it gives power to the person. Compadrazgo in this case refers to members of the upper class and lower class getting married and ameliorating the relations between the segments of society.