A Timeline of American Indian Cultures

North America’s distinctive geographical regions – Eastern Woodlands, Great Plains, Desert Southwest and Pacific Northwest - created many unique Indian cultures in what would later become the United States of America. This time line will give a general view of important American Indian events from the Paleo Indian Era to the present day.

1. **Paleo-Indian Era 15,000 B.C. – 7000 B.C.**
   - Lived in small mobile groups
   - Hunted various animals with spears tipped with flint points
   - May have collected plant food as deciduous forest replaced Ice Age coniferous forest
   - Occupied small temporary camps in response to seasonal availability of food
   - Made their distinctive tools in workshops located near outcrops of flint

2. **12,000 B.C. – American Indians Arrive in What Will Become the United States**
   - Some prehistoric groups travel by boat and land along the coast of present day California
   - As glaciers retreat and land bridges open to North American Continent from Siberia, some prehistoric groups cross these land bridges
   - Hunter gatherer groups spread out across North America

3. **10,000 B.C. – Paleo Indians Become the Most Accomplished Stone Age Hunters**

4. **9000 B.C. – Clovis Culture emerges**
   - Named for artifacts first found at Blackwater Draw near Clovis, New Mexico

5. **7500 B.C. - Folsom Culture emerges**
   - Named for artifacts discovered at Folsom, New Mexico

6. **7500 B.C. Eastern Woodlands Archaic Indian Era begins**
   - 3000 B.C. – American Indians begin shift to agriculture
   - 2000 B.C. - 1000 B.C. - Red Ochre Culture appears

7. **4000 B.C. - Old Copper Culture initiates metallurgy in the United States**
   - Work copper along upper Great Lakes

8. **2200 B.C. – Metallurgy begins in Europe**

9. **2000 B.C. - Pecos Culture produces sacred rock paintings**

10. **1700 B.C. – Poverty Point Mound Culture builds first American city**

11. **1000 B.C. - Woodland Period begins**
   - 1000 B.C. to 100 B.C. – Adena culture appears
   - 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. – Hopewell culture appears
   - 700 A.D. – Cahokia settlement first established
   - 750 A.D. – 1100 A.D. – Upper Midwest Effigy Mounds are built
   - 900 A.D. – Construction of Monks Mound, Eastern U.S.’s largest earth work, is begun at Cahokia
12. 250 A.D. - Bow and arrow introduced
13. 300 - Archaic upper Great Lakes cultures begin building effigy mounds
14. 800 – Bow and arrow spreads across the North American Continent
15. 1000 - Mississippian Period begins.
   - 1000 - Mississippian Culture establishes Cahokia as their capital
   - 1050 – Aztalan is occupied by Mississippians in Wisconsin
   - 1070 – Construction of the Great Serpent Effigy Mound in Ohio
   - 1200 – Monks Mound is completed at Cahokia
   - 1400 – Cahokia is abandoned
   - 1600 – Mississippian towns in Ohio are abandoned
   - 1650 - Mississippian culture vanishes
16. 1000-1400 – Navajo and Apache migrate south from present day Canada’s Northwest Territory and establish homelands in the American Desert Southwest
17. 1100 – Anasazi build cliff cities at Mesa Verde, Colorado
18. 1142 – Iroquois League creates a constitution
19. 1492 – Christopher Columbus makes landfall in the Caribbean
   - 1520 - The Aztec Empire at Mexico City falls to Hernando Cortes
   - 1565 – St. Augustine, oldest European city in North America, is founded
   - 1598 – Spanish establish colony near present day Santa Fe, New Mexico
   - 1607 – Jamestown Colony founded by England in present day Virginia
   - 1620 – Puritans establish Plymouth colony in present day Massachusetts
20. 1600 - 1650 – Modern American Indian Tribes move into Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys
21. 1614 – Pocahontas marries John Rolfe
22. 1621 - Squanto and Massasoit help Pilgrims survive
23. 1636-37 - Pequot War
24. 1638 - First reservations, established by Puritans near New Haven, Connecticut
25. 1675 - Metacom leads “King Philip’s War”
26. 1680 – Popé drives Spanish from Santa Fe
27. 1680 - Kateri Tekakwitha, Patroness of Ecology, dies
28. 1750 - American Indian horse culture dominates the Great Plains –
   - 1700 – 1800 eastern woodland tribes Arapaho, Cheyenne and Sioux acquire horses and move out into the Great Plains to follow the buffalo
   - 1700-1750 – Kiowa migrate from present day British Columbia to southern Great Plains
   - 1720 – Comanche establish Comancheria, a homeland that stretches across the southern plains, including Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and parts of Colorado
29. 1756-63 - French and Indian War
30. 1763-5 – Ottawa Chief Pontiac’s war for independence
31. 1785 - Cherokee leader, Nanye’Hi, helps negotiate the Treaty of Hopewell setting western boundaries for white settlement in South Carolina
32. 1799 - Handsome Lake founds longhouse religion
33. 1803 – United States purchases Louisiana Territory from France
34. 1803–1806 - Louis and Clark expedition meets with Indian cultures living along the Missouri River and in the Pacific northwest, including the Mandan, Hidatsa, Shoshone, Nez Perce and Blackfoot
35. 1805 – Sacagawea, interpreter and guide, aids Lewis and Clark western expedition
36. 1811 – Chief Tecumseh leads the Last Great American Indian Confederacy
37. 1817-42 – Seminole Indian Wars
38. 1821 - Sequoyah creates Cherokee system of writing
39. 1824 – United States establishes Bureau of Indian Affairs in War Department
40. 1827 – Cherokee Indians form their own Republic
41. 1830 - Indian Removal Act, passed by Congress, legalizes removal of all Indians east of Mississippi to lands west of the river
42. 1833 – Chief Black Hawk writes his autobiography
43. 1835 - Osceola resists Indian Removal Act
44. 1850 - Chief Sealth welcomes settlers to the Pacific Northwest
45. 1851 - First Fort Laramie Treaty to guarantee safe passage of settlers traveling to the Pacific Northwest and California
46. 1854 – Plains Indians War begins in Wyoming; it would last for 36 years
47. 1861-65 - Civil War in United States
48. 1862 - Minnesota Uprising by woodland Santee Sioux results in the deaths of more than 400 white settlers and the expulsion of the Santee Sioux from Minnesota
49. 1861 – Cochise, Undefeated Apache Warrior Hero, fights to keep Apache land
50. 1862 – U.S. Congress passes Homestead Act opening the Great Plains to settlers
51. 1864 – Ely Samuel Parker Becomes Adjutant to General Ulysses S. Grant
52. 1865-69 Building of Union Pacific Railroad brings settlers to the Great Plains
53. 1868 – Red Cloud, the Sioux Renaissance Leader, hands the U.S. Military its only defeat on U.S. soil
54. 1875 – Quanah Parker, Legendary Comanche Leader, lead his people to peace
55. 1876 – Sitting Bull & Crazy Horse defeat George Armstrong Custer and 7th Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Bighorn
56. 1877 - Chief Joseph leads brilliant Nez Perce retreat
57. 1879 – Ponca Chief Standing Bear sues Federal Government and wins case to become a citizen
58. 1880 - Susette La Flesche Picotte works lecture circuit for American Indian rights
59. 1883 - Sarah Winnemucca Publishes Her Autobiography
60. 1887 - Dawes General Allotment Act passed by Congress leads to the break up of the large Indian Reservations and the sale of Indian lands to white settlers
61. 1889 - Susan La Flesche Picotte becomes the first American Indian woman medical doctor
62. 1890 – The First Battle of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota ends the Plains Indian Wars
63. 1900 – La Flesche family starts to preserve American Indian cultures and religions
64. 1900 - Francis La Flesche becomes a successful scholar and ethnologist
65. 1903 - Charles Albert Bender opens the door to professional sports for American Indians
66. 1907 - Charles Curtis is the first American Indian elected to the U.S. Senate
67. 1912 – Jim Thorpe wins Olympic Gold Medals in the Pentathlon and Decathlon events
68. 1924 - Gertrude Simmons Bonnin sets the stage for survival of American Indians
69. 1924 - All Indians declared citizens of U.S.
70. 1929 – Charles Curtis is elected Vice President of the United States
71. 1934 - Wheeler-Howard Act, passed to protect American Indian Culture
72. 1939 - U.S. Park Service commissions Pablita Velarde to create a series of murals
73. 1942 –American Indians become heroes in WWII
   - 1942 - Clarence Tinker promoted to major general in U.S. Air Force
   - 1942-45 - Navajo code talkers thwart Japanese code breakers
   - 1945 - Ira Hayes helps raise the flag on Iwo Jima
74. 1956 - Ben Reifel becomes first member of Sioux nation elected to Congress
75. 1964 - Billy Mills wins the 10,000 meter run at the Tokyo Olympics
76. 1964 - Jay Silverheels founds the Indian Actors Workshop
77. 1968 – N. Scott Momaday wins Pulitzer Prize
78. 1969 - American Indian Movement (AIM) begins to form
79. 1970 - John Echohawk founds NARF
80. 1971 - William Hensley helps pass the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
81. 1973 – Second Battle of Wounded Knee
82. 1977 – Velarde and Martinez Found the Modern American Indian Art Movement
83. 1979 - American Indian Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 95-341 ) passed
84. 1983 - Buffy Sainte-Marie receives Academy Award
85. 1984 - Louise Erdrich wins the National Book Critics Circle Award
86. 1985 - Wilma Mankiller becomes Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation
87. 1987 – California’s Cabazon band wins U.S. Supreme Court Case to run casinos
88. 1990 - Simon Ortiz receives Lifetime Achievement award from Native Writers
89. 1996 - Winona LaDuke runs as Green Party candidate for Vice President
90. 2002 – Dr. Frank Dukepoo Joins Einstein on Ithaca’s Sciencenter Wall of Inspiration
   - John Herrington, first American Indian Astronaut
91. 2007 – Jana Mashonee is nominated for a Grammy