

European Treatment of Native Americans

Spanish	Conquer and Rule (“guns, germs and steel”) Inter-marry with the Aztec, Incan, and Mayan cultures. Treated Amerindians as inferiors, socially below their slaves
English	Occupy the land, force the Native Americans to move off the coast and re-settle inland. Seen as “inferiors” or savages
French	Treated Native Americans as economic and military allies. Used for helping trap furs. Many converted to Christianity
Dutch	Traded closely with the Native Americans; often made them business associates and allowed them to stay on their lands. Some Dutch even paid them rent.

Spanish Settlements in North America

They were slow to develop due to the limited mineral resources (gold and silver) and strong opposition from Native Americans.

Florida – after many failed attempts the Spanish finally settled in St. Augustine in 1565 and it is the oldest city in North America.

New Mexico – Santa Fe was established as the capital in 1609. The Spanish tried to convert the Pueblo Indians to Christianity but they refused and revolts took place until the early 1700’s.

Texas – After being driven from New Mexico by the Pueblo Indians, the Spanish created small settlements by the 1700’s but they were constantly under pressure from the French explorers who voyaged to the lower regions of the Mississippi River.

California – In response to the Russian explorers coming south from Alaska, the Spanish settled in San Diego (1769) and San Francisco (1776). By 1784, several mission settlements headed by Franciscan monks (Father Junipero Serra) were spread along the California coast.

Early Colonial Policies of European Nations

Spanish Policy – to conquer and convert. Thousands were killed by warfare and European diseases. Few Spanish people settled and those that did inter-married with natives and slaves. This created a rigid class system (encomienda) that was dominated by the pureblooded Spaniards who settled in America.

English Policy – initially they tried to coexist with the Native Americans, learning to grow new crops (corn/maize) and hunt in the forests. They first traded with manufactured English goods (especially made of iron and other metals). Peaceful relations soon gave way to warfare and the Native Americans were thought of as savages. The Native Americans were a threat to British expansion.

French Policy – unlike the Spanish and English, the French developed a good relationship with the Native Americans., especially around the St. Lawrence River valley, the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. In order to support their fur trade, the French helped the Huron tribe in their war against the Iroquois. As the French had only a few colonists, they posed no major threat to the Native American populations.