A Brief History of the United States

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Units One & Two

The Americas were populated by people from Asia thousands of years ago. The people separated into diverse groups throughout the continents. Eventually, Europeans arrived and began to settle in the hemisphere. The countries of Spain, England, and France fought for dominance in the new world. The French and Indian War was the biggest manifestation of the struggle. The English won and began to tax the fledgling American Colonies to replenish the imperial coffers. The colonists disliked the taxes and began to protest, which would have significant ramifications in the 1770's.

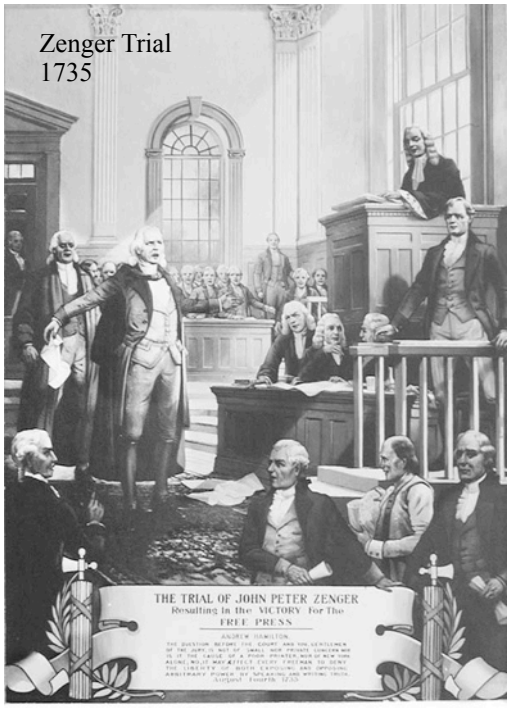
Thousands of years ago, no humans lived in the Americas. The accepted, though not only, theory is that the first arrivals walked across a frozen **land bridge** for Asia. Their progeny quickly adapted to the surroundings and blossomed into the many different native tribes, including our own mighty Caloosa. **Christopher Columbus'** arrival in 1492 changed everything. The transition of goods, food, ideas, and diseases is called the **Columbian Exchange**. The natives had no resistance to the European diseases and died by the thousands. The Spanish quickly claimed large parts of the New World. The French and English struggled to get their fledging colonies going as well.

The first permanent English Colony was **Jamestown** in 1607 (and no, there weren't any talking rodents), set up to find gold. **Plymouth** in 1620 was next, established by **Separatists** from the **Anglican Church** followed by **Puritans** in 1630 who would come to Mass Bay colony. The English colonists eventually established 13 colonies. Religion was a major reason for migration, but the colonists didn't allow religious freedom for new arrivals and dealt harshly with heretics. They kicked out **Roger Williams** and **Anne Hutchinson** for that very reason. Later, a religious movement called the **Great Awakening** caused a renewed interest in religion, although proponents of the **Enlightenment** movement challenged some religious beliefs.

They let the colonists have a great deal of economic and political independence under a policy called **Salutary Neglect**. England wanted the colonies to provide raw materials and become a marketplace for finished goods, under a policy known as **Mercantilism**. **Indentured servants** were the first laborers. This changed when **Nathaniel Bacon** led a rebellion of former servants against the government in 1676. The elite turned to a more controllable force of labor in **slaves**, which had first been brought to Virginia in 1619.

Virginia House of Burgesses
est. 1619

Salem Witch Trials
1692



Zenger Trial
1735