

European Expansion Westward to the Americas

The European expansion westward to the American continents was mostly done by the Spanish, French and English. Each of whom participated in three different types of colonization, which resulted in different outcomes for each and the people they affected in their settling and expansion of influence, power, and territory. During this period of colonization of the Americas; the European participants experienced much more winning, while the Natives and Enslaved Peoples experienced great loss.

The English used the Settler method of Colonization which was a system of power that perpetuated the elimination and repression of indigenous peoples and cultures to replace them with the people and culture of the mother country of the settlers. The first example of this type of colonization by the English is in their attempt to conquer Catholic Ireland. They chose not to integrate them, but instead perpetuated the violent seizure of territory and pushing back of inhabitants.¹ The first successful settlement by the English was Jamestown which at first was failing due to a lack of preparation for self sufficiency. Due to this the settlement struggled for decades and required a constant influx of people to maintain it as many died to disease and starvation. Lack of food forced some of the settlers to resort to cannibalism of buried bodies.² However, with the help of the Powhatan Tribe they were able to survive and stabilize. John Rolfe eventually introduces Tobacco as a cash crop, whose lucrative nature incentivizes the

¹ American Yawp, Ch II, English Colonization

² American Yawp, Ch II, English Colonization

establishment of other Colonies. Another example of successful settlements are the New England Colonies. These were established by mostly puritan family groups who dominated politics, religion, and culture of the area. As time went by the New England culture and society endured long after the region's residents ceased to be called "Puritan."³ This is quite the opposite to the many centuries of Native peoples culture that permeated the area long before the Europeans arrived and is a testament to the success the Settler Colonization method had. As mentioned in the Jamestown, the New World colonies exported cash crops such as; Tobacco, Cotton, and Sugar which further reinforced the positives of North American colonization. Due to the transatlantic trade route and the influx of excess food, the British Isles population increased from fewer than three million in 1500 to over five million by the middle of the seventeenth century. The population of the colonies mirrored this growth and went from tens of thousands in 1630 to over one million in the 1750's.⁴ With increased population and production of export ready crops, the English required much more land. This increased tensions between the Colonies and the Native Population, resulting in native resistance. King Philip's War, an example of one of the first major organized offensives by multiple native tribes under Metacom, focuses on New England colonies and manages to kill approximately 10% of the English population there. The English militia retaliates and manages to fight off the native resistance and achieves victory against the Wampanoag tribe. Allows for English colonists to now have reasoning for the forceful removal of Natives from their land and increases New England territory. With the death of Spanish Monarch Charles II, the War for Spanish Succession was fought by many European

³ American Yawp, Ch II, New England

⁴ Class Dialogue

powers. This war's resolution had effects on the control of territory in North America, France ceded Nova Scotia and Acadia to the English after the signing of the Treaties of Utrecht.⁵ The 7 Years War (French and Indian War) fought by the French and their Native allies against the English over control of the Ohio Valley ends in the complete loss of French Territory in all of North America and the British rule of many Spanish ports in Southern North America. The English colonization of the Americas was a mostly positive experience.

The French reasoning for the exploration of the Americas was first and foremost to find the fabled Northwest Passage that allowed trade from Europe to go uninterrupted westward until it reached Asia. French infatuation with the possible riches of Asia pushed them into St. Lawrence River which appeared to be what they were looking for but in reality stopped at the Great Lakes. This however was not the end of French colonization of North America, they saw a lucrative opportunity in the trade of furs from the area back to Europe in exchange for readily available European goods and technology with the Natives. The French made a relationship with the Natives that was positive for both sides. The export of furs made up most of the revenue of the French Colonies.⁶ The French fight in Queen Anne's war on the side of the Spanish and as a result they lose in the treaty of Utrecht Acadia and Nova Scotia in Northern America to the English. The French also lose land in the 7 Years War which they fought over territory in the Ohio Valley. This loss effectively ends the French immediate sphere of influence on the American Continent as they are forced to cede all of their remaining land to the English.

⁵ Class Dialogue

⁶ Class Dialogue, French Colonization

Spanish Colonization of the Americas was a result of the victory of the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula.⁷ With this new consolidation of Spanish European power, they felt as if they had to “flex” their ability to conquer and spread Spain past Europe itself. Colonization began a century before the English and as such they had become well established. They practiced Extractive Colonization through the use of Encomiendas to gain influence over the territory and then extract anything of value in order to create wealth. The Spanish enslaved Central American natives with the help of their technology, experienced conquistadors, and the Native’s lack of immunological resistance to European disease. They shipped the Native slaves to their tropical sugar plantations in the Caribbean and off the West African coast these were very lucrative ventures for the Spanish and furthered their need for slave labor that eventually moved to purchasing enslaved Africans. Further west the Spanish utilized the Missions to convert the Native peoples to Catholicism and inherently Spanish rule.⁸ The transatlantic trade from the West Indies, Mexico, and Peru booms and Spain profits from this immensely. However, their trade routes would soon be picked apart by British sponsored privateers who under Queen Elizabeth’s orders pillage and disrupt the Spanish.⁹ The Spanish is also plagued by many conflicts throughout this time as literally the bubonic plague which decimates nearly 15% of their population. The Eighty Years War consists of the Spanish ruled Dutch revolting in Europe resulting in the expenditure of large amounts of money. The Spanish attempts to invade and

⁷ American Yawp, Ch 1, European Expansion

⁸ American Yawp, Ch 2, Spanish America

⁹ American Yawp, Ch 2, English Colonization

conquer England using the grand Spanish Armada. The Armada is unable to keep up with the smaller and more agile ships of the English Navy and due to this are required to retreat. In their retreat to the West Coast of the British Isle they are wiped out by a storm effectively eliminates Spanish control over the seas and cedes that to England. In Southwest North America the Pueblo People, Natives in under Spanish control, revolt and kill thousands of Spanish and take a great portion of territory with them. The Spanish Influence over the North American continents begin well but is slowly deteriorated by conflict and competition until they are a fraction of what they were.

The Native Americans experienced nothing but loss in the European expansion westward to the Americas. They Experience enslavement by the Spanish in Central America resulting in the death by labor of thousands. Their population is completely devastated because of a lack of immunological resistance to European diseases such as Smallpox, Bubonic Plague, Chickenpox, Cholera, Diphtheria, Influenza, Malaria, Measles, etc. As many as 90% of the Native population is said to have died to European diseases.¹⁰ The Natives are a victim of the systematic loss of territory by the French, English, and Spanish. They attempt to resist, namely King Philip's War, where Metacom leads an organized offensive against the New England Settlements where they achieved the killing of 10% of the colonists population. However, they suffered greater losses in the English Militias retaliation. This allows the English to push back and expand their territory because of the clear advantages emphasized in their victory of this conflict. The Natives also participate in the 7 Years War with the French against the English. This resulted in a large loss of the Native population and their French ally which was forced to cede all territory to the English.

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In the document, Aliobamo Mingo, Choctaw Leader, Reflects on the British and French, 1765, it is clear that the Natives are no longer resisting the expansion of the English into their land especially after the loss of the French assistance. They only hope that they are contributors to them and the area around them and not a nuisance or source of misery. The Natives of the Americas experience only loss in this period of time and the losses they experience perpetuate through history and are still evident today.

Like the Native Americans, enslaved Africans have a mostly negative experience due to European expansion. The Enslaved Peoples of Africa are introduced to the Americas through the Transatlantic Slave Trade¹¹ where prisoners of war from tribal conflicts were sold to Portuguese and Dutch slave traders and transported to sugar plantations and southern British colonies where they were better suited to the climate according to the Europeans. In these plantations labor conditions and overworking with an extreme caloric deficit resulted in the death of many enslaved Africans in the sugar plantations. Due to a genetic trait the West Africans were sought after in Rice and Sugar plantations and continually imported to meet with the amount of dead. This genetic trait was a basis for the widening of the racial distinction between White and Blacks. The development of Racialized Slavery is noted by a few significant precedents in the British Colonies. The first precedent for the handling of runaway African Slaves was the case of John Punch. Punch had run away with two other Indentured Servants who happened to be European. In trial, the Europeans received only a few years in addition to their indenture whereas Punch being African received lifelong servitude.¹² This is the first example that a “Black” man

¹¹ American Yawp, Ch 4, Slavery, Anti-Slavery, and Atlantic Exchange

¹² Made in America, Seeing White Part 3 - Podcast

had been tried differently than his “White” counterparts and sets the precedent for the lifelong servitude of Africans in the British Colonies. Elizabeth Key, daughter to a White Slave owner who was a member of the House of Burgesses and a Slave Mother, sues for her freedom on the grounds that she is Christian and due Paternity is owed freedom. Keys wins her freedom, but legislatures now make the status determinant the Mother, closing that loophole for enslaved people to free themselves. The nail in the proverbial coffin for the differential treatment of Enslaved peoples were the 1705 Virginia Slave Codes which was the first set of regulatory script in reference specifically to the enslaved population.¹³ This set the tone and all of the remaining legal slave states followed suit in their universal adoption of the Slave Codes. This aided in the creation of the Us versus Them scenario between Whites and Blacks no matter the station of the “White” person, they were always deemed to be racially superior.

The events of European Expansion to the New World ended in a wholly negative experience for the Native and Enslaved Populations; while the Europeans experienced mostly positives and only some negatives in comparison. The greatest winner of this period of globalization were the English because of the remaining influence they had after 1763 and the expansion of their territory to be the greatest of all the European nations. Followed by the Spanish who lost territory but remained a great influence over Central America. Then the French who lost all North American Territories. The Enslaved Peoples come next because of the development of Racialized Slavery and the continual effects of that on their population. Finally the greatest loser being the Natives because of the systematic destruction of their culture, territory, and loss of over 90% of their population.

¹³ Class Dialogue, Development of Racialized Slavery

