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A CONTINENT OF VILLAGES TO 1500

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WHAT EVENTS led to the migration of Asian peoples into North America?

WHAT WERE the consequences of the development of farming for native communities?

WHAT KINDS of agricultural societies developed in North America?

WHAT IMPORTANT differences were there between Indian societies in the Southwest, South, and Northeast on the eve of colonization?

TO 1500



AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Cahokia: Thirteenth-Century Life on the Mississippi

AS THE SUN ROSE OVER THE RICH FLOODPLAIN, THE PEOPLE OF THE riverbank city set about their daily tasks. Some went to shops where they manufactured tools, pots, and luxury items—goods destined to be exchanged in the far corners of the continent. Others left their densely populated neighborhoods for the outlying countryside, where they worked the fields that fed the city. From almost any point people could see the great temple that rose from the city center.

The Indian residents of this thirteenth-century city lived and worked on the east banks of the Mississippi River, across from present-day St. Louis, a place known today as **Cahokia**. In the thirteenth century, Cahokia was an urban cluster of 20,000 or 30,000 people. Its farm fields were abundant with corn, beans, and squash. The temple, a huge earthwork pyramid, covered fifteen acres at its base and rose as high as a ten-story building.

The vast urban complex of Cahokia, which at its height stretched six miles along the Mississippi River, flourished from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Its residents were not nomadic hunters but farmers, participants in a complex agricultural culture that archaeologists term “Mississippian.” Hundreds of acres of crops fed the people of Cahokia, the largest urban community north of the Aztec civilization of central Mexico. Moreover, Cahokia stood at the center of a long-distance trading system that linked it to other Indian communities over a vast area. Copper came from Lake Superior, mica from the southern Appalachians, and conch shells

from the Atlantic coast. Cahokia’s specialized artisans were renowned for the manufacture of high-quality flint hoes, which were exported throughout the Mississippi Valley.

Evidence suggests that Cahokia was a city-state supported by tribute and taxation. Like the awe-inspiring public works of other early urban societies in other parts of the world, most notably the pyramids of ancient Egypt and the acropolis of Athens, the great temple mound of Cahokia was intended to showcase the city’s wealth and power. The mounds and other colossal public works at Cahokia were the monuments of a society ruled by a class of elite leaders. From their residences atop the mound, priests and chiefs looked down on their subjects both literally and figuratively.

The long history of North America before European colonization reveals that the native inhabitants developed a great variety of societies. Beginning as migrant hunting and gathering bands, they found ways to fine-tune their subsistence strategies to fit environmental possibilities and limitations.

Communities in the highlands of Mexico invented systems of farming that spread to all the regions where cultivation was possible. Not only the Aztecs of Mexico and the Mayans of Central America but also communities in the Southwest and the Mississippi Valley constructed densely settled urban civilizations.

North America before colonization was, as historian Howard R. Lamar phrases it, “a continent of villages,” a land spread with thousands of communities.



Cahokia One of the largest urban centers created by Mississippian peoples, containing 30,000 residents in 1250.



THE FIRST AMERICAN SETTLERS

“Why do you call us Indians?” a Massachusetts native complained to Puritan missionary John Eliot in 1646. Christopher Columbus, who mistook the Taino people of the Caribbean for the people of the East Indies, called them “**Indios**.” Within a short time this Spanish word had passed into English as “Indians” and was commonly used to refer to all the native peoples of the Americas. Today anthropologists sometimes employ the term “Amerindians,” and others use “Native Americans.” But in the United States most of the descendants of the original inhabitants refer to themselves as “Indian people.”

WHO ARE THE INDIAN PEOPLE?

At the time of their first contacts with Europeans at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere represented over 2,000 separate cultures, spoke several hundred different languages, and made their livings in scores of different environments. Just as the term “European” includes many nations, so the term “Indian” covers an enormous diversity among the peoples of the Americas.

No single physical type characterized all the peoples of the Americas. Although most had straight, black hair and dark, almond-shaped eyes, their skin color ranged from mahogany to light brown. Few fit the “redskin” descriptions used by North American colonists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, it was only when Europeans had compared Indian peoples with natives of other continents, such as Africans, that they seemed similar enough to be classified as a group.

Once Europeans realized that the Americas were in fact a “New World,” rather than part of the Asian continent, a debate began over how people might have moved there from Europe and Asia, where (according to the Bible) God had created the first man and woman. In 1590, the Spanish Jesuit missionary Joseph de Acosta reasoned that because Old World animals were present in the Americas, they must have crossed by a land bridge that could have been used by humans as well.

MIGRATION FROM ASIA

Acosta was the first to propose the Asian migration hypothesis that is widely accepted today. Siberian and American Indian populations suggest that migrants to North America began leaving Asia approximately 30,000 years ago (see Map 1.1).

The migration was possible because during the last Ice Age, from 70,000 to 10,000 years ago, huge glaciers locked up massive volumes of water, and sea levels were as much as 300 feet lower than they are today. Asia and North America, now separated by the Bering Strait, were joined by a huge subcontinent of ice-free, treeless grassland, which geologists have named **Beringia**. Summers there were warm, and winters were cold but almost snow free, so there was no glaciation. It was a perfect environment for large mammals—mammoth and mastodon, bison, horse, reindeer, camel, and saiga (a goat-like antelope). Small bands of Siberian hunter-gatherers were surely attracted by these animal populations.

Access to the interior of North America, however, was blocked by huge ice sheets covering much of what is today Canada. How did the migrants get through those 2,000 miles of deep ice? The standard hypothesis is that with the warming of the climate and the end of the Ice Age, about 13,000 BCE (before the common era), glacial melting

WHAT EVENTS led to the migration of Asian peoples into North America?

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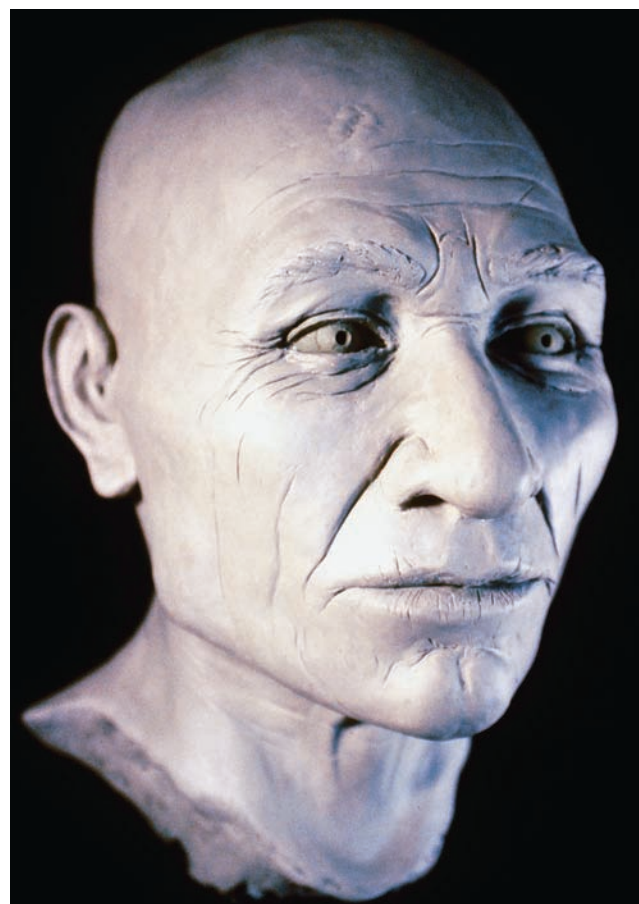
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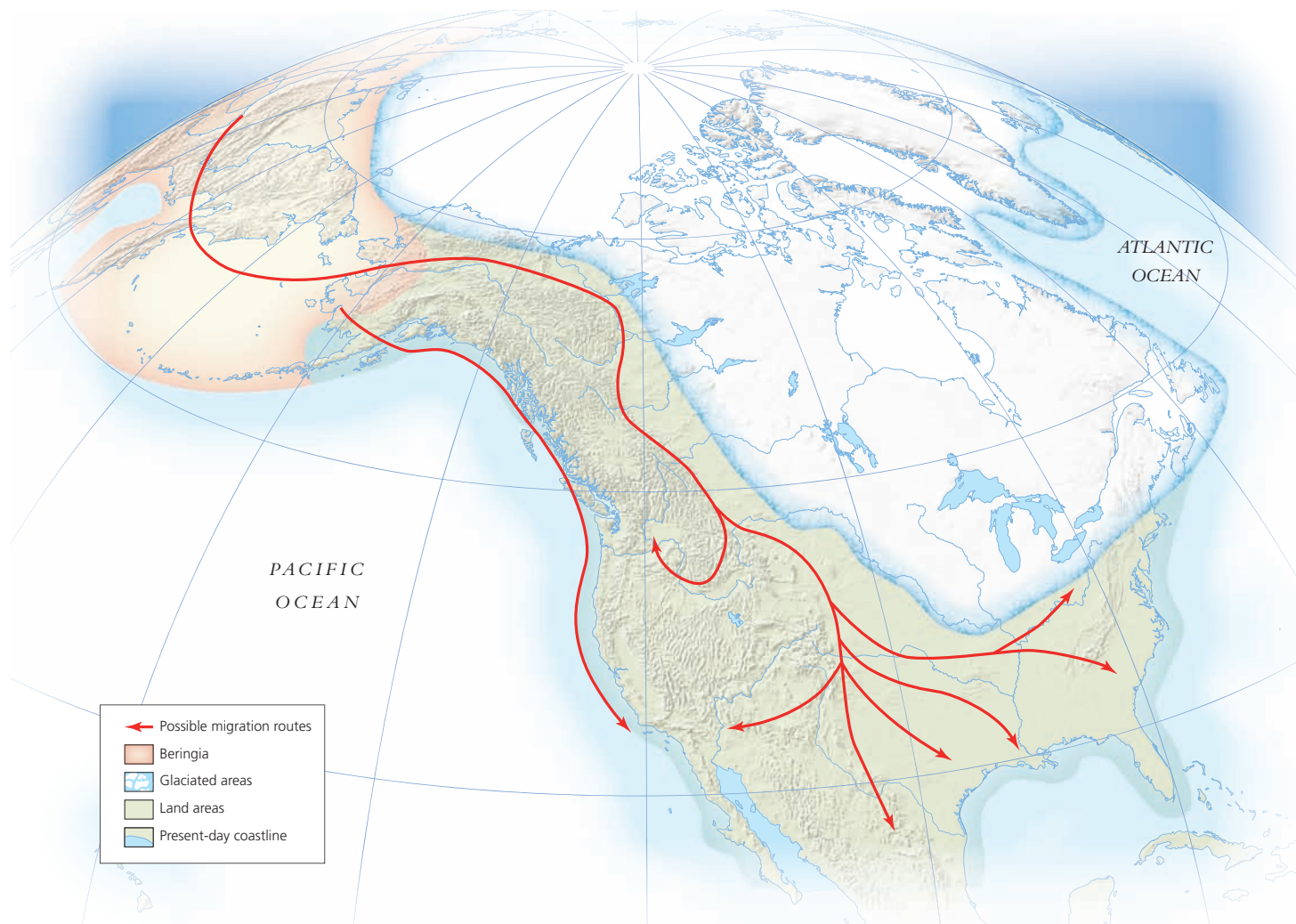
José de Acosta, Speculations on the Origins of the Indians (1590) at www.myhistorylab.com

Indios Name first used by Christopher Columbus for the Taino people of the Caribbean.

Beringia A subcontinent bridging Asia and North America, named after the Bering Straits.



A forensic artist reconstructed this bust from the skull of “Kennewick Man,” whose skeletal remains were discovered along the Columbia River in 1996. Scientific testing suggested that the remains were more than 9,000 years old.

**MAP 1.1**

Migration Routes from Asia to America During the Ice Age, Asia and North America were joined where the Bering Strait is today, forming a migration route for hunting peoples. Either by boat along the coast, or through a narrow corridor between the huge northern glaciers, these migrants began making their way to the heartland of the continent as much as 30,000 years ago.

WHAT GEOGRAPHICAL features shaped the dispersal of Asian migrants throughout the Americas?

created an ice-free corridor—an original “Pan-American Highway”—along the eastern front range of the Rocky Mountains. Using this thoroughfare, the hunters of big game reached the Great Plains as early as 11,000 BCE.

Recently, however, new archaeological finds along the Pacific coast of North and South America have complicated this hypothesis. Radiocarbon analysis of remains discovered at several newly excavated human sites suggested dates of 12,000 BCE or earlier. The most spectacular find, at Monte Verde in southern Chile, produced striking evidence of tool making, house building, and rock painting conservatively dated at 12,500 BCE. A number of archaeologists believe that the people who founded these settlements moved south in boats along a coastal route—an ancient “Pacific Coast Highway.”

There were two later migrations into North America. About 5000 BCE the **Athapascan** people moved across Beringia and began to settle the forests in the

Athapascan A people that began to settle the forests in the northwestern area of North America around 5000 BCE.



northwestern area of the continent. Eventually groups of Athapascan speakers, the ancestors of the Navajos and Apaches, migrated across the Great Plains to the Southwest. A third and final migration began about 3000 BCE, long after Beringia had disappeared under rising seas, when a maritime hunting people crossed the Bering Strait in small boats. The Inuits (also known as the Eskimos) colonized the polar coasts of the Arctic, the Yupiks the coast of southwestern Alaska, and the Aleuts the Aleutian Islands (which are named for them).

While scientists debate the timing and mapping of these various migrations, many Indian people hold to oral traditions that say they have always lived in North America. Every culture has its origin stories, offering explanations of the customs and beliefs of the group. A number of scholars believe these origin stories may shed light on ancient history. Could these stories preserve a memory of the changes at the end of the Ice Age?

THE CLOVIS CULTURE: THE FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION

The tools found at the earliest North American archaeological sites, crude stone or bone choppers and scrapers, are similar to artifacts from the same period found in Europe or Asia. About 11,000 years ago, however, ancient Americans developed a much more sophisticated style of making fluted blades and lance points, a tradition named “Clovis,” after the location of the initial discovery near Clovis, New Mexico, in 1926. In the years since, archaeologists have unearthed Clovis stone tools at sites throughout the continent all dating within 1,000 or 2,000 years of one another, suggesting that the Clovis technology spread quickly throughout the continent.

The evidence suggests that Clovis bands were mobile communities of foragers numbering perhaps thirty to fifty individuals from several interrelated families. They returned to the same hunting camps year after year, migrating seasonally within territories of several hundred square miles. Camps found throughout the continent overlooked watering places that would attract game. Clovis blades have been found amid the remains of mammoth, camel, horse, giant armadillo, and sloth.

The global warming trend that ended the Ice Age dramatically altered the North American climate. About 15,000 years ago the giant continental glaciers began to melt and the northern latitudes were colonized by plants, animals, and humans. Meltwater created the lake and river systems of today and raised the level of the surrounding seas, not only flooding Beringia but also vast stretches of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, creating fertile tidal pools and offshore fishing banks.

NEW WAYS OF LIVING ON THE LAND

These huge transformations produced new patterns of wind, rainfall, and temperature, reshaping the ecology of the entire continent and gradually producing the distinct North American regions of today (see Map 1.2). The great integrating force of a single continental climate faded, and with its passing the continental Clovis culture fragmented into a number of different regional patterns.

The retreat of the glaciers led to new ways of finding food: hunting in the Arctic, foraging in the arid deserts, fishing along the coasts, hunting and gathering in the forests. These developments took place roughly 10,000 to 2,500 years ago, during what archaeologists call the **Archaic period**.

QUICK REVIEW

The Earliest Americans

- ◆ Paleo-Indians were resourceful hunters.
- ◆ During the Archaic period Indians adapted to regional environments.
- ◆ Farming began near the end of the Archaic Period.

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Pima Creation Story
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QUICK REVIEW

The Clovis Tradition

- ◆ Emerged around 10,000 BCE.
- ◆ A new and powerful style of tool making.
- ◆ Clovis artifacts found throughout North and Central America.

Archaic period The period roughly 10,000 to 2,500 years ago marked by the retreat of glaciers.



These Clovis points are typical of thousands that archaeologists have found at sites all over the continent, dating from a period about 12,000 years ago. When inserted in a spear shaft, these three- to six-inch fluted points made effective weapons for hunting mammoth and other big game. The ancient craftsmen who made these points often took advantage of the unique qualities of the stone they were working to enhance their aesthetic beauty.



The First Americans: Location of Major Indian Groups and Culture Areas in the 1600s at www.myhistorylab.com

MAP 1.2

Native North American Culture Areas and Trade Networks, ca. 1400 CE All peoples must adjust their diet, shelter, and other material aspects of their lives to the physical conditions of the world around them. By considering the ways in which Indian peoples developed distinct cultures and adapted to their environments, anthropologists developed the concept of “culture areas.” They divide the continent into nine fundamental regions that have greatly influenced the history of North America over the past 10,000 years. Just as regions shaped the lifeways and history of Indian peoples, after the coming of the Europeans they nurtured the development of regional American cultures. By determining the origin of artifacts found at ancient sites, historians have devised a conjectural map of Indian trade networks. Among large regional centers and smaller local ones, trade connected Indian peoples of many different communities and regions.

QUICK REVIEW

Hunting the Bison

- ◆ Climate shift resulted in the extinction of many large New World animals.
- ◆ As other large-mammal populations declined, hunters concentrated on bison herds.
- ◆ The growing complexity of Indian communities was reflected in bison hunting strategies.

HOW MIGHT the diversity of climates in North America have shaped Indian trade patterns?

Hunting Traditions One of the most important effects of this massive climatic shift was the stress it placed on the big-game animals best suited to an Ice Age environment. The archaeological record documents the extinction of thirty-two classes of large New World mammals. Changing climatic conditions lowered the reproduction and survival rates of these large mammals, forcing hunting bands to intensify their hunting.

As the other large-mammal populations declined, hunters on the Great Plains concentrated on the herds of American bison (known more familiarly as buffalo). To



hunt these animals, people needed a weapon. In archaeological sites dating from about 10,000 years ago, a new style of tool is found mingled with animal remains. This technology, named “Folsom” (for the site of the first major find near Folsom, New Mexico) was a refinement of the Clovis culture that featured more delicate but deadlier spear points. Hunters probably hurled the lances to which these points were attached with wooden spear-throwers, attaining far greater momentum than possible using their arms alone.

These archaeological finds suggest the growing complexity of early Indian communities. Hunters frequently stampeded herds of bison into canyon traps or over cliffs. At one such kill site in southeastern Colorado, dated at about 6500 BCE, archaeologists uncovered the remains of nearly 200 bison that had been slaughtered and then systematically butchered on a single occasion. Such tasks required a sophisticated division of labor among dozens of men and women and the cooperation of a number of communities. Taking food in such great quantities also suggests a knowledge of basic preservation techniques.

Desert Culture In the Great Basin, the warming trend created a desert where once there had been enormous inland seas. Here Indian people developed what anthropologists call “**Desert culture**,” a way of life based on the pursuit of small game and the intensified foraging of plant foods. Small communities of desert foragers migrated seasonally within a small range.

Archaeologists today find the artifacts of desert foragers in the caves and rock shelters in which they lived. In addition to stone tools, there are objects of wood, hide, and fiber, wonderfully preserved for thousands of years in the dry climate.

The innovative practices of Desert culture gradually spread from the Great Basin to the Great Plains and the Southwest, where foraging for plant foods began to supplement hunting. About 6,000 years ago, these techniques were carried to California, where communities developed economies capable of supporting some of the densest populations and the first permanently settled villages in North America. Another dynamic center developed along the coast of the Pacific Northwest, where Indian communities developed a way of life based on the abundance of fish and sea mammals. Densely populated and permanently settled communities developed there as well.

Forest Efficiency There were similar trends east of the Mississippi. In the centuries prior to colonization and settlement by Europeans, the whole of eastern North America was a vast forest. Communities of native people achieved a comfortable and secure life by developing a sophisticated knowledge of the rich and diverse available resources, a principle anthropologists term “**forest efficiency**.”

Archaeological sites in the East suggest that during the late Archaic period community populations grew and settlements became increasingly permanent, providing convincing evidence of the practicality of forest efficiency. The different roles of men and women were reflected in the artifacts these peoples buried with their dead: axes, fishhooks, and animal bones with males; nut-cracking stones, beads, and pestles with females.



When, in 1927, archaeologists at Folsom, New Mexico, uncovered this dramatic example of a projectile point embedded in the ribs of a long-extinct species of bison, it was the first proof that Indians had been in North America for many thousands of years.

Courtesy of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

QUICK REVIEW

Forest Living

- ◆ Eastern North America a vast forest.
- ◆ Indian communities took advantage of rich forest resources.
- ◆ Indians developed settled forest communities.

Desert culture A way of life based on hunting small game and the foraging of plant foods.

forest efficiency Creation of a comfortable life through the development of a sophisticated knowledge of available resources.



WHAT WERE the consequences of the development of farming for native communities?

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Ritual of the Maize
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Mesoamerica The region stretching from central Mexico to Central America.

Aztecs A warrior people who dominated the Valley of Mexico from 1100–1521.



Mesoamerican maize cultivation, as illustrated by an Aztec artist for the *Florentine Codex*, a book prepared several decades after the Spanish conquest. The peoples of Mesoamerica developed a greater variety of cultivated crops than those found in any other region in the world, and their agricultural productivity helped sustain one of the world's great civilizations.

Image #1739-3, courtesy the Library, American Museum of Natural History.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMING

At the end of the Stone Age, communities in different regions of the world independently created systems of farming, each based on a unique staple crop: rice in Southeast Asia, wheat in the Middle East, potatoes in the Andean highlands of South America, and maize (what Americans call “corn”) in Mexico. The dynamic center of this development in North America was in the highlands of Mexico, from which the new technology spread north and east.

ORIGINS IN MEXICO

Archaeological evidence suggests that plant cultivation in the highlands of central Mexico began about 5,000 years ago. Ancient Mexicans developed crops that responded well to human care and produced larger quantities of food in a limited space than did plants growing in the wild. Maize was particularly productive.

As farming became increasingly important, it radically reshaped social life. Farming provided not only the incentive for larger families (more workers for the fields) but also the means to feed them. People became less mobile, built more substantial residences near their crops, and developed more effective means of storage. Villages grew into towns and eventually into large, densely settled communities. Autumn harvests had to be stored during winter months, and the storage and distribution of food had to be managed. The division of labor increased with the appearance of specialists like toolmakers, craft workers, administrators, priests, and rulers.

By 1000 BCE urban communities governed by permanent bureaucracies had begun to form in **Mesoamerica**, the region stretching from central Mexico to Central America. By the beginning of the first millennium CE (common era), highly productive farming was supporting complex urban civilizations in the Valley of Mexico (the location of present-day Mexico City), the Yucatan Peninsula, and other parts of Mesoamerica. Like many of the ancient civilizations of Asia and the Mediterranean, these Mesoamerican civilizations were characterized by the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of an elite class of priests and rulers, the construction of temples and other public structures, and the development of systems of mathematics and astronomy and several forms of hieroglyphic writing. These civilizations also engaged in warfare between states and practiced ritual human sacrifice.

The great city of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico, which emerged about 100 BCE, had a population of as many as 200,000 at the height of its power around 500 CE. Teotihuacan's leaders controlled an elaborate state-sponsored trading system that stretched from present-day Arizona to Central America and may have included coastal shipping connections with the civilizations of Peru. Teotihuacan began to decline in the sixth century, and by the eighth century it was mostly abandoned. A new empire, that of the Toltecs, dominated central Mexico from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. By the fourteenth century a people known as the **Aztecs**, migrants from the north, had settled in the Valley of Mexico and begun a dramatic expansion into a formidable imperial power. By the early fifteenth century an estimated 200,000 people lived in the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, making it one of the largest cities in the world.

The Mayan peoples of the Yucatan Peninsula developed a group of competing city-states that flourished from about 300 BCE until 900 CE. Their achievements included advanced writing and calendar systems and a sophisticated knowledge of mathematics.



INCREASING SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

In a few areas, farming truly did result in a revolutionary change in Indian communities, producing urban civilizations like those in Mesoamerica or on the banks of the Mississippi at Cahokia. It is likely that among the first social transformations was the development of significantly more elaborate systems of kinship. Greater population density prompted families to group themselves into clans, and separate clans gradually became responsible for different social, political, or ritual functions. Clans may have been an important mechanism for binding together the people of several communities into larger social units based on ethnic, linguistic, and territorial unity. These “tribes” were headed by leaders or chiefs from honored clans, often advised by councils of elders.

Chiefs’ primary functions were the supervision of the economy, the collection and storage of the harvest, and the distribution of food to the clans. Wealth inequalities were kept in check by redistribution according to principles of sharing similar to those operating in foraging communities. Nowhere in North America did Indian cultures develop a concept of the private ownership of land or other resources, which were usually considered the common resource of the people and were worked collectively.

Indian communities practiced a rather strict division of labor according to gender. In foraging communities, hunting was generally men’s work, while the gathering of food and the maintenance of home-base camps were the responsibility of women. The development of farming may have challenged that pattern. Where hunting remained an important activity, women took responsibility for the growing of crops. But in areas like Mexico, where communities were almost totally dependent on cultivated crops for their survival, both men and women worked the fields.

In most North American Indian farming communities, women and men belonged to separate social groupings, each with its own rituals and lore. Membership in these gender societies was one of the most important elements of a person’s identity. Marriage ties, on the other hand, were relatively weak, and in most Indian communities divorce was a simple matter.

Farming communities were far more complex than foraging communities, but they were also less stable. Growing populations demanded increasingly large surpluses of food, and this need often led to social conflict and warfare. Moreover, farming systems were especially vulnerable to changes in climate, such as drought, as well as to crises of their own making, such as soil depletion or erosion.

THE RESISTED REVOLUTION

Some scholars describe the transition to farming as a revolution. Their argument is that farming offered such obvious advantages that communities rushed to adopt it. But there is very little evidence to support the notion that farming was a clearly superior way of life. Anthropologists have demonstrated that farmers work considerably longer and harder than do foragers. Moreover, farmers depend on a relatively narrow selection of plants and animals for food and are more vulnerable to famine.

Moreover, ignorance of cultivation was never the reason communities failed to take up farming. All foraging cultures understand a great deal about plant reproduction and take steps to ensure the availability of their preferred food sources. Cultures in different regions assessed the relative advantages and disadvantages of adopting farming. In California and the Pacific Northwest, acorn gathering or salmon fishing made the cultivation of food crops seem a waste of time. In the Great Basin, there were attempts to farm but without much success. Before the invention of modern irrigation systems, which require sophisticated engineering, only the Archaic Desert culture could prevail in this harsh environment.



The creation of man and woman depicted on a pot (dated about 1000 CE) from the ancient villages of the Mimbres River of southwestern New Mexico, the area of Mogollon culture. Mimbres pottery is renowned for its spirited artistry. Such artifacts were usually intended as grave goods to honor the dead.

Mimbres black on white bowl, with painted representations of man and woman under a blanket. Grant County, New Mexico. Diam. 26.7 cm. Courtesy National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 24/3198.

QUICK REVIEW

Indian Agrarian Society

- ◆ Families grouped themselves in clans which, in turn, were grouped in tribes.
- ◆ Chiefs supervised economic activities.
- ◆ No concept of private ownership of land.
- ◆ Strict division of labor according to gender.



In the neighboring Southwest, however, farming resolved certain ecological dilemmas and transformed the way of life. Like the development of more sophisticated traditions of tool manufacture, farming represented another stage in *economic intensification* (like the advance in tool making represented by Clovis technology) that kept populations and available resources in balance. It seems that where the climate favored it, people tended to adopt farming as a way of increasing the production of food, thus continuing the Archaic tradition of squeezing as much productivity as they could from their environment.

FARMING IN EARLY NORTH AMERICA

WHAT KINDS of agricultural societies developed in North America?

Maize farming spread north from Mexico into the area now part of the United States in the first millennium BCE. Over time maize was adapted to a range of climates and its cultivation spread to all the temperate regions.

FARMERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Farming communities began to emerge in the arid Southwest during the first millennium BCE. Among the first to develop a settled farming way of life was a culture known to archaeologists as Mogollon. These people farmed maize, beans, squash, and constructed ingenious food storage pits in permanent village sites along what is today the southern Arizona–New Mexico border. Those pits may have been the precursors of what southwestern peoples today call kivas, sites of community religious rituals.

During the same centuries, a culture known as Hohokam flourished in the region along the floodplain of the Salt and Gila Rivers in southern Arizona. The Hohokam, who lived in farming villages, built and maintained the first irrigation system in America north of Mexico, channeling river water through 500 miles of canals to water desert fields

of maize, beans, squash, tobacco, and cotton. Hohokam culture shared many traits with Mesoamerican civilization to the south, including platform mounds for religious ceremonies and large courts for ball playing.

THE ANASAZIS

The best-known ancient farming culture of the Southwest is the Anasazi, which developed around the first century CE in the Four Corners area, where the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado meet on the great plateau of the Colorado River. Around 750 CE, possibly in response to population pressure and an increasingly dry climate, the residents of communities there began shifting from pit-house villages to densely populated, multistoried apartment complexes that the Spanish invaders called “pueblos.”

Anasazi culture extended over a very large area. The sites of more than 25,000 Anasazi communities are known in New Mexico alone. The most prominent center was Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon. Completed in the twelfth century, this complex of 700 interconnected rooms is a monument to the Anasazi golden age.



Cliff Palace, at Mesa Verde National Park in southwest Colorado, was created 900 years ago when the Anasazis left the mesa tops and moved into more secure and inaccessible cliff dwellings. Facing southwest, the building gained heat from the rays of the low afternoon sun in winter, and overhanging rock protected the structure from rain, snow, and the hot midday summer sun. The numerous round kivas, each covered with a flat roof originally, suggest that Cliff Palace may have had a ceremonial importance.



The Anasazis faced a major challenge in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The arid climate became even drier, and growing populations had to redouble their efforts to improve food production. A devastating drought from 1276 to 1293 resulted in repeated crop failures and eventual famine. The ecological crisis was heightened by the arrival in the fourteenth century of Athapascan migrants, ancestors of the Navajos and the Apaches. Athapascans raided Anasazi farming communities, taking food, goods, and possibly slaves. Gradually Anasazi communities abandoned the Four Corners area altogether, most resettling along the Rio Grande, joining with local residents to form the Pueblo communities that were living there when the Spanish arrived.

FARMERS OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS

Archaeologists date the beginning of the farming culture of eastern North America, known as Woodland culture, from the first appearances of pottery in the region about 3,000 years ago. Woodland culture was based on a sophisticated way of life that combined gathering and hunting with the cultivation of a few local crops.

Woodland people began cultivating maize during the first millennium CE, but even before that they had begun to adopt an increasingly settled existence and a more complex social organization, evidenced by complex earthen constructions. Around 1000 BCE, at a place called Poverty Point in northeastern Louisiana, residents erected a remarkable series of concentric semicircular earthen mounds covering an area about a mile square.

Mound building was also a characteristic activity of the peoples living in the Ohio Valley during this period. The people of a culture known as Adena lived in semi permanent villages and constructed large burial mounds during the first millennium BCE. They were succeeded by a culture called Hopewell. Hopewell chiefs mobilized an elaborate trade network, acquiring obsidian from the Rocky Mountains, copper from the Great Lakes, mica from the Appalachians, and shells from the Gulf Coast. Hopewell artisans converted these materials into goods that played an important role in trade and were used to adorn the dead in their impressive graves.

MISSISSIPPIAN SOCIETY

The Hopewell culture collapsed in the fifth century CE, perhaps as a result of an ecological crisis brought on by shifting climate patterns. Over the next several centuries, however, a number of important technological innovations were introduced in the East. The bow and arrow, developed first on the Great Plains, appeared east of the Mississippi in about the seventh century, greatly increasing the efficiency of hunting. At about the same time maize farming spread widely through the East. A shift from digging sticks to flint hoes also took place about this time, further increasing the productive potential of maize farming.

On the basis of these innovations, a powerful new culture known as Mississippian arose in the seventh or eighth century CE. The peoples of Mississippian culture were farmers living in permanent community sites along the floodplains of the Mississippi Valley. Cahokia was the largest and most spectacular, with its monumental temple mounds, its residential



The Great Serpent Mound in southern Ohio, the shape of an uncoiling snake more than 1,300 feet long, is the largest effigy earthwork in the world. Monumental public works like these suggest the high degree of social organization of the Mississippian people.



This bottle in the shape of a nursing mother (dated about 1300 BCE) was found at a Mississippian site. Historians can only speculate about the thoughts and feelings of the Mississippians, but such works of art are testimonials to the universal human emotion of maternal affection.

"Nursing Mother Effigy Bottle." From the Whelpley Collection at the St. Louis Science Center. Photograph © 1985 the Detroit Institute of Arts/The Bridgeman Art Library, NY.

neighborhoods, and its surrounding farmlands. But there were dozens of other urban communities, each with thousands of residents.

THE POLITICS OF WARFARE AND VIOLENCE

These centers, linked by the Mississippi River and its many tributaries, became the earliest city-states north of Mexico, hierarchical chiefdoms that extended political control over the farmers of the surrounding countryside (see Map 1.2 for an illustration of trade networks). With continued population growth, these cities engaged in vigorous and probably violent competition for the limited space along the rivers. It may have been the need for more orderly ways of allocating territories that stimulated the evolution of political hierarchies. The tasks of preventing local conflict, storing large food surpluses, and redistributing foodstuffs from farmers to artisans and elites required a leadership class with the power to command.

Mississippian culture reached its height between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries CE, the same period in which the Anasazi culture constructed its desert cities. Both groups adapted to their own environment the technology that was spreading northward from Mexico. Both developed impressive artistic traditions, and their feats of engineering reflect the beginnings of science and technology. They were complex societies characterized by urbanism, social stratification, craft specialization, and regional trade.

Organized violence was probably rare among hunting bands, which could seldom manage more than a small raid against an enemy. Certain hunting peoples, though, such as the southward-moving Athapascans, must have engaged in systematic raiding of settled farming communities. Warfare was also common among farming confederacies fighting to gain additional lands for cultivation.

The archaeological remains of Cahokia reveal that during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the residents enclosed the central sections of their city with a heavy log stockade. There must have been a great deal of violent warfare with other nearby communities. Also during this period, numerous towns were formed throughout the river val-

leys of the Mississippi, each based on the domination of farming countryside by metropolitan centers. Eventually conditions in the upper Mississippi Valley deteriorated so badly that Cahokia and many other sites were abandoned altogether, and as the cities collapsed, people relocated in smaller, decentralized communities. Among the peoples of the South, however, Mississippian patterns continued into the period of colonization.

CULTURAL REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA ON THE EVE OF COLONIZATION

WHAT IMPORTANT differences were there between Indian societies in the Southwest, South, and Northeast on the eve of colonization?

An appreciation of the ways human cultures adapted to geography and climate is fundamental to an understanding of American history, for just as regions shaped the development of Indian cultures in the centuries before the arrival of Europeans, so they continued to influence the character of American life in the centuries thereafter.

In order to understand the impact of regions on Indian cultures, anthropologists divide North America into several distinct "culture areas" within which groups shared a significant number of cultural traits: Arctic, Subarctic, Great Basin, Great Plains, California, Northwest, Plateau, Southwest, South, and Northeast.



THE POPULATION OF INDIAN AMERICA

Determining the size of the precolonial population of the Americas is a tricky business, and estimates vary greatly, but there seems to be general agreement among historical demographers that the population of the North American continent (excluding Mesoamerica) numbered between 5 and 10 million at the time of the first European voyages of discovery. The population of the Western Hemisphere as a whole may have numbered 50 million or more, the same order of magnitude as Europe's population at the time.

Population varied tremendously by cultural region (see Map 1.2). Although the cultural regions of the Arctic, Subarctic, Great Basin, and Great Plains made up more than half the physical space of the continent, they were inhabited by only a small fraction of the native population. Those regions were home to scattered bands who continued to practice the Archaic economy. Hunting and gathering continued in California as well, although the population there grew large and dense because of the region's natural abundance. In the Pacific Northwest, abundant salmon fisheries supported large populations concentrated in permanent villages. The people of the Plateau also made their living by fishing, although their communities were not as large or as concentrated.

The largest populations of the continent were concentrated in the farming regions of the Southwest, South, and Northeast. These were the areas in which European explorers, conquerors, and colonists concentrated their first efforts, and they deserve more detailed examination (see Map 1.3).



MAP 1.3

Population Density of Indian Societies in the Fifteenth Century Based on what is called the “carrying capacity” of different subsistence strategies—the population density they could support—historical demographers have mapped the hypothetical population density of Indian societies in the fifteenth century, before the era of European colonization. Populations were densest in farming societies or in coastal areas with marine resources and sparsest in extreme environments like the Great Basin.

WHAT WERE the key factors in determining population density?



OVERVIEW

Origins of Some Indian Tribal Names

Cherokee

A corruption of the Choctaw *chiluk-ki*, meaning “cave people,” an allusion to the many caves in the Cherokee homeland in the highlands of present-day Georgia. The Cherokees called themselves *Ani-Yun-Wiya*, or the “real people.”

Cheyenne

From the Sioux *Sha-hiyena*, “people of strange speech.” The Cheyennes of the Northern Plains called themselves *Dzi-tsistas*, meaning “our people.”

Hopi

A shortening of the name the Hopis of northern Arizona use for themselves, *Hópitú*, which means “peaceful ones.”

Mohawk

From the Algonquian *Mohawaúuck*, meaning “man-eaters.” The Mohawks of the upper Hudson Valley in New York called themselves *Kaniengehaga*, “people of the place of the flint.”

Pawnee

From the Pawnee term *paríki*, which describes a distinctive style of dressing the hair with paint and fat to make it stand erect like a horn. The Pawnees, whose homeland was the Platte River valley in present-day Nebraska, called themselves *Chahiksichahiks*, “men of men.”

THE SOUTHWEST

The single overwhelming fact of life in the Southwest is aridity. Summer rains average only ten to twenty inches annually, and on much of the dry desert cultivation is impossible. A number of rivers, however, flow out of the pine-covered mountain plateaus, making irrigation farming possible along their courses.

On the eve of European colonization, Indian farmers in the Southwest had been cultivating their irrigated fields for nearly 3,000 years. In the floodplain of the Gila and Salt Rivers lived the Pimas and Tohono O’Odhams and along the Colorado River, even on the floor of the Grand Canyon, the Yuman peoples worked small irrigated fields. In their oasis communities, desert farmers cultivated corn, beans, squash, sunflowers, and cotton, which they traded throughout the Southwest. Desert farmers lived in dispersed settlements that the Spanish called **rancherías**, their dwellings separated by as much as a mile. Rancherías were governed by councils of adult men whose decisions required unanimous consent, although a headman was chosen to manage the irrigation works.

East of the Grand Canyon lived the Pueblo peoples, named by the Spanish for their unique dwellings of stacked, interconnected apartments. Although speaking several languages, the Pueblos had a great deal in common, most notably their commitment to communal village life. A strict communal code of behavior that regulated personal conduct was enforced by a maze of matrilineal clans and secret religious societies; unique combinations of these clans and societies formed the governing systems of different Pueblo villages.

The Pueblos inhabit the oldest continuously occupied towns in the United States. The village of Oraibi, Arizona, dates from the twelfth century, when the Hopis (“peaceful ones”) founded it in the isolated central mesas of the Colorado Plateau. Using dry-farming methods and drought-resistant plants, the Hopis produced rich harvests of corn and squash amid shifting sand dunes.

The Athapascans, more recent immigrants to the Southwest, also lived in the arid deserts and mountains. They hunted and foraged, traded meat and medicinal herbs with farmers, and often raided and plundered these same villages and rancherías. One group of Athapascans, the Apaches, continued to maintain their

rancherías Dispersed settlements of Indian farmers in the Southwest.

An Early European Image of Native Americans

From the very beginning of Europeans' contact with native American peoples, they depicted Indians as savages rather than as peoples with complex cultures. This woodcut by German artist Johann Froschauer was included in a 1505 German edition of Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyage to the New World in 1499, and is among the very first images of Native Americans published. The image is a complete fantasy, lacking any ethnographic authenticity. Indians gather for a feast on the beach. The caption in the original

HOW ARE European stereotypes of savage people conveyed visually in this image?

publication read, in part: "The people are naked, handsome, brown, well-shaped in body. . . . No one has anything, but all things are in common. And the men have as wives those who please them, be they mothers, sisters, or friends; therein they make no distinction. They also fight with each other; and they

eat each other, even those who are slain, and hang the flesh of them in the smoke." A cannibalized body is being devoured. A couple is kissing. Women display their breasts. The image sent a powerful message: that some of the strongest taboos of Europeans—nakedness, sexual promiscuity, and cannibalism—were practiced by the people of the New World. It is an unrelentingly negative picture. The arrival of European vessels in the background of the image suggests that all this was about to change. Images like these continued to dominate the depiction of Indians for the next 400 years, and were used as justifications for conquest. ■



Seeing History



nomadic ways. But another group, known as the Navajos, gradually adopted the farming and handicraft skills of their Pueblo neighbors.

THE SOUTH

The South enjoys a mild, moist climate with short winters and long summers, ideal for farming. In the sixteenth century, large populations of Indian peoples farmed this rich land, fishing or hunting local fauna to supplement their diets. They lived in communities ranging from villages of twenty or so dwellings to large towns of a thousand or more inhabitants (see Map 1.4).

Mississippian cultural patterns continued among many of the peoples of the South. Along waterways, many farming towns were organized into chiefdoms. Because most of



MAP 1.4

Indian Groups in the Areas of First Contact The Southwest was populated by desert farmers like the Pimas, Tohono O’Odhams, Yumans, and Pueblos, as well as by nomadic hunters and raiders like the Apaches and Navajos. On the eve of colonization, the Indian societies of the South shared many traits of the complex Mississippian farming culture. The Indians of the Northeast were mostly village peoples. In the fifteenth century, five Iroquois groups—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—joined together to form the Iroquois Five Nation Confederacy.

HOW DID geography help define the major Indian cultural groups?



these groups were decimated by disease in the first years of colonization, they are poorly documented. Archaeologists have excavated sites on the east bank of the Mississippi, in what is now Arkansas, inhabited by the Caddo people. The evidence suggests that in the fifteenth century they lived in complex ranked communities, built monumental temple mounds, and counted a population of more than 200,000. There is historical evidence about the Natchez, who survived into the eighteenth century before being defeated and dispersed in a war with the French. They too lived on the Mississippi, on the opposite bank from the Caddos, where they farmed the rich floodplains. The Natchez were also a ranked society, with a small group of nobility ruling over the majority.

These chiefdoms were rather unstable. Under the pressure of climate change, population growth, and warfare, many were weakened and others collapsed. As a result, thousands of people left behind the grand mounds and earthworks and migrated to the woodlands and hill country, where they took up hunting and foraging, returning to the tried and true methods of “forest efficiency.” They formed communities and banded together in confederacies, which were less centralized and more egalitarian than the Mississippian chiefdoms and would prove considerably more resilient to conquest.

Among the most prominent of these new ethnic groups were a people in present-day Mississippi and Alabama who came to be known as the Choctaws. Another group in

QUICK REVIEW

The South

- ◆ Mild, moist climate ideal for farming.
- ◆ Indian peoples of the South farmed, fished, and hunted.
- ◆ Indian communities in the South formed confederacies.



“The New Queen Being Taken to the King,” an engraving copied from a drawing by Jacques LeMoyne, an early French colonist of Florida, and published by the German Theodor de Bry in 1591. The communities of Florida were hierarchical, with classes and hereditary chiefs, some of whom were women. Here, LeMoyne depicted a “queen” being carried on an ornamental litter by men of rank.

Neg. No. 324281, Photographed by Rota, Engraving by DeBry. American Museum of Natural History Library.



western Tennessee became known as the Chickasaws, and another people in Georgia later became known as the Creeks. On the mountain plateaus lived the Cherokees, the single largest confederacy, which included more than sixty towns. For these groups, farming was somewhat less important, hunting somewhat more so. There were no ruling classes or kings, and leaders included women as well as men. Councils of elderly men governed the confederacies but were joined by clan matrons for annual meetings at the central council house.

THE NORTHEAST

The Northeast, the colder sector of the eastern woodlands, has a varied geography of coastal plains and mountain highlands, great rivers, lakes, and valleys. In the first millennium CE, farming became the main support of the Indian economy in those places where the growing season was long enough to bring a crop of corn to maturity. In such areas of the Northeast, along the coasts and in the river valleys, Indian populations were large and dense (see Map 1.4).

The Iroquois of present-day Ontario and upstate New York have lived in the Northeast for at least 4,500 years and were among the first northeastern peoples to adopt cultivation. Iroquois women produced crops sufficient to support up to fifty longhouses, each occupied by a large matrilineal extended family. Typically, these villages were surrounded by substantial wooden walls or palisades, clear evidence of conflict and warfare.

Population growth and the resulting intensification of farming in Iroquoia stimulated the development of chiefdoms there as it did elsewhere. By the eleventh century, several centers of population had coalesced from east to west across upstate New York. These were the five Iroquois chiefdoms or nations: the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. Oral histories collected from Iroquois speakers during the nineteenth century remember this as an era of persistent violence, possibly the consequence of conflicts over territory.

To control this violence, the five nations established a confederacy. According to Iroquois oral history, Chief Deganawida, speaking through the great orator Hiawatha,

convinced the five nations to agree to prohibit warfare with each other, replacing revenge with payment and gift exchange. Iroquois legend refers to Deganawida “blocking out the sun” as a demonstration of his powers.

The Iroquois called their confederacy Haudenosaunee, meaning “people of the longhouse.” Each nation, they said, occupied a separate hearth but acknowledged a common mother. As in the longhouse, women played important roles in the confederacy, choosing male leaders who would represent their lineages and chiefdom on the Iroquois council. The confederacy suppressed violence among its members but did not hesitate to encourage war against neighboring Iroquoian speakers, such as the Hurons or the Eries, who constructed defensive confederacies of their own at about the same time.

The other major language group of the Northeast was Algonquian, whose speakers divided among at least fifty distinct cultures. The Algonquian peoples north of the Great Lakes

Read the Document

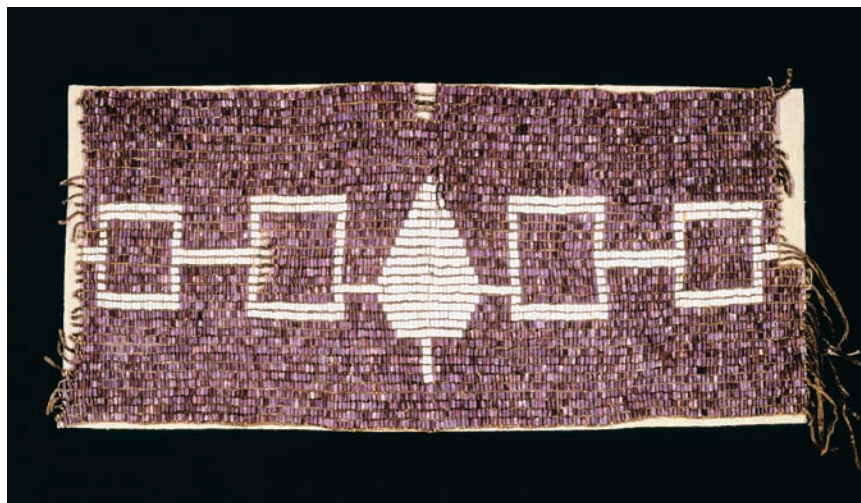
Iroquois Creation Story
at www.myhistorylab.com

Read the Document

Profile: Hiawatha (Deganawida)
at www.myhistorylab.com

Read the Document

Dekanawida Myth & the Achievement of Iroquois Unity at www.myhistorylab.com



This Hiawatha wampum belt of the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois Five Nation Confederacy is exquisitely constructed of nearly 7,000 purple and white drilled shell beads, woven together with buckskin thongs and hemp thread. It is a ceremonial artifact, a symbol of the unity of the five Iroquois nations. With the central tree or heart pointed up, the first two squares on the right represent the Mohawk and Oneida, the tree stands for the Onondaga, where the council met, and the third and fourth squares stand for the Cayuga and Seneca nations. The belt itself dates from the early eighteenth century, but the design is thought to have originated with the confederacy itself, perhaps in the twelfth century CE.



CHRONOLOGY

30,000 BCE	First humans populate Beringia	200 BCE–400 CE	Hopewell culture flourishes
13,000 BCE	Global warming trend begins	650	Bow and arrow, flint hoes, and Northern Flint corn in the Northeast
12,500 BCE	Monte Verde site in southern Chile flourishes	775–1150	Hohokam culture flourishes
10,000 BCE	Clovis technology	1000	Tobacco in use throughout North America
9000 BCE	Extinction of big-game animals	1142	Founding of Haudenosaunee Confederacy
8000 BCE	Beginning of the Archaic period	1150	Founding of Hopi village of Oraibi, oldest continuously occupied town in the United States
7000 BCE	First cultivation of plants in the Mexican highlands	1200	High point of Mississippian and Anasazi cultures
5000 BCE	Athapaskan migration to America begins	1276	Severe drought begins in the Southwest
4000 BCE	First settled communities along the Pacific coast	1300	Arrival of Athapascans in the Southwest
3000 BCE	Inuit, Yupik, and Aleut migrations begin		
1500–1000 BCE	Maize and other Mexican crops introduced into the Southwest		
1000 BCE	First urban communities in Mexico		

and in northern New England were hunters and foragers, organized into bands with loose ethnic affiliations. Several of these peoples were the first to become involved in the fur trade with European newcomers. Among the Algonquians of the Atlantic coast from present-day Massachusetts south to Virginia, as well as among those in the Ohio Valley, farming led to the development of settlements as densely populated as those of the Iroquois.

In contrast to the Iroquois, most Algonquian peoples were patrilineal. In general, they lived in less extensive dwellings and in smaller villages, often without palisade fortifications. Although Algonquian communities were relatively autonomous, they began to form confederacies during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

CONCLUSION

Over the thousands of years that elapsed between the initial settlement of North America and the arrival of Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century, Indian peoples developed dozens of distinctive cultures, each fine-tuned to the geographic and climatic possibilities and limitations of their environments. The ruins of the ancient city of Cahokia provide dramatic evidence that North America was not the “virgin” continent Europeans proclaimed it to be. Indians had transformed the natural world, making it into a human landscape.

“Columbus did not discover a new world,” writes historian J. H. Perry, “he established contact between two worlds, both already old.” North America had a rich history, one that European colonists did not understand and that later generations of Americans have too frequently ignored. The colonists and settlers who came to take the land encountered thousands of Indian communities with deep roots and vibrant traditions. In the confrontation that followed, Indian communities called on their own traditions and their own gods to help them defend their homelands.

QUICK REVIEW

The Northeast

- ♦ Varied geography of plains, mountains, rivers, lakes, and valleys.
- ♦ The Iroquois have lived in the region for 4,500 years.
- ♦ Population growth and intensification of farming led to the development of chiefdoms.

Read the Document

Thomas Harriot, *The Algonquian Peoples of the Atlantic Coast* (1588)
at www.myhistorylab.com



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. List the evidence for the hypothesis that the Americas were settled by migrants from Asia.
2. Discuss the impact of environmental change and human hunting on the big-game populations of North America.
3. Review the principal regions of the North American continent and the human adaptations that made social life possible in each of them.
4. Define the concept of “forest efficiency.” How does it help to illuminate the major development of the Archaic period?
5. Why did the development of farming lead to increasing social complexity? Discuss the reasons why organized political activity began in farming societies.
6. What were the hunting and agrarian traditions? In what ways did the religious beliefs of Indian peoples reflect their environmental adaptations?
7. What factors led to the organization of the Iroquois Five Nation Confederacy?

KEY TERMS

Cahokia (p. 4)
Indios (p. 5)
Beringia (p. 5)
Athapaskan (p. 6)
Desert culture (p. 9)

Forest Efficiency (p. 9)
Archaic period (p. 7)
Mesoamerica (p. 10)
Aztecs (p. 10)
Rancherias (p. 16)



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••• [Read the Document]

Pima Creation Story

Dekanawida Myth & the Achievement of Iroquois Unity

Iroquois Creation Story

Ottawa Origins Story (recorded ca. 1720)

The Story of the Creation of the World, Told by a Zuñi Priest in 1885

Thomas Harriot, The Algonquian Peoples of the Atlantic Coast (1588)

José de Acosta, Speculations on the Origins of the Indians (1590)

• [See the Map]

The First Americans: Location of Major Indian Groups and Culture Areas in the 1600s

Pre-Columbian Societies of the Americas

Research and Explore

••• [Read the Document]

Exploring America: America and the Horse



Whose History Is It?: Images of Indians

Profiles

Trickster

Hiawatha (Deganawida)

History Bookshelf: *Bartolome de las Casas, Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies (1542)*

•• [Hear the Audio] *Ritual of the Maize*



•• [Hear the Audio]

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