

Ancient Egyptians

By Cindy Grigg

Thousands of years ago, ancient Egyptians lived along the Nile River. Once each year, the Nile flooded its banks, covering the nearby land with a layer of dark, fertile mud. The people who lived there soon found that they could grow a variety of crops in this rich soil. The rest of Egypt, away from the Nile River, was desert. Not much could grow anywhere else. Small villages sprang up along the river.

Egypt was once divided into two regions: Upper and Lower Egypt. Then around 3100 B.C., a king known as Menes or Narmer conquered Lower Egypt. He became the first king or pharaoh to control all of Egypt.



Each year after the river flooded, farmers planted their seeds. They grew barley and wheat for bread. They grew flax, which was made into linen cloth for clothing. They grew many kinds of vegetables and fruits. They kept bees to collect the honey.

The people who lived in Egypt 5,000 years ago worshiped many gods. They made masks, statues, and jewelry of gold. They had a written language. We call it hieroglyphics. It used pictures and symbols in place of letters and words. They had a calendar similar to ours with 365 days. Pharaohs (or kings) ruled Egypt for almost 3,000 years. They were rich and powerful. They built the great cities of Thebes and Memphis. In 30 B.C. Egypt was taken over by the Romans and became part of the Roman Empire.

Ancient Egyptians left behind great stone buildings known as pyramids that have stood for more than 4,000 years. Bodies of their dead were preserved as mummies. They made tombs and filled them with beautiful things. Egypt has a long and rich history. It is one of the oldest countries in the world.

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Questions

1. Ancient Egyptians lived along the _____ River.

_____ 2. Around what year were Upper and Lower Egypt united into one country with one ruler?

- A. 332 A.D.
- B. 3100 B.C.
- C. 332 B.C.
- D. No one knows.

3. Name two cities of ancient Egypt.

Upper and Lower Egypt

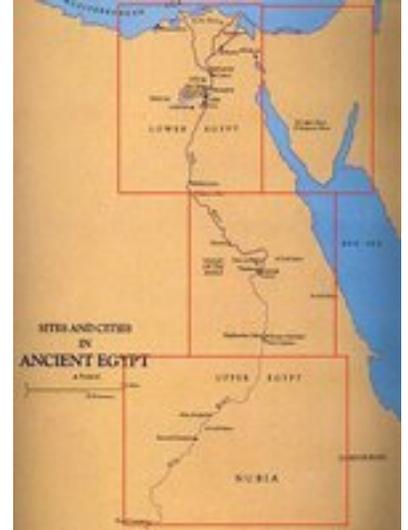
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Once, Egypt was divided. There were two kingdoms in Egypt. They were called Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Lower Egypt was the land around the mouth of the Nile River in northern Egypt. Upper Egypt was in the south.

Meni, or Menes in the Greek language, was a king of Upper Egypt. Menes was also called Aha. He is believed to have conquered Lower Egypt around 3100 B.C. He became the first king or pharaoh to control all of Egypt. His rule is known as the 1st Dynasty.

Experts are not sure that Menes really existed. Some believe that the first king was named Narmer. Some believe Menes and Narmer were the same man. Others disagree.

Whoever the first pharaoh was, we know that Ancient Egypt had 31 dynasties. The 1st Dynasty began around 3100 B.C. when Upper and Lower Egypt were united. The 31st Dynasty ended in 332 B.C.



Egypt's dynasties are grouped into three major time periods. Each time period is called a kingdom. The three kingdoms are the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. However, not all of the 31 dynasties fall into one of the three kingdoms. There are gaps in between. The gaps were often times of trouble for Egypt.

Upper and Lower Egypt

Questions

1. How many dynasties did ancient Egypt have?

_____ 2. Lower Egypt probably got its name because _____.

- A. It is found on the lower part of a map.
- B. The river water level was lower in that part of the land.
- C. The land around the mouth of a river is lower in elevation than surrounding land.

_____ 3. Around what year did the 1st Dynasty begin?

- A. 332 A.D.
- B. No one knows when it began.
- C. 332 B.C.
- D. 3100 B.C.

_____ 4. The author's main purpose for writing this story was to _____.

- A. inform
- B. persuade
- C. entertain

