

Silver and Fur Trade

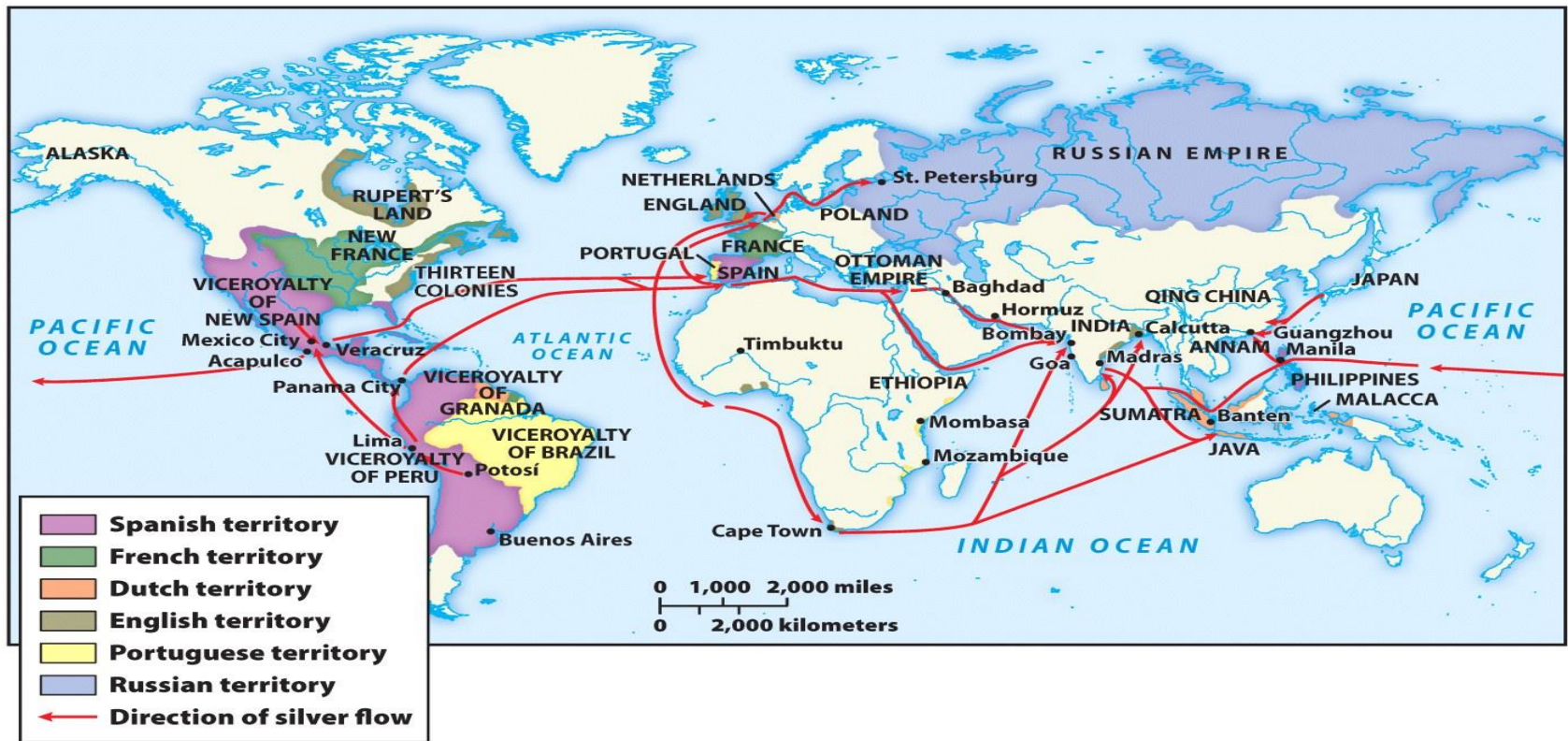
1450-1750

AP World History Notes

Chapter 15

“Global Commerce”

Silver and Global Commerce



Map 15.2 The Global Silver Trade
Chapter 15, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, First Edition
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- Silver = 1st major commodity to be exchanged on a truly global scale

Silver and Global Commerce

- Mid-1500s = rich silver deposits discovered in Bolivia and Japan
- Spanish America = produced about 85% of the world's silver
- Major link in silver trade = Philippines
 - Silver = mined in Bolivia → sent to Acapulco in Mexico where it was loaded onto cargo ships → then shipped to the Philippines



Silver and Global Commerce



Visual Source 15.1 Tea and Porcelain in Europe
Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY
Chapter 15, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, First Edition
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Chinese porcelain in Europe

- Most of the world's silver supply = ended up in China
- Foreigners could now purchase in-demand Chinese goods with silver
 - Many merchants flocked to Manila (capital of the Philippines) to sell Chinese goods there for silver
- Furthermore → in 1570s = China issued new single tax that all people were required to pay in silver
 - Meant that more goods needed to be sold by them = more silver in China = taxes could be paid

Silver and Global Commerce

- Besides Chinese goods, silver was also used to purchase:
 - Spices in Southeast Asia
 - Slaves from Africa



Silver: Impact on Spain

POSITIVES

- Brought wealth and power to Spain
- Rulers could now pursue military and political ambitions in Spain and the Americas
- Supported the Spanish Empire

NEGATIVES

- Over time → too much silver flowed into Spain → caused inflation = value of silver went down and prices went up
- When the value of silver dropped worldwide (early 1600s), Spain began to weaken and lose power

Silver and Japan

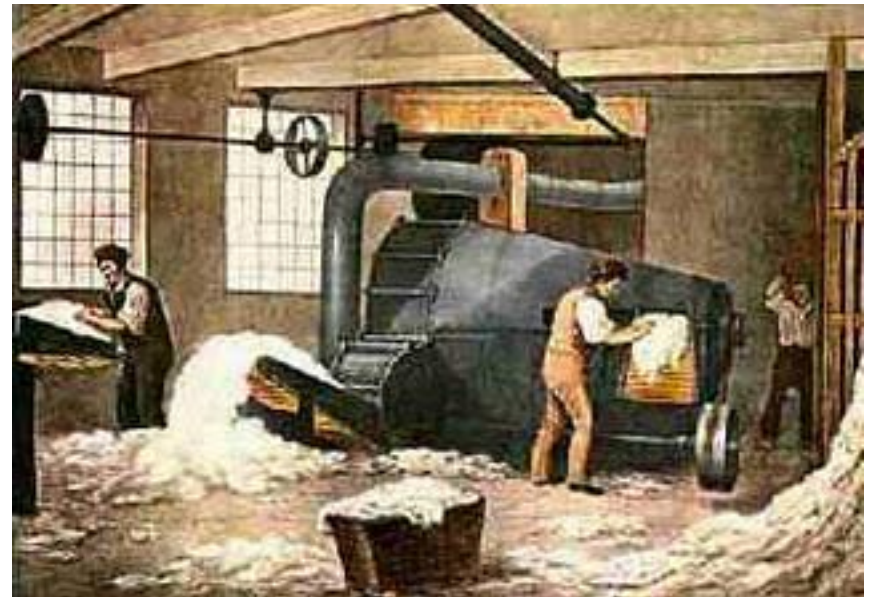


Procession of Japanese shoguns in 17th century

- Japan put its silver-generated profits to good use:
 - Shoguns used it to defeat rival feudal lords and unify Japan
 - Shoguns worked with merchant class to develop a market-based economy
 - Invested in agricultural and industrial enterprises
 - Protected and renewed Japan's dwindling forests

Silver and Japan

- Simultaneously = millions of families (in 18th century) took steps to have fewer children
- Results for Japan = slowing of population growth; prevention of ecological crisis; bustling, commercialized economy
 - Laid the groundwork for Japan's Industrial Revolution in the 19th century



Silver and China



Chinese women making silk

- Impact of silver on China's economy:
 - Led to more commercialization
 - In order to pay silver tax, people had to sell *something* → led to economic specialization
 - Ex: Selling just rice or just silk
- Impact on China's environment:
 - More land = used to grow cash crops
 - Result = loss of about 1/2 of China's forests

Fur in Global Commerce

- By 1500 = diminished supply of fur-bearing animals in Europe due to population growth and agricultural expansion
- “Little Ice Age” = period of cooling temperatures and harsh winters at the time
- Result of these conditions = high demand for furs
- Result of this demand = pushed prices for furs higher = incentive for traders to sell it



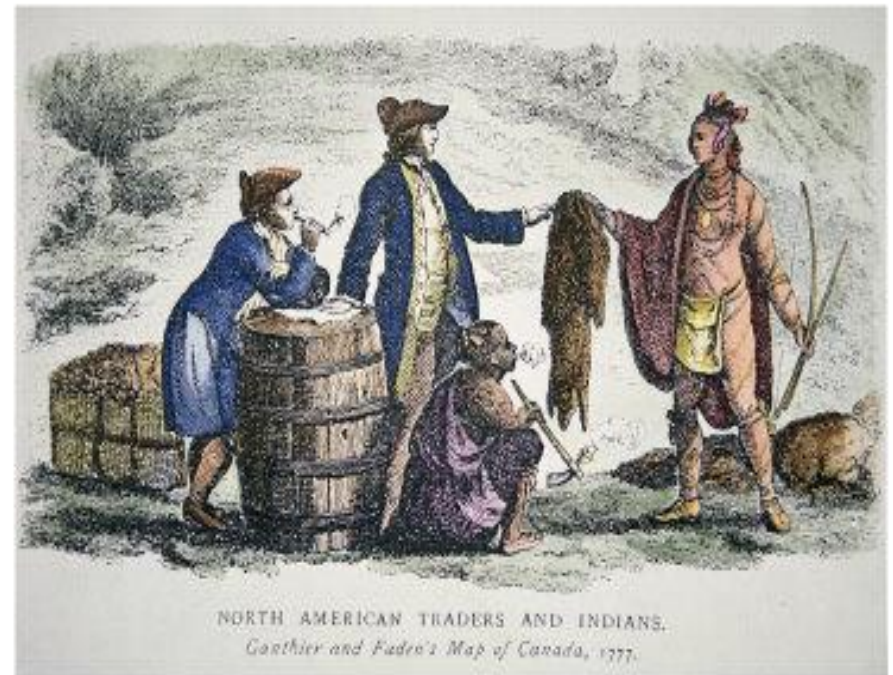
Fur Trade in North America



- Fur trade = very competitive
- French = in St. Lawrence Valley, around Great Lakes, and along Mississippi River
- British = Hudson Bay region and along Atlantic coast
- Dutch = along Hudson River (present-day New York)

Fur Trade in North America

- Actual hunting, trapping, processing, and transporting of animals/furs = done by Native Americans
 - Brought them to European coastal settlements or trading posts
 - Europeans then sold the furs abroad
- In return for the furs, Europeans gave Native Americans: guns, blankets, metal tools, rum, and brandy



Fur Trade in North America: Impact on Native Americans

POSITIVES

- Received items of real value (ex: copper pots, metal axes, etc.)
- Strengthened their relationships with neighboring peoples
- Enhance authority of chiefs → could give their followers gifts
- Protected them (for a while) from enslavement, extermination, or displacement

NEGATIVES

- Exposure to European diseases
- Competition between tribes for furs = resulted in conflict and warfare
- Often got caught up in European rivalries/conflicts
- Became dependent on European goods; never learned to make them themselves
- Alcohol-related problems resulting from influx of rum and brandy

Siberian Fur Trade



Transporting furs across Siberia

- Siberia (in Russia) = major source of furs for Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire
- Brought wealth to the Russian state and many private merchants, trappers, and hunters

Siberian Fur Trade

- Consequences for native Siberians:
 - Exposure to new diseases
 - Became dependent on Russian goods
 - Settlers encroached on their native lands
 - Depletion of many species of fur-bearing animals



A Russian Sable

Fur Trade

North America vs. Siberia

NORTH AMERICA

- Several European nations competing
- Obtained furs using negotiations and trade with Native Americans

SIBERIA

- Only Russians and native Siberians getting furs
- Obtaining furs themselves; no middlemen
- Russian authorities imposed a tax (payable in furs) on all Siberian men between 18 and 50 → took hostages (who were sometimes executed) if taxes not paid