

Trade between native indians and spaniards history essay

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Economics History What is today known as the United States comprised of several groups of red Indians before the Europeans arrived. These groups lived in organized societies that relied heavily on natural resources for sustenance. However, these societies were quite varied as their economic and social trends were determined by the availability of resources. These would determine the types of tools developed by a particular tribe or the clothes they fashioned. The environment, therefore, was a critical determinant of the people's way of life (Nash, 2000, p. 10). Agriculture, like in other areas during this period, was the main economic activity. The Indians of the southwest regions had a well-established agricultural system that employed the use of irrigation canals, hillside terracing, and check-dams (Nash, 2000, p. 10) that provided water to their rather arid land. They had also developed the farming of cotton, which had replaced yucca fiber as the favorite fiber for clothing. Those who inhabited the north, due to the closeness to the Pacific Ocean, relied heavily on fish rather than farming. The native Indians were also good artists who engaged a lot in ceramic works, painting and wood carving. When Europeans first explored the New World, they expected to find primitive tribes that lacked any form of civilized organization. However, this was quite on the contrary as the native tribes had developed techniques to make essential use of the world around them. As much as they depended heavily on nature, they had found ways to tame it to their liking. The economy was natural based, but quite diversified with agriculture, medicine, painting, painting, flavoring, and dyes being the main drivers (Nash, 2000, p. 15). Land, therefore, was an important commodity, and it was owned communally. The main characteristic of the native

economy was that every economic activity was managed at the community level, without an individual having any stake. Hunting was also a major activity, and the hunting party brought all their bounty back to the community where it was shared (Nash, 2000, p. 16). America was indeed rich in natural resources and the Indians had acquired techniques for living in harmony with nature. However, when the Europeans arrived, populations expanded rapidly, especially along the coasts. It was the techniques that the natives had acquired in farming that proved crucial in expanding farming and feeding the large populations. Colonial empires found new foods in pineapples, pumpkins, peanuts, beans, squash as well as turkey and guinea pigs (27). C: UsersBushDesktopUntitled. png

Fig. 1. Early patterns of trade between native Indians and Spaniards. 2. Colonial labor force consisted largely of forced human labor. Europeans arrived in the New World to find isolated communities that had lived in harmony for several centuries. Europeans powers, therefore, had developed better weapons and fighting skills that the natives lacked. This meant that the natives would become more like slaves in their own lands. The Spanish in particular used slavery and production quotas to enhance their economic interests, particularly in mines and agricultural fields. Although these people were working on their ancestral lands, the mobilization of this labor was done through coercion (Nash, 2000, p. 37). However, by the time Europeans discovered America, they had also already reached Africa where they carried out a lucrative slave trade enterprise. These slaves would prove to be a critical source of labor in the new colonies. During the mid-1500s when Spanish explorers discovered gold and silver in the Americas, they shipped in thousands of African slaves

to work in these mines (Nash, 2000, p. 27). The Arab and Portuguese traders were particularly crucial in providing slave labor. The colonial powers came with different interest to America: some wanted to settle, while others just wanted to trade. This led to sharp differences in the manner in which they interacted with the natives. The French, for example, had more of a mutual relationship with the native Indians because their basic interest was trade (Nash, 2000, p. 41). However, other powers such as the British, Spanish, and the Portuguese largely used brutal force to acquire the submission of the Indians. C: UsersBushDesktopUntitled. pngFig. 2. Major export and import products of the New World³. Although Britain arrived late in the conquest of the New World, its force came to be felt many years later. The British government had no desire to establish an empire in America. However, British nationals moved to this newly found treasure land in their thousands and their main interest was land (Nash, 2000, p. 67). The motherland, England, became a major market for the products of the land. By 1662, the colony based in Virginia was exporting more than seven million pounds of tobacco to England every year (Nash, 2000, p. 73). The farmers had consequently become more land-hungry. This demand for land saw the natives being treated to a warfare that can only be compared to a genocide (Nash, 2000, p. 73). The Indians were driven out of their land and forced to relocate to uninhabitable areas of the colony. Consequently, the relationship between the natives and the colonialists degenerated from that of mutual relationship to a slave-servant association. The Indians only remained relevant in the sectors of maize and fur trade where they provided the labor and skills needed in food production, trapping and skin dressing (Nash, 2000,

p. 76). However, as these needs became less important to the British, the need for the Indians also became almost unnecessary, and they were treated as forces standing between the British colonialist and the rich native land.