

Puerto rico history



**ASSIGN
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Rise of American control and Ponce Massacre. Puerto Rico is a small archipelago, that was considered as the primary gateway to all the European travelers bound to Cuba, Central America, Mexico and northern regions of South America. The reports available have clearly indicated the evidences of settlements by different tribes and races that were known to exist from 6000 BC (History). Among them the most dominant culture that had existed in this region was Tainos culture. The presence of this civilization was also reported by the explorer Christopher Columbus. The geographical advantage this place enjoyed, made it as a very strategic location for all the colonial intrusion mostly carried out by the Europeans. The most significant among such encounters were the wars fought between Spanish territorial invaders and Americans (History). The continual aggression of these forces resulted in the slow elimination of Tainos culture by the end of 16th century. By the end of 19th century, the continually fought Spanish-American wars concluded with Americans claiming the control of Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico).

The control of Puerto Rico by Americans started bringing considerable changes to the socio-economic and political conditions of Puerto Ricans. The stage was set for modernization and started creating a congenial atmosphere of American commercial growth plans. The initial step in this direction was rationalization of currency of Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico). The development and implementation of uniform policies for the government employees which included stipulated working hours of eight hours a day, along with the enforcement of freedom of assembly, speech, press and religion. In addition, steps to improve the educational system was initiated by starting public school and extended the US postal service to this island (Puerto Rico). The better transportation was planned, highways extended

and bridges constructed across major rivers and canals to enhance the development. The better health care systems started reducing the child mortality rates and controlled various endemic diseases. The period also showed creation of new political parties - Republican Party and American Federal party (Puerto Rico).

In order to get more democratic rights a new political party called Nationalist party was founded in the year 1922 (History). Being more politically aggressive, Nationalist party started intensifying its protests by boycotting the various collective political exercises. This resulted in distancing the party from the existing authorities. This led to the incident called ' Ponce Massacre', that became the most violent chapter in the history of Puerto Rico (The Ponce Massacre). The incident represented the brutal killing of large number of demonstrators in the Puerto Rican southern city called Ponce in an effort to press the administration to end slavery and demand for independence from United States. Though the approval for demonstrations were said to have obtained, the governor of Puerto Rico demanded an urgent cancellation of the permit. Even after the permission was cancelled, the protesters staged the demonstrations (The Ponce Massacre). Fully armed policemen was positioned to stop the advancement of demonstrating group and without any further notice the police forces started operating fire. The reports available indicates the dead to have included women, children and large number of passers by who were not part of the protesting group. United States called for a detailed enquiry into the incident and based on the report hence submitted the governor was replaced (The Ponce Massacre). The Ponce Massacre thus induced further momentum to the nationalist movements and hence can be considered as the first war of Puerto Rican

independence.

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