

Populated the western hemisphere history essay

[History](#)



Michael Mansfield EC 456 By around 9000 B. C. the first Americans had already populated the Western Hemisphere; new societies formed as they tracked food sources (Nash 9). These diverse societies learned how to survive and master their respective environments, often leading to a relatively high standard of living (King, 8 Apr. 2013). It was about 10, 600 years later that the first European colonizers landed on the shores of America. The Native Americans impacted the Europeans in positive and negative ways, leading to both growth and stagnation for the two societies. The Native Americans used social division of labor. This meant the men cleared land and hunted while the women gathered, planted, cultivated and harvested food (most of the calories consumed came from gathering rather than hunting) (Nash 15). Native Americans seem to have been tall based on the length of their leg bones; this suggests that a variety of quality food was available (King, 8 Apr. 2013). The creation of art suggests food gathering was not always a pressing obligation (King, 8 Apr. 2013). Wealth differed for the Natives based upon region, group, climate and environment. According to Nash, the Pueblo People (Southwest) lived in terraced buildings with many rooms (11). Natives in the Northwest lived well in cedar long-houses, produced art, traded using the rivers and were relatively tall (Nash 12). The Iroquois nation (Northeast), comprised of around 10, 000 politically unified peoples from five tribes, were an advanced communal people who shared food and produced great art (Nash 17). Their densely populated tribes suggest low mortality and high birth rates. The Iroquois were the initial Native American contacts for the Dutch, French and English migrants (Nash 17). Europeans interacted with the Native Americans through trade in fur, food, etc. The Natives demonstrated how to grow agriculture such as corn,

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beans, squash and tobacco. War, however, was frequent and drained both economies. Some Natives were used as slaves or lifelong servants while others converted to Christianity and worked/lived with the settlers in 'praying villages' (King, 8 Apr. 2013). 'Wampum' (shell-beads) was used for trade by both peoples as European currency was in short supply. Question 2: Workers in the colonies comprised of the free, indentured servants, redemptioners and slaves. After survival was accomplished, comparative advantage (the ability to produce at a lower opportunity cost) formed in the colonies. Depending upon the natural endowments of the land, comparative advantage differed between regions. What was produced in New England varied amongst the Middle and Southern colonies. Those who emigrated from Europe to the colonies independently were free and motivated by the headright land grants. They comprised of farmers, merchants, sailors, drayman, and scholars (H&C 9). But because labor was in short supply, white Europeans known as indentured servants also migrated. These individuals agreed to work a certain number of years (varying based upon age, sex and skill level) in exchange for passage, food, clothing, housing and possibly a skill before being set free (H&C 10). From 1630-1776, one-half to two-thirds of the immigrants were indentured (King, 8 Apr. 2013). Redemptioners (many German) were brought over, then allowed time to arrange for payment after arrival (H&C 10). While African slave labor was more expensive, its net yield was greater than indentured servitude because slaves worked for life. Wealthy Southern plantation owners used them for cultivating tobacco, rice and indigo in large fields (H&C 11). The rocky soil and climate in New England made farming difficult; so a lot of lumbering, syrup making, spinning, weaving (the putting-out system), fishing, tanning, <https://assignbuster.com/populated-the-western-hemisphere-history-essay/>

shoe-making, barrel making and ship making occurred (H&C 32). In the Middle colonies, abundant farming supported its growing population which participated in iron making, shoemaking, pottery, glass making, woodworking and leather tanning (H&C 33). They also exported farm animals (livestock, cattle, hogs and sheep) to Europe and the Caribbean (H&C 33). The Middle colonies were known as the "bread basket" for producing abundant wheat and flour (H&C 33). The South was endowed with plantation agriculture such as rice, indigo, pitch, turpentine, tar, resin, cotton and the most popular cash crop, tobacco (H&C 33). These plantation crops were most effectively cultivated by slave labor. And because the South was wealthy from its exports, it could afford to purchase slaves (H&C 33).

Question 3: American colonists and the British had competing views about their relationship which sparked the American Revolution. The Americans felt they were being economically exploited and did not appreciate increasing taxes, while the British felt Americans needed to begin paying their fair share. These competing ideas led to the outbreak of war in July, 1775 (H&C 71). Empirical evidence shows that near the time of the Revolution, colonial recruits were taller than the British; suggesting that life was good in the colonies (King, 10 Apr. 2013). American per capita income increased over the colonial period and in 1775, was one of the highest in the world-greater than Britain's (King, 10 Apr. 2013). America also had a domestic market that provided for producers and a large middle class. The colonists, however, saw themselves as fulfilling a mercantilist role for Britain. They provided the British Empire with products not available domestically, like strategic naval supplies while exporting products to other countries (especially tobacco), thus acquiring foreign currency (H&C 67). America provided a market for <https://assignbuster.com/populated-the-western-hemisphere-history-essay/>

British goods that Americans were forbidden to produce while being prohibited from purchasing goods from ' non-British' protectorates. The Navigation Acts (beginning 1651) dictated that all trade must be transported in British ships under a British captain with at least three-quarters of the crew as British or colonists; this cut out Dutch shipping (H&C 66). The Acts also stated that all foreign trade must first pass through England (creating jobs and profits for Britain). And specific commodities produced by colonists could only be exported to Britain (H&C 66). While the colonists gained an exclusive market with Britain, they had to purchase expensive products while charging lower prices and exporting less to Britain (H&C 67). Compared, however, to those living in Britain and others ruled by the King, the American colonists paid the lowest amount of tax by far (A&P 68). Thus, after the costly French & Indian War (1763), the British decided to levy more taxes on the Americans through the Sugar Act (1764), Stamp and Quartering Act (1765), Townshend Act (1767) and the Tea Act (1773) (H&C 70).