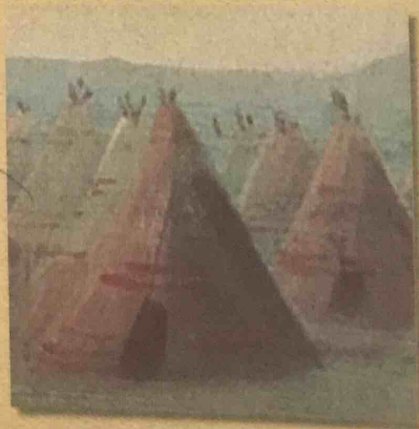
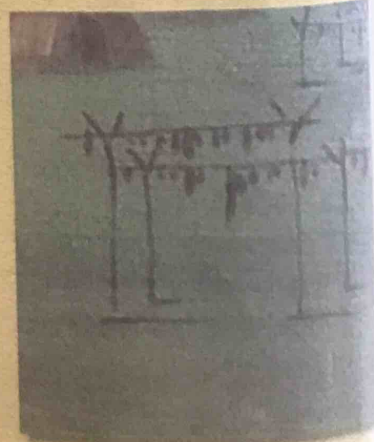




How did the environment affect the clothes these people wore?



How did the environment affect the houses these people built?



How did the environment affect the food these people ate?

# Native American Cultural Regions

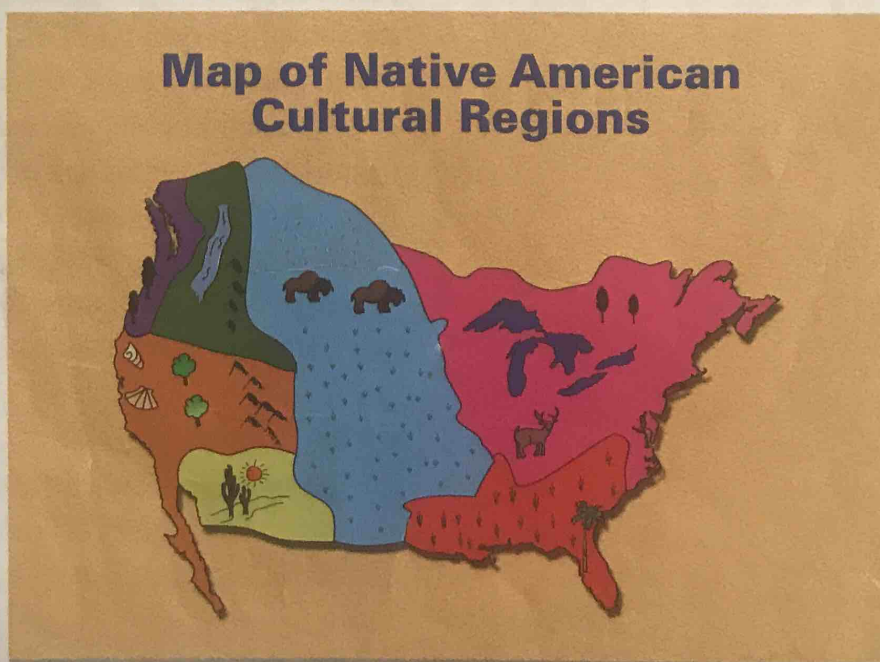
## 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, you read about how the first people settled the Americas. You learned ways that one group, the Inuit, adapted to the Arctic environment. In this chapter, you will see how several other Native American groups adapted to different geographic areas.

By the 1400s, Native Americans had developed a wide variety of **cultures**, or ways of living. Many groups lived in villages. Most were **nomadic**, moving from place to place as changes in seasons made food available in different areas. Historians call the areas where similar cultures developed **cultural regions**. Native Americans lived in seven cultural regions. These regions were the Northwest Coast, California-Intermountain, Southwest, Plateau, Great Plains, Eastern Woodlands, and Southeast.

Historians identify the cultural regions of Native American groups by looking at their **artifacts**. Artifacts are objects made by humans. Each Native American group created clothes, tools, and whatever else they needed from the natural resources around them. For example, Native Americans living along the forested Northwest Coast used wooden boxes for food storage. Native Americans living in the treeless Southwest kept food in pots made from local clay.

Look at the annotated map to the right. It shows the seven major Native American cultural regions. As you read this chapter, locate each region and use this map to remember information about different Native American groups. What was the environment like in each region? How did these environments affect Native American cultures?



### 3.2 Native Americans of the Northwest Coast

South of the Inuit, on a narrow strip of land along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to California, lived the Northwest Coast Native Americans. Dense fir, pine, and cedar forests grew right to the ocean's shore. So, people could settle only on the few flat, rocky beaches. The climate was mild, but the area received heavy rain almost all year. Many


tribes, including the Tlingit, Chinook, and Kwakiutl, called this region home.

Wildlife was plentiful in the area. Fish, especially salmon, filled the streams. Migrating whales swam up and down the coast. Deer, elk, mountain goats, bears, and wolves lived in the forests.

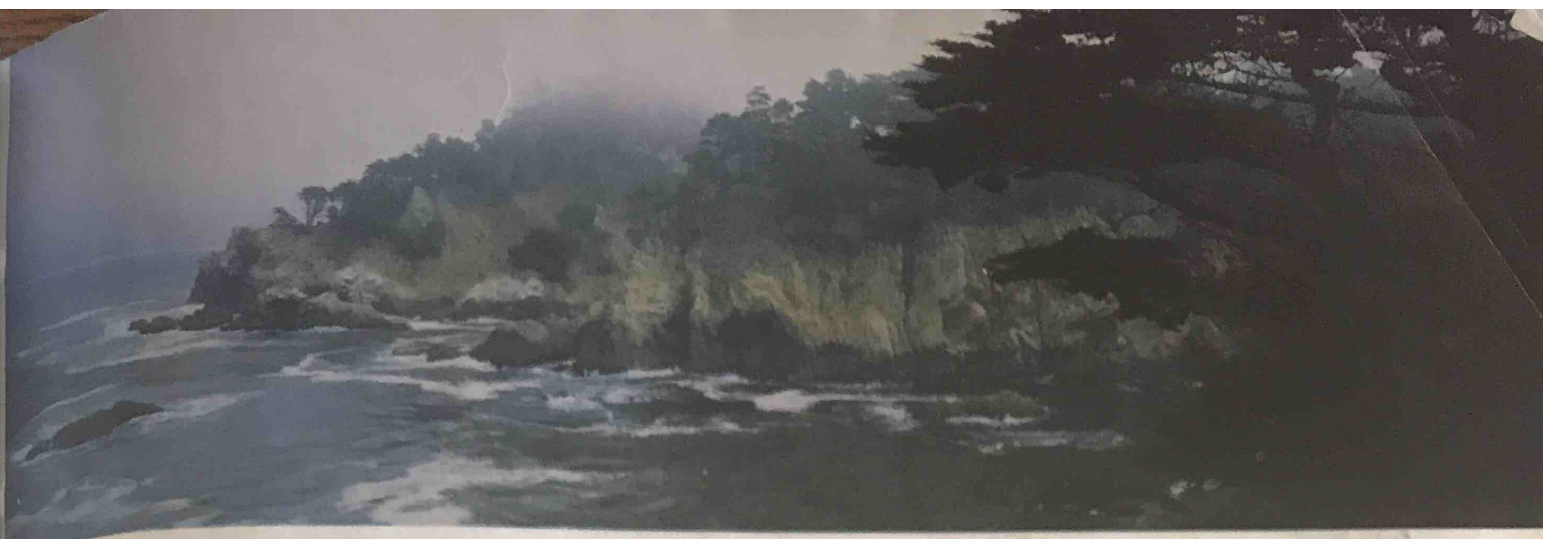
The Kwakiutl (KWAH-kee-oo-tel) used wood from the forest for housing. Their homes were huge wooden structures meant for several families. Outside each home they placed totem poles. On these cedar poles, the Kwakiutl carved figures of animals, humans, and spirits. These carvings told about important events in the family's history and indicated the family's social position.

Clothes made from cedar bark protected the Kwakiutl from the wet climate. Women removed the bark's soft inner core to make thread. They wove the thread into warm, waterproof coats and hats.

The Kwakiutl turned other pieces of cedar bark into equipment they needed for survival, such as fish traps. They shaped each trap like a cone. Salmon swam into the cone and could not escape.



In the Northwest cultural region, Native Americans settled on rocky beaches that were surrounded by thick forests.



### 3.3 Native Americans of the California-Intermountain Region

The California-Intermountain cultural region extended from the Pacific coast of California inland over the Sierra Nevada mountains and into the Great Basin. This region contained a wide variety of environments. For example, the Great Basin was a desert. Because of the extreme heat and cold and little rainfall, it held few plants and animals. Native Americans who lived here were nomadic, moving on after using up available food such as rabbits, ants, and berries. The Shoshone and Paiute and many other tribes made this area their home.

Unlike the Great Basin, California had many different landscapes and a mild climate that provided plentiful resources. Huge redwood trees covered the coastal mountains. Oak trees, grasses, and berries grew inland. The land was rich with deer, rabbits, and birds. Streams were filled with fish, and clams and other shellfish lay along the seashore. Among the many tribes who lived here were the Miwok and Pomo.

Along the California coast and a little inland lived the California Pomo (PO-mo). Coastal Pomos used the giant redwood trees that grew in the area to build their homes. They piled long strips of redwood bark against a center pole to make a house that looked like an inverted ice cream cone.

The sea provided resources from which the Pomo created jewelry. Artisans used clamshells to make necklaces. They broke the shells into pieces, shaped the pieces into beads, and strung them on cords.

The Pomo used the natural materials around them to create practical and artistic crafts. For instance, to hold food, they wove beautiful baskets from the native grasses. They decorated the baskets with shells, beads, and feathers.

The ocean provided many resources for Native Americans living in the California-Intermountain region.



Some Native Americans made their homes on dry, treeless mesas in the Southwest.

### 3.4 Native Americans of the Southwest

The driest cultural region was the Southwest. This region stretched from the southwestern United States to northern Mexico. It contained mountains, flat-topped **mesas**, canyons, and deserts. These varied places shared a similar climate. They received very little rainfall, and they had extreme temperatures. Days were hot, and nights were cold. Summers were scorching, and winters were freezing. So, the Southwest had few trees or other plants.

Some of the Native American tribes who lived here were nomadic, like the Apache. Others, like the Hopi, found ways to farm with little water. They raised crops like corn, beans, squash, and cotton, and they established villages.

The climate of the Southwest greatly influenced the way people lived. For example, since trees were scarce, the Hopi (HO-pee) did not use wood to build their homes. Instead, they used stone and adobe, a type of clay that hardens like cement. They built apartment buildings called *pueblos*. These pueblos were four to five stories high. To move from one story to another, the Hopi used ladders.

To dress themselves during the scorching summer heat, Hopi women wrapped cool cotton cloth around their bodies. They used plants and minerals to dye fabric. Then they wove yellow, red, blue, and green stripes into the material.

The Hopi also created clay pots in which they stored their limited water. Potters painted black geometric designs and images of living creatures to make these containers beautiful.

**mesa:** a flat-topped hill area with steep sides

### 3.5 Native Americans of the Plateau

The Plateau cultural region lay between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains. This region included parts of the northwestern states and British Columbia. It featured flatlands, rolling hills, and steep **gorges**. Like the Southwest, rainfall was light. Summers were hot, but winters were very cold. However, the Plateau had plenty of water, provided by the large Columbia and Fraser Rivers. Many tribes, such as the Nez Percé, Spokane, and Yakima, lived in the Plateau region.

Various types of plants and animals survived on the Plateau. Forests grew near the mountains. Other areas had only thick grasses, berries, or camas, a type of lily. The camas root was an important food for people on the Plateau, since few animals lived here. Some deer and bear roamed the forests. Jackrabbits made their homes in drier sections.

Yakima (YA-kuh-muh) artifacts show the culture that developed as people adapted to the harsh climate and available resources. For instance, the Yakima built their winter homes partially underground to protect themselves from the cold. Each house was a three-foot-deep circular hole with a grass-mat roof. To help keep heat inside, the Yakima covered the mat with earth.

Yakima women also wove local grasses into distinctive clothing, such as basket hats. These hats were cone-shaped but flat on top, and they were decorated with designs.

To harvest camas and other roots, the Yakima developed a digging stick. They used a hardwood stick that was curved and pointed at the end. They attached a short handle of animal horn to the stick. Women pushed a digging stick under a root, and then lifted it out of the ground.



Large rivers provided water and salmon for the dry Plateau region.

**gorge:** a narrow, deep valley with steep sides



When Europeans introduced the horse to Native Americans, the Sioux moved to the treeless grassland of the Great Plains.

### 3.6 Native Americans of the Great Plains

East of the Plateau lay the Great Plains region. The Great Plains extended from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River Valley. From north to south, it stretched from Canada to Texas. Among the many tribes who lived on the Great Plains were the Cheyenne, Pawnee, Comanche, and Sioux.

The Great Plains region was mostly treeless grassland with cold winters and hot summers. It was home to many animals, including pronghorn antelope, deer, and bears. To Native Americans, the most important creature on the plains was the buffalo.

The Western Sioux (SUE) felt that the buffalo was so valuable that they considered it sacred. They created many everyday objects from parts of this animal. For example, the Sioux made their homes, called *teepees*, from buffalo hides, or skins. To build a teepee, women sewed together 6 to 20 buffalo hides. They then constructed a cone of long poles and covered the cone with the hides. Men painted the outside of the teepee with scenes from daily life.

Sioux also used buffalo hides to make warm blankets to wear in the winter. They decorated the flesh side of hides and placed the fur next to their skin.

Warriors even made shields from buffalo skins. The skin of the shield was only one-quarter-inch thick, but it was strong enough to stop an arrow or a spear. Men painted their shields with scenes from their dreams. They believed these images came from heaven and protected them from harm.

### 3.7 Native Americans of the Eastern Woodlands

The Eastern Woodlands cultural region stretched from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean. It ran from the Great Lakes to the Ohio Valley. Native Americans settled among its hills and mountains, in valleys, and along seacoasts. Most Native Americans in the Eastern Woodlands belonged to tribes who spoke either Iroquois or Algonquian. Iroquois tribes included the Mohawk and the Seneca. The Mohegan and the Delaware were two of the many Algonquian tribes.

The area had four quite different seasons, including cold winters and hot summers. Plentiful rain created streams and rivers. The rich woodland forests included birch, oak, and maple trees. The forests provided homes for many animals, such as turkeys, deer, and beavers.

In the region's forests, the Algonquian (al-GON-kwee-in) tribes found the materials for houses. Their houses were called *wigwams*. To make them, the Algonquians (al-GON-kwins) bent small trees into a dome-shaped frame. They covered this frame with mats made from the bark of birch trees.

Animals provided materials for clothing. Deer hide was commonly used. On special occasions, Algonquian men wore capes made of wild turkey feathers. They sewed together overlapping turkey feathers to create a sleeveless cape.

Many Algonquian objects combined more than one resource. For instance, the Algonquians used several types of trees to make amazingly fast, light canoes. First, they constructed a cedar frame. Then they covered the frame with bark from birch trees. The canoe was so light that a man could carry it from one stream to another.



In the Eastern Woodlands, dense forests of birch, oak, and maple trees protected deer, beavers, and other wildlife.





Razor-sharp saw grass and palmetto trees grew in the Everglades swampland of the Southeast.

### 3.8 Native Americans of the Southeast

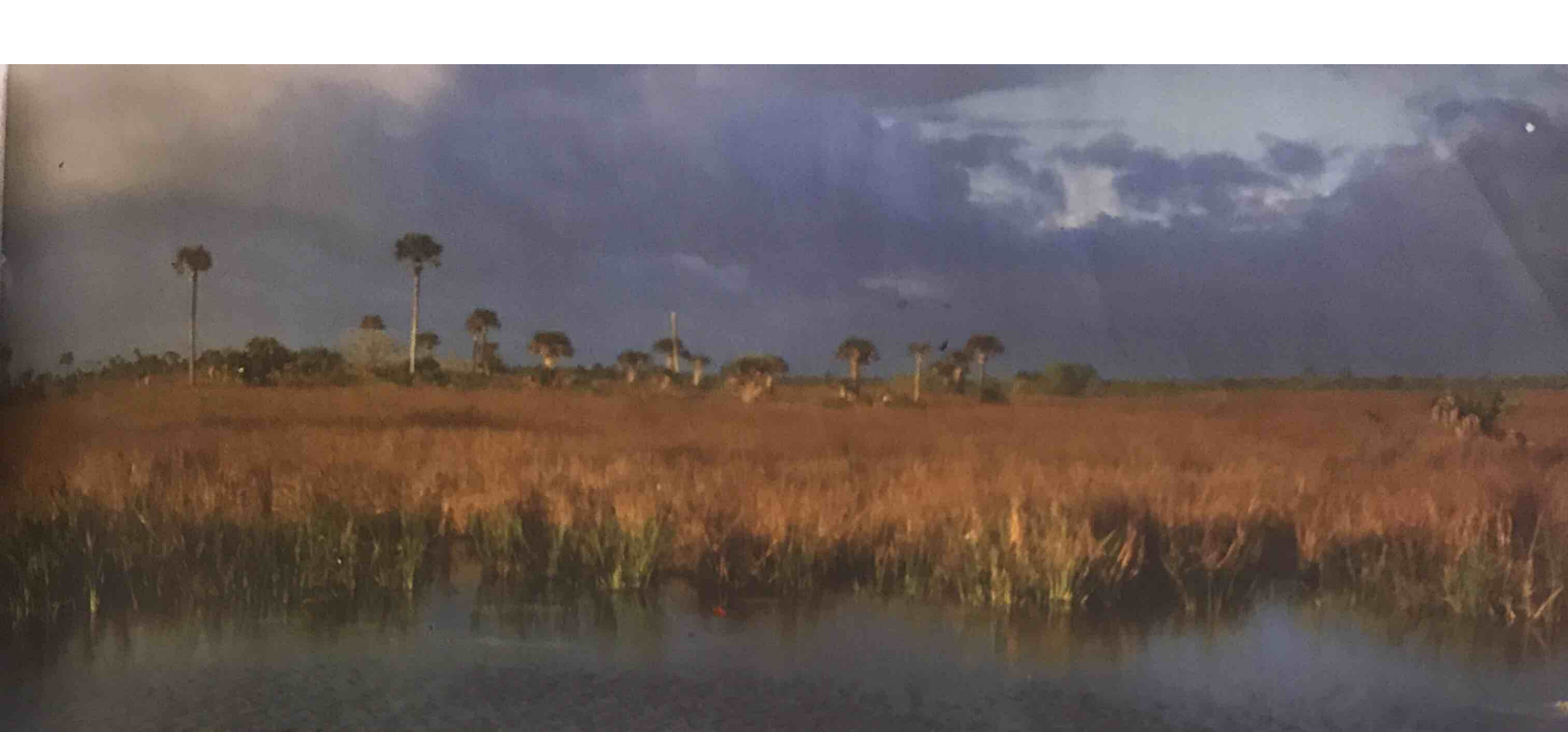
The Southeast cultural region extended south from the Ohio Valley to the Gulf of Mexico. It reached from Texas to the Atlantic Ocean. The territory included river valleys, mountains, coastal plains, and swamps. In both dry and wet areas, weather was usually hot. Many tribes, such as the Creek and Choctaw, lived in the Southeast cultural region. The Seminole lived in the Everglades swampland in southern Florida.

These swamps were particularly hot and steamy. Shallow streams crisscrossed the land. Tall, razor-sharp saw grass sprang from the waters. Giant ferns, cypress, and palmetto trees grew in the humid jungle. While deer roamed the forest, fish, alligators, and snakes lurked in the swamp waters.

The Seminole (SEH-meh-nol) developed a culture suited to swamplands. For example, they built their homes, called *chickees*, on wooden platforms three feet above the ground. The platform protected the houses from the swampy ground. Wooden posts supported a slanted roof constructed of palmetto leaves. To allow breezes to blow through, the chickee had no walls. This made it especially practical in the hot climate.

The swamp environment sometimes forced the Seminole to wear clothing that was unusual for such a warm climate. For instance, to protect their legs from sharp saw grass and mosquitoes, Seminoles wore leggings. They made the leggings of deer hide.

To move along the shallow streams, the Seminole developed flat-bottomed canoes. They constructed each canoe from a fallen cypress tree that they hollowed out using seashells.



### 3.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you learned about a variety of Native American cultures. You used a map to locate the seven Native American cultural regions and to connect the environment of each region with cultures that developed there.

Native Americans in each area used the available natural resources to make their houses, clothing, tools, and art. In the heavily wooded Northwest, Kwakiutl built wooden homes. In the dry Southwest, homes were made of clay.

Each group also adapted to fit its environment. For instance, in the cold Plateau winters, the Yakima built their homes partially underground. In the hot and humid Southeast, the Seminole built houses without walls.

In the next chapter, you will learn why Europeans decided to come to the continent that the Native Americans had already settled. What pushed the Europeans out of their own cities and villages? What did they hope to find in America? Soon you will find out.

