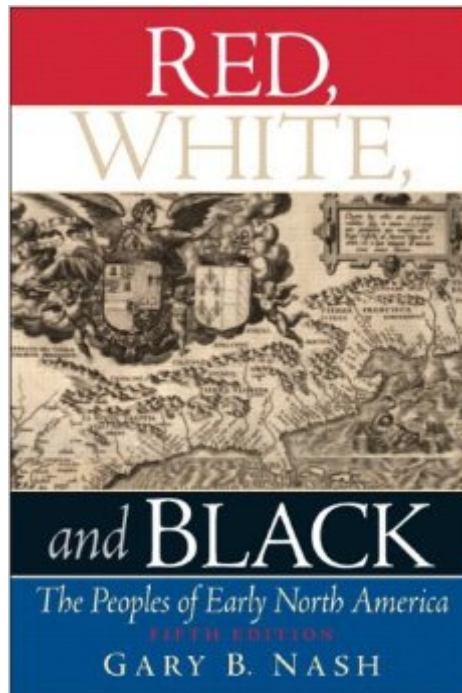


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Red, White, And Black: The Peoples Of Early North America (5th Edition)



Synopsis

Written by highly acclaimed historian Gary B. Nash, this book presents an interpretive account of the interactions between Native Americans, African Americans, and Euroamericans during the colonial and revolutionary eras. It reveals the crucial interconnections between North America's many peoples " illustrating the ease of their interactions in the first two centuries of European and African presence "to develop a fuller, deeper understanding of the nation's underpinnings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First of all, I can see where some would find this book boring- that is if the reader has no interest in American History. But this begs the questions- why would such a person pick up this book to begin with? For class maybe, but I imagine every student of history has read a difficult book or two. This one simply doesn't qualify. As far as books I've had to read for school, this was pretty easy to get through. This book is not a primary source. If you are looking for such a thing, look elsewhere. This is a well-researched account of life on the early American frontier, and the interaction between different cultures. Someone makes the claim further down that this book makes the Europeans look really bad. I disagree. This book does a fine job of looking at this time period from multiple view points. There are moments when the Europeans will come off badly, but almost any group has it's moments throughout history where it's not going to be a shining example of how to live your life. Aside from which, as this book points out, the Europeans are not one single group and the different

European groups looked at within this book (The English, Dutch, French, and Spanish) all had different relationships with the various indigenous peoples of what would become the eastern United States. This book also takes a look at slavery and the origins of that horrid institution in the Americas. It is often fascinating reading and certainly doesn't deserve the one star reviews it's received.

Gary Nash scratches beneath the surface in his analysis of the demographics of colonial America. He skillfully reveals the interaction between Europeans, native Americans, and Africans in the years preceding the American Revolution. Nash brings an important missing element to the mix by exploring how native American and African cultures affected European society, offering a refreshing look at race relations. For once, readers are given a glimpse of the proud and unshakable cultures of these two exploited peoples. *Red, White & Black* compares race relations between several different cultures and regions. Nash not only spouts statistics; he helps the reader to understand why certain peoples fought and why they formed alliances during this volatile period in our history.

Red, White, and Black is a book that takes a different perspective of "the people of North America during the two centuries leading toward the American Revolution" (Nash, p.4). Gary Nash tries to demonstrate that all the peoples, such as Africans, Europeans, and Indians, play a part in the construction and destruction of North America. Nevertheless, his book differs from history's traditional tale of how European colonizers came to the New World, in short this paved the way for America, without hardly any mention of Indians and Africans playing a great part in it. Gary Nash shows how all the people of colonial America interact because of such factors as money, trade, war, and labor. By Nash eliminating inevitability, he shows that nothing happened by chance in colonial America; the people there created it. One of the biggest factors of motivation back then was money. Nash proves that greed and hope in making it rich in the New World, was one of the benefiting factors that convinced Europeans to make that gruesome voyage over the Atlantic. The Spanish and Portuguese were the first to start the expansion towards America. Nash points out the fact of money having something to do with it, by stating "Once the Spanish found gold and silver, a wholesale rush of enterprising young men from the lesser nobility in Spain began the transatlantic adventure" (Nash, pg.27). Nash not only shows that money was important for the cross over from Europe, but also wants people to understand that it started the intermingling with the Native Americans. Trading with the Indians also provided a lot of communication between the two. When it came down to trade, Nash disproves prejudices of Indians, by stating that they were by no way

stupid or not just as smart as the whites. Indians knew exactly how to barter and wanted to make money just like the whites did. Trading and interacting with Indians was not the same for every European. The English didn't want to intermingle with other "savages" because they thought the Indians had nothing to offer them. On the other hand, the Dutch and French, who were mainly composed of trappers and fishermen, depended on the Native Americans for trade. The Dutch and French also "were so few in number that they could not have entertained the slightest hope of survival without the friendship of the native peoples surrounding them"(Nash, pg.42-43). Nash brings out other good points when he shows the Dutch and French intermarrying more with the Indians rather than the English. He points out the two reasons for that, the first is that it helped trade relations with the Indians. The second reason is that the Dutch and French brought over hardly any women in comparison to the English, so the need for women was great. Women were so few numbered that Nash goes on to say "intermarriage was so common that one authority believes that by 1676 virtually all French families had Indian blood in their veins"(Nash, pg.43). It was common for the Spanish and Portuguese to interact with the natives, but in a different way than that of the Dutch and French. When the Spanish came over to America they came with two different professions of men: soldiers and missionaries. Not only did they want the gold in Central and South America, but also the Spanish wanted to convert the natives to Catholicism. From a certain point of view it was the Spaniards Catholic crusade. Yet the missionaries did a better job than the soldiers to make the natives cooperate with their plans. "Reaching the Indian's soul, the Spanish friar proved more effective than the Spanish soldier"(Nash, pg.37). Nash is really able to present how important trade was to get Europeans and Indians to interact with each other. Nash also ties in something else that happens with trades and cultural mixing of two different people and that is war. Many historians have made it seem, that the wars that have gone on during the colonial period are just the doings of the Europeans. Not as much has been mentioned of how great the role of the Native Americans was. Indians were seen as a people who were being aggressed, but Nash shows that they had equal footing, when it came down to conflict between the two. It just didn't happen that the English normally got over on the Indians; the Indians themselves added to it. Nash points out that they weakened themselves by fighting other Indians and not being able to get together to create a more massive force. Most people made it look like the poor Indians have no chance against the Europeans. Yet in reality, they had a great chance in being able to win battles against the Europeans, but it was their own fault that made them lose or get decimated. Another thing about warfare of the Europeans is that in battle with the Indians, the Europeans would commit genocide. Whole tribes would be eliminated, especially along the New England coastline. Genocide was a tool

Europeans used in warfare, but they would also try fear on their labor force. Labor added another piece to the intermingling circle of Indians, Europeans, and Africans. Once Europeans found profit in Tobacco, there became a need to find a way to exploit the resources in the most efficient fashion. That was above all slave labor, either of Indian or African people. One thing that I find wrong with Gary Nash is how he makes some form of slavery sound all right. No matter what is said, slavery is slavery and there is never anything right with it. Nash writes about the difference in slavery of highly populated plantations and that of lesser-populated house servants. The plantation slaves, or "gang slavery" was a lot more fierce and Nash goes on to say that slavery of a house servant was not all that bad. "Slavery in the North was onerous to be sure, but its harshest features were mitigated by the absence of death-dealing gang laboring the fields, by the closer living relationship between masters and bond persons, and, in the cities, by the large degree of mobility and privileges that slaves gradually wrung from the master class"(Nash, pg.177). Another thing that slavery did bring out was the communication of all three people: African, Indian, and European. How this happened a lot from Nash's point of view is through sex. Many times he states how slave masters would have sex with the slaves, and how slaves of Africans would mix blood with a slave or refugee Indian. Nash goes very thoroughly over Colonial America through the eyes of an observer of action instead bias European eyes. Gary Nash gives descriptions and stories of the early North American people, many do not often see. Most of the interaction between the three groups of people was through trade, war, and slave labor. One great point that Nash shows, is that the Europeans were not the only ones that had all the control in trade, war, and labor. The Africans and especially the Indians played a major role in it too.

Much of this is opinion and not very useful for primary data. The primary data cited always has a back story. The opinion is interesting but the sources do not always back it up. Unfortunately used in numerous contemporary sources. Another scavenger hunt for truth.

This people's history of North America is an eye-opener! Follow up with 1491 and 1493 and you'll really have a perspective of the history of North America which is very different from what you learned in your high school!

Nash does an exemplary job of combing sources to examine how the motives and the cultural backgrounds of European settlers affected their relations with Indians as they settled North America. He does an excellent job of exploring the complexity of the mix with the later inclusion of escaped

slaves into a melting pot of America that has generally been overlooked. We have had studies of individual communities where Blacks, Indians, and Europeans have blended, but Nash provides us with a history of such mixing throughout the East Coast of North America. Well written and well documented.

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