

EARLY EUROPEAN CONTACTS

For centuries, Europeans had no direct contact with tropical Africa.

They went as far as the Mediterranean and traded there, but never went far into Africa.

Europeans ALSO wanted a quicker way to get to India/China.

1400's – Portuguese Prince – Prince Henry the Navigator
*We can sail our ships down the coast of western Africa
and then eastward to India and southeast Asia!!*

Smaller ships tried to do this in the past, but as they tried to round Cape of Good Hope, they were swept off toward South America.

However, new, larger sailing ships allowed Europeans to go further. Europeans sailed directly to the west coast of tropical Africa.

By 1446 CE, these Portuguese ships reached the Cape Verde Islands off of West Africa.

By 1488 CE, the Portuguese ships were rounding the Cape of Good Hope and setting up ports in East Africa.

((NOTE: There were very few good natural ports on the coast of West Africa.))

For the next 400 years the Portuguese, Dutch, British, and French built forts along the coastline. They eventually controlled trading along the coastline from the ports; but the strong African kingdoms controlled trade throughout the interior of Africa.

Items traded: **To Africa** – European metals, firearms, cloth, and food crops.

To Europe – gold, ivory, and slaves.

BARRIERS TO EUROPEAN EXPLORATION

Why didn't the Europeans go into the interior of Africa?

Barriers:

- Most rivers have strong rapids and waterfalls that drop off the central plateau that covers Africa. Thus, trading expeditions had to carry everything on their backs through VERY thick tropical rain forests.
- Tsetse flies made humans extremely sick.
- Risk of battle with hostile African kings who didn't want the Europeans to take away their profitable trade routes.
- Diseases like malaria, dengue fever, and yellow fever. Africa became known as "the white man's grave," because between 40% and 60% of Europeans died during their first year in Africa. Popular sailor song: "Forty go in for every one that comes out."

EXPLORERS AND MISSIONARIES

For 400 years, most Europeans stayed on the coast. But there are generally 3 reasons why some decided to go inland:

1. Curiosity – What's in there?!
2. Christianity – Let's spread religion and make the Africans to be more like us!
3. Commerce – Let's make some money off the natural resources!

Curiosity: Scottish explorer: James Bruce (1769 CE) – highlands of Ethiopia

He tried to find the source of the Nile River. He failed, but his accounts led to a great interest in other Europeans.

Other explorers finally reached the source of the Nile River = Lake Victoria.

From all the new explorations, map makers began to fill in the blanks of Africa's interior.

Missionaries: In the late 1700's and early 1800's, missionaries flooded into Africa to convert native Africans and to spread Western civilization/ideas/culture. They also wanted to eliminate the slave trade at its source.

The missionaries believed they had a duty to help Africans.

They built many:

- Schools
- Hospitals
- Churches

European governments used missionaries to help control the African population (*If they are like us, then they won't revolt against us.*)

Commerce: 1850's – quinine is discovered (anti-malaria drug). This made it safer for Europeans to venture into Africa's interior. Soon, trading posts were set up further inland.

1884/1885: Berlin Conference

European powers (Great Britain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, The Netherlands) took out a map and split Africa amongst themselves.

These new colonies would be controlled by the European countries so that the Euros could get the wealth from Africa's natural resources.

No Africans were at the conference.