

Chapter 2

Early Cultures in Our Land

Chapter Preview

TERMS

prehistoric people,
archaeologist, artifact,
petroglyph, fossil,
anthropologist, nomadic,
atlatl, protohistoric,
viceroy, barter, totem,
shaman, polygamy

PEOPLE

Paleo Indians, Archaic
Indians, Woodland
Indians, Plains Village
Indians, mound builders

PLACES

Beringia, Spiro Mounds



This artifact from Spiro Mounds State Archaeological Park is a clay effigy pipe of a man smoking from an effigy pipe! Spiro Mounds, an example of Caddoan Mississippian culture, was active from around AD 800 until about AD 1450.

Historians and scientists help us make sense of today's complex world by continually seeking answers to our past. They try to find patterns and establish meaning by studying artifacts and documents from people of earlier times and places. This exciting exploration of our past is a continual process. New techniques and technological advancements work hand in hand helping us discover information about our ancient past.

Signs of the Times

POPULATION

In 1492, an estimated 2-18 million Native Americans lived in what is today North America, and the estimated world population was 425 million.

HOW PEOPLE LIVED

Lions were given to the Eastern Han Dynasty in China by emissaries from Persia in approximately the year 25. From that gesture, lion dancing came to represent purity and protection to the Chinese, and the dances are still performed on special occasions.

LEADERS

In 1066, William the Conqueror, Duke William of Normandy, was crowned king of England, and it was during his reign that the construction of Windsor Castle began.

INVENTIONS

Paper money was first used in China in 1023. About 1200, buttons were first used on clothing. Eyeglasses were invented about 1270. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press with metal movable type in 1455.

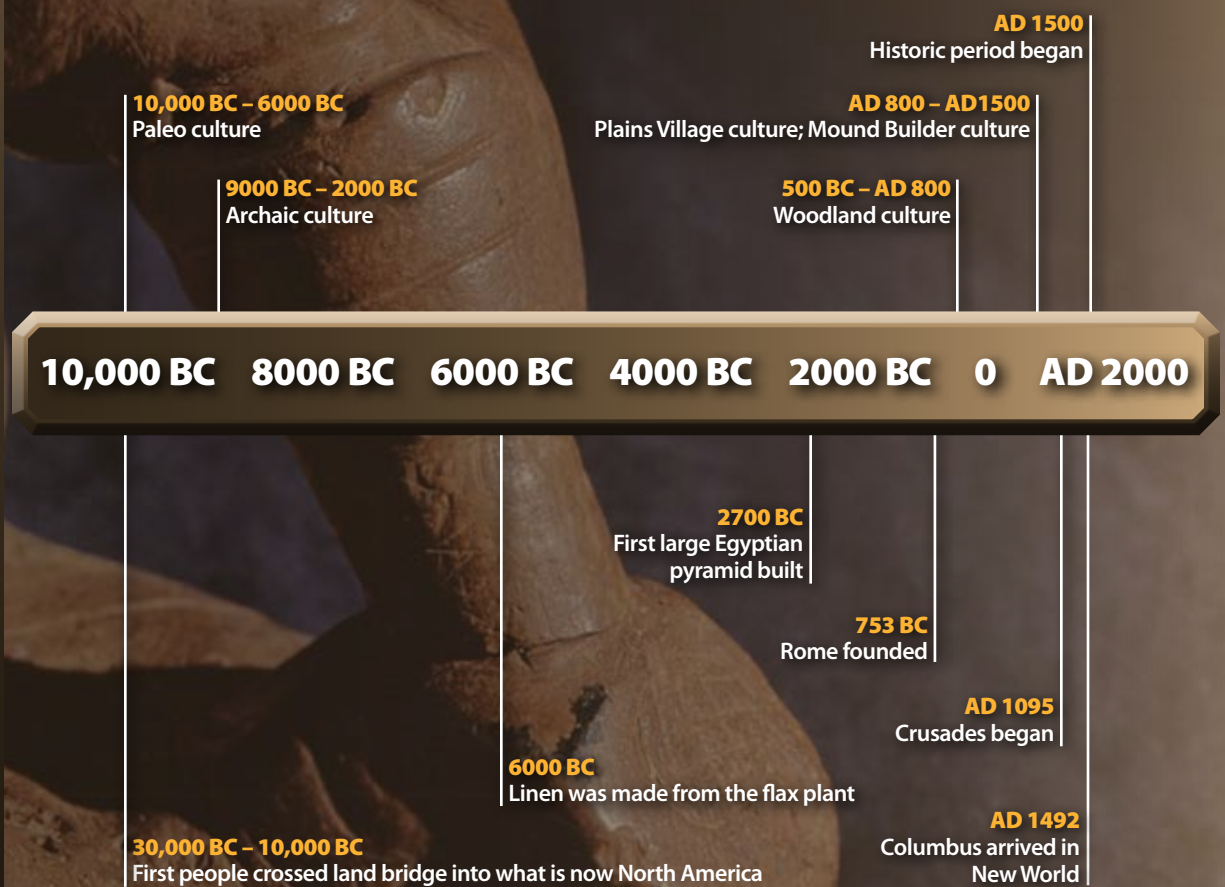
LITERATURE

The written form of communication was developed about 5,500 years ago. An early form of paper, made from the papyrus plant, was first used in ancient Egypt some 5,000 years ago. (The word *paper* is derived from the Egyptian word *papyrus*.) Possibly written by the Greek poet Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed about 2,700 years ago.

GAMES

The ancient Olympic Games were first held in 776 BC, and their modern counterpart began in 1896. As part of military training, the martial art of tae-kwon-do was developed in Korea in the year AD 600.

Figure 2 Timeline: 10,000 BC – AD 1500



Section 1

The Earliest People

As you read, look for

- how anthropologists and archaeologists learn about ancient peoples,
- the various prehistoric cultures in Oklahoma,
- vocabulary terms **prehistoric people**, **archaeologist**, **artifact**, **petroglyph**, **fossil**, **anthropologist**, **nomadic**, **atlatl**, and **protohistoric**.

This archaeological dig took place at a Plains Village site on a terrace above the Washita River in Pauls Valley in Garvin County. The site is dated as being occupied about AD 1290.

Millions of years after the dinosaurs became extinct, the **first prehistoric people** (those who lived before recorded history) reached the Americas. Archaeologists have discovered over time many artifacts that tell us that these first people in America came here some 12,000 to 25,000 years ago. **Archaeologists** are scientists who study ancient cultures by examining what they have left behind.



Searching for Clues

Artifacts can include any item made or used by people, such as pottery, tools, bone, jewelry, and paintings. Artifacts also include **petroglyphs**, pictures or symbols that convey an idea. Artifacts may be found on the surface of the ground or near a waterway, often by a landowner or someone hunting or fishing. They also may be discovered in an archaeological “dig,” the excavation of a site where people lived or worked. Archaeologists very carefully dig, document, and study any fragment of an artifact they discover. These scientists usually spend a considerable amount of time piecing together the artifacts to help tell us more about the people who came before us.

Fossils, which are traces or remains of living things, also tell us about the lives of animals, birds, and people. When a plant or animal dies, it is usually completely destroyed or it decays. If the remains were buried before they were destroyed, and if the conditions are just right, the remains are preserved as fossils. Usually it is teeth, bones, or shells that are fossilized.

Archaeologists determine the age of an artifact in various ways. They sometimes use carbon dating, in which the isotope carbon 14 is analyzed to obtain age estimates on organic matter. DNA studies, fluorine dating (testing fluorine in bones and soils to determine age), and dendrochronology (counting the number of annual rings in wood to learn its age) are also methods of determining the age of an artifact. Even fossil pollen found in sediment can be a clue to learn the types of plants that were living at the time the plant or animal died. Archaeologists are not the only scientists who study artifacts. Experts in such various fields as zoology, geology, physics, and botany can provide valuable information. **Anthropologists** study artifacts, fossils, cave drawings, trails, and oral history to learn the culture of a group and how groups of people lived.

Prehistoric people are identified by cultural periods. No two cultures were exactly alike. People learned from those who lived before them, discovered new things, and taught what they knew to their children—much as we do today. Cultural changes took place slowly and cultural periods in history overlapped, often by a thousand years or more.

These artifacts are early hoes made from buffalo scapulas, from a Plains Village site in Oklahoma.



Something Extra!

Archaeologists sometimes dig through ancient garbage dumps, called **middens**. This “dump diving” can often provide valuable clues about the people who lived there.



Prehistoric Cultures

Most experts believe that the earliest people came to America from Asia. During the last Ice Age, massive glaciers covered much of the northern part of Earth. The glaciers held a great amount of ocean waters, which meant that the sea levels were much lower. Land that is now, in modern times, covered by the oceans was at that time dry and exposed. One such area of land is believed to have joined Asia and North America along what is now called the Bering Strait. The Bering land bridge was part of a grassland area called Beringia. Warm ocean currents kept the land free of ice, allowing animals and people to make their way from Asia south into the heart of North America.

Map 10 Bering Land Bridge

Map Skill: Why is the Bering land bridge important in understanding how some of the earliest people came to America?

Over 16,000 prehistoric and early Native American sites have been explored in Oklahoma. Vast amounts of information have been carefully harvested from these sites and others around the globe.

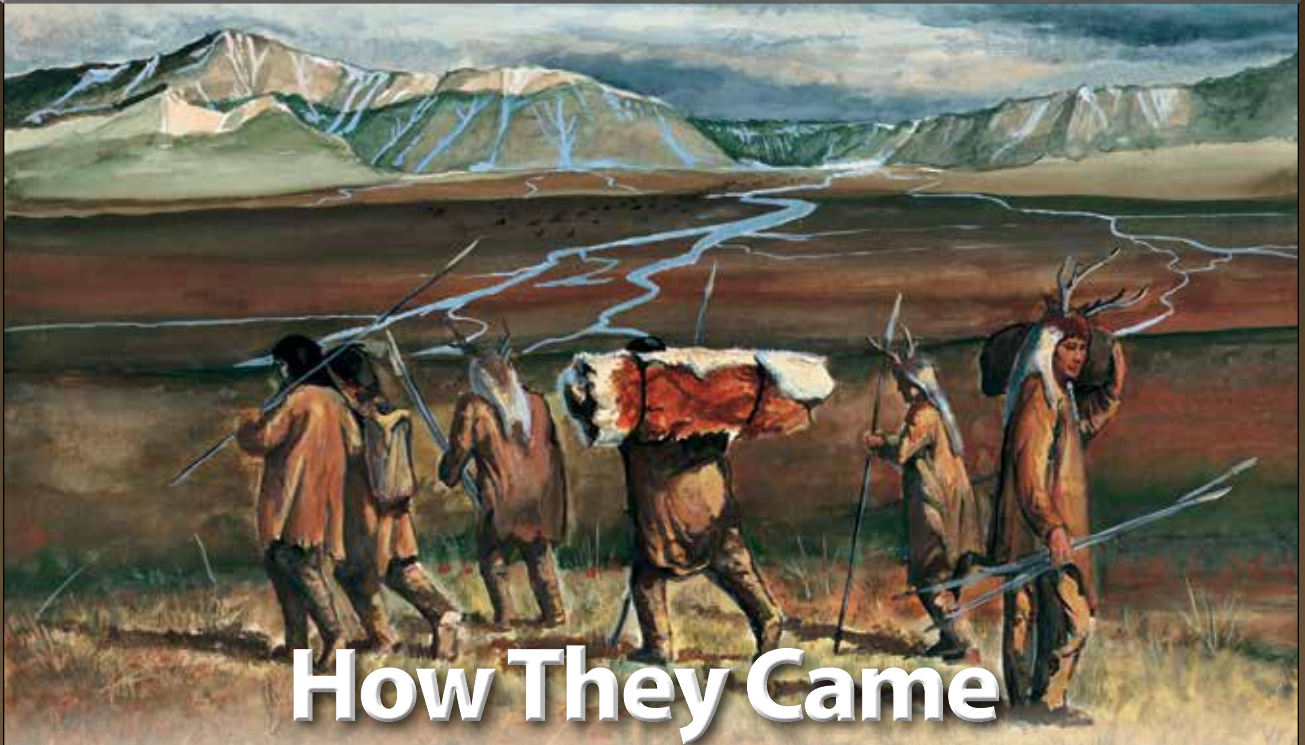
Paleo Indians

Over many years, the **nomadic** (wandering from place to place) big-game hunters followed the animals, their food source, deeper into parts of America. The part of America we now know as Oklahoma had a much more temperate climate than it does today. Summers were cooler, and the winters were milder. Rainfall was more abundant, which allowed grasses and trees and other vegetation to thrive. Many animals of the time were also much larger than animals of today. The enormous game animals in prehistoric Oklahoma included gigantic six-foot-tall bison, short-faced bear, camel, horse, ground sloth the size of today's elephant, a small antelope, mastodon, and Columbian and Imperial mammoths.

In 1961, scientists discovered evidence in southwestern Oklahoma of the Paleo Indian prehistoric hunters. They found the bones of a Columbian mammoth at the Cooperton site in Kiowa County. Rocks also found at the site may have been used as hammerstones and as anvils to break the bones and retrieve the marrow, much as African tribes still do with elephant bones.

Yet another early site has been found in Woods County in the northwestern part of our state. Tiny flakes of chert (a type of sedimentary

Oklahoma Mysteries



How They Came

Most experts believe the first prehistoric humans migrated to North America some 11,500 years ago across the Bering land bridge that at one time connected eastern Siberia and Alaska. Prehistoric north-eastern Asians and Native Americans are similar genetically, which also supports the theory.

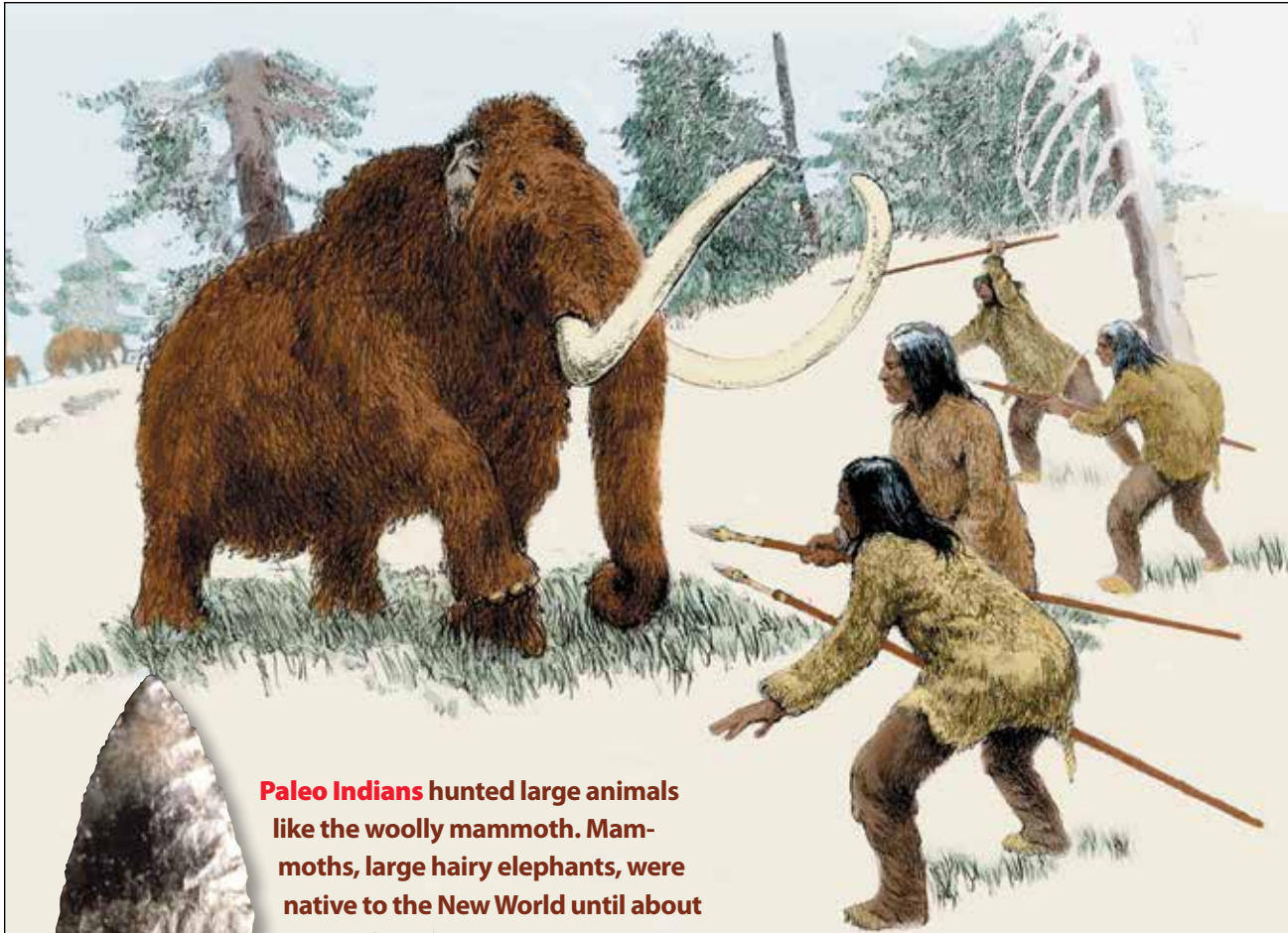
A number of archaeological discoveries in North America have fit the timeline of the Clovis people, but later findings have questioned this timeline. Although they had to hunt for their food, members of the Clovis culture may have also been exploring to see what the new lands had to offer. It was largely thought that these people migrated to South America much later, but a mid-1970s discovery at Monte Verde in Chile has been dated to 12,500 years ago. Although not conclusively dated, evidence of earlier people has also been found in North America. For example, some bone pieces found at Oklahoma's Burnham site in Woods County were dated as being over 30,000 years old.

Above: This painting depicts early Asians crossing the land bridge between Asia and Alaska during one of the Ice Ages. These are thought to be the ancestors of Native Americans.

Another theory proposed that the pre-Clovis people migrated south along the Pacific coast during the period when it would have been free of ice, between 14,000 and 23,000 years ago. Scientists are testing this theory by exploring the sea floor along the shoreline.

Other archaeologists think prehistoric Americans came from Europe, crossing the North Atlantic by boat, rather than migrating from Asia. Similarities between artifacts found here and in prehistoric Europe support this theory.

Some archaeologists now believe that early humans arrived in America in several migrations. As methods, knowledge, and technology continue to improve, we may learn the answers to our questions.



Paleo Indians hunted large animals like the woolly mammoth. Mammoths, large hairy elephants, were native to the New World until about 6000 BC.



Examples of a Clovis point (left) from the Domebo site, and a Folsom point (right) from Greer County. These illustrations are approximately life size.

rock) and bones from a large bison were discovered at the Burnham site. Soil deposits at the site date to about 30,000 years ago, although the chert flakes have not been conclusively dated to that time.

Later Paleo Indian cultures include the Clovis and Folsom people. These cultures lived in Oklahoma from 8,000 to 12,000 years ago (10,000 – 6000 BC).

Clovis People

The mammoth-hunting Clovis people were named after the New Mexico site where their artifacts were first reported. These people had little more than spears for weapons, which meant they had to be close to their prey. Some may have disguised themselves under animal pelts, and some may have driven animals into natural traps or stampeded them over cliffs.

The Clovis spear point, usually 3-4 inches long, was made by chipping away or applying pressure to create a rough fluted (grooved) edge. It took hours of hard work to make a point, and too much pressure could crack the stone. Great skill was required to make such spear points, a process known as *flint knapping*. The point was then possibly attached to a bone foreshaft and then the wooden spear shaft.

An important Clovis site in Oklahoma was discovered near Stecker in Caddo County in 1961. The Domebo Canyon site revealed a young Columbian mammoth that was about fourteen feet tall at the shoulder and would have weighed some ten tons. Excavators found spear points and fragments at the site, which had remained hidden for about eleven thousand years.

As the population of mammoths dwindled, Clovis hunters turned to bison for food. Ten bison were needed to produce the same amount of food as did one or two mammoths. One of the newer sites to be discovered is Jake Bluff just north of Woodward County. Clovis points made from flint from the Texas Panhandle were found at the bison kill site.

Folsom People

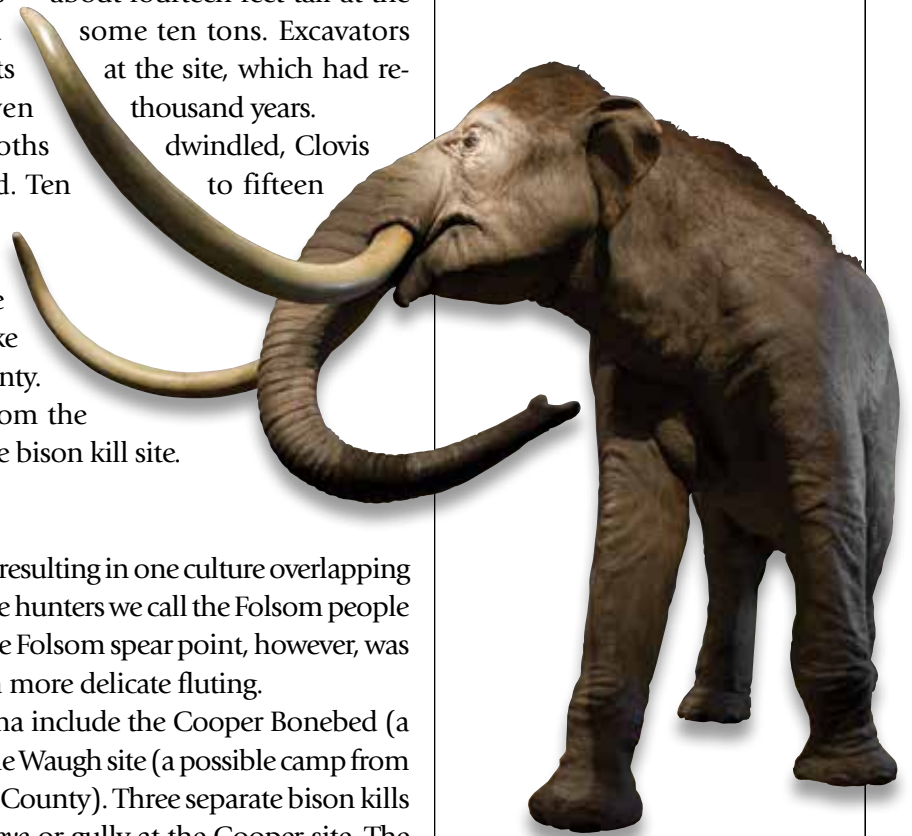
Culture changes happen slowly, resulting in one culture overlapping another. Like the Clovis hunters, the hunters we call the Folsom people continued to hunt using spears. The Folsom spear point, however, was smaller and had a finer point with more delicate fluting.

Folsom sites found in Oklahoma include the Cooper Bonebed (a bison kill in Harper County) and the Waugh site (a possible camp from this period near Laverne in Harper County). Three separate bison kills have been documented in the *arroyo* or gully at the Cooper site. The spear points found there were made from stone common to Austin and Amarillo, Texas, and to northwestern Kansas. This suggests that the hunters were very mobile. Another exciting discovery was a red zigzag, probably depicting a lightning bolt, which had been painted on a bison skull. The red paint was prepared from local stone rich in iron, the blood-red mineral. The skull is among the earliest painted art found thus far in North America. Experts believe the art is evidence that hunting practices of the Folsom people also involved other parts of their culture, such as rituals.

The Dalton people lived some 9,000-10,000 years ago in eastern Oklahoma. They hunted deer and other game animals and ate wild plants. The Packard site in Mayes County in northeastern Oklahoma revealed some 9,500 years of human occupation. The first hunters came to visit the Packard site nearly 5,000 years before the first Egyptian pyramid was built. Today this site is covered by the waters of Lake Hudson.

The Perry Ranch site in Jackson County also dates to about the same time period. The spear points found at the site were made of a special kind of chert known as Alibates. This rock may have come from the Texas Panhandle.

The large animals of the Great Plains died out about ten thousand years ago for reasons that are not yet known. The climate may have



The Columbian mammoth, seen here in a full-size model, was a major food source for early Native Americans. One mammoth provided as much food as a dozen bison.

The Archaic people relied on gathering natural food and hunting smaller animals after the large animals died out.

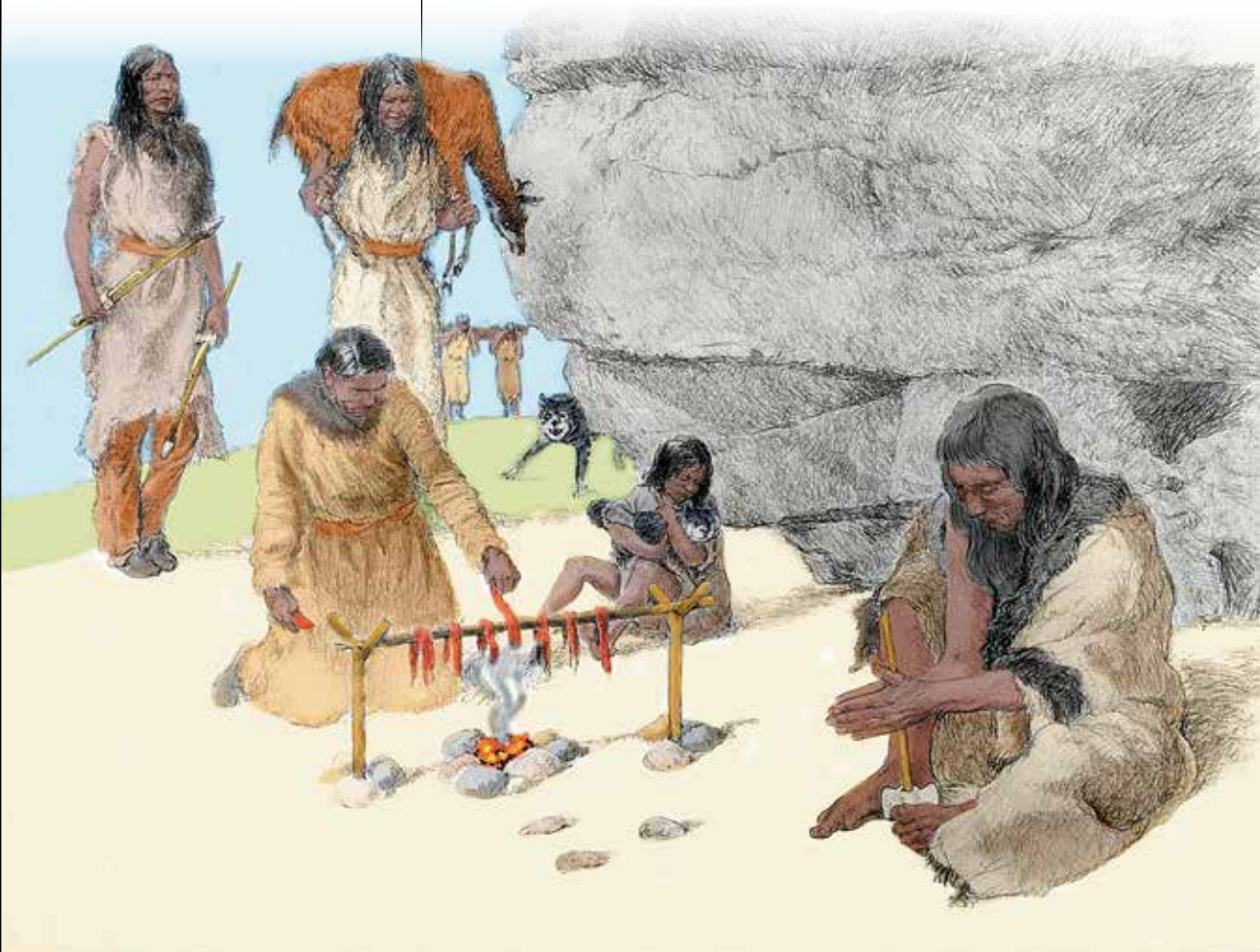
changed, or the people may have hunted the animals to extinction. The smaller animals that began to roam the area included deer, turkey, rabbit, raccoon, squirrel, wolf, coyote, antelope, prairie dog, and the all-important bison, forerunner of today's buffalo. The giant bison bull was about 30 percent larger than our modern buffalo.

Although the early people were hunters, they probably lived in small bands of families. Some evidence suggests they built small, temporary houses with pole frames that were probably covered with hides or brush. They knew how to make and use fire. These people also carved knife handles, awls, and beads from bone and wood. The animals they killed provided food, and the hides were made into clothing, containers, and covers for shelters. They made the bison sinew (or tendon) into thread and string and the bones into tools and ornaments.

Archaic Culture Foragers

The huge ice glaciers had for the most part receded by 7,000 years ago (5000 BC). A warmer climate developed and lasted until about 2,500 years ago. Drier summers caused the forests to decrease.

The change in environment caused the prehistoric people to adjust their way of life, and a new culture began to appear. The Foragers of



the Archaic culture were still hunters, but modern types of animals were their prey. Dogs became domesticated during this time. Increasing populations of people and conflicts with other groups caused the Foragers to hunt in more localized areas. They harvested nuts, berries, roots, and seeds. They ground hard plant foods—seeds, nuts, grains—in small sandstone basins, or *metates*, to crack the grains or to make flour. Forager people stored the grains and flours in baskets made from reeds and plants. They used stone axes to dig plants and to cut trees and brush for shelters and tools. Plant fibers and roots were made into baskets, nets, and string, which they used to snare small animals and to carry things. Stone hooks and string were used to fish or hang food. Pieces of bone and antler became spear points, needles, awls, punches, and atlatl hooks.

An important new weapon that appeared in this period was the **atlatl**. The atlatl was a short wooden shaft with a hook at the end that was used to throw darts with more force and accuracy. With this invention, the hunter could kill from a greater distance and have more time to escape if he missed the target. The smaller dart gave the hunter an advantage in that he could carry more darts.

The Forager people may have used shelters with pole frames to live in as they hunted in their areas. Some in north-eastern Oklahoma used natural caves and bluff overhangs along the rivers as their shelter.

A severe drought gripped our state in the middle of the Archaic period, but many of the people adapted. One group that endured is known as the Calf Creek culture. Evidence of these hunter-gatherers has been found along the Washita River just north of the Arbuckle Mountains in Murray County, as well as four other locations in the state. This culture is distinguished by their finely made spear points.

Forager sites have been found across the state. An early site from this period is Pumpkin Creek in Love County. This area was used from about 9,000 to 7,500 years ago. Dry sheltered caves near Kenton in the Panhandle preserved the story of one group of Foragers for almost 4,000 years. The people ate buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, jackrabbit, cottontail, coyote, wildcat, badger, eagle, wild turkey, and mice. They mixed ground pinon nuts with wild plums and berries to make round flat cakes similar to a doughnut. They knew how to start a fire with a wood drill. They made bags from prairie dog skins, sandals of yucca leaves with soles of cedar bark, colorful mats, rugs, baskets, and cradles.

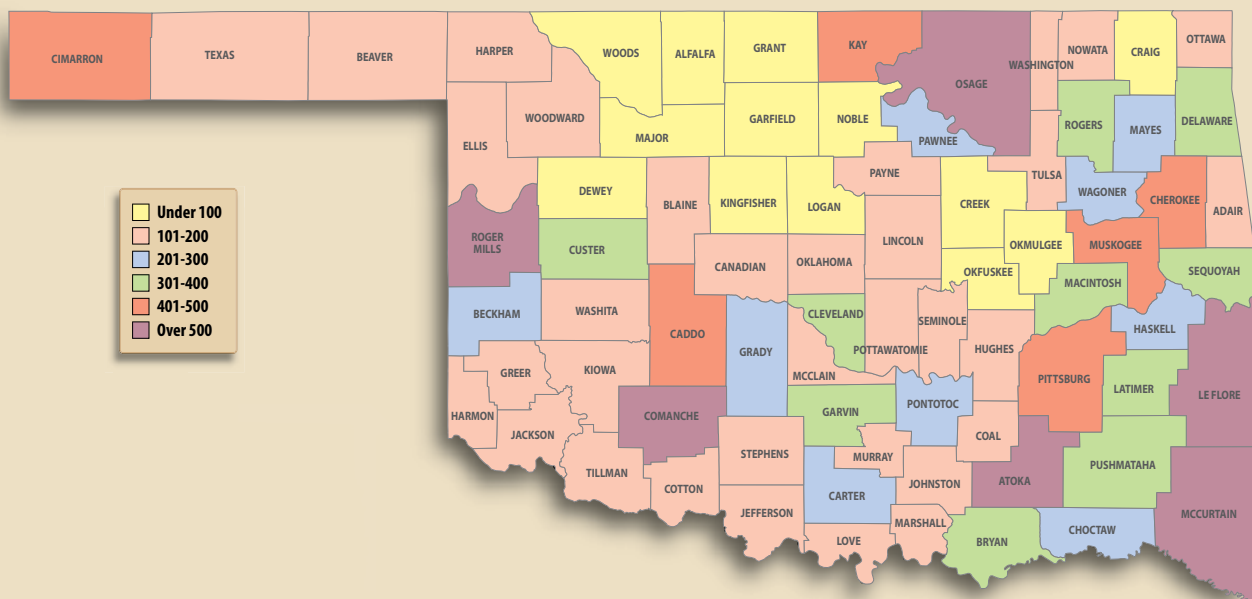
The earliest human skeleton found in Oklahoma was discovered in Comanche County and dates from about 7,000 years ago. Other skeletons have been discovered in eastern Oklahoma that are between 5,000 and 2,000 years old.



The atlatl allowed hunters to throw spears or darts a greater distance. The hunters no longer had to get so close to their prey.

Something Extra!

Some scientists believe that the atlatl was so effective it caused the extinction of the woolly mammoth in North America.



Map 11 Oklahoma Archaeological Sites, 2004

Map Skill: Which counties have the most archaeological sites?

Woodland Culture

Farming began to replace foraging about 2,000 years ago as the Woodland culture emerged. The early farmers needed to stay in one place so they could plant, cultivate, and harvest their crops of pigweed, goosefoot, squash, corn, beans, and sunflowers. They began to build better shelters and live in villages. Since they weren't moving around as much, they could make more and heavier things, such as clay pots and heavy grinding stones.

Farming appears to have first developed in four regions of Oklahoma. These are the Grand River area in the northeast, the Ouachita Mountains in the southeast, the Cimarron River area in the Panhandle, and along the Canadian and Washita rivers in the central and western parts of our state. River valley areas were close to water, easier to plow, and provided shelter and game.

The early farms were more like garden plots. Cultivating was done by hand using wooden sticks and hoes made from flint, bone, stone, or mussel shell. Crops were planted in clusters. Most crops were harvested in the fall after the seeds had ripened and dried. Seeds were then ground using grinding stones and sandstone basins.

The early farming people made pottery by shaping clay that had been mixed with ground bone, shell, or sand. They baked the shaped pot at a high temperature, causing it to become hard.

The bow and arrow and other new tools came into use about this time. The bow and arrow made hunting easier. The ax, made of stone,

was both a weapon and a tool. They also developed an ax with a cutting edge on both sides. Celts were similar to small axes and may have been used like wedges. The adz was similar to an ax, but it was fastened to a handle at a right angle and used for hollowing logs and such.

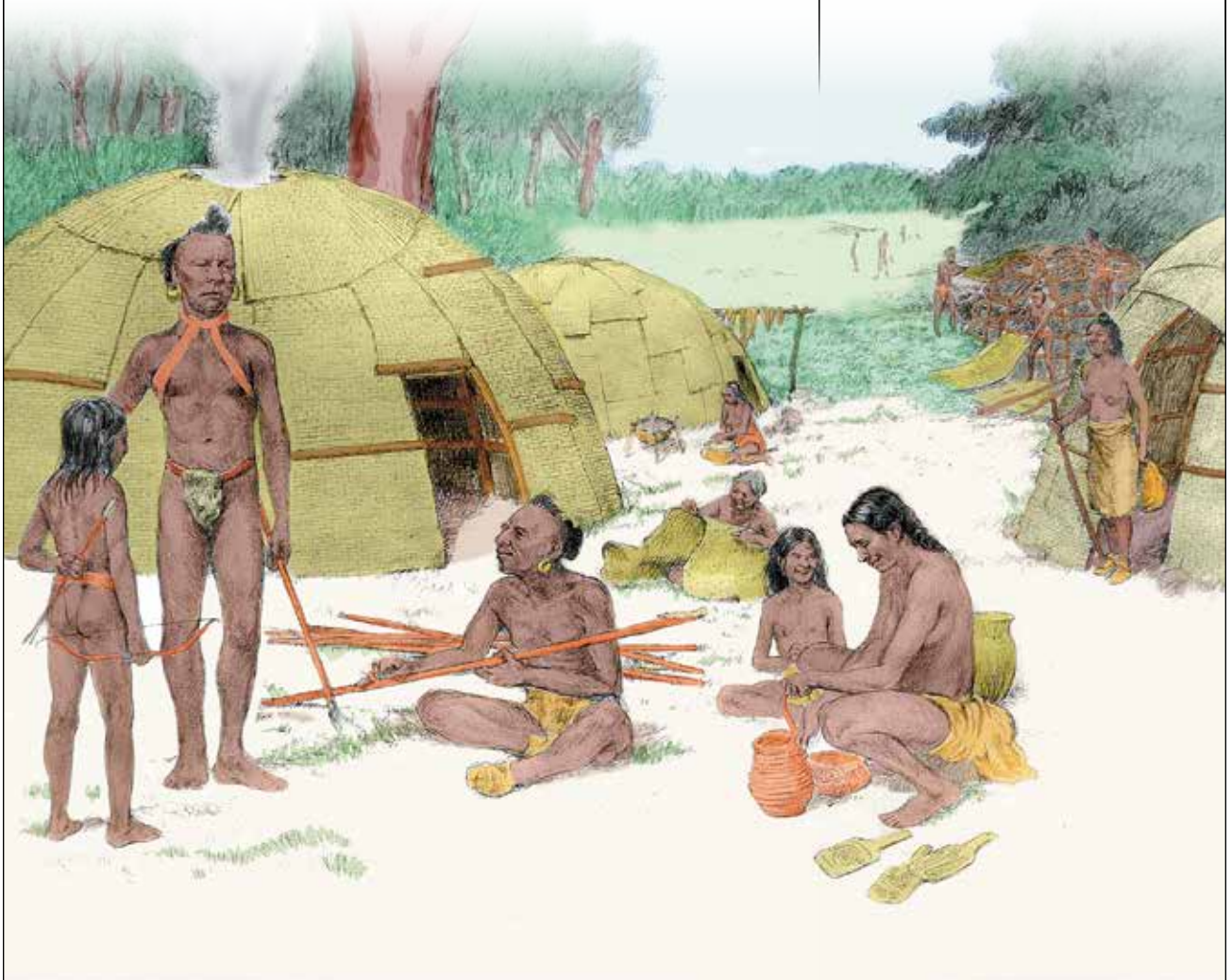
In 1900, a group of archaeologists from the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., traveled to Afton in northeastern Oklahoma to investigate a discovery by Dr. D. H. Harper. Dr. Harper had found 150 artifacts of flint and bone in the bottom of Afton Spring. The artifacts included arrowheads, spear points, knives, and blades from various periods and bones from mastodons with teeth as long as 18 inches. One distinctive arrowhead in particular had a leaflike shape and was made from an unusual kind of flint. The unusual arrowhead was named the Afton point.

Archaeological sites for this culture have been found at the Roulston-Rogers site in Seminole County and on the bank of the Fourche Maline Creek at the McCutchan-McLaughlin site in Latimer County.



Left: This example of an Afton point is from the Packard site, which is now under the waters of Lake Hudson. **Below:**

When the Woodland people began to plant and tend crops, they built more permanent villages. Notice the types of activities going on here.





Above: This Plains Village pot came from a site in Garvin County. **Below:** This engraved shell gorget was excavated from Spiro Mounds. A gorget is an engraved shell ornament worn around the neck.

Plains Village Farmers

The Plains Village farming groups lived in Oklahoma from about 1,200 to 500 years ago. The climate was probably similar to today with alternating years of good rainfall and drought, making farming risky, but possible. These people grew corn, beans, squash, gourds, sunflowers, and tobacco. Women apparently tended the crops and made the pottery, while the men were probably the hunters. They hunted bison and deer as well as many smaller animals. Hickory nuts, walnuts, hackberry seeds, wild cherries and plums, persimmons, and other wild plants provided food, dyes, and medicine.

Villages of about 100 people were scattered along the waterways. Square or rectangular houses were built with posts of red cedar or cottonwood. The walls were made of sticks or cane that were covered with a clay-and-grass mixture. The entryway was a short, above-ground tunnel. Steep roofs were covered with prairie grass. Fireplaces for cooking were used both inside and outside the houses.

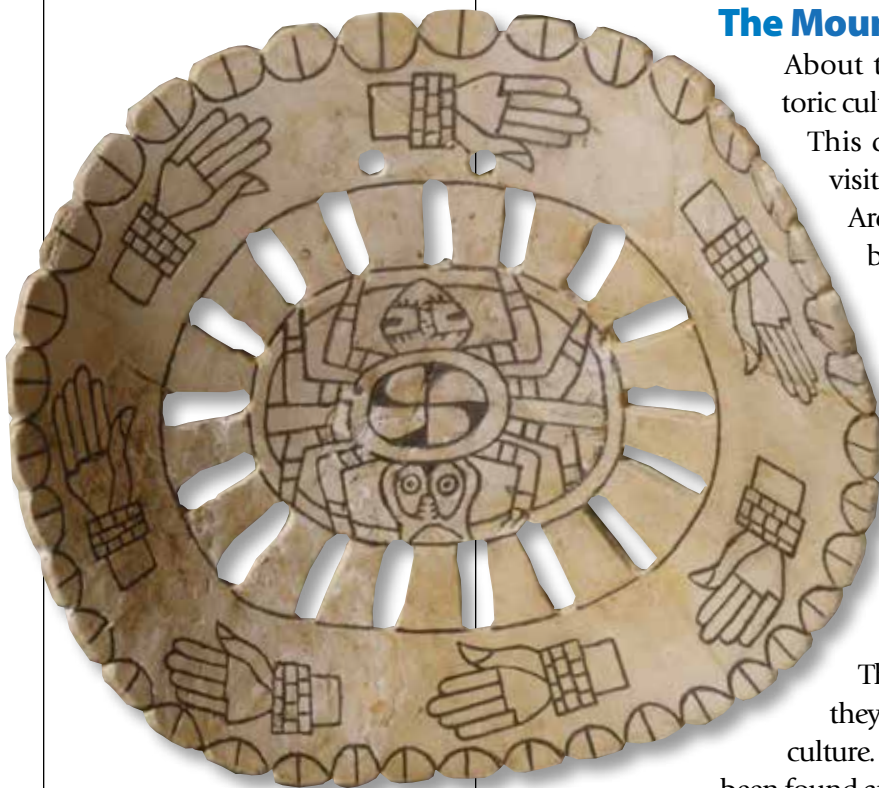
A Plains Village farming group in the Panhandle was similar to the more southern people, except that their houses had stone foundations. Artifacts found at the Roy Smith site in Beaver County suggest that the people may have participated in a trade system that extended to the Pacific Ocean.

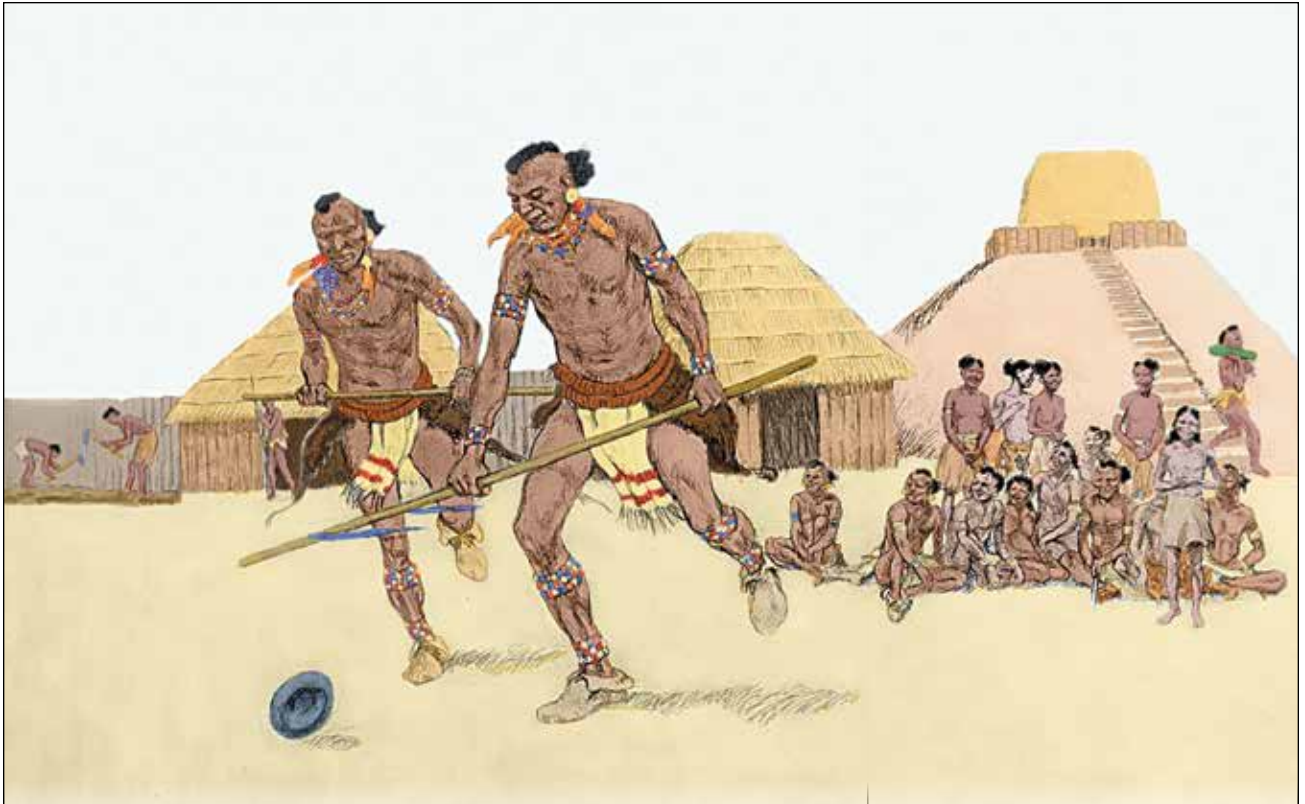
The Mound Builders

About this same time, a different prehistoric culture was living in eastern Oklahoma.

This culture's signature mounds can be visited today at the Spiro Mounds State Archaeological Park. The mounds were built by the Caddo people called the Spiro Mound Builders. Some experts believe the Caddo were ancestors of historic Caddo and Wichita groups who adopted the customs of the southeastern United States mound builders. Others believe the Caddo may have been a branch of the Cahokian mound builders from the Mississippi and Ohio river valleys or linked to tribes in Mexico.

The unique burials and artwork suggest they were part of the larger Mississippian culture. Evidence of the Caddoan culture has been found at several sites in eastern Oklahoma in addition to the Spiro site.





Most of the Caddoan people lived in small farming communities in the nearby countryside, with one large, centrally located village. The central buildings in each village may have been used to keep track of solar events and seasons. Houses were somewhat similar to those of the Plains Village farmers.

Both Spiro men and women painted themselves with colorful paints made from clays and ground-up rocks. Men wore flat-top haircuts, sometimes with Mohawk-type crests or beaded forelocks. They wore breechcloths with sashes and moccasins. The men were fine craftsmen who worked with stone, shell, and copper. They carved fancy stone tobacco pipes depicting people and animals. Some of the items used in their crafts included copper, shell, and turquoise, which were not available in this region. This suggests that they often traded items with other tribes.

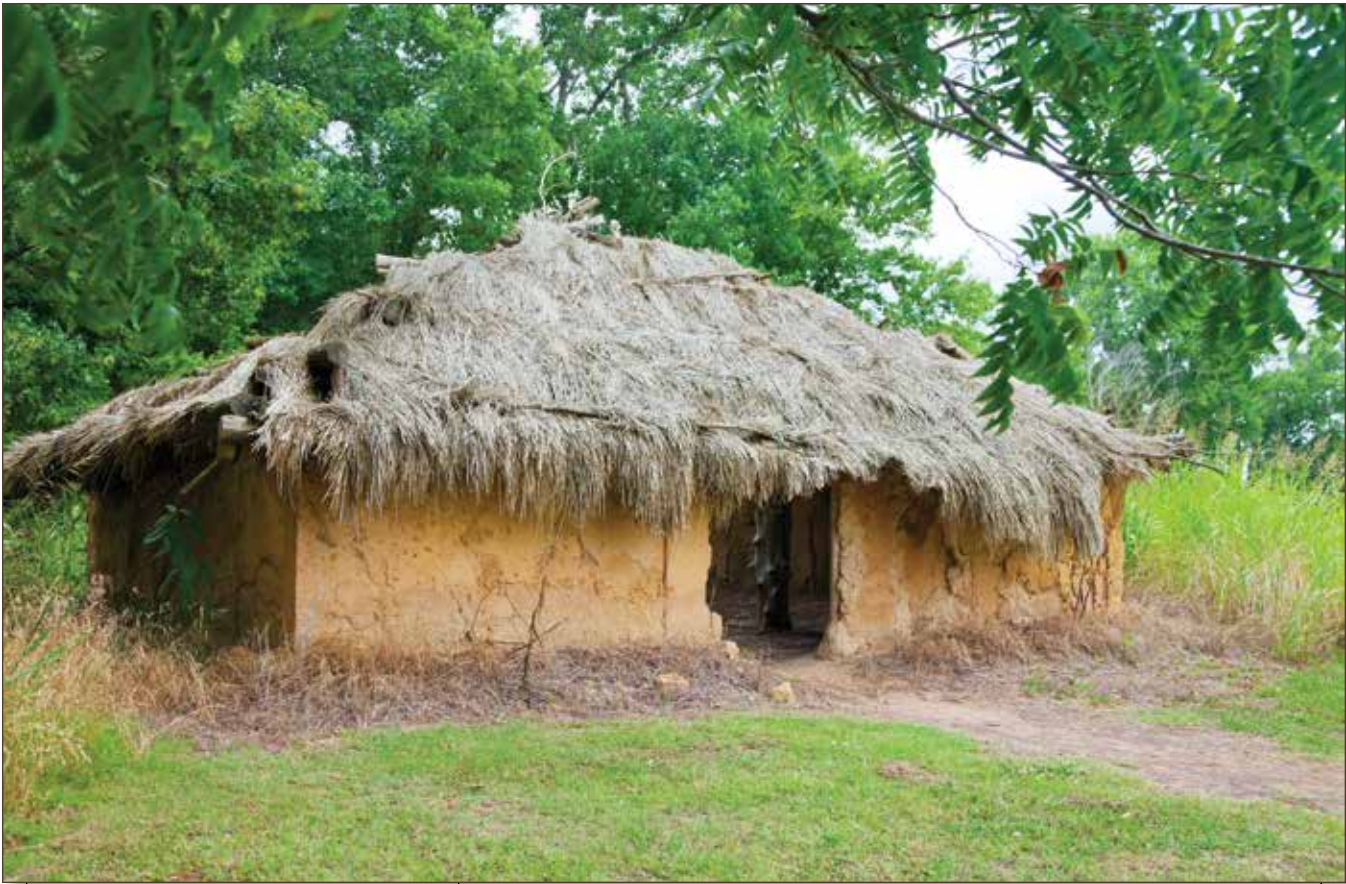
Women wore simple fringed skirts and aprons. Women tended the crops, homes, and children. They gathered persimmons, nuts, acorns, pecans, and wild fruits, including a yellow maypop, the fruit from the passionflower. The women wove cloth and lace using rabbit hair, wild hemp, wild cotton, and nettles. They made blankets of buffalo hair, rabbit fur, and feathers. All members of the clan wore jewelry that was made from rope and string, pearls and seeds.

The Spiro Mound Builders created Spiro's twelve mounds in layers, one basketload of dirt at a time. It is thought that one mound was used for burials, two were for temples, and nine were for houses or

This mound builder village has a temple mound to the right rear. The two men in the foreground are playing chunkey, a game that continued to be popular through the historic period.

Something Extra!

Spiro Mounds, Oklahoma's only archaeological park, is considered one of the four most important prehistoric Native American sites east of the Rocky Mountains.



other buildings. In the 1930s, treasure hunters removed many of the remarkable artifacts from the site before an archaeological study could be done. The clues those artifacts might have revealed may never be known.

The Spiro elite were part of a chiefdom. In a chiefdom, the highest-ranking person has control over critical resources. This control was probably over military leadership and trade in luxury items and farmers' products.

The Spiro people continued to live in the area, but mound building ceased. More trips were made to the western plains to hunt buffalo.

Early Plains Indians

About five hundred years ago, the climate became too dry in the western part of the state for farming. This period of time is called **proto-historic**, the era between prehistoric and recorded history. The people once again resorted to the more nomadic way of life as they returned to hunting buffalo for their food. They also hunted deer, antelope, rabbit, or whatever they could find. They foraged for wild plant foods.

Buffalo were vitally important to the Early Plains Indians. The animals provided the people with food, clothing, shelter, and tools. Making *jerky* (dried meat) and *pemmican* (dried meat mixed with berries and fat) allowed the Early Plains Indians to use buffalo meat long after the animal had been killed.



Their shelters were grass houses and conical tipis covered with buffalo hide. These were easily moved, which was necessary when following the buffalo herds. At first, the Indians traveled on foot, since horses were not available. They used dogs as pack animals, pulling a type of sled made of two poles and a net, now called a *travois*.

These hunters may be the ancestors of a subgroup of Caddoan-speaking people referred to as Wichita. The Native American cultures by this time included a number of tribes and confederacies with different traditions, beliefs, and languages. Some of the hunters on the plains were Apache Indians. Other tribes may have been ancestors of the Kiowa.

It's Your Turn

1. How do we know about prehistoric cultures?
2. What is the difference between artifacts and fossils?
3. What Oklahoma group built mounds? What was their purpose?

Top: Craig Mound is the second-largest mound at Spiro Mounds and the only burial mound.
Above: These two copper masks are artifacts from Spiro Mounds.
Opposite page, above and below: This recreation of a partially built house at Spiro Mounds demonstrates the construction techniques of the mound builders.

Section 2

Historic Native American Cultures

Something Extra!

In the 1400s, it is estimated that as many as 850,000 Native Americans lived in what is now the United States.

As you read, look for

- the tribes that lived in Oklahoma when Europeans first appeared,
- elements of Native American culture,
- vocabulary terms **viceroy**, **barter**, **totem**, **shaman**, and **polygamy**.

Christopher Columbus came to the New World in 1492 and claimed the land for Spain. Explorers from other countries followed, but for the next fifty years, Spain claimed the vast uncharted area north of Mexico. In 1540, Antonio de Mendoza, **viceroy** (governor) of Mexico, approved an expedition to find the golden cities rumored to be somewhere to the north. The following year, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado set out with 2,100 nobles, soldiers, and servants and 7,000 head of livestock in search of treasure. They wandered around the Central Plains for more than two months, trying to find any sign of civilization. They crossed paths with a few Native American tribes.

First Encounters

Coronado's expedition provided the first recorded contact between the Native Americans and the Spanish. Reports from the first European ex-

plorers mention six or seven general groups of Native Americans in this area. Coronado identified the Apache tribe living along the Canadian River region of Texas and western Oklahoma in *rancherias* (tribal villages) as "a gentle people . . . faithful in their friendships." The explorers noted extensive villages of farming and hunting people who lived in round, grass-thatch houses.



The Apache were nomads and did not build permanent shelters. These are reconstructions of an Apache wickiup (right) and a sweat lodge (left).



In the valley of the Red River near the Wichita Mountains, Coronado found the twin villages of Wichita Indian bands (Taovaya, Wichita, and Iscani). Ancient Wichita legends told that they had come from the north and east, but they claimed the valley as their homeland. Coronado called them “truthful and honorable.” When Spaniard Juan de Oñate explored western Oklahoma in 1601, he also met the Wichita, calling them “fair and open.” While the Native Americans were truthful and honorable, they were also frequently at war with at least one other tribe at any given time. Captives or slaves taken in the tribal skirmishes were common to all tribes.

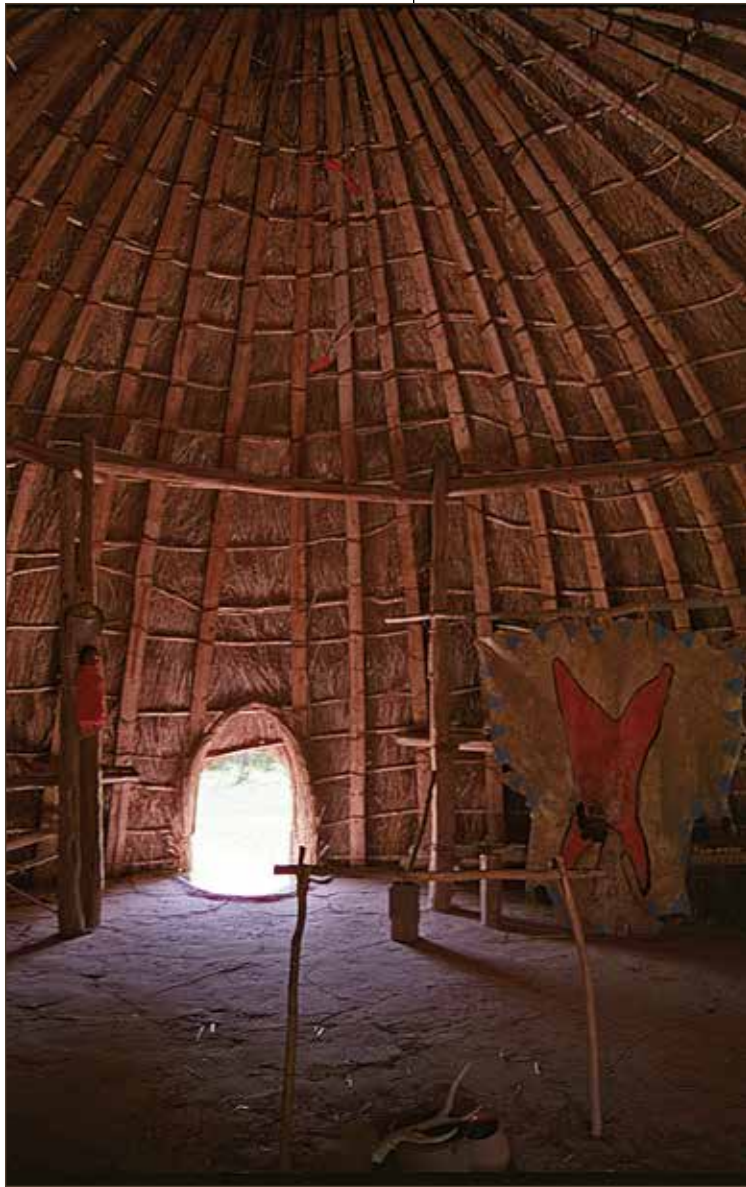
The Wichita people were well-known traders and barterers. (To **barter** means to trade one item for another.) They traded dried pumpkin, maize (corn), and other crops with hunter tribes such as the Apache. Wichita villagers had agreements with French hunters in the mid-1700s. The French needed horses and hunting partners that the Wichita could provide. The Wichita wanted European goods such as guns and metal tools. During this time, small groups of French people hunted and trapped along the Arkansas River. The French probably lived with and traded with the Wichita in at least two locations referred to by archaeologists as the Deer Creek and Bryson Paddock sites near Newkirk.

While Coronado made his way north, Hernando de Soto made his way up from Florida and wintered near what is now Fort Smith, Arkansas, near the eastern Oklahoma border. De Soto came into contact with several tribes. The Caddo had villages along the Red River in southwestern Arkansas and northeastern Texas and were principally farmers. The Quapaw were living near the Arkansas River and were still

The Caddo lived in villages along the Red River. This reconstruction of a Caddo village shows the “wattle and daub” construction they used to build their houses.

Something Extra!

The Spanish reintroduced the horse to North America about five hundred years ago. Some of those horses were lost, stolen, or traded and soon appeared in Oklahoma.



The Council House is the center of government for a tribe. This is a reconstruction of a Wichita council house.

there when French explorers Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette traveled on the Arkansas River in 1673. De Soto also probably met the Tawakoni and the Waco, allied tribes in the area.

In 1542, Spanish monks found the Kaw not far from where Coronado had met the Wichita. Originally from the north, the Kaw were a warlike people who lived mainly by hunting buffalo and growing a few small crops. French explorer Bernard de La Harpe mentioned the Kaw in 1719 when he was exploring the area where Haskell is now located. He also noted parties of Osage, Natsoo, and Nacodoches. Coronado had met the Tonkawa in Texas. The Tonkawa were a fierce, nomadic hunting tribe. La Harpe called them one of the “roving nations” in the upper Red River region.

Indian Culture

Native Americans were different but similar. They belonged to different tribes and spoke different languages, but they believed in many gods and spirits that affected people on Earth. They believed in an afterlife where brave warriors and faithful women were rewarded, and where cowards and thieves were punished. They believed in

cleansing themselves inside and out to purify their spirits.

Life was sacred to all the Plains tribes. They greeted the day by praying first to the Great Spirit, which had power over all things, and then to Mother Earth, from which all plants and animals received breath. The sun’s great power of giving light and warmth to Earth was recognized. If they had personal **totems** (an animal or bird whose spirit guided them), they prayed to them also. Dream visions were believed to come from spirits.

The **shaman**, or wise medicine man, used herbs and prayer to heal the sick. He interpreted dreams and signs. Indian history and beliefs were passed down by spoken word, often by the shaman. Some stories were about powers and spirits possessed by clever animals. Buffalo, coyote, bear, and eagle were spotlighted in many legends of the Plains Indians.

Spotlight



The Battle of Twin Villages

In the mid-1700s, the Wichita bands moved south along the Red River where trade with the French continued. With Comanche and Tonkawa, the Wichita took part in sporadic attacks on a Spanish fort and mission near Menard, Texas, south of Abilene. Diego Ortiz Parrilla was charged with protecting the mission. The raids were part of an ongoing war between these tribes and the Apache Indians. Some two thousand warriors attacked the mission, killing two Spanish priests and several Indians. In 1759, in retaliation, Parrilla and over six hundred Spaniards and Indians, with two cannons and sixteen hundred mules, horses, and cattle, marched from San Antonio to the Twin Village encampment on the north side of the Red River.

In the ensuing battle, Wichita warriors forced the Spanish and their Apache allies to flee. The Taovaya

The Spanish were defeated in the Battle of Twin Villages. This is a recreation of a Wichita village.

village was reported by the Spanish to have a circular stockade protected by an embankment and a moat. Underground tunnels provided shelter for the villagers during an attack. The Taovaya lived in houses around the stockade. The Spanish reported many cornfields near the villages. Tall tipis in a Comanche camp were nearby, as was another band of Wichita.

Excavations by archaeologists at the Longest site south of Ringling have confirmed many of the details mentioned in the Spanish records of the Ortiz Parrilla expedition. The Battle of the Twin Villages was the largest military campaign in Oklahoma in the eighteenth century.



Native Americans believed that all things were tied together and part of a whole. People were not more important than animals or plants or Earth. They were all partners and equal. Members of the tribe worked for the common good of the group. Parents and older tribal members were shown great respect. Children were rarely punished. Honesty was expected, and lying was not tolerated.

The Family

Marriages were permitted between related tribes. **Polygamy**, having more than one wife, was permitted if the husband could afford the added expense. If a husband was lost in battle, the wives shared the extra work. Mothers carried babies in cradleboards, which were strapped to their backs. Children were a blessing. A boy would care for his parents in old age. A girl was a potential source of income, for she could be bartered when she became marriageable.

The men were warriors and hunters. Experienced men taught the young boys the skills of war and hunting and weaponry. They maintained camp government and made sure no one went hungry or cold. Positions of importance included the chief, the shaman, and the camp crier. They told stories to the children, played games, and made new weapons and ceremonial regalia (special dress).

The women took care of the shelter. Sometime this was a fixed shelter of mud, grass, bark, and poles. Other times, when moving, this was a tipi that was usually 14-15 feet in diameter, large enough to house an average family. Before horses were used, tipis were much smaller. Women could set up the tipi in as little as fifteen minutes and hurriedly take it down in three minutes if necessary.

Because there were few trees on the plains, both the poles and hides were moved from camp to camp. The top opening of the tipi and the door flap controlled the heat and smoke.

Women also kept their families clothed and fed, and they gathered wild roots, berries, and other food. They dried fruits and vegetables, as well as meat, to be eaten during the winter. They made clothes and moccasins from animal skins and sinew. Young girls learned these skills at an early age.



Top: Plains tribes used burial platforms to raise the body closer to the Great Spirit and to keep it away from predators.

Above: This reconstruction of a tipi is set up for winter, with a brush fence to stop the wind.

Food

Women prepared the food. Meats were eaten raw, roasted over an open fire, boiled in water, or dried. The women ground corn for breads and soups. When prepared with lye from wood ashes, the corn became *hominy*, which was made into a soup or a drink. They baked pumpkins and squash or dried them for use in stews.

Tribes in more wooded areas sometimes killed bear for meat. They ate nuts raw or ground them into meal. Fish were baked in coals or fried, and turtles and terrapins were made into soup. Squirrel, turkey, duck, and birds were often roasted. Wild honey was sometimes stolen from a beehive for a treat, but milkweed blossoms were often used to sweeten foods. Sassafras, sumac, and honey locust were used for tonics and teas.

Plants

Native Americans used many wildflowers and plants for natural healing. About 170 different plants used by Native Americans have been recognized as having medicinal value today. Digitalis, a heart medicine, is derived from the foxglove plant. Aspirin was originally made from willow bark, which was boiled as a tea to stop pain. Bee balm and butterfly milkweed were used for bronchial problems, colds, and sore throats. Mint was boiled and drunk to cure nausea. Black-eyed susan root tea helped heal sores and snakebite. Prickly pear tea eased headaches and eye trouble. Yarrow tea cured colds. Soaproot made a good shampoo and prevented dandruff. The black powder-like spores of puffball mushrooms helped stop bleeding.

The many cultures and tribes that have called the land we know as Oklahoma home spent much of their time surviving. They found a land that was both bountiful and harsh, and they found ways of dealing with it.



Black-eyed susan roots were made into a tea to treat snakebites and sores.

Something Extra!

Linguistic researchers study ancestral languages to learn if they share words, grammar, sounds, or meaning. This could help determine if there was a "root" language that connected the early Americans or if they are from different language groups.

It's Your Turn

1. Name six tribes that early European explorers encountered in the Oklahoma area.
2. How did American Indian children learn the skills they would need to succeed as adults?
3. Name three uses of plants by the Native Americans.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary

- To learn about prehistoric people, we depend on the findings of archaeologists and anthropologists.
- The first settlers in our country are believed to be Asians who came to North America over a land bridge across what is now the Bering Strait.
- Early Plains Indians lived in Oklahoma during the protohistoric era.
- When Europeans arrived, there were only about six or seven tribes living in what is now Oklahoma.
- The belief systems of Native Americans revolved around the Earth, plants and animals, and the spirit world.
- Men and women of a tribe were responsible for passing along family and tribal traditions to future generations.

Vocabulary

Write at least three paragraphs about early cultures in Oklahoma using four of the following words in each paragraph. Do not repeat material in the chapter.

1. ancestors
2. anthropologist
3. archaeologist
4. artifact
5. atlatl

6. barter
7. domesticated
8. forager
9. fossil
10. nomadic
11. petroglyphs
12. prehistoric people
13. protohistoric
14. shaman
15. totem
16. viceroy

Understanding the Facts

1. Where is the Bering Strait? What is its importance in relation to early Native Americans?
2. What was the earliest prehistoric culture to have lived in Oklahoma?
3. What was the principal weapon developed during the Woodland culture?
4. Name four uses of the buffalo.
5. Name three positions of leadership found among the men of the historic Plains Indian tribes.

Developing Critical Thinking

1. How did changes in climate affect the migration of early peoples from one part of the world to another?
2. How can archaeologists tell about a past culture by studying bits of old tools and bones? Why is an archaeologist's work important in understanding our culture and other cultures?
3. How did the Native Americans' use of natural resources for food, shelter, and clothing differ from how people use natural resources today?
4. What effect did trading and bartering have upon the lives of Indian tribes?

Applying Your Skills

1. On a map of Oklahoma, show where the Early Plains tribes were located when the European explorers encountered them. How did geography affect their location? What problems did the land cause for each tribe? What advantages did the land provide for the tribes?

2. Prepare a time capsule for this year that includes ten items that would tell about your culture today. Why have you chosen these items? If archaeologists found your time capsule in AD 3000, what would they conclude about your world, society, and culture?
3. Because they did not speak the same language, members of different American Indian tribes used sign language to communicate. Sign language is still used by people who cannot hear or who do not speak the same language. Develop a short story to present to your class; devise signs with your hands to represent the major people, places, and things described in your story.

Exploring Technology

1. Using the Internet, find out more information about what happened to the buffalo and what is being done to preserve buffalo today.
2. Native Americans used many herbs and wildflowers for medicinal purposes. Search the Internet for current herbs and plants that are being used in healing today. Compare these to those used by Native Americans.

Building Skills

Understanding Timelines

Keeping track of all the events you read about can be difficult. *Timelines* can help you remember events in the order they happened. Although a timeline can show events over a short period of time, most often they cover a period of years.

Making a timeline is a useful way to organize the events that took place during a period of time. It is usually impossible to include all events in a timeline; only the important ones can be included. These important events then provide reference points for other events that occurred during the same period.

In your textbook, timelines appear in the opening part of most chapters, where they help you identify

the key events in the order they are presented in the chapter. They also help you place other events within the time frame of those on the timeline. You may want to expand these timelines and add other events to help you in your study of the chapter.

Make a timeline of your life or one of your older relatives (mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle). Start the timeline with the year you (or the relative) were born; end the timeline with the present year. Show at least eight events on your timeline in the order in which they occurred.