



Irrigation Communities

The walled compound where you are standing was just one community of a network of communities that were built along canal systems. An eagle flying high over this Gila River Valley 1,000 years ago would have seen dozens of villages with wide, irrigated fields.

Extended families usually shared rooms and open areas within a compound like the one you are in now. Several compounds grouped together made up a village. Villages along a network of canals worked together to keep the irrigation water flowing into the fields.

The largest villages were often found at the beginning or end of canals. At these sites you will find ball courts, and platform mounds and sometimes structures like the Casa Grande. Large sites like Casa Grande Ruins were gathering places where people celebrated ceremonies and harvests.

IMAGE BY MICHAEL WILKINSON COURTESY OF PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM, CITY OF PHOENIX

