

## S3 Native Americans

It is often said that Christopher Columbus “discovered” America. Of course, we know that this cannot be true as there were people living in America for thousands of years before Columbus set sail from Europe trying to reach India by travelling west.

The first people to live on a land are called indigenous people. This means they are the original settlers in an area. The Native Americans are the original settlers and therefore the indigenous people of the United States.

For a time, Native Americans were called Indians. This is because when Columbus first reached America over 500 years ago, he thought he had arrived in India, so he called the local people Indians.

According to archaeologists, the first settlers in the Americas arrived around 13,000 years ago. It is believed that they arrived in what is now known as Alaska by travelling over land from Asia. It is thought that a glacial movement caused the sea level to drop, making it the journey accessible on foot. Over thousands of years, they made their way down through what is now called the United States of America and continued down through Central and South America.

Native Americans were grouped into tribes or nations, usually based on the area they lived in and their culture, such as their religion, customs, and language. There were hundreds of tribes, some of whom are well known, such as the Cherokee, Apache, and Navajo tribes.

Much of Native American history was not written down and recorded, so archaeologists have discovered a lot about their history by digging up artifacts such as tools and weapons.

Today, around 30% of Native Americans live on reservations. These are areas of land that have been set aside specifically for Native Americans to protect their heritage and culture.