



Pre-Columbian American Civilizations

Who were the people and cultures of pre-Columbian America?



Olmec Civilization (1500 BCE – 400 BCE)

❖ Earliest Mesoamerican civilization

- ❖ Olmec research is still ongoing but believed to have African Routes (another migration?)
- ❖ Had strict social class society sacrificial systems
- ❖ Traded for needed goods
 - ❖ Jade, iron-ores, and mirrors
- ❖ Believed to be the root “0”
- ❖ Believed that civilization assimilated into later known Mesoamerican states



We're either really short... or that's really big.



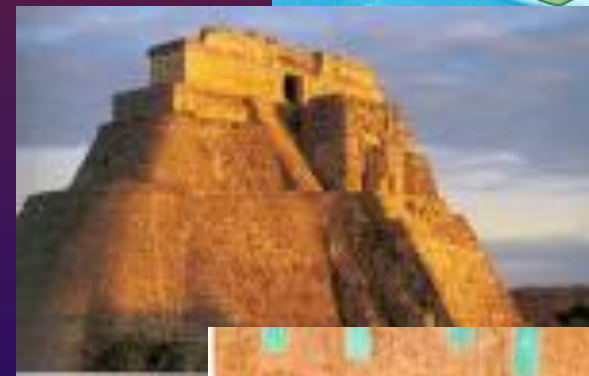


Agricultural Empires of South and Central Mexico and Guatemala

Mesoamerica- Mayan's

❖ The Mayans

- ❖ Established elaborate urban centers
 - ❖ This includes palaces, bridges, aqueducts, vapor baths (natural steam), astronomical observatories, plazas, and temples
- ❖ Developed great advancements
 - ❖ The priest developed written language
 - ❖ Mathematicians used zero “0”
 - ❖ Astronomers developed the most advanced calendar
- ❖ Civilization mysteriously disappeared
 - ❖ Possible internal revolt



Mesoamerica - Aztecs

❖ The Aztecs

- ❖ Growth through conquest and diplomacy

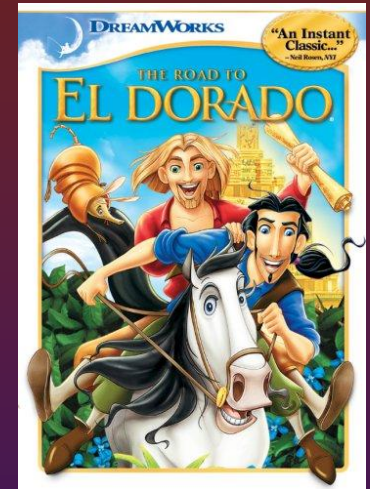
 - ❖ Population of several million

❖ The Capital Tenochtitlan

- ❖ Built on a marshy lake to hold a large population

- ❖ Dominated by the Great Temple of the Sun

 - ❖ City flowed with gold, silver, exotic birds, maize, cocoa, trade goods, and tribute



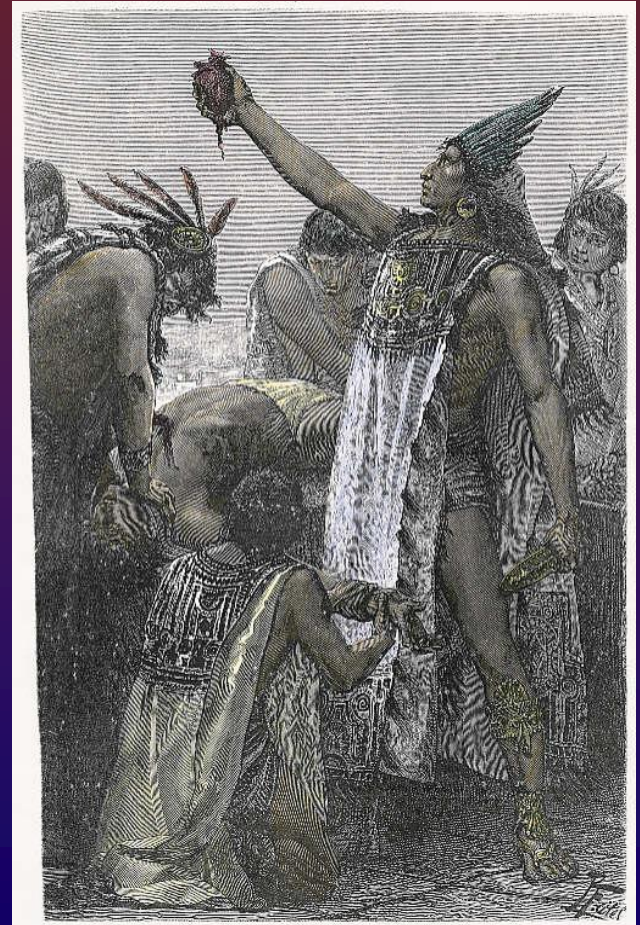
Tenochtitlan (circa 1524)



(Hernan Cortes, 1524)

Mesoamerica - Aztecs

- ❖ Warfare enlarged and enriched the empire
 - ❖ Primary purpose was to supply the kingdom with human sacrifices
 - ❖ They must sustain life by nourishing the sun
 - ❖ Must offer up still beating human hearts which is the essence of life
- ❖ Conquest by the Spaniards





Aztec's vs. Europe by 1500

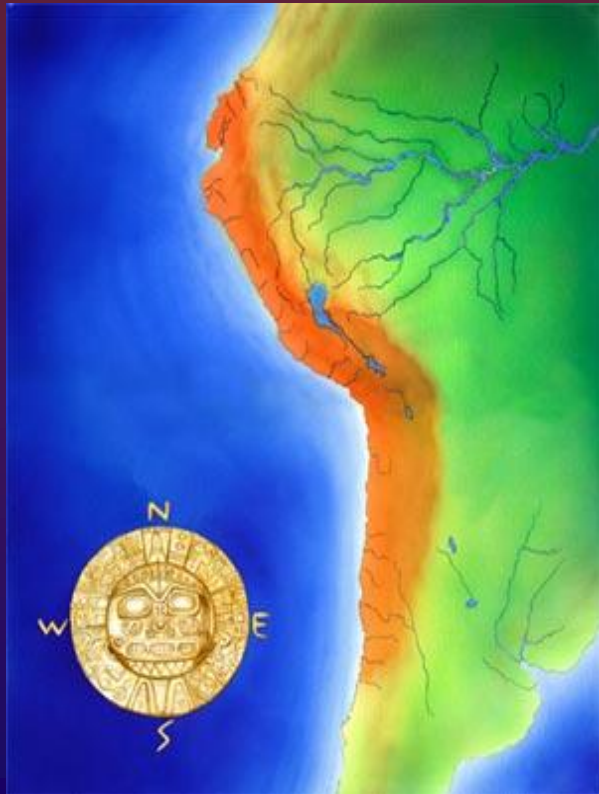
- ❖ Aztec civilization resembles European life
 - ❖ Farmers lived in permanent villages
 - ❖ Specialization of crafts-workers
 - ❖ Organization of guilds
 - ❖ Workers rights
 - ❖ Nobles and priest controlled religion and politics
 - ❖ Gained tribute from the common people
 - ❖ Sophisticated technologies
 - ❖ Irrigation, architecture
 - ❖ Manufacturing of pottery, jewelry, and textiles (fabric)
 - ❖ Aztec civilization stayed localized (didn't travel overseas)



An Andean Civilization – The Incas

❖ The Inca's

- ❖ Rise to power in the 15th century through strong armies
- ❖ A 6+ million population
- ❖ Quechua (Incan language)
 - ❖ More than 7 million peoples still speak it today
- ❖ Had an emperor ruling class with nobility
 - ❖ The royal blood line was kept tight-knit
- ❖ The empire was divided into four quarters
 - ❖ The center was at Cuzco, the capital





Inca

- ❖ Spending through taxes
 - ❖ Taxes were collected at different tax rates
- ❖ Men could be called into the military
 - ❖ public works labor
- ❖ Awesome communication system
 - ❖ Empire was thousands of miles long
 - ❖ Two main highways
 - ❖ Coastal and highland
 - ❖ Used relay runners to transport messages
 - ❖ Could run 150 mpd (miles per day)





Incan Architecture

- ❖ Masters in architecture

- ❖ Used masonry construction to produce palaces, temples, fortress
 - ❖ Still standing today compared to lesser construction, including bridges

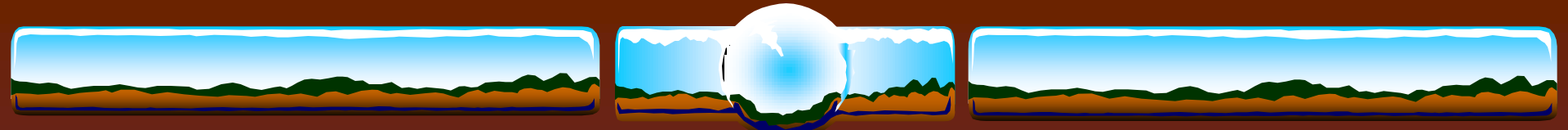
- ❖ Machu Picchu

- ❖ Consist of civic and domesticated building
- ❖ Fields were created on the steep slopes
- ❖ Conquest by Spaniards



Societies of Increasing Complexity





Early roots in *nomadic* hunting and gathering

- ❖ Up until around 5500 B.C.E, Native Americans were hunting based
- ❖ Agricultural Revolution
 - ❖ Cultivation of food crops
 - ❖ Societies can grow much larger developing:
 - ❖ Their own economic, social, and political organizations
- ❖ 15th Century
 - ❖ 10 - 40 million inhabitants
 - ❖ 1000 different languages

Simple Native Societies



Animal skin with pictorial history of Shoshoni chief Wahakie's combats.
American Indian Select List number 142.

- ❖ The simplest societies remained hunters and gatherers (Eskimos)
 - ❖ Stark deserts and frozen tundra
 - ❖ Small food sources
 - ❖ Forces nomadicism
 - ❖ Sustainability of small groups of hunters (<50) dispersed across the land

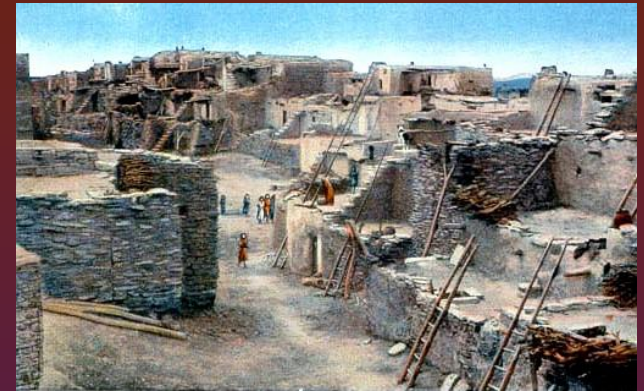


Northeastern and Northwestern tribes

- ❖ An abundance of resources creates larger population and closely knit societies
- ❖ The environment encouraged cooperation in economic pursuits
 - ❖ Tribal leaders assigned territories for hunting
 - ❖ Hunted deer, elk, moose, bear, caribou, and fished
 - ❖ All returns were shared among the whole band
- ❖ Spiritual belief - “Totem”



Pueblo Societies



- ❖ Societies that rely on agriculture
- ❖ Pueblo people of Arizona and New Mexico
 - ❖ Men may have hunted bison and cultivated corn and beans
 - ❖ Women owned the home (adobe), the fields, the crops, and the tools
 - ❖ Pueblo villages flourished (1540's)
 - ❖ Reliable food supplies increase population
 - ❖ Increase in population includes new clans and family ties

Northern – Northeastern societies

❖ Iroquois

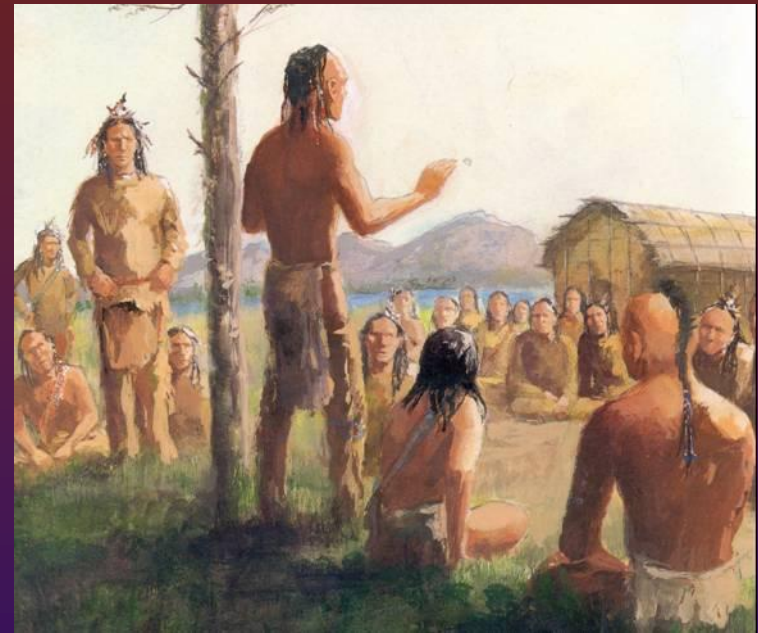
- ❖ Similar to Pueblo culture
- ❖ Matriarchal society
 - ❖ Property and inheritance passed through mothers side
- ❖ Large family alliances

❖ Pacific Northwest

- ❖ Abundance of food through fishing
 - ❖ Cod, salmon, halibut, humpback whale, seals, and otters

❖ Southeast

- ❖ Fertile soil and temperate climate
 - ❖ Cultivation of maize, rice, and a variety of fruits + hunting

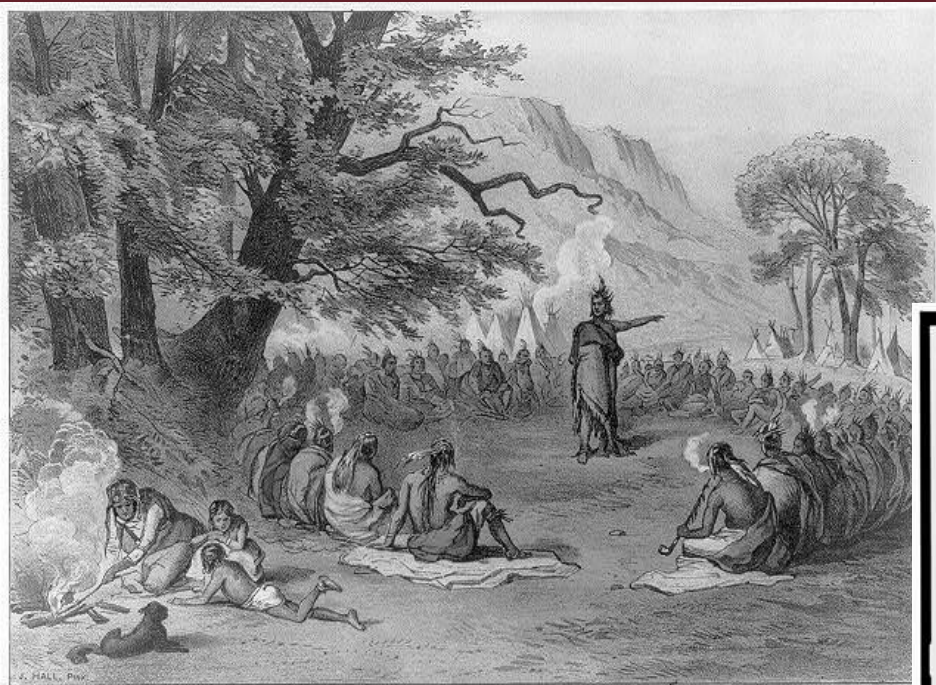


Advanced societies

- ❖ These tribes developed elaborate systems of status and distinct occupational groups
 - ❖ Chief's held considerable authority
 - ❖ Hierarchy based on lineage and wealth
 - ❖ The richest families kept slaves (captives from war)
 - ❖ Different from European slavery



and then... 1492



AMERICA—TIME OF ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS.

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INDIAN CHIEF IN COUNCIL INFORMING HIS TRIBE OF THE ARRIVAL OF STRANGERS IN SHIPS.



THE LANDING OF COLUMBUS.

At San Salvador, October 12, 1492.



THE LANDING OF COLUMBUS.

At San Salvador, October 12th 1492.

1872-73



COLUMBUS TAKING POSSESSION OF THE NEW COUNTRY.

The voyage had lasted 33 days off of what is now Cuba in the Spanish colony, from August 3 to October 12, 1492, when Columbus returned on the Santa Maria. He was met by the natives, and he took possession of the island in the name of the King and Queen of Spain. The island was called San Salvador by the Spaniards and the three sailing ships. Columbus took possession of the island in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the year 1492.

