

A Timeline of American Indian Cultures

North America's distinctive geographical regions – Eastern Woodlands, Great Plains, Desert Southwest and Pacific Northwest - created many unique Indian cultures in what would later become the United States of America. This time line will give a general view of important American Indian events from the Paleo Indian Era to the present day.

1. **Paleo-Indian Era 15,000 B.C. – 7000 B.C.**
 - Lived in small mobile groups
 - Hunted various animals with spears tipped with flint points
 - May have collected plant food as deciduous forest replaced Ice Age coniferous forest
 - Occupied small temporary camps in response to seasonal availability of food
 - Made their distinctive tools in workshops located near outcrops of flint
2. **12,000 B.C. – American Indians Arrive in What Will Become the United States**
 - Some prehistoric groups travel by boat and land along the coast of present day California
 - As glaciers retreat and land bridges open to North American Continent from Siberia, some prehistoric groups cross these land bridges
 - Hunter gatherer groups spread out across North America
3. **10,000 B.C. – Paleo Indians Become the Most Accomplished Stone Age Hunters**
4. **9000 B.C. – Clovis Culture emerges**
 - Named for artifacts first found at Blackwater Draw near Clovis, New Mexico
5. **7500 B.C. - Folsom Culture emerges**
 - Named for artifacts discovered at Folsom, New Mexico
6. **7500 B.C. Eastern Woodlands Archaic Indian Era begins**
 - 3000 B.C. – American Indians begin shift to agriculture
 - 2000 B.C. - 1000 B.C. - Red Ochre Culture appears
7. **4000 B.C. - Old Copper Culture initiates metallurgy in the United States**
 - Work copper along upper Great Lakes
8. **2200 B.C. – Metallurgy begins in Europe**
9. **2000 B.C. - Pecos Culture produces sacred rock paintings**
10. **1700 B.C. – Poverty Point Mound Culture builds first American city**
11. **1000 B.C. - Woodland Period begins**
 - 1000 B.C. to 100 B.C. – Adena culture appears
 - 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. – Hopewell culture appears
 - 700 A.D. – Cahokia settlement first established
 - 750 A.D. – 1100 A.D. – Upper Midwest Effigy Mounds are built
 - 900 A.D. – Construction of Monks Mound, Eastern U.S.'s largest earth work, is begun at Cahokia

12. 250 A.D. - Bow and arrow introduced
13. **300 - Archaic upper Great Lakes cultures begin building effigy mounds**
14. **800 – Bow and arrow spreads across the North American Continent**
15. 1000 - Mississippian Period begins.
 - **1000 - Mississippian Culture establishes Cahokia as their capital**
 - 1050 – Aztalan is occupied by Mississippians in Wisconsin
 - 1070 – Construction of the Great Serpent Effigy Mound in Ohio
 - 1200 – Monks Mound is completed at Cahokia
 - 1400 – Cahokia is abandoned
 - 1600 – Mississippian towns in Ohio are abandoned
 - 1650 - Mississippian culture vanishes
16. 1000-1400 – Navajo and Apache migrate south from present day Canada’s Northwest Territory and establish homelands in the American Desert Southwest
17. **1100 – Anasazi build cliff cities at Mesa Verde, Colorado**
18. **1142 – Iroquois League creates a constitution**
19. 1492 – Christopher Columbus makes landfall in the Caribbean
 - 1520 - The Aztec Empire at Mexico City falls to Hernando Cortes
 - 1565 – St. Augustine, oldest European city in North America, is founded
 - 1598 – Spanish establish colony near present day Santa Fe, New Mexico
 - 1607 – Jamestown Colony founded by England in present day Virginia
 - 1620 – Puritans establish Plymouth colony in present day Massachusetts
20. 1600 - 1650 – Modern American Indian Tribes move into Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys
21. **1614 – Pocahontas marries John Rolfe**
22. **1621 - Squanto and Massasoit help Pilgrims survive**
23. 1636-37 - Pequot War
24. 1638 - First reservations, established by Puritans near New Haven, Connecticut
25. **1675 - Metacom leads “King Philip’s War”**
26. **1680 – Popé drives Spanish from Santa Fe**
27. **1680 - Kateri Tekakwitha, Patroness of Ecology, dies**
28. 1750 - American Indian horse culture dominates the Great Plains –
 - 1700 – 1800 eastern woodland tribes Arapaho, Cheyenne and Sioux acquire horses and move out into the Great Plains to follow the buffalo
 - 1700-1750 – Kiowa migrate from present day British Columbia to southern Great Plains
 - 1720 – Comanche establish Comancheria, a homeland that stretches across the southern plains, including Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and parts of Colorado
29. 1756-63 - French and Indian War
30. **1763-5 – Ottawa Chief Pontiac’s war for independence**
31. 1785 - Cherokee leader, Nanye’Hi, helps negotiate the Treaty of Hopewell setting western boundaries for white settlement in South Carolina
32. **1799 - Handsome Lake founds longhouse religion**
33. 1803 – United States purchases Louisiana Territory from France

34. 1803–1806 - Louis and Clark expedition meets with Indian cultures living along the Missouri River and in the Pacific northwest, including the Mandan, Hidatsa, Shoshone, Nez Perce and Blackfoot
35. **1805 – Sacagawea, interpreter and guide, aids Lewis and Clark western expedition**
36. **1811 – Chief Tecumseh leads the Last Great American Indian Confederacy**
37. 1817-42 – Seminole Indian Wars
38. **1821 - Sequoyah creates Cherokee system of writing**
39. 1824 – United States establishes Bureau of Indian Affairs in War Department
40. 1827 – Cherokee Indians form their own Republic
41. 1830 - Indian Removal Act, passed by Congress, legalizes removal of all Indians east of Mississippi to lands west of the river
42. **1833 – Chief Black Hawk writes his autobiography**
43. **1835 - Osceola resists Indian Removal Act**
44. **1850 - Chief Sealath welcomes settlers to the Pacific Northwest**
45. 1851 - First Fort Laramie Treaty to guarantee safe passage of settlers traveling to the Pacific Northwest and California
46. 1854 – Plains Indians War begins in Wyoming; it would last for 36 years
47. 1861-65 - Civil War in United States
48. 1862 - Minnesota Uprising by woodland Santee Sioux results in the deaths of more than 400 white settlers and the expulsion of the Santee Sioux from Minnesota
49. **1861 – Cochise, Undefeated Apache Warrior Hero, fights to keep Apache land**
50. 1862 – U.S. Congress passes Homestead Act opening the Great Plains to settlers
51. **1864 – Ely Samuel Parker Becomes Adjutant to General Ulysses S. Grant**
52. 1865-69 Building of Union Pacific Railroad brings settlers to the Great Plains
53. **1868 –Red Cloud, the Sioux Renaissance Leader, hands the U.S. Military its only defeat on U.S. soil**
54. **1875 – Quanah Parker, Legendary Comanche Leader, lead his people to peace**
55. **1876 – Sitting Bull & Crazy Horse defeat George Armstrong Custer and 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn**
56. **1877 - Chief Joseph leads brilliant Nez Perce retreat**
57. 1879 – Ponca Chief Standing Bear sues Federal Government and wins case to become a citizen
58. 1880 - Susette La Flesche Picotte works lecture circuit for American Indian rights
59. **1883 - Sarah Winnemucca Publishes Her Autobiography**
60. 1887 - Dawes General Allotment Act passed by Congress leads to the break up of the large Indian Reservations and the sale of Indian lands to white settlers
61. 1889 - Susan La Flesche Picotte becomes the first American Indian woman medical doctor
62. 1890 – The First Battle of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota ends the Plains Indian Wars
63. **1900 – La Flesche family starts to preserve American Indian cultures and religions**

64. 1900 - Francis La Flesche becomes a successful scholar and ethnologist
65. 1903 - Charles Albert Bender opens the door to professional sports for American Indians
66. 1907 - Charles Curtis is the first American Indian elected to the U.S. Senate
67. **1912 – Jim Thorpe wins Olympic Gold Medals in the Pentathlon and Decathlon events**
68. **1924 - Gertrude Simmons Bonnin sets the stage for survival of American Indians**
69. 1924 - All Indians declared citizens of U.S.
70. **1929 – Charles Curtis is elected Vice President of the United States**
71. 1934 - Wheeler-Howard Act, passed to protect American Indian Culture
72. 1939 - U.S. Park Service commissions Pablita Velarde to create a series of murals
73. **1942 –American Indians become heroes in WWII**
 - 1942 - Clarence Tinker promoted to major general in U.S. Air Force
 - 1942-45 - Navajo code talkers thwart Japanese code breakers
 - 1945 - Ira Hayes helps raise the flag on Iwo Jima
74. 1956 - Ben Reifel becomes first member of Sioux nation elected to Congress
75. 1964 - Billy Mills wins the 10,000 meter run at the Tokyo Olympics
76. 1964 - Jay Silverheels founds the Indian Actors Workshop
77. **1968 – N. Scott Momaday wins Pulitzer Prize**
78. 1969 - American Indian Movement (AIM) begins to form
79. **1970 - John Echohawk founds NARF**
80. 1971 - William Hensley helps pass the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
81. **1973 – Second Battle of Wounded Knee**
82. **1977 –Velarde and Martinez Found the Modern American Indian Art Movement**
83. 1979 - American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 95-341) passed
84. 1983 - Buffy Sainte-Marie receives Academy Award
85. 1984 - Louise Erdrich wins the National Book Critics Circle Award
86. **1985 - Wilma Mankiller becomes Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation**
87. 1987 – California’s Cabazon band wins U.S. Supreme Court Case to run casinos
88. 1990 - Simon Ortiz receives Lifetime Achievement award from Native Writers
1996 - Winona LaDuke runs as Green Party candidate for Vice President
89. **2002 – Dr. Frank Dukepoo Joins Einstein on Ithaca’s *Sciencenter* Wall of Inspiration**
 - John Herrington, first American Indian Astronaut
90. **2007 – Jana Mashonee is nominated for a Grammy**