

The Fall of Two Empires -Section 1

1. Who was the Aztec emperor?
2. Which modern country did the Aztec's live in?
3. What was the name of the main Aztec city?
4. What was the name of the main Aztec God?
5. How did Montezuma treat the "strangers" on the coast and why?
6. Who was the Spanish conquistador who arrived in Mexico?
7. What does *conquistador* mean?
8. What type of disease did Cortes have?
9. Why did Cortes leave Cuba for Mexico?
10. What Native American princess helped Cortes?
11. What did Cortes claim in April of 1519?
12. How did Cortes plan to control the Aztecs?
13. Other than guns, what big weapon did the Spanish have? (Hint: You could say they gave it to the Aztecs.)
14. What became the new name of Tenochtitlan?
15. Which Spanish conquistador attacked the Incas?
16. Why did Pizarro believe the stories about great wealth in South America?
17. Who was the Incan ruler?
18. How much gold did the Incas pay to free their ruler?
19. What did Pizarro do with the Incan ruler after the ransom was paid?
20. Why did the Incas hold out longer than the Aztecs?

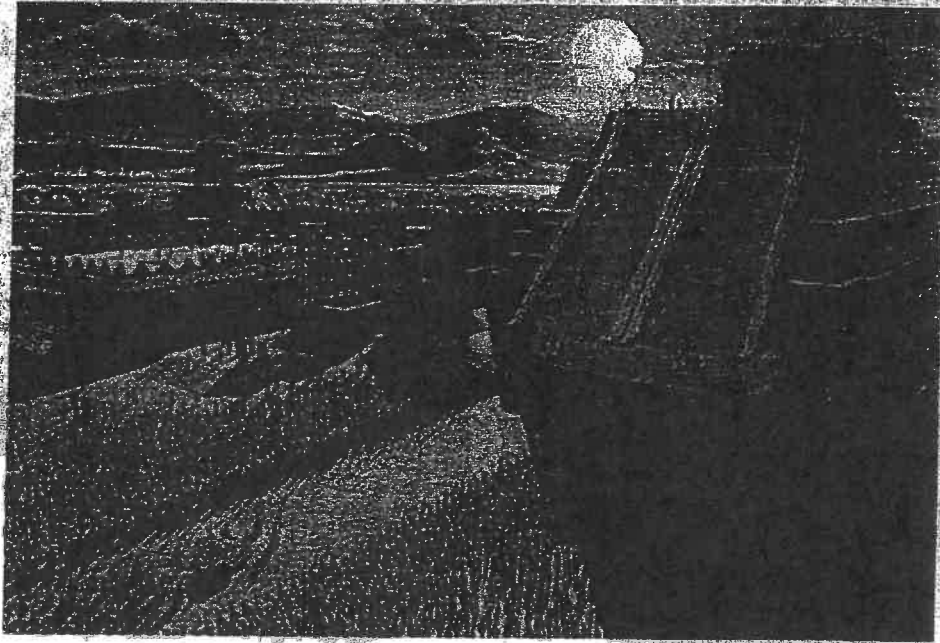
Must Be In Complete Sentences!

STATE OF TEXAS

County of ... State of Texas
I, the undersigned, Clerk of the County of ... State of Texas, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the County of ... State of Texas.

Witness my hand and the seal of the County of ... State of Texas, this ... day of ... 19...
Clerk of the County of ... State of Texas

AZTECS AND INCAS



Montezuma decided to treat the Spaniards and their leader as if they were gods. He sent five men to the coast with gifts and an invitation to visit him at Tenochtitlán. His gifts included golden masks, inlaid with turquoise, headdresses made of brightly colored feathers, gold jewelry, and shields.

Cortés the Conqueror

When the Aztec messengers arrived at the coast, they presented Montezuma's gifts to the leader of the pale-faced strangers. He was Hernán Cortés (kawr•TEHZ). Instead of a god, Cortés was a Spanish conquistador, a Spanish term for *conqueror*.

Cortés was not pleased with Montezuma's messengers. He looked at the gifts with scorn and asked, "And is this all? Is this your gift of welcome?" He placed Montezuma's messengers in chains and pointed a cannon nearby to frighten them. He told the messengers, "I and my friends suffer from a disease of the heart which can be cured only by gold."

Cortés Arrives in Mexico

Cortés had been in the Caribbean since 1511 managing his estate. As a reward for helping Spain conquer Cuba, he had received a large land grant on the island. Like other Spaniards, Cortés had heard tales about magnificent cities of gold on the mainland of North America across the Gulf of Mexico. He was eager to find those riches.

In 1518 the governor of Spain's colony in Cuba asked Cortés to set up a post on the Mexican mainland to claim land, look for gold, and begin trading with the Native Americans. Sensing the ambitions of Cortés, the governor changed his mind at the last minute. Cortés decided to disobey the governor and go anyway.

He had outfitted 11 ships for his trip and enlisted the help of 600 Spanish soldiers

and 200 Cubans. He loaded the ships with horses, cannons, muskets, and specially trained war dogs dressed in their own armor.

Malintzin the Interpreter

Cortés had crossed the Gulf of Mexico and landed on the Yucatán Peninsula by March of 1519. He spent a few weeks sailing along the coast and learning as much as he could from the Maya. Although the great Mayan civilization was gone, Maya descendants still lived and farmed in the region. One Mayan chieftain introduced Cortés to a Native American princess named Malintzin.

As a child, Malintzin had been sold into slavery during a time of famine. She spoke both Nahuatl (NAH•WAH•tuhl), the language of the Aztec, and the Mayan language. Before long, she also learned Spanish. Malintzin became Cortés's interpreter, translating Native American languages into Spanish.

Like many people in the coastal areas, Malintzin hated the Aztec. She told Cortés about their wealth and their belief in the pale-skinned god Quetzalcoatl.

Cortés Marches Inland

By April, Cortés decided to journey inland toward the Aztec capital. Before leaving the coast, however, he founded a colony and named it Veracruz. In so doing, he claimed Mexico for Spain and the Roman Catholic Church. Sensing that the march would be dangerous and difficult, Cortés also destroyed his ships. He wanted to prevent his soldiers from retreating to Cuba.

Meanwhile, Montezuma became more and more fearful. He sent sacks of gold to the approaching Spaniards, hoping to satisfy them and convince them to turn back. The gifts, however, only made the Spaniards more eager to reach the Aztec capital and its riches.

★ Cortés in Tenochtitlán

Cortés arrived at the entrance to Tenochtitlán on November 8, 1519. There Montezuma, perhaps still uncertain about who the Spaniards were, gave him a grand welcome. That same day he gave the Spaniards their own quarters in the palace and presented them with many precious gifts. Finally, speaking through Malintzin, he offered Cortés the Aztec empire to command.

Cortés sensed that Montezuma feared him. He also saw that he and his troops were in a dangerous position. Montezuma could be leading him into a trap. Aztec warriors were everywhere. If they drew up the bridges leading into the city, the Spaniards would have no escape.

Cortés decided that the best way to control the Aztec would be to seize Montezuma and hold him captive. Montezuma remained a prisoner of the Spaniards in his own palace for months.

Meanwhile, the Spaniards ransacked all the gold or other treasures they could find in the capital. They piled gold jewelry and other items into large heaps and started

fires to melt them into gold bars. The bars were easier to carry away. Today the gold that Cortés took from the Aztec would be worth more than \$8 million.

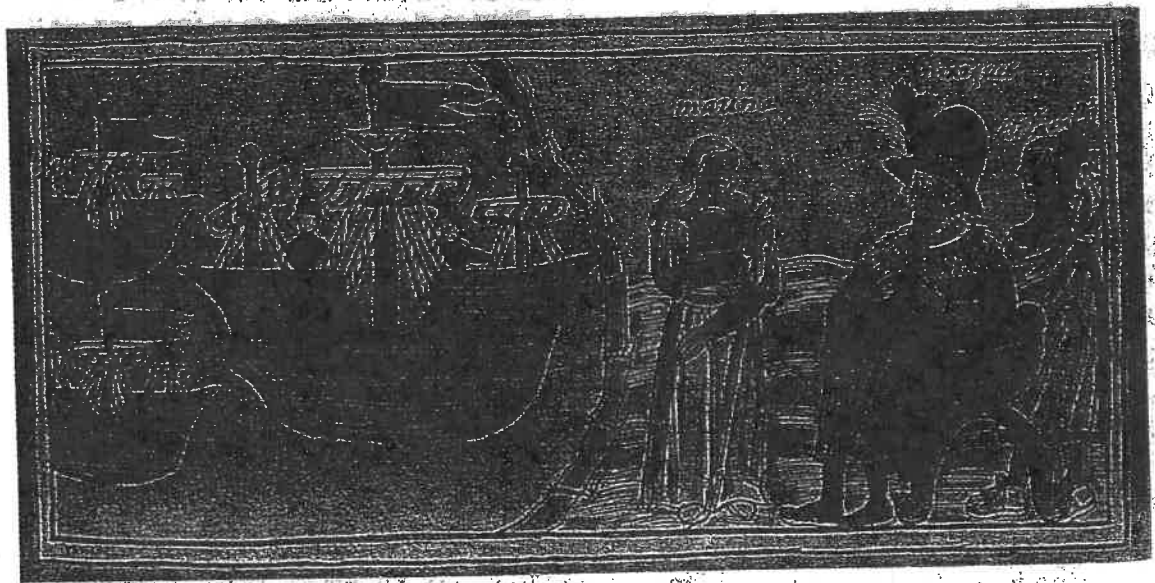
A New Spanish Ally: Disease

During the months that Montezuma was held captive by the Spaniards, he became unpopular among the Aztec people. He was killed by a stone thrown by an Aztec during a revolt against the Spanish.

After Montezuma's death, however, the Aztec united and drove the Spaniards from Tenochtitlán. Fleeing Spaniards—many slowed down with the weight of the treasure they carried—were hunted down and killed.

The Aztec had little chance to enjoy their victory, however. One Aztec account told that:

“After the Spaniards had left the city of Mexico, and before they had made any preparations to attack us again, there came amongst us a great sickness, a general plague.”



Picturing
History

▲ INTERPRETER FOR CORTÉS Malintzin's people, the Maya, lived on the east coast of Mexico. What colony did Cortés find there?

Linking Past and Present

Spanish Treasure Ships

Throughout the 1500s and 1600s, hundreds of Spanish treasure ships carried tons of American gold, silver, and jewels to Spain.

Then

Lost at Sea

In 1622 the Spanish ship *Atocha* departed Cuba for Spain. The unlucky crew soon realized that they had sailed into

an Atlantic hurricane. The *Atocha* ran into a jagged reef and sank to the ocean floor, taking its treasure and more than 100 crew members with it.



▶ SPANISH GALLEON

Now

Treasure Hunt

In 1985, modern treasure hunter and underwater diver Mel Fisher found the *Atocha's* wooden hull covered with sand off the coast of the Florida Keys. Still buried with it were more than 3,000 emeralds, 30 tons of silver, and hundreds of gold bars, chains, and coins. Some estimate that the treasure is worth \$300 million to \$1 billion.



The "great sickness" the Aztec wrote about was probably smallpox or measles. These diseases were deadly because the Aztec had never been exposed to them before. The diseases brought by the Spaniards turned into a deadly weapon.

The Final Conquest

Cortés returned to Tenochtitlán 10 months later. With mounted soldiers in the lead, thousands of Native Americans and at least 1,000 Spanish soldiers attacked the capital. The Aztec fought on foot without horses or guns. Their stone knives, copper shields, and cloth armor were no match for the iron weapons and heavy cannons of the Spaniards.

The Aztec surrendered to Cortés on August 13, 1521. It had taken only two years for the Spaniards to destroy the mighty Aztec empire. Tenochtitlán lay in ruins and the golden treasures of the Aztec now belonged to Cortés and to Spain.

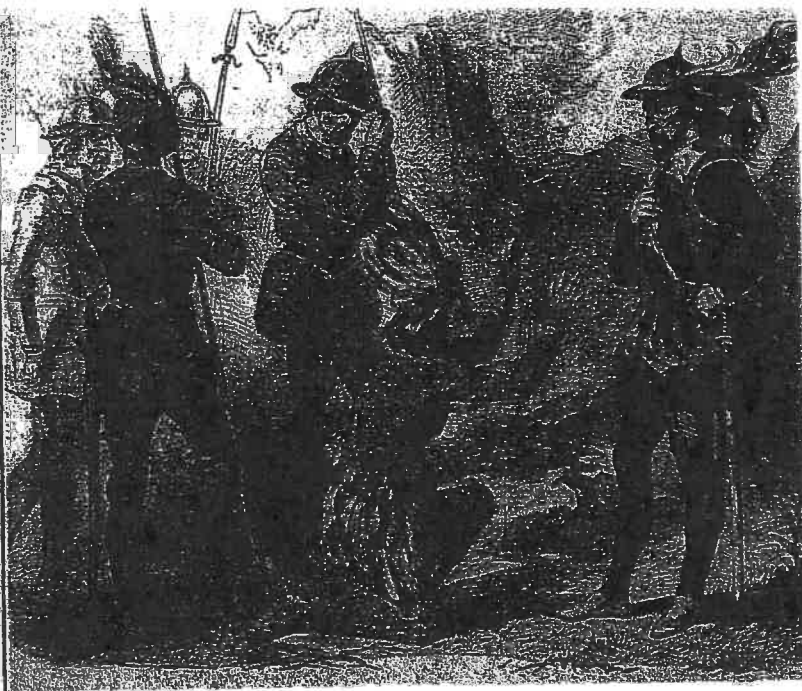
Cortés ordered that a new city be built on the site of Tenochtitlán. It would be the new Spanish capital, renamed Mexico City.

★ Pizarro and the Inca

Thirteen years after the conquest of the Aztec, the Inca also faced the strength of the Spaniards. The leader of the attack against the Inca was the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro.

Like Cortés, Pizarro had heard many stories of the great wealth in the lands of South America. He made several expeditions along the coast to look for the treasure. It was not until 1526, however, when one of his ships spotted an Incan trading boat loaded with silver and gold, that he believed the stories were true.

Pizarro ordered his men to capture the ship. He trained some of the Incan crew to be interpreters, then planned his assault on the Incan empire.



**Picturing
History**

▲ **ATAHUALPA BEFORE PIZARRO** The Incan ruler Atahualpa was captured by Pizarro. What later happened to Atahualpa?

A Broken Promise

In 1531 Pizarro led 180 soldiers across the Isthmus of Panama and then sailed southward along the west coast of South America. When Pizarro's small Spanish army landed in the coastal city of Cajamarca, it learned that the Incan ruler Atahualpa (AH•tuh•WAHL•puh) was resting after a bitter civil war with his half-brother. After killing thousands of Inca, the Spaniards marched to Atahualpa's summer home. Like Cortés among the Aztec, Pizarro thought the best way to

control the Inca was through their emperor. He took Atahualpa captive.

— To gain their leader's freedom, the Inca were ordered to pay a ransom. They collected enough gold and silver to fill the room where their emperor was kept prisoner. At today's prices the roomful of precious metals would be worth more than \$65 million. Pizarro promised to free Atahualpa when the ransom was paid, but instead had the Incan leader killed.

The Fall of an Empire

Pizarro then sent soldiers up the mountains to capture the Incan capital of Cuzco. By 1535 most of the Incan empire had fallen. Pizarro set up his capital in Lima, Peru. From there he sent expeditions to take control of most of the rest of South America outside Portuguese-held Brazil. The Portuguese had held claim to Brazil since 1494.

Unlike the Aztec, who fell to Cortés in only 2 years, parts of the Incan empire held out against the Spaniards for 40 years. The Inca's system of rule encouraged loyalty among its many subjects and the empire was much better unified than the Aztec Empire.

The Spaniards found far more gold in South America than in Mexico. The former Incan empire became Spain's richest colony.

★ **SECTION 1 REVIEW** ★

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Checking for Understanding

1. Identify Montezuma, Hernán Cortés, Malintzin, Francisco Pizarro, Atahualpa.
2. Define conquistador, Nahuatl.
3. What weapons did the Spanish have that the Aztec and Inca did not have?
4. Why was the city of Lima important to Pizarro?

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** Why do you think Montezuma believed that Cortés was the god Quetzalcoatl?

ACTIVITY

6. Imagine you are an Aztec messenger warning the Inca that the Spanish are coming to attack them. Draw a series of five pictures telling them what to expect.