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L2: Semester 1 / 2020-2021
Course: Colonial History of America

5. Native Americans and African slaves

Objectives

After this lecture, students should:

- ✓ have some clues about native Americans and the way they lived
- ✓ be able to give a summary of slavery from Africa to the New World
- ✓ be aware of the negative aspects of colonization of America by Europeans

Introduction

This lecture will focus on Native Americans and African slaves. A timeline with dates will be given to identify the most important historical facts of that period. We will give an overview of the way Native Americans and African slaves were treated by Europeans colonists and highlight the different contradictions that resulted from colonizing North America.

1. Native Americans in Colonial America

The first people of the USA were groups of hunters who migrated across the Bering land-and-ice bridge between Siberia and Alaska in about 16,000 BC. In the next centuries, these indigenous people spread across the continent, developing and advancing their cultures before early exploration of the New World by Europeans began.

During the colonial period, Native Americans had a complicated relationship with European settlers. They resisted the efforts of the Europeans to gain more of their land and control through both warfare and diplomacy. But problems arose for the Native Americans, which held them back from their goal, including new diseases, the slave trade, and the ever-growing European population in North America. Native Americans were vulnerable during the colonial era because they had never been exposed to European diseases, like smallpox, so they didn't have any immunity to the disease, as some Europeans did. European settlers brought these new diseases with them when they settled, and the illnesses decimated the Native Americans—by some estimates killing as much as 90 percent of their population. Though many epidemics happened prior to the colonial era in the 1500s, several large epidemics occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries among various Native American populations.

Another aspect of the colonial era that made the Native Americans vulnerable was the slave trade. As a result of the wars between the European nations, Native Americans allied with the losing side were often indentured or enslaved. There were even Native Americans shipped out of colonies like South Carolina into slavery in other places, like Canada.

These problems that arose for the Native Americans would only get worse in the 19th century, leading to greater confinement and the extermination of native people. Unfortunately, the colonial era was neither the start nor the end of the long, dark history of treatment of Native Americans by Europeans and their decedent's throughout in the United States.

Timeline of Native Americans

16,000 – 8,000 BC – Paleoindian hunters migrated across the Bering land-and-ice bridge between Siberia and Alaska.

13,500 BC to 11,000 BC – The Clovis Culture begins in North America. The era was named for distinct stone tools found near Clovis, New Mexico.

3,000 BC to 1000 AD – The Woodland Period begins in Eastern America.

10th Century – The Norse colonization of North America began in the late 10th century.

1100 – Oraibi, a Hopi village in Navajo County, Arizona was settled, making it one of the oldest settlements within the United States.

1492 – When Christopher Columbus first came in contact with native people, he wrote: “They all go around as naked as their mothers bore them; and also the women.” He also noted that “they could easily be commanded and made to work, to sow and to do whatever might be needed, to build towns and be taught to wear clothes and adopt our ways,” and, “they are the best people in the world and above all the gentlest.”

1519 – Hernán Cortés invades Mexico, completing his conquest of the Aztec empire in 1521 and establishes the colony of New Spain.

1540 – Francisco Vasquez de Coronado led Mexico's invasion of the north with an expeditionary force of 300 conquistadors and more than one thousand Indian “allies.”

1607 – On May 14, 1607, Jamestown is founded in Virginia by the colonists of the London Company. By the end of the year, starvation and disease reduce the original 105 settlers to just 32 survivors. Captain John Smith is captured by Native American Chief Powhatan and saved from death by the chief's daughter, Pocahontas. On July 3, Indians brought maize, beans, squash, and fresh and smoked meat to the Jamestown colony.

1616 – A smallpox epidemic decimates the Native American population in New England.

1621 – One of the first treaties between colonists and Native Americans is signed as the Plymouth Pilgrims enact a peace pact with the Wampanoag Tribe.

2. Slavery in America (1526-1620)

Slavery in America from 1526 to 1620 developed because of the rising demand for labor in colonies.

Slave-ships of the Atlantic slave trade transported captives for slavery from Africa to the Americas.

Indigenous people were also enslaved in the North American colonies, but on a smaller scale, and Indian slavery largely ended in the late 18th century.

In the English colonies, slave status for Africans became hereditary in the mid-17th century with the passage of colonial laws that defined children born in the colonies as taking the status of the mother. Slave-ships of the Atlantic slave trade transported captives for slavery from Africa to the Americas.

Middle Passage, and existed from the 16th to the 19th centuries.



Triangle trade is a historical term indicating trade among three ports or regions. It usually evolves when a region has export commodities that are not required in the region from which its major imports come.

The vast majority of those who were enslaved and transported in the transatlantic slave trade were people from Central and West Africa, who had been sold by other West Africans or by half-Europeans to Western European slave traders who brought them to the Americas. The South Atlantic and Caribbean economies were particularly dependent on labor for the production of sugarcane and other commodities. The first African slaves in what would become the present day United States of America arrived August 9, 1526 in Winyah Bay, when Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón, brought 600 colonists to start a colony. The colonists included enslaved Africans. After a month Ayllón moved the colony to what is now Georgia.

In Virginia, the first recorded Africans arrived in late August 1619. They were captives from the area of present-day Angola and had been seized by the British crew from a Portuguese slave ship. To obtain the Africans, the Jamestown colony traded provisions with the ship. These individuals appear to have been treated as indentured servants, since slave laws were not passed until later, in 1641 in Massachusetts and in 1661 in Virginia.

When it comes to New England, records show that slaves, African and Native American, made up a smaller part of the New England economy, which was based on yeoman farming and trades, and a smaller fraction of the population, but they were present.

Though it is impossible to give accurate figures, some historians have estimated that 6 to 7 million enslaved people were imported to the New World during the 18th century alone, depriving the African continent of some of its healthiest men and women. In the 17th and 18th centuries, enslaved Africans worked mainly on the tobacco, rice and indigo plantations of the southern coast, from the Chesapeake Bay colonies of Maryland and Virginia south to Georgia.

Timeline of slavery in America

- **1526** – Disease decimates Native Americans, enslaved Africans imported as replacements.
- **1562**– Britain Joins Slave Trade. John Hawkins, the first Briton to take part in the slave trade, makes a huge profit hauling human cargo from Africa to Hispaniola.
- **1581**– Slaves in Florida Spanish residents in St. Augustine, the first permanent settlement in Florida, import African slaves.
- **1619**– First Africans arrive at Jamestown. "Twenty and odd" Africans (little more than twenty), probably seized from a Portuguese slave ship, were carried to Jamestown, Virginia, and traded for provisions. They were classified as indentured servants.
- **1626**– The Dutch West India Company imports 11 black male slaves into the New Netherlands.
- **1636**– Colonial North America's slave trade begins when the first American slave carrier, Desire, is built and launched in Massachusetts.

Conclusion

- ✓ Class discussion about the impacts of colonization by Europeans in North America