

## Crash Course Video #1: The Black Legend, Native Americans and Spaniards.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Background:** This video presents an overview of how Native Americans lived in present day U.S. before Europeans arrived. It also describes some key challenges historians have with understanding this time period and the problems with making generalizations about Native Americans. The **Black Legend** refers to the 'dark history' of the interaction between the Spaniards and Native Americans.

**Part I.** Vocabulary/Terms: Use any reputable website to find info on the following.

- a) Pre-Colombian
- b) Encomienda system
- c) Pueblo Revolt

**Part II.** Questions to answer as you watch. You may need to watch more than once, or stop the video at times because this guy talks Fasssst.

1. What were the Native Americans like before Europeans arrived? Or, how were they NOT like other civilizations?
2. What DID the Natives of North America have?
3. Approximately how many Indians lived in North America? How many were killed and how?
4. For what reasons does John Green give for why it is PROBLEMATIC to refer to the Indians as 'primitive?'
5. For what reason does John Green give for why it is also problematic to make generalizations about Indians?
6. How did Indians view property/land ownership?
7. Give 2 reasons why the Spaniards came to America?
8. Why is it difficult to truly know if the Black Legend is completely true?

**Part III. Mystery Document/Primary Source A History of the Indies by Bartolome De Las Casas, 1528 :**

De Las Casas was a Spanish Priest who visited the New World and was moved by the terrible treatment of the Natives. He spoke out against the powerful Spanish governors in the New World and tried to hold them accountable for their treatment of the native population. The following is a quote from his testimony to the Spanish Crown:

“The Indians [of Hispaniola] were totally deprived of their freedom and were put in the harshest, fiercest, most horrible servitude and captivity which no one who has not seen it can understand. Even beasts enjoy more freedom when they are allowed to graze in the fields. But our Spaniards gave no such opportunity to Indians and truly considered them perpetual slaves, since the Indians had not the free will to dispose of their persons but instead were disposed of according to Spanish greed and cruelty, not as men in captivity but as beasts tied to a rope to prevent free movement. When they were allowed to go home, they often found it deserted and had no other recourse than to go out into the woods to find food and to die. When they fell ill, which was very frequently because they are a delicate people unaccustomed to such work, the Spaniards did not believe them and pitilessly called them lazy dogs and kicked and beat them; and when illness was apparent they sent them home as useless. . . . They would go then, falling into the first stream and dying there in desperation; others would hold on longer but very few ever made it home. I sometimes came upon dead bodies on my way, and upon others who were gasping and moaning in their death agony, repeating “Hungry, hungry.” And this was the freedom, the good treatment and the Christianity the Indians received.

10. In what way(s) does his writing support the story of the Black Legend?

11. Why did those natives that survived find their homes deserted?

12. How might Bartolome De Las Casas job role as a priest have protected him against attacks by government officials in the New World?

13. By the mid-1500s, the Spanish Crown passed laws that required Spaniards to treat Indians better and to gradually end the encomienda system and slavery. To what extent do you believe Casas is responsible for this?

14. Should De Las Casas be considered a hero?