Theme 4

 HISTORY OF THE USA AND CANADA

The first settlers of America

North America’s first settlers were the ancestors of the Indians. They came from Asia, across the Bering Strait, many thousands years ago.

North America was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492 though he did not know about it.

Another seaman, who reached America, was Amerigo Vespucci. On returning to Europe he described the lands which he had visited. He wrote that it was not India but a new continent which he called “The New World”

For a long time America was called “The New World”, and only in 1506 it was decided to name this country after the man who had found it was not India.

The English Settlers

The English had visited America at different times. But they had never stayed very long. The first people came over in 1585. But it wasn’t successful. In 1607 some English people landed America. Their settlement was named Jamestown. Life was very hard. Many people died. The colonists learned to grow tobacco. And soon ships filled with tobacco sailed for England and returned with things that the colony needed.

In 1620 a small ship “The Mayflower” reached the America. The settlers called their place New Plymouth. When winter came the life in New Plymouth became very hard. One day some Indians came to New Plymouth. They called the English people “Jankee” as they could not say the word “Englishman”. Since that time “Jankee” has been the name of a white man in America.

When spring came, the people of New Plymouth began to plant corn and maize. In autumn the crops were very good and the people of New Plymouth decided to make a holiday dinner. The Indians came to their dinner and brought some wild turkeys as a present. The people of New Plymouth called their holiday Thanksgiving Day. Since that time Thanksgiving Day has been a great holiday in the United States of America.

The War for Independence

In 1775 – 1783 America fought against Great Britain for freedom and independence. Ordinary men and women got up on their feet and after seven years fighting with the help of France and French Fleet won. The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Congress on July 4, 1776. Since then the 4th of July has been considered to be a great holiday in America.

To command the American army against the British forces the Congress elected George Washington, who became the first president of the USA in 1789.

The States of the USA

The United States began as a nation of 13 states. These were the colonies which had broken away from Great Britain in 1776 and fought a six-year War for Independence. The original 13 colonies were then located in the area today occupied by 16 states, and 34 other states were admitted to the union one by one.

The newest states are Alaska and Hawaii, admitted in 1959. Washington, in the District of Columbia, is the national capital. It was named in honour of George Washington, the first US president. The District of Columbia, which was named for Christopher Columbus, discoverer of America, is 60 square miles in area; and is not part of any state.

Negro Slavery in America. The Civil War

Negro Slavery had been introduced into the American colonies in 1619 when twenty Negroes were brought to Jamestown and sold to the tobacco planters. This was the beginning of Slavery in America.

There were numbers of Americans, however, who didn’t support slavery. Many of them joined the numerous Northern societies dedicated to the abolition of it.

In 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the USA. He was an enemy of slavery. Some of the Southern States left the Union, and the war between the South and the North began. At first the war went badly for the North, but Lincoln never lost his courage and soon they won. When the war was over, Lincoln issued a proclamation to say that slavery was abolished.

The 20th century

The United States grew to be one of the great powers in the world. The nation fought in the First World War. After the war women got the right to vote for the first time.

The United States enter the Second World War when Japan attacked the Hawaiian Islands. The war ended when the United States dropped the first atomic bombs, and the world entered the Nuclear Age.

In 1960’s the Space Age began. The United States put the first men on the Moon in the Apollo Program.

**History of Canada**

The first inhabitants of Canada were native Indian peoples, primarily the Inuit (Eskimo).

The Norse explorer Leif Eriksson probably reached the shores of Canada (Labrador or Nova Scotia) in 1000, but the history of the white man in the country actually began in 1497, when John Cabot, an Italian in the service of Henry VII of England, reached Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. Canada was taken for France in 1534 by Jacques Cartier. The actual settlement of New France, as it was then called, began in 1604 at Port Royal in what is now Nova Scotia; in 1608, Quebec was founded. France’s colonization efforts were not very successful, but French explorers by the end of the 17th century had penetrated beyond the Great Lakes to the western prairies and south along the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Meanwhile, the English Hudson’s Bay Company had been established in 1670. Because of the valuable fisheries and fur trade, a conflict developed between the French and English; in 1713, Newfoundland, Hudson Bay, and Nova Scotia (Acadia) were lost to England. During the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), England extended its conquest, and the British general James Wolfe won his famous victory over Gen. Louis Montcalm outside Quebec on September 13, 1759. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 gave England control.

In 1867, four provinces joined together in the new country – Upper Canada, Lower Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Upper Canada was later renamed Ontario and Lower Canada was renamed Quebec. Canada also took control of the land to the west, which was called Rupert’s Land. When grievances with the Metis population of the Red River Valley escalated, the land was divided into three provinces – Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The northern land still remained as the Northwest Territories.

There are three territories – the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which was created in 2000. Each of the provinces of Canada has its own history and identity due to the multi-cultural mix of people who settled the various areas. The French in Quebec have resented English rule from the beginning and are still looking to separate from Canada. Many Loyalists from the US moved to Canada during the American Revolution and relations between Canada and the US have not always been cordial. Following the defeat of the French troops on the Plains of Abraham in 1763, the English started to expel any French-speaking people from other parts of the country, such as Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These were the Acadian people and eventually they were allowed to return to their lands, but hard feelings still remained.

The fur trade, the lumber industry, agriculture and the fishery were the mainstays of the economy in the early years. While they are still important today, manufacturing and the discovery of oil and gas has replaced them in the amount of work that there is available for the people. Thus there are many major cities in Canada to which people migrate in order to find jobs. In the late 1800’s the Klondike Gold Rush brought large numbers of people to the Canadian North in search of gold and thus settled the area. Previously this area was the domain of Eskimo and Indian tribes.

Canadian troops have played important roles in both world Wars and still play a significant role in peacekeeping duties throughout the world. Canada was one of the first countries to join the United Nations after World War.

Establishing a Canadian has long been the goal of the federal government. There are two official languages in Canada – French and English.

Answer the questions:

1. Where did the first people come to America from?
2. Whom was North America discovered by?
3. What is the origin of Thanksgiving Day?
4. When is the Day of Independence?
5. Who was the first President of the USA?
6. What can you say about the States of the USA?
7. When did the war between the North and the South begin? What can you say about this war?
8. What can you say about the history of Canada?

Task for independent practice:

Find material and prepare your report on the topic “Relations of Ukraine with the USA and Great Britain