

moment in HISTORY

Southwest Native Americans

• Where did they live?

Southwest Native Americans lived in the southwestern part of the United States. They lived in New Mexico, Arizona, and in the south of Utah and Colorado.

• What were some of the famous tribes from this region?

NAVAJO, PUEBLO, AND APACHE

• How did the group get their food?

Hunter-gatherers

Farmers

The Southwest Native Americans were farmers. Corn was important to these people. They mixed corn flour with water to make cakes. They grew fruits and vegetables like squash, melons, and beans.

Southwest Native Americans were hunters and gatherers, too. Sheep were important to them. They ate the meat. They used the wool for clothes, shelter, art, and tools. Southwest natives rode on horses to hunt. They hunted deer, rabbits, goats, and prairie dogs.



• How did the Native Americans in this region live their everyday lives?

In permanent homes

Migrating a lot

Most Southwest Native Americans lived in homes called **pueblos**. Pueblos were made out of adobe bricks.

CLAY + sand + water + straw = adobe bricks

The bricks were dried in the sun. Then, they were used to build homes. Adobe homes were stacked on top of each other. Sometimes four homes could be stacked together! Natives could get from level to level using ladders. Today, some Native Americans still live in pueblos that are over 1,000 years old!

The Navajos did not live in pueblos. They built **hogans**. Hogans were made with wooden poles. The poles were covered with mud, clay and tree bark. Hogans were very dark. Most did not have windows. The front door of the hogan faced the sun rise.

• What did they wear in this region?

The Southwest Native Americans wore clothing to stay cool. They lived in a hot place! Men did not wear much clothing. They wore breechcloths or kilts. **Breechcloths** were pieces of leather tucked into a belt to cover their fronts and backs. Kilts were comfortable wool skirts.

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Women wore light cotton dresses called **mantas**. These dresses were very colorful. The cotton and wool used to make clothing came from sheep.

Jewelry was made from stones, bones, and rocks. The natives found these things where they lived. Turquoise and silver were used in nicer jewelry. Their jewelry was very colorful.

• What did they believe?

The natives needed animals and resources from nature to live. So, they worshipped nature gods or spirits. They called the spirits **kachinas**. Kachina dolls and masks were made to worship the spirits. A room called a **kiva** was built at the bottom of pueblos. This room was used for religious ceremonies. The Native Americans would worship the kachinas here. The natives thought it was important for all ceremonies to be inside the kiva. Each village had a priest. The priest was in charge of leading the ceremonies.

• How were they organized?

Some Southwestern Native Americans did not have one main government. Some of these tribes were the Hopi and Navajo. Instead, they lived and worked in small groups. Each family group lived near the land they farmed and hunted. The family groups took care of themselves.

The Pueblo tribe had an organized government. Each village had its own council. There was one main council for the whole tribe. It was called the tribal council. The tribal council tried to fix problems that affected the whole tribe. Each village picked one person to be on the tribal council. This person was in charge of sharing the village's needs with the tribal council.

FUN FACT: The language spoken by the Navajo tribe is so hard to learn that it was used as a secret code language during World War II.

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Plains Native Americans

• Where did they live?

Plains Native Americans lived in the middle of the United States. This area is called the Great Plains. It stretches from Texas all the way up to southern Canada. It was the biggest area settled by Native Americans during this time. Plains Indians are the most famous group of Native Americans.

• What were some of the famous tribes from this region?

**SIOUX, CHEYENNE, BLACKFOOT,
COMANCHE, AND CROW**

• How did the group get their food?

Hunter-gatherers

Farmers

The Plains Native Americans hunted buffalo and bison. They followed these big animals around. The natives did not have guns, so they had to be smart hunters. They tried to trick the buffalo sometimes. One trick they used was running herds of buffalo off the edge of cliffs. They also tried to trick buffalo into leaving the herd to save a fake baby buffalo. Once the buffalo was away from the others, the natives would kill it.

The Plains Native Americans rode horses when they hunted. They used spears and arrows. They could use the buffalo for more than just food. The Plains people did

not waste any part of the animals they killed. They used buffalo hides to make homes, clothes, and beds. They used animal bones to eat with. They also used the bones for tools and weapons. Native Americans even made glue from buffalo hooves!

The Plains people were farmers, too. Corn was the most important crop. It is still the most important crop in the Great Plains area today!

• How did the Native Americans in this region live their everyday lives?

In permanent homes

Migrating a lot

The Plains Indians moved a lot to follow buffalo. They lived in **teepees**. Teepees look like cones. They are like tents, too. They are made out of wooden sticks and animal skins. They were made in different sizes. Some big tents could hold 40 people! Teepees could be packed up fast when the natives needed to move. Teepees lasted a long time. They were easy to set up. They were nice in hot and cold weather. The women took care of the teepees because the men were busy hunting buffalo.



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• What did they wear in this region?

Most of the clothes the Plains Native Americans wore came from animal hides. Buffalo hides would be **tanned**, or turned into leather. Then, they were made into clothes. Women cut, stitched, and decorated the hides. Feathers, beads, and fur were added to make the clothes look fancy. Men only wore shirts during the winter. They wore leather coats and leggings to stay warm. During battles, the Plains people wore fancy war shirts. They also used armor made out of animal bones.

• What did they believe?

Religion was important to the Plains Native Americans. They believed that everything in life had a spirit. There was one main spirit called the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit ruled over the whole world. Some of the tribes had different names for the Great Spirit:

- "Old Man" for the Blackfoot people
- "Wakan Tanka" for the Sioux people

But, all tribes believed there was one main spirit that watched over the entire earth. The Plains Native Americans believed they could talk to these spirits in their dreams. Each tribe had a **medicine man**, or spiritual leader. The medicine man was in charge of leading ceremonies. Medicine men used herbs and potions to heal people. People also went to see medicine men to get advice.

• How were they organized?

Native American tribes lived in small groups called **villages**. Every man in the village was a member of the village council. The village council picked one man to lead the whole village. This man was the **chief**. The chief worked for the village for his whole life. Chiefs from every village in the tribe were part of the tribal council. The tribal council would pick one tribal chief to be the leader of the entire tribe. The village council tried to make sure that all of the villages in the tribe were treated fairly. Finally, the tribal chief was part of the national council.

Several tribes formed what was called a nation. For example, there were seven large tribes that made up the Sioux Nation. Each of the chiefs of the seven Sioux tribes were part of the national council and stood up for their home tribes.

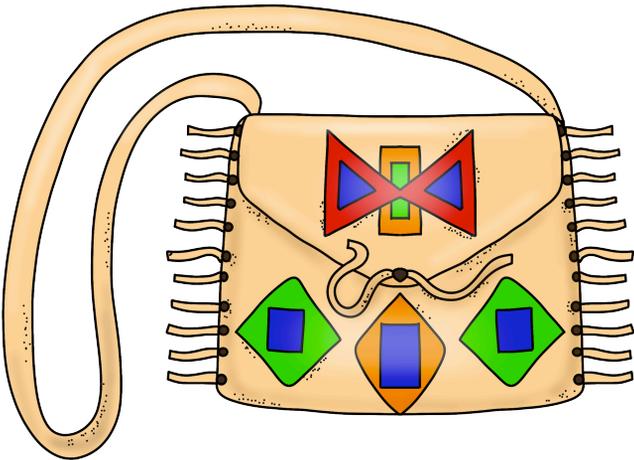
FUN FACT: Only the bravest Sioux men got the honor of wearing a grizzly bear claw necklace as a symbol of their courage.

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Great Basin Native Americans

• Where did they live?

Great Basin Native Americans lived between two areas: the Pacific Northwest and the Great Plains. This area includes Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. Many people do not know a lot about this group of Native Americans. They were one of the last groups of natives that the Europeans met.



• What were some of the famous tribes from this region?

UTE, SHOSHONE, AND WASHO

• How did the group get their food?

- Hunter-gatherers
- Farmers

The Great Basin Native Americans were hunters and gatherers. The area they lived in was dry and hot. So, they ate any food they could find. They ate a lot of nuts,

seeds, berries, plants, and small animals. They kept nuts to eat during the winter.

When children were old enough to help, they were sent to find food. The Great Basin natives hunted rabbit and deer. But, rabbit and deer were hard to find. It was hard for people in this area to get enough food to feed the whole family.

• How did the Native Americans in this region live their everyday lives?

- In permanent homes
- Migrating a lot

Great Basin natives moved a lot because food was hard to find. Natives that were lucky enough to have horses could travel to find food. But, most tribes did not have horses. Great Basin Native Americans moved around in small groups so they could all help each other find enough food.

The Great Basin people lived in **hogans**. Hogans were made out of wooden poles. These poles were covered with mud, clay, and tree bark. They did not have windows. They were dark inside. Hogans were built close to water.

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• What did they wear in this region?

The Great Basin region got very hot and very cold. In the summer, it was very hot. In the winter, it was very cold. The natives did not wear much clothing during the summer. In the winter, they wore rabbit skin robes and blankets. The Great Basin Native Americans that were lucky enough to own horses could wear clothes made out of the buffalo hides that they got from hunting.

• What did they believe?

The Great Basin people believed that everything on earth had spirits. They even thought animals, plants, rocks, and water had spirits! The natives thought these spirits lived on earth before humans and created human life. The Great Basin Native Americans worshipped these spirits, or gods. The Native Americans held dances, festivals, and other ceremonies to worship their gods. The natives thought that the celebrations would bring them good luck in the future.

• How were they organized?

Great Basin Native Americans traveled in small groups. A small group might just have a man, a woman, and their children. A family like this was called a **kin clique**. Because they were always moving around, these natives did not have a tribal council or other type of government.

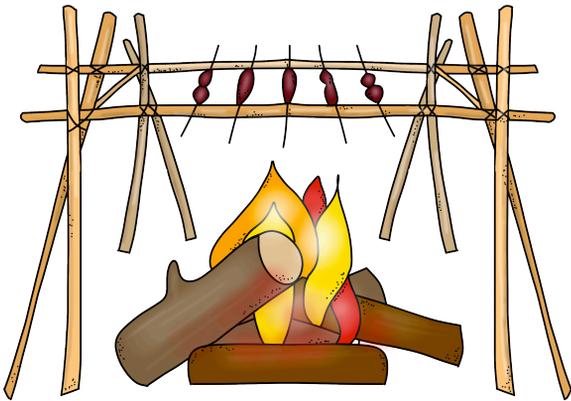
FUN FACT: Ute Native Americans enjoyed eating grasshoppers and other bugs. They thought it was gross to see the Spanish eat eggs!

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Eastern Woodlands Native Americans

• Where did they live?

Eastern Woodlands Native Americans lived in the eastern part of the United States. This area stretched across from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. It stretched up from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. These were the first Native Americans the European explorers met.



• What were some of the famous tribes from this region?

ALGONQUIAN (GREAT LAKES), CHEROKEE (CAROLINAS), SHAWNEE (EAST COAST), SEMINOLE (FLORIDA), AND IROQUOIS (NEW YORK)

• How did the group get their food?

- Hunter-gatherers
- Farmers

The Eastern Woodlands Native Americans were hunters, gatherers, farmers, and fishermen. The men hunted

and fished. The women farmed and gathered. When young boys were old enough, their fathers taught them to hunt and fish. Men hunted animals like bears, moose, bison, rabbits, beavers, and raccoons. They hunted with a bow and arrow. The most important animal was the deer. They ate deer meat and also used the skin and antlers. The women grew crops like squash, melons, and pumpkins. They also gathered nuts and berries that grew around where they lived. The tribes that lived near the Great Lakes ate a lot of rice.

Most tribes moved close to water. They became fishermen. Natives fished a lot in the summer. They hunted more in the winter. They roasted meat over a fire and ate it right away. Sometimes, instead of eating their meat right away, they dried and preserved it. This type of cooking is like how Americans make beef jerky! Eastern Woodlands people thought nobody in the tribe should go without food. So, they always shared with each other.

• How did the Native Americans in this region live their everyday lives?

- In permanent homes
- Migrating a lot

The area that the Eastern Woodlands Native Americans lived in was big and had a lot of different climates! Because of this, different tribes lived in different kinds of homes. The kind of home each group lived in changed based on where they lived.

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The Iroquois tribe lived in and around New York. They built wooden homes called **longhouses**. Longhouses were very long buildings. Some were 200 feet long. They were made from long wooden poles covered with tree bark. These homes could last 20 years! More than one family lived in each longhouse. Each family had their own part of the longhouse. Longhouses were not measured in feet or meters; they were measured by how many fires could fit inside. Fires were used for cooking, making clothes, and staying warm.

Most natives living in the northeast lived in longhouses. But, some lived in **wigwams**. Wigwams were smaller and easier to build. The Algonquian tribe lived in wigwams. Wigwams were round and made out of logs. The logs were covered with tree bark, animal hides, and mud. Wigwams could not be moved like teepees. But, the animal hide that covered the outside of the house could be used again. Only one family lived in each wigwam. Grandparents sometimes lived with their children and grandchildren, too.

The Seminole Native Americans lived in **chickees**. Chickees were small and easy to build. They were sometimes called "huts." Only one family lived in each chickee. The natives had everything they needed to build their chickees. The roofs were made out of Palmetto leaves. The floors were raised to stop flooding and keep out animals. Floods happened a lot in that area! The huts did not have walls so they would be cooler. Chickees had long posts. These posts kept the huts from sinking into the swampy soil.

• What did they wear in this region?

Everything the Eastern Woodland Native Americans used to make their clothes came from the forest. The native men wore **buckskin** shirts and pants during the winter. Buckskin is animal skin without the hair or fur. Men also wore **buckskin moccasins**. Buckskin moccasins are leather shoes. Women wore skirts made out of grass. These skirts were covered with animal fur for warmth in the winter. During the summer, men wore breechcloths. Children did not wear much clothing.

The Eastern Woodlands Native Americans were famous for their war paint. Because they lived in such a big area, tribes were always fighting over land. The men would paint their faces before going into battle to honor their gods. The paint made them look scarier, too.

• What were their beliefs and religious practices?

Eastern Woodlands natives believed everything had a soul. They believed that rocks and thunderstorms had spirits just like people do. The natives made **Dreamcatchers**. Dreamcatchers were supposed to keep evil spirits away while the natives were sleeping. The Eastern Woodlands Indians had lots of ceremonies. The Cry Ceremony was held when someone died. During the ceremony, five knots were tied in a plant. One knot would be untied each day after the death. Another popular ceremony was the Green Corn festival. This ceremony celebrated the corn crops.

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The Native Americans in the southeastern part of the Eastern Woodlands believed in different things. They thought there were three worlds - the "This World", the "Upper World", and the "Lower World". The Upper World and the Lower World were like the Christian idea of heaven and hell. The natives lived in "This World." They thought spirits could move between the worlds. They thought it was their job to make sure the world was in order.

• How were they organized?

The Eastern Woodlands Native Americans were very organized. Their government was similar to the government of the United States today. Each tribe was split into classes. The chief and his family were at the top of society. The common people were at the bottom. However, commoners still had a say in the tribe. Male council members were picked by each clan, or extended family. They tried to take care of what the common people needed. Council members would meet to discuss the tribe's issues and make important decisions. The Iroquois people had two chiefs in each tribe. One chief was responsible for overseeing the daily activities of the tribe. The other chief acted as the judge of the tribe.

moment in HISTORY

Pacific Northwest Native Americans

• Where did they live?

The Pacific Northwest Native Americans lived in the northwestern part of the United States and Canada. This area stretches from northern California to southern Alaska.

• What were some of the famous tribes from this region?

TLINGIT, KWAKIUTL, AND SALISH

• How did the group get their food?



Hunter-gatherers



Farmers

The Pacific Northwest Native Americans were fishermen. They made cedar wood canoes. They hunted whales and salmon. The natives used a type of spear called a **harpoon** to hunt whales. Whale hunting was not safe! A whale could tip a canoe! But, the amount of meat made it worth the risk. It took many days to kill a whale. Once the whale was dead, the village could eat for months.

There was a lot of food in this area. Rivers were full of salmon. The ocean was full of seafood. The forests were full of deer, elk, and fruit. The Native Americans dried and stored food so they did not have to hunt and gather during the winter.

Families cooked inside their houses. They had big houses that could keep many weeks' worth of food inside. Most natives baked and steamed their food. The natives heated stones in a hot fire. Then, they dropped the hot stones in a wooden box of water. When the stones were cool, they were replaced with new hot stones. Eventually, the water in the box started boiling. Fish and vegetables were cooked in the boiling water.

• How did the Native Americans in this region live their everyday lives?



In permanent homes



Frequently migrating

The Pacific Northwest Native Americans lived in **plank houses**. These homes kept the natives warm. Plank houses were like the longhouses. Plank houses and longhouses were big and took a long time to build. These natives did not move around very much so that was okay! Another reason they did not move a lot is because there was so much food in the area. More than one family lived in both kinds of houses. But, single families sometimes built their own smaller plank houses. Plank houses were made out of planks from cedar trees. The natives in this area used stones and animal bone tools to cut down the tall cedar trees. The roofs were built lower than the roofs of longhouses. Low roofs made the plank houses warmer.

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• What did they wear in this region?

The Pacific Northwest people wore clothing made out items from where they lived. Women made shirts, skirts, and capes from cedar wood. They wore animal hides in the winter to keep warm. Men wore breechcloths to stay cool while hunting and fishing in the summer. Most natives did not wear shoes all year long. Men and women made fancy clothing and blankets to wear at their festivals. Festival clothing was more colorful than the clothing that they wore everyday.

• What did they believe?

These Native Americans threw fancy parties. These parties were called **Potlatches**. Potlatches were festivals with gifts, dancing, stories, and more. Tribes showed how rich they were during these parties. Potlatches were very important.

The natives thought guardian spirits watched over everything. They felt connected to these spirits. Young boys had to find their own spirit before they were thought of as men. Each boy would go off alone into the wild until he found his spirit. This usually happened during a natural event, like a storm.

The natives also honored their spirits with **totem poles**. Totem poles were made out of big cedar posts. They put the totem poles in front of their houses. The poles showed the history of the family. They were painted with animals and other symbols. The poles were supposed to honor the spirits. Each tribe had different totem poles.

• How were they organized?

Pacific Northwest Native Americans were split into **clans**, or groups. Each clan had its own symbol, like an eagle or a raven. Men could not marry women from their same clan.

The people in the Pacific Northwest did not have a government. The more money a family had, the more power it had in the village. The amount of power a village had was based on the amount of slaves and riches it had. This is why the Potlaches were so important to these people.



FUN FACT: Pacific Northwest Native Americans did not have a written language, so totem poles were used to tell stories, myths, and legends through carved images.