

Summary: Native People in the South

East Coast Fishers

Some of the earliest people in Florida settled along the southern coast of the Atlantic Ocean. They chose places with lakes and rivers so they could get fresh drinking water.

Lakes, rivers, and the ocean also provided food.

A group of American Indians called the Ais built villages on the coast near the Indian River and the St. Lucie River. They ate shellfish and fish. They hunted animals and gathered food. Family groups lived together and shared a common culture. They shared customs, laws, and beliefs.

The Tequesta lived south of the Ais. They lived in villages near present day Miami and Biscayne Bay. Each village had a leader. A chief was in charge of all the villages. The Tequesta used canoes to catch sharks, small whales, and fish.

West Coast Fishers

The Tocobaga and Calusa settled in villages on the west coast of Florida. The Tocobaga lived near Tampa Bay. They fished for food. The Tocobaga culture had one powerful chief who made important decisions. Less powerful chiefs ruled the villages.

The Calusa also lived along the coast and depended on fish for food. The Calusa lived on the southwest coast. Their main town was near the present day city of Fort Myers. Canals connected many of their villages. The Calusa were boatbuilders. They traveled in order to trade goods with other people.

The Calusa faced scarcity. They didn't have everything they wanted. They had to barter to get more goods and services. Trade helped make the Calusa wealthy and powerful.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

culture *noun*, a way of life shared by a group of people

custom *noun*, a way of doing something that is shared by a group

trade *noun*, the exchange of goods and services

barter *noun*, a kind of trade in which one type of goods or service is traded for another

scarcity *noun*, when there are few resources to produce the goods and services that people want



After You Read

REVIEW Why did groups of people settle near the ocean? What did the ocean provide for these settlers? Circle one word that tells the answer.

REVIEW In what ways were the Tocobaga and the Calusa similar? How were the Calusa like the Tocobaga? Underline the sentence that tells the answer.