

The Pawnee Indians

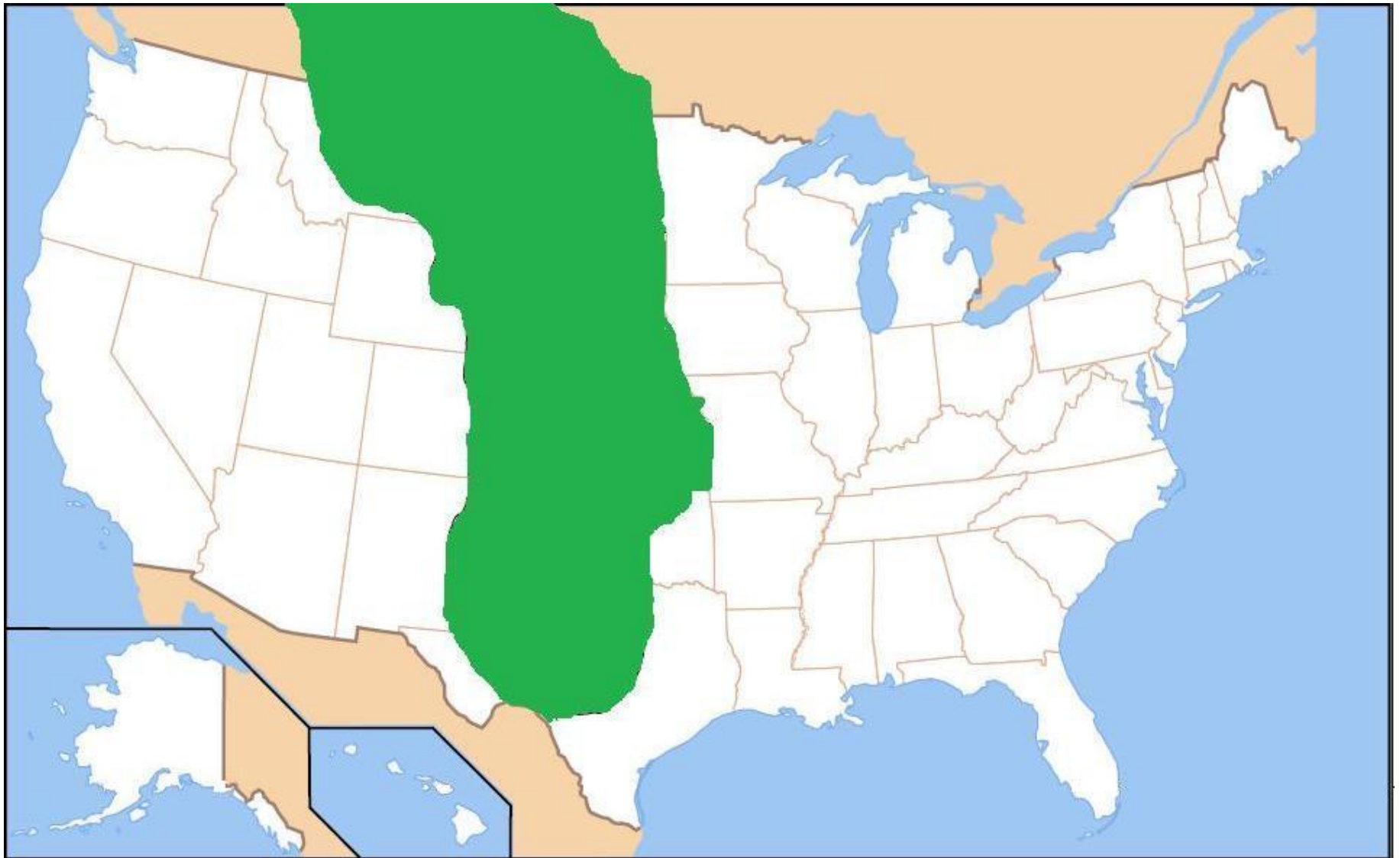
Of the Great Plains

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.

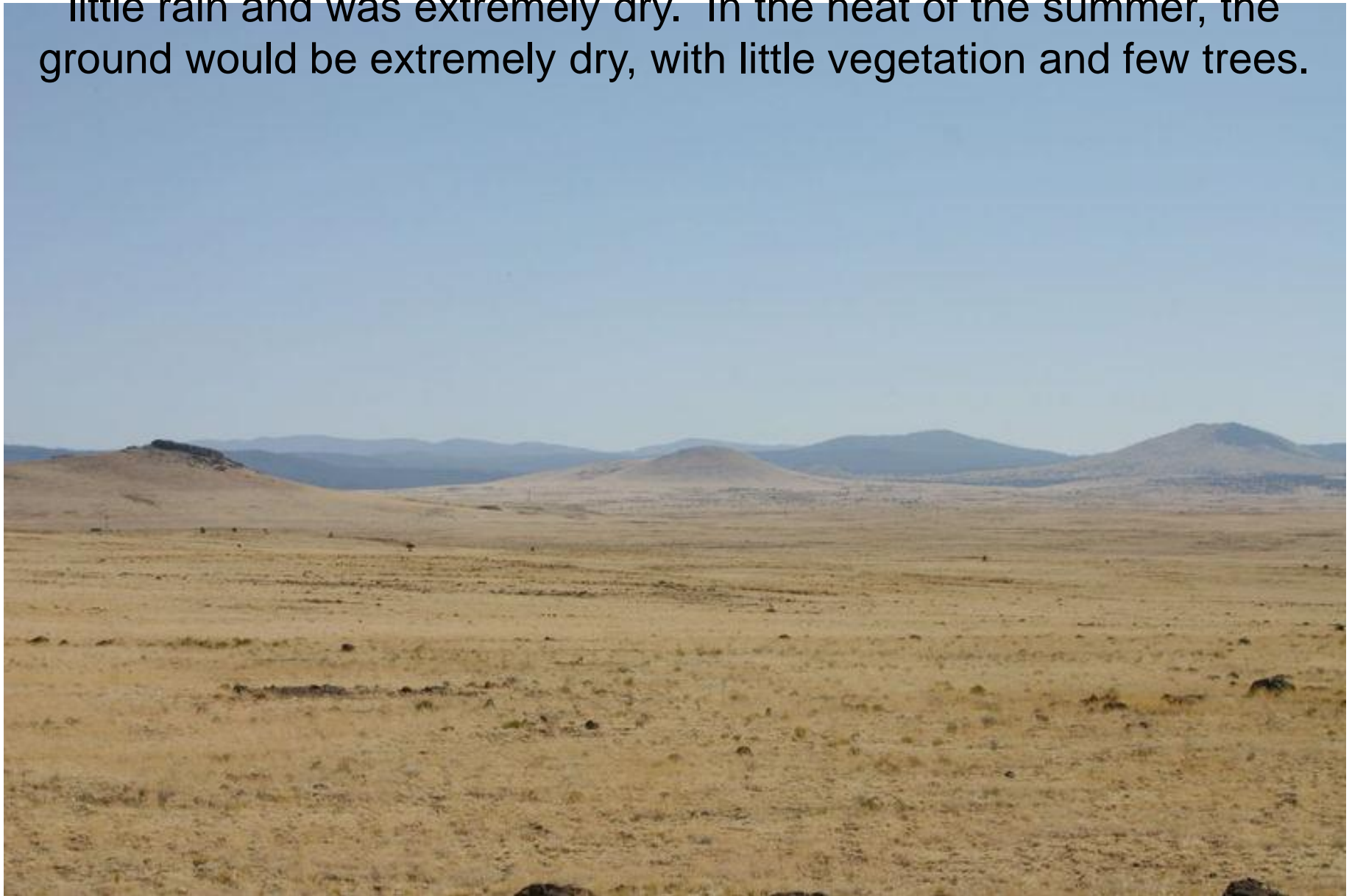


The area between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River is known as the Great Plains. The climate of the plains includes extreme temperatures, incredibly hot in the summer and cold in the winter.



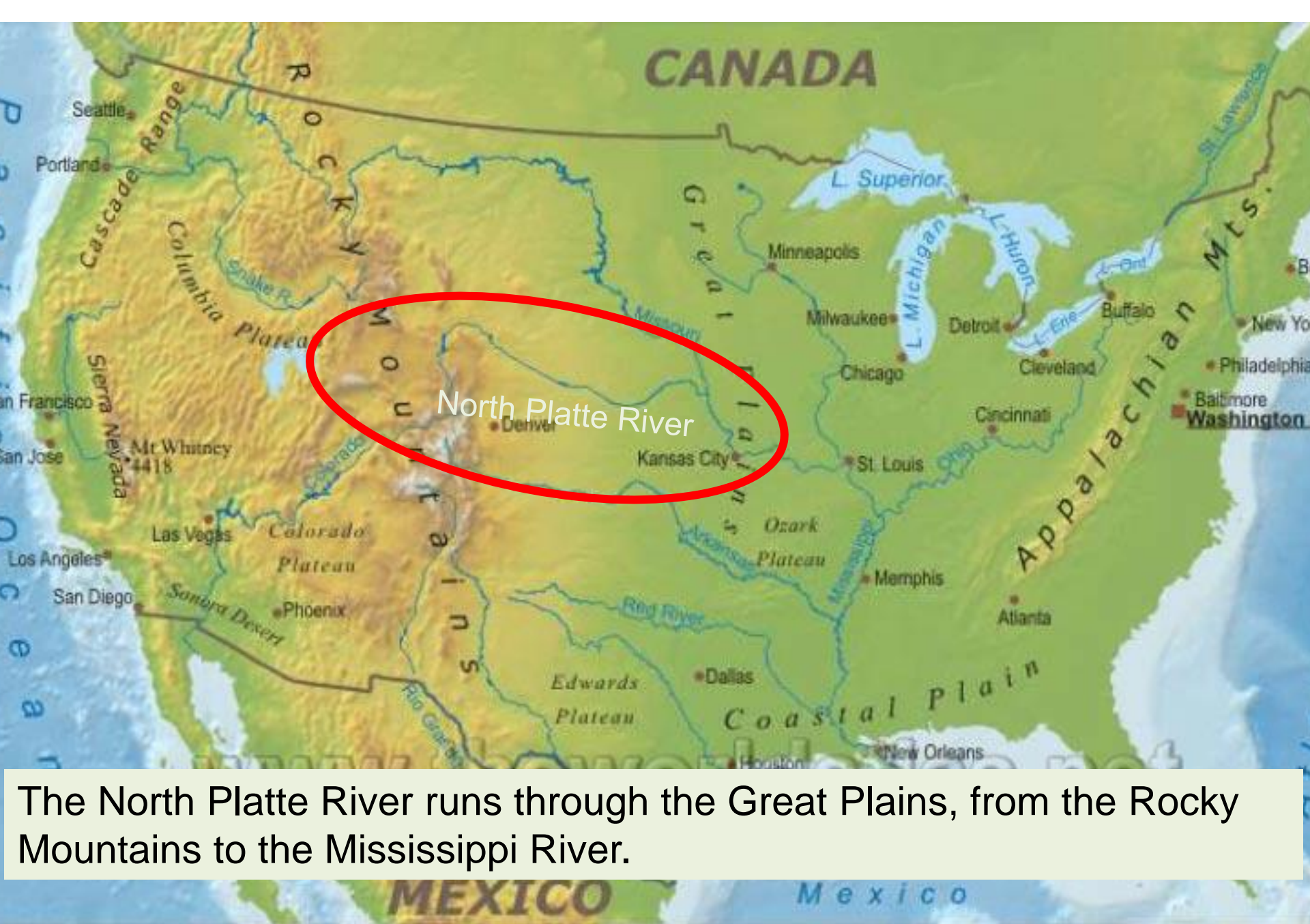
The Pawnee Indians were one of the Plains Indian tribes that lived in the Great Plains.

The Pawnee lived in the western plains. This area received very little rain and was extremely dry. In the heat of the summer, the ground would be extremely dry, with little vegetation and few trees.



At the time in history that the Pawnee lived on the Great Plains, bison roamed the plains in great quantity. The bison would migrate across the plains to find food and water. The Pawnee migrated to follow the bison.





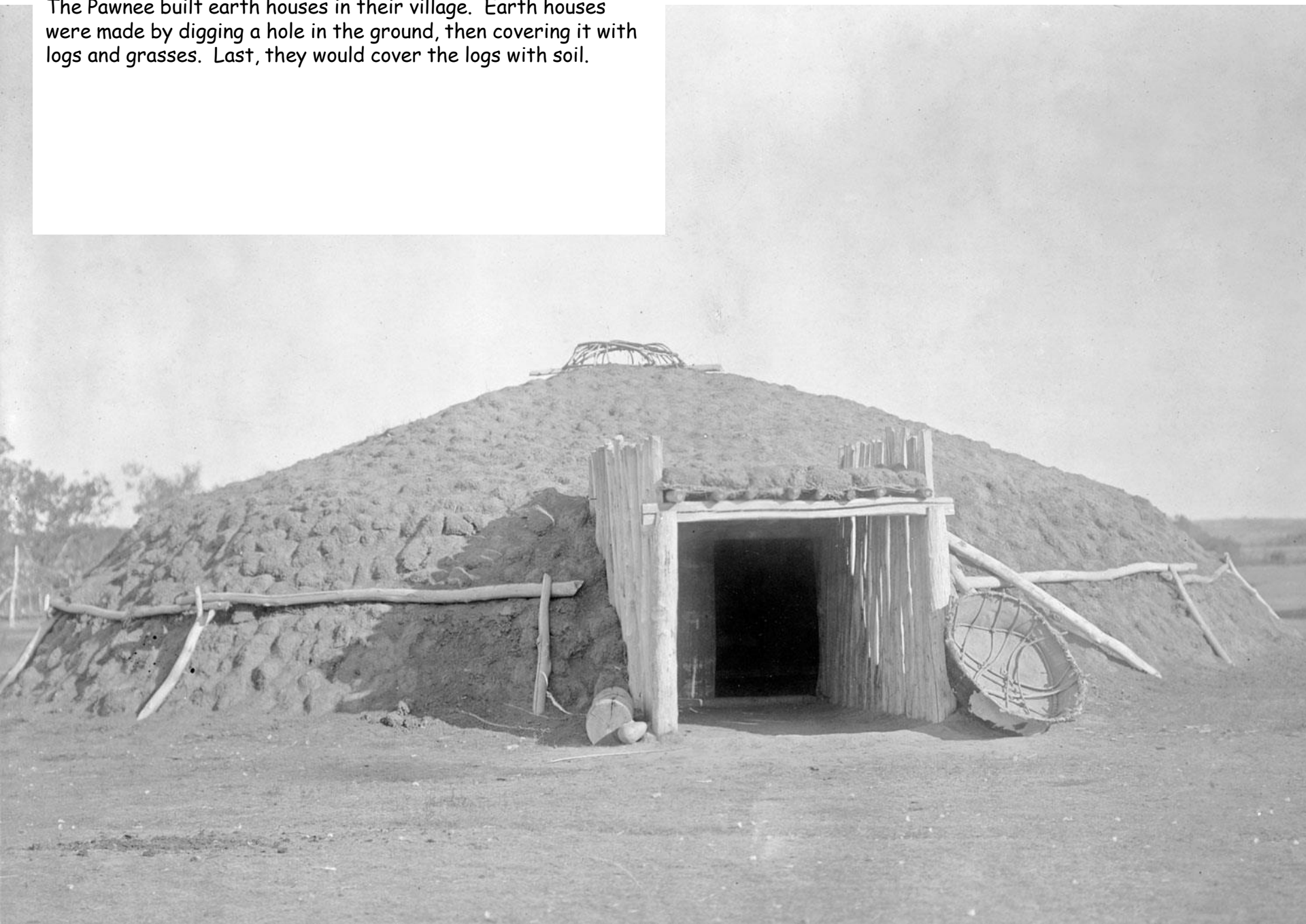
North Platte River


The North Platte River runs through the Great Plains, from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River.

The environment around the North Platte included trees, vegetation, forest animals, roots, and berries. This is the area where the Pawnee built their permanent village, so they could have access to water.



The Pawnee built earth houses in their village. Earth houses were made by digging a hole in the ground, then covering it with logs and grasses. Last, they would cover the logs with soil.





The Pawnee tribe built their village along
the North Platte River.



The Pawnee hunted bison, elk, and antelope.



Bison was the main source of meat for the Pawnee.



This drawing shows how the Pawnee would wear disguise themselves with animal skins so they could sneak up on bison during a hunt.



While the men were on the hunt, the Pawnee women planted gardens. They grew corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash. Their main vegetable was corn.



The Pawnee also gathered seeds, nuts, and berries. They would preserve their food and store the surplus to make sure they plenty to eat throughout the year.





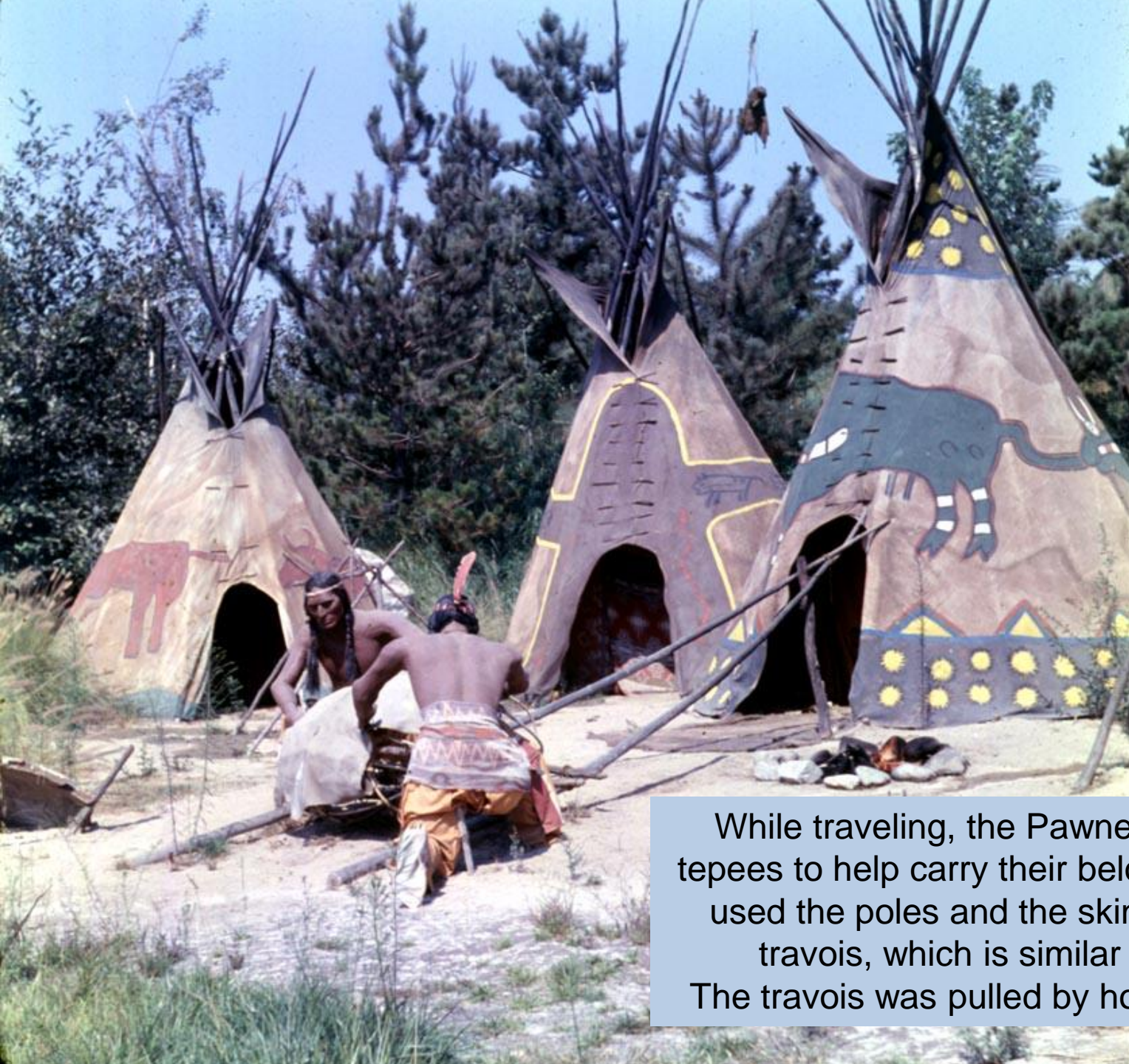
When the Pawnee followed the migrating herds of bison, they had to leave their permanent homes and live on the plains. While on the hunt, they lived in tepees, which could be easily moved as the tribe moved across the plains with the bison.

Tepees were made out of long wooden poles covered with animal skins.

The outside of the tepee was often painted with pictures of animals or things in nature to show the personalities of the family.

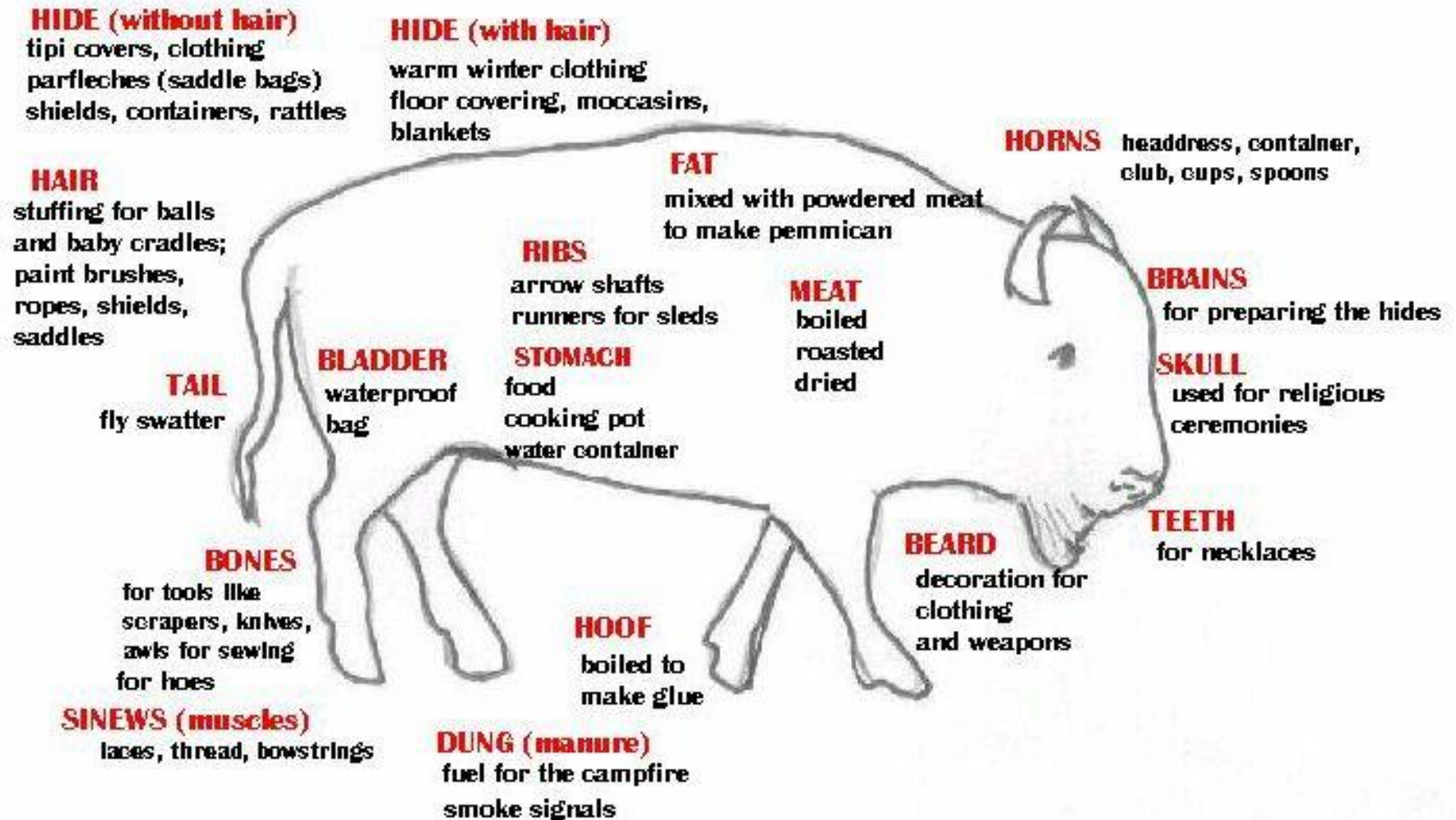


Some of the Plains tribes only lived in tepees and did not establish permanent villages. These Native Americans were nomads, a person that moves around all year and does not have a permanent village. The Pawnee, on the other hand, would return to their village after the hunt.



While traveling, the Pawnee used their tepees to help carry their belongings. They used the poles and the skins to make a travois, which is similar to a sled. The travois was pulled by horses or dogs.

The most important resource to the Pawnee was the bison.
They used EVERY part of the bison.



The bison was very important to the Plains Indians. They used every part of the animal.

meat - roasted on the campfire, boiled, for pemmican and jerky, sausages

hides with the hair left on - winter clothing, gloves, blankets, robes, costumes for ceremonies

hides - ropes, blankets, shields, clothing, bags, tipi covers, bull boats, sweat lodge covers, containers

sinew (muscles) - bowstrings, thread for sewing, webbing for snowshoes

bones - for making hoes, shovels, runners for sleds, pointy tools, knives, pipes, scrapers, arrowheads

horns - spoons, cups, bowls, containers to carry tobacco, medicine or gunpowder, headdresses

hair - rope, pillow stuffing, yarn, shields, medicine balls

beard - decoration on clothes and weapons

tail - fly swatter, whip, tipi decoration

brain - used for tanning the hides (to soften the skin)

hoofs - rattles, boiled to make glue

fat - paint base, hair grease, for making candles and soap

dung (manure chips) - fuel for campfires and smoke signals

teeth - for decorating, necklaces

stomach - containers for water and for cooking

bladder - medicine bag, water container, pouches

skull - ceremonies and prayer

1



2



3

Farm tools made from bison bones



The Pawnee wore beads made from animal bone and teeth, feathers, and other pieces of nature.

The Pawnee believed in the Great Spirit that had power over all things in nature. The Earth was the mother of all spirits.



A Native American Prayer

O' Great Spirit,

Who's voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life,
life to all the world, hear me!

I am small and weak, I need your strength and wisdom.

Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever
behold the red and purple sunset.

Make my hands respect the things you have made
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things
you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in
every rock and leaf.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,
but to fight my greatest enemy which is myself.

Make me always ready to come to you
with clean hands and straight eyes.

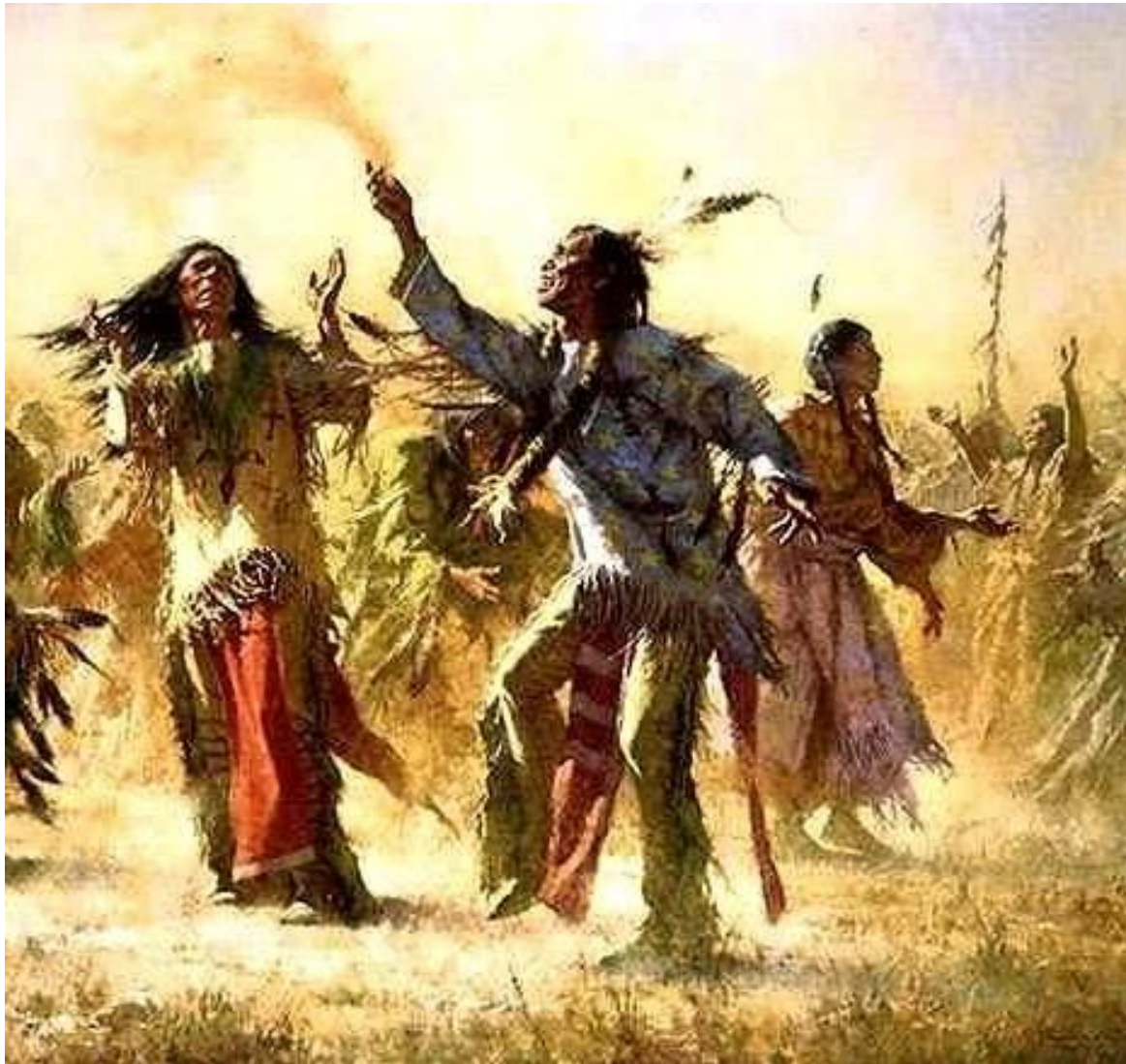
So, when life fades as the falling sunset,
my spirit may come to you without shame.



Based on the poem, what was important to the Native Americans?

The Pawnee had ceremonies to honor the Great Spirit, such as

- when babies were born**
- to thank the sun**
- to pray for rain**
- before a hunt**





Symbols of power were used as decorations.

The lightning grooves etched into the horn were more than decorative. It was believed that a symbol on an object transferred a power to a happening. The lightning marks on the handle would symbolically cause the horse to run faster.

Lightning and thunder were powerful forces to native people. The horse was thought to have a connection with the Thunderbeings due to its speed and the thunderous sound of its running.

The Pawnee believed that the Great Spirit communicated with them through their dreams. Visions in their dreams were messages from the Great Spirit.

They made dream catchers to catch good dreams and to help them remember their visions.





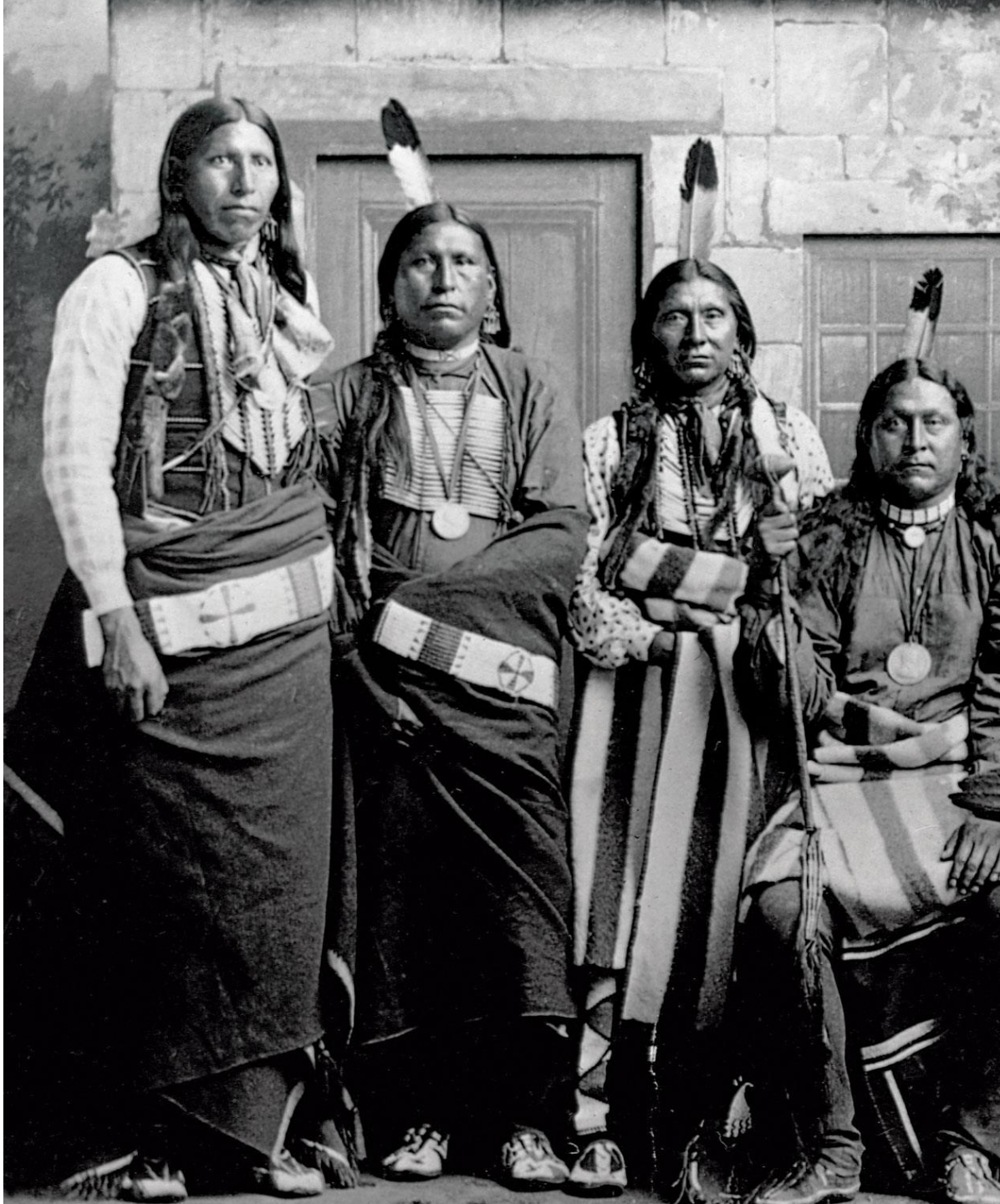
The Pawnee believed that powerful symbols, such as eagle feathers or paintings of the sun, brought power to the person or object with that symbol.

Objects created from different parts of nature:





The Pawnee used animal skins for clothing, tepees, blankets, storage bags, and many other things. The skins were often decorated with painted symbols.



In later years, the Pawnee traded with explorers and settlers. Their dress included new items for which they traded, along with adornments and accessories from their original heritage.



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

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How did they adapt to their environment?

How did the Pawnee use their resources for food, clothing, and shelter?