

SLIDE SET #144: Guajiro Indians

The Guajiro Indians inhabit the arid Guajira Peninsula in Northwest Venezuela (Guajiros also live in Columbia). This group is characterized by a strong, cohesive, matrilineal clan structure. Nomadic herdsmen by tradition, the Arawak-speaking Guajiros are a rugged and proud people. Although many still keep cattle and sell meat and milk for a livelihood, many are now employed in the oil fields, and in salt or gypsum mines. Skilled Guajiro craftsmen weave brilliantly designed blankets and tapastries; the motifs of stylized birds, flowers and geometric forms are worked in vibrant colors.

- A. Coast of the Guajira Peninsula.
- B. Houses and piers built over the waters of Lake Coquibocoa. The Spanish conquerors who saw these houses named the region "Little Venice" or Venezuela which later became the name of the country.
- C. View of houses over the waters of the lake.
- D. Despite the waters of the lake, the area is very dry; palm trees thrive in the harsh climate.
- E. A group of Guajiro women wearing the traditional dress, the "manta guajira".
- F. More brilliantly colored mantas.
- G. Guajiro woman, the high cheekbones are characteristic of these people.
- H. Guajiro boy rests on a chinchorro, a small hammock woven from the fiber of the palm tree.
- I. Guajiro man, in the harsh desert interior of the Peninsula.
- J. Lake Coquibocoa at sunset.