THE VIOLENT WORLD OF THE 1600'S

The population of China in 1600 under the Ming Dynasty is estimated to have been more than 160,000,000, or more than one quarter of the population of the world, accounting for an estimated one third of the world's gross domestic product. Its civilization was perhaps the most technologically advanced in the world. It also tolerated minority religions. But its peasants lived in poverty, paid high taxes and had little to no opportunity to advance.

It was not always a gentle place. For example, in the decades following 1600, about 25 million people died in the transition from the Ming Dynasty to the Manchu Dynasty. That amounted to 15% of the total population. To put it another way, the death rate would have been 15,265 per 100,000, a death rate that was a little higher than the devastating death rate for the natives in King Philip's War in New England, discussed in detail in other articles.

In 1600, the Mughal Empire stretched from today's northern Afghanistan to today's Bangladesh and included much of today's India. It had an estimated population of about 115,000,000 or about one fifth of the population of the world. It probably accounted for more than a fifth of the world's gross domestic product.

Akbar was its emperor in 1600 and could be very violent. In 1561 one of his subjects had a confrontation with him and Akbar threw him from a terrace into a courtyard below. When that didn't kill him, Akbar had him brought up to the terrace again where he threw him into the courtyard again and killed him. In 1564, a clan of Uzbek Chiefs rebelled three times so Akbar finally had them trampled by elephants. In 1567 he besieged the Chitter Fort in Mewar for four months. When he was finally successful, he slaughtered the defenders and 30,000 non-combatants.

The Ottoman Empire covered most of the south coast of the Mediterranean, about half of the north coast and all the east coast, as well as almost all the coasts of the Red Sea and the Black Sea. It produced almost 10% of the world's gross domestic product. It had a population of about 26,000,000 and its civilization was more advanced than that of Europe and of China, after absorbing and expanding upon much of the civilizations of the states it conquered, including that of Egypt and Greece. It was a Moslem state but tolerated other religions.

The Sultan in 1600 was Mehmed III. On becoming Sultan, he had his royal executioners strangle all nineteen of his brothers, so Ottoman civilization had limits.

The Spanish Empire in 1600 included Portugal, the Spanish Netherlands (today's Belgium), the Kingdom of Naples (almost all of today's southern Italy), Sicily, Milan, Luxembourg, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Florida, today's Texas, Mexico, Central America, Peru, Chile, Brazil and Portuguese India. It had a population of about 30,000,000. It accounted for almost 4% of the world's gross domestic product. Hundreds of thousands of the residents of this Empire were killed by the Spanish to establish and maintain the

Empire. The Spanish Inquisition outdid the Puritans for religious intolerance. The Spanish also outdid the Puritans in their mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples.

In 1600, the population of England was about 5,600,000 or about 1% of the world's population, accounting for substantially less than 2% of the world's gross domestic product. While the English would be appalled when natives roasted their enemies alive, Queen Mary Tudor had recently done the same thing to at least 280 Protestants who refused to become Catholics.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony did not exist in 1600.

The Massachusett Tribe did exist and their traditional territory included much of what would become the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Pokanoket Tribe and its confederated communities occupied much of the future Plymouth Colony and some of the eastern part of today's Rhode Island. The Narragansett Tribe occupied much of the rest of Rhode Island. The Pequot Tribe was to the west of the Narragansett, along the coast of today's Connecticut.

All these Tribes governed their territories without any significant interference from Europeans and lived in them with more success than the invading Europeans did, at least originally. All of the rest of North America was similarly governed and lived in by other Tribes except for the parts of the south conquered by Spain. Depending on one's view of success in living in a territory, it is arguable that the native way of living in North America has always been more successful in living in harmony with the land and less violent than the European way of doing so.