



Native Americans

Tribes & Regions



Native Americans were often grouped into tribes or nations. These groupings were generally based on peoples that shared the same culture, language, religion, customs, and politics. There are over 1000 Native American Tribes in the United States.



Arctic/Subarctic - These Native Americans survived some of the coldest weather on the planet. They include the Inuit people of Alaska who lived primarily off of whale and seal meat.



Californian - Tribes living in the area that is today the state of California such as the Mohave and the Miwok.



Great Basin - This is a dry area and was one of the last to have contact with Europeans. The Great Basin tribes include the Washo, Ute, and Shoshone.



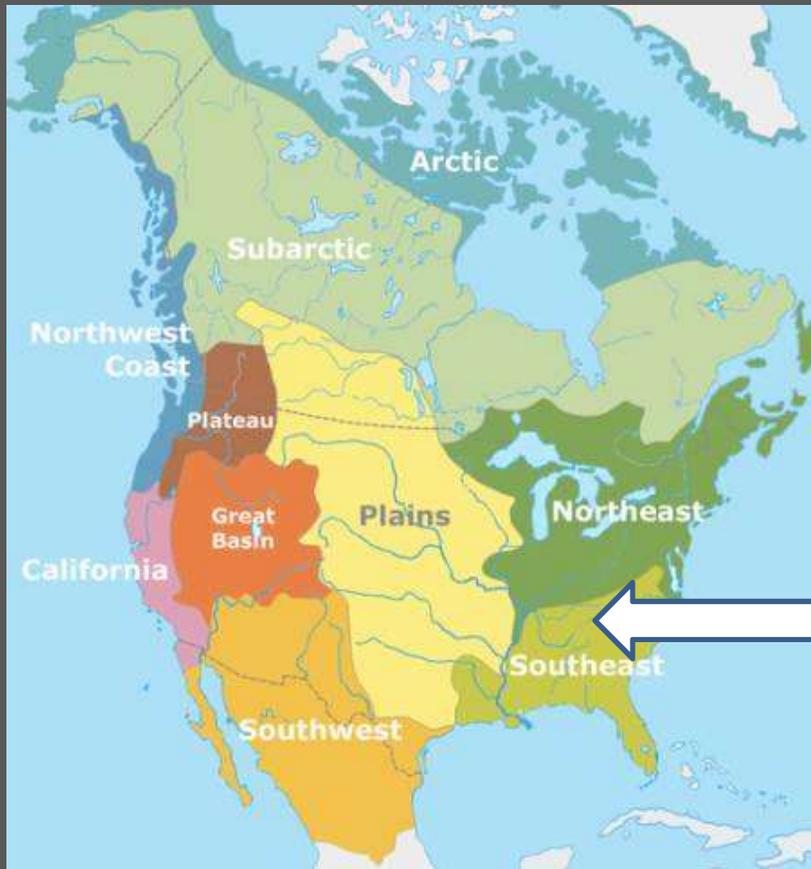
Great Plains - One of the largest areas and perhaps most famous group of American Indians, the Great Plains Indians were known for hunting bison. They were nomadic people who lived in teepees and they moved constantly following the bison herds. Tribes of the Great Plains include the Blackfoot, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Comanche and Crow.



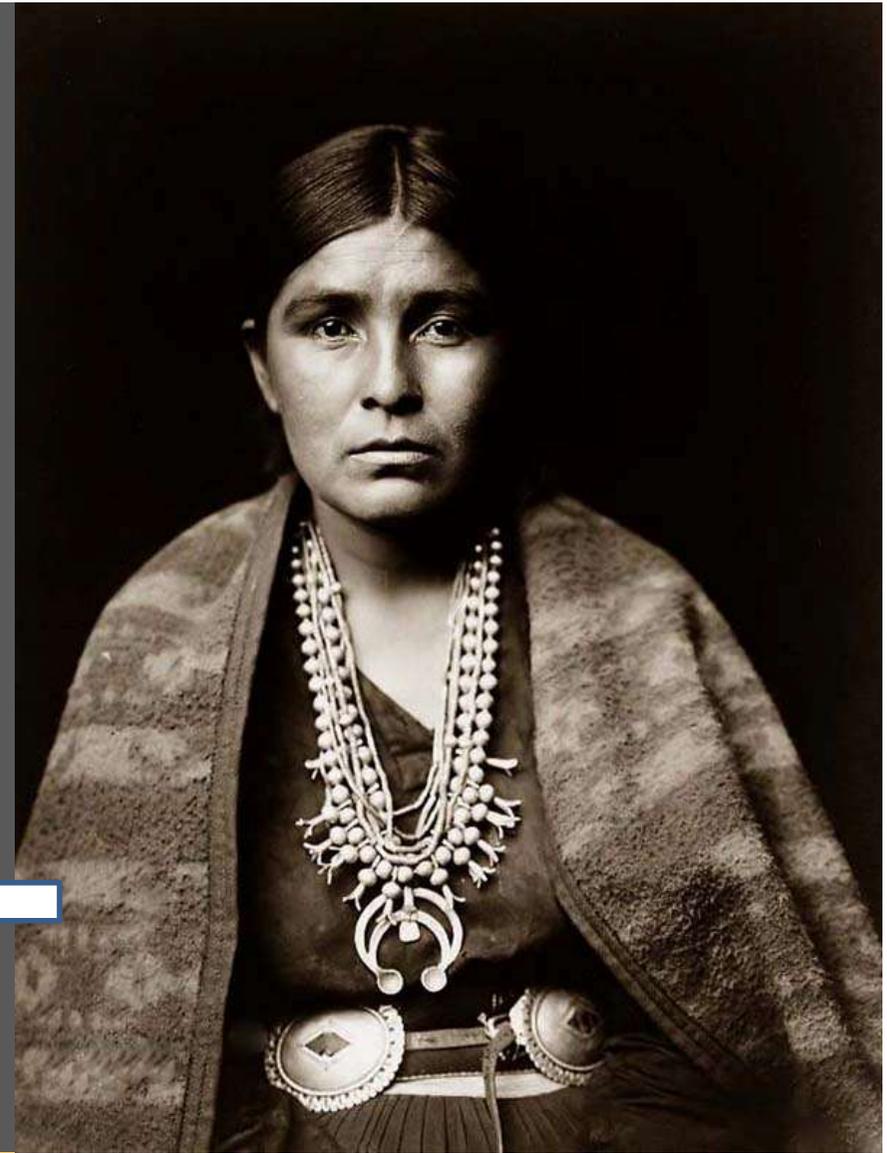
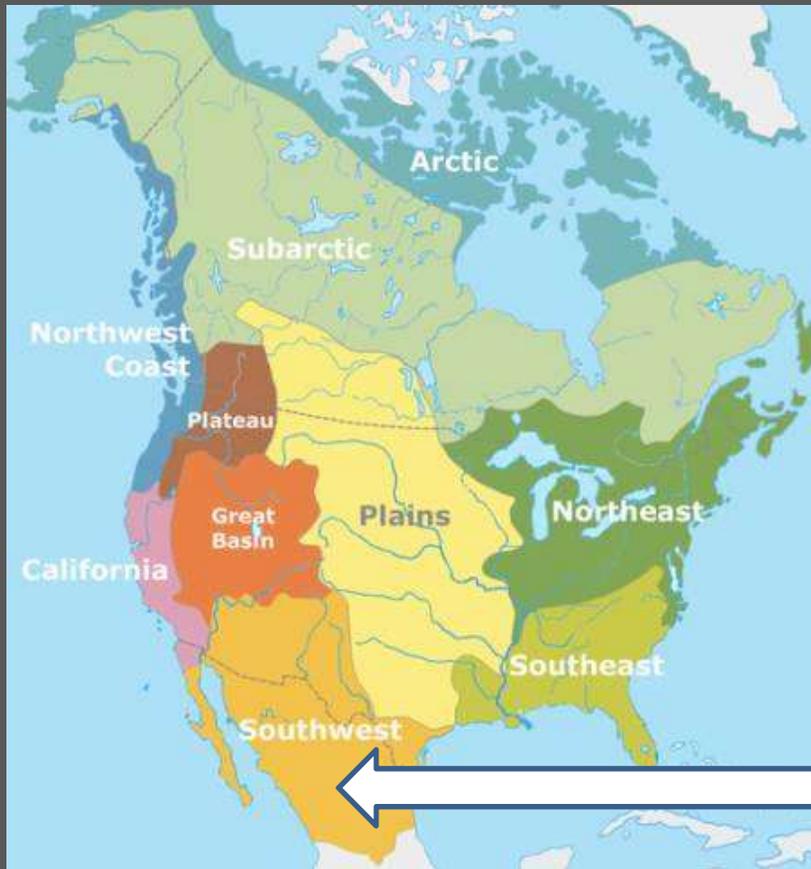
Northeast Woodlands - Includes the Iroquois Indians of New York, the Wappani, and the Shawnee.



Northwest Coast/Plateau - These Native Americans were known for their houses made of cedar planks as well as their totem poles. Tribes include the Nez Perce, Salish, and the Tlingit.



Southeast - The largest Native American tribe, the Cherokee, lived in the Southeast. Other tribes included the Seminole in Florida and the Chickasaw. These tribes tended to stay in one place and were skilled farmers.



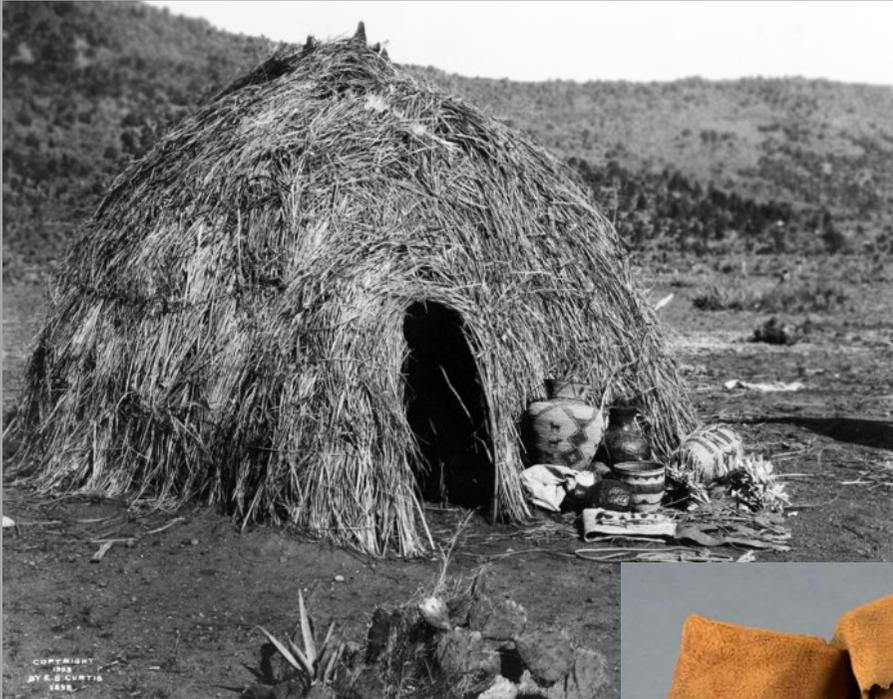
Southwest - The southwest was dry and the Native Americans lived in tiered homes made out of adobe bricks. Famous tribes here include the Navajo Nation, the Apache, and the Pueblo Indians.

Apache Leader Geronimo



The Apache peoples are made up of a group of American Indian tribes that are similar in culture and speak the same language. There are six tribes that make up the Apache: the Chiricahua, Jicarillo, Lipan, Mescalero, Western Apache, and Kiowa.

The Apache lived in two types of traditional homes; wikiups and teepees.



The wikiup, also called a wigwam, was a more permanent home. Its frame was made from tree saplings and formed a dome. It was covered with bark or grass



Teepees were a more temporary home that could be moved easily when the tribe was hunting buffalo. The teepee's frame was made of long poles and then covered with buffalo hide

Most of the Apache clothing was made from leather or buckskin. The women wore buckskin dresses while the men wore shirts and breechcloths. Sometimes they would decorate their clothing with fringes, beads, feathers, and shells. They wore soft leather shoes called moccasins.



The Apache ate a wide variety of food, but their main staple was corn, also called maize, and meat from the buffalo. They also gathered food such as berries and acorns. Another traditional food was roasted agave, which was roasted for many days in a pit. Some Apaches hunted other animals like deer and rabbits.



To hunt, the Apache used bows and arrows. Arrowheads were made from rocks that were chipped down to a sharp point. Bow strings were made from the tendons of animals.



To carry their teepees and other items when they moved, the Apache used something called a travois. The travois was a sled that could be filled with items and then dragged by a dog. When the Europeans brought horses to the Americas, the Apache started using horses to drag the travois. Because horses were so much bigger and stronger, the travois could be bigger and carry a lot more stuff. This also allowed the Apache to make larger teepees.



The Apache women wove large baskets to store grain and other food. They also made pots from clay to hold liquids and other items.



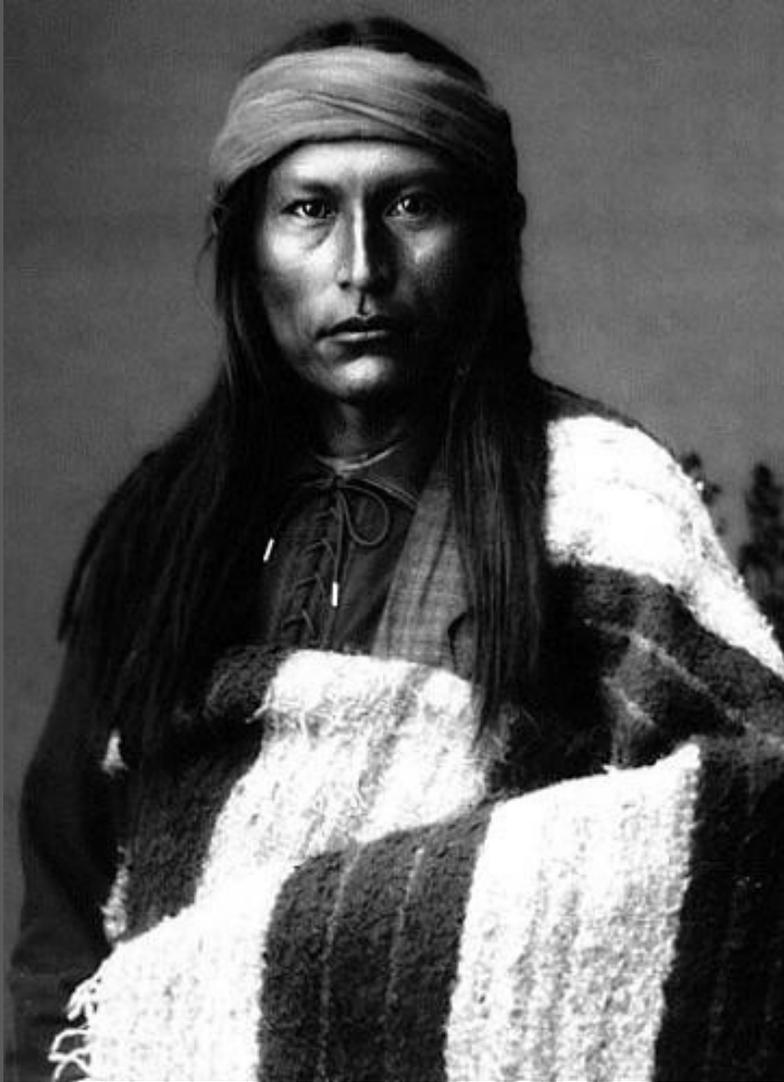
- The Apache social life was based around the family. Groups of extended family members would live together. The extended family was based on the women, meaning that when a man married a woman he would become part of her extended family and leave his own family.

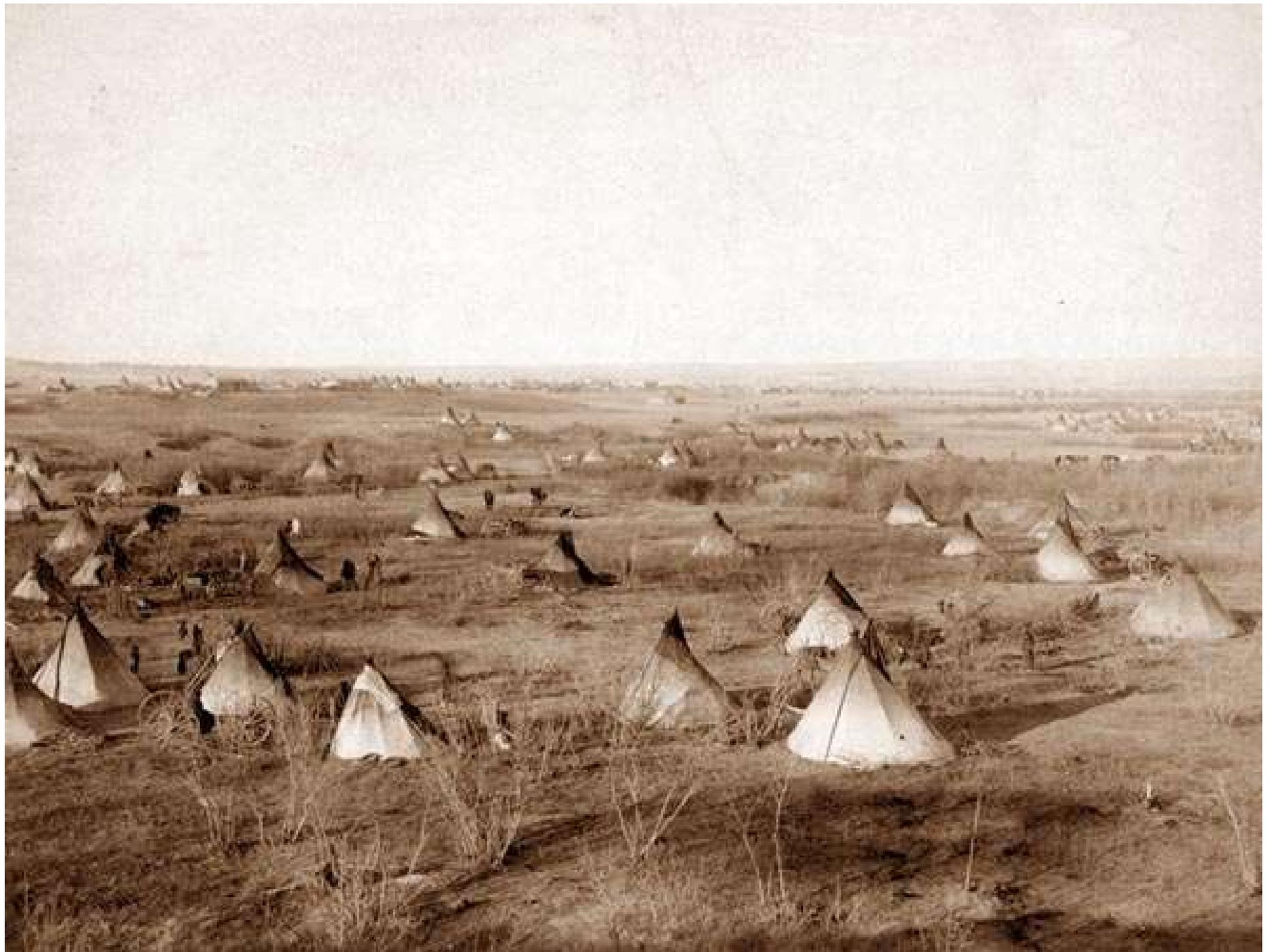


- A number of extended Apache families would live near each other in a local group which had a chief as the leader. The chief would be a man who had earned the position by being the strongest and most capable leader.



- In the late 1800s the Apache's fought a number of battles against the United States government. They were trying to fight back from the aggression and take over of their land. Several great Apache leaders arose such as Cochise and Geronimo. They fought with ferocity for decades, but finally had to surrender and were forced into reservations.





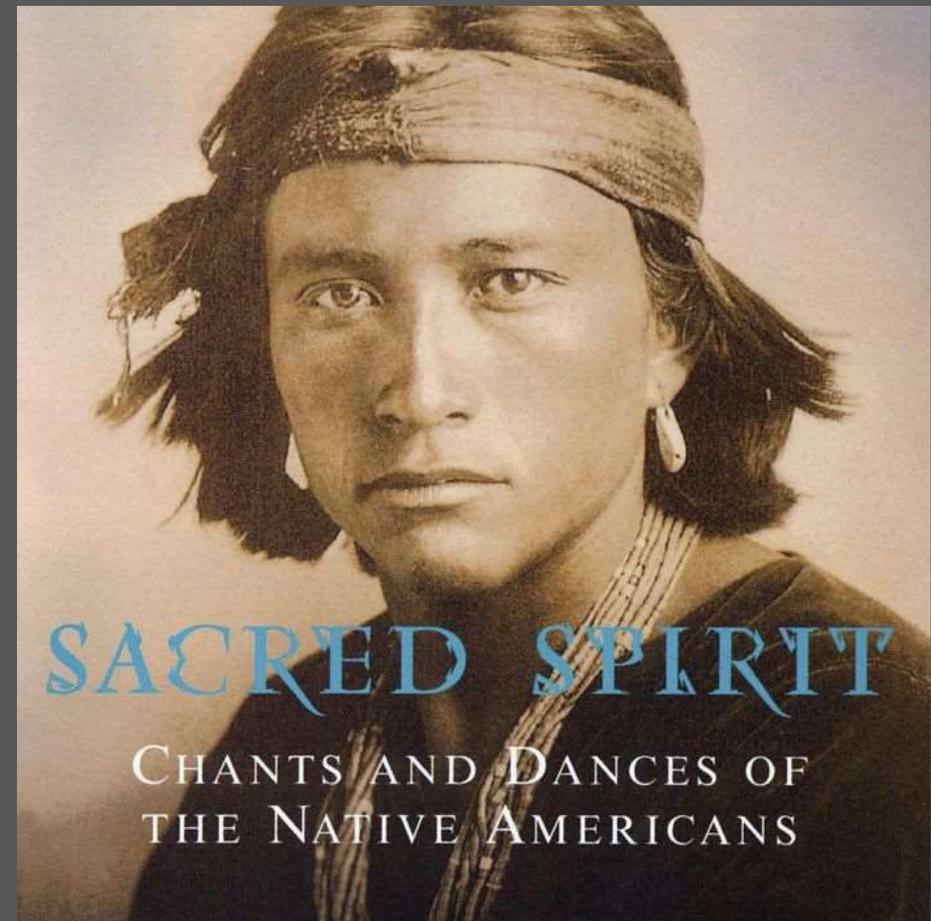
- Today many of the Apache tribes live in reservations in New Mexico and Arizona. Some also live in Oklahoma and Texas.



- The Cherokee Indians are the largest tribe in the United States. The name Cherokee comes from a Muskogean word that means "speakers of another language". The Cherokee called themselves the Ani-Yunwiya, meaning "principal people".



- The Cherokee were a religious people who believed in spirits. They performed ceremonies in order to ask the spirits to help them.



- The Cherokee would have special ceremonies before going to battle, leaving on a hunt, and when trying to heal sick people. They would often dress up and dance to music during the ceremony. The largest of their celebrations was called the Green Corn Ceremony which thanked the spirits for their harvest of corn.



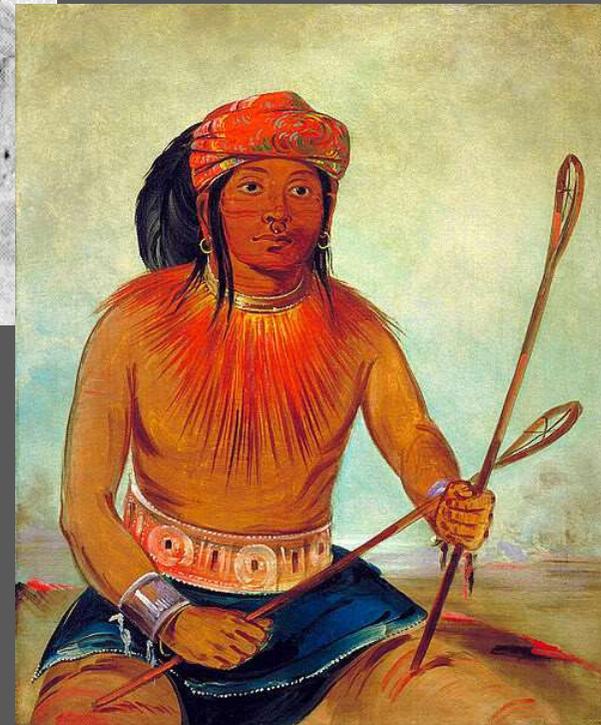
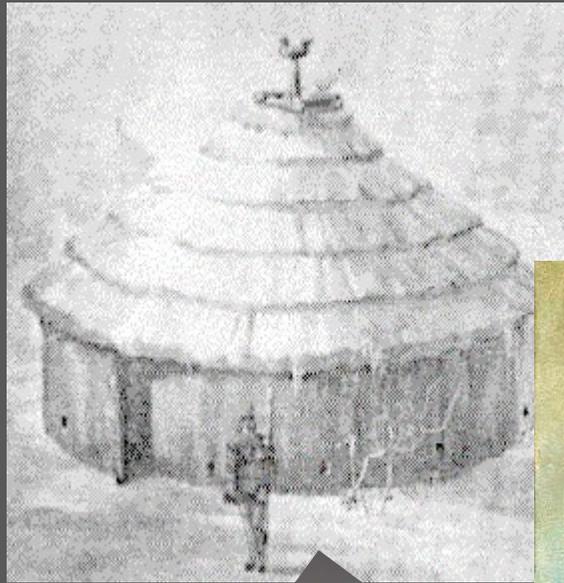
- Living in the East, the Cherokee had early contact with the American colonists. They made many treaties with the colonists over the years. They also fought alongside the French in the French and Indian war in 1754 against the British. When the British won the war, the Cherokee lost some of their land. They again lost more of their land to the United States when they sided with the British in the American Revolutionary War.



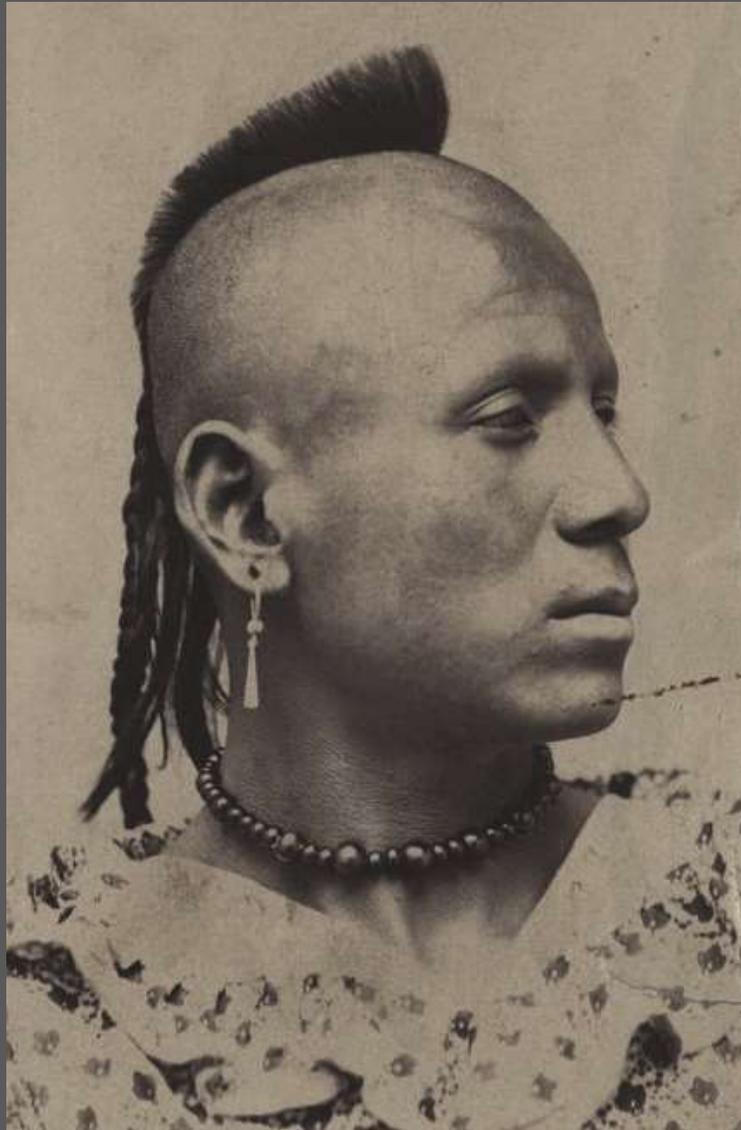
- In 1835 some of the Cherokee signed a treaty with the United States giving the US all of the Cherokee land in return for land in Oklahoma plus \$5 million. Most of the Cherokee did not want to do this, but they had no choice. In 1838 the US army forced the Cherokee nation to move from their homes in the Southeast all the way to the state of Oklahoma. Over 4,000 Cherokee people died on the march to Oklahoma. Today this forced march is called the "The Trail of Tears".



- The original Chickasaw Indians lived in small villages. Their homes were one room wattle and daub homes made with a wood frame covered with a plaster of mud and straw. Typically the homes would be laid out in an oval with the centre of village being the main meeting place. They also enjoyed a form of the game lacrosse called stickball and most villages had a stickball field.



The men generally shaved most of their hair, but left a long lock of hair at the very top of their head called a scalp lock. The women wore their hair up on their head using strings of beads.



- The Inuit people live in the far northern areas of Alaska, Canada, Siberia, and Greenland. They originally made their home along the Alaskan coast, but migrated to other areas. Everything about the lives of the Inuit is influenced by the cold tundra climate in which they live.



The typical materials for making homes such as wood and mud are hard to find in the frozen tundra of the Arctic. The Inuit learned to make warm homes out of snow and ice for the winter. During the summer they would make homes from animal skin stretched over a frame made from driftwood or whalebones. The Inuit word for home is "igloo".



The Inuit needed thick and warm clothing to survive the cold weather. They used animal skins and furs to stay warm. They made shirts, pants, boots, hats, and big jackets called anoraks from caribou and seal skin. They would line their clothes with furs from animals like polar bears, rabbits, and foxes.



They used harpoons to hunt seals, walruses, and the bowhead whale. They also ate fish and foraged for wild berries. A high percentage of their food was fatty, which gave them energy in the cold weather.



Despite the harsh landscape of the Arctic, the Inuit still found ways to travel long distances. On land and ice they used dogsleds called qamutik. They bred strong sled dogs from wolves and dogs to pull the sleds which were made from whale bones and wood. These dogs became the husky dog breed.

