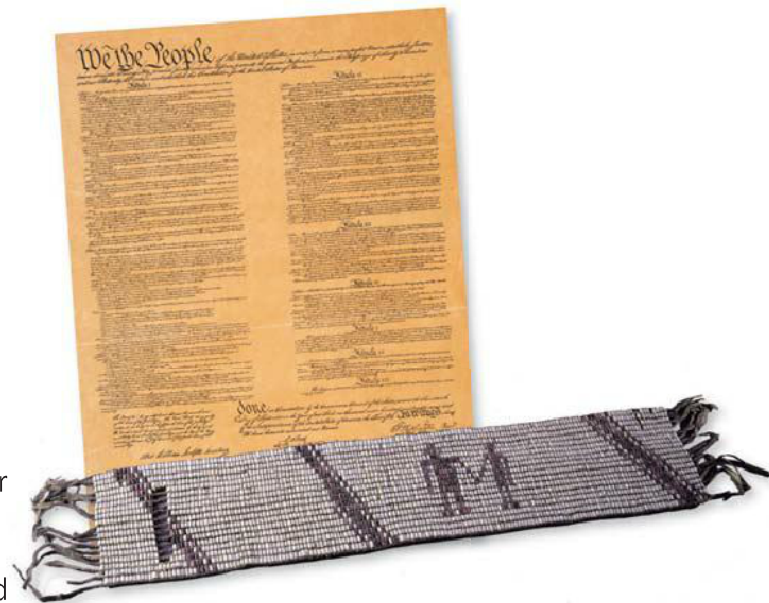


Snapshot of the Period

In 1492, North America was already populated by several hundred Native American tribes. More than 12,000 years before Christopher Columbus reached North America, nomadic peoples had migrated across the Bering Land Bridge from Asia and settled across the continent. These people spoke different languages and had very different cultures, but the Europeans called them all by one name: "Indians." In the centuries after Columbus, more and more Europeans ventured to the new world. Among them were explorers, fortune-seekers, missionaries, and those fleeing religious persecution. There were also enslaved Africans who made the journey against their will. Individuals from these groups wrote accounts of their experiences, creating the first written literature of North America. By 1699, European colonies dotted the entire Eastern seaboard and extended as far west as New Mexico. In 1776, thirteen of those colonies declared their independence from England.



▲ Political documents, such as the Constitution, recorded the new nation's founding principles. Wampum belts recorded important treaties of Eastern tribes.



The Iroquois



Bradstreet



Wheatley



Jefferson



Equiano



Franklin

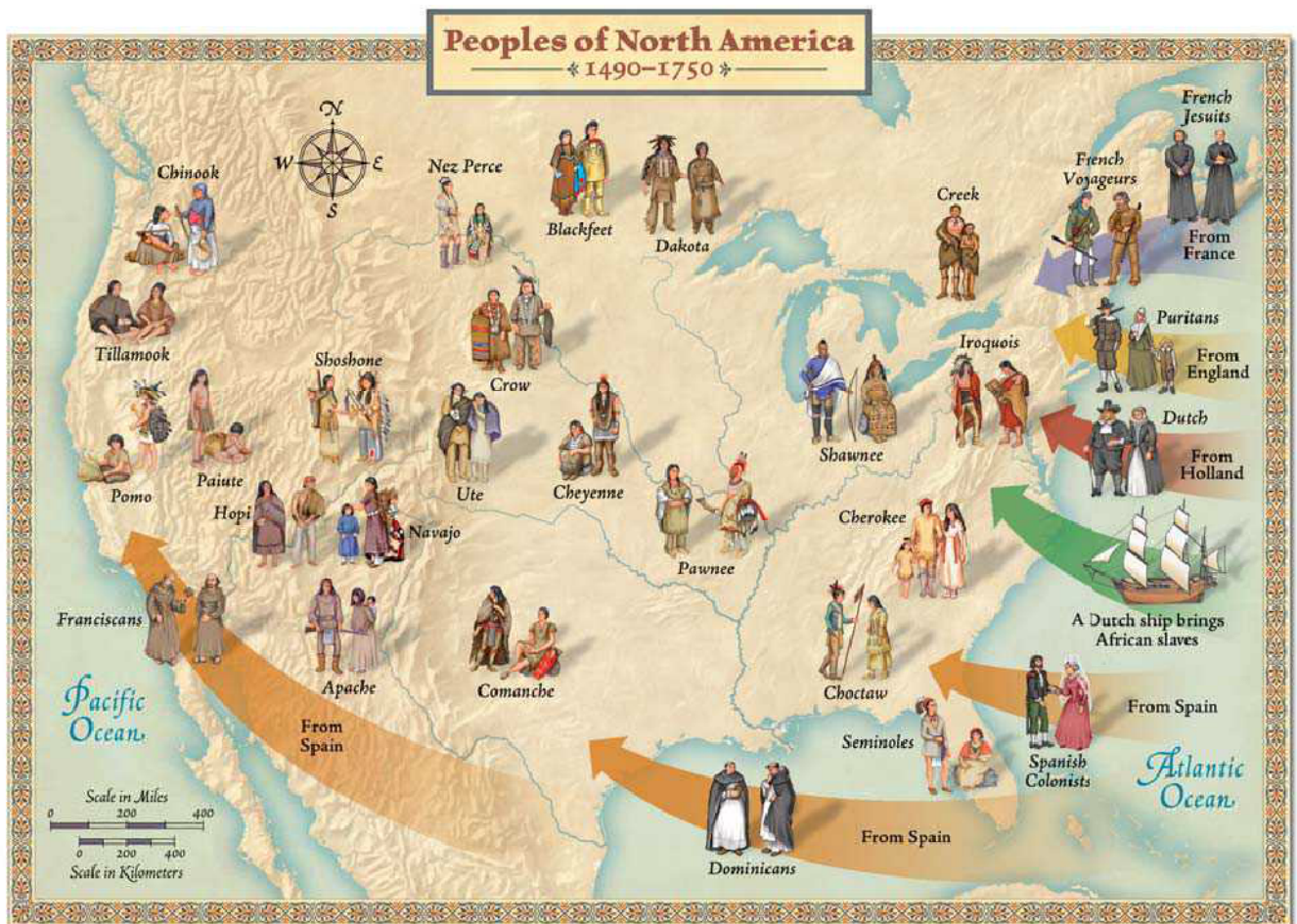


As you read the selections in this unit, you will be asked to think about them in view of three key questions:

What is the relationship
between place and *literature*?

How does literature
shape or reflect *society*?

What makes American
literature *American*?



European exploration of North America quickly led to settlement and colonization. The Spaniards settled in Florida, then sent Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries to California and Texas. The French settled in Maine and along the Gulf of Mexico, while the Dutch established New Amsterdam (New York) and communities reaching south to Delaware. English Puritans settled Virginia, New England, and Pennsylvania and later took over the Dutch and French colonies and Florida. This influx of Europeans had a lasting impact on Native Americans, whose lifestyles and territories were increasingly restricted.

Connect to the Period Based on the information in this map, what can you predict about the interactions among these various groups? Think about the ways in which different groups might form alliances, react to newcomers, or protect their territories. Explain your predictions. **[Predict]**