

Compare and contrast the French, Spanish, and English empires in the Americas. How were these empires similar and different in aims, populations, economies and labor systems, dealings with Native Americans, and successes/failures? Which empire became the most prosperous and powerful by the 18th century and why?

The French Empire differed greatly from the Spanish and English because of the number of settlers who came to the Americas. For France it was hard to get settlers to North America because there were little push and pull factors. Land was abundant in France and moving to the Americas meant moving to a cruel and cold world. Contrast this with the English, where space was limited and England was giving away land in order to push people there. For France there was a negative connotation of North America, while English had a good connotation of North America. Those who did end up coming went into the Fur trade. However, France had to make alliances with the Natives in order to hunt the animals in which to make fur. French could not conquer because there was so little French and so many Natives in the region. French had no biological advantage as Natives had become immune to the diseases brought by the Spanish Empire. So, A labor system of a “Middle Ground”, based on alliances, was necessary in order for French to survive in the region. Natives and French become interdependent and would borrow each other’s cultures in the coming years. Frances unsuccessful attempts to bring settlers to the Americas is their ultimate failure. If France had garnered more support and more individuals to cross to the Americas, they might have fought off the Indians and rose to be the most prosperous and powerful country instead of England.

Spanish Empire’s aims in the Americas was “gold, glory, and God”. One of their main goals concerning Native Americans was conversion. However, this concern for total conversion is one of there downfalls, as revolts mounted such as the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Religion and the state were fused together in Spain at the time, so it makes sense that a big part of their agenda in the Americas was conversion. Populations of Spanish in the Americas was large urban cities where gold and silver were plentiful. Gold and Silver were also some of the only pull factors bringing Spanish populations to America. Spain did not bring African-Slaves to the mainland, opting to keep them to the Caribbean. Contrast this with the English who brought massive numbers of African-Slaves to the Americas. A Mestizo (mixed) population is unique to the Spanish Empire as it was common for Natives and Spanish to intermarry. Thus, a recognition and exchange of culture could be seen in some Spanish cities in the Americas. While Spanish had great pull factors of Gold and Silver, the size of the Spanish Empire made it difficult for the king to control the land, it being so far away. The intimidation and terror tactics used by Spanish on Natives for conversion often led to resentment and revolt. Contrast this with French who did not like the Natives but learned to tolerate them because they had no choice. The French were not focused on conversion because it was not in Frances interest to do so. On the other hand, Spain monarchs were set on conversion so when people came it was under the assumption that they would do everything in their power to convert as much people as they could.

English became the most powerful, populous, and profitable of the European efforts because of certain factors. Compared to the French they had no reason to be nice to Natives, except for when colonists first arrived and did not know how to farm the land. After, however, English colonists saw Natives as obstacles and unworthy occupants when trying to secure “their” land that was “given” to them by England. Compared to the Spanish, the battles with Natives proved to be more successful when trying to displace them from the land. At the end of the Pueblo Revolt Spanish were weak and had to share their power with the Natives. After King Philips war, English saw Natives as savages and this cements the divide between the two groups and enables further incursions by the English. English planned on settling the Americas and staying unlike the French, who could not get enough settlers and the Spanish, who wanted to get rich and go back to Spain. This is evident in the establishment of the original 13 colonies by the English. Colonists would retain the rights, protections, and liberties that English citizens had back in England. Some of these rights were local assemblies, trial by jury, and access to land. This is unseen in any other country that would try and settle the Americas and is unique to colonists from the British Empire. Economies of the southern colonies consisted of “cash crops” such as tobacco that grew well in the land of Virginia. Need for labor causes indentured servitude and slavery to skyrocket in this region. The northern colonies however, focused on religious tolerance and people came to flee persecution from English.

Explain the economic changes in northern states of the United States in the early 1800s. How did industrialization, urbanization, the market revolution, and the transportation revolution change America? What were its effects on society and culture?

Transportation Revolution refers to the rapid change of the way people, ideas (information), and goods were transported from horses to other modes of transportation including, railroads, canals, roads, telegraph, and steamboats. This was huge to everyone who lived in the north because it was the first change of transportation ever seen, so any change from the norm was drastic. Inventions such as the steamboat and railroads allowed goods to be transported at lightning fast speeds which contributed to the Market Revolutions shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming. Commercial farming is not possible without these inventions, as crops would wither away on their long journey by horse. With the construction of the National Road in 1806, the successful building of the Erie Canal in 1821, and addition of many miles of railroad tracks, many cities were connected. New York in the east was connected all the way to Ohio in the west. With this resort cities sprouted up along the railroad lines in the west and America was slowly venturing westward and becoming a mobile society. Railroads were the “computers” of the 19th century and their significance cannot be overstated when talking about the changes of society and culture in America during this time.

Market Revolution concerned “how” and “where” farming took place in the early 19th century. Market revolution is very dependent on the Transportation revolution because of the change from subsistence farming to commercial farming. Farmers would grow a surplus of crops, more than their family could eat, and sold the rest. The ability to transport and sell crops is made possible with the use of steamboats and railroads. The means to make surplus of crops is made possible by the use of mechanization and machines that could be much faster than humans. Mechanization lowers production costs and decreases labor demands which ultimately means less people are working in farms and farmers are growing richer because of the machines doing the tasks.

Urbanization refers to Americas’ change from a rural farming society to an urban city society. As more and more railroad tracks and waterways are built, it prompts cities to develop all over what is now the Midwest. Western urban cities such as Cincinnati offer a less physically demanding and better material life than those of the past. Between the 1820’s and 1830’s 667,000 immigrants flood into America, ready for the change in the new urban environment. The idea of the factory is alluring because it is not chained to mother nature and the outside world like farming is. Dreams of fame are also alluring and pulls people in, with the hope of becoming famous, having material objects, and living the great life.

Industrialization, predicted by Hamilton, is the change from an Agrarian farming society to an Industrial factory society. This replaced labor such as blacksmiths, artisans, tailors, because of the abstraction of the consumer and less and less focus on the individual. Mass production, consumer capitalism, and the world of the “ready-made” was at the forefront of America in the early 19th century. Textile factories such as Boston Associates Lowell factory appear with the utilization of mechanization helping in the phases of production. Children and women were a big part of these textile mills, even though they could not have any of the money they earned. The change from an agrarian society to an industrial one had a drastic change on Americas develop of our “sense of self”, our identity, and our values. For example, Americans were not as interested in land and farming and instead were focused on the wage labor (working for money) seen in factories. Wage labor was less physically intensive than the traditional farming previously seen. An “Industrial Morality” meant socializing out the pre-industrial culture and embracing the virtues of the market. As the Second Great Awakening was beginning to take shape our culture of “right and wrong” changed and acts such as drinking were frowned upon. Temperance (abstinence from alcohol) was more common when one had to be to work on time, aware, and ready to work. Some resisted this new industrialized economy and thought that it made one dependent on the cyclic economy. Labor unions cropped up and offered critiques and solutions to some of the problems of this new economy and served as a voice to grieving workers. Soon some of the first free public schools were built, an end to imprisonment of debt, and worker protections were implemented.