

The Neolithic Revolution

I. The Neolithic Revolution

About 10,000 years ago, one of the greatest turning points in history occurred. A “turning point” is a major event that dramatically changes the way people live. There was a shift from the hunting of animals and gathering of food to the keeping of animals and the growing of food on a regular basis. Around 10,000 B.C., people made two important discoveries. They learned to plant seeds to grow food, and they learned to domesticate animals.

People learned to produce food by planting crops, such as wheat and barley. People learned to domesticate animals at about the same time that farming first appeared. The planting of grains and vegetables provided a regular supply of food. The domestication of animals led to a steady supply of milk and meat by herding sheep, goats, and cattle.



These discoveries meant that people no longer had to wander in search of food. The growing of crops on a regular basis made possible the support of larger populations and gave rise to more permanent settlements. Historians call these discoveries the “Neolithic Revolution”, or the “Agricultural Revolution”, because farming and domestic animals changed the way people lived.

II. The Impact of the Neolithic Revolution

- **Role of Men and Women:** The Neolithic Age affected the roles of men and women. Men became more active in farming and herding animals. Women remained home and cared for the children.
- **Permanent Settlements:** People settled together in villages. Villages gradually developed into organized communities where food was stored and material goods were traded.
- **New Social Classes:** As settlements developed, two new social classes emerged: warriors and priests. Because the village had to be defended, a warrior class was necessary. Priests emerged to conduct religious rituals to protect the crops and village from danger.
- **New Technology:** People began to develop technology, or tools. And skills they could use to meet their basic needs, such as calendars and plows. Other new technology included the wheel, metal weapons, and metal tools.

These changes paved the way for civilization to emerge.

Questions to Answer

1. How did the Neolithic Revolution change the way people live?
2. Why were animals domesticated?
3. How did the growing of crops affect society?
4. What was the impact of the Neolithic Revolution?