

Florida Studies Weekly

State History



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GRADE 4

Ships Full of Spanish Missionaries Come to Florida!

Why on Earth would a country like Spain spend a whole bunch of money, and go to all the trouble of sailing across the sea with captains and soldiers, just for the chance to colonize a little old peninsula (land surrounded by water on three sides) like Florida? That's a pretty good question. But the answer is not so simple. First of all, in the 16th century, Florida wasn't just the little "sticking-out part" of the United States that it is today. The first Spanish explorers gave the name of La Florida to an area of land that included present-day Florida, as well as about half of the whole United States. Now that's a bunch of land! It's also a big colonization opportunity. But here's where the answer gets even tougher: The first Spanish colonists couldn't get much to grow in Florida soil, and it didn't look like there was much gold or silver either. So what would Spain want with land where there weren't any hidden riches and where crops wouldn't grow? The answer

might amaze you! One thing there was plenty of in Florida was people (all natives). To the Catholic Church in Spain, that meant missionary opportunities. Spain sent ships full of missionaries and priests to the New World of La Florida, not to look for gold and not to grow crops, but to bring their religion to the Florida natives.



(top) Antonio de Montesinos gave, what many believe, the first Catholic Mass in North America. (left) Clement VII was the Catholic Pope at the beginning of settling La Florida.



Connections

What Do We Really Know About Ponce de Leon?

Have you ever heard a crazy story? Something that sounded too good to be true? Maybe it was a flying carpet or magic beans. How about a famous explorer looking for water that could make you stay young forever?

You know the story of Juan Ponce de Leon. What do we really know about this famous Spanish explorer? We know he sailed to the New World with Christopher

Columbus in 1493. We know he came to Florida in 1513. And we know he gets the credit for naming our state.

Many people believe he was looking for the Fountain of Youth, but not everyone agrees. Some people claim the legendary fountain is in St. Augustine and that Ponce de Leon went there to drink from it. But so far, no one has found proof that it really happened. Some historians

believe he landed 140 miles south of St. Augustine and probably wasn't looking for the famous fountain at all.

History is like that, especially when you're talking about something that happened 500 years ago. Amazing tales are fun to read, but remember: If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

Florida Next Generation Sunshine State Standards: SS.4.A.1.1: Analyze primary and secondary resources to identify significant individuals and events throughout Florida history. SS.4.A.1.2: Synthesize information related to Florida history through print and electronic media. SS.4.A.3.1: Identify explorers who came to Florida and the motivations for their expeditions. SS.4.A.3.2: Describe causes and effects of European colonization on the Native American tribes of Florida. SS.4.A.3.4: Explain the purpose of and daily life on missions (San Luis de Talimali in present-day Tallahassee). SS.4.A.3.6: Identify the effects of Spanish rule in Florida. SS.4.A.3.7: Identify nations (Spain, France, England) that controlled Florida before it became a United States territory. SS.4.A.4.2: Describe pioneer life in Florida. SS.4.A.6.1: Describe the economic development of Florida's major industries. SS.4.A.9.1: Utilize timelines to sequence key events in Florida history. SS.4.G.1.1: Identify physical features of Florida. SS.4.G.1.2: Locate and label cultural features on a Florida map. SS.4.G.1.4: Interpret political and physical maps using map elements (title, compass rose, cardinal directions, intermediate directions, symbols, legend, scale, longitude, latitude).



Spanish Mission Era

At the peak of the missionary period, more than 50 missions operated between St. Augustine and Pensacola.

Baptism or Battle?

One of the problems early missionaries faced was that Spanish soldiers almost always accompanied them. Missionaries were sent to convert people to Christianity. To convert means to convince people to accept new beliefs.

The soldiers were sent to conquer people, or take control of them by force. The Florida natives were confused as the missionaries

taught about peace and faith while soldiers tried to take over their lands and turn them into slaves.

Ponce de Leon Killed by a Calusa Arrow

The first missionary effort in Florida was a huge failure. Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon brought missionaries with him on his second voyage to Florida. Unfortunately, the Calusa Indians did not want any Spaniards on their lands, including missionaries. They attacked the

Spanish, and Ponce de Leon was injured in the fighting. A poisoned arrow hit him in the leg. He sailed to Cuba to recover, but it was too late. Ponce de Leon soon died from the wound.

Where Did the Missions Go?

Florida was not the only place where the Spanish built missions. Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California are all home to dozens of missions. One of the most famous Spanish missions is the Alamo in Texas. Missions in these other



What were Spanish missions like?

Missionaries from Spain wanted to convert American Indians to Christianity. Missions were built to help make that happen. Many missions were made up of many buildings. They often had a chapel, or church, for religious services and prayers. Missions also had places for people to eat, sleep and write. People who lived on missions often had gardens to grow food or even small shops to make and sell goods.

Imagine that you were in charge of building a new Spanish mission. What sort of buildings would you make sure to have? Make a list of your ideas and discuss them with a classmate.

This Week's Question



Union, Bradford and Clay Counties

Union County: Ah, Union County—small on land (the smallest county in Florida) but big on trees. Around 80 percent of this county is forest, and lumber is a big business here. The county seat is Lake Butler. Timucuan Indians lived in this area at one time, and so did Spanish settlers until Florida became a U.S. territory.

Bradford County: Bradford County used to be a larger county called New River. It was renamed in 1861 to honor Captain Richard Bradford, the first Confederate officer from Florida to die in the Civil War. You can read about him on a historical marker in the county seat, Starke. In 1921, part of Bradford County became Union County.

Clay County: Clay County is located east of Bradford County. The county seat, Green Cove Springs, is on the St. Johns River. Each year Clay County hosts the Northeast Florida Scottish Highland Games, where you'll see caber tossing, bagpipe playing, battle-axe throwing and plenty of plaid! It's almost like being in Scotland, and it's loads of fun for wee lads and lasses.

Florida Counties



states are still standing, and they are popular tourist attractions.

What about Florida's missions? Our state was home to many missions, but you don't see them on tourist maps. This is because we don't know where these old missions were. Historians think hurricanes, fires or wars destroyed them. Also, many of Florida's American Indians were forced to leave the area during the 1800s. That meant there was no one left to carry on the missions' traditions.

We do know about one mission, San Luis de Talimali. It was located near where Tallahassee is today. The mission was built during the 1600s and grew to include several buildings. Most of the mission was destroyed in 1704. Even though the real mission was lost, historians have worked hard to rebuild a copy of what it looked like. Today, it is one of the only places in Florida where visitors can see what a real Spanish mission looked like.



Trading Goods and Germs

In 1526, a man named Vazquez set up a colony in Florida. The colony failed, but it still had a major impact on the area. Vazquez and his men brought European diseases to the area. The American Indians living in Florida had never been exposed to those germs, and their bodies did not know how to protect them. These germs wouldn't give the Europeans so much as a cold, but they caused serious sickness and even death to the natives. Many of Florida's tribes were completely killed off by these diseases.

The Vazquez colony also brought new goods into Florida. The colonists traded Spanish goods with the American Indians. Later expeditions found some of those goods in villages that were hundreds of miles away. An expedition is a group of explorers. The goods had been traded again and again over the years.

TIMELINE

Ponce de Leon arrives in Florida, 1513



Spanish explorers arrive in Florida, 1516-1560

Vazquez colony is founded, 1526



Hernando de Soto arrives in Florida, 1539

Pedro Menendez arrives in Florida, 1565



Rockin' the Boat

The missionaries had many obstacles (challenges). One was that the natives already had religion! Some were willing to change to Christianity, but many, including the natives' religious leaders, or "shamans," were not. The shamans often encouraged their tribes to fight the Spanish colonizers (people who started settlements in a new land). One problem with fighting was that the Spanish had guns. What would you do if you were an angry native? Most natives usually chose not to fight. But sometimes, the natives got so angry that they fought anyway—guns or no guns! Some missionaries were killed in these battles, but the natives usually lost. One battle was caused because the missionaries tried to get the natives to change their marriage rules. You see, some native men had many wives, and the missionaries didn't like that one bit! Five missionaries were killed in that battle. The Spanish responded by destroying villages and crops as a warning. Boy, that's some warning!

Florida Facts



Opossum *Florida Wildlife*

The opossum is a Florida marsupial. This means that the mom carries her babies in a pouch on her tummy. Opossums are found in nearly all parts of the state. They have furry bodies and feet with little fingers that look like human hands. Their tails are very long and hairless, sort of like a rat's tail, and their noses are very long, too. In fact, there are people who have mistaken a young opossum for a rodent.

Opossums are the only North American marsupials. The opossum has a gray and white face, black ears and a gray or pinkish tail. They grow to be about 15-20 inches long.



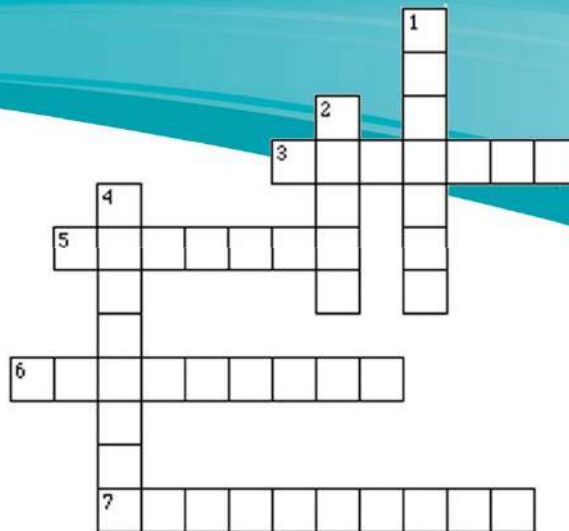
Name _____

ACROSS

- 3. leader of the Spanish colony that brought the first European diseases
- 5. to convince someone to accept a new belief
- 6. a body of land surrounded by water on three sides (like Florida)
- 7. a group that explores a new land

DOWN

- 1. to gain control over others by force
- 2. belief that something is true that cannot be seen
- 4. to start a settlement in a new land



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

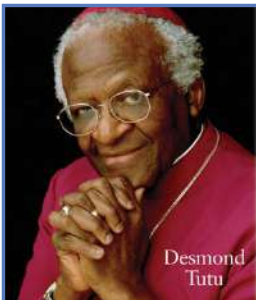
You are living during the time of the Spanish missions.

You and your sister want to go to the mission to learn what the European people teach, but your father happens to be the shaman of your people. He doesn't want you to go. He says that shaman children must be examples. You really want to go, but you don't want to disobey your father. After thinking it over, you come up with a plan. Before you begin to write, think about what your plan is going to be. Now write to tell what your plan is going to be.

Let's Write

1. Why did Spain send missionaries to Florida?
2. Name at least one of the obstacles for the missionaries.
3. What two things happened because of Vasquez's group of colonists?
4. Why can't we find many of the remains of missions in Florida from this period?
5. The opossum is a marsupial. What does "marsupial" mean?
6. Who was Bradford County named after? Why?

Think & Review



His moral compass points to equality.

PEACE

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Spanish Missions: Find Out More!

Activity

This week, you read a little about a few of Florida's amazing Spanish missions. Now it's time to learn a little more!

Directions: Ask permission to use the Internet to find out about one of Florida's Spanish missions. Do some research and record what you find.

Name of Mission: _____

Year Founded: _____

Crops Grown: _____

Animals Raised: _____

Today, my mission is near the city of _____.

Three interesting facts about my mission are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Present your information to the class. If time allows, include an illustration or small model of your mission, and ask your teacher to display your work!



Teachers:

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