Conflict and Collaboration Between European Explorers and Natives in North America

Annotated Bibliography

Bonvillian, John D., Ingram, Vicky L., and McCleary, Brendan M. “Observations and the Use of Manual Signs and Gestures in the Communicative Interactions Between Native Americans And Spanish Explorers of North America: The Accounts of Bernal Díaz del Castillo and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.” *Sign Language Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2009, pp. 132-165, www.muse.jhu.edu/article/259439. Accessed May 3, 2017.

Bonvillian, Ingram, and McCleary’s article discusses the communication barriers that existed between the Spanish explorers and Native Americans, as well as methods that were used to break through those barriers. The article discusses how at times, interpreters (either Spanish or native) were used; however, when these were not available, pantomimes, gestures, and manual signs were used to communicate instead. Of all the expeditions, two that stand out are those of Bernal Diaz del Castillo and Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca. Del Castillo conquered what is now Mexico, while de Vaca explored from Florida to California. Bonvillian et al. reviews these two expeditions while focusing on evidence of the use of signs and gestures to communicate with natives. The article is a secondary source, but utilizes excerpts from primary sources written by del Castillo and de Vaca; therefore, it can be considered to be credible. Its content is significant to my paper as it discusses communication methods in the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans. Moreover, the paper also sheds light upon the nature of those interactions, and struggles that came up between the two groups. Unlike the other sources, Bonvillian et al.’s article focuses on a singular aspect of the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans – communication. It is likely that the intended audience of the article is historians, researchers and students.

Columbus, Christopher. “Letter of Christopher Columbus on His First Voyage to America, 1492.” *National Humanities Center Resource Toolbox,* 1493, www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text1/columbusletter.pdf. Accessed May 3, 2017.

This is a primary source consisting of a letter Christopher Columbus wrote to the Treasurer of Aragon about his first voyage to North America. In the letter, Columbus describes his first encounters with the natives of the West Indies, as well as the various lands and islands that he discovered. He writes that the Spaniards gave the natives many gifts, and in turn, the natives were readily helpful to the Europeans. Apart from trading with the natives, Columbus and his crew attempted to convert the natives that they met to Christianity, while the natives believed that the Europeans came from heaven. Overall, the natives and the Europeans appeared to be on very good terms, with the king calling Columbus his brother. Similarly, the Europeans viewed the natives as a generally “timid” and gentle. There was one tribe of natives, however, that Columbus described as being extremely fierce and as engaging in cannibalism. Overall, Columbus’s letter provides a great deal of information concerning the initial interactions between European explorers and natives in North America. Moreover, as the letter is a primary source, it reveals valuable and credible information about the mindset and attitudes of the Spaniards in relation to the natives. Columbus’s letter varies greatly from the other sources, as it is a primary source and as it details the very first contacts between Europeans and Native Americans.

Pajer-Rogers, Ian. The Politics of Survival: Indian and European Collaboration in Colonial North America. *Inquiry Journal,* vol. 9, 2005, www.scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=inquiry\_2005. Accessed May 3, 2017.

Pajer-Roger’s article provides an overview of the complex relationship between European explorers and Native Americans. The article, which is published in an undergraduate research journal and therefore geared toward students and researchers, emphasizes the kinds of collaboration that existed between the two groups during expeditions. It appears that the natives relied on the Europeans for military strength, while the Europeans learned agriculture and other survival tactics from them. Collaboration was essential for the survival of the Europeans; this is demonstrated by the example of Roanoke, an English colony that perished due to the unwillingness of the natives to engage with them. At the same time, the natives often required the help of the Europeans as well, especially when weakened by disease and threatened by enemy tribes. The natives and Europeans also collaborated in the fur trade, especially between the Iroquois and the French; and in war, as demonstrated by European-Indian alliances in the four major imperial wars in North America. Ultimately, Pajer-Roger’s article is extremely useful for my paper as it sheds light upon the positive interchanges between Europeans and Natives in North America. The article is a secondary source that is based on other secondary sources, which somewhat limits its credibility. However, it was written by a doctoral student in history and was published in a peer-reviewed academic journal; therefore, it can be assumed that it is credible enough to be used as a source.

“Native Americans and the Lewis and Clark Expedition: Hospitality and Hostility.” *University of Virginia,* 2007, www.exhibits.hsl.virginia.edu/lewisclark/natives/. Accessed May 3, 2017.

This article, published by the University of Virginia, discusses both positive and negative interactions between the Lewis and Clark Expedition and the Natives that they encountered. The article, which appears to be intended for students, discusses how for the most part, Native Americans were extremely helpful to Lewis and Clark. They offered food and gifts, as well as provided tips and advice. This was especially true of the Nez Perce, a tribe living in the Rocky Mountains who encountered the expeditioners. At the same time, Lewis and Clark provided the Natives with medical services and goods. However, not all interactions between the Americans and the Natives were positive. The article discusses how conflict frequently broke out between the white men and the Natives; this was most frequently due to misunderstandings regarding trade. Overall, the article contributes greatly to my paper, as it discusses both positive and negative interactions between explorers and Natives. The article is unique from my other sources for two reasons: first, it focuses on conflict between explorers and natives, which the others do not do, and second, it discusses interactions between Americans and natives, unlike the others which primarily focus on European explorers. Another benefit of the article is that it is a credible source; it uses excerpts from primary sources – letters written by members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition – as a basis for its content.