

Native Americans in the United States



- In the United States, Native Americans are considered to be people whose pre-Columbian ancestors were indigenous to the lands within the nation's modern boundaries. These peoples were composed of numerous distinct tribes, bands, and ethnic groups, and many of these groups survive intact today as sovereign nations.



- The terms Native Americans use to refer to themselves vary regionally and generationally, with many older Native Americans self-identifying as "Indians" or "American Indians", while younger Native Americans often identify as "Indigenous" or "Aboriginal." Which terms should be used to refer to Native Americans has at times been controversial.

TRIBES OF THE INDIAN NATION



Settlement of the Americas



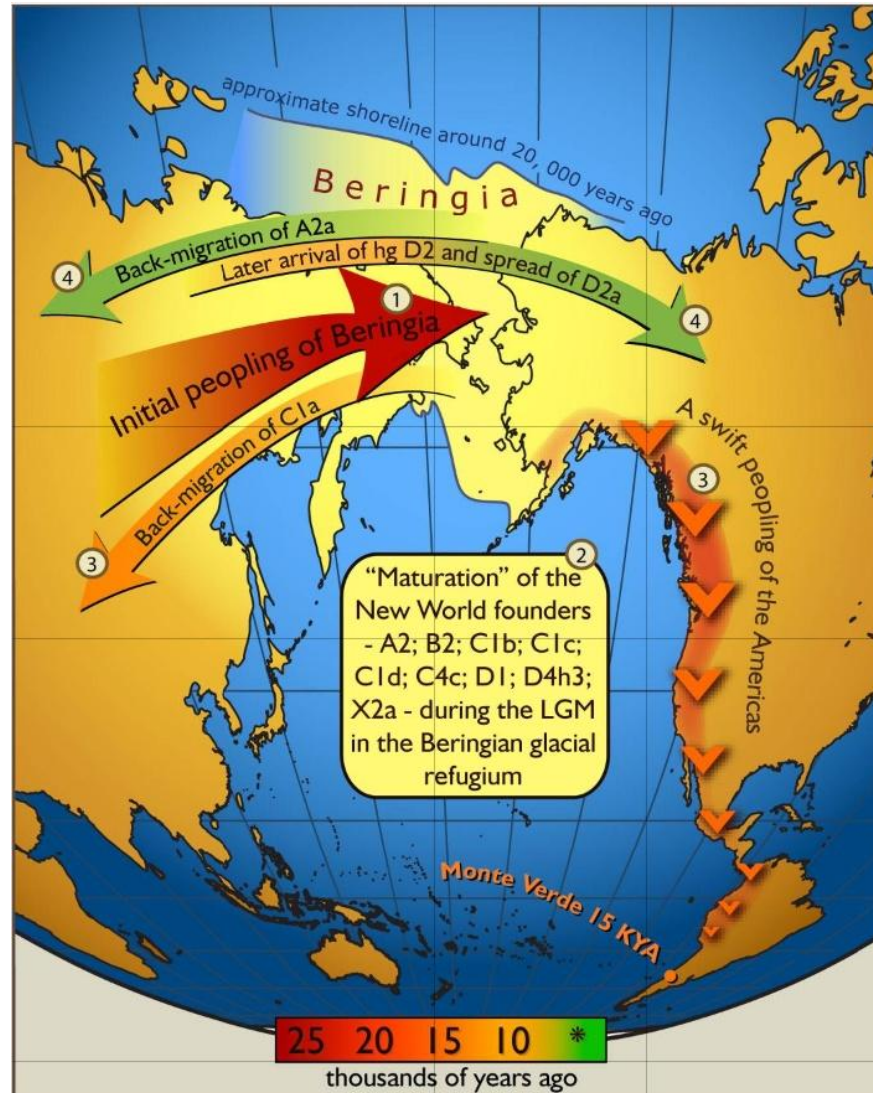
- Three major migrations occurred, as traced by linguistic and genetic data; the early Paleoamericans soon spread throughout the Americas, diversifying into many hundreds of culturally distinct nations and tribes. By 8000 BCE the North American climate was very similar to today's. A study published in 2012 gives genetic backing to the 1986 theory put forward by linguist Joseph Greenberg that the Americas must have been populated in three waves, based on language differences

Settlement of the Americas

- Current understanding of the settlement of the Americas (human migration to and throughout the American continents) derives from advances in four interrelated disciplines: archaeology, Pleistocene geology, physical anthropology, and DNA analysis. While there is general agreement that the Americas were first settled from Asia, the pattern of migration, its timing, and the place(s) of origin in Asia of the peoples who migrated to the Americas remain unclear.

In the 2000s, researchers sought to use familiar tools to validate or reject established theories, such as Clovis first. The archeological evidence suggests that the Paleo-Indians' first dispersal into the Americas occurred during the end of the last glacial period or, more specifically, what is known as the Last Glacial Maximum, around 16,500–13,000 years ago. The settlement of the Americas is of intense interest to archaeologists and anthropologists.

Chronology



- The first is the *short chronology theory*, based on the concept that the first migration into the New World occurred after the LGM, which went into decline after about 19k cal years BP, then was followed by successive waves of immigrants. The second is the *long chronology theory*, which proposes that the first group of people entered the Americas at a much earlier date, possibly 21k–40k cal years BP, with a much later second wave of immigrants. Further controversy has been generated as age-dating of archaeological sites in the Americas and the timing of the opening of the ice-free corridor have challenged the Clovis First theory, which dominated thinking on New World anthropology for much of the 20th century.

European exploration and colonization

- After 1492 European exploration and colonization of the Americas revolutionized how the Old and New Worlds perceived themselves. The subsequent European colonists in North America often rationalized their expansion of empire with the assumption that they were saving a barbaric, pagan world by spreading Christian civilization.



Impact on native populations

- From the 16th through the 19th centuries, the population of Native Americans declined in the following ways: epidemic diseases brought from Europe; violence and warfare at the hands of European explorers and colonists, as well as between tribes; displacement from their lands; internal warfare, enslavement; and a high rate of intermarriage.

- Europeans at that time had patriarchal cultures and had developed concepts of individual property rights with respect to land that were extremely different. The differences in cultures between the established Native Americans and immigrant Europeans, as well as shifting alliances among different nations in times of war, caused extensive political tension, ethnic violence, and social disruption.



- Estimating the number of Native Americans living in what is today the United States of America before the arrival of the European explorers and settlers has been the subject of much debate. While it is difficult to determine exactly how many Natives lived in North America before Columbus, estimates range from a low of 2.1 million (Ubelaker 1976) to 7 million people (Russell Thornton). Native population of the present-day United States had declined to approximately 600,000, and only 250,000 Native Americans remained in the 1890s.

Foundations for freedom

- Some Europeans considered Native American societies to be representative of a golden age known to them only in folk history. The political theorist Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote that the idea of freedom and democratic ideals was born in the Americas because "it was only in America" that Europeans from 1500 to 1776 knew of societies that were "truly free."



- Natural freedom is the only object of the policy of the [Native Americans]; with this freedom do nature and climate rule alone amongst them ... [Native Americans] maintain their freedom and find abundant nourishment... [and are] people who live without laws, without police, without religion.
- — *Jean Jacques Rousseau*

American Revolution

- The British made peace with the Americans in the Treaty of Paris (1783), through which they ceded vast Native American territories to the United States without informing or consulting with the Native Americans.



Bronze medals struck at behest of Virginia governor Thomas Jefferson and carried by Joseph Martin to give to Cherokee allies of colonial forces. Notice peace pipe atop the medal.

- American Indians have played a central role in shaping the history of the nation, and they are deeply woven into the social fabric of much of American life.... During the last three decades of the 20th century, scholars of ethnohistory, of the "new Indian history," and of Native American studies forcefully demonstrated that to understand American history and the American experience, one must include American Indians.
- — *Robbie Ethridge, Creek Country*

Removals and reservations

- In the 19th century, the incessant westward expansion of the United States incrementally compelled large numbers of Native Americans to resettle further west, often by force, almost always reluctantly. As many as 100,000 Native Americans relocated to the West as a result of this Indian removal policy. In theory, relocation was supposed to be voluntary and many Native Americans did remain in the East. In practice, great pressure was put on Native American leaders to sign removal treaties.



20th century

- On June 2, 1924
U.S. Republican President Calvin Coolidge signed the Indian Citizenship Act, which made citizens of the United States of all Native Americans, who were not already citizens, born in the United States and its territories. Prior to passage of the act, nearly two-thirds of Native Americans were already U.S. citizens.

Society, language, and culture

- Though cultural features, language, clothing, and customs vary enormously from one tribe to another, there are certain elements which are encountered frequently and shared by many tribes. Early European American scholars described the Native Americans as having a society dominated by clans.



- Early hunter-gatherer tribes made stone weapons from around 10,000 years ago; as the age of metallurgy dawned, newer technologies were used and more efficient weapons produced. Prior to contact with Europeans, most tribes used similar weaponry. The most common implements were the bow and arrow, the war club, and the spear. Quality, material, and design varied widely. Native American use of fire both helped provide and prepare for food and altered the landscape of the continent to help the human population flourish.

- The Great Plains tribes were still hunting the bison when they first encountered the Europeans. The Spanish reintroduction of the horse to North America in the 17th century and Native Americans' learning to use them greatly altered the Native Americans' culture, including changing the way in which they hunted large game. Horses became such a valuable, central element of Native lives that they were counted as a measure of wealth.

