

The Aztecs

The Aztec people ruled from the Gulf of Mexico to present day Guatemala. Their capital city was Tenochtitlan.

The greatest controlling force was religion. It was shown in their architecture and sculpture. They also had writing, numbers and a calendar. They had recorded dates for religious holidays.

The children were taught respect, courtesy, truthfulness and self control. Aztec boys learned practical tasks from their fathers at home. Then when they reached 15 they went to a youth house. There elders taught the boys religion, citizenship, history, traditions and art. They also learned war.

Girls could also learn to be priestesses in temple schools.

The Aztecs were divided into tribes that were divided into clans. Each clan had its own officials that represented them at tribal meetings.

The land was divided up by the tribes. They controlled the land but the peasants farmed it having to give some of it to the chiefs and priests.

The Aztecs worshipped a host of gods that represented nature. To win the gods' aid they performed rituals and offered penance. Human sacrifice played an important role. Since life was a man's most valued possession it was the best thing to offer up to the gods. As the Aztec empire grew so did the human sacrifice.

Sometimes the Aztecs performed cannibalism, believing they absorb the virtues of the slain. The sacrificed people were thought to be given a high place in heaven.

The average Aztec was a farmer. He lived outside the city and grew crops for his tribe. Farming was the most important means of survival due to the warm, humid climate. They lived in small huts. The male was the head of the family. He would often arrange marriages for their children. The language they spoke was the Nahuatl language that originated from the west coast of the United States. They wore elaborate colorful clothing made from animal skins that were traded from northern tribes. I personally like the cities they built. They did not have the wheel yet they built some of the most beautiful cities in the world.

They were at their prime when the Spanish arrived. They saw their practices and considered them barbaric. They destroyed all but a few records of them and tried to convert them. even though they were almost destroyed the Aztec people live on in present day Mexicans today.