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Description

Three primary cultural groups exist in the Americas after the time of the first Ice Age. These groups are differentiated by migratory and community habits and are referred to as Sedentary, Semi-Sedentary, and Non-Sedentary.

Keywords

Sedentary, Semi-Sedentary, Non-Sedentary, Archaic Period, Trade, Farming, Communities, Hunting and Gathering, Permanent Dwellings, Migration, Agriculture, Maize, Corn, Squash, Towns, Villages, Empire, Aztec, Inca, South America, Mesoamerica, Eastern Woodland Indians, Native Americans, North America, Great Plains, Buffalo, European Explorers, Caterina Pizzigoni, Columbia University

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Transcript

Sedentary, Semi-Sedentary, and Non-Sedentary Cultures

NARRATOR:

During the Archaic Period of 12,000 years ago, humans began trading with each other and cultivating farmland. If the land was rich enough for hunting and farming, people tended to build permanent dwellings and start communities. If they couldn’t find good land, they stayed on the move.

This period was marked by three distinct groups of people: sedentary, who had permanent dwellings; semi-sedentary, who moved every few years; and non-sedentary, who were entirely migratory.

CATERINA PIZZIGONI (Columbia University):

Sedentary groups are based on intensive agriculture. So, this is where we find sort of a complex way of cultivating the starting with maize, and then moved on to squash, and other kind of products. Sedentary people have stable towns and villages, precisely because they can stay on the ground and cultivate.

NARRATOR: Eventually, the Sedentary peoples would create the empire civilizations of the Aztec of Meso-America, and the Inca of South America. Semi-sedentary cultures, like the Eastern Woodland Indian cultures in North America, would also build villages and community centers, but there was a difference. They would continue to migrate every few years.

PIZZIGONI: When we have a look at semi-sedentary populations, they don’t have intensive agriculture. What they do, they shift around within the limited territory over a few years. So, they use part of the territory after four or five years at the maximum, they move to another part.

NARRATOR: Non-Sedentary cultures, like the peoples of the Great Plains in the Midwest, would follow migratory patterns of their food source. For example, they would follow the buffalo herds.

PIZZIGONI: Non-sedentary people have camps. They’re mainly based on hunting and gathering. So, it's
a seasonal moving within in a territory.

NARRATOR:

These patterns of migration and settlement would continue until North America was discovered by European explorers.