

# Example of essay on settlement of california from 1865- 1895

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## Settlement of California from 1865-1895 and its impact on the U. S. economy

### CALIFORNIA FROM 1865- 1895 AND THE U. S. ECONOMY

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The California Gold Rush, which started in the discovery of gold in 1848, has an important role in the massive migration of people from diverse culture in the Golden State in the remaining half of the 19th century. Although California was already home to Native Americans and people of other cultures, the Gold Rush has dramatically increased the population of this state. People from different places marched through difficult and dangerous journey in their hope to get a share of a good fortune in the west. After the gold fever, some of the gold miners left California, while many opted to stay. The Anglo Americans, Asians and African Americans among others, stayed and change the population composition of this state (" Diversity"). Despite the initial tension of having to live in a heterogeneous society, the Native Californians', and the people from diverse culture who came and stayed help California grow culturally, physically and economically.

The construction of the transcontinental road in the 1860s connected the economically developing California to the railroads of Eastern United States. Its completion on May 10, 1869 marked the move of California to become a more economically progressive state. The transcontinental road was responsible for the rapid trade, commerce and travel advancement in California; the accessible transportation fostered an easier and inexpensive migration to this territory. " Within ten years of its completion, the railroad shipped \$50 million worth of freight coast to coast every year" (The Impact).

Just as the railroads opened trade with Asia and the East, it has also brought products from other parts of the world into the West. The agricultural, coal and other mining produce from the west were transported freely to the east coast.

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Native Americans- Not all were benefited from the construction and opening of the intercontinental road. Although it helped in shortening the distances of the vast United States, and improved the Californian way of conducting business; it had negatively affected the early settlers of the region, the Native Americans. The arrival of the white American to permanently settle in California displaces the natives and moved them further into the mountains. The Native Americans had wanted to preserve their home and resources against migration but the white migrants showed little consideration for them: most of the migrants believed that the natives are an inferior and undesirable race. The incompatibility of character and beliefs caused the conflict between the white settlers and the Native Americans. The Indians attributed the plants, animals and the environment with spiritual and religious meaning, and believed that it is their duty to preserve and protect the land. Their view was in complete opposite to that of the Anglo settlers. The migrants view the natural resources as creations that are to be used for human consumption, and that it is important to own the land and take full control of it.

Series of wars ensued between the natives and the new settlers of the west. There was conflict because of land encroachment by the whites and reports

of theft and murder on both sides. Several negotiations and treaties were signed in order to lessen the conflict. The Native Americans were forced to assimilate with the whites. They were made to conform with the whites social and educational standards. The tribes were made to give up their lands, and so the native Californians struggled to preserve their traditional but they have little means to fight against discrimination, more so with the dispossession of their lands. The last battles fought by the Indians of California in their hope to gain back their land were the Modoc war that happened

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in 1872 to 1873. These are battles from which the natives finally lost, and the last known time that the Indians in California fought against the law. Although many of the remaining Indians showed their sentiments over their culture and tradition that were lost; and the apparent discriminating attitude from the whites, the native Californians assimilated with their new environment. Some of them found work in the city and in the agricultural sector (California).

Asian Americans- Asians started migrating to the Golden Country in the Gold Rush era. Most of them are the Chinese who initially came to work in the gold mines. Soon they took other jobs such as cooks, launderers and other menial work in their hope to earn a good fortune. However, life was not meant to be easy for the Asian immigrants of the 19th century. They experienced low pay and discrimination from the whites. In 1862, Leland Stanford, the newly elected governor of California stated that he would protect the state of California from “ the dregs of Asia”, particularly referring to the Chinese

immigrants who are coming in large numbers to California. But no policies were yet made against the Chinese during that time. The Central Pacific railroad construction was ongoing and the contractor was in need of hundreds of men who can withstand hard work at any given time. There were Irish men who were initially working on the railroads, but heavy work made them demand for a higher pay. The contractors hired 50 Chinese men as wagon fillers. Their attitude towards work impressed the contractors and so they decided to hire more Chinese for the more strenuous jobs. They advertised the work in China; and by the end of 1868 the number of Chinese rose to 12, 000 of which 80% of them were employed in the railroads (Workers). The white contractors found that the Chinese are good in whatever job that they were assigned to do. The effort in the construction of the Central Pacific railroad is an unspoken statement of their contribution to the opening of California to other parts of America.

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After the construction of the railroads, the Chinese immigrants, owing particularly to their dexterity and positive work attitude, were able to grow successfully as laborers. Many of them even became entrepreneurs in the Golden State. Their success fueled anti- Chinese sentiments in the American society. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed to limit the number of Chinese immigrants that came to the United States. Tales were spread that the Chinese men smoke opium and are gamblers within the premise of their neighborhood. The advocates of anti-Chinese legislation used these tales to argue that further admission of Chinese in the U. S. lowers the cultural and moral standards of America (Milestones). The U. S. Government was

challenged on how to balance the domestic attitude on Chinese exclusion and wanting to maintain good diplomatic relations with China. In the end, the U. S. government chose to uphold its society's clamor for the exclusion of the Chinese.

The Hispanic-Americans-The Hispanic Californians has been the largest group in terms of cultural representation in the state. This may be due to earlier the arrival and settlement of Hispanic explorers in California brought about by the Spanish missions to spread Christianity. When the U. S. extended its powers to include California, many of the Hispanic population opted to become U. S. citizens. The number of Hispanics in California increased as the Mexicans, Chileans and Latin Americans immigrated on account of the Gold Rush. Soon after, they assimilated with the Californian society as entrepreneurs, farmers and laborers.

The African- American- Between 1850 to 186, there are four thousand African Americans who migrated to the Golden State, and half of them settled in San Francisco and Sacramento where they formed the first community of English speaking Blacks in the west. In the last half of the

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19th century, the Black Americans became successful in the catering business that they formed the United Public Waiter's Mutual Beneficial Association (Civil). The organization was set up in 1869 with the purpose of providing quality service. Despite the racism and discrimination, many African Americans were able to go against the odds and established themselves in the society. In the 1870, Alexander Ashbourne, moved from to

California and started a dry goods business. Later, he became one of the prominent Black residents of the state (Civil). The African-Americans who came to settle throughout California had made important contributions in the states' growth and development.

“ If and when the United States wanted to see and know itself as a successful world commonwealth, an ecumenopolis, all it had to do was to look at California as it remained the coast of dreams” (Starr as cited in Flanigan). Despite being at odds in the beginning, the diverse races who comprised the California population were the pioneers who made what California is today. The part played by the Chinese in the construction of the railroads that connects California to other states, the enterprising attitude of the Hispanics and Black- Americans all made contribution in building California.

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