

June 11, 2018

Dear Advanced Placement U.S. History Students:

Welcome to A.P. U.S. History. I love teaching this class and am always sad at the end of the year when I know I must bid you all adieu after working so hard together for nine months straight. We have a big journey ahead, and I would not recommend it for the fainthearted. You will need to read about half-an-hour to an hour (depending on your reading speed) five days a week for nine months. You will learn how to think like a historian, comparing and contrasting events, ideas, people and time periods, identifying causes and prioritizing them, connecting between the particular to the general, linking eras and recognizing change over time. You will be writing, writing and writing, honing these skills into effective essays of causation, comparison, contextualization and continuity.

I would like you to begin developing your historian skills by doing research on one of your own grandparents. I have an attachment with questions to ask them. When you are finished interviewing, please type their answers into the document online and email it to me at bmcmillan@behs.com. If you can use their exact words, often it is even better. Hopefully, you and your family will enjoy this project together. By the way, you are welcome to use substitute grandparents if you are unable to interview any of your own. As you read the questions you will notice that not all questions will apply. Do your best and have fun with this. You will also read an essay on Native Americans (attached) and write a reflection essay. AP students are expected to become familiar with a variety of historical arguments on each era of American history, so your essay will give me an idea of your critical thinking skills as you begin the semester. Do not stress over this essay. We will be working all year to improve.

In the past I have asked the students to get a head start on the textbook by reading two chapters and answering questions on them from a packet. This year we will read instead a delightful book called *Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. I have read it twice and enjoyed it both times for many reasons. The life lessons about teamwork and leadership may be more important than the history you will pick up. By reading this, you will get a much better feel for life during the Great Depression than any textbook or lesson in class can provide.

The game is afoot—our journey into history begins. Enjoy!

Please complete these written assignments by August 13, 2018.

- Grandparent interview (may send in as soon as it is finished)
- Reflection Essay (may send in as soon as it is finished)
- *Boys in the Boat*, Daniel James Brown – (jot down notes—no test)

If you have any questions about the assignments, do not hesitate to email me at bmcmillan@behs.com. Have a great summer.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Betsy McMillan
A.P. U.S. History Teacher

Hardcore Historian Primary Document Exercise
Your most important query -- your grandparent (s)

Your Name _____

Name of Grandparent: _____

1. When and where were you born?
2. What were your parents' names?
3. What is your happiest memory of your father? Your mother?
4. What is the most important lesson your parents taught you?
5. What are the names of your grandparents?
6. What is your happiest memory of your grandfather? Grandmother?
7. Where did you grow up?
8. What did you do for fun as a child?
9. How did you like school?
10. What did you want to be when you grew up?
11. How did you meet Grandma/Grandpa?
12. Tell me about the day my mom/dad was born.
13. What jobs have you had?
14. Were you in the military? If so, what are your strongest memories from your time in the military?
15. What did your job(s) entail? Did you enjoy your work?
16. Did you attend college? If so, what did you study?
17. Did you have any dangerous and/or life threatening experiences? If so, what happened?
18. What presidents (or national leaders) do you recall?
19. What were some of the important news (current) events that you remember?
20. How did you receive the news?
21. What wars did you experience directly or indirectly? What was your experience?
22. Did you experience the Great Depression or hear about how it affected family members? If so, please describe.
23. Describe your kitchen and school rooms. What technological items were in these places? What were some of the new inventions?
24. Describe the cars that you owned. What were some other modes of transportation you have taken?
25. Tell a family story or a family event.
26. Describe and briefly talk about someone you admire.
27. What advice would you give to our generation about our role as citizens?
28. What would be your recipe for happiness?

Reading Assignment
***Boys in the Boat*, Daniel James Brown**

As soon as you begin reading, take notes on a legal pad. Jot down historical information that paints the backdrop of the 1930s and the havoc the Great Depression created for Americans of that time. You will need this pad for our first class discussion and then later in the second semester. I want you to think about the following questions while you are reading.

- What were the difficulties that shaped Joe Rantz's life and made a college education almost unattainable?
- What were the strengths he had developed that enabled him to overcome these obstacles?
- What did Joe Rantz accomplish? Who else was instrumental in his success?
- What were the differences between the University of Washington's rowing team and the east coast rowing teams?
- What was the role of sports in Americans' lives during the Great Depression?
- What was the role of government in Americans' lives during the Great Depression?
- How has the country changed since the 1930s? How is it similar?
- What makes a good leader? What makes a good team?

Read the following essay.

Type a 1 page reaction. Your reaction should do one of the following:

- *Comment on a new insight you have as a result of the reading.*
- *Note something you did not understand and what you did to try to understand it.*
- *Make a connection between a specific idea in the essay and other readings or ideas you have addressed in other classes (does not need to be Social Studies)*

American Indians by Elliott West

If history is the story of what people have done, then American history began thousands of years ago, and by far most of it is that of Indian peoples and their ancestors before Europeans arrived. Historians, however, disagree over answers to fundamental questions about that long history. Some say the first migrations into the Americas from today's Siberia happened twelve or thirteen thousand years ago, others say as early as twenty-five thousand years ago. That migration continued southward by land along both sides of the Rocky Mountains, according to some, while others lean toward a route down the Pacific coast, partly by boat.

Estimates of the New World population in 1492 range from thirty million to one hundred twenty million, and those for North America above Mexico range from five million to thirteen million. (The best guesses today are around fifty million and seven million respectively.) On some points, however, all agree. In 1492 what is today the United States was home to an extraordinary number of cultures of breathtaking variety. There were more than five hundred peoples, most of them divided into smaller related groups. Each people spoke their own language, many with separate dialects. Many languages were grouped in half a dozen families but many were not, and the difference between, say, the language of the Pomo of California and that of the Chickasaws of Mississippi was as great as the difference between German and Chinese. The disparate peoples expressed themselves in rich artistic traditions—elaborate redwood carvings in the Pacific Northwest; basketry of grasses woven into gorgeous, intricate patterns in the Southwest and California; garments on the plains decorated delicately with shells, porcupine quills, and elk teeth. Indians worshipped by cosmologies as varied as their art and languages. Pawnees believed the stars were living beings who had sung and chanted everything into existence. Hopis could point to a spring where they had emerged from several worlds beneath this one and from which sustaining spirits visited annually.

Each Indian people supported themselves by a savvy and complex use of their particular place, and in America's diverse geography that meant a bewildering array of economies. Those in the wooded East lived in permanent villages and practiced diversified "safety net" economies blending gardening, gathering, hunting, and fishing. Southwestern peoples like the Hopis and Zunis farmed with the help of elaborate irrigation systems. In the Missouri River valley people living in villages of large earth lodges cultivated extensive gardens and hunted from huge herds of bison to the west. Downstream on the lower Mississippi palisaded cities thrived, fed by great cornfields, fishing, and trade, while on the high plains other peoples lived semi-nomadically in small groups as hunters and gatherers. On the Pacific coast there was virtually no agriculture but dense populations supported themselves by gathering, hunting, and fishing—in the Northwest especially of the salmon that returned annually in unimaginable numbers.

Tying together this splay of cultures and economies was an intricate and well-trafficked trade network. Goods from across the continent and beyond passed through major trading centers and annual rendezvous into a webbing that ultimately reached the remotest villages. Bison meat and hides from the plains were swapped for corn in the Southwest and fish and conch shells in the Southeast. Mica from the Appalachian Mountains made its way to the northern Rocky Mountains, and obsidian from the Rockies traveled to the upper Ohio River and deep into Mexico. From Mexico in turn came a whole array of goods, including colorful bird feathers. Everywhere daily life featured details from hundreds of miles away. Men along the eastern Great Lakes wore necklaces of grizzly claws from the far West, while others on the upper Rio Grande listened to music from flutes fashioned from the leg bones of Gulf coastal whooping cranes.

The first Europeans, then, encountered a land far more culturally varied than the one they had left. They would only gradually realize that variety, however. Early reports from America, whether from the English and French on the Atlantic coast or from the Spanish on the Gulf coast and Southwest, pictured Indians in similar terms that were both clichéd and contradictory. Indians were described as simple, childlike, and innocent but also savage, dangerous, godless, and debased. American Indians' impressions of Europeans are much harder to determine, but natives also misunderstood much of what they saw. Certainly they underestimated the forces about to be unleashed and the changes that would follow.

Indians often were first impressed by what they might gain from the newcomers. A pictograph from the Lene Lenape (later called the Delawares) expresses their initial response to whites who had come "from north and south." It shows a ship, and its accompanying memory is, "They are peaceful; they have great things; who are they?" Indians took in much that was immaterial. European contact brought an expanded view of the world's expanse and new notions of people's relations to God, the Great Mystery. The most immediate effects, however, came from the "great things" changing their daily lives. Metal goods ranked high among them. Iron pots and axe heads, a point for a lance or arrow, and something as simple as a metal awl to replace a sharpened piece of bone to punch a hole in an animal hide—these were near miraculous advances that eased the labors and heightened the comforts of Native peoples. Such items coursed through the long-established trading network linking coast to coast and the Arctic to tropical rainforests. This initial European impact, the vigorous spout of life-transforming goods, preceded the Europeans themselves into much of the interior. Impressions of the newcomers traveled with the pots and spearpoints. In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European to sail along the Pacific coast, heard from Indians that to the east "men like us were traveling about, bearded, clothed and armed . . . killing many native Indians."

That would have been the expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado (1540–1542) or Hernando de Soto (1539–1542), maybe both. Coronado's rode out of Mexico into Arizona and New Mexico, with a thrust through modern-day Texas up into Kansas. De Soto's landed in Florida and marched through what is today Georgia, the Carolinas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas, with an offshoot to eastern Texas. Both epitomized Spain's two dominant motives—wealth and souls—and the Native response to them. Both Coronado and de Soto hoped to find opulent cities and storehouses of wealth like those conquered in Mexico and Peru. The second motive was religious. Columbus's first voyage was in the same year that Spain finally expelled Muslim forces that had occupied part of Iberia for nearly eight centuries. Fired by that victory,

the Spanish saw the unexpected revelation of the Americas as a duty to save its peoples' souls through conversion to Roman Catholicism.

In both cases some American Indians welcomed the newcomers at first, hoping to obtain Spanish goods and to acquire whatever spiritual powers they thought useful. Soon, however, the *conquistadors'* demands, abuses, and intolerance soured relations. De Soto's large command, about seven hundred men at the outset, was especially brutal, and Indians put up stiff resistance, killing as many as two hundred in one battle. De Soto died of a fever, and the accounts brought back by the expedition's survivors, like those of Coronado on his return from the Southwest, discouraged further expeditions. In 1565 Pedro

Menendez de Aviles founded San Augustine on the Atlantic coast of Florida, and thirty-three years later Juan de Onate established missions and military outposts among the Pueblo peoples along the upper Rio Grande in New Mexico. Now Spain's purpose was religious and strategic—to spread the faith and to protect more valuable holdings to the south in the Indies and Mexico from imperial competition.

Spain's first competitors were the French, who explored the Atlantic coast and attempted to colonize present-day South Carolina, from which they also preyed on the treasure fleets bearing gold and silver back to Spain. Menendez destroyed one colony and set out as well to dominate Indians of the Southeast, but the isolated, thinly garrisoned outposts held only a tenuous toehold in Florida in 1620. By then the English also were making their bid for the Atlantic coast. Their colony at Roanoke in North Carolina, begun in 1585, vanished during a long delay in resupplying it. In 1607 England tried again, landing 105 colonists on the James River in Virginia. Unlike those of the Spanish, English goals were mainly commercial, with plans for Indians to supply labor and support for the production of such big-ticket items as wine, silk, and caviar. Native Virginians, a confederation numbering perhaps twenty thousand persons, had little interest in that, however. As had others elsewhere, their leader, Powhatan, at first courted English trade, but, also as elsewhere, English demands and cultural misunderstandings soon brought conflict. In 1620 Jamestown, like Spanish St. Augustine, was barely hanging on. In that year another English colony, Plymouth, with another motive, to be a religious refuge for radical English Protestants, was planted on Massachusetts Bay.

With a few isolated exceptions, Indian peoples in what is today the United States were firmly in command of their world in 1620. They vastly outnumbered Europeans. In many ways they had benefited from goods Europeans offered, and they were increasingly savvy to the newcomers' ways and how to deal with them to their advantage. By then, however, their vulnerabilities to the new arrivals were clear. In time those vulnerabilities would undermine their independence, cripple their economies and threaten their cultures and even their very existence.

The greatest threat came from diseases—smallpox, typhus, influenza, measles, malaria, and others. With no earlier exposure, Indians had little resistance to them, and the toll was horrific. Pathogens brought by de Soto's expedition apparently swept away vast numbers of southeastern natives and led to the abandonment of many cities described by the invaders. The terrible losses from diseases were followed by economic disruption, which brought hunger, social disarray, and further deaths. Like trade goods, epidemics often moved in advance of Europeans themselves.

Traders, fishermen and privateers infected Indians along the North Atlantic coast on the eve of the first colonies. Plymouth was founded on the ruins of a Wampanoag village abandoned after a pestilence, possibly typhus, had swept away its peoples in 1616–1617. More than fifty New England settlements rose from other devastated villages. Diseases would move in waves across the continent, eventually reducing the overall Indian population by 80 percent or more.

Europeans brought domesticated animals that Indians had never known. Some were welcomed. Especially in the far West after 1680, horses would revolutionize Native life. Initially, however, horses were hugely helpful in subduing Indians and in maintaining European settlements. Animals introduced diseases—de Soto's herds of pigs may have carried dangerous contagions—and pigs, cattle, horses, sheep and goats threatened Indian economies by destroying their crops and competing with game animals for forage. The effects of Europe's technology, like its animals, cut both ways. While trade goods offered great advantages, the more Indians used them, the more reliant on them they became, and thus the more leverage Europeans had in economic exchanges. As the newcomers' numbers grew and Indians were less able to supply what they wanted, that disparity would prove deeply troubling.

The greatest threats to Indian peoples in 1620 were so fundamental they are easy to miss. Europe held far more people than did North America—and in fact the Indian population was shrinking due to epidemics. European nations could focus resources and power against Native American divided into hundreds of different societies. European nations were highly motivated to invade and exploit a continent brimming with resources, and they looked upon its natives not as partners but as people to convert or to conquer. The Indians' firm command of what is now the United States was not to last. By 1820 they had lost control of land east of the Mississippi River, and a mere sixty years later the descendants of those newcomers perched so precariously on the Atlantic in 1620 dominated the continent all the way to the Pacific. The ways of life of all American Indian peoples were under siege.