North America And The Beginnings Of European Colonization

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The first Europeans to arrive in North America -- at least the first for whom there is record -- were the Spanish explorers under Christopher Columbus. The great wealth which poured into Spain from the colonies in Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America had a profound effect on the European colonizers. To realize that diversity in North America was here from the beginning and such diversity makes us uniquely American.

Map of European Colonization of North America, 1492-1690.