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CHAPTER

Colliding Worlds

1491–1600

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AP[®] LEARNING FOCUS

How did the political, economic, and religious systems of Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans compare, and how did things change as a result of contacts among them?

In April 1493, a Genoese sailor of humble origins appeared at the court of Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon along with six Caribbean natives, numerous colorful parrots, and “samples of finest gold, and many other things never before seen or heard tell of in Spain.” The sailor was Christopher Columbus, just returned from his first voyage into the Atlantic. He and his party entered Barcelona’s fortress in a solemn procession. The monarchs stood to greet Columbus; he knelt to kiss their hands. They talked for an hour and then adjourned to the royal chapel for a ceremony of thanksgiving. Columbus, now bearing the official title *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, remained at court for more than a month. The highlight of his stay was the baptism of the six natives, whom Columbus called Indians because he mistakenly believed he had sailed westward all the way to Asia.

In the spring of 1540, the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto met the Lady of Cofachiqui, ruler of a large Native American province in present-day South Carolina. Though an **epidemic** had carried away many of her people, the lady of the province offered the Spanish expedition as much corn, and as many pearls, as it could carry. As she spoke to de Soto, she unwound “a great rope of pearls as large as hazelnuts” and handed them to the Spaniard; in return he gave her a gold ring set with a ruby. De Soto and his men then visited the temples of Cofachiqui, which were guarded by carved statues and held storehouses of weapons and chest upon chest of pearls. After loading their horses with corn and pearls, they continued on their way.

A Portuguese traveler named Duarte Lopez visited the African kingdom of Kongo in 1578. “The men and women are black,” he reported, “some approaching olive colour, with black curly hair, and others with red. The men are of middle height, and, excepting the black skin, are like the Portuguese.” The royal city of Kongo sat on a high plain that was “entirely cultivated,” with a population of more than 100,000. The city included a separate commercial district, a mile around, where Portuguese traders acquired ivory, wax, honey, palm oil, and slaves from the Kongolese.

Three glimpses of three lost worlds. Soon these peoples would be transforming one another’s societies, often through conflict and **exploitation**. But at the moment they first met, Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans stood on roughly equal terms. Even a hundred years after Columbus’s discovery of the Americas, no one could have foreseen the shape that their interactions would take in the generations to come. To begin, we need to understand the three worlds as distinct places, each home to unique societies and cultures.



Village of Secoton, 1585 English colonist John White painted this view of an Algonquin village on the outer banks of present-day North Carolina. Its cluster of houses surrounded by fields of crops closely resembled European farming communities of the same era. White captured everyday details of the town's social life, including food preparation and a ceremony or celebration in progress (lower right). Private Collection/Bridgeman Images.

CHAPTER CHRONOLOGY

As you read, ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

c. 13,000–3000 B.C.	▶ Asian migrants reach North America	c. 1350	▶ The Black Death sweeps Europe; Cahokia goes into rapid decline
c. 6000 B.C.	▶ Domestication of maize begins in Mesoamerica	c. 1400	▶ Songhai Empire emerges
312	▶ Roman emperor Constantine converts to Christianity	1435	▶ Portuguese trade begins along West and Central African coasts
c. 600	▶ Pueblo cultures emerge	c. 1450	▶ Founding of the Iroquois Confederacy
632	▶ Death of Muhammad	1492	▶ Christopher Columbus makes first voyage to America
632–1100	▶ Arab people adopt Islam and spread its influence	1497–1498	▶ Portugal's Vasco da Gama reaches East Africa and India
c. 800	▶ Ghana Empire emerges	1500	▶ Pedro Alvares Cabral encounters Brazil
c. 1000	▶ Irrigation developed by Hohokam, Mogollon, and Anasazi peoples	1513	▶ Juan Ponce de León explores Florida
c. 1000–1350	▶ Development of Mississippian culture	1517	▶ Martin Luther sparks Protestant Reformation
c. 1050	▶ Founding of Cahokia	1519–1521	▶ Hernán Cortés conquers Aztec Empire
1096–1291	▶ Crusades link Europe with Arab trade routes	1532–1535	▶ Francisco Pizarro vanquishes Incas
c. 1150	▶ Chaco Canyon abandoned	1536	▶ John Calvin publishes <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
c. 1200	▶ Mali Empire emerges	1540	▶ De Soto meets the Lady of Cofachiqui; founding of the Jesuit order
c. 1300–1450	▶ The Renaissance in Italy	1578	▶ Duarte Lopez visits the Kongo capital
c. 1325	▶ Aztecs establish capital at Tenochtitlán		
1326	▶ Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca		

 Turn to the **Glossary of Academic & Historical Terms** in the back of the book for definitions of bolded terms.

The Native American Experience

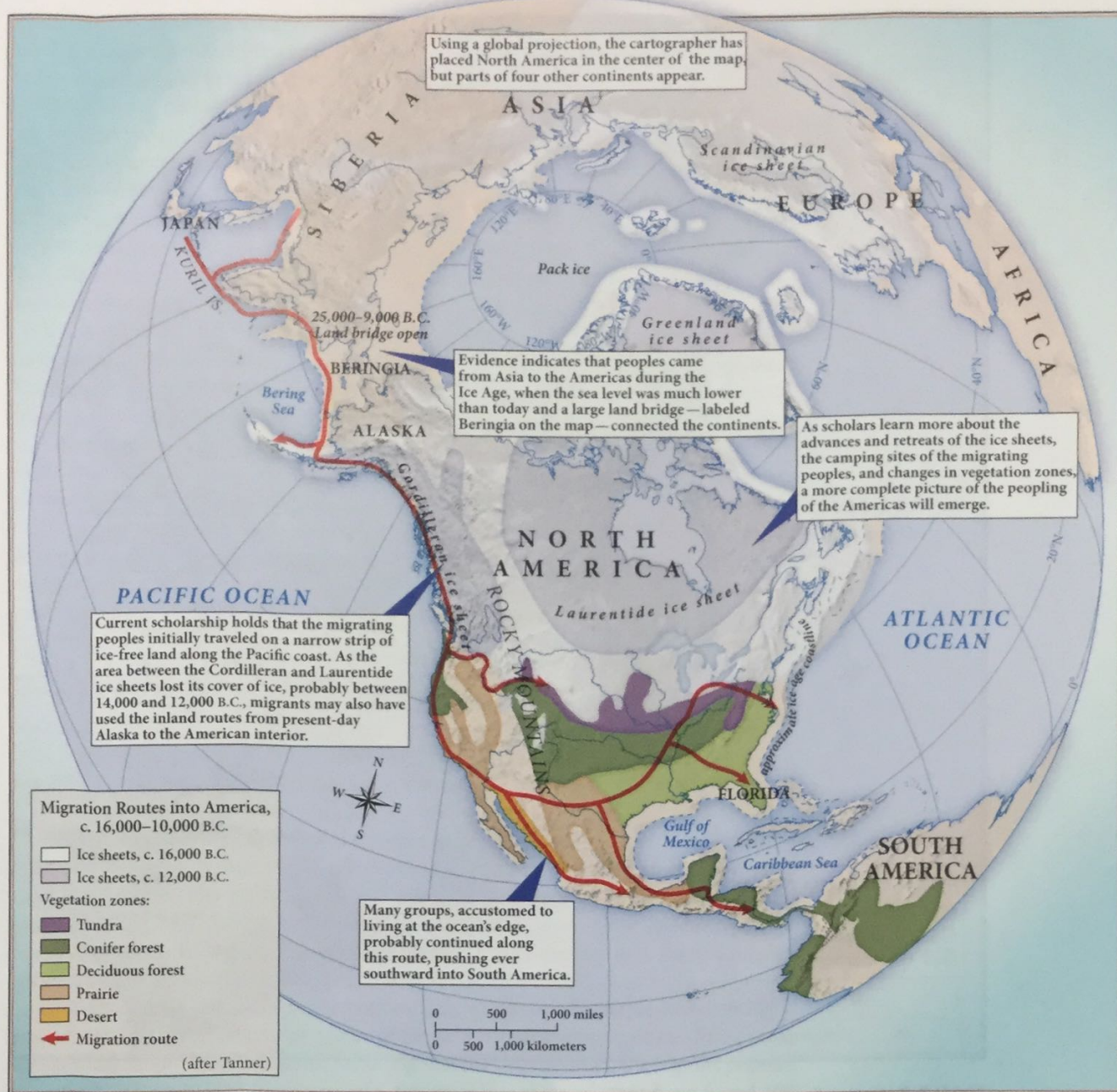
When Europeans arrived, perhaps 60 million people occupied the Americas, 7 million of whom lived north of Mexico. In Mesoamerica (present-day Mexico and Guatemala) and the Andes, empires that rivaled the greatest civilizations in world history ruled over millions of people. At the other end of the political spectrum, **hunters and gatherers** were organized into kin-based bands. Between these extremes, **semisedentary societies** planted and tended crops in the spring and summer, fished and hunted, made war, and conducted trade. Though we often see this spectrum as a hierarchy in which the empires are most impressive and important while hunter-gatherers deserve scarcely a mention, this bias toward civilizations that left behind monumental **architecture** and spawned powerful ruling classes is misplaced. To be fully understood, the Americas must be treated in all their complexity, with an appreciation for their diverse societies and cultures.

The First Americans

Archaeologists believe that migrants from Asia crossed a 100-mile-wide land bridge connecting Siberia and Alaska during the last Ice Age sometime between 13,000 and 3000 B.C. and thus became the first Americans. The first wave of this migratory stream from Asia lasted from about fifteen thousand to eleven thousand years ago. Then the glaciers melted, and the rising ocean submerged the land bridge beneath the Bering Strait (Map 1.1). Around eight thousand years ago, a second movement of peoples, traveling by water across the same narrow strait, brought the ancestors of the Navajos and the Apaches to North America. The forebears of the Aleut and Inuit peoples, the “Eskimos,” came in a third wave around five thousand years ago. Then, for three hundred generations, the peoples of the Western Hemisphere were largely cut off from the rest of the world.

AP® EXAM TIP

Take detailed notes on the diverse Native peoples that inhabited the Americas before the arrival of Columbus.



MAP 1.1 The Ice Age and the Settling of the Americas

Some sixteen thousand years ago, a sheet of ice covered much of Europe and North America. As the ice lowered the level of the world's oceans, a broad bridge of land was created between Siberia and Alaska. Using that land bridge, hunting peoples from Asia migrated to North America as they pursued woolly mammoths and other large game animals and sought ice-free habitats. By 10,000 B.C., the descendants of these migrant peoples had moved south to present-day Florida and central Mexico. In time, they would settle as far south as the tip of South America and as far east as the Atlantic coast of North America.

Migrants moved across the continents as they hunted and gathered available resources. Most flowed southward, and the densest populations developed in central Mexico—home to some 20 million people at the time of first contact with Europeans—and the Andes Mountains, with a population of perhaps 12 million. In North America, a secondary trickle pushed to the east, across the Rockies and into the Mississippi Valley and the eastern woodlands.

Around 6000 B.C., Native peoples in present-day Mexico and Peru began raising domesticated crops. Mesoamericans cultivated maize (corn) into a nutritious plant

AP EXAM TIP

Knowledge of the impact of maize cultivation on Native populations is essential for success on the AP® exam.



MAP 1.2 Native American Peoples, 1492

Having learned to live in many environments, Native Americans populated the entire Western Hemisphere. They created cultures that ranged from centralized empires (the Incas and Aztecs), to societies that combined farming with hunting, fishing, and gathering (the Iroquois and Algonquians), to nomadic tribes of hunter-gatherers (the Micmacs and Shoshones). The great diversity of Native American peoples—in language, tribal identity, and ways of life—and the long-standing rivalries among neighboring peoples usually prevented them from uniting to resist the European invaders.

AP PRACTICES & SKILLS

CAUSATION

What factors allowed for the development of empires in central Mexico and the Andes?

with a higher yield per acre than wheat, barley, or rye, the staple cereals of Europe. In Peru they also bred the potato, a root crop of unsurpassed nutritional value. The resulting agricultural surpluses encouraged population growth and laid the foundation for wealthy, urban societies in Mexico and Peru, and later in the Mississippi Valley and the southeastern woodlands of North America (Map 1.2).

American Empires

In Mesoamerica and the Andes, the two great empires of the Americas—the Aztecs and Incas—dominated the landscape. Dense populations, productive agriculture, and an aggressive **bureaucratic** state were the keys to their power. Each had an impressive

capital city. Tenochtitlán, established in 1325 at the center of the Aztec Empire, had at its height around 1500 a population of about 250,000, at a time when the European cities of London and Seville each had perhaps 50,000. The Aztec state controlled the fertile valleys in the highlands of Mexico, and Aztec **merchants** forged trading routes that crisscrossed the empire. Trade, along with tribute demanded from subject peoples (comparable to taxes in Europe), brought gold, textiles, turquoise, obsidian, tropical bird feathers, and cacao to Tenochtitlán. The Europeans who first encountered this city in 1519 marveled at its wealth and beauty. “Some of the soldiers among us who had been in many parts of the world,” wrote Spanish **conquistador** Bernal Díaz del Castillo, “in Constantinople, and all over Italy, and in Rome, said that [they had never seen] so large a market place and so full of people, and so well regulated and arranged.”

Ruled by priests and warrior-nobles, the Aztecs **subjugated** most of central Mexico. Captured enemies were brought to the capital, where Aztec priests brutally sacrificed thousands of them. The Aztecs believed that these ritual murders sustained the cosmos, ensuring fertile fields and the daily return of the sun.

Cuzco, the Inca capital located more than 11,000 feet above sea level, had perhaps 60,000 residents. A dense network of roads, storehouses, and administrative centers stitched together this improbable high-altitude empire, which ran down the 2,000-mile-long spine of the Andes Mountains. A king claiming divine status ruled the empire through a bureaucracy of nobles. As with the Aztecs, the empire consisted of subordinate kingdoms that had been conquered by the Incas, and tribute flowed from local centers of power to the imperial core.

Chiefdoms and Confederacies

Nothing on the scale of the Aztec and Inca empires ever developed north of Mexico, but maize agriculture spread from Mesoamerica across much of North America beginning around A.D. 800, laying a foundation for new ways of life there as well.

The Mississippi Valley The spread of maize to the Mississippi River Valley and the Southeast around A.D. 800 led to the development of a large-scale northern Native American culture. The older Adena and Hopewell cultures had already introduced moundbuilding and distinctive pottery styles to the region. Now residents of the Mississippi River Valley experienced the greater urban density and more complex social organization that agriculture encouraged.

The city of Cahokia, in the fertile bottomlands along the Mississippi River, emerged around A.D. 1000 as the foremost center of the new **Mississippian culture**. At its peak, Cahokia had about 10,000 residents; including satellite communities, the region's population was 20,000 to 30,000. In an area of 6 square miles, archaeologists have found 120 mounds of varying size, shape, and function. Some contain extensive burials; others, known as platform mounds, were used as bases for ceremonial buildings or rulers' homes. Cahokia had a powerful ruling class and a priesthood that worshipped the sun. After peaking in size around 1350, it declined rapidly. Scholars speculate that its decline was caused by a period of ruinous warfare, made worse by environmental changes that made the site less habitable. It had been abandoned by the time Europeans arrived in the area.

Mississippian culture endured, however, and was still in evidence throughout much of the Southeast at the time of first contact with Europeans. The Lady of Cofachiqui encountered by Hernando de Soto in 1540 ruled over a Mississippian community, and others dotted the landscape between the Carolinas and the lower Mississippi River. In Florida, sixteenth-century Spanish explorers encountered the Apalachee Indians, who occupied a network of towns built around mounds and fields of maize.

Eastern Woodlands In the **eastern woodlands**, the Mississippian-influenced peoples of the Southeast interacted with other groups, many of whom adopted maize agriculture but did not otherwise display Mississippian characteristics. **Algonquian** and **Iroquoian** speakers shared related languages and lifeways but were divided into



The Great Serpent Mound Scholars long believed that this mound was the work of the Adena peoples (500 B.C.–A.D. 200) because of its proximity to an Adena burial site in present-day southern Ohio. Recent research places the mound at a much later date (A.D. 950–1200) and, because of the serpent imagery, ties it to the Fort Ancient culture, which is closely related to the Mississippian complex. The head of the serpent is aligned with the sunset of the summer solstice (June 20 or 21 in the Northern Hemisphere), an event of great religious significance to a sun-worshipping culture. Richard A. Cooke/Corbis Documentary/Getty Images.

dozens of distinct societies. Most occupied villages built around fields of maize, beans, and squash during the summer months; at other times of the year, they dispersed in smaller groups to hunt, fish, and gather. Throughout the eastern woodlands, as in most of North America, women tended crops, gathered plants, and oversaw affairs within the community, while men were responsible for activities beyond it, especially hunting, fishing, and warfare.

In this densely forested region, Indians regularly set fires—in New England, twice a year, in spring and fall—to clear away underbrush, open fields, and make it easier to hunt big game. The catastrophic population decline accompanying European colonization quickly put an end to seasonal burning, but in the years before Europeans arrived in North America, bison roamed east as far as modern-day New York and Georgia. Early European colonists remarked upon landscapes that “resemble[d] a stately Parke,” where men could ride among widely spaced trees on horseback and even a “large army” could pass unimpeded (AP* *America in the World*).

Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples had no single style of political organization. Many were chiefdoms, with one individual claiming authority. Some were paramount chiefdoms, in which numerous communities with their own local chiefs banded together under a single, more powerful ruler. For example, the Powhatan Chiefdom, which dominated the Chesapeake Bay region, was made up of more than thirty subordinate chiefdoms, and some 20,000 people, when Englishmen established the colony of Virginia. Powhatan himself, according to the English colonist John Smith, was attended by “a guard of 40 or 50 of the tallest men his Country affords.”



The Kincaid Site Located on the north bank of the Ohio River 140 miles from Cahokia, the Kincaid site was a Mississippian town from c. A.D. 1050 to 1450. It contains at least nineteen mounds topped by large buildings thought to have been temples or council houses. Now a state historic site in Illinois, it has been studied by anthropologists and archaeologists since the 1930s. Artist Herb Roe depicts the town as it may have looked at its peak. Herb Roe, Chromasun Productions.

Elsewhere, especially in the Mid-Atlantic region, the power of chiefs was strictly local. Along the Delaware and Hudson rivers, Lenni Lenape (or Delaware) and Munsee Indians lived in small, independent communities without overarching political organizations. Early European maps of this region show a landscape dotted with a bewildering profusion of Indian names. Colonization would soon drive many of these groups into oblivion and force survivors to coalesce into larger groups.

Some Native American groups were not chiefdoms at all but instead granted political authority to councils of sachems, or leaders. This was the case with the **Iroquois Confederacy**. Sometime shortly before the arrival of Europeans, probably around 1500, five nations occupying the region between the Hudson River and Lake Erie—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—banded together to form the Iroquois.

These nations had been fighting among themselves for years. Then, according to Iroquois legend, a Mohawk man named Hiawatha lost his family in one of these wars. Stricken by grief, he met a spirit who taught him a series of condolence rituals. He returned to his people preaching a new gospel of peace and power, and the condolence rituals he taught became the foundation for the Iroquois Confederacy. Once bound by these rituals, the Five Nations began acting together as a political confederacy. They

Altered Landscapes

In the eastern woodlands, Native Americans set fires once or twice a year to clear underbrush and open up landscapes that would otherwise have been densely wooded. The burnings made it easier to plant corn, beans, and squash and drew big game animals into the clearings, where hunters could fell them. As European colonization displaced Indian populations, this practice ended. Some scholars have even suggested that the decline in burning caused a drop of carbon in the atmosphere large enough to account for the Little Ice Age, an episode of global cooling that lasted from about 1550 to 1850, though the claim is controversial.

THOMAS MORTON, OF THE CUSTOME IN BURNING THE COUNTRY, AND THE REASON THEREOF (1637)

The Savages are accustomed to set fire of the Country in all places where they come, and to burne it twice a year, viz: at the Spring, and the fall of the leafe. The reason that mooves them to doe so, is because it would other wise be so overgrowne with underweedes that it would be all a coppice wood, and the people would not be able in any wise to passe through the Country out of a beaten path.

The meanes that they do it with, is with certaine minerall stones, that they carry about them in baggs made for that purpose of the skinnes of little beastes, which they convert into good lether, carrying in the same a peece of touch wood, very excellent for that purpose, of their owne making. These minerall stones they have from the Piquenteenes, (which is to the Southward of all the plantations in New England,) by trade and trafficke with those people.

The burning of the grasse destroyes the underwoods, and so scorseth the elder trees that it shrinkes them, and hinders their growth very much: so that hee that will looke to finde large trees and good tymber, must not depend upon the help of a wooden prospect to finde them on the uplandground; but must seeke for them, (as I and others have done,) in the lower grounds, where the grounds are wett, when the Country is fired, by reason of the snow water that remains

there for a time, untill the Sunne by continuance of that hath exhaled the vapoures of the earth, and dried up those places where the fire, (by reason of the moisture,) can have no power to doe them any hurt: and if he would endeavour to finde out any goodly Cedars, hee must not seeke for them on the higher grounds, but make his inquest for them in the valleys, for the Savages, by this custome of theirs, have spoiled all the rest: for this custome hath bin continued from the beginning.

And least their firing of the Country in this manner should be an occasion of damnifying us, and indangering our habitations, wee our selves have used carefully about the same times to observe the winds, and fire the grounds about our owne habitations; to prevent the Dammage that might happen by any neglect thereof, if the fire should come neere those howses in our absence.

For, when the fire is once kindled, it dilates and spreads it selfe as well against, as with the winde; burning continually night and day, untill a shower of raine falls to quench it.

And this custome of firing the Country is the meanes to make it passable; and by that meanes the trees growe here and there as in our parks: and makes the Country very beautifull and commodious.

SOURCE: Thomas Morton, *The New English Canaan* (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1883 [orig. pub. 1637]), 172–173.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What benefits and dangers does Morton attribute to the practice of Indian burning? How did he and his fellow colonists respond to the practice?
2. Since Europeans did not practice widespread burning in the Indian manner, they achieved deforestation only slowly,

through many years of backbreaking labor. Thinking comparatively about European and Native American approaches to landscape management, how would you assess the benefits and challenges of each approach?

made peace among themselves and became one of the most powerful Native American groups in the Northeast.

The Iroquois did not recognize chiefs; instead, councils of sachems made decisions. These were **matriarchal** societies, with power inherited through female lines of authority. Women were influential in local councils, though men served as sachems, made war, and conducted diplomacy.

Along the southern coast of the region that would soon be called New England, a dense network of powerful chiefdoms—including the Narragansetts, Wampanoags,

Mohegans, Pequots, and others — competed for resources and dominance. When the Dutch and English arrived, they were able to exploit these rivalries and pit Indian groups against one another. Farther north, in northern New England and much of present-day Canada, the short growing season and thin, rocky soil were inhospitable to maize agriculture. Here the Native peoples were hunters and gatherers and therefore had smaller and more mobile communities.

The Great Lakes To the west, Algonquian-speaking peoples dominated the **Great Lakes**. The tribal groups recognized by Europeans in this region included the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Potawatomis. But collectively they thought of themselves as a single people: the Anishinaabe. Clan identities — beaver, otter, sturgeon, deer, and others — crosscut tribal affiliations and were in some ways more fundamental. The result was a social landscape that could be bewildering to outsiders. Here lived, one French official remarked, “an infinity of undiscovered nations.”

The extensive network of lakes and rivers, and the use of birchbark canoes, made Great Lakes peoples especially mobile. “They seem to have as many abodes as the year has seasons,” wrote one observer. They traveled long distances to hunt and fish, to trade, or to join in important ceremonies or military **alliances**. Groups negotiated access to resources and travel routes. Instead of an area with clearly delineated tribal territories, it is best to imagine the Great Lakes as a porous region, where “political power and social identity took on multiple forms,” as one scholar has written.

AP® EXAM TIP

The impact of geography on the diversity of North American cultures is a “must know” for the AP® exam.

The Great Plains and Rockies Farther west lies the vast, arid **steppe** region known as the **Great Plains**, which was dominated by small, dispersed groups of hunter-gatherers. The world of these Plains Indians was transformed by a European import — the horse — long before Europeans themselves arrived on the plains. Horses were introduced in the Spanish colony of New Mexico in the late sixteenth century and gradually dispersed across the plains. Bison hunters who had previously relied on stealth became much more successful on horseback.

Indians on horseback were also more formidable opponents in war than their counterparts on foot, and some Plains peoples leveraged their control of horses to gain power over their neighbors. The Comanches were a small Shoshonean band on the northern plains that migrated south in pursuit of horses. They became expert raiders, capturing people and horses alike and trading them for weapons, food, clothing, and other necessities. Eventually they controlled a vast territory. Their skill in making war on horseback transformed the Comanches from a small group to one of the region’s most formidable peoples.

Similarly, horses allowed the Sioux, a confederation of seven distinct peoples who originated in present-day Minnesota, to move west and dominate a vast territory ranging from the Mississippi River to the Black Hills. The Crow Indians moved from the Missouri River to the eastern slope of the **Rocky Mountains**, where they became nomadic bison hunters. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, they became horse breeders and traders as well.

In some places, farming communities were embedded within the much wider territories of hunter-gatherers. The Hidatsa and Mandan Indians, for example, maintained settled agricultural villages along the Missouri River, while the more mobile Sioux dominated the region around them. Similarly, the Caddos, who lived on the edge of the southern plains, inhabited farming communities that were like islands in a sea of more mobile peoples.

Three broad swaths of Numic-speaking peoples occupied the **Great Basin** that separated the Rockies from the Sierra Mountains: Bannocks and Northern Paiutes in the north, Shoshones in the central basin, and Utes and Southern Paiutes in the south. Resources were varied and spread thin on the land. Kin-based bands traveled great distances to hunt bison along the Yellowstone River (where they shared territory with the Crows) and bighorn sheep in high altitudes, to fish for salmon, and to gather pine



Anasazi Ladle Crafted between A.D. 1300 and 1600 and found in a site in central Arizona, this Anasazi dipper was coiled and molded by hand and painted with a geometric motif. Anasazi pottery is abundant in archaeological sites, thanks in part to the Southwest's dry climate. Clay vessels and ladles helped Anasazi peoples handle water—one of their most precious resources—with care. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution 21/5025.

nuts when they were in season. Throughout the Great Basin, some groups adopted horses and became relatively powerful, while others remained foot-borne and **impoverished** in comparison with their more mobile neighbors.

The Arid Southwest In the part of North America that appears to be most hostile to agriculture—the canyon-laced country of the arid Southwest—surprisingly large farming settlements developed. Anasazi peoples were growing maize by the first century A.D., earlier than anywhere else north of Mexico, and Pueblo cultures emerged around A.D. 600. By A.D. 1000, the Hohokams, Mogollons, and Anasazis (all Pueblo peoples) had developed irrigation systems to manage scarce water, enabling them to build sizable villages and towns of adobe and rock that were often molded to sheer canyon walls. Chaco Canyon, in modern New Mexico, supported a dozen large Anasazi towns, while beyond the canyon a network of roads tied these settlements together with hundreds of small Anasazi villages.

Extended droughts and soil exhaustion caused the abandonment of Chaco Canyon and other large settlements in the Southwest after 1150, but smaller communities still dotted the landscape when the first Europeans arrived. It was the Spanish who called these groups *Pueblos*: *pueblo* means “town” in Spanish, and the name refers to their distinctive building style. When Europeans arrived, Pueblo peoples, including the Acomas, Zuñis, Tewas, and Hopis, were found throughout much of modern New Mexico, Arizona, and western Texas.

The Pacific Coast Hunter-gatherers inhabited the Pacific coast. Before the Spanish arrived, California was home to more than 300,000 people, subdivided into dozens of small, localized groups and speaking at least a hundred distinct languages. This diversity of languages and cultures discouraged intermarriage and kept these societies independent. Despite their differences, many groups did share common characteristics, including clearly defined social hierarchies separating elites from commoners. They gathered acorns and other nuts and seeds, caught fish and shellfish, and hunted game.

The Pacific Northwest also supported a dense population that was divided into many distinct groups who controlled small territories—both on land and on the sea—and spoke different languages. Their **stratified** societies were ruled by wealthy families. To maintain control of their territories, the more powerful nations, including the Chinooks, Coast Salishes, Haidas, and Tlingits, nurtured strong warrior traditions. They developed sophisticated fishing technologies and crafted oceangoing dugout canoes, made from enormous cedar trees, that ranged up to 60 feet in length. Their distinctive material culture included large longhouses that were home to dozens of people and totem poles representing clan lineages or local legends.



Chilkat Tlingit Bowl This bowl in the form of a brown bear, which dates to the mid-nineteenth century, is made of alder wood and inlaid with snail shells. The brown bear is a Tlingit clan totem. Animal-form bowls like this one, which express an affinity with nonhuman creatures, are a common feature of Tlingit culture. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution 9/7990.

Patterns of Trade

Expansive trade networks tied together regions and carried valuable goods hundreds and even thousands of miles. Trade goods included food and raw materials, tools, ritual artifacts, and decorative goods. Trade enriched diets,

enhanced economies, and allowed the powerful to set themselves apart with luxury items.

In areas where Indians specialized in a particular economic activity, regional trade networks allowed them to share resources. Thus nomadic hunters of the southern plains, including the Navajos and Apaches, conducted annual trade fairs with Pueblo farmers, exchanging hides and meat for maize, pottery, and cotton blankets. Similar patterns of exchange occurred throughout the Great Plains, wherever hunters and farmers coexisted. In some parts of North America, a regional trade in war captives who were offered as slaves helped to sustain friendly relations among neighboring groups. One such network developed in the Upper Mississippi River basin, where Plains Indian captives were traded, or given as diplomatic gifts, to Ottawas and other Great Lakes and eastern woodlands peoples.

Rare and valuable objects traveled longer distances. Great Lakes copper, Rocky Mountain mica, jasper from Pennsylvania, obsidian from New Mexico and Wyoming, and pipestone from the Midwest have all been found in archaeological sites hundreds of miles from their points of origin. Seashells—often shaped and polished into beads and other artifacts—were highly prized and widely distributed. Grizzly bear claws and eagle feathers were valuable, high-status objects. After European contact, Indian hunters often traveled long distances to trade for cloth, iron tools, and weapons. Historians debate the extent to which such long-distance connections helped to create deeper cultural ties (AP® Interpreting the Past).

Powerful leaders controlled much of a community's wealth and redistributed it to prove their generosity and strengthen their authority. In small, kin-based bands, the strongest hunters possessed the most food, and sharing it was essential. In chiefdoms, rulers filled the same role, often collecting the wealth of a community and then redistributing it to their followers. Powhatan, the powerful Chesapeake Bay chief, reportedly collected nine-tenths of the produce of the communities he oversaw—"skins, beads, copper, pearls, deer, turkeys, wild beasts, and corn"—and then gave much of it back to his subordinates. His generosity was considered a mark of good leadership. In the Pacific Northwest, the Chinook word *potlatch* refers to periodic festivals in which wealthy residents gave away belongings to friends, family, and followers.

Sacred Power

Most Native North Americans were animists who believed that the natural world was suffused with spiritual power. They interpreted dreams and visions to understand the world, and their rituals appeased guardian spirits to ensure successful hunts and other forms of good fortune. Although their views were subject to countless local variations, certain patterns were widespread.

Women and men interacted differently with these spiritual forces. In farming communities, women grew crops and maintained hearth, home, and village. Native American ideas about female power linked their bodies' generative functions with the earth's fertility, and rituals like the Green Corn Ceremony—a summer ritual of purification and renewal—helped to sustain the life-giving properties of the world around them.

For men, spiritual power was invoked in hunting and war. To ensure success in hunting, men took care not to offend the spirits of the animals they killed. They performed rituals before, during, and after a hunt to acknowledge the power of those guardian spirits, and they believed that, when an animal had been killed properly, its spirit would rise from the earth unharmed. Success in hunting and prowess in war were both interpreted as signs of sacred protection and power.

Ideas about war varied widely. War could be fought for geopolitical reasons—to gain ground against an enemy—but for many groups, warfare was a crucial rite of passage for young men, and raids were conducted to allow warriors to prove themselves in battle. Motives for war could be highly personal; war was often more like a blood feud

AP® PRACTICES & SKILLS

CAUSATION

How did landscape, climate, and resources influence the development of Native American societies?

AP® PRACTICES & SKILLS

POINT OF VIEW

How did Native Americans' conceptions of the spiritual world influence their daily lives?

How Connected Were Native American Communities Before 1492?

For a long time, American history textbooks largely ignored the thousands of years of history lived by North America's Native peoples before the arrival of Europeans. The focus of U.S. history was on the planting of European ideas and institutions in the "new world." More recently, some historians have explored the long history of the Americas that stretches back more than fifteen thousand years. Peopled by diverse groups with distinctive customs and unique cultures, America's early history defies easy categorization. In the following excerpts, historians Robert F. Berkhofer Jr. and Neal Salisbury reach different conclusions regarding the extent to which Native North American peoples interacted with each other prior to European contact.

ROBERT F. BERKHOFFER JR.

SOURCE: Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 3.

The first residents of the Americas were by modern estimates divided into at least two thousand cultures and more societies, practiced a multiplicity of customs and lifestyles, held an enormous variety of values and beliefs, spoke numerous languages mutually unintelligible to the many speakers, and did not conceive of themselves as a single people — if they knew about each other at all.

NEAL SALISBURY

SOURCE: Neal Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53 (July 1996): 444.

Given the archaeological record, North American "prehistory" can hardly be characterized as a multiplicity of discrete microhistories. Fundamental to the social and economic patterns . . . were exchanges that linked peoples across geographic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. The effects of these links are apparent in the spread of raw materials and finished goods, of beliefs and ceremonies, and of techniques for food production and for manufacturing. . . . Exchange constitutes an important key to conceptualizing American history before Columbus.

AP SHORT ANSWER PRACTICE

1. Describe one way in which these historians disagree in their understanding of early Native American history.
2. How does each of these historians explain the diversity among Native American peoples?
3. Identify a specific passage or section from the textbook chapter that supports or challenges the arguments presented by each of these two historians.

between families than a contest between nations. If a community lost warriors in battle, it might retaliate by capturing or killing a like number of warriors in response — a so-called mourning war. Some captives were adopted into new communities, while others were enslaved or tortured.

IN YOUR OWN WORDS What factors might best explain the variations among Native American societies and cultures?

Western Europe: The Edge of the Old World

In 1491, Western Europe lay at the far edge of the Eurasian and African continents. It had neither the powerful centralized empires nor the hunter-gatherer bands and semi-sedentary societies of the Americas. Western Europe was, instead, a patchwork of roughly equivalent kingdoms, duchies, and republics vying with one another and struggling to reach out effectively to the rest of the world. No one would have predicted that Europeans would soon become overlords of the Western Hemisphere. A thousand years after the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe's populations still relied on subsistence