Before You Read

In the last section, you read about the competition among European countries for colonies in North America. In this section, you will read how Spanish rule in the Americas affected the Native Americans.

As You Read

Use this diagram to take notes on the effects of Spanish rule in the Americas.

The Spanish and Native Americans

Spanish Colonies in the Americas; Life in Spanish America (pages 71–72)

What did Spain do to establish colonial government?

By 1700, Spain controlled much of the Americas. To set up an effective colonial government, Spain divided its American empire into two provinces. These provinces were named New Spain and Peru. Each province was a viceroyalty ruled by a viceroy in the king’s name. Spain built roads, which helped them control the colonies and transport goods.

Spanish colonists received encomiendas, or grants of Native American labor. The Spanish created large estates, called haciendas, to feed the colonists. Native Americans worked on the haciendas to grow cash crops. The encomienda and hacienda systems put much of the power and land in the hands of a few Spaniards.

The Role of the Church (pages 72–73)

Why did the Catholic Church build missions?

The Catholic Church built missions, or settlements that included a church, a town, and farmlands. The

Terms & Names

viceroyalty A province in Spain’s American empire
encomienda A grant of Native American labor
hacienda Large estate
mission Spanish settlement set up by the Catholic Church
Popé Native American who led a rebellion against the Spanish in 1680
plantation Large farm that raised cash crops
Bartolomé de Las Casas A Spaniard who fought for better treatment of Native Americans
Columbian Exchange A movement of living things such as plants, animals, and diseases, between the Eastern and Western hemispheres
missions tried to convert Native Americans to Christianity. They increased Spanish control over the land. Missionaries helped the Native Americans create a better food supply. They also taught them to read and write as well as other skills. The missionaries often treated the Native Americans like slaves and tried to replace their religions and values. Many Native Americans ran away or rebelled.

2. What was the goal of missions?

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Sugar Plantations Are Developed; The Abuse of Native Americans (pages 73–74)

Who was Bartolomé de Las Casas?
The Spanish forced Native Americans to work on plantations. Plantations were large farms that raised cash crops. The most important cash crop was sugar. It was in great demand in Europe. Since there was little land in Europe to grow it, sugar plantations were started in the Americas.

Most Spaniards treated Native Americans as beasts of burden. One Spaniard who fought for better treatment of Native Americans was Bartolomé de Las Casas. As a result of his efforts, the Spanish king issued laws ordering the freedom of all enslaved Native Americans. Spanish colonists protested the laws. The king then reversed many of the laws.

3. How did Las Casas try to help Native Americans?

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The Columbian Exchange (pages 74–75)

What was the Columbian Exchange?
The arrival of Europeans in the Americas led to the Columbian Exchange. The Columbian Exchange was the movement of living things such as plants, animals, and diseases, between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. One result of this exchange was the transfer of germs and viruses that brought diseases from Europe to the Americas. Native Americans had no natural immunity to the germs and viruses. Millions of Native Americans died from these diseases.

Other effects of the Columbian Exchange were positive. The Spanish brought many plants and animals to the Americas. Many American crops became part of the European diet. As a result, Europe’s population grew rapidly.

4. How did the Columbian Exchange affect the Americas and Europe?

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