

Every chapter includes a story at the beginning, which sets the tone and introduces the big ideas for the chapter  
At the end of the introduction predict the big ideas for Chapter One.

## AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

### Cahokia: Thirteenth-Century Life on the Mississippi

**A**s 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, crafted pottery, worked metal, or fashioned ornamental jewelry—goods destined to be exchanged in the far corners of the continent. Others left their densely populated neighborhoods for the outlying countryside, where in the summer heat they worked the seemingly endless fields that fed the city. From almost any point people could see the great temple that rose from the city center—the temple where priests in splendid costumes acted out public rituals of death and renewal.

This thirteenth-century city was not in preindustrial Europe or Asia but in North America. Its residents lived and worked on the banks of the Mississippi River, across from present-day St. Louis, at a place archaeologists have named **Cahokia** after the group who occupied the area from about 700 to 1400 C.E. In the mid-1200s, Cahokia was an urban cluster of perhaps 30,000 people, and the city covered nearly six square miles. Houses were arranged in rows around open plazas, and the farm fields were abundant with corn, beans, and pumpkins. The temple, a huge earthwork pyramid, covered fifteen acres at its base and rose as high as a ten-story building. On top were the residences of chiefs and priests, who dressed in elaborate headdresses made from the plumage of American birds.

By the fourteenth century, Cahokia had been abandoned, whether the victim of physical attack, political collapse, drought and famine, or some combination, is not known. But the great central temple mound and dozens of smaller ones in the

surrounding area, as well as hundreds more throughout the Mississippi Valley, remained to puzzle the European immigrants who resettled the valley in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Treasure seekers plundered those mounds, and many were eventually leveled and plowed under for farmland. Only a few were saved, inside parks and estates. Cahokia's central mound survived because in the nineteenth century its summit became the site of a monastery, now long gone.

The Europeans who first explored and excavated those mounds were convinced they were the ruins of a vanished civilization, but could not believe they were the work of Indians. The first comprehensive study of Cahokia, published in 1848 under the sponsorship of the newly established Smithsonian Institution, noted that “the mound-builders were an agricultural people, considerably advanced in arts, manners, habits, and religion.” But because “Indians were hunters averse to labor, and not known to have constructed any works approaching [the] skillfulness of design or [the] magnitude” of Cahokia, surely those wonders were constructed by a “lost race.”

The Smithsonian scientists were wrong. The ancestors of contemporary Native Americans constructed massive earthworks in the Mississippi Valley. The vast urban complex of Cahokia—at its height stretching six miles along the Mississippi River—flourished from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Its residents were not nomadic hunters but farmers, members of an agricultural society that archaeologists call the Mississippian, with highly productive cultivation techniques. Hundreds of acres of crops fed the people of Cahokia, the most populated urban community north of the civilization of the Aztecs in central Mexico. Mississippian farmers constructed ingenious raised plots of land on which they heaped compost in wide ridges for improved drainage and protection against unseasonable frosts. To their houses of wood and mud they attached pens in which they kept flocks of domesticated turkeys and small herds of young deer that they slaughtered for meat and hides. Cahokia was 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, conch shells from the Atlantic coast, and Cahokia's specialized artisans were renowned for the manufacture of high-quality flint hoes, exported throughout the Mississippi Valley.

The archaeological evidence suggests that Cahokia was a city-state supported by tribute and taxation. Like the awe-inspiring public works of other early urban societies—the pyramids of ancient Egypt and the acropolis of Athens are two familiar examples—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 an elite who commanded the people, and sometimes demanded human sacrifice in deference to their power. From their residences atop the mound, priests and

governors looked down on their subjects both literally and figuratively.

The 1848 Smithsonian report on Cahokia reflected a stereotypical view that all Indian peoples were hunters. But the history of North America before European colonization demonstrates that the native inhabitants lived in a great variety of societies, including not only the hunting and gathering bands of the Great Basin or Arctic, but densely settled urban civilizations, like those of the Aztecs of Mexico or the Mayans of Central America. North America before colonization was, as historian Howard R. Lamar phrases it, “a continent of villages,” a land spread with thousands of local communities. The wonders and mystery of the lost city of Cahokia are but one aspect of the little-understood history of the Indians of the Americas.

At the beginning of each chapter the authors introduce an outline of all topics in the chapter. Use these as review questions at the END of your reading.

### KEY TOPICS

- The peopling of the Americas by migrants from Asia
- The adaptation of native cultures to the regions of North America
- The increase in complexity of many native societies following the development of farming
- The nature of Indian cultures in the three major regions of European invasion and settlement

The Shipley tested and approved note taking method.  
 -First, write down the overall section heading.  
 -Second, read the intro, typically there is nothing too important to take notes on here.  
 -Third, identify the sub-heading and read through that section

## SETTLING THE CONTINENT

“Why do you call us Indians?” a Massachusetts native complained to Puritan missionary John Eliot in 1646. Christopher Columbus, who mistook the Taíno 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 often use the term “Amerindians,” and many people prefer “Native Americans.” But in the United States most of the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America refer to themselves as “Indian people.”

This one is easy you don't have to change a thing!

### WHO ARE THE INDIAN PEOPLE?

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

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

AP\*

### Guideline 1.1

Notes Continues:

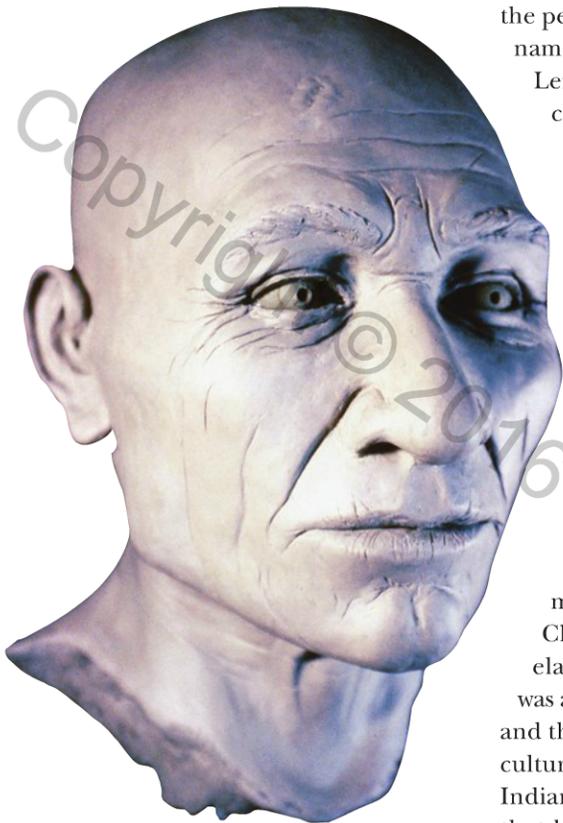
- Fourth, go back to the sub-heading and turn it into a question, by adding a question word at the beginning.
- Fifth, answer the question using that section's reading

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

Who  
What  
Where  
When  
Why

When I take notes, I like to use different color pens to show the difference between the section headings and sub-headings, and to make sure my term definitions stick out. Check out my notes for how I approached taking notes for this chapter.

Always pay attention to the pictures!



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.

James Chatters/Agence France Presse/Getty Images.

the peoples of the Americas. Natives, of course, referred to themselves by their own names. For example, the people of the mid-Atlantic coast called themselves Lenni Lenape, meaning “true men”; a large group of natives in the western Great Lakes country called themselves Lakota, or “the allies”; and the nomadic hunters of the desert Southwest used the name Dine (pronounced “dee-nay”), meaning simply “the people.” Europeans came to know these three groups by rather different names: the Delawares (from the principal river of the mid-Atlantic region), the Sioux, and the Apaches (both of which meant “enemy” in the language of neighboring tribes).

No single physical type characterized all the native peoples of the Americas. Although most had straight, black hair and dark, almond-shaped eyes, their skin color ranged from mahogany to light brown and 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 Judeo-Christian Bible) God had created the first man and woman. Writers proposed elaborate theories of **transoceanic migrations**. Common to all these theories was a belief that the Americas had been populated for a few thousand years at most, and that native societies were the degenerate offspring of a far superior Old World culture. A number of Spanish scholars thought more deeply about the question of Indian origins. 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. The most compelling scientific evidence comes from genetic research. Studies comparing the DNA variation of populations around the world consistently demonstrate the close genetic relationship of Asian and Native American populations.

## OVERVIEW

### ORIGINS OF SOME INDIAN TRIBAL NAMES

You DO NOT need to memorize all of the details regarding the etymology of Native American tribal names. What is the big idea that this information is teaching us?

<b>Cherokee</b>	A corruption of the Choctaw <b>chiluk-ki</b> , meaning “cave people,” an allusion to the many caves in the Cherokee homeland in the highlands of present-day Georgia. The Cherokees called themselves <b>Ani-Yun-Wiya</b> , or “real people.”
<b>Cheyenne</b>	From the Sioux <b>Sha-hiyena</b> , “people of strange speech.” The Cheyennes of the Northern Plains called themselves <b>Dzi-tsistas</b> , meaning “our people.”
<b>Hopi</b>	A shortening of the name the Hopis of northern Arizona use for themselves, <b>Hópitú</b> , which means “peaceful ones.”
<b>Mohawk</b>	From the Algonquian <b>Mohawaúuck</b> , meaning “man-eaters.” The Mohawks of the upper Hudson Valley in New York called themselves <b>Kaniengehaga</b> , “people of the place of the flint.”
<b>Pawnee</b>	From the Pawnee term <b>paríki</b> , 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 <b>Chahiksichahiks</b> , “men of men.”

Analysis of the genetic drift of these two populations suggests that migrants to North America began leaving Asia approximately 30,000 years ago (see Map 1-1).

The migration could have begun over a land bridge connecting the continents. During the last Ice Age (the Wisconsin Glaciation, from 70,000 to 10,000 years ago, the final act in the geologic epoch known as the Pleistocene), 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 Straits, were joined by a subcontinent of ice-free, treeless grassland, 750 miles wide from north to south, which geologists have named **Beringia**. Glaciers did not form in Beringia because the climate was too dry. Summers there were warm, winters cold but almost snow-free. This was a perfect environment for large mammals—mammoth and mastodon, bison, horse, reindeer, camel, and saiga (a goatlike antelope). Small bands of “Stone Age” hunter-gatherers were surely attracted by these animal populations. Accompanied by a husky-like species of dog, these bands gradually moved as far east as the Yukon River basin of northern Canada, where field excavations have uncovered the fossilized jawbones of several dogs and bone tools estimated to be about 27,000 years old.

Access to lands to the south, however, was blocked by the huge glacial sheets that covered much of what is today Canada. How did the migrants get over 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 B.C.E., glacial melting created an ice-free corridor—an original “Pan-American Highway”—along the eastern front range of the Rocky Mountains. Traveling down this highway, the hunters of big

**QUICK REVIEW**

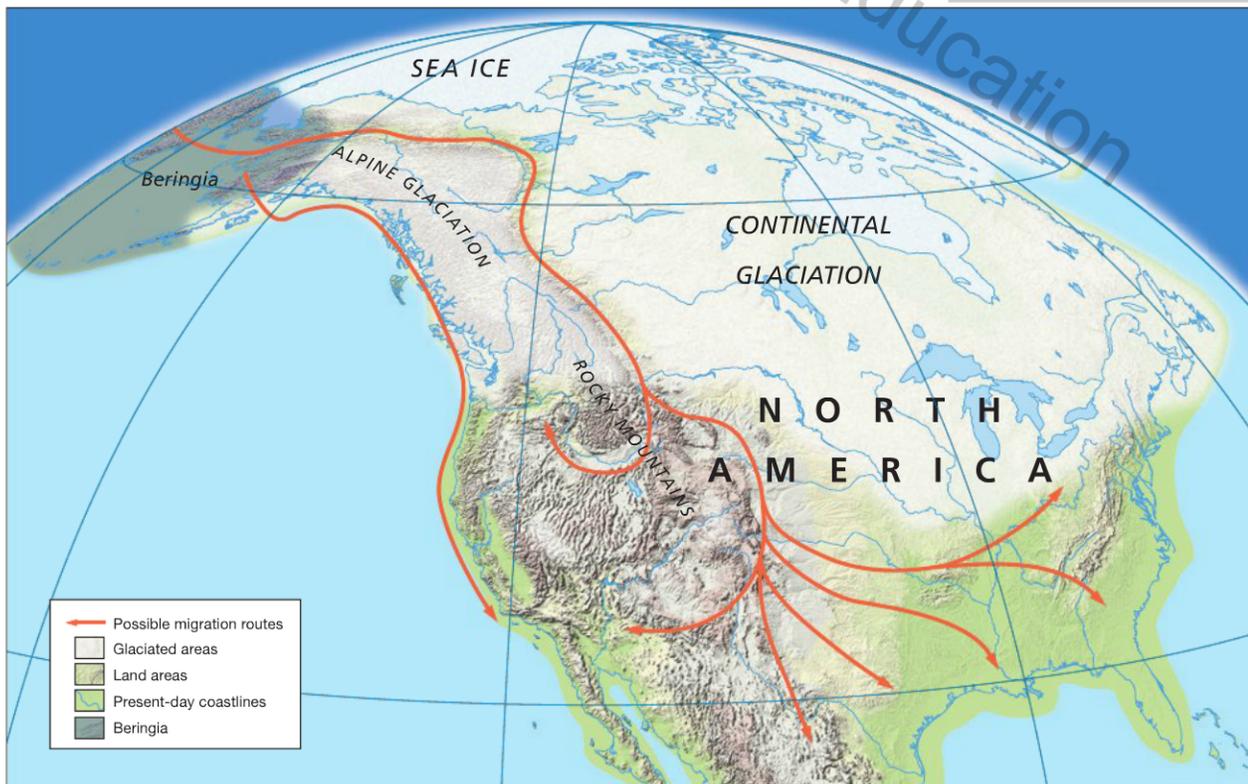
**The Earliest Americans**

- ◆ No single physical type characterized the peoples of the Americas.
- ◆ Migration from Asia began about 30,000 years ago.
- ◆ Stone Age hunters brought tools and animals with them on their journey.

Term definitions in the margins are often helpful to read.

**Transoceanic migrations** A population migration across oceans.

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



Always analyze maps, pictures, and graphs. These images are often some of the easiest parts of the reading to recall, so do your brain a favor and take a minutes to look over the map and its caption.

**MAP 1-1**

**Migration Routes from Asia to America** During the Ice Age, Asia and North America were joined where the Bering Straits are 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.

Printed by Sarah Shipley (sarah\_h\_shipley@mcpsmd.org) on 6/5/2016 from 108.48.178.123 authorized to use until 5/28/2021. Use beyond the authorized user or valid subscription date represents a copyright violation.

NOT REQUIRED READING, BUT COOL NONETHELESS. This article came out in April 2017 and explains how archeologists are getting a clearer picture of how North America was settled during the Ice Age. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/one-oldest-north-american-settlements-found-180962750/>



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.

©Warren Morgan/CORBIS.

**Athapaskan** A people that began to settle the forests in the northwestern area of North America around 5000 B.C.E.

**Clovis tradition** A powerful new and sophisticated style of tool making, unlike anything found in the Old World.



This creation story excerpt was told by a Zuni informant to ethnographer Frank Hamilton Cushing in the late nineteenth century:

*Then as man and woman spoke these two together, "Behold!" said Earth-mother, as a great terraced bowl appeared at hand, and within it water, "This shall be the home of my tiny children. On the rim of each world-country in which they wander, terraced mountains shall stand, making in one region many mountains by which one country shall be known from another."*

game reached the Great Plains, where evidence has been found of their settlements, dated as early as 10,000 B.C.E.

Recently, however, archaeological finds along the Pacific coast of North and South America have complicated this hypothesis. Newly excavated human sites in Washington State, California, and Peru have been radiocarbon dated to be more than 12,000 years old. The most spectacular find, at Monte Verde in southern Chile, produced striking evidence of tool making, house building, rock painting, and human footprints conservatively dated at 12,500 years ago. A number of archaeologists now believe that the people who founded these settlements moved south in boats along a coastal route rather than overland—an ancient "Pacific Coast Highway." These people were probably fishers and gatherers rather than hunters of big game.

There were two later migrations into North America. About 5000 B.C.E. the Athapaskan or Na-Dene people moved across Beringia and began to settle the forests in the northwestern area of the continent. Although they eventually adopted a technology similar to that of neighboring peoples, the Na-Dene maintained a separate cultural and linguistic identity. Eventually groups of Athapaskan speakers, the ancestors of the Navajos and Apaches, migrated across the Great Plains to the Southwest. A third and final migration began about 3000 B.C.E., long after Beringia had disappeared under rising seas, when a maritime hunting people crossed the Bering Straits in small boats. The Inuits (also known as 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 peoples hold to their 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. The Haida people of the Northwest Pacific coast tell of a time, long ago, when the offshore islands were much larger; but then the oceans rose, they say, and "flood tide woman" forced them to move to higher ground. Could these stories preserve the memory of changes at the end of the Ice Age? It is notable that many Indian traditions include a long journey from a distant place of origin to a new homeland. The Pima people of the Southwest once sang an "Emergence Song":

*This is the White Land; we arrive singing,  
Headdresses waving in the breeze.  
We have come! We have come!  
The land trembles with our dancing and singing.*

### CLOVIS: THE FIRST AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY

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. The **Clovis tradition**, named after the site of its first discovery near Clovis, New Mexico, was a powerful new technology. In the years since the initial discovery, archaeologists have unearthed Clovis artifacts at sites ranging from Montana to Mexico, Nova Scotia to Arizona, all of them dating back to within 1,000 or 2,000 years of one another, suggesting that the Clovis technology spread quickly throughout the continent.

## QUICK REVIEW

## The Clovis Tradition

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

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. Near Delbert, Nova Scotia, archaeologists discovered the floors of ten tents arranged in a semicircle, their doors opening south to avoid the prevailing northerly winds. Both this camp and others found throughout the continent overlooked watering places that would attract game. Clovis blades have been excavated amid the remains of mammoth, camel, horse, giant armadillo, and sloth.

You made it through your first section of *Out of Many!* Keep taking notes and feel free to email me with any questions or problems you are having.

## NEW WAYS OF LIVING ON THE LAND

The global warming trend that ended the Ice Age dramatically altered the North American climate. As the giant continental glaciers began to melt about 15,000 years ago, 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 vast stretches of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, creating fertile tidal pools and offshore fishing banks. 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 many different regional 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, including not only the mammoth and mastodon but also the horse and camel, both of which evolved in America and then migrated to Asia across Beringia. Lowered reproduction and survival rates of these large mammals may have forced hunting bands to intensify their efforts, leading to what some archaeologists have called the “Pleistocene Overkill.”

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 they could throw quickly with great accuracy and speed at fast-moving targets over distances of as much as a hundred yards. 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 after the site of the first major excavation in New Mexico, was a refinement of the Clovis tradition, featuring more delicate but deadlier spear points. Hunters probably hurled the lances to which these points were attached with wooden spear-throwers, with far greater speed than they could achieve with 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 B.C.E., 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. These people must have been among the first

IN WHAT ways did native communities adapt to the distinct regions of North America?



In this excerpt from *The Natural and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies*, Joseph de Acosta (1540–1600) provides an explanation for the peopling of the Americas:

... the true and principall cause to peopple the Indies, was, that the lands and limits therof are ioyned and continued in some extremities of the world, or at least were very near. And I beleeeue it is not many thousand yeeres past since men first inhabited this new world and West Indies . . .

Reading Tip: Even I, Ms. Shipley, cannot read an entire chapter from *Out of Many* in one sitting. I like reading 1-2 sections and then going off to do something else for a brain break and then coming back to read 1-2 more sections. Remember, if you get to the point where you are reading a paragraph 3 times just to understand 1 sentence, you probably need a break.

**Pleistocene Overkill** Intensified hunting efforts brought on in response to lowered reproduction and survival rates of large animals.



MAP 1-2

**Climatological and Culture Regions of North America** Occupying more than a third of the continent, the United States is alone among the world's nations in encompassing all five general classes of global climate: tropical jungles, arid deserts and grasslands, temperate woodlands, subarctic forests, and frozen polar tundra. 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.

to make jerky (dried strips of meat) and pemmican (a mixture of dried meat, animal fat, and berries that can keep into the winter when stored in hide containers).

### DESERT CULTURE

The retreat of the glaciers led to new ways of finding food in other regions: 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** (the equivalent of the Mesolithic period in European chronology).

In the Great Basin of present-day Utah and Nevada, the warming trend created a desert where once there had been enormous inland seas. Here Indian peoples developed Desert Culture, a way of life based on the pursuit of small game and the intensified foraging of plant foods. Small communities or bands of desert foragers migrated seasonally within a small range. They collected seeds, fiber, and prickly pear from the

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

yucca one season, then moved to highland mesas or plateaus to gather grass seed, acorns, juniper berries, and piñon nuts, and next to mountain streams to spear and net fish. This strategy required considerable skill in handicrafts and the production of fiber baskets for collecting; pitch-lined baskets for cooking, nets and traps; and stones shaped to grind seeds and nuts, as well as stone knives, hammers, and clubs.

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. Desert Culture persisted into the nineteenth century among modern Shoshone and Ute communities. Although these people were once scornfully labeled “Diggers” because of their practice of gathering edible roots and were ridiculed for their “primitive” lifeways, they actually made very sophisticated adjustments to a harsh environment.

Descriptions of the culture of the modern Shoshones suggest that their emphasis on sharing and gift giving, their condemnation of hoarding, and their limitations on the accumulation of material goods, fostered by a nomadic lifestyle, prevented individuals or families from acquiring excessive wealth and forged a strong sense of community among these people of the desert. Desert communities were characterized by a kind of social equality in which decisions were made by consensus among the adults and leadership tended to be informal, based on achievement and reputation. Men of one band generally married women from another, and wives came to live with the people of their husband’s families, creating important linkages between groups that contributed to the sense of shared ethnic identity.

The innovative practices of the Desert Culture gradually spread from the Great Basin to the Great Plains and the Southwest, where foraging for plant foods began to supplement hunting. Archaeologists estimate that about 6,000 years ago, the techniques of Desert Culture diffused to California, where in the natural abundance of the valleys and coasts, Indian peoples developed an economy capable of supporting some of the densest populations and the first permanently settled communities in North America. Another dynamic center in the West developed along the Northwest Pacific coast, where communities developed a way of life based on the use of abundant fish and sea mammals. Here, densely populated, permanently settled communities were also possible.

## FOREST EFFICIENCY

There were similar trends east of the Mississippi. Before European settlers destroyed countless acres of woodland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the whole of eastern North America was a vast forest. Hardwoods grew in the North, southern pine in the South. The Winnebagos of the Great Lakes region sang of these forests:

*Pleasant it looked,  
this newly created world.  
Along the entire length and breadth  
of the earth, our grandmother  
extended the green reflection  
of her covering  
and the escaping odors  
were pleasant to inhale.*



**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 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.

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

**Mesoamerican maize cultivation**, as illustrated by an Aztec artist for the *Florentine Codex*, a book prepared a few years 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.

Courtesy of the Library, American Museum of Natural History.



During the Archaic period, forest communities achieved a comfortable and secure life based on their sophisticated knowledge of the rich and diverse available resources, a principle that archaeologists term “forest efficiency.” Indian communities of the forest hunted small game and gathered seeds, nuts, roots, and other wild plant foods. They also developed the practice of burning the woodlands and prairies to stimulate the growth of berries, fruits, and edible roots. These burns created meadows and edge environments that provided harvestable food and attracted grazing animals, which were hunted for their meat and hides. Another important resource was the abundant fish of the rivers.

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 viability of forest efficiency. The artifacts these people buried with their dead—axes, fishhooks, and animal bones with males, nut-cracking stones, beads, and pestles with females—reflected the different roles of men and women in their society.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMING

The use of a wide variety of food sources during the Archaic period eventually led many Indian peoples to develop and adopt the practice of farming. The dynamic center of this development in North America was in the highlands of Mexico, from which the new technology spread north and east.

### MEXICO

At the end of the Stone Age, people in four regions of the world developed farming systems, each based on a different 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. Today, the two American staples, maize and potatoes, contribute more to the world’s food supply than do wheat and rice. These “miracle crops” fueled the expansion of European human and livestock populations in the three centuries after 1650. Without these and other New World crops, such as tobacco, American cotton, and rubber—each of which was the basis of important new industries and markets—the history of the modern world would have been far different.

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. In addition to maize, they domesticated a great variety of other crops—most importantly beans and squash, but also tomatoes, peppers, avocados, cocoa (chocolate), and vanilla. But maize was particularly productive and provided the foundation for the farming system. Over time it was adapted to a wide range of American climates and its cultivation spread throughout the temperate regions of North America.

### INCREASING SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

Farming radically reshaped social life. A foraging society might require 100 square miles to support 100 people, but a farming society required only one square mile. Population growth and the need for people to

remain near their fields throughout the year led to the appearance of villages and permanent architecture. Autumn harvests had to be stored during winter months, and the storage and distribution of food had to be managed.

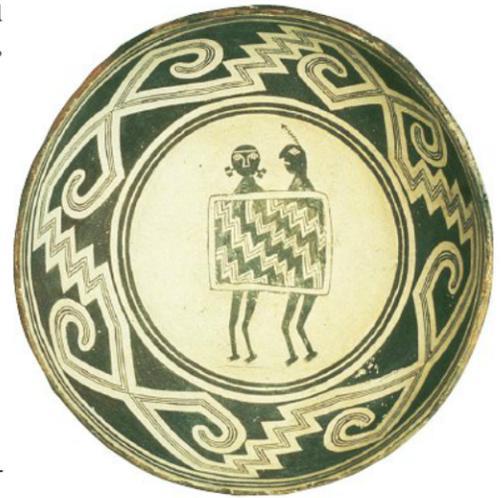
Farming created the material basis for much greater social complexity. Greater population density prompted the development of significantly more elaborate systems of kinship, and families began grouping themselves into **clans**. Different clans often became responsible for different social, political, or ritual functions, and clans also became an important mechanism for binding together the people of several communities into loose ethnic and territorial alliances or confederacies. These confederacies were led by leaders or chiefs from honored clans, who were often advised by councils of elders. A division of labor developed with the appearance of specialists like toolmakers, crafts workers, administrators, priests, and rulers, as well as farmers and food processors. Ultimately, unequal access to wealth and power resulted in the emergence of classes.

Indian communities practiced a rather strict division of labor according to gender. The details varied tremendously from culture to culture, but it is possible to generalize. Among foraging peoples, hunting was generally assigned to men, and the gathering of food and the maintenance of home-base camps to women. But the development of farming called this pattern into question. In Mexico, where communities became almost totally dependent on crops, both men and women worked in the fields. Where hunting remained important, the older division of labor remained, and women took responsibility for fieldwork.

In most farming communities, women and men belonged to separate social groupings, each with its own rituals and lore. Membership in these 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 usually simple. The couple separated without a great deal of ceremony, the children almost always remaining with the mother. All Indian women controlled their own bodies, were free to determine the timing of reproduction, and were free to use secret herbs to prevent pregnancy, induce abortion, or ease the pains of childbirth. All this was strikingly different from European patterns, in which the rule of men over women and fathers over households was thought to be the social ideal.

Farming eventually led to the development of large, densely settled communities. These first developed in **Mesoamerica**, the region stretching from central Mexico to Central America, where by the first millennium B.C.E. large urban communities were taking shape. By the beginning of the first millennium C.E. highly productive farming was supporting complex urban civilizations in the Valley of Mexico (the location of present-day Mexico City), the Yucatan Peninsula, and Guatemala. 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 impressive temples and other public structures, and the development of systems of mathematics and astronomy and several forms of hieroglyphic writing.

Growing populations demanded increasingly large surpluses of food, and this need often led to social conflict. Farming societies were considerably more complex than foraging bands, but they were also less stable and required management by permanent bureaucracies. These societies 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. And, in the struggle for more arable land, they were more prone than hunting societies to engage in protracted warfare with each other. The elite rulers of these complex urban communities often staged terrifying public rituals of human torture and



**The creation of man and woman** depicted on a pot (dated about 1000 c.e.) 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.

Courtesy National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 24/3198.

## AP\* Guideline 1.2

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Mesoamerica

- ◆ Mesoamerica was the birthplace of agriculture in North America.
- ◆ Olmecs: first literate urban culture in region.
- ◆ Mayan civilization flourished between about 300 B.C.E. and 900 C.E.

**Clans** Groups of allied families.

**Mesoamerica** The region stretching from central Mexico to Central America.

sacrifice as testimonials to their power. Skeletal remains from farming societies show much more evidence of violent death than the remains from hunter-gatherer societies.

A prominent example of an early urban civilization is the great city of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico, which may have been populated by as many as 200,000 residents at its height around 500 C.E. Teotihuacan's elite class of religious and political 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 Andean civilizations in South America. The city had a highly specialized division of labor. Artisans manufactured tools and produced textiles, stoneware, pottery, and obsidian blades. The bureaucratic elite collected taxes and tribute. Farmers worked the fields, and armies of workers constructed such monumental edifices as the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon, which still dominate the site's ruins.

Teotihuacan began to decline in the sixth century (for reasons that are not yet clear), and by the eighth century it was mostly abandoned. Its rulers were succeeded by a new ethnic power, the Toltecs, who dominated central Mexico from the tenth to the twelfth century. 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. (For the continuing history of the Aztecs, see Chapter 2.)

### THE RESISTED REVOLUTION

Historians once described the development of farming as a revolution. They believed that agricultural communities offered such obvious advantages that neighbors must have rushed to adopt this way of life. Societies that remained without a farming tradition were judged too "primitive" to achieve this breakthrough. This interpretation was based on a scheme of social evolution that saw human history as the story of technological progress, with hunters gradually developing into civilized farmers.

There is very little evidence to support this notion of a "revolution" occurring during a short, critical period. The adoption of farming was a gradual process, one that required hundreds, even thousands, of years. Moreover, ignorance of cultivation was never the reason cultures failed to take up farming, for hunter-gatherer peoples understood a great deal about plant reproduction. When gathering wild rice, for example, the Menominee Indians of the northern forests of present-day Wisconsin purposely allowed some of it to fall back into the water to ensure a crop for the next season. And the Paiutes of the Great Basin systematically irrigated stands of their favorite wild foods.

Surviving hunter-gatherers today generally look upon their own method of getting food as vastly superior to farming. The food sources of desert gatherers, for example, are considerably more varied and higher in protein than those of desert farmers, whose diets concentrate almost exclusively on maize. The results of this diet are evident in the skeletal remains of farming peoples, which suggest they were far more subject to malnutrition and tooth decay (a primary cause of death before modern dentistry). Because foragers took advantage of natural diversity, they were also less vulnerable to climatological stress; although gathering communities frequently experienced periods of scarcity and hunger, unlike farming societies they were rarely devastated by famine. Foragers also point out that farming requires much more work. Why sweat all day in the fields cultivating a crop of maize, they argue, when in an hour or two one can gather enough sweet prickly pear to last a week? Indeed, rather than freeing men and women from the tyranny of nature, farming tied people to a work discipline unlike anything previously known in human

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

history. The skeletal evidence indicates that farming peoples suffered from a high frequency of degenerative joint disease, the result of strenuous and repetitive patterns of work.

As farming technology became available, cultures in different regions assessed its advantages and limitations. 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, several peoples attempted to farm, but without long-term success. Before the invention of modern irrigation systems, which require sophisticated engineering, only the Archaic Desert Culture could prevail in this harsh environment. 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 intensifications (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. In a few areas, however, farming truly did result in a revolutionary transformation, creating urban civilizations like the one in central Mexico or at Cahokia, on the banks of the Mississippi.

### FARMERS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Farming communities began to emerge in the arid Southwest during the first millennium B.C.E. Among the first to develop a settled farming way of life were a people known as the Mogollon, who farmed maize, beans, and squash, and constructed ingenious pit structures 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 people known as the Hohokam (“those who are gone,” in the language of the modern Pima people of the region) flourished along the floodplain of the Salt and Gila rivers in southern Arizona. The Hohokam 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. The Hohokam shared many traits with Mesoamerican civilization to the south, including platform mounds for religious ceremonies and large courts for ball playing. At a site near present-day Phoenix called Snaketown by the Pima Indians, archaeologists have recovered a variety of goods from Central America—rubber balls, mirrors of pyrite mosaics, copper bells, and fashionable ear ornaments—suggesting that Snaketown may have housed a community of merchants who traded Mesoamerican manufactured goods for locally mined turquoise.

### THE ANASAZIS

The best-known farming culture of the Southwest is that of the Anasazis, which developed around the first century C.E. 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, possibly in response to population pressure and an increasingly dry climate, the Anasazis began shifting from pit-house villages to densely populated, multistoried apartment complexes, called “pueblos” by the Spanish invaders of the sixteenth century. These clustered around central complexes with circular underground *kivas*. The Anasazis grew high-yield varieties of maize in terraced fields irrigated by canals flowing from mountain catchment basins. To supplement this vegetable diet, they hunted animals,

**Human figures dance** on this characteristic piece of red-on-buff pottery of the Hohokams (dated about 1000 c.e.). The Hohokams, located on the floodplain of the Gila River near present-day Phoenix, Arizona, were the first irrigation farmers of North America. The Pima and Tohono O’odham people of Arizona may be descended from them.

Photograph by Helga Teiwes, Courtesy Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona.





**Cliff Palace**, at Mesa Verde National Park in southwest Colorado, was created 900 years ago when the Anasazi 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 mid-day summer sun. The numerous round kivas, each covered with a flat roof originally, suggest that Cliff Palace may have had a ceremonial importance.

David Muench/CORBIS-NY.

using the bow and arrow that first appeared in the region in the sixth century. Anasazi culture extended over a very large area. More than 25,000 Anasazi sites are known in New Mexico alone, but only a few have been excavated, so there is much that archaeologists do not yet understand. Their 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. Hundreds of miles of arrow-straight roads and an interueblo communication system consisting of mountaintop signaling stations connect Chaco Canyon to outlying sites, making it the center of a food distribution, trading, and ceremonial network. The Anasazis faced a major challenge in the thirteenth century. The arid climate became even drier, and growing populations had to redouble their efforts to improve food production, building increasingly complex irrigation canals, dams, and terraced fields. A devastating drought from 1276 to 1293 (precisely dated by analysis of tree rings) resulted in repeated crop failures and famine. This ecological crisis was heightened by the arrival in the region of Athapascan migrants, the ancestors of the Navajos and the Apaches, who for a thousand years or more had been moving south from the Subarctic. By the fourteenth century, Athapascan warriors were raiding Anasazi farming communities, taking food, goods, and possibly slaves. (Indeed, the name Anasazi means “ancient enemies” in the Athapascan language.) Gradually the Anasazis abandoned the Four Corners area altogether, most resettling in communities along the Rio Grande, joining with local residents to form the Pueblo communities 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 hunting and gathering with the cultivation of local crops such as sunflowers and small grains, providing the people with seeds and cooking oil. The presence of pipes in archaeological digs indicates that Woodland farmers also grew tobacco, which spread north from the Caribbean, where it was first domesticated. These eastern peoples lived most of the year in permanent community sites, but moved seasonally to take advantage of the resources such as fishing, hunting, and the gathering of wild plants at different locations.

The Woodland peoples of the Ohio Valley were notable for their tradition of mound building. In the first millennium B.C.E., a culture archaeologists have named Adena established the practice. Adena culture was followed by another known as Hopewell, whose adherents honored their dead by constructing even larger and more elaborate mounds. The ancient Hopewell site at Chillicothe, Ohio, for example, features a complex of earthen embankments laid out as a series of large, interlinked circles and squares, that includes conical and loaf-shaped mounds thirty feet high. Excavations of these earthworks exposed large underground chambers,

apparently the tombs of important leaders, and included rare and precious artifacts. Hopewell chiefs mobilized an elaborate trade network that acquired obsidian from the Rocky Mountains, copper from the Great Lakes, mica from the Appalachians, and shells from the Gulf coast. Artisans converted these materials into goods that played an important role in Hopewell trade and were included as grave goods in the mounds.

## MISSISSIPPIAN SOCIETY

Hopewell culture collapsed in the fifth century C.E., perhaps as a result of an ecological crisis brought on by shifting climate patterns. Local communities continued to practice their late Archaic subsistence strategies, but abandoned the expensive cultural displays of mound building. Over the next several centuries, however, a number of important technological innovations were introduced in the East. The bow and arrow, first developed on the Great Plains, appeared east of the Mississippi about the seventh century, greatly increasing the efficiency of hunting. At about the same time, a new variety of maize known today as Northern Flint was developed by Indian farmers of the East; with large cobs and plentiful kernels, it matured in a short enough time to make it suitable for cultivation in temperate northern latitudes. A shift from digging sticks to flint hoes also took place about this time, further increasing the productive potential of maize farming.

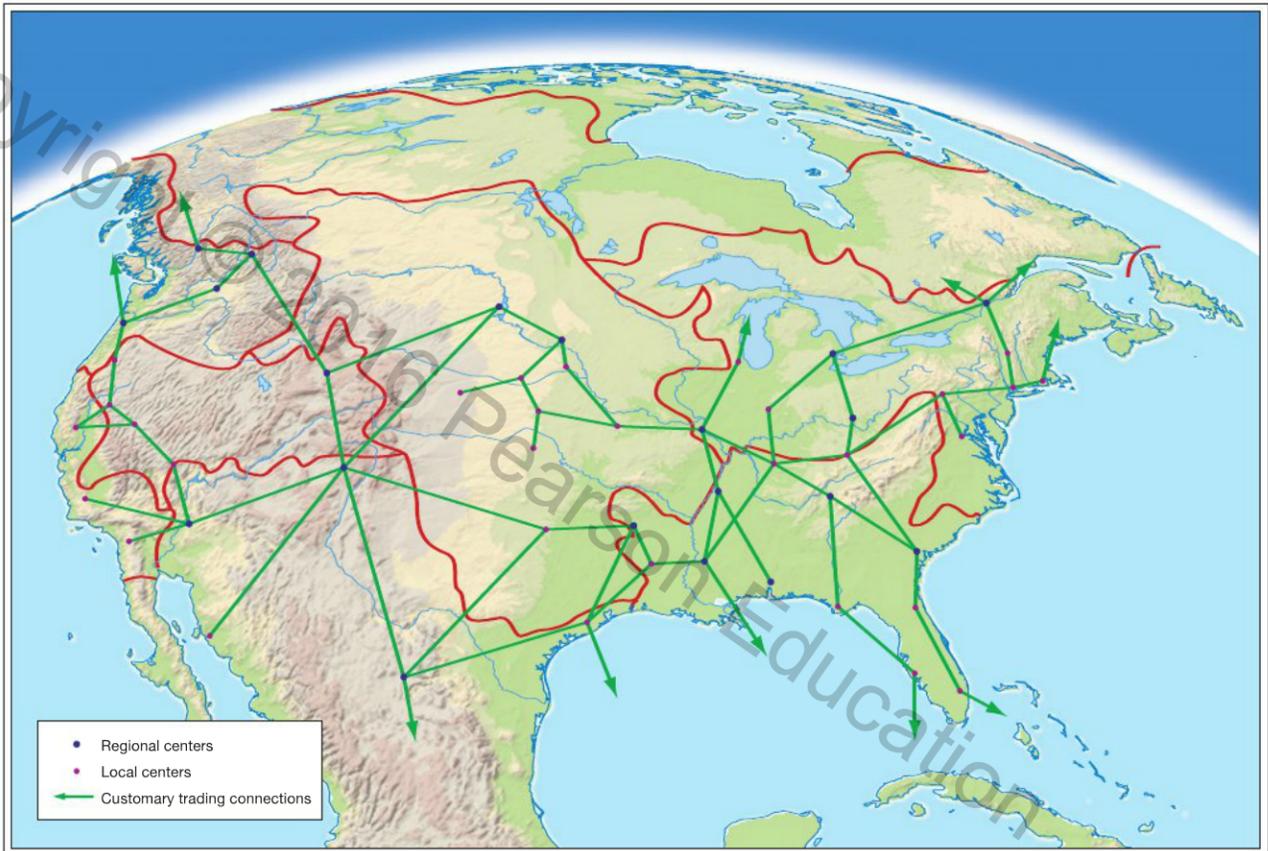
On the basis of these innovations, a powerful new culture known as Mississippian arose. The Mississippians were master maize farmers who lived in permanent settlements along the floodplains of the Mississippi Valley. Cahokia was the largest of these sites, with its monumental temple, its residential neighborhoods, and its surrounding farmlands. But there were dozens of other cities, each with thousands of residents. Archaeologists have excavated urban sites on the Arkansas River near Spiro, Oklahoma; on the Black Warrior River at Moundville, Alabama; at Hiawassee Island on the Tennessee River; and along the Etowah and Okmulgee rivers in Georgia. The Great Serpent Mound, the largest effigy earthwork in the world, was constructed by Mississippian peoples in southern Ohio.

These centers, linked by the vast river transportation system of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, became the earliest city-states north of Mexico, hierarchical chiefdoms that extended political control over the farmers of the surrounding countryside (see Map 1-3 for a map of trade networks). Their urban designs echoed the cities of Mesoamerica, rectangular plazas bounded by platform mounds. 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. Mound building and the use of tribute labor in the construction of other public works testified to the power of chiefs, who lived in sumptuous quarters atop the mounds. The excavation

**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.

Tony Linck. SuperStock, Inc.



**MAP 1-3**

**Native North American Trade Networks, ca. 1400 c.e.** 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.

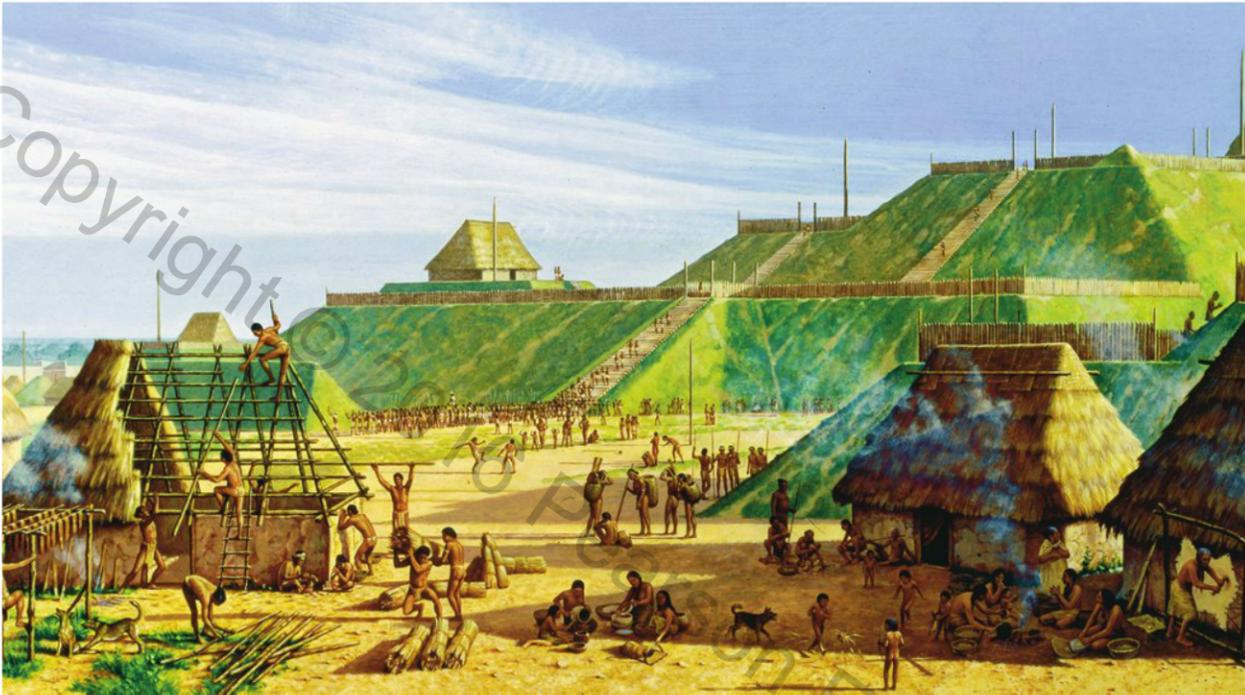
---

**HOW DID** the environment influence the relationship between trade and culture?

---

of one mound at Cahokia uncovered the burial chamber of a chief, who was accompanied in death by the bodies of dozens of young men and women, undoubtedly the victims of sacrifice. If politics is defined as the organized contest for power among people and groups, then the Mississippians (and the Anasazis) were the first truly political societies north of Mexico.

Mississippian culture reached its height between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries C.E., the same period in which the Anasazis constructed their 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—except for the absence of a writing system, all the traits of European civilization.



## THE POLITICS OF WARFARE AND VIOLENCE

The late thirteenth century marked the end of several hundred years of weather very favorable to maize farming and the beginning of a century and a half of cool, dry conditions. Although the changes in climate in the Mississippi Valley were not as severe as those that devastated the Anasazis of the Southwest, over the long term they significantly lowered the potential of farming to support growing urban populations. Some archaeologists have suggested that one consequence of this extended drought may have been greatly increased violence and social disorder.

Warfare among Indian peoples certainly predated the colonial era. Organized violence was probably rare among hunting bands, who seldom could 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 first Europeans to arrive in the southeastern part of the continent described highly organized combat among large tribal armies. The bow and arrow was a deadly weapon of war, and the practice of scalping seems to have originated among warring tribes, who believed one could capture a warrior's spirit by taking his scalp lock.

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 valleys 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.

**The city of Cahokia**, with a population of more than 30,000, was the center of a farming society that arose on the Mississippi bottomlands near present-day St. Louis in the tenth century c.e. The Cahokians built dozens of vast earthen mounds covering six square miles, evidence of their complex social organization.

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, painting by Michael Hampshire.

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

**AP\*** Guideline 1.3

**This bottle** in the shape of a nursing mother (dated about 1300 B.C.E.) 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. WL-23. Photograph © 1985 the Detroit Institute of Arts.



## CULTURAL REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA 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. 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

In determining the precolonial population of the Americas, historical demographers consider a number of factors—the earliest European accounts, the archaeological evidence, and the “carrying capacity” of different cultural regions. Determining the size of early human population is a tricky business, and estimates differ greatly, but there seems to be general agreement that the population of North America (excluding Mexico) was between 5 and 10 million in the fifteenth century. Millions more lived in the complex societies of Mesoamerica (estimates run from as low as 5 million to as high as 25 million). The population of the Western Hemisphere as a whole may have numbered 50 million or more, in the same range as Europe’s population at the time.

Scholars disagree about the numbers, but agree that population varied tremendously by cultural region (see Map 1-4). Although the cultural regions of the Arctic, Subarctic, Great Basin, and Great Plains made up more than half the physical space of the continent, in the fifteenth century 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 of hunting and gathering. The Archaic way of life continued in California as well, although the population there was large and dense because of the natural abundance of the region. In the Northwest, the narrow coastal strip running 2,000 miles from northern California to southern Alaska, abundant salmon fisheries supported large populations concentrated in permanent villages. The Indian societies of the Northwest coast were characterized by an elaborate material culture and by their “potlatch” ceremonies, where prestige and rank were accumulated by those people who could give away the most goods. The people of the Plateau also made their living by fishing, but their communities were not as large or as concentrated.

The largest populations of the continent were concentrated in the farming districts of the Southwest, the South, and the Northeast. And since it was in those culture areas that European explorers, conquerors, and colonists first concentrated their efforts, they deserve more detailed examination.

### 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

**MAP 1-4**

**Indian Settlement Before European Colonization** 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.

---

**WHY WERE** some regions more populated than others?

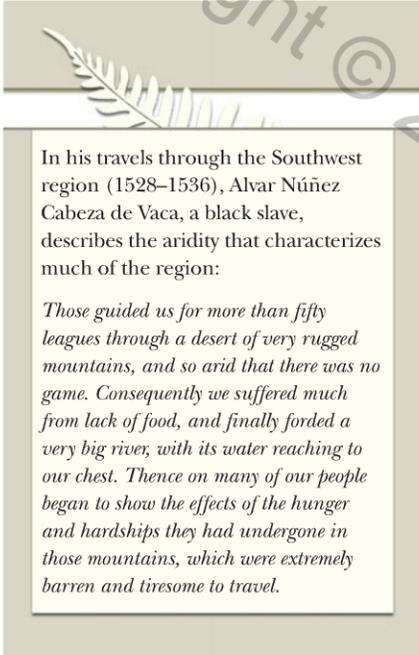
---

of the pine-covered mountain plateaus. Flowing south to the Gulf of Mexico or the Gulf of California, these narrow bands of green winding through parched browns and reds have made possible irrigation farming along their courses (see Map 1-5).

On the eve of European colonization, Indian farmers had been cultivating their Southwest fields for nearly 3,000 years. In the floodplain of the Gila and Salt rivers lived the Pimas and Tohono O’Odhams, descendants of the ancient Hohokams, and along the Colorado River 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. Often described as individualists, desert farmers lived in dispersed settlements that the Spanish called **rancherías**, their dwellings separated by as much as a mile. That way, say the Pimas, people avoid getting on each other’s nerves. Rancherías were governed by councils of adult men whose decisions required unanimous consent, although a headman was chosen to manage the irrigation works.

**Rancherías** Dispersed settlements of Indian farmers in the Southwest.

**Kachinas** Impersonations of the ancestral spirits by Southwest Indians.



In his travels through the Southwest region (1528–1536), Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, a black slave, describes the aridity that characterizes much of the region:

*Those guided us for more than fifty leagues through a desert of very rugged mountains, and so arid that there was no game. Consequently we suffered much from lack of food, and finally forded a very big river, with its water reaching to our chest. Thence on many of our people began to show the effects of the hunger and hardships they had undergone in those mountains, which were extremely barren and tiresome to travel.*

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. Seasonal public ceremonies in the village squares included singing and chanting, dancing, colorful impersonations of the ancestral spirits called **kachinas**, and the comic antics of clowns who mocked in slapstick style those who did not conform to the communal ideal (pretending to drink urine or eat dirt, for example, in front of the home of a person who kept an unclean house).

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. On a mesa top about fifty miles southwest of present-day Albuquerque, New Mexico, Anasazi immigrants from Mesa Verde built Acoma, the “sky city,” in the late thirteenth century. The Pueblo peoples established approximately seventy other villages over the next two centuries; fifty of these were still in existence when the Spanish founded Santa Fé at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and two dozen survive today, including the large Indian towns of Laguna, Isleta, Santo Domingo, Jémez, San Felipe, and Taos.

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. Gradually, some of the Athapaskan people adopted the farming and handicraft skills of their Pueblo neighbors; they became known as the Navajos. Others, more heavily influenced by the hunting and gathering traditions of the Great Basin and Great Plains, remained nomadic and became known as the Apaches.

## THE SOUTH

The South enjoys a mild, moist climate with short winters and long summers, ideal for farming. From the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, a broad fertile plain extends inland to the Piedmont, a plateau separating the coastal plains from the Appalachian Mountains. The upper courses of the waterways originating in the Appalachian highlands offered ample rich bottom land for farming. The extensive forests, mostly of yellow pine, offered abundant animal resources. 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 1-6).

Mississippian cultural patterns continued among many of the peoples of the South. Many of the farming towns along the waterways were organized into chiefdoms. Because most of these groups were decimated by disease in the first years of colonization, they are poorly documented. We know most about the Natchez, farmers of the rich floodplains of the lower Mississippi Delta, who survived into the eighteenth century before being destroyed in a war with the French. Overseeing the Natchez was a ruler known as the Great Sun, who lived in royal splendor on a ceremonial mound in the capital. When out



**MAP 1-5**

**Southwestern Indian Groups on the Eve of Colonization** 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.

among his subjects, he was carried on a litter, the path before him swept by his retinue of servants and wives. Natchez was a class society, with a small group of nobility ruling the majority. Persistent territorial conflict with other confederacies elevated warriors to an honored status among the Natchez. Public torture and human sacrifice of enemies were common. The Natchez give us our best glimpse of what life would have been like in the community of Cahokia.

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 the grand mounds and earthworks behind 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.

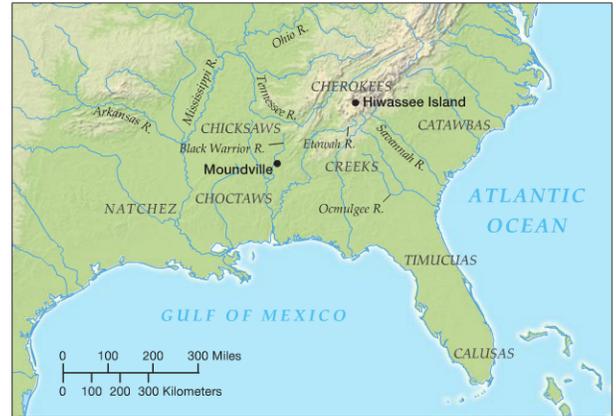
Among the most prominent of these new ethnic groups were a people in present-day Mississippi and Alabama who came to be known as the Choctaws. Another group in western Tennessee became known as the Chickasaws, and another people in Georgia later became known as the Creeks. On the mountain plateaus lived 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. Most peoples reckoned their descent matrilineally (back through generations of mothers), and after marriage, husbands left the homes of their mothers to reside with the families of their wives. Women controlled household and village life, and were influential in the matrilineal clans that linked communities together. Councils of elderly men governed the confederacies, but were joined by clan matrons for annual meetings at the central council house.

The peoples of the South celebrated a common round of agricultural festivals that brought clans together from surrounding communities. At the harvest festival, for example, people thoroughly cleaned their homes and villages. They fasted and purified themselves by consuming “black drink,” which induced hallucinations and visions. They extinguished the old fires and lit new ones, then celebrated the new crop of sweet corn with dancing and other festivities. During the days that followed, villages, clans, and groups of men and women competed against one another in the ancient stick-and-ball game that the French named lacrosse; in the evenings men and women played chunky, a gambling game.

## 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 C.E., 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 these areas of the Northeast, along the coasts and in the river valleys, Indian populations were large and dense (see Map 1-7 on page 25).

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 peoples of the region to adopt cultivation. Iroquois women produced crops of corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers sufficient to support up to fifty longhouses, each occupied by a large matrilineal extended



**MAP 1-6**  
**Southern Indian Groups on the Eve of Colonization** On the eve of colonization, the Indian societies of the South shared many traits of the complex Mississippian farming culture.

## QUICK REVIEW

### The South

- ◆ Mild, moist climate.
- ◆ Indian peoples of the South farmed, fished, and hunted.
- ◆ Peoples of the South shared agricultural festivals.



In this excerpt, Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz, a Dutchman and a Louisiana colonist of the early eighteenth century, provides a glimpse of the “Great Corn Feast” of the Natchez and the role of their leader, “The Great Sun.”

*Before he alights he makes the tour of the whole place deliberately, and when he comes before the corn, he salutes it thrice with the words, hoo, hoo, hoo, lengthened and pronounced respectfully. The salutation is repeated by the whole nation, who pronounce the word hoo nine times distinctly, and at the ninth time he alights and places himself on his throne.*



**The New Queen Being Taken to the King**, engraved by Theodor deBry in the sixteenth century from a drawing by Jacques le Moyne, an early French colonist of Florida. The communities of Florida were hierarchical, with classes and hereditary chiefs, some of whom were women. Here, le Moyne 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.

family. Some of those houses were truly long; archaeologists have excavated the foundations of some that extended 400 feet and would have housed dozens of families. Typically, these villages were surrounded by substantial wooden walls or palisades, clear evidence of intergroup conflict and warfare.

Population growth and the resulting intensification of farming in Iroquoia stimulated the development of chiefdoms there as elsewhere. By the fifteenth century, several centers of population, each in a separate watershed, 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. Iroquois oral histories collected during the nineteenth century recall this as a period of persistent violence, possibly the consequence of conflicts over territory.

To control this violence, the Iroquois founded a confederacy in which warfare among the member nations was outlawed, gift exchange and payment replacing revenge. Iroquois oral history refers to the founder of the confederacy, Chief Deganawida, “blocking out the sun” as a demonstration of his powers. From this bit of evidence, some historians have suggested that the founding might have taken place during the full solar eclipse in the Northeast in the year 1451. Deganawida’s message was proclaimed by his supporter, Hiawatha, a great orator, who convinced all the five Iroquois nations to join in confederacy. As a model of their government, the confederacy used the metaphor of the longhouse; each nation, it was said, occupied a separate

## 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.

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 and in northern New England were hunters and foragers, organized into bands with loose ethnic affiliations. Several of these peoples, including the Mikmaq, Crees, Montagnais, and Ojibwas (also known as the Chippewas), 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. Among these groupings were those of the Massachusetts, Narragansetts, and Pequots of New England; the Delawares and the peoples of Powhatan's confederacy on the mid-Atlantic coast; and the Shawnees, Miamis, Kickapoos, and Potawatomis of the Ohio Valley.



**MAP 1-7**  
**Northeastern Indian Groups on the Eve of Colonization** 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.

## CONCLUSION

Over the thousands of years that elapsed between the settlement of North America and the invasion of Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century, Indian peoples developed hundreds of distinctive cultures that were fine-tuned to the geographic and climatic possibilities and limitations of their homelands. In the northern forests, they hunted game and perfected the art of processing furs and hides. Along the coasts and rivers they harvested the abundant runs of fish and learned to navigate the waters with sleek and graceful boats. In the arid Southwest, they mastered irrigation farming and made the deserts bloom, while in the humid Southeast, they mastered the large-scale production of crops that could sustain large cities with sophisticated political systems. North America was not a “virgin” continent, as so many of the Europeans believed. Indians had transformed the natural world, making it over 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 Europeans did not understand and that later generations of Americans have too frequently ignored. The European colonists who came to settle encountered thousands of Indian communities with deep roots and vibrant traditions. In the confrontation that followed, Indian communities viewed the colonists as invaders and called upon their traditions and their own gods to help them defend their homelands.

Thomas Harriot (1560–1621) served as a navigator and mapmaker on Walter Raleigh’s first voyage to Virginia. The following is a brief description of the Algonquian natives they encountered:

*They are a people clothed with loofe mantles made of Deere skins, & aprons of the same rounde about their middles; all els naked; of such a difference of statures only as wee in England; having no edge tooles or weawapons of yron or steele to offend vs. . . . by the experience we have had in some places, the turning up of the heeles against us in running away was their best defence.*

Now, go back to the “Key Topics” section at the beginning of the chapter and try to summarize the information about each of those topics. If you are struggling with a topic, go to that section of the reading/your notes for that section and review it again.

## 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

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

caption in the original 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 four hundred years, and were used as justifications for conquest. ■

