

Social Studies 7

Chapter 1 – Explorers Reach the Americas (40,000 B.C. to A.D. 1500)

Section 1 – Who were the first Americans, and how did they live?

A). Nomadic hunters who came from Asia across a land bridge at the Bering Strait during the final Ice Age. They were following herds of animals who were searching for food because of the climate change.

B). These first Americans had to adjust to several new environments. About 9,000 years ago Native Americans learned how to farm. Farming caused the settlement of farming communities with permanent homes.

C). Several cultural regions will develop throughout North, Central and South America. Each region will have a different climate with different resources to offer. This will define how each culture will live.

* See map on page 5 in class*

D). The Southwest Indians learned to adapt in a hot and dry climate. The Indians on the Great Plains combined farming and hunting animals like buffalo. Indians from the Eastern Woodlands thrived with the abundant resources that the forest provided.

E). In Central and South America three American cultures developed into great civilizations. The Mayans civilization reached its peak between the years A.D. 200 to 800. They were located in parts of Mexico and Central America. The Aztec civilization was from 1200 to the mid 1500's. They were located on the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. The Incan empire peaked between 1400 and the mid 1500's. They were located in the Andes Mountains of South America.

F). Lasting contributions of Native Americans to our cultures today:

Food - Many foods commonly eaten in the US today were first grown by American Indians. Examples - corn, potatoes, peanuts, pumpkins & squash

They also used herbs and plants as medicines.

Inventions - canoes, ponchos, hammocks & snowshoes

Nature - They respect the gift of nature. "The original environmentalists"