Pre- & Early Hohokam

4000 to 1300 years ago
2000 BP to AD 700
The region
Pre-Hohokam

- Mainly in Southern Arizona, near Tucson (Santa Cruz River)
- Maize 4000 ya
- **Rudimentary irrigation 3500 ya**
- Shifting cultivation
- Somewhat mobile lifestyle
- AD 0 to 200; population declined

Wallace, pp. 19
Early Housing

- Not full pithouse architecture, temporary
Early Ceramic Period

• AD 200 – 450
• Deep river cutting changed farming
• Homes move to high floodplain margins
• Substantial pithouses developed
Santa Cruz River Sites

Las Capas: 3500 ya irrigation

Santa Cruz Bend
800 BC to AD 50

Oversized pithouse

Julian Wash Site:
Pithouse Village
Pre-Hohokam summary

• **Myth**: irrigation, crops, villages developed together
  – Hohokam came from elsewhere

• **Fact**: irrigation 1000 years before permanent villages
  – Hohokam evolved *in situ*

• = “a blend of the older, mobile, hunter-gatherer life-style with a farming existence that tethered cultivators to one spot on the landscape for months at a time.” Wallace pp. 15.
Full Sedentism

- Quite costly
- Can only occur with surplus
- Requires tolerance of
  - Authority, community rules, disease, neighbors

- By AD 475; conditions ripe for sedentism
- = early Hohokam (Pioneer Period: AD 450 - 700)
Farming-surplus treadmill

Intensification of resource use

Paleoindian

Archaic

Agricultural periods

Surplus
Population Increase
Valencia Vieja

- Southern Tucson Basin
- AD 475 to 700
- Early: 5 to 10 households
  - Irrigation farming
  - Typical Pioneer Period Site
- AD 500 village doubled in size

- BY AD 600 eight large square pit structures
  - Surround, open on to central plaza
Why aggregate?

• Pooling of labor = canals
• Defense

• “Once residents built substantial houses and developed canals systems, villages were largely locked into place.” Wallace pp. 18

• The rules change
  – Collective identity & kinship
Valencia Vieja

Wallace, pp. 18 & 19
Hohokam beginnings

• Central Plazas unique; signature of Hohokam
  – Earlier than thought
  – Evolved in region

• Pottery vessel form becomes diverse
  – Cooking proficiency increases
  – Red on buff pottery established
Geography of early Hohokam

• Was thought that early Hohokam occurred mainly in Tuscon Basin

• Also to the north of Phoenix near the Verde River
  – Antler House village, very similar to Valencia Vieja
  – http://www.ecoplanaz.com/07-046.htm
Households & Courtyards

- Hohokam social units
- Household = nuclear family, one pithouse
- Courtyard = set of related houses around plaza
  - Passed down through generations (rebuilding)

www.northlandresearchinc.com
Courtyard Groups

- **Grewe Site (Preclassic: AD 700 to 1150)**
- Largest contained 26 houses
- Small contain 3 to 4
  - Typically only a few houses occupied at a time
  - Sequence of rebuilds in same spot
  - These groups thought to own fields
  - Social hierarchy in group size

- **Farm field houses**
  - Sequential rebuilds, like courtyard houses
  - Paired (seasonal) living & storage structures

Craig & Henderson, pp. 32
Overlapping occupations

- Family-owned farm plots & courtyard passed down
Courtyards & fields

• Courtyard houses & field houses rebuilt
  – In same places, similar form
  – Suggests ownership over generations

• By analogy, some families wealthier than others
  – Perhaps first to arrive (prime land)
  – Perhaps helped build irrigation canals
Wealth

• Must use a proxy measure
• House size = signature of wealth cross culturally
  – These are more labor intensive
  – Require more raw materials to build

• Grewe site: large houses
  – Only a few courtyards
  – The longest occupied courtyards
  – Nearest to civic architecture (e.g., ballcourts)
  – Craft-making areas near large-house courtyards
    • Pottery, shell jewelry, textiles,
  – More exotic goods in large houses
Summary

- Pre-Hohokam = early farming & irrigation
- Early Ceramic = increased sedentism & villages
- Pioneer Period = full sedentism
- Preclassic = intense aggregation & farming