In the New World , the number string is best illustrated by the knotted cords , called quipus , of the Incas of Peru .Through gradual expansion and warfare , they came to rule a vast empire consisting of the coastal and mountain regions of present – day Ecuador , Peru , Bolivia , and the northern parts of Chile and Argentina .A striking accomplishment was their creation of a vast network (as much as 14,000 miles) of roads and bridges linking the far– ung parts of the empire .They were originally a South American Indian tribe , or a collection of kindred tribes , living in the central Andean mountainous highlands .The isolation of the Incas from the horrors of the Spanish Conquest ended early in 1532 when 180 conquistadors landed in northern Peru .The Incas became renowned for their engineering skills , constructing stone temples and public buildings of a great size .By the end of the year , the invaders had seized the capital city of Cuzco and imprisoned the emperor .The Spaniards imposed a way of life on the people that within about 40 years would destroy the Inca culture .

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