

European, native american, and african collisions essay



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In the 1400s alone, two collisions of worlds took place. They are collisions in the sense that there were two parties who were socially very different whose cultures met at rather sudden point. These collisions' importance and impact in history and global economics is great. The first was the introduction of European trading posts into Africa; the second was Columbus landing in the Bahamas and unintentionally discovering the New World.

These two events are alike in they both let to dramatic changes in the course of history and both were much more beneficiary for the Europeans. The Portuguese clashed cultures with the Africans in the mid-1400s. When the Portuguese found that it was possible to get back to Europe using a certain route with westward breezes and had developed a new type of ship, they began to set up trading posts on the African shoreline. They reached previously unreachable places (unreachable, at least, to Europeans at the time). Now Portugal had prime access to slaves and gold. Using methods invented by Arab ' flesh merchants', the Portuguese set up their own slave distribution system that was very profitable, especially when selling slaves far away from the slaves' homeland.

Bartholomeu Dias eventually sailed around the tip of Africa and discovered the water route to India. This clash of cultures proved very beneficial for the Portuguese, as many became rich off of the gold and slaves. The European popularization of slave trade would eventually lead to Enland's colonial success, which in turn lead to the creation of the United States of America. The Africans, however, did not receive as much of a benefit from the slave trade. According to The American Pageant, " some forty thousand Africans

were carried away to the Atlantic sugar islands in the last half of the fifteenth century.

Millions more were to be wrenched from their home continent after the discovery of the Americas. " In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed to find the Indies under the Spanish flag. The Spanish were intrigued and wanting to achieve more success than the Portuguese, which is why King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella approved of Columbus's voyage. He landed on a Bohemian island approximately six weeks after setting sail.

This is when the Spanish culture clashed with the Native American culture. The global economy was severely changed from the new crops found in the New World. Europeans were introduced to vanilla, chocolate, tobacco, beans, tomatoes, pineapples, potatoes, and corn. Sugar brought over from the Old World grew especially well in parts of the New World.

Another thing that benefited the Europeans was the presence of gold in the New World. Spanish conquistadores hungrily sought after gold and silver. By 1600, price increases caused by the explosion of silver supplies caused the beginning of capitalism. The amazing success of the Spanish would be sought after by many countries after these events.

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas ended up being beginning of the demise of the Native Americans. The Europeans first introduced new foodstuffs to the Indians. They also greatly helped by introducing pigs, horses, and cows. unwittingly brought many diseases to America, including smallpox, measles, bubonic plague, influenza, typhus, diphtheria, and scarlet

fever. These diseases devastated Indian populations, ultimately helping in reducing Native American populations by over 90%.

The Spanish conquistadores, very selfish and hungry for silver, crushed Indian armies, such as the Incas in 1532. Hernan Cortes was entered the Aztec empire's capital of Tenochitlan in 1540, welcomed by cheftain Montezuma. After Cortes and his conquistadores took advantage of the people for their gold, the Aztecs tried to fight back. Tenochitlan, a city that was as large as most European cities at its time, was easily capitulated because of the combination of Spanish guns and a smallpox outbreak. The Indians could not compete when guns and disease were on the European side.

These two periods in history put the Europeans in more power at the risk of the Africans and the Indians. In conclusion, these clashes of cultures, although destructive at some times, were very constructive. They led to events and ideas so quintessential that our world would not be the same without them.