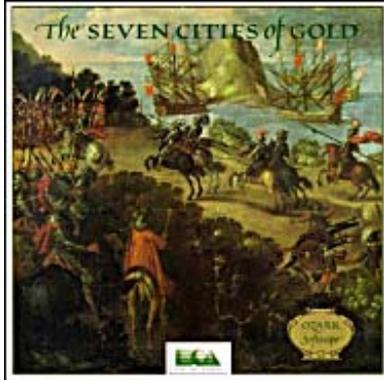


The Seven Cities of Gold



1492-1540

The Age of Discovery, Exploration and Conquest.
The Stage of History Belonged to Spain. Now it
Belongs to You.

Dan Buntен
Bill Buntен
Jim Rushing
Alan Watson

Dani Buntен on *The Seven Cities of Gold*:

"Seven Cities of Gold" was my best selling game. It garnered a SPA Gold Disk and a number of minor awards. It was also my first game that didn't allow for more than one player. It was planned to be multi-player but during development it lost that aspect, along with colonists and development. To keep it's focus (and allow for a really large world) it ended up just covering the early exploration and conquest of the new world. It was published in '84 by Electronic Arts and it was the game Trip Hawkins (founder of EA) coined the term "edu-tainment" to describe on the press tour introducing it. (Back then the term wasn't the kiss of death it is now).

There are several things I'm proud of about that game. Unlike most strategy-adventure games then (and now as well) which load the player with numerous economic and logistical decisions, it only used four commodities to model the constraints and opportunities facing the Conquistadors (men, food, [trade] goods and gold). I also like the way I was able to reflect the unique interactions between natives and Conquistadors when they shared neither a language nor cultural values in common. I came up with a simple arcade element which also included a number of subtle "secret" opportunities that I was quite gratified to learn that folks found on their own. Finally, the fact that our "New World" was randomly generated (and so large it required disk caching and overlays) made exploring a challenge fraught with peril and surprises. It sufficiently captured the sense of panic that comes from being lost in the wilderness and running out of supplies as well as the joy of rescue (which was something I experienced once backpacking and wanted to make a touchstone of this design).

Our biggest frustration with this product was that it was developed in the days when you had to write a number of different versions since no platform was pre-eminent. There were Atari 800, C64, Apple, Mac and IBM PC versions of the game put out but the only "full" version was on the Atari. On the others we did the best we could with what we had.