Exploration and the Pacific Northwest
The Exploration of North America

- 1492: Christopher Columbus reaches North America
- Intensifies the rivalry between Spain and Portugal over global exploration and trade
- Rivalry threatens to turn into war
- Pope negotiates a peace
- In 1494, Spain and Portugal sign the Treaty of Tordesillas
- Treaty divides world between Spain and Portugal
- 1498-1533: Spain aggressively expands in New World
- After Protestant Reformation, Treaty of Tordesillas largely ignored
Exploring the Pacific Northwest

• First European explorer – Bartolome Ferrelo 1542/43
• Spanish dominate early stages of New World exploration
• Spain’s experiences in Mexico and the Andes shaped their desires and expectations during the initial years of exploration and colonization
• Spain interested in precious metals
• No obvious (or significant) sources in the PNW
• PNW largely ignored for much of the 1500s and 1600s
• Sole exception is Sir Francis Drake in 1577
• 1607 and 1620: North American colonial equation changes
• England now involved
• England is expanding and building an overseas empire from 1607 through the 1700s
• English interests and desires differ from the Spanish
Spanish Explorations

- Due to expansion, pressure, and competition from England, Spain renews its interests in the PNW
- Spain has declined in power by the late 1700s
- Interest in PNW is purely geopolitical
- Wants buffer zone between Spanish California and British Canada
- Will exploit any available resources but not looking to settle
- 1774: Juan Perez
- 1775: Bruno de Hezeta and Juan Bodega y Quadra (right)
- 1790s: Manuel Quimper and Francisco Eliza
English Explorations

- English interest is about the Northwest Passage
- Control trade with Far East
- Solidify emerging commercial and imperial interests
- 1778: Expedition of James Cook
  - Cook concludes that there is no Northwest Passage
  - But gives detailed account of region and resources
- Fish, Furs, and Forests
- 1786: John Meares arrived
- 1789: Meares returned
The Nootka Controversy

- Spain alarmed by increased presence of British
- Arrest Meares in 1789
- Spain argues “exclusive rights” to N. America from Treaty of Tordesillas
- Britain outraged
- 1790: Britain and Spain meet at Nootka village, hammer out Nootka Agreement
- Nootka Agreement forces Spain to capitulate; accept GB has right to be in PNW
- Watershed moment in claiming of PNW
- 1792: George Vancouver (right) arrived in PNW to ensure agreement