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I. The Meeting of Cultures

- a. First human beings crossed **Bering Strait** between 12,000 and 14,000 years ago due to hunting
- b. At the end of 15th century A.D. when Europeans came, America had a high population

A. America Before Columbus

1. The Civilizations of the South

- a. The **Incas** developed a complex political system, paved roads, and controlled different tribes under a single ruler in Peru
- b. The **Mayas** created a written language, numerical system, and agricultural system in Mexico. By the time Europeans came, the only thing left was ruins
- c. Despite the fact **Aztecs** were "**savages**" for sacrificing humans, Aztecs built great settlements such as **Tenochtitlan** which was as large as Europe's greatest capital

2. The Civilizations of the North

- a. In the Southwest, people in **Chaco Canyon** built large **irrigation** systems to farm on dry land
- b. At the peak of 1200AD, the **Cahokia** which lived in the Eastern Woodlands which was covered in forests and had greatest food resources, contained a great complex of large earthen mounds.

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- c. Since agricultural societies were more mobile in the Northeast, farming techniques were designed to **exploit** land faster than to have permanent settlement. Natives used slash-and-burning farming.
- d. Tribes in east of the Mississippi River were linked together loosely by common **linguistic** roots. The largest of the language tribes was the **Algonquin** tribe, which lived along the Atlantic seaboard from Canada to Virginia.
- e. The **Iroquois Confederation** was a more elaborately organized language group. The Iroquois connected five distinct northern "nation"- the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk
- f. Alliances among the various Indian societies (even among those with common languages) were **fragile**, since the peoples of the Americas did not think of themselves as members of a single civilization. When Europeans came and threatened their lifestyle, Indians generally viewed the threat and how it affected their own tribe, not the larger "Indian nation".

3. Tribal Cultures

- a. Tribes all over the United States were starting to experience an **agricultural revolution**. Native Americans started to settle down more and develop new sources of food, clothing, and shelter. Most religions were experiencing significant population growth.