

# PENSACOLA IN THE RENAISSANCE ERA

Pensacola is said to be America's First Settlement. Colonization efforts began here in the late 1500's which falls into the Renaissance time period. The end of the Renaissance is typically given as the year 1600, or the end of the reign of Elizabeth I of England.

The Renaissance is typically thought of as a period of enlightenment and scientific achievement after the Medieval period. The recovery of Europe from the destructive Black Plague broke long standing social customs and people were able to improve their standards of living. Possibly the greatest improvement was literacy. By learning to read and write, an increased flow of ideas and knowledge allowed people to use technology to better their conditions.

With the discovery of the New World, the natural inclination of the time would be one of conquest and the claiming of territory. The expedition of Tristan de Luna brought colonists to the Gulf Coast, and specifically to the Pensacola area. Although this colony did not survive, artifacts have been found which record their presence.

Things to think about:

What made the Pensacola area a good place to start a colony?

Who were the natives?

What was the journey like for the colonists?

Why would people want to become a colonist?

Why did the first settlement fail?

What should have been done to ensure the survival of the colony?

What were the European governments trying to do?

# Explorers



Use the map above to plot the voyages of the great Tudor explorers. Use a different colour for each explorer and make a key linking the colours to the explorer's names on the right.

Christopher Columbus, 1492

Tristan de Luna y Arellano, 1559

## Establishing a Colony

From *Essentials of Classroom Teaching Elementary Social Studies* by Thomas N. Turner, 1994, Allyn and Bacon Publishing, page 189-190

You are the leader of a group of colonists who have come to the new world during the seventeenth century. You have sighted the coast and sailed along it for several days, finally dropping anchor in a quiet cove. There is a likely area for a colony just ashore and a small river flows into the sea here. The area does not appear to have any permanent settlements, but you have seen natives peering at your ship from ashore. You have not idea whether they are friendly or hostile.

You do not own your ship, but have hired the ship along with the services of its crusty old sea captain who wants to hurry you off his ship, so that he can return home to take on other cargo. A number of tasks face you. The following is a list of some of them. In what order should these jobs be done?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Send scouting parties to explore the surrounding area to be sure that the best possible site for a colony was chosen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find fresh water to replenish the ship's stores.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send a group to try to meet with the natives who have been seen looking out from the shore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hold a meeting of all the colonists to decide on the rules of government for the new colony.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Land all passengers from the ship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pay the captain what is still owed him for the voyage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Draft a letter to the patrons of the colony telling of your safe arrival and suggesting what you will do now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Determine your exact location and how far your colony is from other new world colonies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Build a stockade for defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Start building shelters for the colonists.

# Make your own Tudor coins

Print this page onto card. Colour in the coins. Cut out and glue together so each coin has the kings head on one side and the coat of arms on the other.



# The Renaissance Fair and the Economy

People from all cultures have gathered together in days of celebration and trade. This tradition was brought to a high state in the European Medieval and Renaissance periods. As in modern times, the main purpose of these fairs were to generate revenue, network with clients and manufacturers, and enjoy social events such as sports and contests.

Nowdays, the Renaissance Fair still fills this same role. Not only are we looking to history for entertainment, we are keeping alive useful skills and ancient knowledge which often benefits us in our modern lives.

The Fair offers a rich variety of hand made wares which range from things we use everyday such as baskets and jewelry, to things we enjoy on special occasions such as calligraphy and fancy costumes. Demonstrations are also an important part of the Fair. Blacksmithing can show how modern technology has vastly increased the convenience of modern life, but it also shows the satisfaction of producing a well crafted item. One of the best economic lessons of the Renaissance Fair is showing how people can create their own jobs, relying on themselves to earn a living.

Jousting, juggling and swordplay demonstrations are great examples of how a person can earn a living through a skill. These troupes of players and actors are an example of another economic principle of the Renaissance Fair- to go where the people are. Many Fair merchants and entertainers follow a yearly circuit, just like many people did back in the Medieval and Renaissance period.

Things to think about:

What are the advantages of following a circuit?

How is it harder to be a merchant today than in Medieval/Renaissance times?

What must a merchant do to be successful?

Why are people interested in ancient technology and items?

# All About the Money

The most prosperous merchants of the Medieval and Renaissance periods were those who could import luxuries and exotic items from far away places. During this period of history, many people lived their entire lives within a 10 mile radius from the place where they had been born. The reason for this is that most people had a daily routine that tied them to their land or place of business. Leaving it would mean a loss of business or money and in many cases, getting permission to leave from the feudal lord was a difficult thing to do.

Local Fairs gave ordinary people a chance to see what exciting new things were being brought in from the world around them. Even if commoners could not afford an item, they might be able to make a copy of it for themselves. Although literacy was limited, many people were skilled at crafting and could understand how to adapt new technologies to make their lives better.

Things to think about:

What kinds of items would people want from far away places?

What kinds of items were best suited for long journeys?

How does distance affect cost?

If you were a landowner and one of your workers left,  
how would it affect you?

What are the dangers of importing goods?

If you were an importer, where would you sell your goods?

What was the fastest way to move goods?

How does your job affect your ability to buy goods?

What laws were made to prevent the commoners from  
becoming more wealthy than the nobility?

How does religion play a part in the demand for goods?