



## Southeast

The New World was a terrain of discovery and wealth for Europeans for hundreds of years, and was also a major battleground on which the contests for power between these nations were fought. *Conquest of America: Southeast* focuses on the dramatic clash between the Spanish and French for control over modern day Florida. As the French were divided by a civil war between Catholics and Protestants, Catherine di Medici was determined that exploration to North America would bolster the French position in the world unite the country. Led by the explorer Jean Ribault, the French set out in 1562 to the New World with the mission to establish a colony along the Southeast coast of North American and take advantage of the riches the Spanish had reportedly amassed in the form of gold. This fateful journey set off a series of voyages among the French to the New World and years of bitter conflict among the two nations as the Spanish struggled fiercely to defend their territory in the Southeast.

*Conquest of America: Southeast* is an hour long program in a larger series on the early exploration of North America and the transformations these events inspired. The bitter showdowns between France and Spain, and relations with Native Americans, are brought to full color through the use of primary sources such as journals, diaries, and historical documents. The drive for dominance in Florida unfolded over the course of several years, culminating in a violent confrontation at the Spanish stronghold in Fort Caroline led by the Spanish leader Pedro Menendez. Following through each phase of the French effort to seize control, this program highlights the ways the larger political relationships between nations played out in the New World. Educators and their students will find that this show provides an excellent framework for studying New World exploration and Native American relations and introduces a crucial but little known chapter in North American history.

### Curriculum Links:

*Conquest of America: Southeast* would be useful for courses on U.S. history, global studies, World Civilization, World Cultures, and Florida state history. It is appropriate for middle school and high school. This documentary fulfills several National Standards guidelines as outlined by the National Council for History Education including: Values, Beliefs, Political Ideas and Institutions, Conflict and Cooperation, Human Interaction with the Environment and Comparative History of Major Developments.

### Key Identifications and Terms:

colony  
convoy  
detrimental  
Divine Right  
heretic  
Ribault, Jean  
mutiny  
Menendez, Pedro  
plunder  
sovereignty

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why did the French decide to explore the New World in the 1560s?
2. What did the French hope to find when they first went to Florida?
3. Did the French intend for the Spanish to know about their initial settlement?
4. Why did Jean Ribault return to France before the colony in Florida was officially established?
5. Over what issue was France divided during the 1560s?
6. What were relations between Native Americans and the French like as the colony was being established?
7. What was the extent of Spanish control and development in Florida at the time of French arrival?
8. Who was Pedro Menendez? What were some of his battle techniques in challenging the French?
9. What role did Native Americans play in the battle between the French and the Spanish? Whose “side” were they on? Did this change over time?
10. How were Native Americans affected by the arrival of Europeans?

### Extended Activities:

1. The settlement of St. Augustine, Florida is one of the significant events discussed in this documentary. St. Augustine is known today as “The Nation’s Oldest City.” This town has a very rich history and was at the cross-section of many important national events. Research the history of St. Augustine. Create a mini-report on this town on a piece of large construction paper or poster-board. Include a timeline for the important events which transpired there, starting in the 1560s. You can decorate your project with images of the town and any other fun facts you discover about its history.
2. The artist and mapmaker Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues created what is known today to be the first map of Florida. At the library or using the Internet, research his work and locate one of his maps or drawings. In groups of four or five, write down a list of five things you would learn about Florida if your only information was the map or drawing. Chose one representative to share your list with the larger class or group. Have a larger discussion of early map making and how artists such as Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues were able to map these newly discovered and often unknown lands.
3. This documentary traces the early history of the state of Florida, and the showdown between the Spanish and the French is crucial to that story. On a

- chalkboard or on a long piece of white roll paper, create a timeline of Florida history starting with the events in this documentary and moving up through the present day. Make sure to include pivotal dates such as the role of this territory during the Civil War and the date at which Florida achieved statehood.
4. Native Americans were among the key players in this documentary. At the library or using the Internet, research the Native American groups that would have been in Florida during the 1560s. Write an essay of 2-3 pages describing the role of Native Americans in this conflict, or the cultural patterns typical of the groups featured in the documentary.

## Resources

### Books:

- Krensky, Stephen and Steve Sullivan. *Who Really Discovered America?* (Scholastic, 1987).
- Burnett, Gene. *Florida's Past: People and Events That Shaped the State*, (Pineapple Press, 1998).
- Kapitzke, Robert L. *Religion, Power, and Politics in Colonial St. Augustine*, (University Press of Florida, 2001).
- Bennett, Charles E. *Laudonniere & Fort Caroline: History and Documents*, (University of Alabama, 2001).
- Spencer, Donald, et al. *Florida's Timucua Indians: A Pictorial History*, (Camelot, 2003).

### Web sites:

- Excellent background information on Pedro Menendez and his role in Florida history:  
<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/florida/lessons/menendz/menendz1.htm>
- A history of the Spanish in Florida:  
<http://www.floridahistory.org/floridians/spanish.html>
- A useful timeline of Spanish conquest:  
<http://www.houstonculture.org/vc/ruta.html>
- Background and updated information on Fort Caroline:  
<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/florida/lessons/ribault/ribault1.htm>