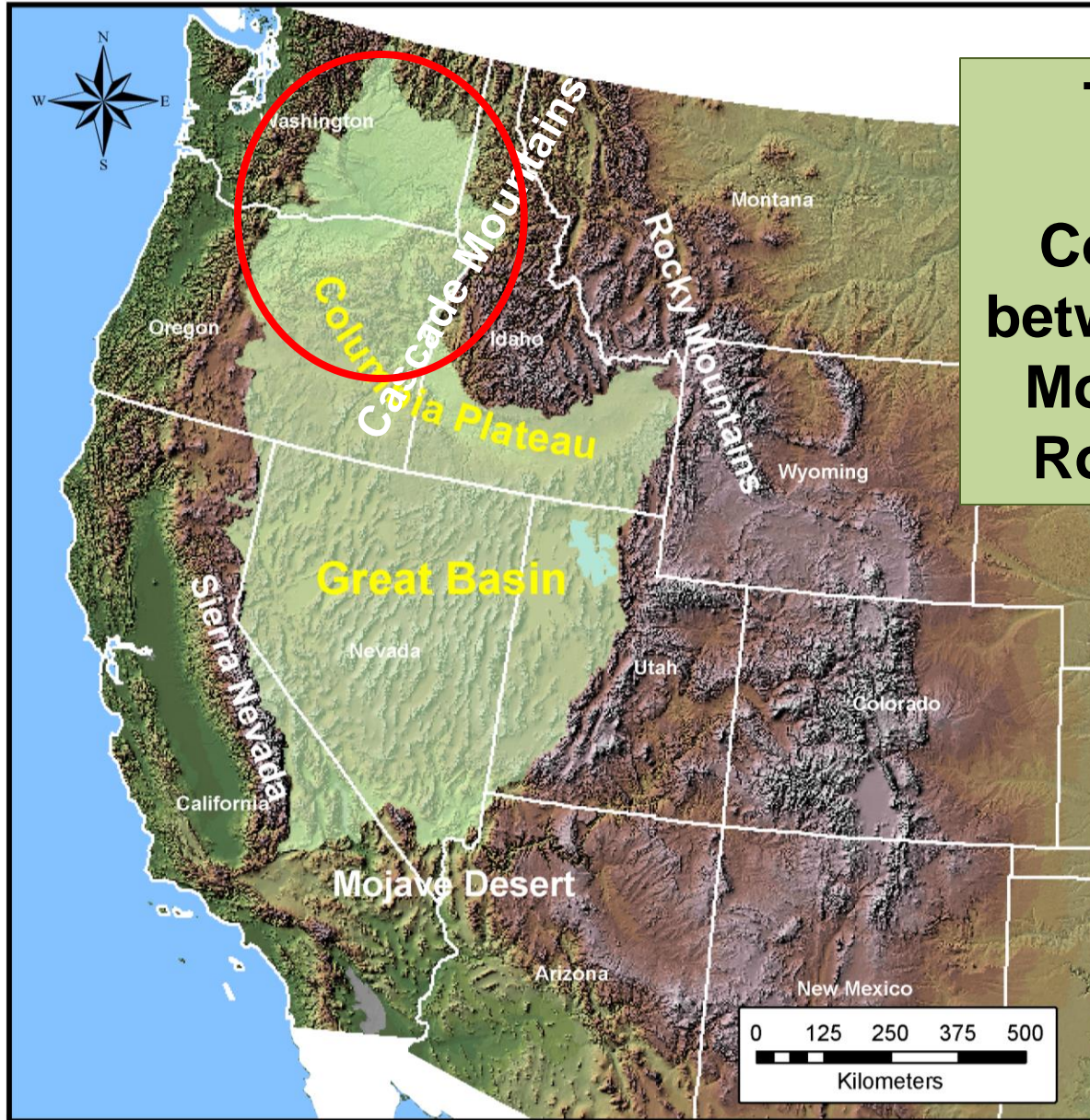


Nez Perce of the Northwest Plateau

SS4H1 The student will describe how early Native American cultures developed in North America.

- a. Locate where Native Americans settled
- b. Describe how Native Americans used their environment to obtain food, clothing, and shelter.

Great Basin and Columbia Plateau Regions in the western United States



The Nez Perce settled on the Columbia plateau between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains.

A plateau is a high, steep sided area rising above the surrounding land.



The top of the plateau was mostly flat and covered with thick prairie grasses.



Many rivers are found in the valleys of the region. The area around the rivers is a thick forest. The Nez Perce used the rivers and forests for food, shelter, and clothing.



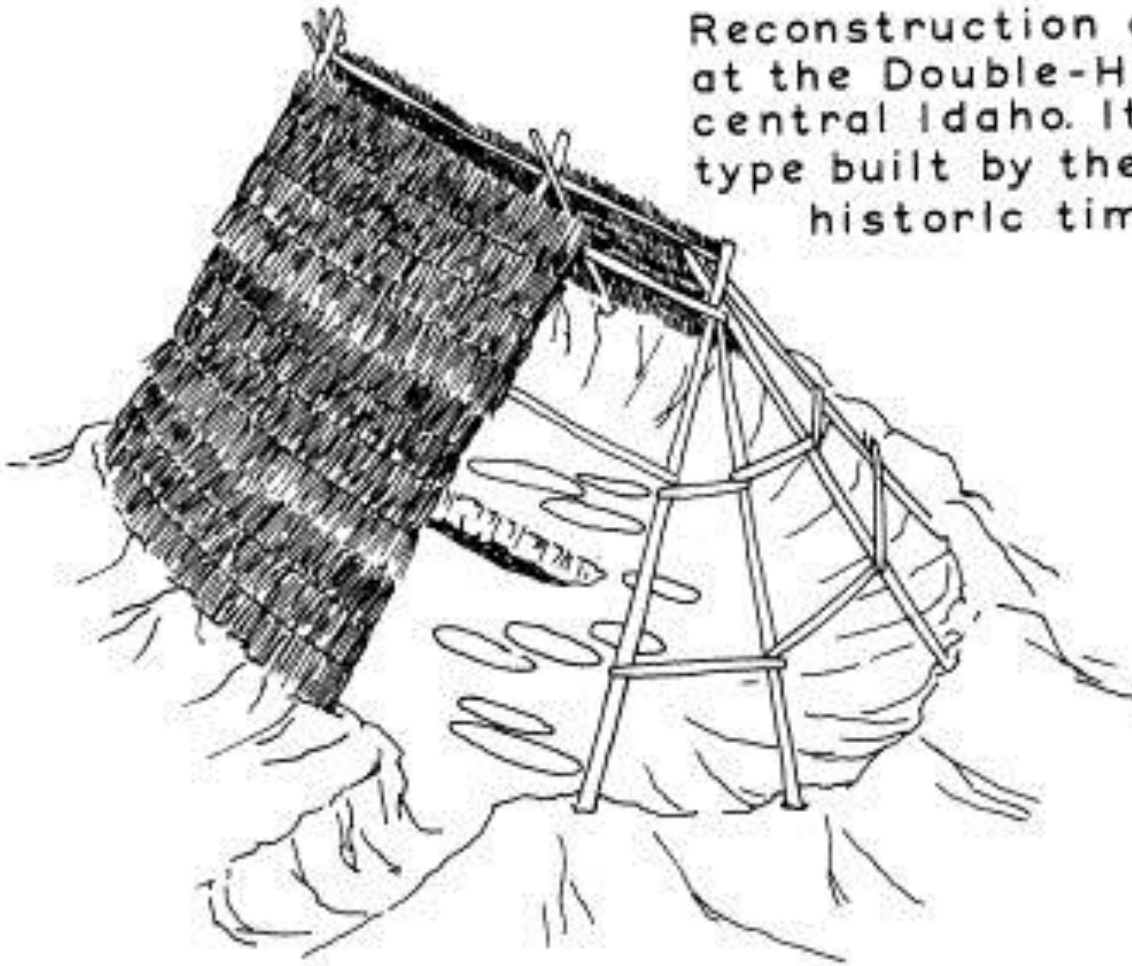
The difference in altitude between the river valleys and the top of the plateau meant a difference in temperature and climate. This benefited the Nez Perce because it gave them a longer period of time to find the plants that they ate. Plants found in both locations might bloom at different times. It also increased their resources because different plants and animals could also be found in each location.



**The Nez Perce
used to long
prairie grass to
weave mats and
baskets.**



Reconstruction of a mat lodge
at the Double-House site, north-
central Idaho. It resembles the
type built by the Nez Percé in
historic times.



The mats were used to build their shelter.
They linked logs together and then covered the logs
with mats woven out of the prairie grasses.

**This type of shelter was called the mat longhouse.
Each house could be up to 100 feet long.
Many families lived together in one house.**





In the spring, the
Nez Perce caught
salmon in the rivers.



They also hunted in the forests for elk, sheep, and other animals.

The Nez Perce wore shirts, leggings, and breech cloths made out of animal skins and jewelry made out of animal bones and elk teeth.





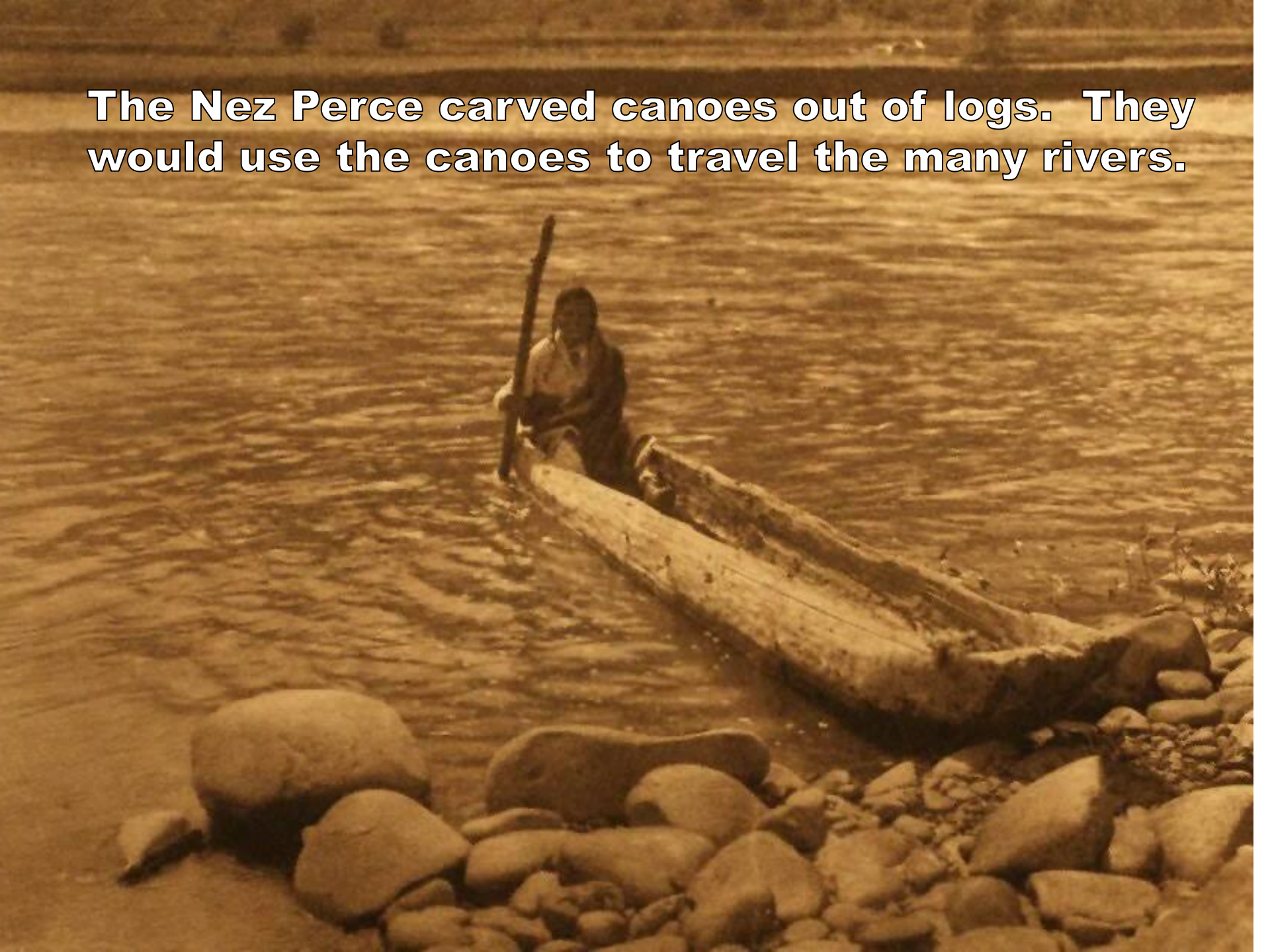
They made tools out of wood, animal bones, animal antlers, and rocks.



Bowls and spoons were cut from the long horn sheep horns – already curved.



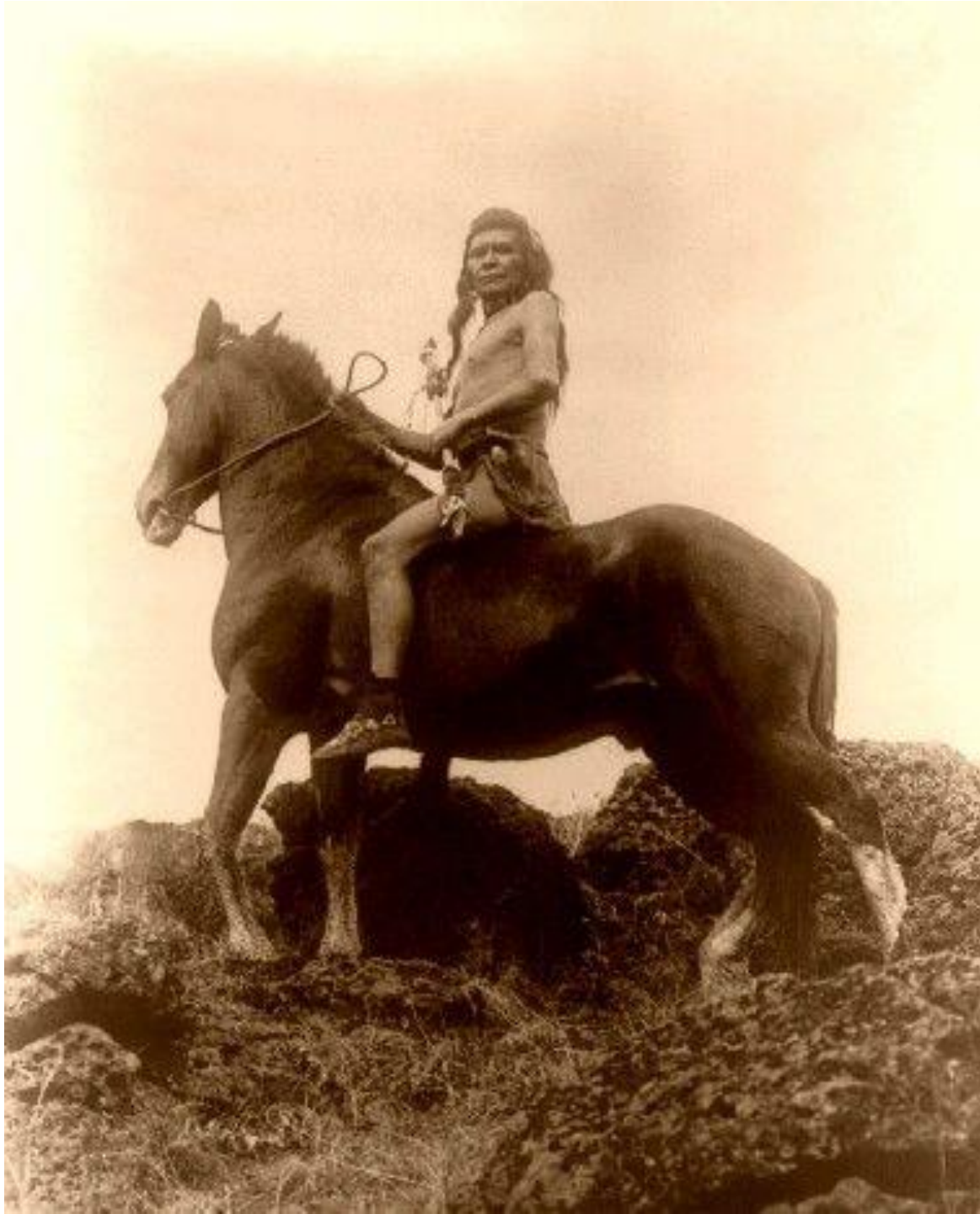
The Nez Perce carved canoes out of logs. They would use the canoes to travel the many rivers.



In the 1700s, the Nez Perce acquired horses. They raised the horses on the top of the plateau, and had one of the largest herds in North America.



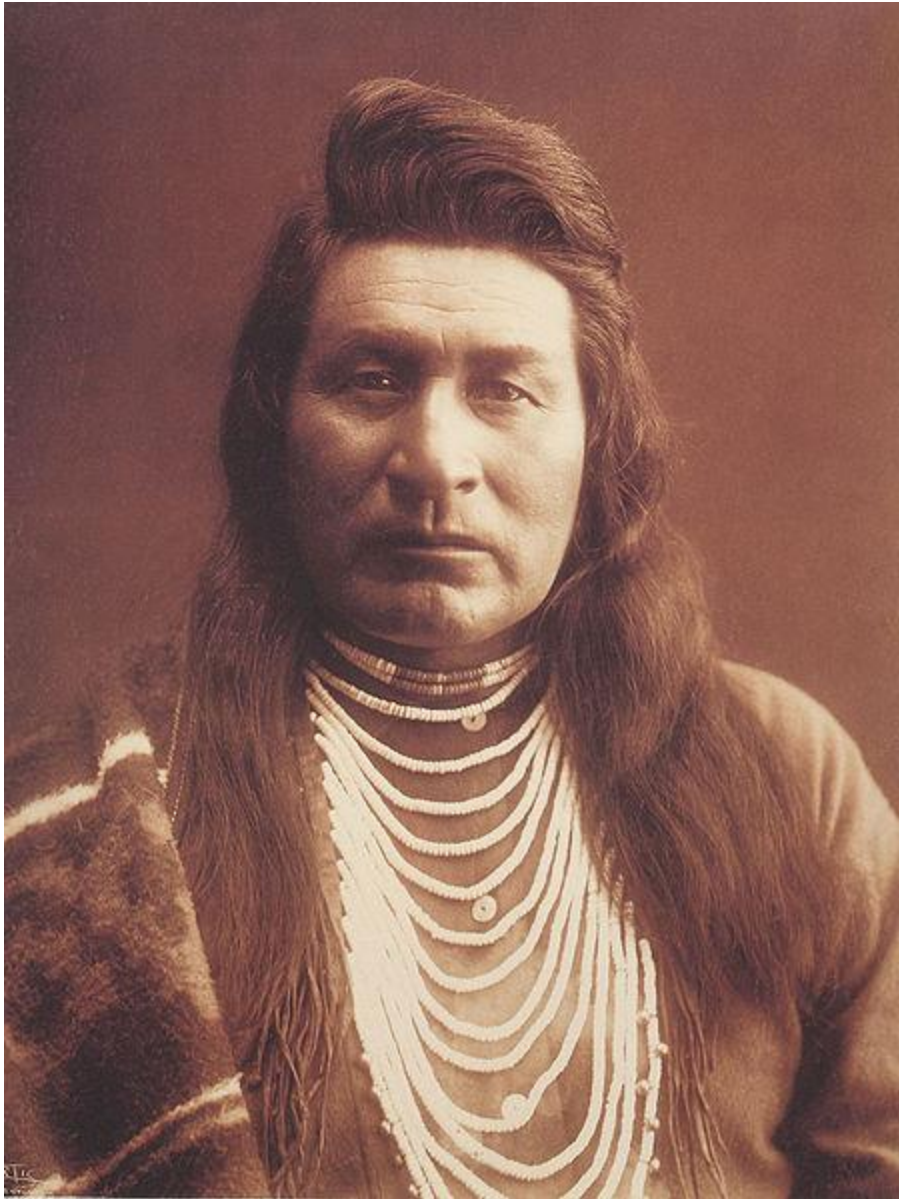
Horses allowed the Nez Perce to travel farther and faster, and to carry a heavier load. They began traveling farther to hunt, and traveled to neighboring tribes and trading posts to trade goods.





For more information about the Nez Perce
and their Appaloosa horse, visit:

<http://www.appaloosa.com/association/history.htm>



Chief Joseph was head of the Nez Perce in 1877 at the time of the Nez Perce war, which occurred when the U.S. government and incoming settlers wanted the land occupied by the Nez Perce.

The Nez Perce believe that all things in nature, such as rocks, animals, rivers, plants, etc. had at one time had the characteristics of humans

They believed that they could still communicate with the human side of nature.



When children reached a certain age, they would go into the forest for a visionquest and seek supernatural guidance from things in nature. This guidance would determine their future success within the tribe.

Nez Perce **of the** **Northwest Plateau**

How did the Nez Perce use their environment for food, clothing, and shelter?

How did the Nez Perce compare and contrast with other tribes you have studied?

Resources:

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/whmi/educate/whmitg/2whmi4.htm>

<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Le-Pa/Nez-Perc.html>

<http://www.centennial.k12.mn.us/gle/5thgradeNAmerican/NezPerce.htm>

<http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/walker.html>

<http://www.aaanativearts.com/colville-tribe/plateau-indian-tools-weapons.htm>

<http://www.windermereallstar.com/pagemanager/default.aspx/pageid=2113649&nf=1>

http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/nepe/exb/transportation_trade/NEPE8851-3017_Ax-etc..jpg