

Chronology of North American Indian History: Native North America

circa 52,000-13,000 BP (before present)

Waves of Paleo-Siberians arrive in the Americas from Asia, across the Bering Strait Land Bridge (Beringia) and disperse throughout the Americas.

c. 52,000-7,000 BP

So-called Paleo-Indian or Lithic period, characterized by migratory big-game hunting and chipped-stone artifacts.

c. 17,000-10,000 BP

Clovis Spear Point culture.

c. 10,000-9,000 BP

Folsom Spear-Point culture. Development of atlatl spear-throwing device.

c. 9,500-6,500 BP

Plano (Plainview) Spear-Point culture.

c. 12,000-10,000 BP

Pleistocene epoch (Ice Age) ends with final retreat of northern glaciers.

c. 11,000-7,000 BP

Big-game species become extinct, including mastodons, woolly mammoths, lions, saber-toothed tigers, tapirs, ground sloths, bighorn bisons, camels, giant armadillos, giant beavers, and native horses.

c. 10,000 BP

Climate is warm enough to support cone-bearing trees.

c. 8,000 BP

Climate is warm enough to support deciduous trees.

c. 10,000 (or 7,000)-3,000 BP

So-called Archaic period, characterized by migratory hunting and gathering of a wide assortment of fauna and flora, as well as by the use of a wide assortment of tools and utensils.

c. 5,400-5,000 BP

Mound complex built at Watson Brake, Louisiana

c. 9,000-4,000 BP

While Archaic cultures are dominant in North America, the Mesoindian phrase occurs in Middle America, characterized by beginnings of food production and pottery.

c. 7,000-5,000 BP

Cultivated strain of maize is introduced.

c. 5,500-3,500 BP

Beginnings of agriculture in the Southwest.

c. 4,000 BP

Agriculture and pottery spread into much of North America.

c. 5,000-3,000 BP

Aleuts and Inuits migrate from Siberia into North America.

c. 4,000-3,500 BP

Indians of Southeast first make pottery. Pottery culture spreads throughout North America.

c. 3,000 BP

Poverty Point Mounds built in Louisiana.

c. 3,500 BP

Dog domesticated in North and Middle America.

c. 3,500 (or 2,000)-1,000 (or 500) BP

So-called Formative period, characterized by village life, use of agriculture, pottery making, weaving, stone carving, ceremonial structures, and trade.

c. 2,800-2,100 BP

Adena culture in Eastern Woodlands. Great Serpent Mound built c. 2,400 BP.

c. 2,300-700 BP

Mogollon culture in Southwest.

c. 2,100-1,700 BP

Hopewell culture in Eastern Woodlands.

c. 2,100-600 BP

Hohokam culture in Southwest. Extensive canal systems developed to irrigate deserts.

c. 2,100-700 BP

Anasazi culture in Southwest, peaking in the four-corners region c. 900-1300 AD.

c. 1100 AD Chaco Canyon in northwest New Mexico at its height. Mesa Verde built in southern Colorado.

c. 1150 AD Pueblo of Oraibi founded, the oldest continuously occupied town in U.S.

c. 500

Bow and arrow widely used in North America, generally replacing the atlatl. By c. 1000 use of the bow and arrow has also spread to Middle America.

c. 700-1700

Mississippian culture in Mississippi Basin and Southeast. Mississippian chiefdoms flourish throughout the Southeast until c. 1550.

c. 700

Cahokia established.

c. 1200-1500

Aztec civilization dominant.

c. 1200-1400

Ancestral Apache and Navajo bands break from northern Athapascan groups and migrate into Southwest.

c. 1275-1300

Droughts and raiding Athapascans cause abandonment of many pueblo cities in Southwest.

Pre-1400

Iroquois Great League of Peace formed.