

WORLD HISTORY

ANCIENT RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS

ANCIENT EGYPT

LOCATION:

along the Nile River in present-day Egypt.

GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGES:

1. Nile provided water
2. Nile provided fertile soil for farming
3. Nile provided transportation
4. Deserts, rugged coastlines, the Nile, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea protected Egypt from invasion

GOVERNMENT:

Upper and Lower Egypt were united by Menes and he began the system of dynasties (a series of rulers from the same family). Egypt was ruled by pharaohs who were believed to be gods.

RELIGION:

Polytheistic. Pharaohs were thought to be gods and were buried in pyramids. Originally it was believed that only pharaohs could hope for pleasant afterlives – everyone else was doomed to misery and sorrow. Over time, though, this idea changed and it was believed that everyone was entitled to a prosperous afterlife.

HISTORY:

- Old Kingdom: also known as the “Age of Pyramids” because this is when most pyramids were built. Pharaohs were glorified. 2660-2180 B.C. Ended when the First Illness occurred – poor harvests, warfare and lawlessness. People lost faith in the pharaohs because they thought the First Illness happened because the gods were unhappy with the pharaohs.
- Middle Kingdom: 2080-1640 B.C. Pharaohs restored power and moved the capital to Thebes. Focused on projects for the public trying to keep the people happy. Encouraged trade, improved transportation, built irrigation canals and made sure all people had plenty to eat. A Second Illness occurred, though, and a group of people from the East (the Hyksos) invaded Egypt and took over. They were able to conquer Egypt because they had horse-drawn carriages and weapons the Egyptians had never seen before.
- Rule of the Hyksos: 1640-1570 B.C. Eventually overthrown by the Egyptians and pharaohs are restored to power.
- New Kingdom: 1570-1075 B.C. Egypt decided to avoid invasion by invading those around them. Egypt creates an empire.
- Late Period: 1075-671 B.C. Period of decline for Egypt. They lost their empire and faced many invasions.

WORLD HISTORY

ANCIENT RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS

ANCIENT EGYPT

PHARAOHS:

1. Menes: United Upper and Lower Egypt
2. Hatshepsut: first female pharaoh
3. Ramses II: known for building great temples
4. Akhenaton: tried to convert Egyptians from polytheism to monotheism
– not successful for long

SOCIAL CLASSES:

great differences between the upper and lower classes

- Upper class: pharaoh, pharaoh's family and advisors, nobles, priests – lived in large homes, had plenty to eat, held extravagant banquets, many clothes, jewels.
- Lower Class: peasants – worked hard in the fields and paid high taxes

CULTURAL ADVANCEMENTS:

- Writing: hieroglyphics – wrote on papyrus
- Numeral system for accounting
- Geometry to build pyramids
- Lunar Calendar: 12 months with 30 days each
- Medicine: first to perform brain surgery and make accurate drawings of human organs