PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK ME, AS AN HISTORIAN, "WHAT IS HISTORY FOR?"

PARTICULARLY, SINCE IT'S WHAT I CALL A CRIPPLED DISCIPLINE THAT CAN'T GET AT THE TRUTH.

WE'LL NEVER HAVE A COMPLETE AND CLEAR RECORD OF THE HUMAN PAST AND WE CAN'T GET INTO THE MINDS OF OUR HISTORICAL CHARACTERS.

WE CAN'T RESURRECT THEM FROM THE GRAVE AND PUT THEM ON THE FREUDIAN COUCH AND PSYCHOANALYZE THEM.

EVEN IF THEY LEAVE MEMOIRS THOSE MEMOIRS ARE LIABLE TO BE SLANTED AND FAULTED.

AND THE HISTORIAN HIMSELF IS A BRAINWASHER, IN A SENSE.

IN THAT HE OR SHE HAS HIS OWN POINT OF VIEW AND PERSPECTIVE.

YET, GIVEN ALL THESE LIMITATIONS I WOULD ARGUE THAT HISTORY IS UTTERLY ESSENTIAL ESSENTIAL TO MAKING US HUMAN.

IT SEPARATES US FROM THE ANIMALS.

HUMAN BEINGS INTERACT WITH THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND OUT OF THAT INTERACTION COMES A CULTURE.

AND WHAT HISTORY IS OUR MEMORY OF THAT CULTURE.

IT PUTS US IN TOUCH WITH OUR PAST.

BY PUTTING US IN TOUCH WITH OUR PAST.

OUR PAST CEASELESSLY INFLUENCES US AND EVEN HAUNTS US.

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN BECAUSE IT IS INCONCEIVABLE.

IT IS A PANORAMA
OF AMERICAN EVENTS

LIVES, IDEAS, VOICES.

A TEAM OF HISTORIANS CAME TOGETHER TO THINK THROUGH AND SHAPE THE SERIES.

...STAND UP FOR FREEDOM TOGETHER.

I'D LIKE TO START OUT TALKING A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE WE'RE TRYING TO DO-- IT'S A "BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA."

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? SO IT WON'T BE A GRAB BAG OF EVERYTHING...

IN FASHIONING THIS SERIES WE WENT OUT AND TRIED TO GET THE BEST HISTORIANS WE COULD.

I THINK THE TELLING DETAILS...

WE PICKED PEOPLE WHO ARE GREAT STORYTELLERS, SCHOLARS.

TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE PAST IS IMPLICITLY TO KNOW WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE PRESENT.

PAULINE MAIER, FOR EXAMPLE, IS OUR REVOLUTIONARY HISTORIAN.

AND SHE'S ABSOLUTELY AT THE TOP OF HER GAME.

SHE'S A BRILLIANT HISTORIAN.. AND SHE BRINGS TO LIFE THE WHOLE PERIOD

OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, THE CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD.

BUT IT'S THE DISTINCTION OF THE PAST, I THINK THAT MAKES THE STORY INTERESTING.

THIS "BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA" IS NOT PRETENDING

THAT BIOGRAPHY IS ANY MORE NEUTRAL AND OBJECTIVE

AND DETACHED THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

I MEAN, WE'RE MAKING CHOICES, WE'RE MAKING SELECTIONS.

WE HAVE LOU MASUR WHO'S AN INTELLECTUAL HISTORIAN
BUT ALSO DOES SOCIAL HISTORY. AND LOU HAS A WONDERFUL FEEL FOR THE 19th CENTURY AND HE’S DONE SOME BRILLIANT LECTURES, I THINK, FOR US.

AND LOU HAS A WONDERFUL FEEL FOR THE 19th CENTURY AND HE’S DONE SOME BRILLIANT LECTURES, I THINK, FOR US.

ON THE REFORM PERIOD DURING THE JACKSONIAN ERA.

AS EMERSON SAID, "HISTORY RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD IS BIOGRAPHY."

AND SO IT REALLY COMES DOWN ALSO TO OUR DEFINITION OF HISTORY.

MY STUDENTS ARE ALWAYS ENRAPTURED.

WITH THE NOTION OF SUCCESS.

BUT FAILURES ARE OFTEN FAR MORE INTERESTING AND FAR MORE REVEALING.

WALDO MARTIN EXPLAINS, I THINK, COGENTLY, CLEARLY.

THE MOTIVATING CAUSES FOR THE CIVIL WAR.

WE BRING WALDO BACK AGAIN AND HE TRACES WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SOUTH AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

AND TAKES A LOOK AT IT FROM A LONG-RANGE PERSPECTIVE.

WE HAVE DOUGLAS BRINKLEY.

IT SEEMS TO ME TO SAY WE'RE LOOKING AT THE STORY OF AMERICA IN A NARRATIVE FASHION THAT LIKE A BIOGRAPHY GOES CHRONOLOGICALLY, BUT ALSO AS BEST BIOGRAPHIES DO.

TALK ABOUT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AMERICA...

HE HAS A SPECIAL LOVE FOR THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

AND HAS DONE A REAL NICE LECTURE FOR US ON THE PROGRESSIVE PERIOD

ON TEDDY ROOSEVELT AND WOODROW WILSON.

PEOPLE HE'S BOTH, YOU KNOW, ACUTELY FAMILIAR WITH.

DOUG'S ALSO DONE THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

AS THOMAS WOLFE SAID "THERE ARE A BILLION FORMS OF AMERICA."

AND JUST WHEN YOU THINK.... YOU'RE COMING TO SOME NEW REALIZATION.

YOU REALIZE, WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW
ABOUT THE SHOSHONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE SIOUX.

Woman: I REALLY LIKE STUPID QUESTIONS. AND I HAD THREE STUPID QUESTIONS THAT I CAME TO THIS PROJECT WITH.

WHERE IS AMERICA? WHO COUNTS AS AMERICAN? AND WHAT COUNTS AS AMERICAN?

OUR WESTERN HISTORIAN IS VIRGINIA SHARFF.

SHE'S BEEN GREAT. SHE PINCH-HITS ALL OVER THE PLACE AND HAS HELPED US SO MUCH. SHE ASKS THE BIG QUESTIONS. SHE FILLS IN THE SPACES FOR US. SHE'S DONE A TERRIFIC LECTURE ON THE AMERICAN WEST.

THE FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT HISTORY IS THAT THE PEOPLE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT WEREN'T ALWAYS DEAD, THEY WERE ALIVE.

YOU KNOW, A LOT OF THEM... AT ANY ONE POINT IN TIME WE'RE THINKING OF THE PAST, THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.

YOU'RE SITTING HERE YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO NEXT...

THE PAST IS INFORMED BY THE PAST AND SHAPED BY THE PAST.

A LONG TIME AGO MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME-- HE WAS A SLOVAK IMMIGRANT WHO HAD NO EDUCATION.

HE SAID, "ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN.

I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN.

THAT'S WHAT HISTORY MEANS TO ME.

TODAY, ON THE BIOGRAPHY OF AMERICA "NEW WORLD ENCOUNTERS."
WE BEGIN WITH THAT RAREST OF THINGS:

A WORLD-TRANSFORMING EVENT.

IT'S 2:00 IN THE MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1492.

THREE SPANISH SHIPS HAD BEEN AT SEA FOR 33 DAYS.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HAS GAMBLED THAT BY SAILING WEST INTO THE UNKNOWN ATLANTIC

HE'LL REACH ASIA, OPENING A BLUE-WATER TRADE ROUTE TO CHINA

THEN THE WORLD'S GREATEST CIVILIZATION.

COLUMBUS IS ON THE FLAGSHIP SANTA MARIA

WHEN A LOOKOUT ON THE PINTA SPOTS A WHITE CLIFF IN THE MOONLIGHT AND SHOUTS, "TIERRA!"

TIERRA!"

THAT MOMENT WAS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW AGE OF WORLD HISTORY.

A KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSON IN 1492 KNEW THE EARTH WAS ROUND.

BUT THAT PERSON'S WORLD HAD ONLY THREE CONTINENTS-- EUROPE, ASIA AND AFRICA-- AND THEY WERE LOCATED AROUND THE LANDLOCKED MEDITERRANEAN.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS CHANGED THAT FOREVER.

COLUMBUS WENT TO HIS DEATH CONVINCED HE'D LANDED SOMEWHERE IN ASIA, BUT OTHERS SUSPECTED HE'D FOUND WHAT SHAKESPEARE CALLED "A BRAVE NEW WORLD."

THE VIKINGS HAD LANDED IN NORTH AMERICA MORE THAN 500 YEARS BEFORE COLUMBUS.

BUT HADN'T FOLLOWED UP THEIR DISCOVERY.

SPAIN DID, AND ITS DISCOVERY SET LOOSE CREATIVE ENERGIES

ALL OVER EUROPE.

COLUMBUS'S LANDFALL IN THE BAHAMAS BEGAN ONE OF THE MOST MOMENTOUS CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN HISTORY.

IT REUNITED TWO WORLDS-- TWO PEOPLES WHO'D LIVED APART FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

AND IT CREATED THE MODERN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY.

TRADE AND ENTERPRISE EXPANDED
BEYOND ALL RECKONING

156 01:07:16:18 01:07:19:23 AND EVEN THE WORLD'S FOOD WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME.

157 01:07:19:25 01:07:23:06 IN 1492, NO ONE IN IRELAND HAD EVER TASTED A POTATO.

158 01:07:23:08 01:07:26:00 AND ITALIANS ATE PASTA WITHOUT TOMATO SAUCE.

159 01:07:26:02 01:07:28:19 NOR HAD THE INDIANS COLUMBUS ENCOUNTERED EVER TASTED AN ONION, A PEACH, A PEAR, AN ORANGE OR A BANANA.

160 01:07:28:21 01:07:32:19 OR ANYTHING MADE WITH RICE, WHEAT OR SUGAR.

161 01:07:32:21 01:07:35:09 OR THEY'D NEVER SEEN A HORSE, A COW, A PIG, A GOAT, A CHICKEN OR EVEN A HONEYBEE.

162 01:07:35:11 01:07:39:05 EUROPEANS ENRICHED THIS CULTURAL EXCHANGE BY TAKING BACK WITH THEM A HOST OF PLANTS BESIDES THE TOMATO AND THE WHITE POTATO.

163 01:07:39:07 01:07:41:06 THEY TOOK BACK SQUASH AND COCOA, BEANS AND CORN.

164 01:07:41:08 01:07:45:01 AVOCADOS AND PINEAPPLES, CHILI PEPPERS AND PEANUTS.

165 01:07:45:03 01:07:52:12 AS WELL AS TWO NON-FOOD PLANTS, TOBACCO AND COTTON WHICH WOULD SUSTAIN WEALTHY SLAVE SYSTEMS IN THE NEW WORLD.

166 01:07:52:14 01:08:00:18 COLUMBUS'S VOYAGES, AS WE'LL SEE, CHANGED THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

167 01:07:52:16 01:08:06:08 AND SOMETIMES CATASTROPHIC WAYS.

168 01:08:00:20 01:08:16:05 BUT THE POINT I WANT TO MAKE HERE IS THAT THE ORIGINATOR OF WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE WASN'T THE REAL DISCOVERER OF AMERICA.

169 01:08:02:16 01:08:14:11 AND THAT AMERICAN HISTORY DOESN'T BEGIN IN 1492.

170 01:08:08:00 01:08:18:09 IT BEGINS IN THE ICE AGE, APPROXIMATELY 30,000 YEARS AGO.

171 01:08:08:09 01:08:21:12 WE MAY NEVER KNOW PRECISELY WHEN OUR HISTORY BEGINS.

172 01:08:18:09 01:08:25:12 OR WHO WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE TO STEP FOOT ON THE LAND WE CALL AMERICA.

173 01:08:21:14 01:08:36:18 OF ORIGINAL DISCOVERERS WERE STONE AGE HUNTING BANDS FROM ASIA.

174 01:08:25:14 01:08:40:06 THEY MIGRATED FROM SIBERIA.
TO ALASKA ACROSS A LAND BRIDGE

186 01:08:48:22 01:08:50:29  THAT APPEARED
WHEN MASSIVE SHEETS OF ICE
187 01:08:51:01 01:08:53:16  CAPTURED THE SEA WATER
OF THE BERING STRAIT
188 01:08:53:18 01:08:56:19  EXPOSING THE DRY OCEAN FLOOR.
189 01:08:56:21 01:08:59:20  THESE EARLY AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS
WERE SEARCHING FOR GAME
190 01:08:59:22 01:09:02:05  AND THEIR SEARCH TOOK
THEM THROUGH CORRIDORS
191 01:09:02:07 01:09:04:09  CREATED BY TOWERING WALLS
OF BLUE ICE.
192 01:09:04:11 01:09:06:09  OTHERS MAY HAVE ENTERED
THE CONTINENT
193 01:09:06:11 01:09:09:25  OVER THE ICE FLOES FROM THE EAST
IN AN ALMOST UNFATHOMABLE FEAT
194 01:09:09:27 01:09:12:23  OF ENDURANCE
AND NAVIGATIONAL SKILL.
195 01:09:12:25 01:09:15:04  STILL THE CONTINENT WAS VAST
AND UNPOPULATED
196 01:09:15:06 01:09:17:03  PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL
OF THESE PEOPLE.
197 01:09:17:05 01:09:18:26  SO WHEREVER THEY MIGRATED
198 01:09:18:28 01:09:22:02  WHEN THEY GOT THERE,
THEY WERE UTTERLY ALONE.
199 01:09:22:04 01:09:25:08  THEN ALMOST 10,000 YEARS LATER
THE ICE MELTED
200 01:09:25:10 01:09:28:20  THE SEA ROSE UP AGAIN,
THE LAND BRIDGE DISAPPEARED
201 01:09:28:22 01:09:32:04  AND THEY WERE CUT OFF
FROM THE REST OF THE PLANET.
202 01:09:32:06 01:09:33:18  FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS
203 01:09:33:20 01:09:36:23  THESE STONE AGE HUNTING BANDS
LIVED NOMADIC LIVES.
204 01:09:36:25 01:09:38:12  BUT ABOUT 9,000 YEARS AGO
205 01:09:38:14 01:09:40:29  PEOPLE IN THE HIGHLANDS
OF CENTRAL AMERICA
206 01:09:41:01 01:09:43:13  BEGAN CULTIVATING
BEANS, SQUASH AND CORN
207 01:09:43:15 01:09:45:19  AND THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.
208 01:09:45:21 01:09:47:29  THESE FIRST
PART-TIME FARMERS BEGAN
209 01:09:48:01 01:09:50:11  OVER A PERIOD
OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS
210 01:09:50:13 01:09:52:08  TO LIVE CLOSE TO THEIR FIELDS
211 01:09:52:10 01:09:55:23  AND THEY STARTED MAKING POTTERY
TO STORE THEIR SURPLUS.
212 01:09:55:25 01:09:59:14  VILLAGE LIFE WAS BORN,
HUMANS BEGAN TO SETTLE DOWN
213 01:09:59:16 01:10:01:18  AND CORN BECAME THE FOUNDATION
214 01:10:01:20 01:10:04:03  OF A NEW, MORE COMPLEX
CIVILIZATION.
215 01:10:04:05 01:10:07:18  TWO OF THE GREATEST OF THESE
CORN-BASED CIVILIZATIONS GREW UP
216 01:10:07:20 01:10:10:00  BEFORE EUROPE EMERGED
FROM THE DARK AGES.
CHACO CANYON, IN NORTHWESTERN NEW MEXICO, was a center of culture for the Anasazi Indians. They harnessed scarce water with earthen dams and irrigation systems to turn the desert floor into a garden of squash and corn. Their architects built magnificent multi-storied apartments and 400 miles of arrow-straight roads to surrounding communities. When Chaco Canyon was abandoned, some of its master builders migrated 100 miles north to Mesa Verde. There, in huge caves in the canyon walls, they built communal houses so fantastic that the place has been called "The Disneyland of American Archaeology." Today, these are both active archaeological sites, but we may never know why the Anasazi left.

In Cahokia, a sprawling urban cluster just across the Mississippi River from present-day St. Louis, the pharaoh-like rulers of Cahokia lived atop colossal, man-made earthen mounds, one of them with a base larger than any Egyptian pyramid. By the 13th century, Cahokia had a population of perhaps 30,000 people and a trading network encompassing the entire Mississippi River valley. Today, these are both active archaeological sites, but we may never know why the Anasazi left.
THEY ENCOUNTERED WHAT WAS LEFT OF MISSISSIPPIAN CIVILIZATION.

THE LANDS OCCUPIED BY THESE PEOPLE AND FURTHER WEST, THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ANASAZI WERE AREAS OF NORTH AMERICA THAT SPAIN FIRST PENETRATED.

THE INVADERS HAD DECISIVE ADVANTAGES OVER THOSE THEY INVADED. NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS STILL LIVED IN THE STONE AGE AND HAD ONLY ONE FOUR-LEGGED DOMESTIC ANIMAL, THE DOG WHILE THE SPANISH CONQUISTADORS HAD ARMOR POWERFUL STEEL SWORDS, GUNS AND EXPLOSIVES.

AND THEY HAD THE HORSE, WHICH GAVE THEM TREMENDOUS MOBILITY AND TERRIFIED THE INDIANS WHO HAD NEVER SEEN SUCH A FEARSOME BEAST.

THEY ALSO HAD TRAINED WAR DOGS-- GREYHOUNDS THAT COULD CHEW THE FACE OFF A MAN.

BUT THE SPANIARD'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS WERE INVISIBLE KILLERS THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM IN THE BLOOD AND BREATH-- INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

BECAUSE THEY'D BEEN ISOLATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD THE INDIANS HAD NO IMMUNITY TO EUROPEAN DISEASES SUCH AS SMALLPOX, DIPHTHERIA, INFuenZA AND CHOLERA.

COMMON CHILDHOOD DISEASES LIKE MEASLES AND MUMPS HIT THEM WITH FEROCIOUS FORCE.

SMALLPOX ALONE COULD WIPE OUT AN ENTIRE TRIBE THE INDIANS HAD NO IMMUNITY TO EUROPEAN DISEASES.

SUCH AS SMALLPOX, DIPHTHERIA, INFuenZA AND CHOLERA.

COMMON CHILDHOOD DISEASES LIKE MEASLES AND MUMPS HIT THEM WITH FEROCIOUS FORCE.

SMALLPOX ALONE COULD WIPE OUT AN ENTIRE TRIBE

IN ONE HARROWING VISITATION PARTLY BECAUSE IT STRUCK ALMOST EVERYONE AT THE SAME TIME

LEAVING NO ONE TO TEND TO THE VICTIMS.

IN 1520 80 YEARS LATER THERE WERE ABOUT 1.3 MILLION

LARGELY BECAUSE OF EUROPEAN DISEASES.
WAS OFF BY 10,000 MILES.

BUT THAT SPECTACULAR ERROR GAVE COLUMBUS THE CONFIDENCE TO SET OUT FOR CHINA AND JAPAN.

LUCKILY, TWO HUGE CONTINENTS BLOCKED HIS WAY. OR HE AND HIS MEN WOULD HAVE DIED HORRIBLY ON THE OPEN SEA. COLUMBUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BAD GEOGRAPHER BUT HE WAS A CRACK MARINER.

LUCKILY, TWO HUGE CONTINENTS BLOCKED HIS WAY. OR HE AND HIS MEN WOULD HAVE DIED HORRIBLY ON THE OPEN SEA. COLUMBUS MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BAD GEOGRAPHER BUT HE WAS A CRACK MARINER. 

THE CLOCKWISE MOTION OF THE WINDS AND CURRENTS THAT WOULD TAKE HIM, AND EVERY SMART SAILOR AFTER HIM TO AND FROM THE AMERICA. THE RENAISSANCE WRITERS AND ARTISTS CELEBRATED INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT, AND COLUMBUS'S FIRST VOYAGE WAS ONE OF THE GREAT MARITIME FEATS OF ANY AGE. THE POINT HERE IS THAT COLUMBUS WAS TOO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TRADE AND NAVIGATIONAL SCIENCE TO PLACE HIM WITH MEDIEVAL-LIKE KNIGHTS OF THE RECONQUISTA. IF YOU WANT THE PROTOTYPICAL CONQUISTADOR YOUR MAN ISN'T COLUMBUS, IT'S HERNANDO DE SOTO. SOTO, AS HE WAS KNOWN IN HIS TIME, BECAME THE FIRST EUROPEAN TO PENETRATE FAR INTO THE INTERIOR OF NORTH AMERICA. FROM 1539 TO 1543, HIS ARMY OF 600 MEN TRAVELED 4,000 MILES, TWICE THE DISTANCE LATER COVERED BY LEWIS AND CLARK. SOTO WAS A TOUGHENED VETERAN OF THE SPANISH CONQUEST IN PERU. HE'D COME TO THE AMERICAS AT THE AGE OF 14. THE SON OF AN IMPOVERISHED SQUIRE AND RETURNED TO SPAIN A RICH MAN WITH A REPUTATION FOR KILLING INDIANS FOR SPORT. BUT HE WANTED MORE--MORE GOLD, MORE GLORY. SO HE GOT A COMMISSION FROM
THE CROWN TO ORGANIZE A VOYAGE INTO UNKNOWN NORTH AMERICA.

HIS AIM: TO FIND ANOTHER INCA-STYLE EMPIRE.

AFTER LANDING ON THE WEST COAST OF FLORIDA, HE MOVED NORTH TRAVELING IN PRINCELY SPLENDOR.

HIS RETINUE INCLUDED A STEWARD, TWO TOASTMASTERS, A BUTLER, A PASTRY COOK, TWO FALCONERS, EIGHT GROOMS, FIVE MUSICIANS, TWO JUGGLERS AND INNUMERABLE BEARERS AND BODYGUARDS.

HE PASSED THROUGH TEN FUTURE STATES OF THE UNITED STATES.

HE WENT UP INTO THE CAROLINAS, ACROSS THE APPALACHIANS AND DOWN THROUGH PARTS OF TENNESSEE ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI COMING ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEAR MEMPHIS.

HE PASSED THROUGH TEN FUTURE STATES OF THE UNITED STATES.

HE WENT UP INTO THE CAROLINAS, ACROSS THE APPALACHIANS AND DOWN THROUGH PARTS OF TENNESSEE ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI COMING ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NEAR MEMPHIS.

HE CAME DOWN WITH A FEVER AND DIED.

FREED FROM HIS OBSESSION HIS MEN DUMPED HIS BODY INTO THE RIVER AND MADE IT BACK TO MEXICO ON SHIPS MADE OF LOGS.

THE LOCAL INDIANS IN HOT PURSUIT.

THERE'S A SPLENDID PAINTING OF DE SOTO BY WILLIAM HENRY POWELL.

IN A PANEL IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE U.S. CAPITOL.

SOTO IS ON A WHITE STALLION AND HE'S DECKED OUT IN SATIN AND GLISTENING ARMOR.

AS ARE HIS SOLDIERS AND LIEUTENANTS.

AS THEY RIDE TOWARD THE GREAT RIVER SOTO HAS DISCOVERED.

THE NEAR-NAKED INDIANS ARE IN SUPPLICATING POSITIONS IN FEAR AND AWE.

IN THE CONQUERING CAPTAIN.

THE PAINTING IS A BEAUTIFUL LIE.

FIRST OF ALL

SOTO WASN'T THE FIRST EUROPEAN.
TO DISCOVER THE MISSISSIPPI.

THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER WAS FIRST CITED IN 1519 BY ANOTHER SPANISH EXPLORER, ALVAREZ DE PIÑEDA.

AND WHEN SOTO AND HIS ARMY REACHED THE MISSISSIPPI THEY DIDN'T LOOK ANYTHING LIKE THE WAY WE SEE THEM.

BY SICKNESS AND INDIAN ATTACKS.

ALMOST HALF OF HIS MEN

AND THE WALKING WOUNDED WERE CARRYING THE MORTALLY WOUNDED.

A FEW MEN STILL WORE EUROPEAN CLOTHES,

BUT MOST WERE DRESSED LIKE INDIANS.

AND THEY SAW THE BIG RIVER IN FRONT OF THEM.

NOT AS SOME MAGNIFICENT DISCOVERY.

BUT AS ONE MORE DAMN OBSTACLE TO SURMOUNT.

THE FIGHTING IN THE SOUTHEAST HAD BEEN INCREDIBLY FEROUS.

EVERYWHERE DE SOTO WENT HE DEMANDED FOOD, CLOTHING AND WOMEN FOR HIS SEX-STARVED MEN.

WHEN THREATS AND DIPLOMACY DIDN'T WORK

HE WENT ON HAIR-RAISING KILLING SPIRES.

BUT THE INDIANS FOUGHT BACK WITH SUICIDAL DETERMINATION;

THEY WEREN'T THE SUPPLICANTS IN POWELL'S PAINTINGS.

IN THE WALLED CITY OF MAVILA, IN PRESENT-DAY ALABAMA

ATAHACHI WOMEN FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH THEIR MEN

IN WHAT WAS ONE OF THE BLOODIEST ENCOUNTERS IN FIVE CENTURIES OF WARFARE BETWEEN EUROPEANS AND INDIANS.

SOTO'S INVASION LED TO THE DESTRUCTION

OF MOST OF WHAT WAS LEFT OF MISSISSIPPAN CULTURE.

HAD SOTO BEEN MORE INTERESTED
In settlement than conquest

The rich agricultural lands he passed through might have been claimed permanently by Spain.

And today they'd be speaking Spanish all over Dixie.

As Soto was pushing beyond the Mississippi another Spanish explorer, Francisco Vazquez de Coronado was moving across the continent from the other direction.

At one point, without knowing it the two explorers came within 300 miles of each other. Coronado headed out from Mexico City with an enormous expeditionary force looking for cities of silver.

But when he entered the lands of the Pueblo Indians— the descendants of the Anasazi— he found nothing but towns of adobe and stone.

Here he met resistance but crushed it quickly and pushed on, sending exploring parties all over the Southwest across Arizona to the Grand Canyon and beyond, into California.

Then, hearing from an Indian guide that there was a rich city, called Quivera, that he found were the beehive-shaped huts of the primitive Wichita Indians and an endless sea of grass filled with buffalo.

Coronado saw land and people of no value but for those with a sense of irony this is a rich moment. The Indians of the Plains who stood staring in wonderment at Coronado's mounted warriors were seeing for the first time the animal that would eventually
REVOLUTIONIZE THEIR LIVES.

434 01:20:03:13 01:20:06:02 DISGUSTED BY THESE PEOPLE WHO DRANK BUFFALO BLOOD

435 01:20:06:04 01:20:08:00 CORONADO TURNED BACK TOWARD MEXICO

436 01:20:08:02 01:20:10:09 BUT NOT BEFORE ORDERING THE STRANGULATION

437 01:20:10:11 01:20:11:22 OF HIS INDIAN GUIDE.

438 01:20:11:24 01:20:14:21 FOR ALMOST 60 YEARS, ONLY A HANDFUL OF WHITE MEN

439 01:20:14:23 01:20:16:27 VENTURED BACK INTO PUEBLO COUNTRY.

440 01:20:16:29 01:20:20:00 THEN, IN 1598, NEW RUMORS REACHED MEXICO CITY

441 01:20:20:02 01:20:22:10 OF RICH MINES ALONG THE RIO GRANDE

442 01:20:22:12 01:20:25:10 AND JUAN DE OÑATE WAS SENT FROM NEW MEXICO

443 01:20:25:12 01:20:28:15 WITH AN EXPEDITION OF SOLDIERS AND SETTLERS.


446 01:20:34:16 01:20:38:18 A PUEBLO BUILT ON TOP A SPECTACULAR, 400-FOOT-HIGH MESA.

447 01:20:38:20 01:20:41:24 WHEN SPANISH TROOPS STOPPED THERE AND DEMANDED FOOD

448 01:20:41:26 01:20:44:23 THE WARRIORS ATTACKED THEM, KILLING 16 SOLDIERS

449 01:20:44:25 01:20:46:13 INCLUDING OÑATE’S NEPHEW.

450 01:20:46:15 01:20:48:27 OÑATE RETALIATED WITH CHILLING BRUTALITY.


452 01:20:51:27 01:20:54:16 UP THE ROCK FACE AT THE REAR OF THE MESA

453 01:20:54:18 01:20:56:16 TURNED IT ON THE TOWN AND BLASTED AWAY.

454 01:20:56:18 01:20:58:03 IN THREE DAYS OF FIGHTING

455 01:20:58:05 01:21:01:17 THE SPANISH LEVELED ACOMA AND KILLED 800 OF ITS PEOPLE.

456 01:21:01:19 01:21:04:03 THEN OÑATE STAGED A PUBLIC MUTATION--

457 01:21:04:05 01:21:07:08 CHOPPING ONE FOOT OFF EVERY SURVIVING YOUNG MAN.

458 01:21:07:10 01:21:11:26 BUT OÑATE WAS AS UNSUCCESSFUL AS CORONADO IN FINDING RICH MINES

459 01:21:11:28 01:21:14:17 AND WAS SOON RECALLED TO MEXICO CITY.

460 01:21:14:19 01:21:18:03 AT THIS POINT, TWO YEARS BEFORE THE ENGLISH FOUNDED JAMESTOWN

461 01:21:18:05 01:21:20:17 THE CROWN WAS ABOUT TO ABANDON NEW MEXICO.


463 01:21:23:06 01:21:26:25 FOR MISSIONARY TERRITORY; SO
BECAUSE POPE DEMANDED AN END
TO ALL THINGS SPANISH, AND
THE PUEBLOS HAD COME TO DEPEND
ON SPANISH FARMING TECHNOLOGY
AND ON SPANISH GOATS, SHEEP,
CATTLE, PIGS AND HORSES.
SO WHEN DIEGO DE VARGAS MARCHED
INTO NEW MEXICO TO RECONQUER IT
IT WAS AN EASIER TASK
THAN HE’D IMAGINED.
THERE WAS ONE UPRISING;
THEN THERE WERE NO MORE.
THE SPANISH SETTLERS AND
SOLDIERS HELPED KEEP THE PEACE
BY REDUCING THEIR DEMANDS
FOR INDIAN LABOR
AND BY MARRYING INDIAN WIVES.
AND THE FRANCISCANS LEARNED
TO TOLERATE
PUEBLO RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.
IN THE 17th CENTURY
NEW MEXICO, AND THE FORTIFIED
TOWN OF ST. AUGUSTINE
ON THE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA
WAS SPAIN’S
ONLY NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES.
BOTH SERVED AS BUFFER STATES--
IN FLORIDA, AGAINST THE ENGLISH
IN GEORGIA AND THE CAROLINAS
AND IN NEW MEXICO,
AGAINST THE FRENCH
WHO FROM THEIR BASE IN CANADA
HAD CLAIMED
THE ENTIRE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.
FRANCE’S NORTH AMERICAN EMPIRE,
HOWEVER
WAS VASTLY DIFFERENT FROM
SPAIN’S IN PURPOSE AND PRACTICE.
THE FRENCH WERE IN NORTH AMERICA
PRIMARILY FOR COMMERCE
NOT COLONIZATION.
THEY WANTED TO CONTROL
THE LUCRATIVE FUR TRADE
AND TO GET FURS, THEY MADE
ALLIANCES WITH THE INDIANS.
THEY DIDN’T WANT
INDIAN LANDS OR LABOR.
AND THE JESUIT MISSIONARIES
WERE AMAZINGLY TOLERANT
IN DEALING WITH THE INDIANS.
AS WERE FRENCH FUR TRADERS,
WHO MARRIED INTO INDIAN FAMILIES
AND LIVED WITH NATIVES
AND MIXED-BLOODS
AT FRONTIER TRADING POSTS.
BUT WE'RE GETTING AHEAD
OF OURSELVES.

IN 1600, SPAIN WAS
THE ONLY EUROPEAN NATION
WITH COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA.

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN DID
NOT YET ESTABLISH
A FRENCH SETTLEMENT AT QUEBEC.

AND PROTESTANT ENGLAND,
UNDER QUEEN ELIZABETH
HAD TRIED AND FAILED TO PLANT
A COLONY ON ROANOKE ISLAND
OFF THE COAST OF NORTH CAROLINA.

THE SETTLERS ON ROANOKE ISLAND
HAD MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED
AROUND 1590.
TO THIS DAY, NO ONE KNOWS
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

AT THIS POINT, ENGLAND WAS
AT WAR WITH SPAIN
AND MIGHT HAVE POSTPONED
COLONIZATION FOR SOME TIME
HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR TWO
OF THE GREATEST SPIN-DOCTORS
BOTH NAMED RICHARD HAKLUYT.
THE HAKLUYTS BELIEVED
ENGLAND'S FUTURE GREATNESS
WOULD BE BASED
ON OVERSEAS COLONIES.
IN A SERIES OF MASSIVE BOOKS
AND REPORTS
THEY IMPLORED THE CROWN
TO EXPEL THE SPANISH PAPISTS
FROM NORTH AMERICA, CONVERT
THE INDIANS TO PROTESTANTISM
AND BEGIN TRADING WITH THEM.
THE HAKLUYTS DESCRIBED
AN AMERICA
WHERE THE EARTH WOULD PRODUCE
THINGS IN ABUNDANCE
AS IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN,
"WITHOUT TOIL OR LABOR."
THOSE ARE THEIR WORDS.
WHEN A COMPANY OF GENTLEMEN
ADVENTURERS
WAS FINALLY SENT
TO VIRGINIA IN 1607
THEY APPARENTLY TOOK
THE COUSINS AT THEIR WORD
AND DIED IN APPALLING NUMBERS.
BUT THE STRUGGLING COLONY
WAS SAVED-- BUT JUST BARELY--
BY THE SOLDIERLY DISCIPLINE
OF THE SWASHBUCKLING CAPTAIN
WE'LL MEET IN OUR NEXT LECTURE.

JOHN SMITH'S MISSION WAS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT, IN AMERICA

THE 17th CENTURY WOULD BE ENGLAND'S CENTURY.