

# 1491: new revelations of the americas before columbus



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Charles C. Mann was born in the year of 1955. He lived the first initial years of his life in Detroit, Michigan., but before starting middle school his parents made the choice to move to the Pacific Northwest. He had attended Amherst College and graduated in the class of 1976. Mann worked for The Atlantic Monthly, Science, and Wired as a successful correspondent.

He has also written editorials for The New York Times, and co written other books prior to 1491. Charles is an American journalist and author that specifies in scientific areas. Charles gained many opportunities to travel to many famous location such as Rome, Italy, and the Yucatan Peninsula. Mann has received various awards for his works in writing from the Margaret Sanger Foundation, American Bar, and many other organizations. Now he resides with his children and wife in Amherst, Massachusetts

### Synopsis

New England during the 17th century there was a common belief that European technological advance were further then those of the Indians. Yet, guns were a prime example of the faulty truth there were seen as nothing more than noisemakers to actual Indians. John Smith the famous colonist even noted that the guns couldn't shoot farther than a arrow could. Indians technology in reality was more impressive such as the Indian equivalent of boots, moccasins. Canoes were also a prime example of the more impressive technological advances made by the Indians as they were more maneuverable than any small European boat.

Henry F. Dobyns in the 1960s researched records in the central cathedral in Lima, Peru and to a shock found that upon European arrival, there were far  
<https://assignbuster.com/1491-new-revelations-of-the-americas-before-columbus/>

more burials than baptisms recorded. This gave a little more proof to that Indians may have died in greater numbers than what we had once thought. Which may have been caused by the introduction of European diseases to the Indian society.

Mann then attempts to put together exactly how the famous Incan empire fell, even if the number of Incans exceeded the armies of the conquistadors. It is later explained how Europeans used metals completely different from the Indian cultures. As the Europeans used them for the production of tools examples-swords, rifles, cannons. Whereas the Indians only used them for crafts and a sign of wealth in their societies.

The use of horses by many European groups was to be thought to be a huge advantage over Indian groups yet many of their cities used stepped roads which were impassable to horses. Yet not completely stopping the many intruders the mighty Incan empire didn't fall through brute force, it was due to already dwindled Incan society. As smallpox and other epidemics had done their damage to the population also a civil war had run a muck to the population density of the Incas.

The Aztecs were also more advanced than previously conceived. Their societies were based on tlaminitis, or "thinker-teacher." Which helped prove that Indians were more supplicated than once thought and only perished to the European invaders with a rare mixture of factors.

Evidence linked to the Lagoa Santa skeletons uncovered in caves in Brazil, proved that Indians could have been living there for thousands of years.

Indians in this area come from the same haplogroup as natives in Siberia, thus concluding that Indians of Siberians share common ancestry.

Agriculture is also focused by Mann as he explores Andean and Mesoamerican cultures. Specifically the development of maize as it was significant for the rise in crop surplus, population and complex cultures. The actual growth of maize was complex also as it was grown on a milpa, a system of planting multiple crops in one area that would be “ nutritionally and environmentally complementary,” and promoted long term success.

Mann then presents the reader with Mesoamerican cultures that used calendars and developed wheels. Showing a better understanding on how complex Indian cultures were. Yet they were limited to so much as they did not have as much cultural exchanges as Europeans did. They also lacked the domestication of animals which limited them greatly.

Man finally wraps up with his synthesis of the Mayan and how they rapidly grew and then rapidly disappeared. The best known theory is to be a over population of the environment the Mayans called home. Which was common to most Indian cultures. Man also disagrees with the myth that Indians did not transform there environment. As they used a primitive burn tactic for the transformation of land most historians seems to overlook.

#### Author's Argument

Mann recounts in his introduction that in high school he was taught that “ Indians came across the Bering Strait about 13, 000 years ago, they had little impact on their environment that even after millennia of habitation the

continents remain mostly wilderness.” Which he found the need to disprove greatly from his book as Indians had a huge impact on there environment given from there accounts not colonists. As most indigenous people somewhat naturally transformed the land though burn tactics. Mann also examines what he called the “ Holmberg’s mistake”. “ Holmberg’s mistake” was named after the anthropologist Allan r. Holmberg, who took time to live among the Siriono in the 1940s. In Holmberg’s account he deemed the society as the most backward society in the world to his standards of the time. Yet Mann helps challenge this thought as Holmberg only sees what the aftermath of what smallpox and influenza had to a society, Mann describes them as “ persecuted survivors of a recently shattered culture.”

Opinion 1491 was a interesting book as it completely changed my opinion of Native Americans as they were way ahead of their time. Mann presents us with a huge amount of evidence as he shows us how culturally advance some groups were, a prime example is the production of the maneuverable canoes. Mann also presents the reader with evidence of how truly equally matched colonists and Native Americans were as most guns at the time shot as far and as accurate as bows and arrows. The book presents population of these groups may have been greatly under estimated which shows us how actually devastating the bringing of European diseases was. Mann makes us think more about Native Americans before the introduction of European colonists and wonder did these great Empires truly fall just to the introduction of diseases.

Recommendation Yes, I would recommended this novel to any scholar, teacher, and anybody involved in education, as it disproves some <https://assignbuster.com/1491-new-revelations-of-the-americas-before-columbus/>

misconceptions of pre-colonial America. I say this as the book gives a good insight on the subject of pre-colonial America and its inhabitants. The book does not also give you unbelievable theories as it provides a huge amount of proof while still being quite solid. The book is a huge amount of information considerably useful to historical insight and shows us how advance Native Americans really were. Showing us through many differently levels socially and technologically through comparison to colonists of the time. The novel also goes as far to help explain how the first “ Americans” got here disapproving a common misconception that they came through a quick mass movement.