**Spanish Exploration**

Each of the three major European nations had different reasons for exploring North American and the Southeast. **Spanish interest can be summed up with the three “G’s:” God, Glory, and Gold**. Specifically, Spain wanted to convert Native Americans to Christianity, the conquistadors were looking for personal fortune and fame, and the Spanish Monarchy wanted to bring as much gold into their treasury as possible.

**Hernando De Soto**

European contact had a dramatic impact on the Native American cultures in Georgia. Hernando De Soto, the **first European explorer in Georgia, was directly responsible for starving and killing a large number Native Americans** in his quest for **God, Gold and Glory** (1539-1542). Later, **the diseases** he and his men carried with them, such as **influenza and smallpox, caused massive population losses** and the end of the Mississippian culture. Ironically, the Spanish who chronicled the Mississippian chiefdoms provided us with the only written account of this culture.

Hernando De Soto is credited with introducing pigs to the Southeast, his body was “buried” in the Mississippi in order to prevent the Natives from finding out that he had actually died, since they believed he was a god, and that the only way we know about his expedition today is based on the journals of three of his soldiers.

**Spanish Missions**

After **De Soto’s failed expedition (he did not find any gold and died on the journey**), both the Spanish and the French explored the area that became Georgia, and both attempted to create colonies which failed nonetheless. However, **the most successful Spanish colonization attempt was during the “Mission Period”** from 1568-1684. During this period the **Spanish set up several missions (churches) on both the Barrier Islands as well as in the interior of the state.** **Some of the sites included Cumberland Island, St. Catherine’s Island, and the Okefenokee Swamp**. Many were also established near future Georgia cities, such as Lumber City and Valdosta. **The primary reason for establishing these missions was to convert the natives to Christianity (Catholicism). The mission system was used to bring Native American cultures into the Spanish society**. For instance, unmarried Indian males were required to work for the Spanish in Saint Augustine for several months out of the year. Once again, the close contact with the Spanish brought disease and death to many Native American villages. **By the mid- 1600’s, the Spanish mission system was crumbling due to the deaths of large numbers of natives, along with Indian raids often supported by the British**. The last Spanish Mission in Georgia was destroyed by a pirate attack in 1684.

**French Exploration**

Though the French did explore southeastern North America, their **primary focus was on the fur trade and their sphere of influence was in Louisiana, the Ohio Valley, and Canada**. However, the French had connections to the future Southeastern United States and the state of Georgia. For example, French sailors such as Jean Ribault sailed off the coastline of Georgia and South Carolina in 1562. In addition, **French Protestants came to the “New World” in search of religious freedom**. These settlers, called Hugenots, moved to South Carolina in the 1680’s, and crossed into Georgia in the 1730’s.

**English Exploration**

**The English were interested in permanent colonization in North America due to the economic policy of mercantilism. In a mercantilist economy, a country wanted to export more than it imported**. Often, the “mother country” sought out colonies that could produce raw materials which would then be sent back for production. The colonies would then purchase the finished products. **Other reasons for English settlement in the New World included “religious freedom” and the opportunity for colonist to begin “a new life.”**

**The first permanent English colony was Jamestown, Virginia**, which was established in 1607. Though initially unsuccessful, the colony began to thrive after John Rolfe successfully developed a new form of tobacco. Based on the success of Virginia and the other northern and middle colonies, **new southeastern English colonies were created and encouraged to produce agricultural products such as rice, tobacco, and indigo for England**. These colonies included Maryland (1632), Carolina (1663: Divided in to North and South Carolina in 1712) and Georgia (1733).

**Mercantilism: put out more than you take in-gets $$$**

**Mother country gets colonies to have raw materials to make stuff to put out to buy then colonies buy back the merchandise.**

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| European Explorers | Reasons for Exploration? | Where did they explore? | Were they successful? |
| Spanish Explorers |  |  |  |
| French Explorers |  |  |  |
| English Explorers |  |  |  |