

The first americans essay

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The world works in mysterious ways.

This class has determined that people must be able to adapt to environmental changes if they are to survive. The inability to adapt has proven to be the collapse of a particular society time and time again. This essay traces the rise of Cahokia and Chaco Canyon and the developments of each culture to each culture's end.

Cahokia was the largest pre-Columbian town in North America - five times the size of its nearest competition (Thomas 152). Cahokia was composed of a number of competing chiefdoms, sometimes consolidating into a single paramount chiefdom and other times warring with one another. Cahokia was home to 10,000 - 15,000 people and perhaps tens of thousands more lived in the surrounding floodplains (Thomas 153). In the early stages of development, the woodland people established simple villages in the Cahokia area. An intense transformation of social, political, religious, and economic organization of the next three centuries took place.

An interesting aspect of this transformation was the adoption of full-scale maize horticulture (Thomas 153). Maize horticulture would end up supporting the evolving Iroquoian confederacy of the Northeast, the Fort Ancient polities along the middle Ohio River Valley, and the diverse array of Mississippian chiefdoms that controlled the river valleys of the Southeast and Midwest. Cahokia was much like a magnet that drew in farmers from smaller villages nearby.

Over time, outside villages would get smaller and smaller while the main Cahokia area was getting bigger and bigger. Thomas explains that by 1300

Cahokia had fully disintegrated and would soon lie in ruins; nobody knows the exact cause of this decline (Thomas 161). One theory suggests that the population was getting out of control and that natural resources were not sufficient to sustain the population. Chaco Canyon is an amazing yet mysterious place. Many questions have yet to be answered regarding the mysteries of Chaco Canyon. It has ten massive buildings built four and five stories high can house approximately one thousand people. Its size and massive appearance is compared to that of the roman coliseum. The location is interesting as food would not grow easily and water was scarce.

Building materials had to be imported from distant sites nearly a hundred miles away. Chaco Canyon natives crafted elegant pottery and jewelry using turquoise. These people made offerings at ceremonies by breaking pottery as shown in the vLec for Chaco Canyon. According to the video, the people left in a slow, calculated migration. One theory suggests that the reason being is that the grounds were corrupted by evil forces (accumulation of knowledge, control, and natural forces. The mysteries of Cahokia and Chaco Canyon will remain unanswered.

Nobody will know for sure what happened to their respective civilizations. There are many interesting theories regarding the end of their cultures. All we can do as archaeologists is look at the evidence presented and make our best guess as to what we think happened.