

weakened Native Americans, making military and political resistance much more difficult. In addition, conquests led to the mixing of the people of the Old and New Worlds. After the conquest, many Native American women had children with the early Spanish explorers from the Old World. Children of Spanish and Native American parents were

The history and culture of both the Old World and The New World have been influenced greatly by plants and animals. Unlike disease, their introduction has been deliberate. Bread and wine were part of the Spaniards' daily diet. Moreover, the Spaniards were Catholic and were required to take bread and wine as part of their Holy Communion. The New World did not have wheat to make bread, or grapes to make wine. The early Spanish explorers and settlers brought the seeds from Spain. Today, wheat is a staple of the American diet and excellent wines are produced in Argentina, California, and Chile.

Sugar was introduced to the New World in the same way. Spaniards were also accustomed to riding horses, eating beef, goat and pork, and wearing clothes made from wool. These habits led to the importation of cows, goats, horses, pigs, and sheep. Traditionally, these animals were domesticated, but oftentimes they reproduced in the wild. An example of this is on the Argentine Pampas, where cattle reproduced quickly and continue to do so. To this day, cattle ranching is an important industry in Argentina. This was also the case in the North American Southwest, where wild horses reproduced rapidly. Eventually, the Apache domesticated them. The Apache became formidable warriors, due to the mobility the horses gave them. This proved to be very important to the Apache, as early American settlers in the United States moved westward in the nineteenth century.

The Columbian Exchange has had an equally profound influence on the Old World and indeed on the entire world. As one studies history, one can see how quickly the New World grew as immigration from the Old World took place at a rapid pace. One might wonder why the population in the Old World did not decrease, if so many people were leaving the Old World to join those in the New World. The answer to this mystery is "New World crops." New World crops such as: beans, corn, manioc, and potatoes, grew remarkably well in the Old World. In fact, the Old World found that many of these crops grew far better than the traditional crops that had been raised for centuries by Old World farmers, because the soil proved to be better suited for the new seeds from the New World. The Old World welcomed these new crops.

The Columbian Exchange greatly increased the food supply in the Old World. An increased food supply, in turn, increased the human reproductive rate. More food meant more people survived to the reproductive age, thereby increasing the population in the Old World. The population increased swiftly enough so that immigration to the New World did not reduce the population in the Old World. Both Africa and Ireland are good examples of how The Columbian Exchange moved the world. Because of the potato, the population in Ireland grew overwhelmingly. Also, from 1650-1850, the world's population doubled. In less than half that time, from 1754-1845, the population of Ireland boomed from 3.2 million to 8.2 million. If one considers the two million Irishmen who immigrated to the United States during this time, the population explosion is even more impressive. However, in 1846, life in Ireland took a dramatic turn. The "potato blight" hit Ireland, devastated the potato crops, and left millions of people starving.

The examples presented clearly show how The Columbian Exchange transformed the demography of the world. It indeed made possible many historical events and trends. Little did Christopher Columbus know what an influence he would have on the world for centuries to come. Columbus not only showed humankind that the world was larger than imagined, but he also showed that it was smaller at the same time. The Columbian Exchange has permanently transformed the world, making it a more homogenous place. This phenomenon influences even small details of our daily lives. No other event has had such a widespread and lasting effect on the life of humankind and on the life of this planet.