

1860s

Māori in New Zealand

In the 1860s in New Zealand, Māori were displaced and mistreated, as had happened in so many countries when another country colonized and took control. In 1863, the land confiscation law was passed. This law allowed for confiscation of Māori land to punish tribes the British said had rebelled against their authority in the early 1860s. Even though the land had previously been promised to the Māori in the Treaty of Waitangi, the land was given to white settlers to occupy. Unfortunately, the law was used not only in cases where there was actual proof of rebellion, it was largely used as a convenient way to take Māori land. In 1865, the Native Rights Act declared all Māori to be natural-born British subjects. This law was supposed to show, as a matter of law, that Māori were to be treated the same as any British subject.

Later in 1865, the Native Land Court was established in accordance with the Native Lands Act. This court was set up to convert Māori land, which was traditionally held communally, into individual titles. This made it easier for the white settlers to buy Māori land. When this land was broken up in court, it was to be distributed to no more than ten people, regardless of the size of the block of land being dealt with. The people who were given title to the land were allowed to sell it or manage it in any way they wanted for their own benefit. There was nothing that required them to act in the best interests of all the original owners. All people, other than the ten chosen to own the land, were basically thrown out and no longer owned any land. The first chief judge of the Court, Francis Fenton, declared that all claimants had to attend the court proceedings, whether they wanted to or not. This caused many Māori to end up with large debts as they had to pay lawyers for their services, in addition to needing to pay for surveyors and a place to stay and eat. While they were given credit as needed, it often forced even those with land to sell it in order to pay their debts. Despite the opposition of those who felt this was a terrible mistreatment of the Māori, it resulted in a dramatic loss of land for the original inhabitants of the country.

In 1867, the Māori Representation Act established four seats to be held by Māori in the House of Representatives and gave the right to vote to all Māori men who were twenty-one or older. This was done as a way to try to bring the Māori into a common political system with the British and to reward those who had supported the British over the years. The Representation Act was extended, and later, Māori were given permanent representation in the government.

Similar scenes have occurred throughout history when one country colonizes another, and they are examples of the impact basic laws can have on those who are not represented in the making of those laws. While the Māori fought against the taking of their land, they were not as successful as they would have liked. Do you think people who colonized other lands had a right to treat those already living there as less than themselves? Do you think there is anything that can be done today to make up for the way the Māori were treated during this time in New Zealand's history? Do you think the

Māori have a reason to be suspect of any new laws, even today, that impact land ownership? Explain your answers.

Advancements in Chemistry

Much advancement was made in the science of chemistry in the 1860s. In 1860, cesium was first detected by German scientists. In 1861, rubidium was discovered by German scientists, and thallium was discovered by an English scientist. Then, in 1863, indium was discovered by German scientists.

From the 1500s to the 1700s, only a few elements were discovered. In the mid- and late-1700s, many more were found, but scientists had a very difficult time determining whether substances were elements or compounds. Even one of the earlier classifications of elements in the late 1700s included some compounds. In 1869, Dmitri Mendeleev developed what is considered to be the first modern periodic table of the elements. His table included 70 elements known at the time. He also included spaces for three elements he believed existed but had not yet been discovered. These three elements were discovered within his lifetime. Mendeleev's periodic table was not set up exactly the same way as the periodic table in use today, but it was based on atomic weights and the properties of the elements. Today, there are 118 recognized elements.

Do you think that organizing and standardizing the placement of elements on a table such as the periodic table, by using atomic weights and similarities between the properties of the elements, helped scientists know what to look for as they continued their research? If so, how do you think it helped?

An element such as indium, although discovered in 1863, has been put to use in modern technology including in the bearings of high-speed engines, in the production of lasers and LEDs, and in products such as computer touch screens and LCDs. Using your imagination, explore what new uses you think could be found for other substances that are a part of the planet. With enough research, is there a possibility that many of the answers we look for in health-related issues or ways to solve food and water shortages could be found if people worked together to find them instead of using the discoveries that are made as a way of making money? Explain your answers.

Canadian Confederation and the Sale of Alaska

In 1864, conferences were held to plan the confederation of the Canadian colonies. Then, in 1867, the British North America Act established the Dominion of Canada and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec became the first four provinces. The new nation grew rapidly, and one of the goals of the first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, was to settle the land to the west coast.

Russia had offered to sell the Alaska territory to the United States on many occasions, but the American Civil War caused a delay in the discussions. Russia had a difficult time controlling the area because of the distance involved, and trying to send supplies to

settlers there was very expensive. Russia was already trying to find a way to deal with the debt it had accumulated as a result of the Crimean War and felt selling the property was the best thing they could do. The secretary of state for the United States, William Seward, was very interested in acquiring the territory of Alaska, so when the offer was made in 1867, it was accepted, and a treaty was signed the same year.

Why do you think Russia offered the territory of Alaska to the United States instead of Canada or Great Britain? Do you think Russia expected the United States to expand throughout North America? By this time in the history of the United States, was there any evidence that expansion into the area that is now Canada was intended? Do you think Prime Minister Macdonald was anxious to expand Canada to the west coast out of concern that the United States would claim some of the land if Canada did not claim it first? Why do you think Canada and the United States were able to work out the boundaries and be content with the land they had instead of trying to control each other? Explain your answers.

The South-to-North Race Across Australia

William John Wills, who had immigrated to Australia from England, and Robert O'Hara Burke, who had immigrated to Australia from Ireland, crossed the Australian continent from south to north in 1860 and 1861. They had been sent by the settlers of the colony of Victoria, but the reasons for the expedition are still debated. Some think the reason was to accomplish the crossing of the continent from south to north before John McDouall Stuart, who represented South Australia, could successfully do it. The expedition was poorly planned, with part of the route decided on less than a month before it began. The Burke and Wills expedition was the most costly in the history of the exploration of Australia, and yet, one of the reasons for the death of both William Wills and Robert Burke was lack of provisions. It has been said that Robert Burke refused to take all of the provisions along on the entire expedition as he felt it would slow him down. Regardless of the reasons, the expedition, led by two very brave men, won the race to the north, but they did not survive the return trip. Because of the rapid pace of the expedition, little to no scientific and geographic discoveries were recorded. The explorers who were later sent to try to find and rescue the expedition compiled significant geographic knowledge that was useful in the future exploration of Australia.

John McDouall Stuart, who immigrated to Australia from Scotland, joined an expedition led by Charles Sturt to explore the center of Australia. After serving for seventeen months with Sturt, he had learned much of the problems of exploring areas where there was no water and dealing with scurvy, and he had drawn maps that made him familiar with the landscape of the center of the continent. He served with several other expeditions exploring the continent until he was asked to lead an expedition to cross the continent from south to north. Burke and Wills had already left on their expedition, so in order for Stuart to win this race, there was no time to lose. However, before he reached the northernmost point in the expedition, his team ran into problems. There were many failed attempts to move on past a certain point and on July 12, 1861, Stuart made the decision to return to Adelaide without completing the expedition. He received the 1861

gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society for his efforts.

Still feeling he could accomplish the task of crossing the Australian continent from south to north, he formed another expedition and left late in 1861 to try to cross the continent again. This time, they made it, returning to Adelaide on December 17, 1862. While Burke and Wills had been the first to complete the expedition, Stuart's route allowed the colony of South Australia to gain control of the Northern Territory in 1863, and the route was later used when the Overland Telegraph was built.

Many brave people have explored throughout history to bring the knowledge of unknown places to people. This knowledge has allowed people to move into new areas better prepared for what they would find, and it has brought the possibility of a better life to many. Which expedition did the most to help those who came after them? Was being first the best way to help people, or did the preparation and opportunities to help future explorers outweigh the notoriety won by being first? Which do you consider more important, helping others through your efforts or becoming famous for something even if your success helps no one but yourself? Which way ultimately makes the world a better place to live in? Explain your answers.

The United States Transcontinental Railroad and the Suez Canal

In 1863, the Central Pacific Railroad began building the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States east from Sacramento. In 1865, the Union Pacific began building the railroad west from Omaha. The Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada Mountains had to be crossed. There were problems with sickness from bad water and strikes by the workers. European immigrants, Chinese immigrants, recently freed slaves and free African Americans, along with former American Civil War soldiers worked on the project. On May 10, 1869, the two railroads met at Promontory, Utah, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed. The railroad changed many things in the United States, some for the better and others for the worse. The Native Americans' culture suffered, and they lost much of their land as the government set it aside for use by the railroads. This brought about wars and the need for more troops to safeguard those living in the expanding communities. Many natural resources were destroyed as the railroad was built across the country. The wagon trains that had crossed the country were replaced with trains, making it easier for people to travel, but it had a significant impact on the areas that depended on those travelers for their businesses. Markets for the products from both coasts and all areas in between grew with the faster way of transporting goods. Because of the increased speed in transporting goods, products from the east coast could be sent across the nation and then on to Asia by ship much more quickly than before. This allowed for an increase in the products needed with the new markets and an increase in the speed those products had to be supplied. All these changes brought about by the construction of the transcontinental railroad in the United States were only the beginning, and many more would come with the passing years.

The Suez Canal, although completed in the same year as the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States, was started earlier. Along with climate difficulties, sickness, and labor

problems, the digging of the canal was originally done by hand, with forced labor using picks and baskets. When the Egyptian ruler stopped the use of forced labor, the European countries involved in the project brought in heavy machinery to do the hard work of digging the canal. Ismail Pasha performed the official opening of the canal on November 17, 1869. Traffic through the canal was not as heavy as expected in the beginning, and financial problems occurred, but the Suez Canal had a profound impact on the world as a whole. The canal made the travel time between the United Kingdom and India just over half as long as it had been before the canal was built. This caused a shorter delivery time for goods and made it easier for businesses to provide products to their customers. The Suez Canal was not without its drawbacks. One of the most significant drawbacks was that it proved to be an important part of the European colonization of Africa.

In the same way the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States shortened the time needed to travel across the country, the Suez Canal shortened the time needed for ocean travel to many parts of the world. While this allowed for an increase in business opportunities, it also meant that products were expected to be made more quickly to meet the increased demand and shortened length of delivery time. Do you think these factors impacted the rapid growth of industry in the late 1800s and early 1900s? Do you think the increased pace of production led to handmade products being replaced by machine-made products and, at times, led to a product inferior to one that had been handcrafted by someone who took a special pride in their work? Do you think that over time, this has led to society expecting “disposable” products rather than products made to last? Give reasons for your answers.

1870s

Montreal Bread Riots

In 1875, during a time of depression, there were many hungry people in Montreal, Canada. Those helping people in need were having a hard time finding enough to help all those who came to them. Some of the unemployed went to find the new mayor, William Hales Hingston, but could not find him at his office or at his home. The new mayor, however, was not avoiding the people and met with them later that evening. He promised to be at city hall the next morning. By that time, it was reported that the crowd numbered about 1,000. Still, they were orderly and listened to the mayor as he told them he realized how hard things were for them. He told them that in two days there would be a city council meeting where proposals would be made and discussions held that would lead to some type of help.

Mayor Hingston pushed the city council to make headway on projects that were stalled because of the bureaucracy. He informed the finance committee to find a way to pay for everything. He also sent people to Ottawa to work on speeding up a planned expansion of the Lachine Canal. However, this did not give immediate help to the hungry.

The day after the city council meeting, a crowd once again came to speak to the mayor.