

Name

Instructor

Course

Date

U.S HISTORY

This paper focuses on the history of the United States from 1607 to 1865. The theme that is discussed in this paper is that of imperial expansion and dispossession. The various nations that conquered America did so through various means. Some of the nations were more violent than others in their approach. They also had various impacts or influences on the native population.

The Indians settled in the New world earlier than the rest of the population. The North and south American Indian societies built trade networks, roads and irrigation systems. The societies from present day Mexico and areas south were grander in scale and organization than those that were located north of Mexico. The Indians north of Mexico lacked metal tools, literacy as well as the scientific knowledge that was necessary for long distance navigation. The Hopi and Zuni Indian ancestors settled around the present day New Mexico and Arizona and built large planned towns that had multiple family dwellings. They also traded with people that were as far away as the Mississippi and Central Mexico

In native America, religious ceremonies were often related to hunting and farming. Those who were believed to have special spiritual powers in the society held positions of authority and respect. To the native Indians, the idea of ownership of private property was foreign to them. They believed that land had to be treated as a common resource and not an economic commodity. In the Indian societies, wealth mattered little and a far more important trait to them was generosity. In the Indian society, women could engage in premarital sex. They could also choose to divorce their

husbands if they so wished and most of the Indian societies were matrilineal in nature. Women attended to the agricultural and house hold duties since men were often away hunting.

The Europeans felt that the Indians did not have a genuine religion. They saw that what the Indians had could not be categorized as a true religion. They also claimed that the native Indians didn't "use" the land, therefore, had not claim to it. Additionally, the Europeans viewed the Indian men as weak and the women as mistreated in the Indian society.

The Europeans concluded that the idea of freedom was foreign to the native Indians. The European understanding of freedom was focused on ideas of personal independence as well as the ownership of private property. All these ideas were foreign to the Indians. The Europeans believed that embracing Christ led to provision of freedom from sin. The Europeans also claimed that obedience to the law was another definition of freedom. However, under English law, the women held very few rights. They were also expected to be submissive to their husbands. Liberty emanated from the knowledge of one's place in a hierarchical society and the fulfillment of duties that were appropriate to one's rank in the society.

The Chinese admiral Zheng He led several naval expeditions into the Indian Ocean between the years 1405 and 1433. He even explored the eastern African region on the sixth voyage. The compass, caravel and the quadrant made it possible for the Portuguese to travel along the African coast in the early fifteenth century. The Portuguese established trading posts along the western coast of Africa as they continued in their exploration. They began colonization of Atlantic islands and establishment of plantations that were worked by slaves.

Slavery was already one form of labor in the African region before the Europeans arrived. When the Portuguese arrived, there was acceleration of the selling and buying of slaves in the African region. By the time of Vasco Da Gama sailing to India in the year 1498, the Portuguese had managed to establish a vast trading empire.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus who was an Italian got financial support from Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain. In the same year, the queen and king completed the reconquista. Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola in the year 1492 and colonization began the following year. Another man named Nicolas de Ovando established a permanent base in Hispaniola in 1502. Amerigo Vespucci was able to sail along the south American coast between the years 1499 and 1502, and the new world came to be named America.

News now travelled more quickly, especially when the Gutenberg's movable type printing press was invented in the 1430s. John Cabot traveled to Newfoundland in the year 1497. Soon, many Europeans began exploration of the New World. Balboa was able to trek across the Panama and became the first European to see the Pacific Ocean. Magellan was able to lead an expedition to sail around the world. Cortes and Pizarro who were Spanish conquistadores were able to lead devastating expeditions against the Inca and Aztec civilizations in the early 1500s.

The Columbian exchange not only transferred animals and plants but also diseases such as influenza and small pox. The native populations were depleted significantly through diseases, enslavement and wars.

The Spanish governed Spanish America through a stable government that was modeled after Spanish home rule as well as absolutism. The power flowed from the king to the Council of the Indies to viceroys and finally to local officials. The catholic church also played an important role in the Spanish colonies administration. Silver and gold mining was the major economy in Spanish America. The mines were worked by Indians. Many of the Spaniards came to the New World due to the easier social mobility. The Indian inhabitants were always more than the European colonists and their descendants in Spanish America.

To justify their claims to land that was owned by someone else, the Spanish relied on missionary zeal, cultural superiority, and violence. A missionary element existed from the long holy

war of the church against Islam. This was renewed with the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. Religious mission and national glory went hand in hand, with the major aim of the Spaniards to change or transform the Indians into obedient, Catholic subjects of the Crown. The souls that would be saved could also act as a major source of labor force in the silver and gold mines.

The French hoped to find gold and a northwest passage to the Pacific, however, they were only able to find a barrier. Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec in the year 1608. With the relatively few settlers, there were friendly relations that were typical with France. The French prided themselves on having a policy that was more humane towards the Indians than Spain. However, their contact still brought disease and depletion of animals that resulted from trading of fur. The children of French men and Indian women were called the *métis*.

In the year 1609, Henry Hudson sailed into the harbor in New York and was able to claim the area for the Netherlands. The Dutch prided themselves on their broad religious toleration, freedom of the press and their devotion to liberty. In fact, Amsterdam was a refuge for many of the persecuted Jews and Protestants. The New Netherlands was a military post and was not governed democratically. However, the citizens possessed rights. The slaves too had some rights and the women enjoyed more independence than their counterparts in the other colonies. Also, there was more toleration with regard to religion. In an attempt to attract settlers there was cheap livestock provided as well as free land after six years of labor. The Dutch came to trade, not to conquer, and treated the native Indians more humanely, even though conflict wasn't completely avoided.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the various nations employed different means as they tried to conquer America. While the Spanish were more aggressive in their attempt to conquer the natives, the French and Dutch treated the Native Indians more humanely.

Works Cited

Eric Foner (2014) *Give Me Liberty*, Volume One, Brief Fourth Edition. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.