

## Chapter 1 -- Prehistoric Americans



**Dates:**  
16,000BC – 1,500 AD

- Sections:**
- The North American Continent
  - Aboriginal Tribes Settle The Land

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Time: 16,000BC-1500AD

### The North American Continent



From the mountains, to the prairies, to the oceans white with foam...the land awaited its first settlers.

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Time: 1500AD

### Aboriginal Tribes Settle The Land



Lakota Chief Rain-In-The-Face

Starting around 16,000 BC, or earlier, America’s first settlers wend their way across a 1000 mile “land bridge,” formed by a sea level drop in the Bering Straits, which once linked the eastern edges of Siberia to western-most Alaska.

Their facial features signal an Asian heritage, and they are typically dark complexioned. They operate in tribes and become adept at both hunting and gathering. They are the first farmers of the land, sustained by a wide range of indigenous crops, including corn, potatoes, peanuts, chocolate, cotton and tobacco.

Thus the New World is born.

Over time the settlers fan out across the northern continent, east to the Atlantic coast and south through Mexico to the southern hemisphere. Along the way they build enduring civilizations.

The Tlingit people of the Pacific Northwest master the arts of fishing and record their history on totem poles. The Hohokam tribes of Arizona introduce irrigation systems to facilitate desert farming. The Pueblos build roads connecting some 2500 communities from New Mexico to Utah. The Siouans roam the Great Plains over to the upper Mississippi, while the Natchez people, living in adobe huts with thatched roofs and led by their Sun King, dominate the lower valley.

The Hopewell nation flourishes in the Midwest from Missouri to Wisconsin and east through Illinois and Indiana, their past evident in huge burial mounds throughout the region.

The Algonquians extend across Canada from the Rockies to New England, chasing seasonal food supplies with their portable wigwams. They eventually collide with the Iroquoians, who flourish in New York and the upper Atlantic states. Meanwhile the Southeast is home to what will later become known as the “five civilized tribes” – the Cherokee, Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaw and Seminoles.

By 1500 AD Native American civilizations, speaking upwards of 250 unique languages, dot the landscape from coast to coast.



There are no reliable population statistics for this timeframe, but estimates tend to range upwards of 10 million people – at the time European explorers intrude on their homeland.