

WORLD HISTORY

EARLY AFRICAN AND MESO-AMERICAN SOCIETIES

THE INCA OVERVIEW NOTES

- Nearly the whole Inca Empire was part of the rugged Andes mountain chain
- The pre imperial homeland of the Incas was a small area along the Urubamba River Valley, on the eastern side of the Andes of present-day Peru
- Like nowhere else in the Americas, the people of the Andes had for over a thousand years domesticated beasts of burden: alpacas and llamas
- The origins of the Incas are murky.
- Archaeological evidence suggests they were a regional ethnic group, or tribe, living around present-day Cuzco. However, Inca oral tradition has them emerging from the chilly depths of the high Andes Lake, Titicaca
- There may have been as many as eight Supreme Inca rulers before the greatest of the Incas, Pachacuti, claimed the throne around 1438
- The foundation of the Inca empire was their ability to grow excess food and store it
- The Incas' unique social organization brought together over 7 million people, speaking many different languages and spanning over 2,000 miles
- All worked towards a common purpose
- The Incas had no written language
- The Incas built stoneworks capable of withstanding tremendous earthquakes
- The Incas built 20,000 miles of roads
- The Incas achieved a great empire through a remarkable organization of human labor
- Human labor was the coin of the Inca Empire
- Through a system of communication called *quipu*, information was constantly flowing through the empire by runners
- Inca Empire created a world of magnificent accomplishments
- The Incas made pottery, including small effigies depicting animals such as llamas, alpacas and the large predator of the region – the jaguar
- Utilitarian pots, beakers and dual bottles with simple repetitive geometric patterns are distinctly Inca
- The Inca state organized artisan women to produce distinctive textiles
- The Incas are most famous for their spectacular stonework and naturalistic artistic design
- Machu Picchu, the temple palace in the clouds, is the crown jewel of Inca architecture and design
- Started by Pachacuti, but never completed, Machu Picchu was never touched, damaged or looted by the Spanish
- Lost to the ages, Machu Picchu was rediscovered in 1911 by Hiram Bingham
- Machu Picchu is sharply divided into two parts: an agricultural area and an urban area