



NATIVE PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS

The first people to live in the Americas were the Indians, or Native Americans. Their settlements ranged across the Western Hemisphere and were built on many of the sites where modern cities now rise. Native families and traders used paths now followed by roads and railroads. Indian words dot the maps of the United States, Canada, and the rest of the Americas. In the United States alone, 27 states bear names from the languages of the first Americans.

American Indian farmers were the first in the world to domesticate corn (maize), beans, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, and many other food plants that help feed the peoples of the world today. They found a variety of uses for such native American plants as rubber, tobacco, and the sugar maple. They also raised turkeys, llamas, and alpacas. These resources, along with others provided by hunting, gathering, and fishing, were used to support communities ranging from small villages to expansive cities with tens of thousands of residents.

Native peoples had lived in the Americas for thousands of years when the first European explorers set foot on their land. When Christopher Columbus landed in the New World, he called the native peoples *indios* (Spanish for Indians) because he thought he had reached a part of South Asia called the Indies.

Early explorers and settlers tended to think of the Indians as a single people, but the Indians themselves did not. An Indian considered himself a Delaware, a Dakota, a Navajo, or a member of one of the hundreds of other Indian nations in the Americas. The name of many peoples meant “the people” in their language.

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas proved devastating to the native peoples. Military conquest and

epidemic diseases brought by the newcomers killed millions of Indians throughout North and South America. Many of the survivors lost their land and were forced into slavery. Under colonial authorities and later under national and state governments, native peoples were subject to discriminatory political and legal policies well into the 20th, and even the 21st, century. This history of injustice largely explains why Indians are among the most impoverished groups in the United States and other countries.

Nevertheless, American Indians have been among the world’s most active and successful native peoples in bringing about political change. Since the late 20th century they have made gains in such areas as education, land ownership, religious freedom, and the law. They have worked for the revitalization of traditional culture by encouraging the use of native languages. They have also had some success in finding new sources of income to improve their economic standing.

The term American Indian is just one of many that have been used to refer to the native peoples of the Americas. In the 1960s many activists in the United States and Canada rejected the label because it is a misnomer applied by Europeans. In these countries Native American soon became the preferred term. Later, Native Americans in Canada began to refer to themselves as First Nations. The word nation has also been adopted by native peoples in other areas because it emphasizes their independent political status. Peoples of the American Arctic prefer the term Native Alaskan, Yupik, or Inuit. Nevertheless, many native people of North America continue to identify themselves as Indians.

KEY TO THE NATIVE PEOPLES

This book covers native peoples and cultures of prehistoric America as well as those that flourished at the time of European contact in the 1500s. The first four groups in the list below are notable prehistoric cultures covered in Part I. In the rest of the book, the native peoples are discussed largely in terms of the culture area to which they belonged. A culture area is a geographic region in which peoples share many cultural traits. Beginning with The Arctic, the 15 traditional culture areas of the Americas are listed below along with some of the peoples who lived in them.

The names used in this book are ones by which the native peoples are commonly known. Many ethnic groups have more than one name, however, and American Indians are no exception. Names can originate in a number of ways. The best-known names for many American Indian groups were given to them by their rivals and, when translated into English, can be considered quite insulting. For example, when the Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) and Fox (Meskwaki) were asked who lived to their west, French traders were told stories of the Winipig, or Winipyāgohagi—a name that translates roughly to “Filthy (or Stinking) Waters.” In 1993, after more than 300 years of using this name, the members of the Wisconsin Winnebago Tribe officially replaced it with Ho-Chunk, meaning “People of the Big Voice” in their language.

Other peoples have chosen to keep historical names even though they began as derogatory labels. The name Sioux, for example, comes from Nadouessioux—a name given to them by the Ojibwa that means “Adder” or “Snake.” Many members of the dozens of bands and tribes within the Sioux nation prefer the names Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota, referring to the three dialects of their language. Yet Sioux is still widely used for several reasons: one is that it provides a convenient way to refer to the three dialect groups as a whole, and another is that it promotes ethnic unity among the many bands and tribes.

Paleo-Indians

Archaic Cultures

Prehistoric Farmers of Northern America

Adena culture
Ancestral Pueblo
Hohokam culture
Hopewell culture
Mississippian culture
Mogollon culture
Plains Village culture
Plains Woodland culture

Early Civilizations of Middle and South America

Chavín
Chimú
Maya
Olmec
Teotihuacán
Tiwanaku
Toltec

The Arctic

Aleut
Eskimo (Inuit)

The Subarctic

Beaver
Carrier
Chipevyan
Cree
Deg Xinag
Dogrib
Innu
Kaska
Ojibwa (Chippewa)
Slave
Tanaina

The Northeast

Abenaki
Algonquin
Delaware
Fox (Meskwaki)
Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)
Illinois

Iroquois (including the Cayuga, Huron, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora)
Kickapoo
Massachuset
Menominee
Mi'kmaq (Micmac)
Mohegan
Mohican
Ojibwa
Penobscot
Pequot
Sauk
Wampanoag

The Southeast

Alabama
Apalachee
Caddo
Catawba
Cherokee
Chickasaw
Choctaw
Creek
Guale
Natchez
Seminole
Timucua

The Plains

Arapaho
Arikara
Assiniboin
Atsina
Blackfeet
Cheyenne
Comanche
Crow
Hidatsa
Iowa
Kansa
Kiowa
Mandan
Missouri
Omaha
Osage

Oto
Pawnee
Plains Cree
Plains Ojibwa
Ponca
Sarcee
Sioux (consisting of the Santee [Dakota], Teton [Lakota], and Yankton [Nakota] divisions)
Wichita
Wind River Shoshone

The Great Basin

Bannock
Gosiute
Mono
Paiute
Shoshone
Ute
Washoe

California

Chumash
Hupa
Maidu
Miwok
Pomo
Wintun
Yana
Yokuts
Yuki
Yurok

The Northwest Coast

Bella Coola
Chinook
Coast Salish
Haida
Kwakiutl
Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)
Tlingit
Tsimshian
The Plateau
Coeur d'Alene
Flathead
Kalispel

Klamath
Kutenai
Lillooet
Modoc
Nez Percé
Pend d'Oreille
Shuswap
Spokan
Umatilla
Wallawalla
Yakima

The Southwest

Apache
Cocopa
Havasupai
Hualapai
Maricopa
Mojave
Navajo
Pima
Pueblo
Tohono O'odham (Papago)
Yavapai
Yuma (Quechan)

Middle America

Aztec
Cora
Huastec
Huichol
Maya
Mixtec
Tarasco
Zapotec

Central America and the Northern Andes

Arawak
Caquetío
Carib
Cenú (Sinú)
Chibcha
Chocó
Guaymí
Jirajara
Kuna

Miskito
Páez
Quimbaya
Tairona

The Central Andes

Araucanian
Atacama
Aymara
Chanca
Chimú
Chincha
Diaguita
Huarpe
Inca

The Rainforest

Achagua
Arawak
Carib
Ge (including the Kaingang, Kayapó, Suyá, Timbira, Xavante, and Xerente)
Guahibo
Kawaib
Makushi
Mundurukú
Palicur
Taulipang
Tupinambá

Marginal Regions

Abipón
Aché
Alacaluf
Botocudo
Charrúa
Chono
Guahibo
Makú
Mura
Nambikwara
Puelche
Querandí
Sirionó
Tehuelche
Vilela
Yámana