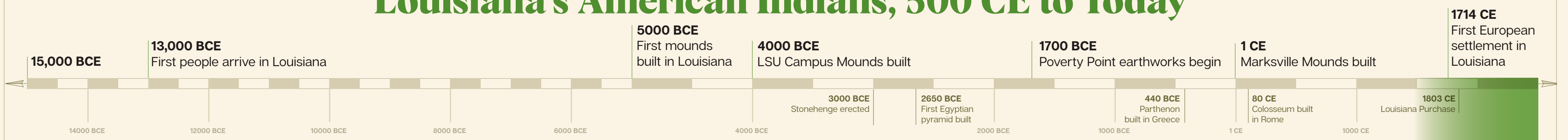


Louisiana Archaeology

Louisiana's American Indians, 500 CE to Today



American Indians lived in Louisiana for thousands of years. Their lives changed dramatically when Europeans and enslaved Africans arrived. Europeans brought new ideas and materials with them. They also brought different diseases, slavery, and warfare. American Indians strived to live with Europeans while keeping their culture and traditions.



Sauvage Matachez en Guerrier (Natchez War Chief), Nouvelle Orleans. Gift of the Estate of Belle J. Bushnell, 1941. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 41-72-10/18.



Desseins de Sauvages de Plusieurs Nations (Drawing of Indians of Several Nations) Gift of the Estate of Belle J. Bushnell, 1941. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 41-72-10/20.



Alfred Boisseau, *Louisiana Indians Walking Along a Bayou*, The New Orleans Museum of Art: Gift of William E. Groves, 56.34.

In the 1600s and early 1700s, conflicts arose in the eastern U.S. between some Tribes and colonists. In the late 1700s, some Native Americans moved west to avoid more conflict. Many Tribes moved into Louisiana. Some allied with communities still living on their ancestral lands. Others disagreed over land and resources.



Tribal communities, identified by Europeans, across the state during this period.

1800s – 1900s

American settlers moving west in the 1800s pushed more American Indians from their home lands. Some chose to leave, but conflicts with settlers forced many to move. They took different paths into the state and lived in different places. Many groups moved frequently, struggling to find vacant land to live on.



Choctaw Village near the Chefuncte. Gift of the Estate of Belle J. Bushnell, 1941. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 41-72-10/27.

In the early 1900s, U.S. policy tried to reduce and even destroy Tribes. American Indians resisted this effort. They worked to protect their culture, history, and traditions. In the 1970s, the U.S. changed its position



Tribal communities across the state during this period.

to support tribal self-determination. They began to recognize Tribes as sovereign nations. Tribes must document their history and genealogy to gain recognition.



Chief Stimafukchee, 1790, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.



Choctaw Palmetto House, Bayou LaCombe, ca. 1881. Courtesy of National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



Ali Sylestine and Landon Daigle, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.



Vivian H. with chalk art project. *Hanma* means "family" in Sitimaxa (Chitimacha), Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana.

TODAY

The U.S. government recognizes four Tribes in Louisiana. This status provides important rights and responsibilities. Each Tribe has a reservation where many, but not all, of its citizens live. They also receive access to government services and control over their trust lands. Nine other federally recognized Tribes in the U.S. have ancestral ties to Louisiana.



Ally B., Rikkiann C., and Zoe B. prepare thistle for blow gun darts. Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana.

Louisiana also has eleven state-recognized tribes. State recognition does not provide land or legal rights. It does affirm tribal status for state purposes, and tribal members qualify for some educational and health benefits. Other groups continue working toward recognition.



Jena Band of Choctaw Tribal Staff.

Today, American Indians live across Louisiana. They have jobs in all areas of agriculture, business, education, and industry. Tribes keep strong ties to the land we now call the State of Louisiana. They pass their culture, history, and traditions on to each generation.



Tribes recognized in Louisiana today.



Ann Luster Robicheaux teaches Tehya the tradition of making spanish moss dolls, United Houma Nation



Palmetto hut building demonstration by members Jared Crosby and Raymond Clark, United Houma Nation.