

# The First Americans

## *(Partial Dictation)*

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Archeologists believe Native Americans came from **Asia** 25,000 years ago. By the year **5000 B.C.**, many different groups lived in all parts of North America. Because Indians lived in scattered groups and had little contact with each other, they developed different cultures. They spoke over 1000 different languages, wore different types of clothing, built different types of homes, and made their living in different ways. Those who settled in the northern areas hunted and fished. Those who settled in the east and southwest farmed. Despite their many differences, most Indians shared the belief that people should live in harmony with nature. They believed that people should not own land because the land, like the air, stars, and water, belonged to everyone. The European settlers believed in the ownership of private property. These two very different ways of life were the basis of the many conflicts between the Indians and the settlers.

In the early years of discovery and exploration between **1492** and the mid **1600s**, relations with the Indians were, for the most part, friendly. But as more and more settlers arrived, conflicts developed. Indian tribal leaders were worried and angry because settlers were crowding people off their land. When Indians “sold” land to the settlers, the Indians misunderstood and thought they were only giving whites the right to use the land.

Many settlers tried to understand the Indian way of life and treat them fairly. But others cheated them and took their land. While Indians always fought for their rights, they were unable to stop the advance of thousands of settlers supported by the U.S. Army. Indians won some battles, but they always ended up losing their lands.

By **1880**, fighting had stopped. Finally, the government moved almost all the remaining Indians onto reservations. Today, however, less than half of the Indians live on reservations. Those who do, try to preserve their tribal customs and ways of life. But discrimination by non-Indians, an unwillingness by Indians to adopt new ways, and a basic distrust of the federal government, have kept many Indians out of the mainstream of modern life.