

Chapter 1-The First Americans



Section 1-Migration to the Americas

Archaeology has been able to show that the first people to arrive in North America arrived much earlier than previously thought.

-Read "American Diary" on page 6

-By AD 1500 there were already millions of Native Americans living between North and South America.

-The first Europeans showed up in the Americas in the late 1400s. Many believed that they had arrived from Atlantis.



How Do We Know?

Archaeology, the study of ancient people, helps us determine our past.

-Using artifacts-the tools, weapons, baskets, carvings, etc. from earlier civilizations help us determine the cultural characteristics of our past.



How Did They Get Here?

During the last Ice Age, which began about 100,000 years ago, the North Atlantic froze, which dropped the sea level.

-This exposed a piece of land that ran from what is now Siberia to Alaska. This was called Beringia.



Searching for Hunting Grounds

The early Americans were nomads.

- As the migration continued, the new Americans were forced to spread to other regions of the land.
- Often, they were trying to find a source of food.
- Settlers found huge mammals upon arrival.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/travel/exceptionally-preserved-woolly-mammoth-goes-view-6C10592132>



Settling Down

As overhunting took place, as well as the end of the Ice Age, the availability of food dwindled.

-Other options were fishing, gathering berries and grains, hunting smaller game, and farming.

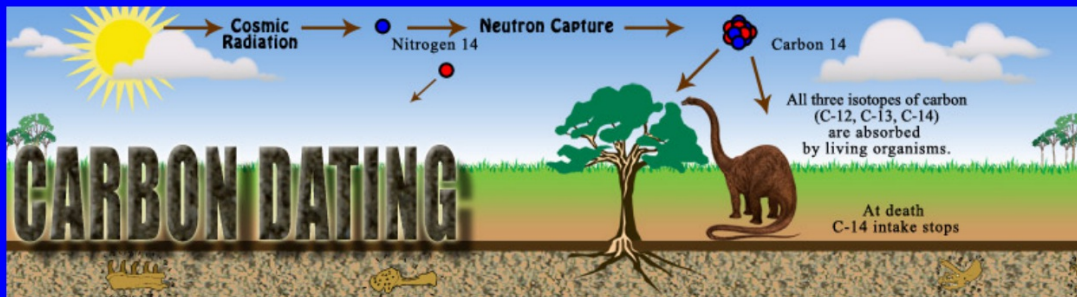
-9,000 years ago, people living in Mexico learned how to plant maize, which is a form of corn.

-Also planted beans, pumpkins, and squash.



Unique Cultures

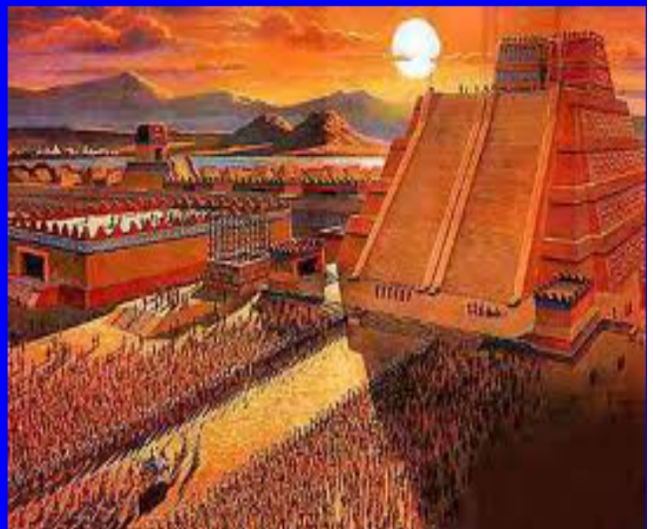
Villages have been discovered that are as old as 5,000 years.
-Carbon dating allows scientists to estimate the approximate age of an artifact.
-Also allows us to gain accurate representations of changing cultures.



Olmec, Maya, Aztec

The Olmec, Maya, and Aztec developed highly advanced civilizations in Mexico and Central America.

- They were able to develop huge cities in the middle of jungles, and in the case of the Aztec, in the middle of a lake.
- Each had a civilization that expanded hundreds of miles.
- Each was composed of millions of people.
- Each survived for hundreds of years.



The Olmec

The Olmec flourished between 1500 B.C. and 300 B.C.

-Could be found in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras.

-Had an advanced farming system

-Had paved roads

-Drainage systems

-Participated in bloodletting and sacrifice

-No one is entirely sure why the Olmec declined/collapsed.



The Maya

Found in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize.

- Planted maize, beans, and sweet potatoes.
- Developed a math system consisting of dots and lines.
- Fully developed a 365 day calendar system and written language.
- Each city had a large stone pyramid, some as tall as 200 ft.
- Rituals were performed by members of the theocracy.



Maya

No wheeled vehicles were used by the Maya.

-Cut paths through the jungle connecting their cities.

-Had many markets throughout the region.

-Used boats to travel up the coast for trade.

900 A.D.-Maya began to decline. Popular thought says that the soil was devastated by fire and or erosion.

-By 1100, most of the larger cities were completely abandoned.



The Aztec

Hundreds of years after the decline of the Maya, the Aztec wandered Mexico.

-Came across Lake Texcoco in 1325 (pg. 13)

-Developed Tenochtitlan-Built a city within a lake.

-If the above line didn't hit you, read it again.

-Became one of the largest cities in the world, and THE largest city in America.



War and Religion

1400s-The Aztec march through southern and central Mexico.

-Conquered many and used them as slaves.

-Also used the conquered as human sacrifices.

-Held belief that sacrifice was necessary to ensure successful harvests.

Read page 14.



The Inca

The Inca developed in South America.

-Capital city was Cuzco, in modern day Peru.

-1438-Pachacuti and Topa Inca expand the empire from what is now Colombia to Argentina/Chile.

-Inca power was derived from the military.

-Men between 25 and 50 could be drafted.

-Weapons included clubs, spears, copper balls on a rope, and stones.



Life in the Empire

- Runners carried messages between the major cities.
- Quipus were used as a system of accounting.
- Farmed in terraces (Maize, squash, tomatoes, peanuts, peppers, cotton, potatoes).
- Belonged to the emperor, descendant of the Sun God.

