

Flourishing north american cultures



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

2000 years before Europeans began to arrive in the New World, the last era of the pre-Columbian development began. North American cultures such as the Mississippian culture, the Hopewell Tradition, and the Hohokam culture experienced growth and environmental adaptation throughout this era. Major contributions and innovations of Native Americans have developed and been passed on through generations of ancestors.

Originating in 700 A. D. , the Mississippian culture expanded through the Mississippi Valley and out into the southeastern states of Alabama, Georgia and Florida. For 800 years, until the 1550s, the Mississippian culture prospered.

They cultivated a substantial amount of corn, by means of intensive farming, and other crops, such as squash and beans. Their trade networks with other native Americans extended across the New World in all directions, as far west as the Rocky Mountains, north as the Great Lakes, south as the Gulf of Mexico and east as the Atlantic Ocean. They manufactured an abundance of stone, shell and copper products. Some scholars believe that the Mississippian culture evolved as a result of climate conditions and their own strength and ability to grow, though others argue that Mexico influenced their agricultural techniques and religious practices.

Native Americans of the Mississippian culture were nicknamed Temple Mound Builders because they built earthen temple mounds that were several stories high and had flat tops. The significant buildings, such as their wooden temples, council houses and chief's house, were built atop these mounds. The cultural hub of the Mississippian culture was Cahokia, which occupied

over 8000 people and was the first metropolis of America. Constructed near present day Collinsville, Illinois, Cahokia occupied nearly 120 temple mounds, including Monks Mound, the largest mound in North America and nearly 100 feet tall.

The Mississippian culture developed a complex chiefdom level of social organization. One major center with earthen temple mounds had control over a select few of lesser communities. Based on their ritual relationship with their land, they developed a sophisticated and an organized culture, religiously, socially and politically. The smaller tribes that settled on the east coast of North America never flourished in the way the Mississippian culture did, and never accomplished what they did in architecture, agriculture and earthwork sculpturing. The Anasazi is the name given to the cultural groups that descended from the Ancient Pueblo culture.

Having inhabited the Four Corners area from 300 B. C. to 1300 A. D. , the Anasazi is one of the longest-lasting cultures of Pueblo history. Due to their intricate basketwork, the original Anasazi were known as the Basketmaker People.

Their skill in basketmaking eventually diminished, though, as they adapted pottery and other innovations. A rapid incline in growth resulted because of such innovations in food storage, agriculture, trading and hunting. The addition of beans to their crops increased the net nutritional value of their crops. They domesticated the turkey and adapted the bow and arrow for hunting. New, more productive grinding basins were adapted for processing grains. Because of this population growth, the Ancient Pueblo culture spread.

The Anasazi Pueblo people were the most advanced culture in their area. They were skilled in astronomy, stone and architecture. They change in name from the Basketmaker People to Pueblo Anasazi is because of the period of advancement in which they developed a new building technique. Multi-room complexes, that eventually evolved to be multistoried as well, were called “ pueblos. ” These expert stone masons stacked stones to build the pueblos, using mud as mortar. At the peak of their dynamic culture, the Anasazi developed the Chaco Canyon.

Within the canyon, they constructed many pueblos, totaling nearly seven hundred rooms. In addition, they built water-collection systems and a network of roads. It was a massive achievement in engineering. The founding fathers of America looked at the Iroquois, who lived along the St. Lawrence River in what is now New York, as a model of democracy to base America’s political system on.

From the Iroquois, Europeans learned of a well-developed system of checks, balances and supreme law. Because the Iroquois influenced the Articles of Confederation, they were one of the most important native groups in North American history. The federation of the Iroquois enabled them to prosper in independence and protect themselves from enemies. The Hohokam culture of present day Arizona existed from 300 A.

D. to 1200 A. D. The earliest Hohokam people lived in unusually large lodges possibly with their extended family. The Hohokam men, who were traditionally hunters, hunted large game with spears until the bow and arrow was introduced around 400-500 A. D.

Throughout the culture's lifespan, its geographical range expanded by at least three to four times. As the Hohokam culture expanded and their contacts with neighboring tribes increased, trade began to flourish. A surprising variety of products were manufactured for trade by the Hohokam families. These desert farmers were the first to grow cotton in the southwest. Not only did they weave cotton fabrics, but they also cultivated corn. Crops, such as corn, beans, squash, tobacco and cotton, were planted in a series of earth mounds along water canals.

Corn may have influenced the transition from hunting and gathering to farming. As the villages of the Hohokam people grew, land near the rivers was becoming more and more unavailable. To bring water to land farther away from the rivers, around 400-500 A. D. they began to dig canals. This technique was used by the Hohokam for centuries and it gradually spread throughout other parts of Arizona.

These canals of water turned into a vast network of irrigation systems. Major canals were over ten miles long. The agricultural fields that were previously unequipped against the arid environment now depended on the irrigation system. Joined by Anasazi, the Hohokam began to experiment with unfamiliar types of wall structures, such as solid clay walls and clay walls reinforced with posts.

The Hohokam used caliche, a natural concrete-like material found beneath the top soil throughout this region, to build houses with solid walls and flat, caliche-covered roofs. They, like the Anasazi, built large, multistoried

structures, with walls more than six feet thick at the base. The Hopewell Tradition existed from 100 B. C. to 500 A.

D. in the Ohio Valley, central Mississippi and the Illinois River Valleys.

Villages and farms were usually built beside a river. The Hopewell Tradition were one of the first populations of Native Americans to be committed to agriculture, beginning at the start of the millennium. Their agricultural systems were based on seed-bearing plants, such as sunflowers, squash, maygrass, knotweed and an assortment of grasses. The Hopewell Tradition is well-known for its art, ritual, ceremonial architecture and exchange between communities.

They were highly skilled craftsmen in pottery, stone, sculpture and metalworking, such as copper. Many of the materials used by the Hopewell were gained through the Hopewell Exchange System. The Hopewell Tradition was a group of related populations that were bonded by trade routes. They traded with Native Americans all over North America. At its peak, Hopewell Tradition extended from New York to Missouri and from Wisconsin to Mississippi. One of the Hopewell's greatest achievements is their burial grounds.

The large earthen mounds were for ceremony and rituals related to the burial of their dead. Within the burial mounds were evidence of their artistic talents, such as the utensils and pottery used for feasts and religious rituals. Copper was used by their skilled tradesmen often, as well as iron and silver. Native Americans were not as advanced as Europeans, who had horses and other large draft animals.

Without such animals it never occurred to Native Americans to develop wheeled vehicles or a potter's wheel, as the Europeans did. But the subtle imprint of Native Americans on our society is obvious, and even though they are not as technologically advanced as the Europeans were, their contributions still remain evident. Bibliography Chaco Canyon. Exploratorium . 2 Sep.

2008 . Major Pre-Columbian Indian Cultures in the United States. 3 Sep.

2008 . Nash, Gary B. , and Julie R.

Jeffrey. The American People. 5th ed. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc, 2001.

1 Sep. 2008. Schroedl, Gerald F. Mississippian Culture. 1998.

Tennessee Historical Society. 3 Sep. 2008

php? EntryID= M108>. Sharp, Jay W. Desert People of the Past. 2001. 2 Sep. 2008

desertusa. com/ind1/du_peo_ancient. html>. Stein, Anthony.

The Mississippian Moundbuilders and their Artifacts. 1 Mar. 2000. 3 Sep. 2008

mississippian-artifacts. com/>. Radonjic, Brankica . The Hopewell Culture. Ed.

Kristian A. Werling. 25 Sep. 1996. WebChron.

<https://assignbuster.com/flourishing-north-american-cultures/>

3 Sep. 2008 .