



Georgia's Pre-Historic Native Americans

SS8H1a. Describe the evolution of Native American cultures (Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian) prior to European contact.

Paleo Indians



Ed Jackson

Paleo

- Toward the end of the Ice Age.
- **Sea levels** were more than **200 feet lower** than present levels
- Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico shorelines were 100 or more miles seaward of their present locations
- Global **temperature** was **rising** rapidly



Paleo



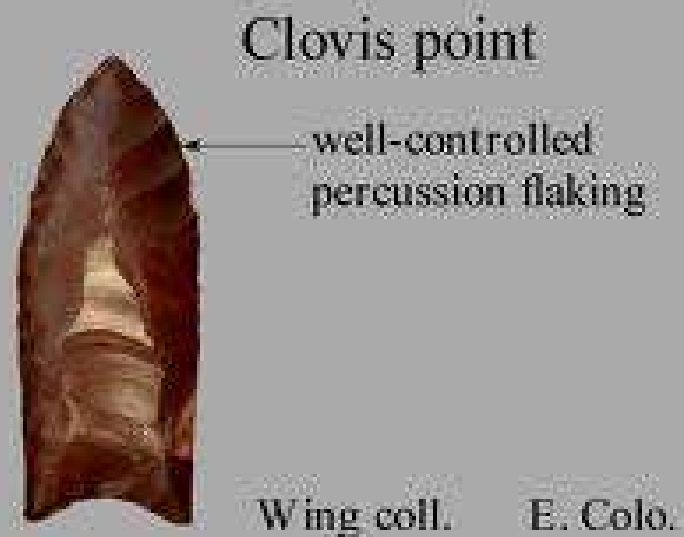
- great continental **ice sheets** were **retreating**, causing the coastline to move rapidly inland
- During this interval **massive extinctions** of such animals as elephants, horses, camels, and other megafauna took place
- In north Georgia a **spruce/pine** boreal forest was **replaced by** northern **hardwoods** (oak, hickory, beech, birch, and elm),



Paleo

● 10,000 BCE to 8,000 BCE

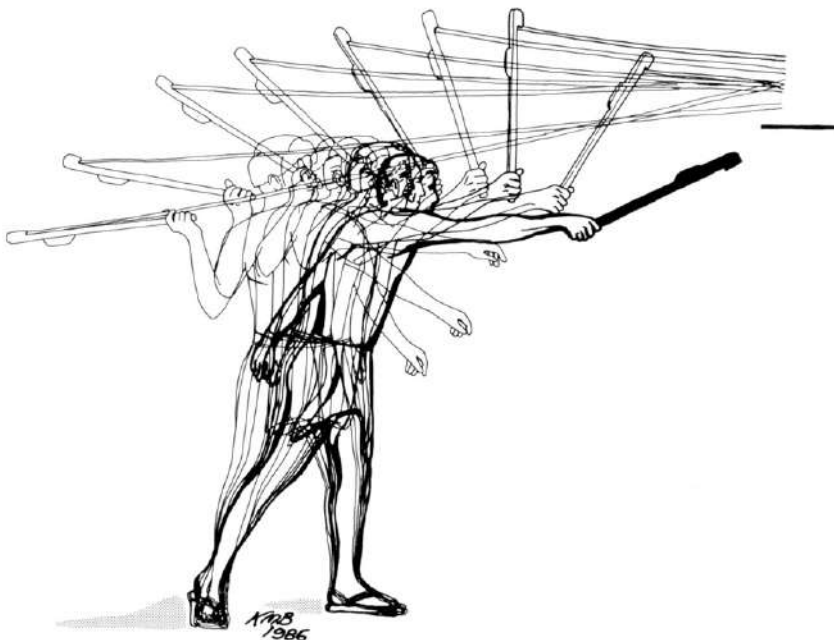
- **Clovis** and related projectile **point spears**, relatively large lance-shaped points



Paleo



spear-thrower



Paleo

- Paleoindians moved over large areas, on foot or by water
- in small bands of twenty-five to fifty people
- it is known they were hunter-gatherers
- large game animals or a wide array of plants and animals



Paleo



- toolkits have superbly made artifacts of **chipped stone and carved bone**—projectile points, **scraping and engraving tools**, cutting tools known to archaeologists as **spokeshaves**, and toward the end of the period, axlike **adzes**

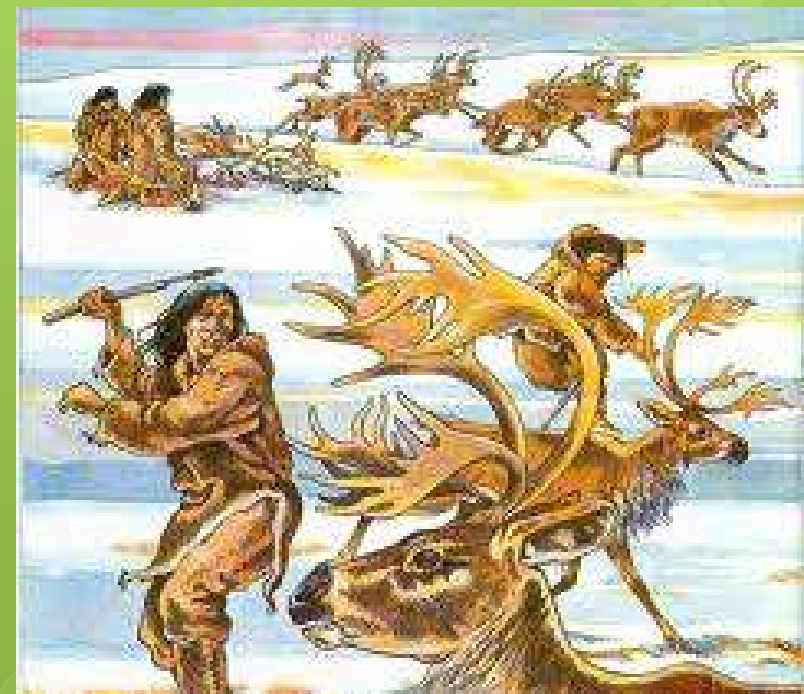
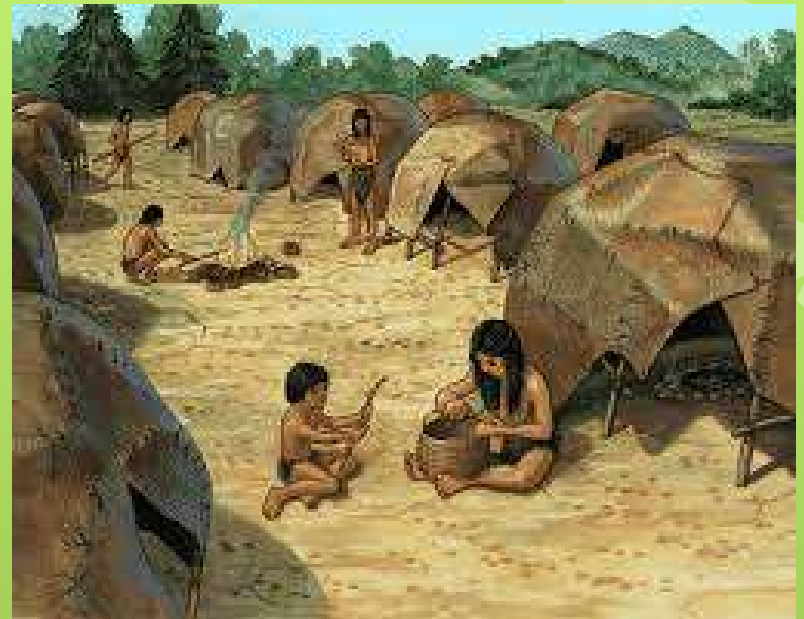


Paleo Indians

Dates	10,000 BCE to 8,000 BCE
Environment	Sea levels lower; temps. rising rapidly; ice sheets receding; massive extinctions; hardwood forests
Tools & Weapons	Clovis point spears; atlatl; chipped stone and carved bone; scrapping and engraving tools; spokeshaves (knives); adzes (axes)
Food	Hunter-gatherers; megafauna; wide array of plants and animals

Paleo

- Examples of prehistoric clothing are rare, because materials used for clothing, such as animal hides or plant fibers, quickly deteriorate. Durable ornaments of stone or bone are more commonly found. Judging by the clothing people living today wear in colder climates and by the resources available to them, Paleoindians probably wore **animal hide and fur clothing**.



Housing



- Paleoindians may have lived in **skin tents**, which they could easily transport.
- They have also lived in **caves** and **pit-houses**.



Paleo

- Two or three Paleo-Indian **burials** from Montana **contained** extraordinary Clovis **points**, **and** large bifacial **knives**
- Certainly Paleo-Indians attached some significance to the afterlife.
- The Clovis points from these burials are so large and exquisite that they may not have been functional tools, but true **offerings**.



Paleo Indians	
Clothes	Animal hide & fur
Housing	Skin tents; caves; pit-houses
Evidence of Religion	Buried with points and knives so large that they could be offerings

Archaic Indians



Archaic

- 8,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE
- Spread of pine forests
- Megafauna had become extinct
- Becoming drier and warmer

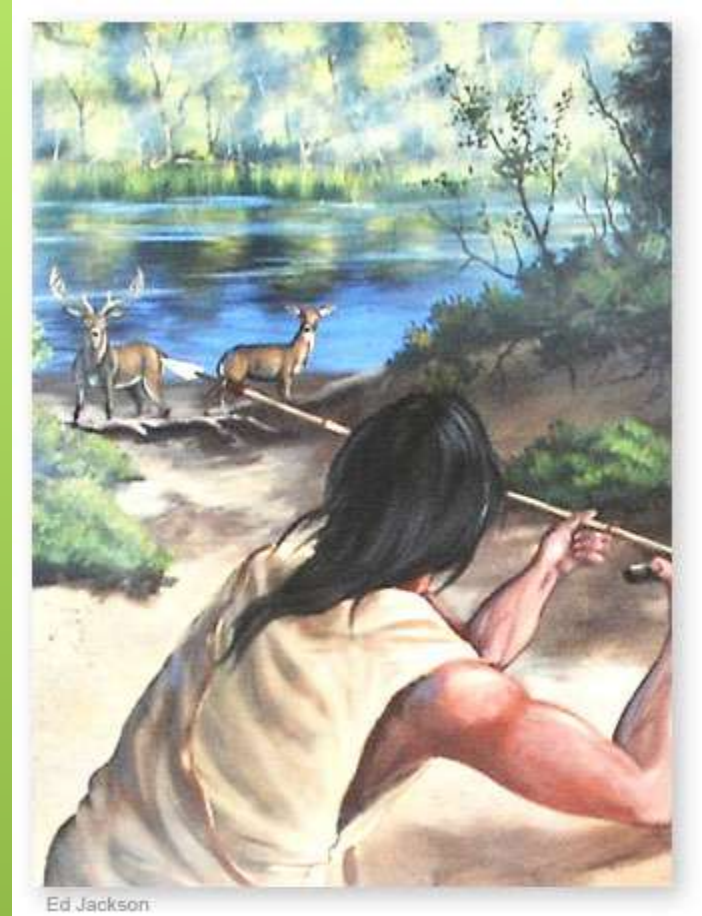


Archaic

- They hunted white-tailed deer, black bear, turkey, and other **large game** animals and **collected nuts, roots, fruits, seeds, and berries**
- **caught or collected** turtles, fish, shellfish, birds, and smaller mammals.
- Early Archaic people were **hunters and gatherers**
- lived in small groups or "bands" of twenty to fifty

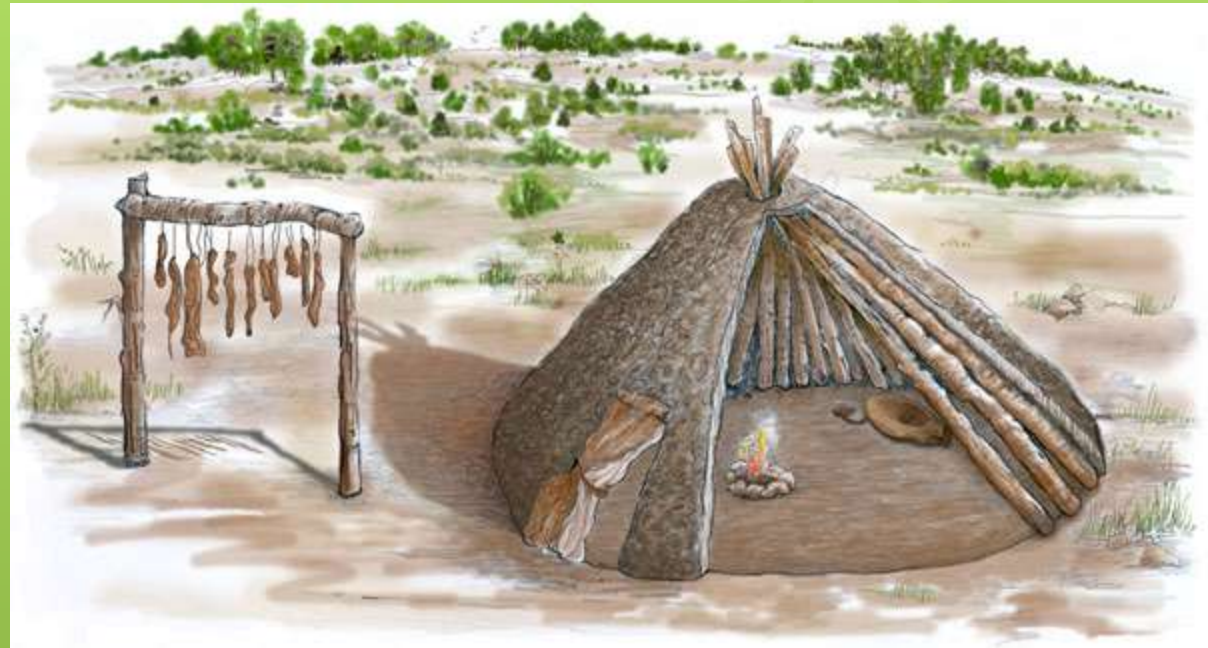
Archaic

- Archaic bands probably moved around in search of seasonal foods, mates outside of their social group, and sources of stone from which they could make spear points and other tools
- There is little archaeological evidence that they stored foods or stayed for long at one location



Archaic

- Their **houses were small** but provided simple shelter from the elements.
- The people built **hearths for fires** with which to keep warm and cook their food
- almost certainly built of **wooden poles covered** with bark, hides, mats, or thatch



Archaic



- stone spear points that usually have notches on the bases
- These notches were used to help tie or attach the stone points to a spear shaft that was probably made of wood

Archaic

- Sharp serrated edges on some spear points suggest that they were also used as **knives**
- stone **scrapers**, which may have been used to prepare deer hides for tanning
- **stone tools** that could have been used for carving wood or bone and processing plant foods



Archaic



- As the Archaic period progressed the bands traveled less and started to build some permanent settlements.
- From this later period artifacts include **cooking slabs** made of soapstone (a soft stone that retains heat well), fiber-tempered **pottery vessels**, and **soapstone vessels**

Archaic

- tool kits included **atlatl weights**, grooved stone axes, metates (or **grinding slabs**), and stone drills



Archaic Indians	
Dates	8,000 – 1,000 BCE
Environment	Spread of pine forests; Megafauna had become extinct; drier and warmer
Tools & Weapons	Stone points with notches on the bases; cooking & grinding slabs; pottery and soapstone vessels; knives; scrapers; woven baskets; bannerstones
Food	hunters and gatherers; large game; small game; fruits, seeds, nuts roots
Housing	Small; more permanent; had hearth; covered poles; clothes made from hides
Evidence of Religion	Cemeteries; intricate carving on bannerstones

Woodland Indians



Woodland



- 1000 BCE to 900A.D.
- This period witnessed increases in sedentariness and social stratification, an elaboration of ritual and ceremony, and an intensification of horticulture.

Woodland

- Ceramic cooking vessels became sturdier and more elaborately decorated, with surfaces bearing the impressions of fabric-wrapped or simple carved wooden paddles



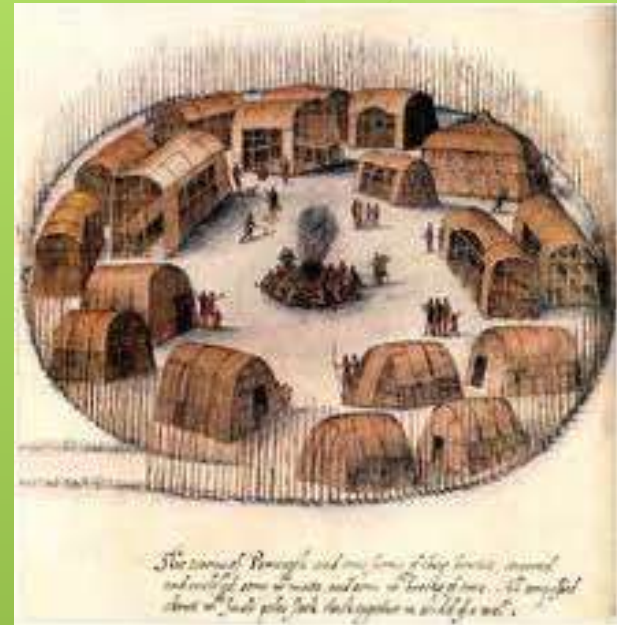
Woodland



- Settlements may have become somewhat **more permanent**, sites have revealed evidence of relatively **substantial structures** that were generally **circular to oval** in form
- settlements from this time were generally **small** no more than fifty people

Woodland

- Later in this period excavations at a few sites have revealed **planned villages**, sometimes consisting of a **circular arrangement** of as many as twenty houses surrounding an open plaza area



Woodland

- ◉ **domesticated plants**, included goosefoot, maygrass, knotweed, and sunflower
- ◉ **Nuts and other wild foods**, however, continued to form the bulk of the diet
- ◉ **Corn** was introduced
- ◉ began clearing forests for fields



Woodland



- increase in ritual and ceremonialism
- earthen and rock mounds served as burial repositories
- earthen platform mounds were also constructed probably functioned as stages for ceremonies

Woodland

- The appearance in the archaeological record of small triangular stone projectiles suggests that the **bow and arrow** may have been adopted
- The bow and arrow also may have made warfare more deadly
- Perhaps not by coincidence, the **first fortified settlements** appeared

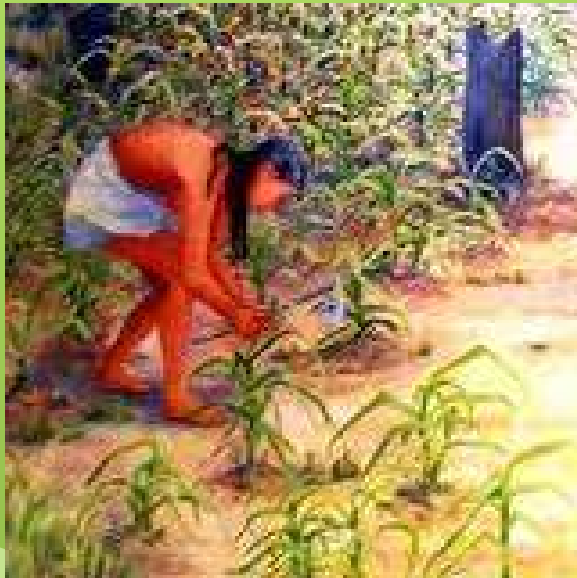


Woodland Indians	
Dates	1000 BCE to 900A.D
Environment	Very similar to today
Tools & Weapons	Sturdier vessels with more elaborate decorations; bow and arrow;
Food	domesticated plants; Nuts and other wild foods; Corn
Clothes & Housing	more permanent; substantial structures; circular to oval; planned villages; circular arrangement; clothes made from hide
Evidence of Religion	elaboration of ritual; mounds served as burial

Mississippian Indians



Mississippian



- A.D. 800 to 1600
- Mississippian people were horticulturalists
- grew much of their food in small gardens using simple tools like stone axes, digging sticks, and fire.

Mississippian

- Corn, beans, squash, sunflowers, goosefoot, sumpweed, and other plants were cultivated
- Wild plant and animal foods were also eaten
- gathered nuts and fruits and hunted such game as deer, turkeys, and other small animals
- Mississippian people also collected fish, shellfish, and turtles from rivers, streams, and ponds



Mississippian



- spent much of their lives outdoors
- houses were used mainly as shelter from inclement weather, sleeping in cold months, and storage
- rectangular or circular pole structures;

Mississippian

- the poles were set in individual holes or in continuous trenches. **Walls** were made by **weaving saplings** and cane around the poles, and the outer surface of the walls was sometimes covered with **sunbaked clay** or daub. **Roofs** were covered with **thatch**, with a small hole left in the middle to allow smoke to escape.



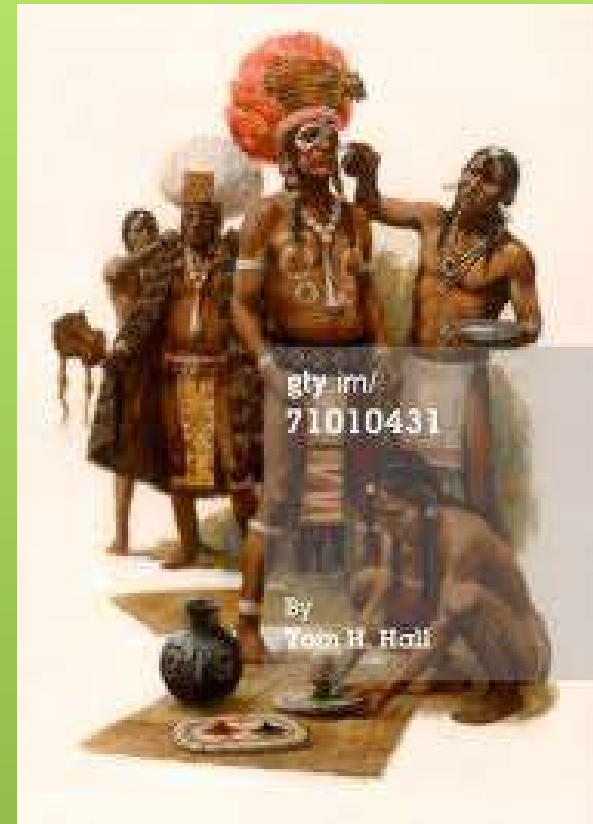
Mississippian



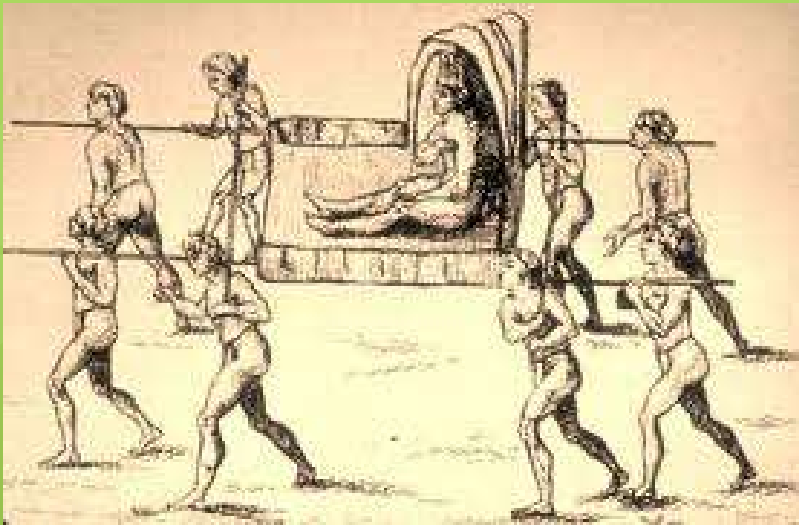
- Inside the houses the **hearth dominated** the center of the living space. **Low benches** used for sleeping and storage ringed the outer walls, while short partitions sometimes divided this outer space into compartments. By today's standards Mississippian houses were quite small, ranging from twelve feet to thirty feet on a side

Mississippian

- Mississippian people were organized as chiefdoms or **ranked societies**. Chiefdoms were a specific kind of human social organization with social ranking as a fundamental part of their structure. In ranked societies people belonged to one of two groupings, elites or commoners. **Elites**, who made up a relatively small percentage of chiefdom populations, had a higher social standing than commoners



Mississippian



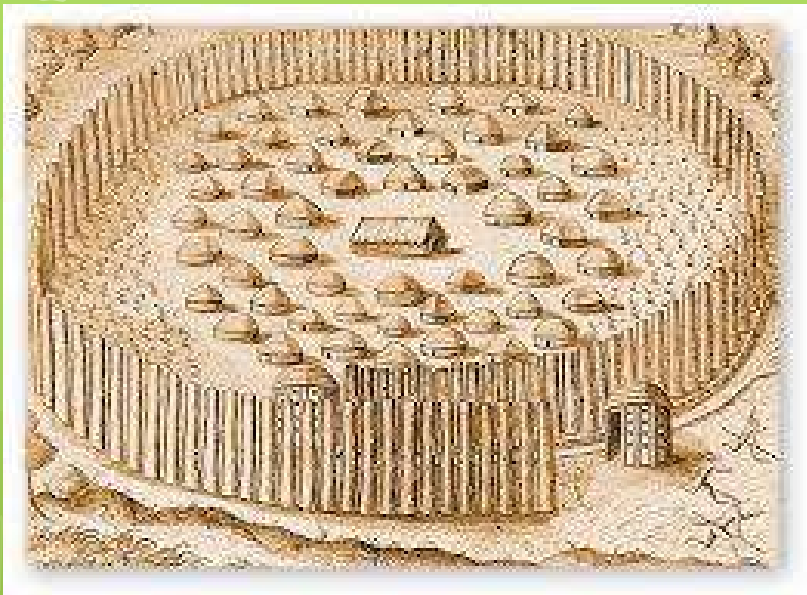
- For example, the Natchez of Louisiana, who were still organized as a chiefdom during the early 1700s, believed that their chief and his immediate family were **descended from the sun**, an important god to the Natchez. It was believed that the Natchez chief, probably like most Mississippian chiefs, **could influence the supernatural** world and therefore had the ability to ensure that important events like the rising of the sun, spring rains, and the fall harvest came on time.

Mississippian

- Mississippian people, who were mainly farmers, often lived close to rivers, where periodic flooding replenished soil nutrients and kept their gardens productive. They lived in small villages and hamlets that rarely had more than a few hundred residents and in some areas also lived in single-family farms scattered across the landscape. Although there was a great deal of variation across Georgia, a typical Mississippian village consisted of a central plaza, residential zone, and defensive structures.



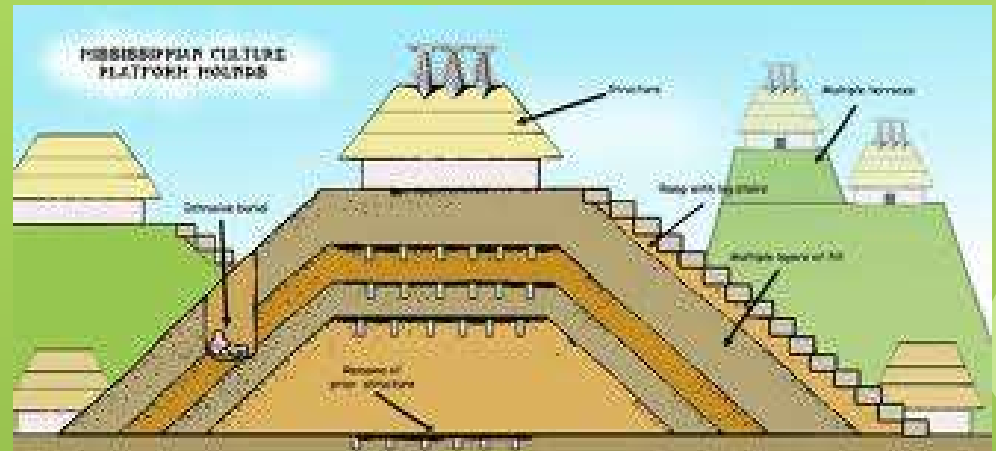
Mississippian



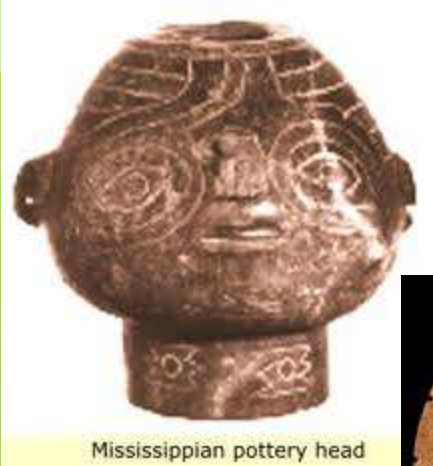
- The plaza, located in the center of the town, served as a gathering place for many purposes, from religious to social. Houses were built around the plaza and were often arranged around small courtyards that probably served the households of several related families. Some, though not all, Mississippian villages also had defensive structures. Usually these took the form of a pole wall, known as a palisade; sometimes there was a ditch immediately outside the wall. These helped to keep unwelcome people and animals from entering the village.

Mississippian

- Certain Mississippian towns featured mounds. These were made from locally quarried soils and could stand as tall as 100 feet. Most were built in stages, sometimes over the course of a century or more. Although Mississippian mounds were made in various shapes, most were rectangular to oval with a flat top. These mounds were used for a variety of purposes: as platforms for buildings, as stages for religious and social activities, and as cemeteries



Mississippian



- Some of the most impressive achievements of Mississippian people are the **finely crafted objects made of stone, marine shell, pottery, and native copper**
- many of these were important ritual items or parts of elite **costumes**

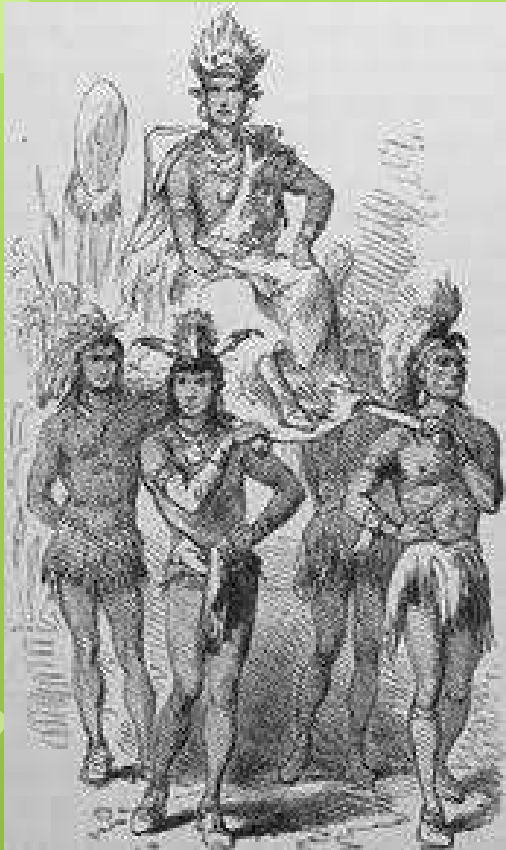
Mississippian

- The objects themselves, or elements of their **decoration**, almost certainly **represent supernatural** beings, mythological objects, and mythical events



Moundville: Mississippian Indian
Civilization. 1000-1450 A.D.

Mississippian



- Near the end of this period, from 1539 to 1543, Hernando de Soto and his army of Spaniards traveled through the Southeast in search of riches. Descriptions left behind by some of de Soto's men tell of powerful chiefs ruling over territories that stretched for hundreds of miles. Historical and archaeological studies have identified these as paramount chiefdoms. Paramount chiefdoms were loosely united confederacies of individual chiefdoms spread over large areas. The paramount chiefdom of Coosa, described by one de Soto chronicler, had as many as seven smaller chiefdoms, all under the influence of a powerful chief living at the town also known as Coosa.

Mississippian

- The Mississippian Period in Georgia was brought to an end by the increasing European presence in the Southeast. European diseases introduced by early explorers and colonists devastated native populations in some areas, and the desire for European goods and the trade in native slaves and, later, deerskins caused whole social groups to relocate closer to or farther from European settlements. The result was the collapse of native chiefdoms as their populations were reduced, their authority structures were destroyed by European trade, and their people scattered across the region. Many remnant populations came together to form historically known native groups such as the Creeks, Cherokees, and Seminoles.



Mississippian Indians	
Dates	A.D. 800 to 1600
Environment	Very much like today
Tools & Weapons	Digging sticks; axes; fire
Food	Grew food; nuts & fruits; game; fish; turtles; shellfish
Clothes & Housing	rectangular or circular pole structures; small to large villages; mounds; clay walls; thatched roofs; hearth dominated; costumes and jewelry
Evidence of Religion	ranked societies; elites descended from the sun; control over nature