 LAST TIME

• Peopling of the Americas
• Mesoamerican Cultures
• “Classic” period lowland Maya: ~300-900 CE
• Lower Central America
• Circum-Caribbean & Antilles
TODAY

• South American Lowland moist tropical
• Southern Cone societies
• Andean Societies
• Coastal Desert Societies
South American Lowland moist tropics (Amazonia)

- **Population**: ~ > 5-6 m but very uncertain
- **Livelihood**: Old (outdated) view is of semi-nomadic, small bands practicing long fallow swidden with a limited material culture
South American Lowland moist tropics (Amazonia)

• New more complex view posits at least 3 distinct livelihood systems in Amazonia
  ➢ semi-nomadic hunting-gathering in “inter-fluves”
  ➢ high density sedentary ag along rivers
  ➢ also terra mulato and terra prieta do indio along rivers (see web site)
  ➢ Raised/drained field agriculture
Ancient raised fields in the Llanos de Mojos (© C. Erickson)
New raised fields in Llanos de Mojos, Bolivia (© C. Erickson)
Southern Cone societies

- **Low population**: ~ 2 million tops

- **Livelihood**: no evidence for agriculture in 1491
  - hunter-gatherer societies
  - like North American Plains Indians
Andean Societies I

- **Inca** (or Inka) empire
- Ancient cultures, recent empire (at time of Spanish conquest)
- Quechua and Aymara languages (both still spoken by millions)
- C. Andes population ~ 11-15 m in 1490s
Andean Societies II

• Resource management problems
  ➢ Little land in any eco zone
  ➢ Different agriculture needed in different zones
  ➢ Altitude => frost a problem
  ➢ extreme diurnal temp differences
Andean Societies III

• Resource opportunities
  ➢ The only large domesticated animals in the Americas (llamas & alpacas)
    ▪ “Camelids”
Andean Societies III

• Andean solution
  ➢ Exploit 4 major altitudinal eco-zones simultaneously
Andean Societies III

- Andean solution
  - Murra’s “vertical archipelago”
Charki & chuña = freeze dried meat and tubers
Taclla = foot plow/hoe
Altiplano in C Peru
Coastal Desert Societies

- Seat of sophisticated high cultures long before the Inka
  - Moche and Chimú
Moche and Chimú

Jugs and Gold
Coastal Desert Societies

- **Resource opportunities and limitations**
  - Coastal fishing excellent
  - No frost
  - No rain except in El Niño years
- **Water management problems are severe**
Coastal Desert Societies

- **Agricultural strategies**
  - Canal irrigation
  - Sunken plots
  - Gathered foods
Quest for empire began about 1438 under the indomitable Pachacuti, first Inca emperor. His son Tupa Inca continued expansion and became one of history's farthest-ranging conquerors; he set the empire's southern limits on the Maule River in Chile. Pachacuti's grandson Huayna Capac thrust north into Colombia, staking boundary markers on the Angamos River. He then settled in Quito, making that city the northern capital of an empire which spanned 2,500 miles—similar to the extent of the Roman Empire that sprawled from present-day Great Britain to Iran. But plague, civil war, and European invasion doomed the Incas at the height of their power. In 1532, Francisco Pizarro captured the Inca Atahuallpa; this act shattered the empire, although conflict continued for 40 years.