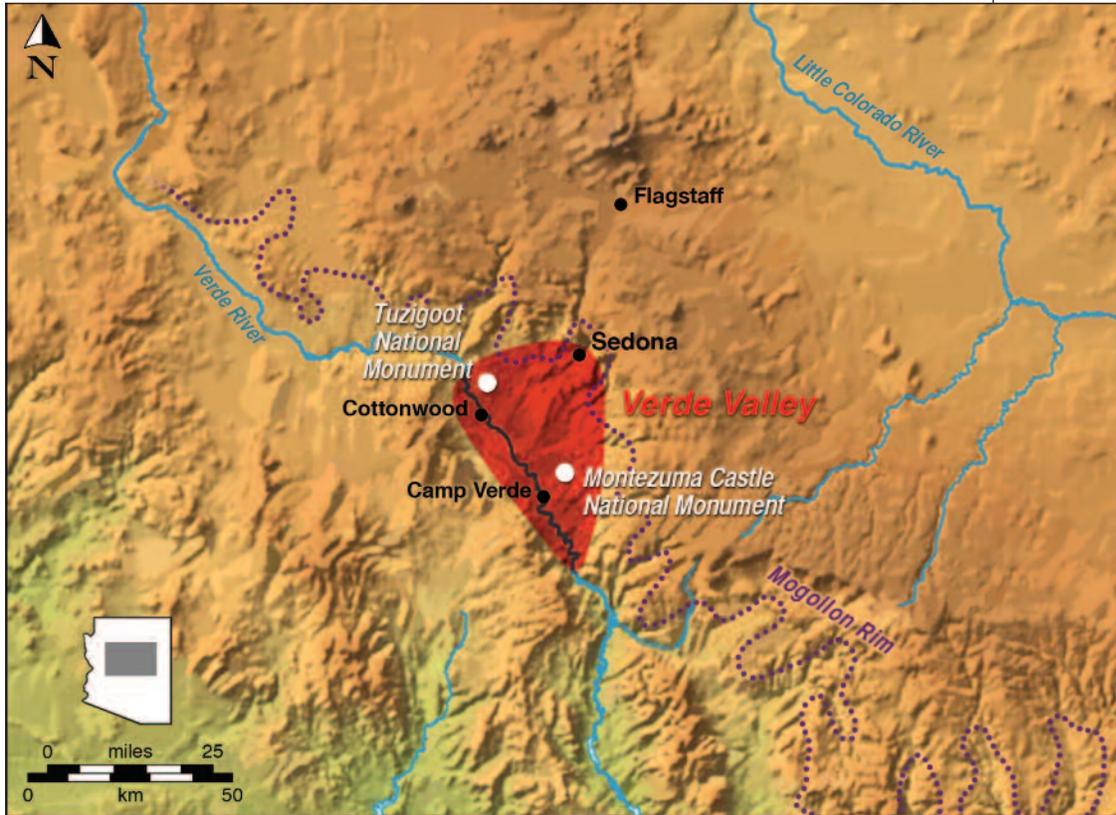


PEOPLE OF THE VERDE VALLEY



Verde Valley in Central Arizona

The Verde Valley is a beautiful, tear-dropped shaped valley in central Arizona. The valley is located north of Phoenix and south of Flagstaff. It is surrounded by mountains, mesas, and broad flat areas called plateaus. Several streams flow with water all year. The largest stream is the Verde River. Today, the Verde Valley has three small cities: Camp Verde, Cottonwood, and Sedona. There are several smaller towns and villages. The Verde Valley is also home to the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Their reservation has five pieces of land. They are next to the communities of Middle Verde, Camp Verde, and Clarkdale. The Yavapai-Apache Nation is a Native American government that brings together two separate groups of people. The Yavapai and Western Apache are now related through marriage and friendship.

The Yavapai-Apache People

The Yavapai-Apache people understand that their ancestors have lived in the Verde Valley for hundreds of years. Many of the ancestors were Patayan foraging and farming people. The Patayan once lived in the western deserts and near the Colorado River. The Yavapai people believe that some of their ancestors were the Sinagua farmers. The Sinagua farmed and foraged. They built and used the villages of Tuzigoot near Clarkdale and Montezuma Castle near Camp Verde.

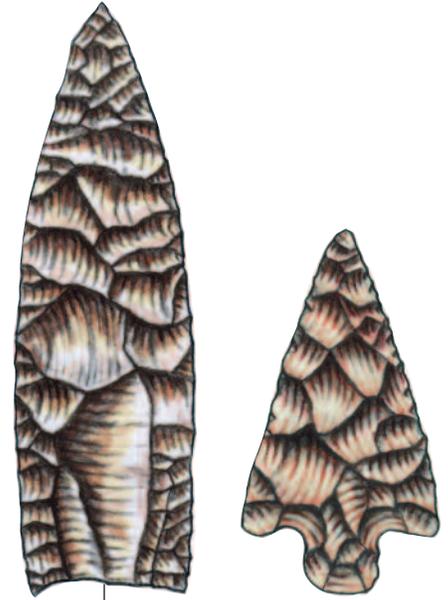
The Yavapai-Apache people consider Montezuma Well to be the place where their earliest ancestors emerged. In their stories, their people came through a hole from an underground world. Some time later, this hole was flooded. When it flooded it became Montezuma Well. Many of the places around the Verde Valley are important to the Yavapai-Apache peoples. Each place has a story about it. The stories tell of their past. All Yavapai-Apache consider Montezuma Well and the “Red Rock Country” near Sedona to be *sacred* places.

Early People of the Verde Valley

Archaeologists believe people have lived in the Verde Valley for at least 8,000 years. The Verde Valley is located just north of the lower Sonoran desert and just below the Mogollon Rim and the Colorado Plateau. It is unique because it contains plants and animals belonging to both regions. Also, the Verde Valley has mild weather. Flagstaff to the north is cooler and Phoenix to the south is hotter. And, perhaps most important of all, it has rivers and creeks that run year-round. This makes it an especially good place to live. For all these reasons, the Verde Valley was and still is a wonderful place to live. It has everything a hunter-gatherer or a farmer-forager needed to survive!

The First Hunter-Gatherers in the Verde Valley

Archaeologists have found a few stone artifacts dating to the Paleoindian period (10,000 to 6000 B.C.) and many stone artifacts dating to the long Archaic period (6000 B.C. to A.D. 650). These stone tools are the broken or lost dart points or spear points used by hunters to kill their prey. Once in a while, archaeologists find other artifacts made by Archaic-period people, such as grinding stones called *metates* and *manos*. The metate is a large flat or bowl-shaped stone that is placed on the ground. A mano is an oval or rectangular stone that fits in the hand. Together, they are used to grind nuts and seeds. Archaeologists also find stone knives that were used for preparing hides and cutting meat. In the places people lived, they find earth-ovens and *hearths* for preparing food. Sometimes they even find the area where a small house once stood before it was taken down or rotted away.

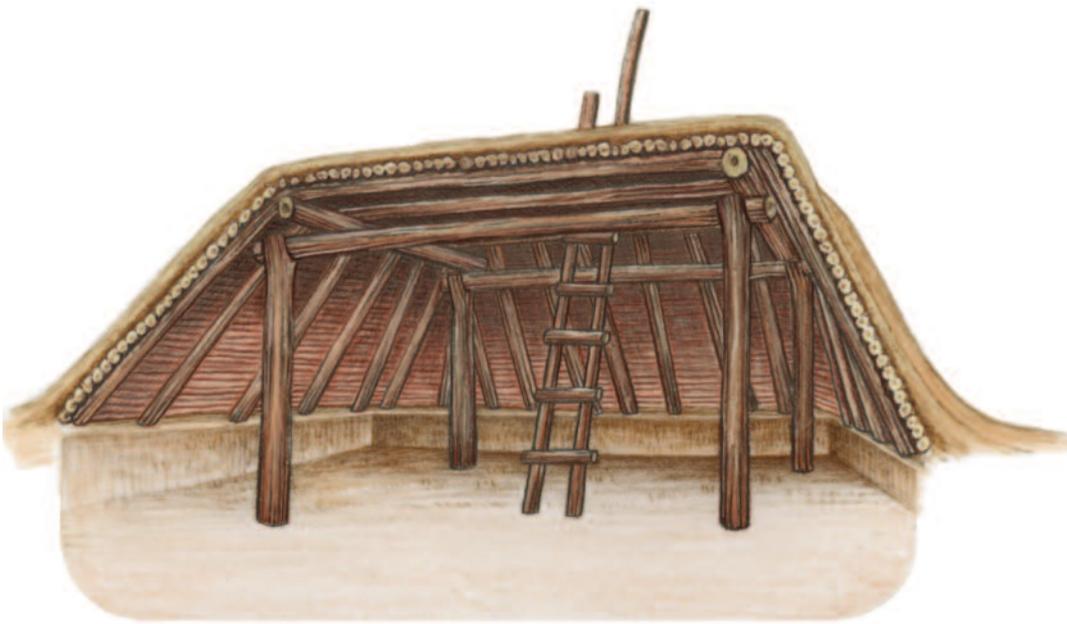


Clovis and Archaic Points used on spears and darts.

The First Farmers of the Verde Valley

Archaeologists are still trying to learn when the first Archaic-period groups in the Verde Valley decided to do a little farming. Ancient corn kernels recovered from excavated sites in Verde Valley are at least 1,400 years old (just before A.D. 600). But by A.D. 700, there were people who were farmers first and foragers second. It is even possible that the new farmers came from some other place.

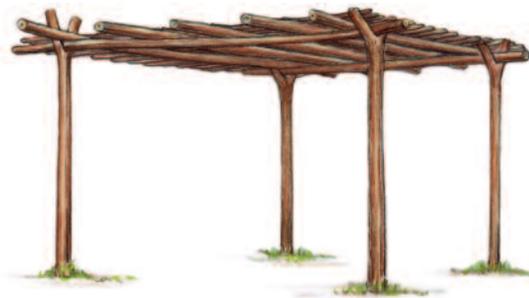
Archaeologists call these farming people the “Sinagua.” This name means “without water” in Spanish (*sin agua*). It was given first to a group of people that lived north of Flagstaff near Wupatki National Monument. They got the name because they lived in especially dry areas with little water. The name was given later to the people of the Verde Valley. They were given the same group name because they built similar style houses, made similar tools and pottery, and had a similar way of life.



Pit House

Over many centuries, the Sinagua people came to be the largest group in the Verde Valley. In about A.D. 650, there were just a few families living together. They lived in many small villages. They lived in a few wood-brush-and-mud houses that were built in shallow pits in the ground (*pit houses*). They had outdoor work areas that were like covered patios called *ramadas*. Like other farming peoples in the American Southwest, the Sinagua lived near places where they could raise crops and find wood, water, and other building materials. As their population grew, they spread out over most of the valley.

Their villages grew in size. People lived there year-round and sometime went far from their villages to hunt and gather. But, by A.D. 1150, for reasons that are not fully understood, most of the Sinagua peoples lived in only a few large villages. They had apartment-like stone houses. The villages were near flowing water and farmland. Some of the villages were occupied by many generations of people. Some villages lasted nearly 250 years!



Ramada



Montezuma Castle

After being settled so long, something changed. During the late A.D. 1300s and early A.D. 1400s, all but a few Sinagua families moved east and north to join other farming peoples near Winslow and the Hopi mesas. The modern Hopi Indians understand that the Sinagua are ancestors. The largest and best known of ancient Sinagua settlements or *pueblos* in the Verde Valley are Montezuma Castle and Tuzigoot Pueblo.

The Sinagua were not the only people who lived in the Verde Valley. Before A.D. 1000, there was a small number of Hohokam who also lived and farmed in the valley. Their styles of houses, pottery, stone tools, jewelry, and other crafts were very different than those of the Sinagua. Most of the Hohokam lived near Phoenix.



Tuzigoot Ruins

The Ancestral Yavapai Come to the Verde Valley

After A.D. 1300, a number of ancestral Yavapai people moved into the Verde Valley from the west. Archaeologists do not know exactly when the ancestors of the modern Yavapai arrived in the valley. They also do not know if they raised crops, like the Sinagua and Hohokam. The ancestral Yavapai people certainly were expert hunters and gatherers of wild foods. They practiced a nomadic way of life, following the ripening of plants and the availability of wild game. It is likely that they arrived sometime before the last Sinagua families left their villages and the Verde Valley around A.D. 1400. When this happened, the Yavapai became the largest group in the Verde Valley. Two different groups of Yavapai lived in the Verde Valley. The Wipukpaya Yavapai lived near Oak Creek Canyon and Sedona. The Yavepe Yavapai lived near Cottonwood and Camp Verde. Except for brief time periods, the Yavapai have remained in the valley ever since. Only after A.D. 1700, was there another group of foraging people in the Verde Valley. These were the Northern Tonto Apache, one of several groups of the Western Apache people. The Northern Tonto Apache included the Verde Valley as part of their foraging territory.

