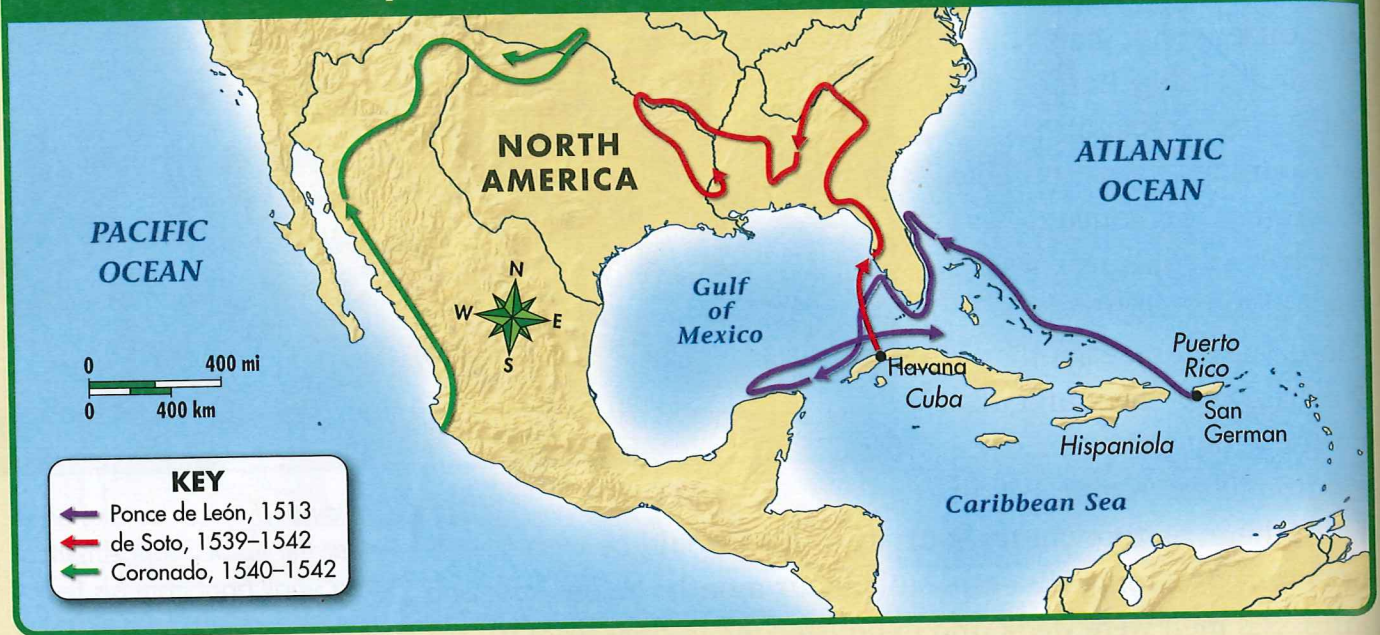


Spanish Exploration, 1513–1542



Exploring the North

Spanish conquistadors explored other parts of North America in their search for riches. Juan Ponce de León (hwahn PAHN suh day LEE awn) settled the island of Puerto Rico in 1508. There he heard myths about a magical spring that could turn old people young. The stories were not true.

Hoping to find this fountain of youth, Ponce de León led an expedition out of Puerto Rico in March 1513. A month later, at Easter time, he landed in present-day Florida. The name he gave this rich and colorful land, *Pescua Florida*, means “Easter flowers” in Spanish.

Ponce de León was probably the first European to visit Florida. Later, he tried to start settlements there. However, Native Americans in the area feared losing their land to the armed newcomers. They attacked, and the settlers left.

Other Spaniards explored Florida, sometimes with terrible results for the native peoples. In 1539, Hernando de Soto sailed to the region with 10 ships and 700 men. De Soto’s expedition spent several years traveling through what is now the southeastern United States. Though he never found treasure, de Soto learned a great deal about the land and people. However, the expedition stole food and other valuable items from Native Americans. The Spanish fought several battles, killing many native peoples.

5. **Write** the answer to each question about the Spanish Explorers.

a. What led Ponce de León to travel north from Puerto Rico?

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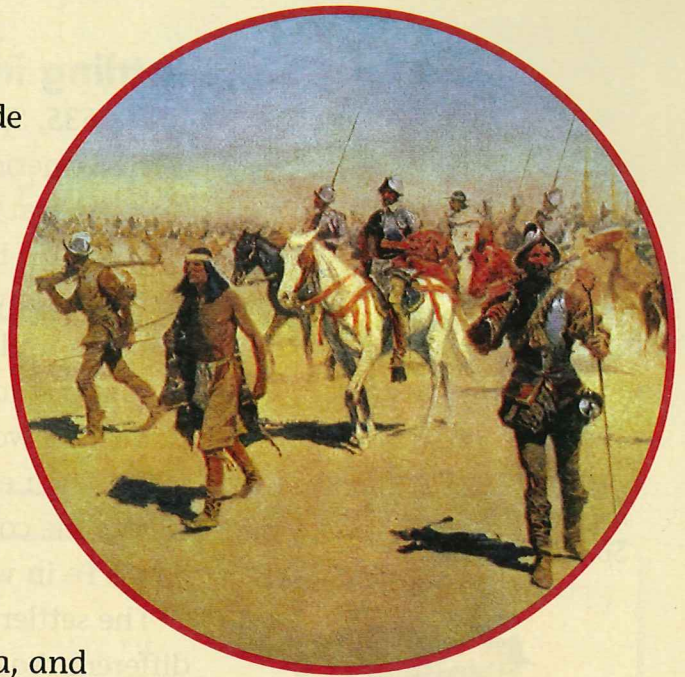
b. Who began an expedition on the Pacific coast?

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Coronado's Expedition

Another Spanish explorer, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, also wanted to search for treasure in the Americas. While serving as a Spanish leader in Mexico, he had heard rumors of a rich kingdom to the north called Cíbola (SEE buh kuh). This mythical land was supposed to be filled with gold, silver, and jewels. Others had looked for it, but none had found it.

Coronado set out to find Cíbola in 1540. Hundreds of Native American soldiers and servants took part in the expedition along with several hundred Spanish soldiers. During their travels through present-day New Mexico, Arizona, and other southwestern states, Coronado claimed land for Spain. He also attacked and killed many native peoples. Like de Soto, Coronado found no treasure, and he returned to Mexico very disappointed. His men did discover several important landmarks in the Southwest. For example, one scouting party became the first Europeans to see the Grand Canyon in Arizona.



Francisco Coronado leads hundreds of Spanish and Native American soldiers in search of a mythical land filled with riches.

6.  **Draw Conclusions** Write a conclusion based on the facts.

Measuring Spanish Accomplishments

Fact

Ponce de León explored Florida, but his settlements in the new land failed.

Fact

De Soto never found treasure, but he learned much about the people and land in the Southeast.

Fact

Coronado opened the Southwest to the Spaniards, but he never found great riches.

Conclusion

The Spanish explorers discovered the Southwest, but they did not find the mythical land of Cíbola.

Settling in the Americas

In 1535, Spain established the colony of New Spain in North America. A **colony** is a settlement or area far from the country that rules it. New Spain became an important part of the Spanish Empire. Over time, New Spain would expand to include many islands in the Caribbean, as well as large parts of North and South America.

Towns sprang up throughout New Spain. In 1565, St. Augustine was founded in what is today Florida. It is the oldest town established by Europeans in the United States. Across the continent, in 1610, Spanish leaders founded Santa Fe in what is now New Mexico.

The settlers who arrived in New Spain came for several different reasons. Spanish officials moved to the colony to set up a government. Roman Catholic priests came to teach Native Americans about Christianity. Other colonists came to start farms and businesses or to search for gold and silver.

The Spanish takeover of New Spain brought harsh changes to Native Americans who had lived in the area for hundreds of years. Many native people were killed battling the conquistadors. Millions more died from diseases, such as smallpox, brought unknowingly to the Americas by the Spaniards. Native peoples who survived often lost their lands and property. Spanish settlers forced many of the Native Americans to work against their will in mines and on farms in New Spain.

This church, built on the Caribbean island of Cuba in the 1500s, reflects building styles from Spain. The bell tower and its arches are Spanish in design.

