

Native americans



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Columbus is considered the first European who revealed that the new world Indians were seafaring people that traded throughout the Caribbean island. In 1492 Isabel and Ferdinand commissioned Columbus to search for a way to the Indies. Following his arrival, the Spaniards followed and settled on the Caribbean Islands. They explored the resources within the area and accumulated and acquired enough wealth to be able to carry out future expeditions. It was Governor Diego Velazquez who later on commissioned Herman Cortes to carry out an expedition at the coast of Yucatan.

Though Valasquez later on changed his mind, Cortes on his own account founded the city of Veracruz. It was at this town that he learnt of the hatred that many Indian tribes harbored against Aztecs (Keegan, 1995). The Spanish held the opinion that their culture was more superiors as compared to that of the Indians and the result was that the Indians were later on exploited by the Spanish conquerors. It is considered that approximately six million Indians died out of the European diseases or were killed. Indian priest were persecuted as the Spanish burned their books thus destroying the Indians astronomy, mathematics and even architecture.

The Spanish language was imposed up on the Indians and were forcefully converted to Catholicism. Spain being one of the European countries set out on a course of expansion. There was great hope among the ruler of Spain that they would eventually bring the Americas wealth to Spain. Cortes was one of those men who were “ credited for conquering” Mexico played a major roe in the process. By the time Cortes made it to Mexico, there was a highly complex form of civilization that was in place as evidenced by the clear trade routes, great cities and even a form of a written language.

Native Americans also had a culture whose religion they considered very important. Today it is considered that their religion played a role towards their downfall (Keegan, 1995). By 1500s, the Indian cultures had calendars, written languages and even both an effective religious and political systems. A good example is the Indians of Mexico who were able to build pyramids, developed a written language recorded culture and history in books and even possessed agricultural systems that gave them the potential of feeding cities of up to 200, 000 people.

Also at this time, the Spanish were able to work with metal and use wheel as well as explore distant places that were far away from Spain. As soon as the Spanish conquered Aztecs at around 1521, Indians were forced to be subject to the Spanish rule. The Spanish did not find any value in the Indians culture and thus attempted to destroy it though they valued the Mexico's wealth a lot. The result was that the Indians were used as a labor force and forced to speak a new language, dress in the European clothes and subjected them to the Spanish rule. Most of the Mesoamerica tribes were characterized with a highly complex society.

The Olmecs were considered geniuses of philosophy, art and science. They are considered historically the first astronomers of the ancient America. The Maya on the other hand invented a hieroglyphics system of writing. As compared to Europe, their mathematical system was approximately a thousand years more advanced (Keegan, 1995). Historically most the indigenous people in America were hunter-gathers while some practiced agriculture and aquaculture. Colonization of America by Europe changed not only the bloodlines and cultures but also the lives of the people.

Columbus first encountered approximately 250, 000 Hispaniola and Tainos who were the dominant culture in the Bahamas and Antilles. In approximately thirty years later after this encounter with Columbus, it is estimated that 70% of the Tainos lost their lives. Out of the forced labor in the mines, slavery and mistreatment, Tainos slowly adopted suicidal behavior that saw women abort or kill their children soon after birth. Men would either ingest manioc, a violent poison or jump from the cliffs. Since the Native Americans were not immune to the European diseases such as smallpox and measles, their outbreak killed them even more.

It is estimated that nearly half of the Hispaniola population was killed by smallpox in 1518 and within a few years, 60-90% of the Inca population was killed by smallpox. The Archaic Native Americans began practicing agriculture in 4, 000 years BP. Since technology to them was advanced and pottery was common, felling of tree in small scale became a feasible phenomenon. In the course of many thousand years, most of the plants that the Native Americans domesticated have now come to be part of the 50-60% of the worldwide crops.

Geographic zones did appear to share cultural practices where even unrelated people adopted similar social organizations and technologies. The Indians had a special view about land. They shared a common view that everything within the universe was interconnected and thus possessed a certain energy or spiritual force that had the potential to affect the lives of anything else in the world. They thus considered the idea of gaining power as one which was very vital especially in their day to day activities such as farming and hunting (Keegan, 1995).