

# Civil war essay sample

War



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1. The English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and Swedes all controlled parts of the Americas between 1492 and the Civil War. How did these Europeans gain control of the Americas in the first place? Where in the Americas did each build their empire, and what were their differing goals (economic, political, etc)?

“ The start of the European colonization of the Americas is typically dated to 1492.[1] However, L’Anse aux Meadows in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador is much older. Dating from 1000AD, it is the only known site of a Norse or Viking village in Canada, and in North America outside of Greenland. L’Anse aux Meadows remains the only widely accepted instance of pre-Columbian trans-oceanic contact and is notable for its possible connection with the attempted colony of Vinland established by Leif Ericson around the same time period or, more broadly, with Norse exploration of the Americas. In 1492, a Spanish expedition headed by Christopher Columbus sailed to America to sell, buy, and trade rich spices and other goods. European conquest, large-scale exploration and colonization soon followed. This first occurred along the Caribbean coasts on the islands of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Cuba, and after 1500 extended into the interiors of both North and South America. In 1497, sailing from the north on behalf of England, John Cabot landed on the North American coast, and a year later, Columbus’s third voyage reached the South American coast. France founded colonies in much of eastern North America, on a number of Caribbean islands, and in South America.

Portugal colonized Brazil. Eventually, the entire Western Hemisphere came under the control of European governments, leading to profound changes to

its landscape, population, and plant and animal life. In the 19th century alone over 50 million people left Europe for the Americas.[2] The post-1492 era is known as the period of the Columbian Exchange. The first explorations and conquests were made by the Spanish and the Portuguese, immediately following their own final reconquest of Iberia in 1492. In the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, ratified by the Pope, these two kingdoms divided the entire non-European world into two areas of world exploration and colonization, with a north to south boundary that cut through the Atlantic Ocean and the eastern part of present-day Brazil. Based on this Treaty and on early claims by Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific Ocean in 1513, the Spanish conquered large territories in North, Central and South America. Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes took over the Aztec Kingdom and Francisco Pizarro conquered the Inca Empire. As a result, by the mid-16th century, the Spanish Crown had gained control of much of western South America, Central America and southern North America, in addition to its earlier Caribbean territories. Over this same timeframe, Portugal colonized much of eastern South America, naming it Brazil.

Other European nations soon disputed the terms of the Treaty of Tordesillas. England and France attempted to plant colonies in the Americas in the 16th century, but these were a failure. However, in the following century, the two kingdoms, along with the Dutch Republic, succeeded in establishing permanent colonies. Some of these were on Caribbean islands, which had often already been conquered by the Spanish or depopulated by disease, while others were in eastern North America, which had not been colonized by Spain north of Florida. Early European possessions in North America included

Spanish Florida, Spanish New Mexico, the English colonies of Virginia (with its North Atlantic off-shoot, The Somers Isles) and New England, the French colonies of Acadia and Canada, the Swedish colony of New Sweden, and the Dutch New Netherland. In the 18th century, Denmark–Norway revived its former colonies in Greenland, while the Russian Empire gained a foothold in Alaska. As more nations gained an interest in the colonization of the Americas, competition for territory became increasingly fierce.

Colonists often faced the threat of attacks from neighboring colonies, as well as from indigenous tribes and pirates. The first phase of European activity in the Americas began with the Atlantic Ocean crossings of Christopher Columbus (1492–1504), sponsored by Spain, whose original attempt was to find a new route to India and China, known as “ the Indies”. He was followed by other explorers such as John Cabot, who reached Newfoundland and was sponsored by England. Pedro Álvares Cabral reached Brazil and claimed it for Portugal. Amerigo Vespucci, working for Portugal in voyages from 1497 to 1513, established that Columbus had reached a new set of continents.

Cartographers still use a Latinized version of his first name, America, for the two continents. Other explorers included Giovanni da Verrazzano, sponsored by France; the Portuguese João Vaz Corte-Real in Newfoundland; and Samuel de Champlain (1567–1635) who explored Canada. In 1513, Vasco Núñez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and led the first European expedition to see the Pacific Ocean from the west coast of the New World. In an action with enduring historical import, Balboa claimed the Pacific Ocean and all the lands adjoining it for the Spanish Crown. It was 1517 before another

expedition from Cuba visited Central America, landing on the coast of Yucatán in search of slaves. Economic immigrants

Inspired by the Spanish riches from colonies founded upon the conquest of the Aztecs, Incas, and other large Native American populations in the sixteenth century, the first Englishmen to settle permanently in America hoped for some of the same rich discoveries when they established their first permanent settlement in Jamestown, Virginia. They were sponsored by common stock companies such as the chartered Virginia Company (and its off-shoot, the Somers Isles Company) financed by wealthy Englishmen who understood the economic potential of this new land. The main purpose of this colony was the hope of finding gold or the possibility (or impossibility) of finding a passage through the Americas to the Indies. It took strong leaders, like John Smith, to convince the colonists of Jamestown that searching for gold was not taking care of their immediate needs for food and shelter and that “ he who shall not work shall not eat.” (A direction based on text from the New Testament.)

The extremely high mortality rate was quite distressing and cause for despair among the colonists. Tobacco later became a cash crop, with the work of John Rolfe and others, for export and the sustaining economic driver of Virginia and nearby colonies like Maryland. From the beginning of Virginia’s settlements in 1587 until the 1680s, the main source of labor and a large portion of the immigrants were indentured servants looking for new life in the overseas colonies. During the 17th century, indentured servants constituted three-quarters of all European immigrants to the Chesapeake region. Most of the indentured servants were English farmers who had been

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pushed off their lands due to the expansion of livestock raising, the enclosure of land, and overcrowding in the countryside. This unfortunate turn of events served as a push for thousands of people (mostly single men) away from their situation in England.

There was hope, however, as American landowners were in need of labourers and were willing to pay for a labourer's passage to America if they served them for several years. By selling passage for five to seven years worth of work they could hope to start out on their own in America. In the French colonial regions, the focus of economy was the fur trade with the natives. Farming was set up primarily to provide subsistence only, although cod and other fish of the Grand Banks were a major export and source of income for the French and many other European nations. The fur trade was also practiced by the Russians on the northwest coast of North America. After the French and Indian War, the British were ceded all French possessions in North America east of the Mississippi River, aside from the tiny islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. Religious immigration

Roman Catholics were the first major religious group to immigrate to the New World, as settlers in the colonies of Portugal and Spain (and later, France) were required to belong to that faith. English and Dutch colonies, on the other hand, tended to be more religiously diverse. Settlers to these colonies included Anglicans, Dutch Calvinists, English Puritans, English Catholics, Scottish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, German and Swedish Lutherans, as well as Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, Moravians and Jews of various nationalities. Many groups of colonists came to the Americas searching for the right to practice their religion without persecution. The <https://assignbuster.com/civil-war-essay-sample/>

Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century broke the unity of Western Christendom and led to the formation of numerous new religious sects, which often faced persecution by governmental authorities. In England, many people came to question the organization of the Church of England by the end of the sixteenth century.

One of the primary manifestations of this was the Puritan movement, which sought to “purify” the existing Church of England of its many residual Catholic rites that they believed had no mention in the Bible. A strong believer in the notion of rule by divine right, England’s Charles I persecuted religious dissenters. Waves of repression led to the migration of about 20,000 Puritans to New England between 1629 and 1642, where they founded multiple colonies. Later in the century, the new Pennsylvania colony was given to William Penn in settlement of a debt the king owed his father. Its government was set up by William Penn in about 1682 to become primarily a refuge for persecuted English Quakers; but others were welcomed. Baptists, Quakers and German and Swiss Protestants flocked to Pennsylvania. The lure of cheap land, religious freedom and the right to improve themselves with their own hand was very attractive.[9] Forced immigration

Slavery existed in the Americas, prior to the arrival of Europeans, as the Natives often captured and held other tribes’ members as captives.[10] Some of these captives were even forced to undergo human sacrifice under some tribes, such as the Aztecs. The Spanish followed with the enslavement of local aborigines in the Caribbean. As the native populations declined (mostly from European diseases, but also and significantly from forced exploitation and careless murder), they were often replaced by Africans

imported through a large commercial slave trade. By the 18th century, the overwhelming number of black slaves was such that Native American slavery was less commonly used. Africans, who were taken aboard slave ships to the Americas, were primarily obtained from their African homelands by coastal tribes who captured and sold them. The high incidence of disease nearly always fatal to Europeans kept nearly all the slave capture activities confined to native African tribes. Rum, guns and gun powder were some of the major trade items exchanged for slaves. The great majority went to sugar colonies in the Caribbean and to Brazil, where life expectancy was short and the numbers had to be continually replenished.

The total slave trade to islands in the Caribbean, Brazil, Mexico and to the United States is estimated to have involved 12 million Africans.[11][12 About 600, 000 slaves were imported into the U. S., or 5% of the 12 million slaves brought across from Africa. Life expectancy was much higher in the U. S. (because of better food, less disease, lighter work loads, and better medical care) so the numbers grew rapidly by excesses of births over deaths, reaching 4 million by the 1860 Census. From 1770 until 1860, the rate of natural growth of North American slaves was much greater than for the population of any nation in Europe, and was nearly twice as rapid as that of England.[15] In all, approximately three to four hundred thousand black slaves streamed into the ports of Charleston, South Carolina and Newport, Rhode Island until about 1810. Of the 12 million brought to the New World, 5. 4% (645, 000) were brought to what is now the United States.[16] In addition to African slaves, poor Europeans were brought over in substantial numbers



as indentured servants, particularly in the British Thirteen colonies.[17][18]

### Disease and indigenous population loss

The European and Asian lifestyle included a long history of sharing close quarters with domesticated animals such as cows, pigs, sheep, goats, horses, and various domesticated fowl, which had resulted in epidemic diseases unknown in the Americas. Thus the large-scale contact with Europeans after 1492 introduced novel germs to the indigenous people of the Americas. Epidemics of smallpox (1518, 1521, 1525, 1558, 1589), typhus (1546), influenza (1558), diphtheria (1614) and measles (1618) swept ahead of initial European contact,[19][20] killing between 10 million and 20 million[21] people, up to 95% of the indigenous population of the Americas. [22][23][24] The cultural and political instability attending these losses appears to have been of substantial aid in the efforts of various colonists to seize the great wealth in land and resources of which indigenous societies had customarily made use.[25]

Such diseases yielded human mortality of an unquestionably enormous gravity and scale – and this has profoundly confused efforts to determine its full extent with any true precision. Estimates of the pre-Columbian population of the Americas vary tremendously. Others have argued that significant variations in population size over pre-Columbian history are reason to view higher-end estimates with caution. Such estimates may reflect historical population maxima, while indigenous populations may have been at a level somewhat below these maxima or in a moment of decline in the period just prior to contact with Europeans. Indigenous populations hit

their ultimate lows in most areas of the Americas in the early twentieth century; in a number of cases, growth has returned.

## English

England's interest in America emerged slowly. In 1497, Henry VII sent Giovanni Caboto, an Italian mariner to search for a northwest passage to Asia. Cabot probably reached Newfoundland, which he took to be part of Asia.

When interest in America revived during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), England was rapidly becoming a Protestant kingdom. After 1600, internal migration fueled overseas settlement. Before then, interest in America centered, not in London, but in southwestern ports involved in the Newfoundland fisheries. By the 1560s, the idea of permanent colonization intrigued several Englishmen.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a well-educated humanist, was one of the most brutal of Elizabeth's captains in the Irish wars of the 1560s. Gilbert began to think of colonizing America. He proposed that England grab control of the Newfoundland fisheries, a nursery of seamen and naval power.

Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh obtained his own patent from the queen and tried twice to plant a colony in North America. In 1587, he sent a second expedition, one that included some women, a sign that he envisioned a permanent colony. Sketchy evidence suggests that the Powhatans, the most powerful Indians in the area, wiped out the Chesapeake, along with

any English living with them, in spring 1607, just as the first Jamestown settlers were arriving in the bay.

In the 17th Century, more than 700, 000 people crossed the Atlantic to the English colonies in North America and the Caribbean. Most European migrants were single young men who arrived as servants. At first some Africans were treated as servants, not slaves.

The Europeans who settled in New England or the Hudson or Delaware valleys were the most fortunate. Because Puritans and Quakers migrated as families into healthy regions, their population expanded at a rate far beyond anything known in Europe. The descendants of this small, idealistic minority soon became a substantial part of the total population, and they played a role in American history far out of proportion to their original numbers.

### Economics

In 1606 King James I of England chartered the Virginia Company with authority to colonize North America between the 34th and 45th parallels.

The export of tobacco financed the importation of indentured servants.

### Sanitation (Health)

The colony was a deathtrap. Every summer, the river became contaminated around Jamestown and sent out killing waves of dysentery and typhoid fever. Before long, malaria also set in. Only 38 of the original 104 colonists survived the first year.

The Maryland charter of 1632 made Baltimore “ lord proprietor” of the colony.

French

In 1682, Frenchmen traveled down the Mississippi to its mouth, claimed possession of the entire area for France, and called it Louisiana.