

## Chapter Summary

### **Section 1: Civilizations of Mesoamerica**

The first civilization in Mesoamerica was the Olmecs. Little is known of them, but they influenced the later Mayan and Aztec cultures. The Maya built city-states in the forest, whereas the Aztecs built a powerful empire in central Mexico.

### **Section 3: Peoples of North America**

Many different cultures emerged in North America. They are divided into ten groups based on the environment in which they developed.



## Objectives

- Describe when and where people first settled the Americas.
- Analyze the main characteristics of the Olmec and Maya civilizations.
- Outline how the Aztec empire and Aztec society took shape.



## Terms and People

- **Mesoamerica** – cultural region made up of present-day Mexico and Central America
- **maize** – Native American name for corn
- **Olmeecs** – earliest American civilization; emerged on the Gulf Coast of Mexico about 1500 B.C.
- **stela** – tall stone monument sculpted by Mayans

## Terms and People (continued)

- **Valley of Mexico** – region on the high plateau of central Mexico where the Aztec civilization arose
- **Tenochtitlán** – capital city of the Aztecs; present location of Mexico City
- **chinampas** – artificial islands created by Aztecs to farm on a shallow lake bed; mud covered floating mats anchored by willow trees
- **tribute** – payment from a conquered people
- **Teotihuacán** – city of 200,000 in the Valley of Mexico between A.D. 200 and A.D. 750



## What factors encouraged the rise of powerful civilizations in Mesoamerica?

The Americas include two continents, North America and South America. Within these two geographic regions lies a cultural region called Mesoamerica, which is made up of Mexico and Central America.

Some of the earliest civilizations in the Americas developed in Mesoamerica.



The first people to arrive in America may have walked over a land bridge connecting Siberia and Alaska during the last Ice Age, about 10,000 years ago.

They walked or possibly paddled southward along the coast.

## The first people found a wide range of environments in the Americas.

Neolithic people began to domesticate animals and raise crops between 8500 B.C. and 2000 B.C.

In tropical parts of **Mesoamerica** they raised beans, squash, peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and **maize**.

Mesoamerican farmers had settled into villages by about 1500 B.C.

**The earliest American civilization emerged in the tropical forests along Mexico's Gulf Coast.**

**Olmec** civilization lasted from 1500 B.C. to 400 B.C.

- They developed a calendar and artistic styles that were copied by later civilizations.
- They carved huge heads and hieroglyphics in stone.



## Maya civilization flourished on the Yucatán Peninsula and through much of Central America.

By 300 B.C. there were Mayan cities.

The golden age of Mayan culture began in about A.D. 250.

The Maya never formed an empire, but they had many powerful city-states. Tikal and Calakmul were the strongest.

## Agriculture was at the base of Mayan civilization.

Two farming methods allowed the Maya to thrive in their tropical environment.

Forests were burned, cut, and planted. When they became infertile, farmers moved to another site while the soil recovered.

Along river banks, fields were planted on raised areas built to keep the crops above the rainy season high-water mark.



Mayan cities traded along roads made of packed earth.

They traded food items such as honey and fruit and luxury goods such as jaguar pelts, feathers, and jade.

**Most Mayan leaders were men, though women did rule at times in some cities.**

**Nobles** served as military leaders and administrators.

Scribes, painters, and sculptors were a respected class of **workers**.

**Merchants** may have formed a middle class.

Most Mayans were **farmers**. They paid taxes and worked on city construction projects.

**Slaves** were commoners captured in war.

## Mayan culture included sculpture and stone architecture.

- Large stone temples on pyramid-shaped platforms were the site of ceremonies and sacrifices.
- Tall sculpted stone monuments, each of which is called a **stela**, preserved images of rulers and gods.

## Mayan Achievements

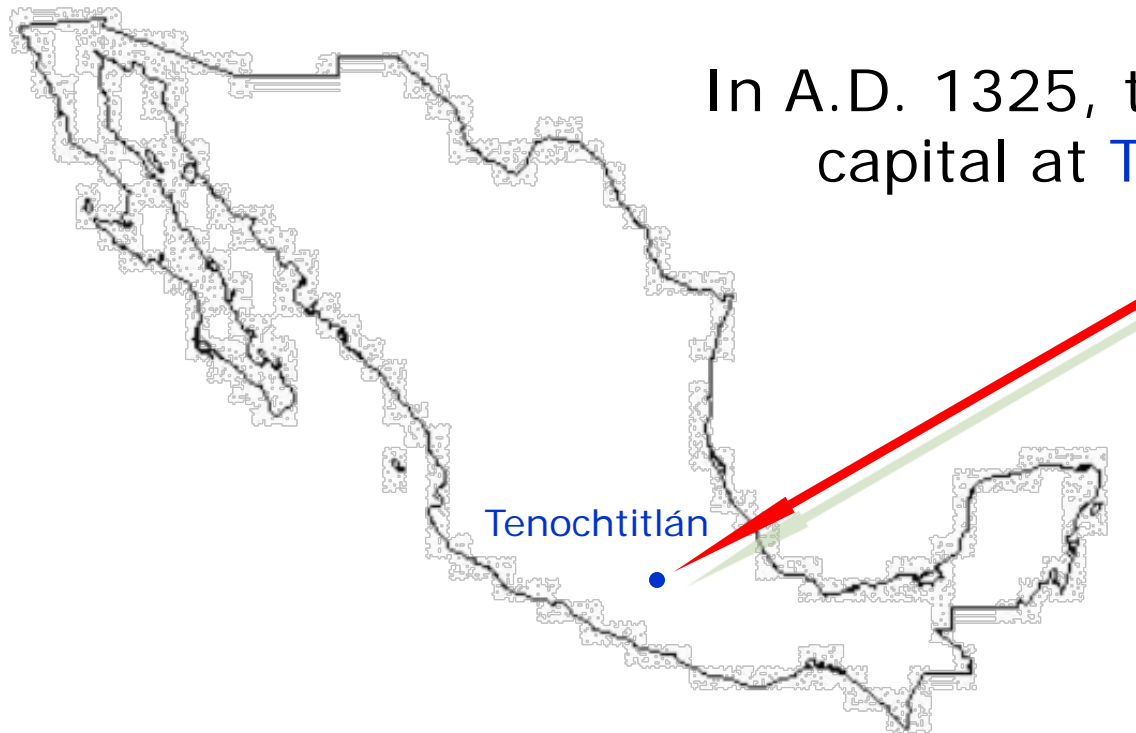
Scribes recorded events in stone using carved hieroglyphics.

Scribes made books of bark pages, but most of these were destroyed by Spanish priests.

They developed a 365-day calendar and a numbering system with place values and a zero.

Mayan civilization declined after A.D. 900, but their descendants still live in Guatemala and Mexico.

About A.D. 1200 the Aztecs settled in the  
**Valley of Mexico.**



In A.D. 1325, they built their  
capital at **Tenochtitlán** on  
Lake Texcoco.



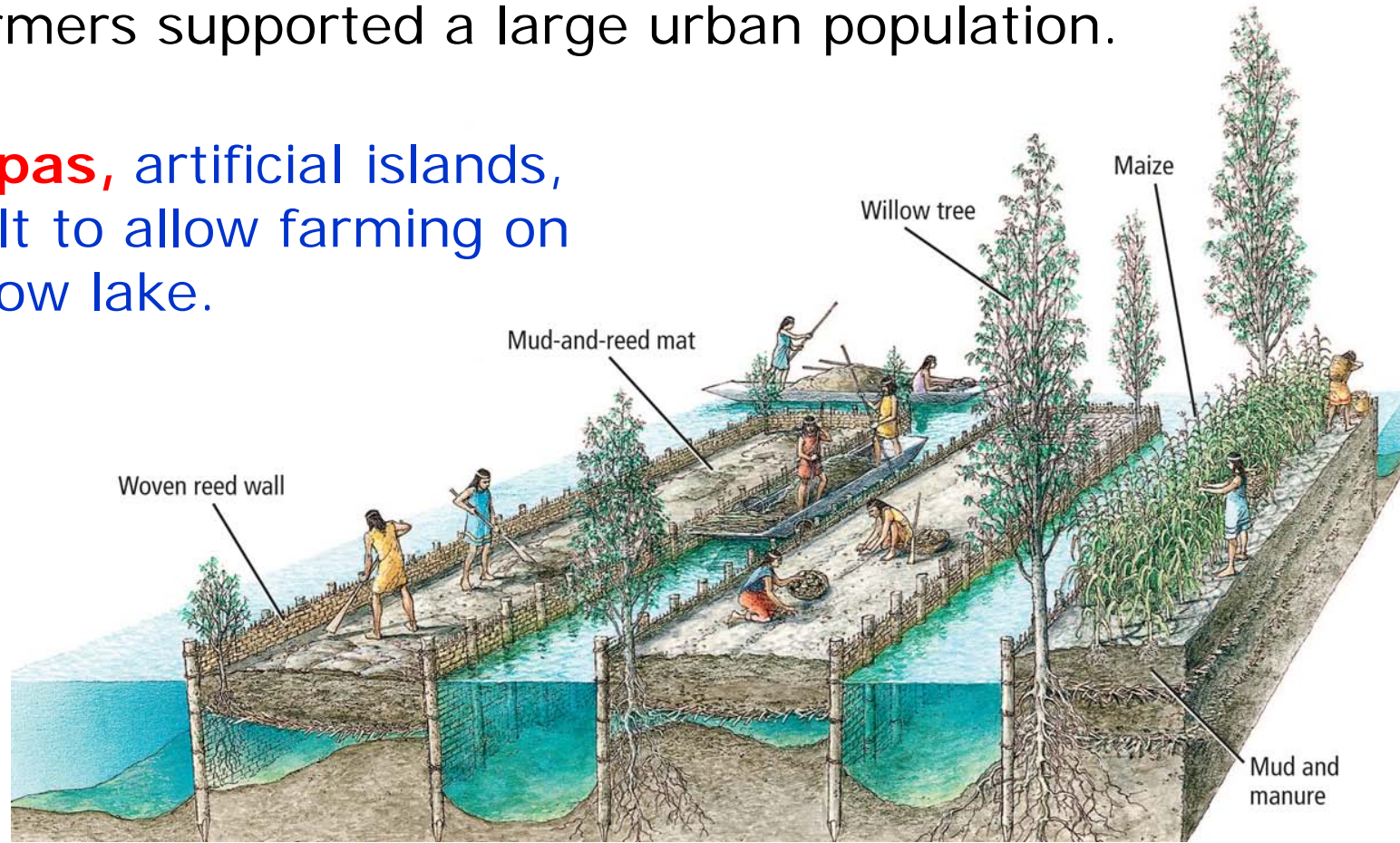
**Tenochtitlán** was built on an island connected by stone causeways to the mainland.

This Spanish sketch of the city, made in the 1500s, shows crowded buildings and causeways.



Aztec farmers supported a large urban population.

**Chinampas**, artificial islands, were built to allow farming on the shallow lake.



## The Aztecs had a structured society:

The **emperor** was the military leader.

**Nobles** were government officials.

Great **warriors** became nobles.

**Priests** were a separate class.

The middle class included wealthy **traders**.

The largest group, **commoners**, were mostly farmers.

**Serfs** and **slaves** were prisoners of war and debtors.

## Aztec religion was influenced by the previous culture at **Teotihuacán**.

- Teotihuacán dominated valley life from A.D. 200 to A.D. 750.
- The two groups worshipped some of the same gods, including Quetzacoatl, the god of earth and water, and Tlaloc, the rain god.
- Aztecs believed the gods had created their world in Teotihuacán.

## The Aztecs were frequently at war.

Conquered neighbors were forced to pay **tribute.**

Prisoners of war might be sacrificed to Nanahuatzin, the sun god.

Neighboring tribes allied themselves with the Spanish in the 1500s to gain revenge on the Aztecs.

## Objectives

- Understand how groups of people adapted to the desert environment of the Southwest.
- Analyze the evidence from which we have learned about the emergence of cultures in eastern North America.
- Examine the cultures that emerged in three very different geographic regions.

## Terms and People

- **Mesa Verde** – location of massive cliff dwellings built by the Anasazi between A.D. 1150 and 1300
- **pueblo** – Spanish name for a community of multifloor dwellings found in the Southwest
- **Pueblo Bonito** – the largest pueblo, over 800 rooms built of adobe; in present-day New Mexico
- **kiva** – a large underground chamber used for religious ceremonies and political meetings

## Terms and People (continued)

- **earthworks** – giant burial mounds left by the Adena and Hopewell in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys
- **Cahokia** – largest city of the Mississippian culture, in present-day Illinois; once had 20,000 occupants
- **potlatch** – a ceremony among native people of the Northwest in which a person gains status by giving away lavish gifts
- **Iroquois League** – a well-organized political alliance of five northeastern tribes in present-day New York



## What factors contributed to the growth of diverse cultures in North America?

Hundreds of Native American cultural groups lived in North America before the arrival of Europeans. Based on the environments in which people lived, scholars have categorized them into ten culture areas.

In each area, people adapted to geographic conditions that influenced their ways of life.





The ten different environments into which early North American people are categorized by scholars.

Native Americans adapted differently to each.

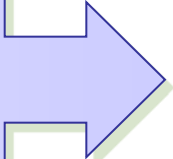
**Native American Culture Groups: Historical Locations**

Culture Area	Culture Groups
Arctic	Aleut, Inuit
Subarctic	Beaver, Chipewyan, Cree, Ingalik, Kutchin, Montagnais, Naskapi, Ojibwa, Tanaina
Northwest Coast	Bella Coola, Chinook, Haida, Kwakiutl, Nootka, Tlingit
California	Chumash, Maidu, Miwok, Pomo, Shastan
Great Basin	Paiute, Shoshone, Ute
Plateau	Nez Percé, Spokane, Shuswap
Southwest	Ancestral Puebloan, Apache, Hohokam, Mojave, Navajo, Papago, Pima, Pueblos (Acoma, Hopi, Laguna, Zuni)
Plains	Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Cree, Crow, Hidatsa, Kiowa, Mandan, Omaha, Pawnee, Sioux, Wichita
Southeast	Calusa, Catawba, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Mississippians, Natchez, Seminole
Northeast	Adena, Algonquin (Delaware, Miami, Mohegan, Ojibwa, Pequot, Potawatomi, Shawnee), Hopewell, Iroquois (Cayuga, Erie, Huron, Mohawk, Onandaga, Oneida, Seneca, Tuscarora), Micmac, Winnebago

Before the arrival of the Europeans in the 1500s, there were hundreds of distinct cultural groups or tribes in North America.

## Some of the first permanent farming settlements developed in the Southwest.

Around 300 B.C. the Hohokam built irrigation systems and farmed near the Gila and Salt rivers in Arizona.



They built temples similar to those found in Mesoamerica. They left their settlements in the 1400s.

Between 1150 and 1300 the Anasazi, ancestors to the Pueblo, built cliffside villages.



- Using hand-cut stone, they constructed elaborate residences along cliff walls.
- Those at **Mesa Verde** have over 200 rooms.
- The cliffs provided protection from raiders.

Remains of the largest **pueblo**, the **Pueblo Bonito**, were found in New Mexico.

It contained 800 rooms and housed about 3,000 people.

Stone and adobe bricks were used to create a five-story structure.

A large underground chamber, or **kiva**, was constructed for religious ceremonies and political meetings.

Drought forced the people to leave in the late 1200s. Their descendents, the Pueblo, still live in the Southwest.

## Farming cultures in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys left behind giant **earthworks**.

The **Adena** and **Hopewell** heaped earth into large mounds. Some were used for burials, others were the base for structures.

Objects found in the Hopewell mounds were traded from as far away as the Rocky Mountains.



The Great Serpent Mound twists like a snake for a quarter-mile.

**By A.D. 800 the early mound builders disappeared. A new group, the Mississippians, appeared and built ever-larger and more elaborate mounds.**

**Cahokia**, in present-day Illinois, housed about 20,000 people around A.D. 1100.

Temples and the homes of nobles sat atop the mounds.

The Mississippians disappeared, but their descendents, known as the Natchez, continued a tradition of sun worship.

## **In the far north, the Inuit or Eskimos adapted to life in the Arctic.**

About 2000 B.C. small bands of hunters and fishers learned to survive in the harsh climate.

The Inuit used small kayaks in open water, dog sleds for moving over ice. Some built partially buried sod homes or igloos of snow and ice.



## Many Native American groups lived in the forests of the Northeast, including the Iroquois.

The Iroquois were made up of five tribes—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.

The Iroquois were run by an all-male council, but clan mothers could add or remove members.

In the 1500s they formed a unique political alliance, the Iroquois League, to keep the peace among the tribes.