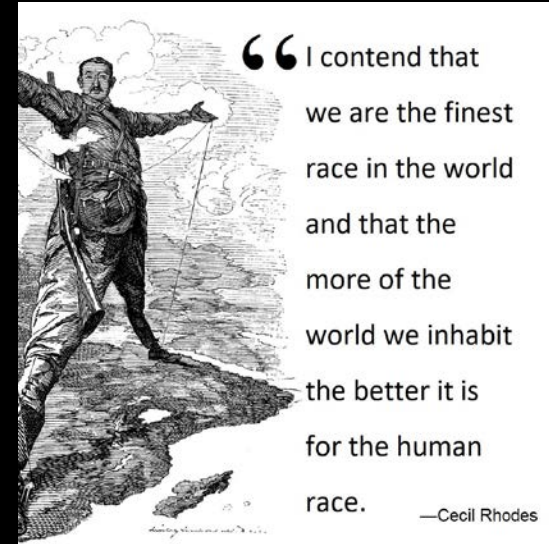




America, Empire of Liberty



The Battle of Amoy, fought between British and Chinese forces during the First Opium War



Have you ever wondered?

Grandpa's History Lessons that Matter

- Lesson 13:
- *The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)*
- *"The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets"*



# The British Empire

## (1583-1997 CE)

---

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*

*Introduction:*

*Why should we study the British empire?*

*The British empire was one of the most important developments in world history. The empire was huge, it lasted a long time and it brought tremendous changes to many parts of the world. For millions of people the world today is the way it is because of the impact of the British empire.*

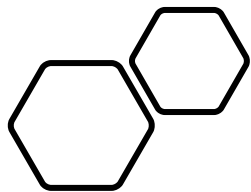
*At its height the British empire was the largest in world history. It covered around 25% of the world's land surface. Large areas of North America, Australia, Africa and Asia were all part of the British empire at one time or other. Other areas, especially in South America, were closely linked to the British empire by trade.*

*Was the British empire a force for good or not?*

*This question cannot be answered with a yes or a no! The British empire brought many changes to many people and many countries. Some of these changes involved innovations in medical care, education and railways. The British empire fought to abolish slavery in the 1800s, but it profited from slavery in the 1700s. For many peoples the British empire meant loss of lands, discrimination and prejudice. There will never be an answer to this question that everyone will agree on.*

*The British empire has had a huge impact on the world. The majority of former colonies still keep their ties with Britain through the Commonwealth. Today, North America and Australia are very similar to Europe in a lot of ways. Many countries around the world now have multi-cultural populations. Parliamentary democracy, the English language and the Christian religion can be found in many countries. These are just a few of the ways in which the British empire has had a lasting effect on world history.*





## The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire at its Peak”*



# The British Empire

## (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*

In 1497, Henry VII commissions the Italian navigator John Cabot to cross the Atlantic in search of new territories for England. Cabot traveled from Bristol to “New Found Land”, which he mistook for Asia, claiming the North American land for England and setting the course for England's rise to power in the 16th and 17th centuries.

John Cabot

In 1583, Humphrey Gilbert claims Newfoundland on behalf of England's queen Elizabeth.

Humphrey  
Gilbert

Colonists establish the first lasting British settlement in the new world, at Jamestown.

Jamestown

1651 - Parliament in England passes the first of several Navigation Acts designed to reserve international trade for English ships.

1655 - The British, settling in Jamaica, soon turn the island into the major slave market of the West Indies.

Navigation Acts  
(Imperialism & Slavery)

1520-1562 CE

1600 CE

1620 CE

1497 CE

1583 CE

1607 CE

1650's CE

The Great Dying

C. 1500, European diseases (“‘Virgin-soil’ epidemics”) bring death on a massive scale to an Indigenous population that has no immunity.

East India  
Company

Britain's East India Company is established when Elizabeth I grants a charter to a 'Company of Merchants trading into the East Indies' (lands of South (Indian subcontinent) and Southeast Asia.

Pilgrims

The Pilgrim Fathers, a group of 102 English settlers, sail in the Mayflower to the new world; at Cape Cod, the adult males on the Mayflower agree a form of government for their new colony and they select a place for their settlement, giving it the name of Plymouth, their port of departure in England.



# The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*

1664 - Peter Stuyvesant, Director-General, essentially Governor, of New Amsterdam, accepts the reality of the military situation and yields New Amsterdam to the British without a shot being fired.

1666 - New Amsterdam is renamed New York by the recently established English regime.

## New York

The Sugar Act 1764, the Stamp Act 1765, the Townshend Acts 1767 and the Tea Act 1773 taxed goods imported to the American colonies. American colonists, who had no representation in Parliament, saw the Acts as an abuse of power. The British sent troops to America to enforce the unpopular new laws, further heightening tensions between Great Britain and the American colonies in the run-up to the American Revolutionary War.

## Taxes & the American Revolution

Naval officer George Vancouver sails from Britain on the voyage which will bring him to the northwest coast of America.

## West Coast America

The British acquire a foothold in the Persian Gulf by making Oman a protectorate

## The Middle East

1759-1763 CE

1770-1788 CE

1795-1815 CE

1660's CE

1764-1783 CE

1791 CE

1798 CE

## England and France in North America

1759 – British general James Wolfe sails up the St Lawrence river with 15,000 men, defeats Montcalm and captures Quebec. Both commanders die in the engagement.

1763 - In the treaty of Paris France cedes to Britain territory north of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi, except New Orleans; Spain cedes Florida to Britain, completing British possession of the entire east coast of North America.

## Australia

1770 - Captain Cook reaches the mainland of Australia, at a place which he names Botany Bay, and continues up the eastern coast.

1779 - Joseph Banks tells a committee of the House of Commons that the east coast of Australia is suitable for the transportation of convicted felons.

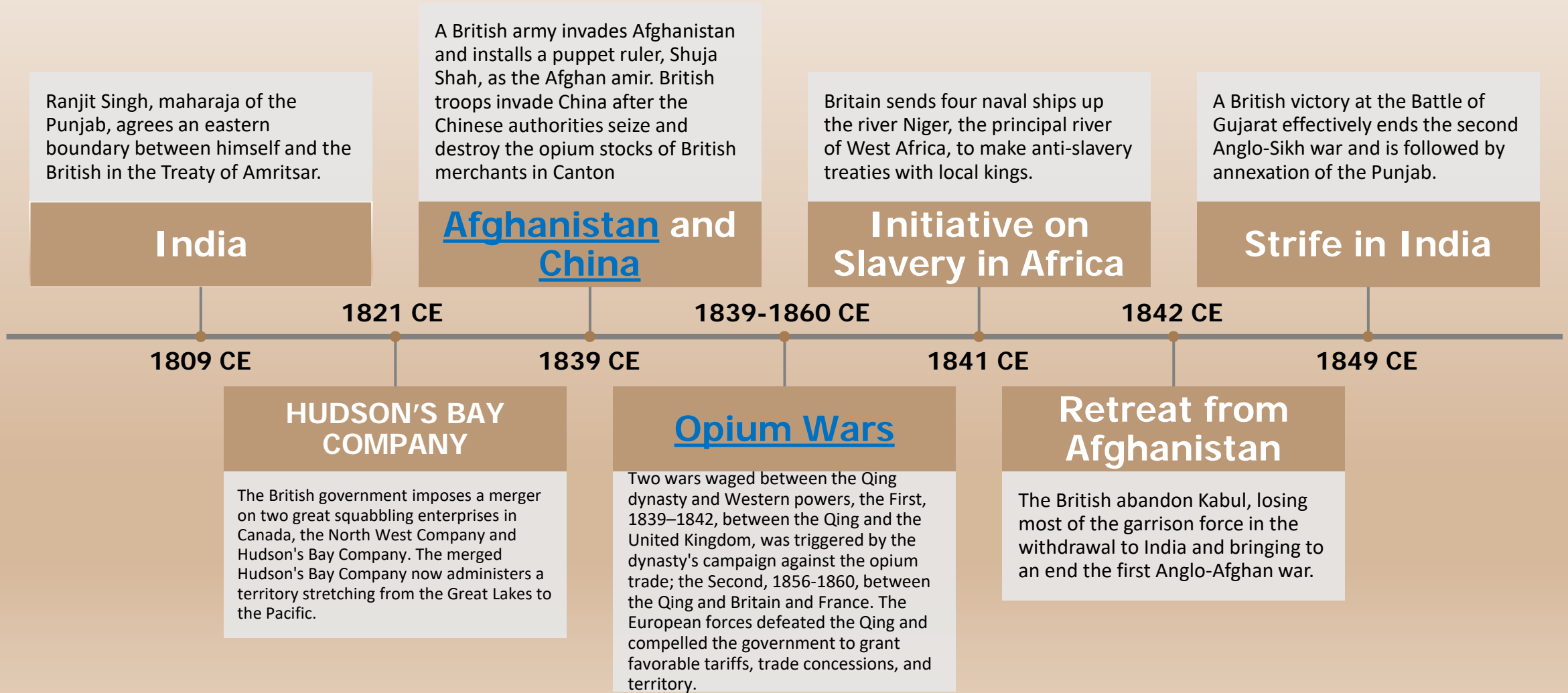
1788 - The First Fleet (eleven ships carrying about 750 convicts) arrives in Botany Bay from Portsmouth, England. A penal colony is est. at Sydney Cove.

## South Africa

With the Dutch entering the war on the side of the French, Britain seizes their valuable Cape colony in South Africa; cedes it to the Netherlands in 1802 and recaptures it in 1806. In 1815, the congress of Vienna leaves the Cape of Good Hope in British hands.

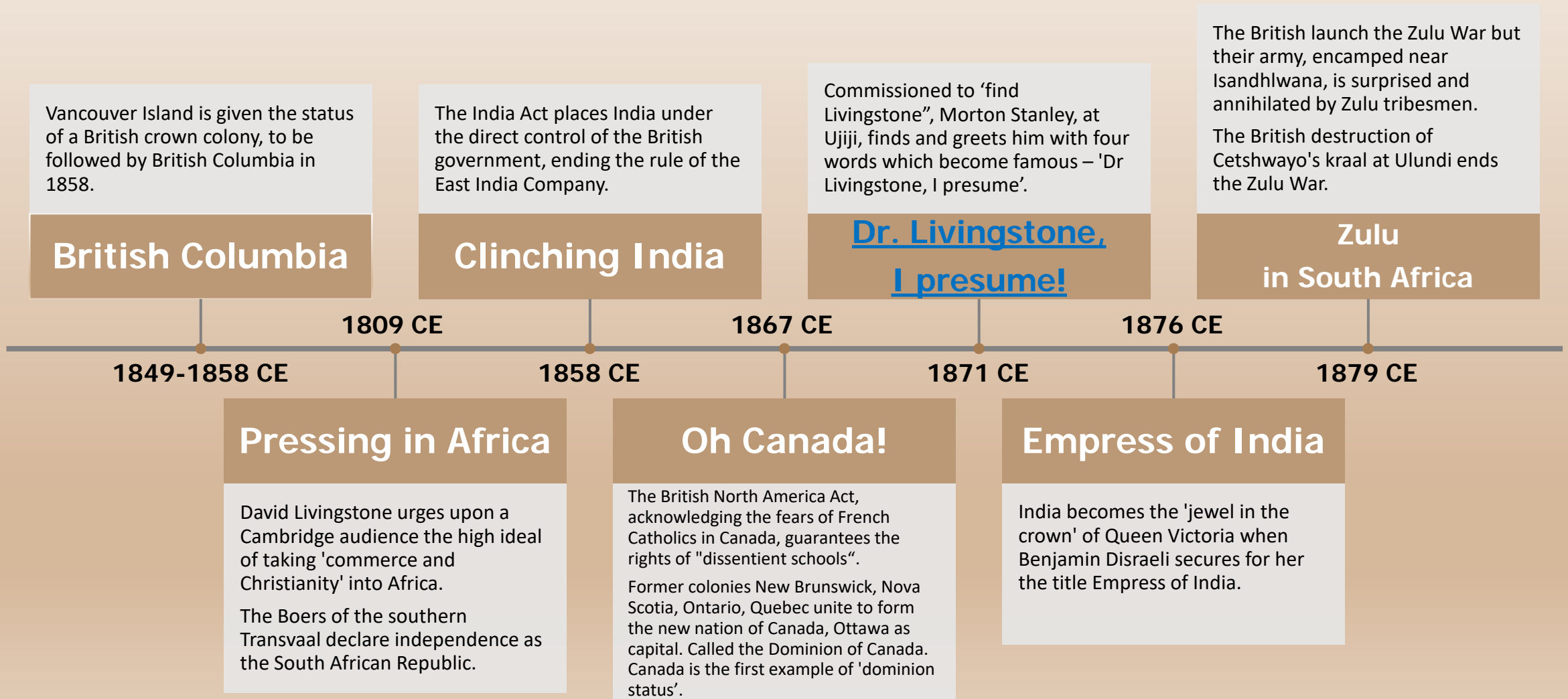
# The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*



# The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*



# The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*

The Boers inflict a convincing defeat on a British army at Majuba, in the Transvaal, South Africa.

The British withdraw from Afghanistan, having achieved nothing in the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

## Defeat in South Africa & Afghanistan

1881 CE

1884-1895 CE

## Cecil Rhodes in Africa

1899 - The Boer War breaks out, over the rights of British settlers in the Transvaal.  
1902 - The Boer leadership surrendered and accepted British terms with the Treaty of Vereeniging.

1910 - Former republics were turned into the Transvaal and Orange River colonies and merged with the Cape and Natal Colonies into the Union of South Africa, as part of the British Empire.

1899 - The Boer War breaks out, over the rights of British settlers in the Transvaal.  
1902 - The Boer leadership surrendered and accepted British terms with the Treaty of Vereeniging.

1910 - Former republics were turned into the Transvaal and Orange River colonies and merged with the Cape and Natal Colonies into the Union of South Africa, as part of the British Empire.

## The Second Boer War (1899-1902)

1899-1910 CE

## New Zealand

New Zealand becomes independent as a self-governing dominion.

1907 CE

1909 - Mahatma Gandhi, on a visit to India, publishes a pamphlet entitled Hind Swaraj ("Indian Home Rule").

1915 - Gandhi returns to India after more than twenty years in South Africa.

1922 - Gandhi arrested by the British in India as an agitator and is sentenced to six years in prison.

## Gandhi

1909-1922 CE

## Gandhi – Civil Disobedience?

1930 - Mahatma Gandhi leads a 240-mile march from Ahmedabad to the sea to defy the British salt tax, thus launching a campaign of civil disobedience.

1942 - Mahatma Gandhi launches the Quit India Movement, calling on a large crowd in Bombay to 'do or die' in the struggle to expel the British.

1930-1942 CE

1942 - Gandhi and nearly all the leaders of India's Congress party are arrested and will remain in prison until the end of the war

1947 - In granting independence to India, Britain partitions the subcontinent along sectarian lines into Pakistan and the republic of India.

## Indian Independence

1942-1947 CE



# The British Empire (1583-1997 CE)

*“The Empire On Which The Sun Never Sets”*



Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India, becomes the first governor-general.  
Jawaharlal Nehru becomes prime minister of the newly independent republic of India.  
Muslim leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah becomes the first governor-general of the new state of Pakistan.  
In 1948 Gandhi is assassinated at a Delhi prayer meeting by a Hindu extremist, Nathuram Godse.

## A New India and Gandhi Assassinated

1953 CE

Joshua Nkomo founds ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African People's Union, in the British colony of Southern Rhodesia.

## Zimbabwe

1961 CE

Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Uganda, Zanzibar, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Gambia, Botswana all declare independence through the '60's.

1965 - Ian Smith makes a unilateral declaration of Rhodesia's independence.  
1980 - Rhodesia becomes independent, taking the name Zimbabwe, with Robert Mugabe as prime minister.

## Independence Across Africa

1960-1980 CE

1982-1997 CE

Why did the British  
empire decline?

Why?

1945-1997 CE

## Rhodesia Self- Governing

The two Rhodesias and Nyasaland are merged in the self-governing Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

## Ian Smith in Rhodesia

1962 - Ian Smith's white supremacist party, the Rhodesian Front, wins power in Rhodesia's election.

1964 - Smith arrests leading black politicians Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe.

## The Falklands

1982 - 5000 Argentinian troops land in the Falkland Islands, provoking war with Britain. British troops recapture Port Stanley, after which the Argentinian forces in the Falklands surrender.

1997 - Fifteen years after the Falklands War there are 1700 British troops in the islands, guarding 2200 residents.

## Appendix

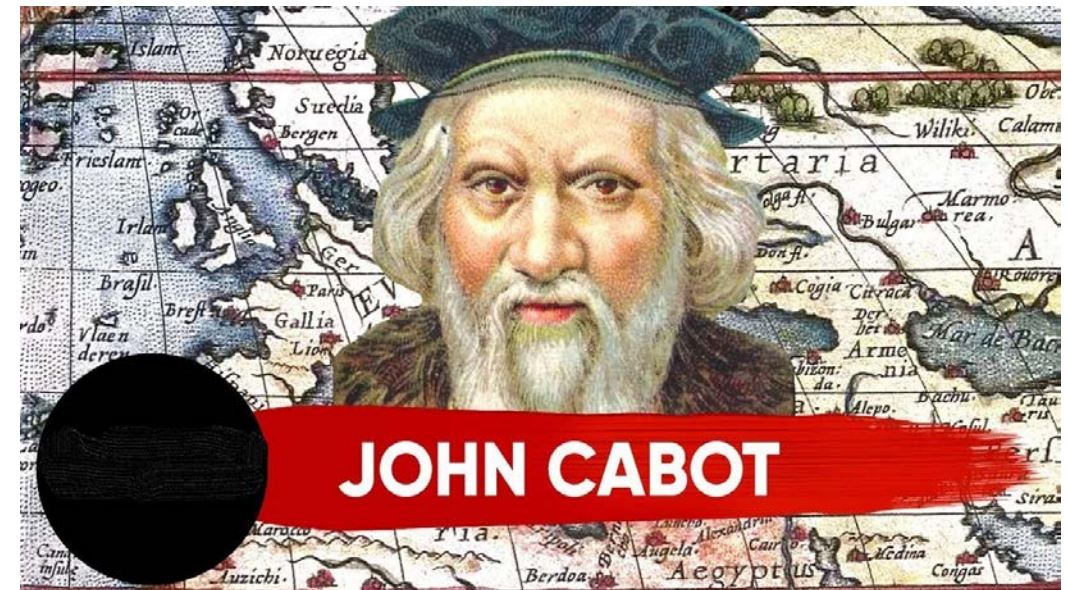
---

### *Action Links*

**MORE FUN, MORE FACTS  
ABOUT THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
PEOPLE AND EVENTS  
DURING THE BRITISH EMPIRE**

# John Cabot (c. 1450–c. 1500)

- John Cabot (or Giovanni Caboto, as he was known in Italian) was an Italian explorer and navigator who may have developed the idea of sailing westward to reach the riches of Asia while working for a Venetian merchant. Though the exact details of his life and expeditions are the subject of debate, he was born in 1450 and by the late 1490s, he was living in England, where he gained a commission from King Henry VII to make an expedition across the northern Atlantic. He sailed from Bristol in May 1497 and made landfall in late June. The exact site of Cabot's landing has not been definitively established; it may have been located in Newfoundland, Cape Breton Island or southern Labrador. When Cabot went ashore, he reportedly saw signs of habitation but no people. He took possession of the land for King Henry but hoisted both the English and Venetian flags. After returning to England to report his success, Cabot departed on a second expedition in mid-1498, but is thought to have perished in a shipwreck en route.
- In addition to laying the groundwork for British land claims in Canada, his expeditions proved the existence of a shorter route across the northern Atlantic Ocean, which would later facilitate the establishment of other British colonies in North America.





# The Great Dying (16<sup>th</sup> Century Americas)

- While Europe was in the early days of the Renaissance, there were empires in the Americas sustaining more than 60 million people. But the first European contact in 1492 brought diseases (measles, smallpox, influenza and the bubonic plague) to the Americas which devastated the native population, and the resultant collapse of farming in the Americas and eventual reforestation. Our best estimate is a death toll of 56 million by the beginning of the 1600s — 90 percent of the pre-Columbian Indigenous population and around 10 percent of the global population at the time. This makes the “Great Dying” the largest human mortality event in proportion to the global population, putting it second in absolute terms only to World War II, in which 80 million people died — 3% of the world’s population at the time.
- A figure of 90 percent mortality in post-contact America is extraordinary and exceeds similar epidemics, including the Black Death in Europe — which resulted in a 30 percent population loss in Europe. One explanation is that multiple waves of epidemics hit Indigenous immune systems that had evolved in isolation from Eurasian and African populations for 13,000 years.
- Native Americas at that time had never been in contact with the pathogens the colonists brought, creating so-called “virgin soil” epidemics. People who didn’t die from smallpox, died from the following wave of influenza. Those who survived that succumbed to measles. Warfare, famine and colonial atrocities did the rest in the Great Dying.

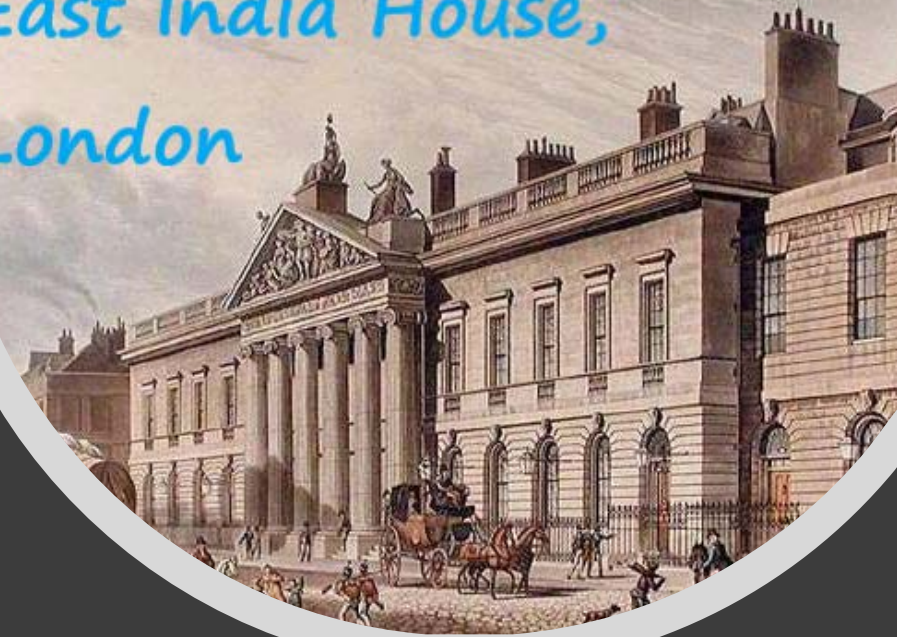


"Landing of Columbus" by John Vanderlyn (1775-1852). Christopher Columbus has been credited with the European discovery of the Bahamian islands in 1492 - which led to the European discovery of North America.

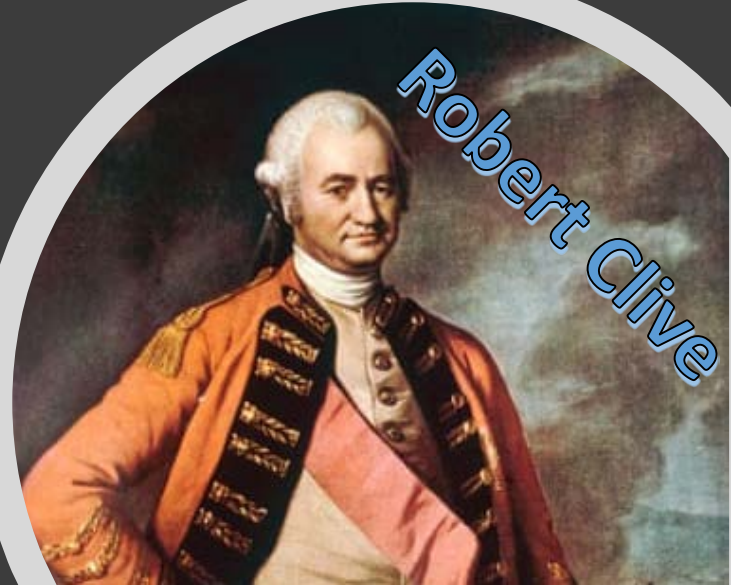
# The East India Company: The original corporate raiders

- English company formed for the exploitation of trade with East and Southeast Asia and India, incorporated by royal charter on December 31, 1600. Starting as a monopolistic trading body, the company became involved in politics and acted as an agent of British imperialism in India from the early 18th century to the mid-19th century during which time the company conquered, subjugated and plundered vast tracts of south Asia. Robert Clive, was an unstable sociopath who led the fearsome East India Company to its conquest of the subcontinent. In addition, the activities of the company in China in the 19th century served as a catalyst for the expansion of British influence there.
- The company was formed to share in the East Indian spice trade. That trade had been a monopoly of Spain and Portugal until the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) by England gave the English the chance to break the monopoly.
- The company met with opposition from the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and the Portuguese. The Dutch virtually excluded company members from the East Indies after the Amboina Massacre in 1623 (an incident in which English, Japanese, and Portuguese traders were executed by Dutch authorities), but the company's defeat of the Portuguese in India (1612) won them trading concessions from the Mughal Empire. The company settled down to a trade in cotton and silk piece goods, indigo, and saltpetre, with spices from South India. It extended its activities to the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, and East Asia.
- The official government machinery of British India assumed the East India Company's governmental functions and absorbed its navy and its armies in 1858.

East India House,  
London



Robert Clive







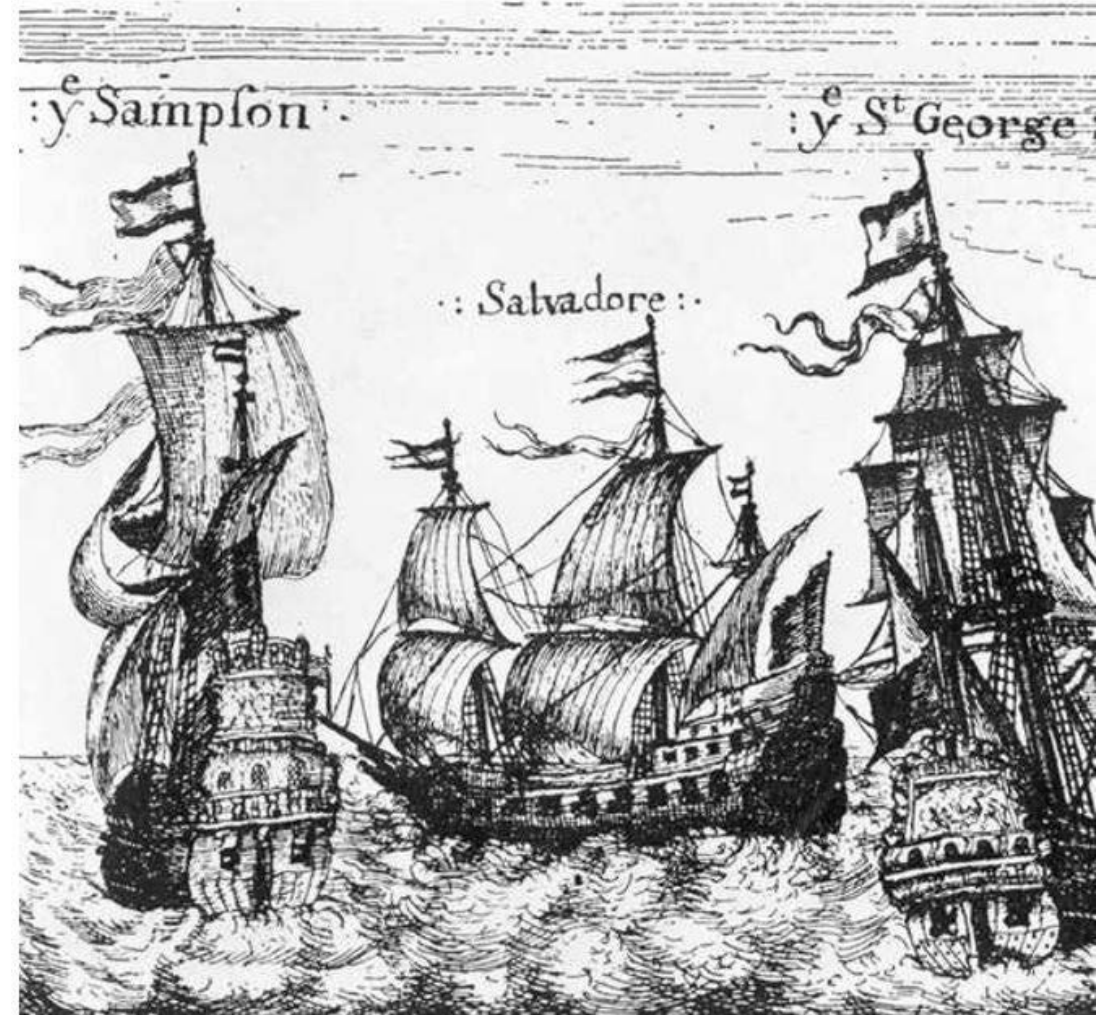
# Pilgrims and the Mayflower Story

- Pilgrim Fathers, in American colonial history, settlers of Plymouth, Massachusetts, the first permanent colony in New England (1620). Of the 102 colonists, 35 were members of the English Separatist Church (a radical faction of Puritanism) who had earlier fled to Leiden, the Netherlands, to escape persecution at home. The Mayflower set sail on 16th September 1620 from Plymouth, UK, to voyage to America. But its history and story start long before that.
- Its passengers were in search of a new life – some seeking religious freedom, others a fresh start in a different land. They would go on to be known as the Pilgrims and influence the future of the United States of America in ways they could never have imagined. This story isn't just about the Mayflower's passengers though. It's about the people who already lived in America and the enormous effect the arrival of these colonists would have on Native Americans and the land they had called home for centuries.
- Importantly, the Pilgrims were not the first to land in America, nor did they discover it. There were already established colonies at the time, not least Jamestown – founded in 1607.
- But the Mayflower story is renowned for its themes of freedom and humanity – including the relationships first formed between the Native American Wampanoag tribe and the colonists and the first Thanksgiving.



# Navigation Acts

- In English history, a series of laws designed to restrict England's carrying trade to English ships, effective chiefly in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- The system came into its own at the beginning of the colonial era, in the 17th century. The great Navigation Act passed by the Commonwealth government in 1651 was aimed at the Dutch, then England's greatest commercial rivals. It distinguished between goods imported from European countries, which could be brought in either English ships or ships of the country of origin, and goods brought from Asia, Africa, or America, which could travel to England, Ireland, or any English colony only in ships from England or the particular colony. Various fish imports and exports were entirely reserved to English shipping, as was the English coastal trade. The law was re-enacted in 1660, and the practice was introduced of "enumerating" certain colonial products, which could be shipped directly only to England, Ireland, or another English colony. These included sugar (until 1739), indigo, and tobacco; rice and molasses were added during the 18th century.
- The tightening of the laws in 1764 contributed to the unrest leading to the rebellion of England's American colonies; their achievement of independence made the first serious breach in the navigation system, and from then on exceptions were increasingly made.



**Navigation Acts: Dutch ships masquerading as Spanish vessels:** The *Sar*, the *Salvadore*, and the *St. George*, three Dutch ships masquerading as Spanish vessels in order to circumvent the 1651 Navigation Act. *Hulton Archive*

# New York

- In 1609, Henry Hudson's attempt to find a Northeast Passage to Asia led him south along the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to North Carolina. The Dutch consequently claimed parts of present-day New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut and Delaware for the colony of New Netherland.
- Fur-trading expeditions up the Hudson River got going almost immediately after Hudson's voyage, but the colony grew at a snail's pace. The first major group of settlers did not arrive until 1624 and in 1626 they founded New Amsterdam on the southern tip of nearby Manhattan Island. From that point forward, the city was New Netherland's largest and most important settlement.
- At its peak, only about 9,000 people lived in New Netherland, leaving it vulnerable to attack from the English, who fought three wars against the Dutch, their main commercial rivals, between 1652 and 1674 and who vastly outnumbered them in the New World. The breaking point came in March 1664, when English King Charles II awarded the colony's land to his brother, the Duke of York, even though the two countries were then technically at peace. A few months later, four warships with several hundred soldiers onboard arrived in New Amsterdam's harbor and demanded that the Dutch surrender. Though Stuyvesant at least outwardly prepared to fight, prominent city residents persuaded him to stand down, and on September 8 he signed the colony over without any blood being shed. In 1673, during the Third Anglo-Dutch War, the Dutch re-conquered Manhattan with an invasion force of some 600 men. But they gave it up the following year as part of a peace treaty in which they retained Suriname in South America. "They thought that was going to be worth more," Fabend said. "They were wrong."



Dutch governor Peter Stuyvesant surrenders New Amsterdam to the British, September 8, 1664.



# The American Revolution

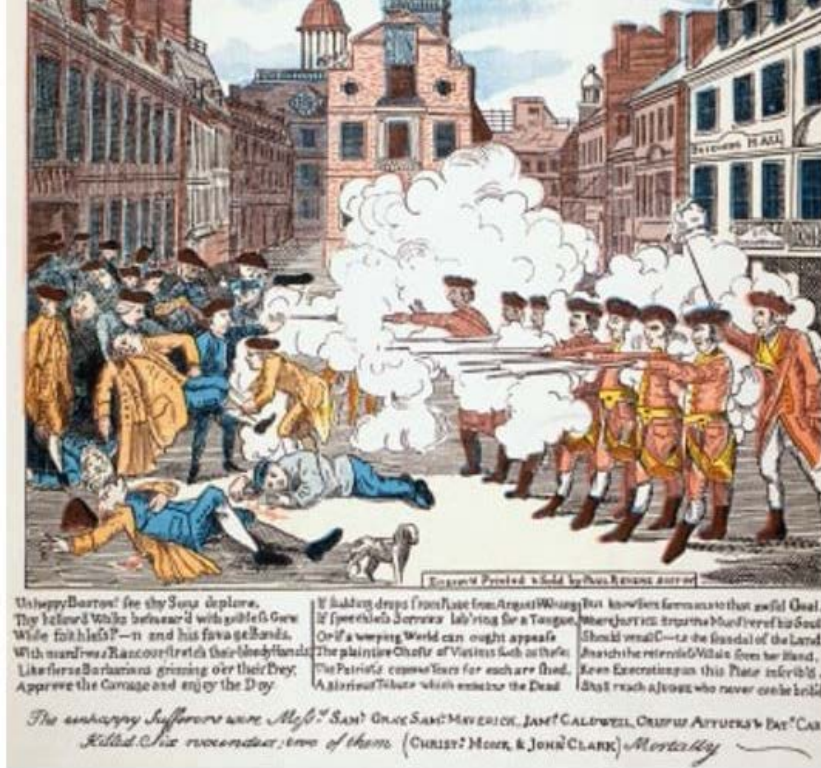
- The Revolutionary War (1775-83), also known as the American Revolution, arose from growing tensions between residents of Great Britain's 13 North American colonies and the colonial government, which represented the British crown. In December 1773, a band of Bostonians dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded British ships and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party.

- On the night of April 18, 1775, hundreds of British troops marched from Boston to nearby Concord, Massachusetts in order to seize an arms cache. Paul Revere and other riders sounded the alarm, and colonial militiamen began mobilizing to intercept the Redcoats. On April 19, local militiamen clashed with British soldiers in the Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts, marking the "shot heard round the world" that signified the start of the Revolutionary War.

- In May 1775, the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia, delegates—including George Washington of Virginia, John and Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, Patrick Henry of Virginia, John Jay of New York, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson—voted to form a Continental Army, with Washington as its commander in chief.

- By June 1776, with the Revolutionary War in full swing, a growing majority of the colonists had come to favor independence from Britain. On July 4, the Continental Congress voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence, drafted by a five-man committee including Benjamin Franklin and John Adams but written mainly by Thomas Jefferson.

- France entered the American Revolution on the side of the colonists in 1778, turning what had essentially been a civil war into an international conflict. After French assistance helped the Continental Army force the British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, the Americans had effectively won their independence, though fighting would not formally end until 1783 when British and American negotiators met in Paris to sign preliminary peace terms. On September 3, 1783, Great Britain formally recognized the independence of the United States in the Treaty of Paris.



The Boston Massacre (1770) pitted British soldiers against local workers and resulted in the death of five men. The event galvanized many towards the cause of independence from the British.



Washington at Valley Forge



Paul Revere

Paul Revere was a colonial Boston silversmith, industrialist, propagandist and patriot immortalized in the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem describing Revere's midnight ride to warn the colonists about a British attack.



Boston Tea Party

In 1773, colonists dressed as Mohawk Indians threw 342 chests of tea belonging to the British East India Company into Boston harbor. They were protesting a tax on tea and a perceived British monopoly.



# The Anglo-Afghan Wars

- The Anglo-Afghan Wars involved the British in three conflicts over 80 years (1839–42; 1878–80; 1919) in which Great Britain, from its base in India, sought to extend its control over neighbouring Afghanistan and to oppose Russian influence there.
- The First Anglo-Afghan War: Following a protracted civil war that began in 1816, the Bārakzay clan became the ruling dynasty of Afghanistan, with its most powerful member, Dōst Moḥammad Khan, ascending the throne in 1826. With Great Britain and Russia maneuvering for influence in Afghanistan, Dōst Moḥammad was forced to balance his country between the two great powers. The British, feeling that Dōst Moḥammad was either hostile to them or unable to resist Russian penetration, moved to take a direct role in Afghan affairs. Having negotiated unsatisfactorily with Dōst Moḥammad, an invasion of Afghanistan was ordered by the governor-general of India, Lord Auckland, with the object of restoring exiled Afghan ruler Shah Shojā' to the throne. In April 1839, after suffering great privations, the British army entered Kandahār, and Shojā' was then crowned shah.
- The Second Anglo-Afghan War: In 1878, when Russia's General Stolietov was admitted to Kabul while Lytton's envoy, Sir Neville Chamberlain, was turned back at the border by Afghan troops, Britain's Lord Lytton, governor-general of India, decided to crush his neighbouring "pipkin" with a British invasion. Shīr 'Alī fled his capital and country, dying in exile early in 1879. The British army occupied Kabul, as it had in the first war, and a treaty signed at Gandamak (Gandomak) on May 26, 1879, recognized Shīr 'Alī's son, Ya'qūb Khan, as emir. He subsequently agreed to receive a permanent British embassy at Kabul. In addition, he agreed to conduct his foreign relations with other states in accordance "with the wishes and advice" of the British government.
- The Third Anglo-Afghan War: With the outbreak of World War I (1914–18), there was in Afghanistan widespread support of Ottoman Turkey against the British. In his coronation address Amānullāh declared total independence from Great Britain. This declaration launched the inconclusive Third Anglo-Afghan War in May 1919, after which a peace treaty recognizing the independence of Afghanistan was signed at Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan) on August 8, 1919 and was amended as the ANGLO-AFGHAN TREATY OF 1921. Before signing the final document with the British, the Afghans concluded a treaty of friendship with the new Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union. Afghanistan thereby became one of the first states to recognize the Soviet government, and a "special relationship" evolved between the two governments that lasted until December 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan during the Afghan War.

First Anglo-Afghan War The British army at Urghundee, Afghanistan, during the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42)



First Anglo-Afghan War, Bolān Pass: The British army entering the Bolān Pass during the First Anglo-Afghan War.



Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1919





# The British Empire in China

- In 1839, Britain invaded China to crush opposition to its interference in the country's economic and political affairs. The First Opium War was a series of military engagements fought between Britain and the Qing dynasty of China. The immediate issue was Chinese official seizure of opium stocks at Canton to stop the banned opium trade and threatening the death penalty for future offenders. The British government insisted on the principles of free trade, equal diplomatic recognition among nations, and backed the merchants' demands. The British navy defeated the Chinese using technologically superior ships and weapons, and in 1841 the British imposed a treaty (the Chuenpi Convention) ceding the island of Hong Kong to the British and opening trade with China. In 1842 the Treaty of Nanking was signed, formally ending the First Opium War.
- In the 18th century the demand for Chinese luxury goods (particularly silk, porcelain, and tea) created a trade imbalance between China and Britain. European silver flowed into China through the Canton System, which confined incoming foreign trade to the southern port city of Canton. To counter this imbalance, the British East India Company began to grow opium in Bengal and allowed private British merchants to sell opium to Chinese smugglers for illegal sale in China. The influx of narcotics reversed the Chinese trade surplus, drained the economy of silver, and increased the numbers of opium addicts inside the country, outcomes that seriously worried Chinese officials.
- Britain's new colony flourished as an East-West trading center and as the commercial gateway and distribution center for southern China. In 1898, Britain was granted an additional 99 years of rule over Hong Kong under the Second Convention of Peking. In September 1984, after years of negotiations, the British and the Chinese signed a formal agreement approving the 1997 turnover of the island in exchange for a Chinese pledge to preserve Hong Kong's capitalist system.
- On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong was peaceably handed over to China in a ceremony attended by numerous Chinese and British dignitaries. The chief executive under the new Hong Kong government, Tung Chee Hwa, formulated a policy based upon the concept of "one country, two systems," thus preserving Hong Kong's role as a principal capitalist center in Asia.



1842: the Treaty of Nanking



1839-1842: the First Opium War



# "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

- On March 21, 1871, Henry Morton Stanley set out from the African port of Bagamoyo on what he hoped would be a career-making adventure. The 30-year-old journalist had arrived at the behest of the New York Herald newspaper and he had been placed in charge of a grand expedition to find the explorer David Livingstone, who had vanished in the heart of Africa several years earlier. Stanley, a Welsh-born orphan who had previously fought on both sides of the American Civil War, took to the mission with gusto. Despite never having set foot in Africa before, he assembled a caravan of over 100 porters and struck out into the unknown.
- At the time that Stanley began his relief operation, Dr. David Livingstone was the most renowned of all the explorers of Africa. Among other exploits, the Scottish missionary and abolitionist had survived a lion attack, charted the Zambezi River and walked from one side of the continent to the other. In 1866, he had embarked on what was supposed to be his last and greatest expedition: a quest to locate the fabled source of the Nile River, on the belief that if he could solve that age-old mystery, his fame would give him the influence to end the East African Arab-Swahili slave trade. "The Nile sources," he told a friend, "are valuable only as a means of opening my mouth with power among men. It is this power [with] which I hope to remedy an immense evil." By 1871, nearly six years had passed with only a few scattered updates on Livingstone's whereabouts. Many Europeans had given him up for dead.
- Stanley knew that Livingstone had last been spotted in the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika, but reaching the area proved to be a monumental task. Between March and October of 1871, the New York Herald expedition endured repeated setbacks as it trudged through endless miles of swampland and jungle. Crocodiles and swarming tsetse flies killed their pack animals, and dozens of porters abandoned the caravan or died from illnesses. Stanley himself was ravaged by dysentery, smallpox and a near-fatal case of cerebral malaria, yet he continued to urge his party forward at breakneck pace. By the time they arrived at Ujiji, a remote village in what is now Tanzania, they had crossed more than 700 miles of territory.
- On November 10, 1871, Stanley donned his finest set of clothes and entered the town with a small band of followers. As crowds of locals gathered around them, Stanley spied a sickly-looking European with an unruly beard and white hair. Sensing that he had found his man, he approached, extended his hand and asked a now-famous question: "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" When the stranger answered in the affirmative, Stanley let out a sigh of relief. "I thank God, doctor, I have been permitted to see you," he said.
- Livingstone had been languishing in the heart of Africa for several years, his Nile expedition beset by thievery and mass desertions by his porters, and a succession of tropical diseases had sapped his strength and forced him to travel with Arab slave traders. He was wasting away in a small hut when the relief operation finally reached him.
- Despite his failing health, Livingstone refused an offer to return home and resumed his search for the source of the Nile. After being resupplied by Stanley in March 1872 he made his way south to Lake Bangweulu in modern day Zambia. His illnesses later caught up with him, however, and he died from malaria and dysentery on May 1, 1873. Even as Livingstone's career as an explorer was ending, Stanley's was just beginning . . .



epiction of Livingstone's 1843 lion attack (Credit: [Hulton Archive/Getty Image](#))





# Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902)



“ I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. —Cecil Rhodes

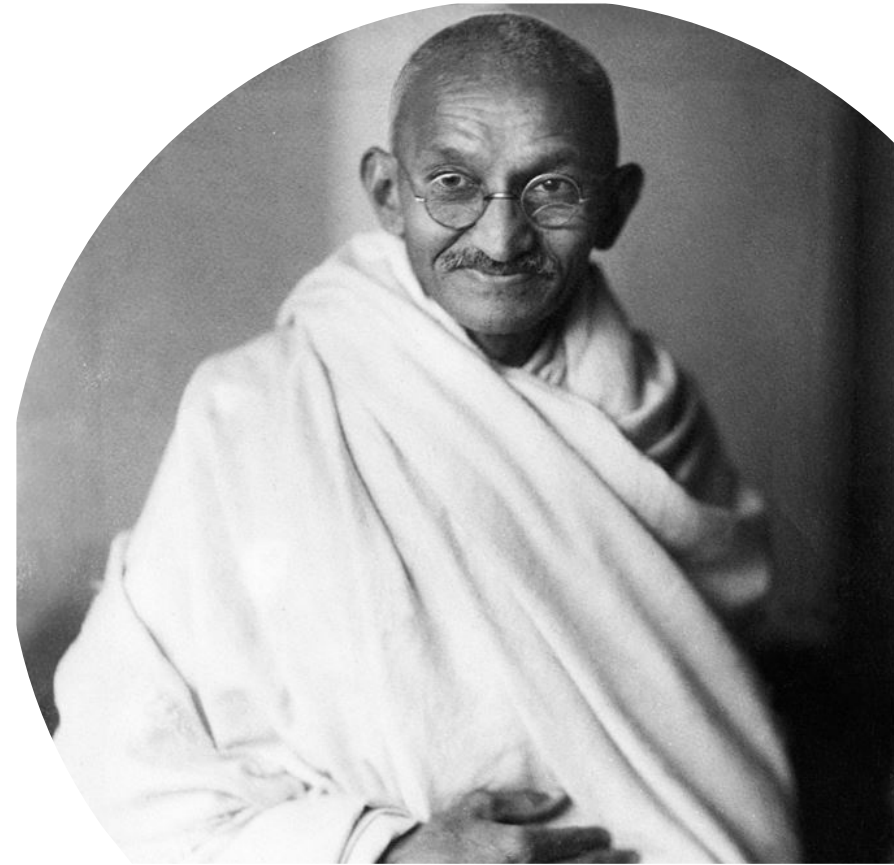
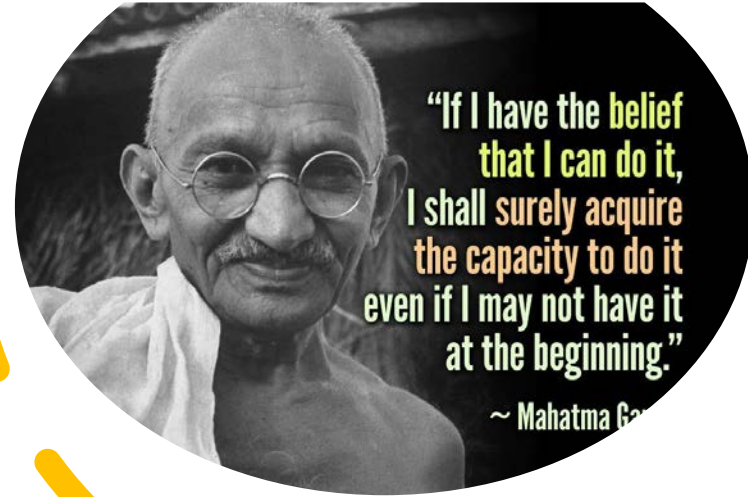


Copyright © Boer-War.com

- The English imperialist, financier, and mining magnate Cecil John Rhodes founded and controlled the British South Africa Company, which acquired Rhodesia and Zambia as British territories.
- Cecil Rhodes was born on 5th July 1853, at Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, one of nine sons of the parish vicar. After attending the local grammar school, his health broke down, and at 16 he was sent to South Africa. Arriving in October 1870, he grew cotton in Natal with his brother Herbert but in 1871 left for the newly developed diamond field at Kimberley.
- In the 1870's Rhodes laid the foundation for his later massive fortune by speculating in diamond claims, beginning pumping techniques, and in 1880 forming the De Beers Mining Company. During this time he attended Oxford off and on, starting in 1873, and finally acquired the degree of bachelor of arts in 1881. His extraordinary imperialist ideas were revealed early, after his serious heart attack in 1877, when he made his first will, disposing of his as yet unearned fortune to found a secret society that would extend British rule over the whole world and colonize most parts of it with British settlers, leading to the "ultimate recovery of the United States of America" by the British Empire!
- From 1880 to 1895 Rhodes's star rose steadily. Basic to this rise was his successful struggle to take control of the rival diamond interests of Barney Barnato, with whom he amalgamated in 1888 to form De Beers Consolidated Mines, a company whose trust deed gave extraordinary powers to acquire lands and rule them and extend the British Empire. With his brother Frank he also formed Goldfields of South Africa, with substantial mines in the Transvaal. At the same time Rhodes built a career in politics; elected to the Cape Parliament in 1880, he succeeded in focusing alarm at Transvaal and German expansion so as to secure British control of Bechuanaland by 1885. In 1888 Rhodes agents secured mining concessions from Lobengula, King of the Ndebele, which by highly stretched interpretations gave Rhodes a claim to what became Rhodesia (named after Rhodes). In 1889 Rhodes persuaded the British government to grant a charter to form the British South Africa Company, which in 1890 put white settlers into Lobengula's territories and founded Salisbury and other towns. This provoked Ndebele hostility, but they were crushed in the war of 1893.
- By this time Rhodes controlled the politics of Cape Colony; in July 1890 he became premier of the Cape with the support of the English-speaking white and non-white voters and the Afrikaners of the "Bond" (among whom 25,000 shares in the British South Africa Company had been distributed). His policy was to aim for the creation of a South African federation under the British flag, and he conciliated the Afrikaners by restricting the Africans' franchise with educational and property qualifications (1892) and setting up a new system of "native administration" (1894).
- At the end of 1895 Rhodes's fortunes took a disastrous turn. In poor health and anxious to hurry his dream of South African federation, he organized a conspiracy against the Boer government of the Transvaal. Through his mining company, arms and ammunition were smuggled into Johannesburg to be used for a revolution by "outlanders," mainly British. A strip of land on the borders of the Transvaal was ceded to the chartered company by Joseph Chamberlain, British colonial secretary; and Leander Jameson, administrator of Rhodesia, was stationed there with company troops. The Johannesburg conspirators did not rebel; Jameson, however, rode in on 27th December 1895, and was ignominiously captured. As a result, Rhodes had to resign his premiership in January 1896. Thereafter he concentrated on developing Rhodesia and especially in extending the railway, which he dreamed would one day reach Cairo.
- When the Anglo-Boer War broke out in October 1899, Rhodes hurried to Kimberley, which the Boers surrounded a few days later. It was not relieved until 16th February 1900, during which time Rhodes had been active in organizing defense and sanitation. His health was worsened by the siege, and after traveling in Europe he returned to the Cape in February 1902, where he died at Muizenberg on 26th March.
- Rhodes left £6 million, most of which went to Oxford University to establish the Rhodes scholarships to provide places at Oxford for students from the United States, the British colonies, and Germany. Land was also left to provide eventually for a university in Rhodesia.

# Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an Indian lawyer, anti-colonial nationalist, and political ethicist, who employed nonviolent resistance to lead the successful campaign for India's independence from British rule, and in turn inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.
- Revered the world over for his nonviolent philosophy of passive resistance, Gandhi was known to his many followers as Mahatma, or “the great-souled one.” He began his activism as an Indian immigrant in South Africa in the early 1900s, and in the years following World War I became the leading figure in India’s struggle to gain independence from Great Britain. Known for his ascetic lifestyle—he often dressed only in a loincloth and shawl—and devout Hindu faith, Gandhi was imprisoned several times during his pursuit of non-cooperation and undertook a number of hunger strikes to protest the oppression of India’s poorest classes, among other injustices. After Partition in 1947, he continued to work toward peace between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi was shot to death in Delhi in January 1948 by a Hindu fundamentalist.
- Gandhi’s Religion and Beliefs: Gandhi grew up worshiping the Hindu god Vishnu and following Jainism, a morally rigorous ancient Indian religion that espoused non-violence, fasting, meditation and vegetarianism. During Gandhi’s first stay in London, from 1888 to 1891, he became more committed to a meatless diet, joining the executive committee of the London Vegetarian Society, and started to read a variety of sacred texts to learn more about world religions. Living in South Africa, Gandhi continued to study world religions. “The religious spirit within me became a living force,” he wrote of his time there. He immersed himself in sacred Hindu spiritual texts and adopted a life of simplicity, austerity, fasting and celibacy that was free of material goods.



# Why did the British Empire decline?

---

There is no simple answer to this question. The empire changed throughout its history. In the 19th century, some parts of the empire became Dominions. These were states that were still part of the empire but ruled themselves. In most cases this happened peacefully, although there was serious violence in Ireland.

The First and Second World Wars left Britain weakened and less interested in its empire. Also many parts of the empire contributed troops and resources to the war effort and took an increasingly independent view. This led to a steady decline of the empire after 1945. In the Asian and African colonies, nationalist movements used a range of methods to end British rule. By the late 1960s, most of Britain's territories had become independent countries.

