

Power Notes: Meeting of the Three Cultures and Colonial America

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand how Western Europe emerged from the medieval period into the modern era.

- 1) The political system of feudalism was replaced by nationalism.
- 2) The economic system of manorialism was replaced by capitalism.
- 3) Because of the Reformation and the actions of secular authorities the influence of religion was gradually reduced.
- 4) During the Renaissance humanism and scientific inquiry developed.

Importance: Without these developments European expansion into other parts of the world (including the Americas) would not have taken place.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why the Iberian Peninsula took the lead in Western European expansion.

- 1) Geographic location. The location of Spain and Portugal on the Atlantic Ocean motivated them to find a way to bypass the Italian controlled trade of the Mediterranean.
- 2) Political stability. Because it was small and isolated from the rest of Europe, Portugal avoided many of the wars and conflicts of other Western European countries.
- 3) Economic opportunity. Portugal, and later, Spain saw expansion as a way to enhance the national treasury.

Importance: Columbus, an Italian sailing for Spain, discovered the Americas in 1492, and Vasco Da Gama of Portugal was the first European to reach India by sailing around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why Spain and Portugal were replaced by the British, French and Dutch in exploration and commerce.

- 1) Spain squandered its wealth in war.
- 2) Iberians did not develop a manufacturing base.
- 3) Influx of specie into Spain led to inflation.
- 4) The values of the Spanish aristocrats did not encourage economic development.
- 5) The 1588 defeat of the Spanish Armada by England greatly reduced Spain's military power.
- 6) Portugal lacked the natural, capital, and human resources to maintain a far-flung empire.

Importance: England, not Spain, settled the eastern seaboard of the future United States, and France occupied the area around Québec (Canada) and Louisiana. The conflict between Protestant England and Catholic Spain helped lead to future anti-Catholicism in the U.S.A.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

- 1) Europe had contact with Sub-Saharan Africa through caravan trade.
- 2) Desire for African gold led to Portuguese exploration, and the development of the slave trade.
- 3) Africans were enslaved because they were a cheap, readily available supply of labor (almost all labor was not free in Europe). Taking manpower from Africa did not economically disrupt the European world-economy.
- 4) Europeans tried to use Native Americans as non-free labor, but primarily because of high death rates there were not enough of them to effectively work on plantations. In addition, it was easy for the Native Americans to escape back into their tribes.
- 5) Slaves were a commodity. Their cost was so low that, with the exception of North America, it was cheaper to work them to death than to maintain a standard of living that would allow them to survive into old age. Slavery in the New World was maintained only through the continued importation of more slaves.
- 6) Most slaves were captured and sold into bondage by Africans from a tribe other than their own. The Atlantic slave trade took about 12 million Africans from their homes.

Importance: Slaves were taken from Africa for economic, not racial, reasons. Race would later be used as a rationale to keep African-Americans enslaved. If Native Americans had been a practical alternative they would have been used as a labor force instead.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand slavery in British North America.

- 1) At first the English were able to fill their labor needs by using English indentured servants. Characteristics: a) passage paid to America; b) room & board furnished; and, c) worked for a specified time (usually 7 years). Because of a high death rate most indentured servants died before their term expired.
- 2) First Africans landed in Jamestown, VA in 1619 (first African slaves brought to Latin America in 1510).
- 3) Africans replaced English as non-free labor because: a) they served for life; b) their descendants were also slaves; c) Africans not protected by European "rights"; d) color made it difficult to escape; e) Africans came from an agricultural society; and, f) once death rate declined African slaves were politically and economically preferable to English indentured servants.

Importance: African slavery led to a distinct Southern society, the Civil War, and to racial conflict after the Civil War.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand Native American culture.

- 1) Native American cultures varied from hunters and gatherers to very sophisticated cultures like the Incas and Aztecs.
- 2) European diseases were the primary cause of Native American destruction. European technology, alcohol, and lack of unity among the Indians also played a role.
- 3) The "Columbian Exchange" of crops, animals, and diseases had great impact upon the world.

Importance: Because of disease Indians were not a reliable labor force for European plantations. Europeans were able to settle and dominate the culture of all of the Americans (unlike Africa and Asia). The crops of the New World (especially the potato) enabled Europe's population to boom.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why the British established colonies in North America.

- 1) Markets for English goods--the theory of Mercantilism: a country should export more than it imports.
- 2) Access to raw materials.
- 3) Increase security.
- 4) Spread its ideology.

Importance: English law, customs and ideology are the foundation of the future United States; and, colonial dissatisfaction with English colonial objectives (e.g. control of trade), helped lead to the American Revolution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the British North American colonies.

- 1) The British colonies were established by private joint stock companies.
- 2) Jamestown was established in 1607 by the London Company. With the development of the tobacco industry and African slavery in the late 17th century the economy of VA soared.
- 3) Plymouth colony was established in 1620 by the Pilgrims (Separatists--they wanted to separate from the Church of England because it was too "Catholic").
- 4) Massachusetts Bay colony was established in 1630 by Puritans (they wanted to "purify" the Church of England of its Catholic ritual and dogma).
- 5) Georgia, the last colony, was organized in 1732.
- 6) The following environmental factors influenced European settlers: a) the Indians; b) space & distance; and, c) the geography of the New World--New England, the Middle Colonies, and the South.

Importance: Virginia and Massachusetts were the leading colonies in Colonial America. Puritanism has a lasting effect on American culture. The environment helped create a unique American culture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why there was conflict between Native Americans and Europeans.

Differences between European and Native American cultures:

Europeans	Native Americans
Christians	non-Christians
central governments	lack of central Indian government
private ownership of land	communal use of land
economies based on trade	subsistence economy
advanced technology	stone age culture

1) Cultural conflicts existed between the Indians and Europeans because the Europeans: a) demanded that the Indians live under their laws; b) tried to convert the Indians to Christianity; c) took the Indians' land; d) destroyed the Indians' self-esteem through the use of alcohol; and, e) European diseases decimated the Indians.

Importance: The above factors cause over 200 years of misunderstandings and warfare between European-Americans and Native Americans. By the end of the 19th century European-Americans have removed the Indians from all territory that they wanted to control.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand how a constitutional government developed in England and how the development of this system effected colonial America.

- 1) In 1642 a 46 year civil war broke out in England. During this period the American colonies suffered a period of "benign, or salutary, neglect."
- 2) The 1688 Glorious Revolution established the principle of parliamentary supremacy and that Englishmen had certain rights--no matter where they lived.

Importance: Englishmen in America began to believe that they had the same rights as Englishmen living in England--self-representation. This belief was a major cause of the American Revolution.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand how conflict began to develop between the British North American Colonies and Britain.

- 1) Colonial government was based on the English model: a) governor appointed by the king; b) governor appointed a council; c) lower house elected by freemen of colony (free, white, males, 21 years or older, and property owners; some colonies had religious qualifications to vote)--VA House of Burgesses 1st legislature; and, d) lower house had the power to tax.
- 2) The Navigation Acts of 1660 & 1696 were used by the British to try and enforce mercantilism. These acts restricted American trade in the following ways: a) all overseas trade had to be shipped on British vessels; b) only British citizens could trade with America; and c) major colonial commodities could be exported only to Britain.
- 3) Because Britain was preoccupied with events in Europe the colonists were able to avoid complying with the Navigation Acts until after the French and Indian War ended in 1763.
- 4) The French and Indian War started in 1754 over whether France or Britain would control the Ohio River Valley. France controlled Canada and Britain controlled the "13 colonies."
- 5) The war ended with the Peace of Paris, 1763: a) France lost all its territory in North America; b) Britain had a large war debt; c) the British colonies no longer needed the British to protect them from the French or Indians; and, d) ex-French territory was available to American colonization.

Importance: The French and Indian War was a direct cause of the American Revolution--Americans wanted to move west, have less British control, and avoid taxation. British goals were the opposite.