

Prehistoric Georgia Indians



Essential Questions

- How did the Native American cultures develop prior to European contact?
- What impact did the environment have on the development of prehistoric Native Americans in Georgia?



Understanding Ancient Peoples Through Artifacts

Oral Tradition

Elders repeated narratives of events often until the younger generations memorized them.



Who Is the Real Archaeologist?



VS.

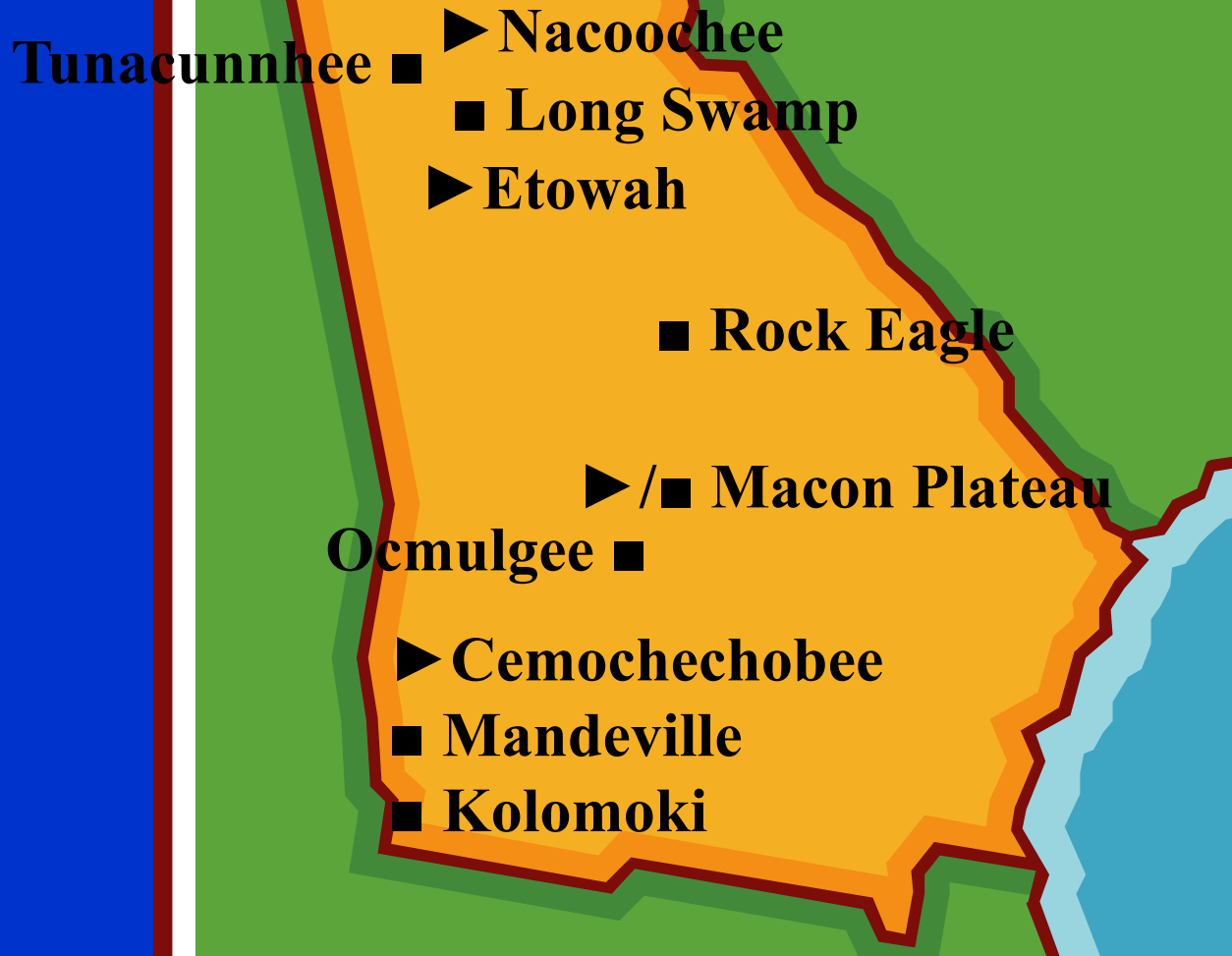


Archeologists dig into earth to find artifacts (items made by people) that tell us about early inhabitants

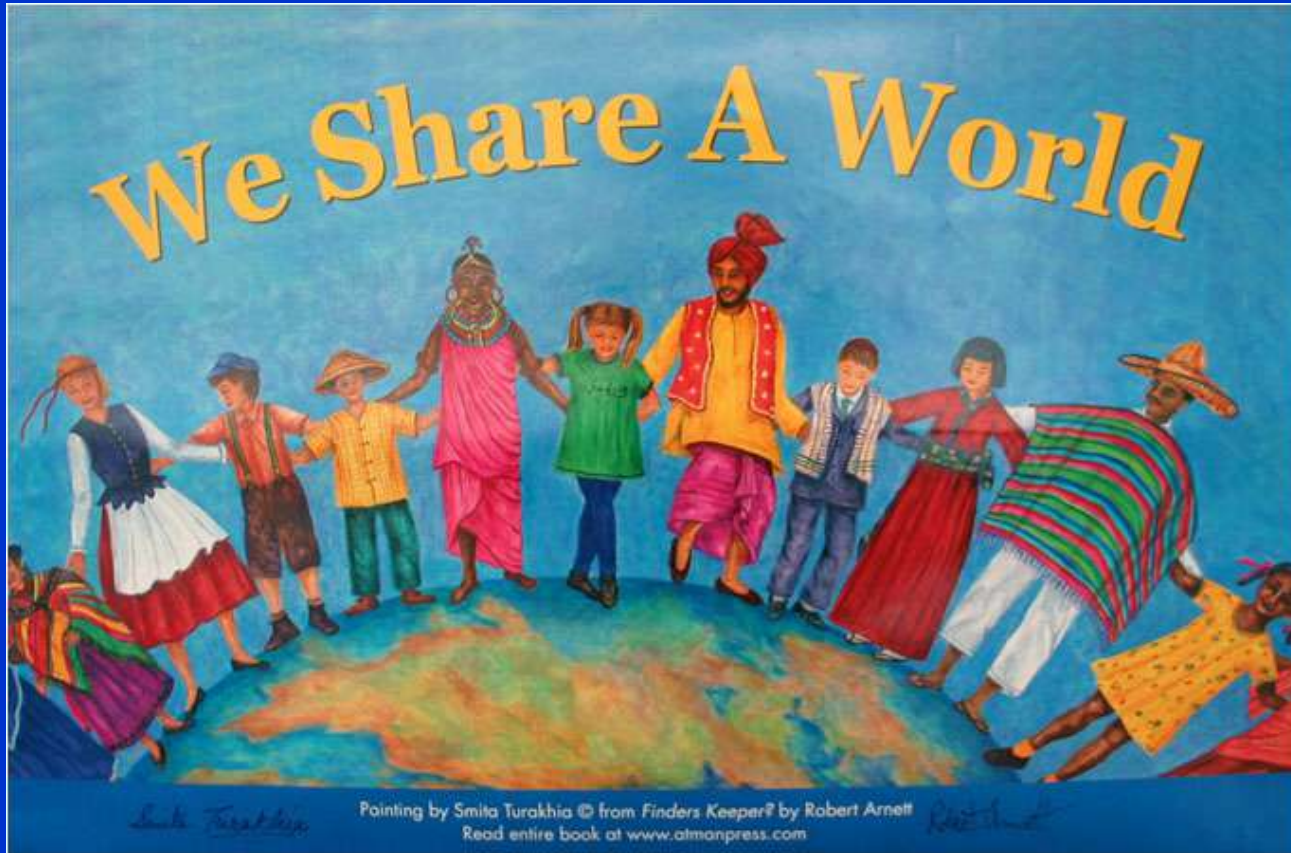
Shale:
Layered
rock
that can
encase
ancient
animals
or birds



Georgia Native American Archaeological Sites



CULTURE



shared beliefs, traditions, music, art, and social institutions of a group of people



The First Americans

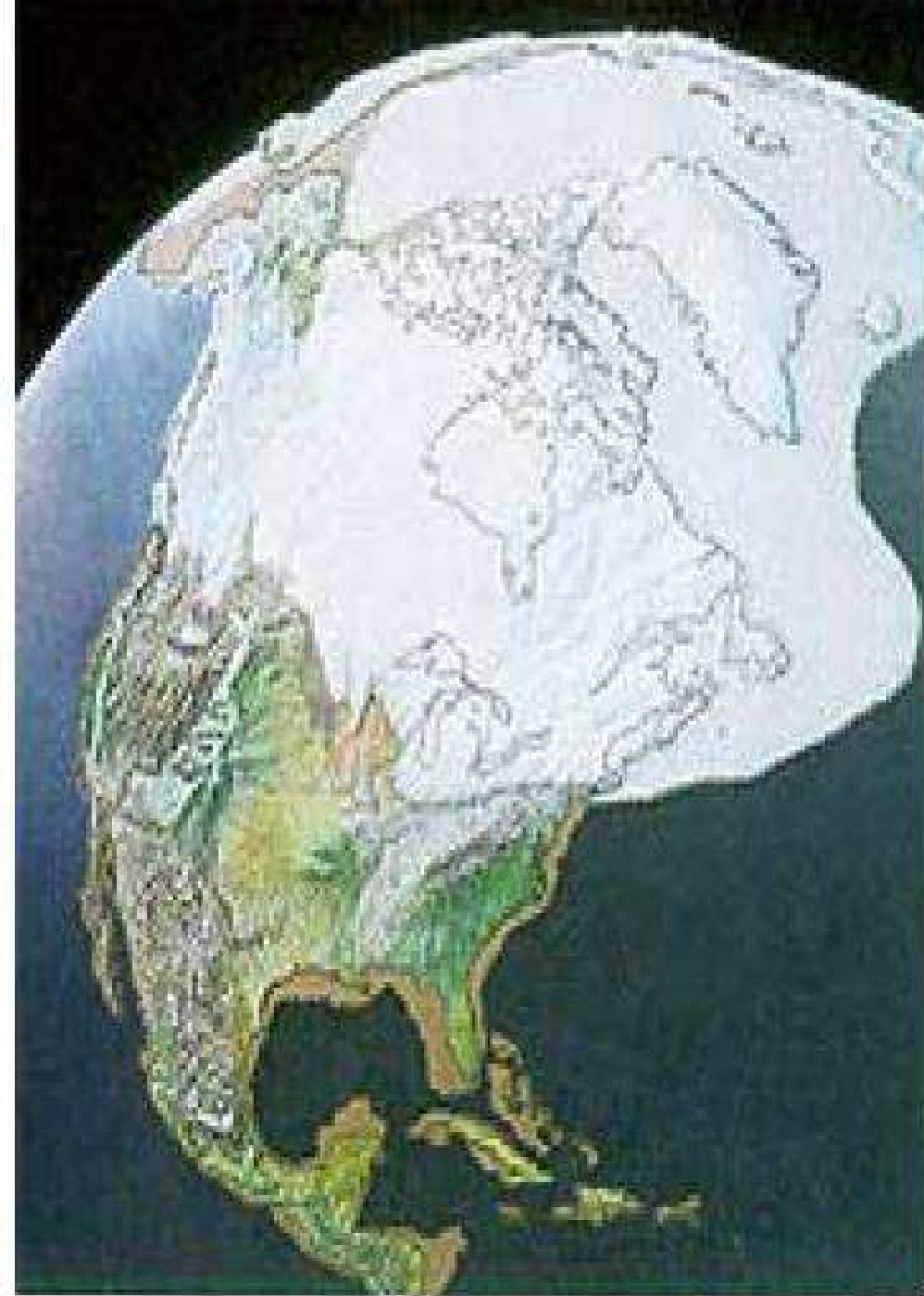
- Approximately 30,000 years ago the earth experienced an Ice Age.
- *Ice Age* – a period of time in which temperatures on earth were very cold, and North America was covered in glaciers.
- *Glaciers* – large, slow moving sheets of ice

Ice Age

When the **glaciers** were growing, the oceans became smaller and shallow. When the glaciers were melting, the oceans became larger and deeper.

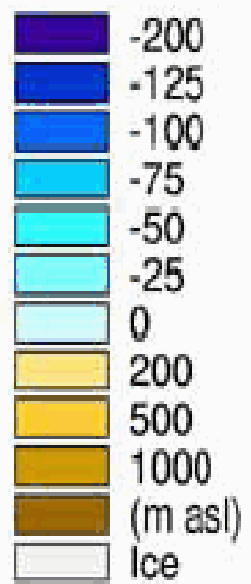
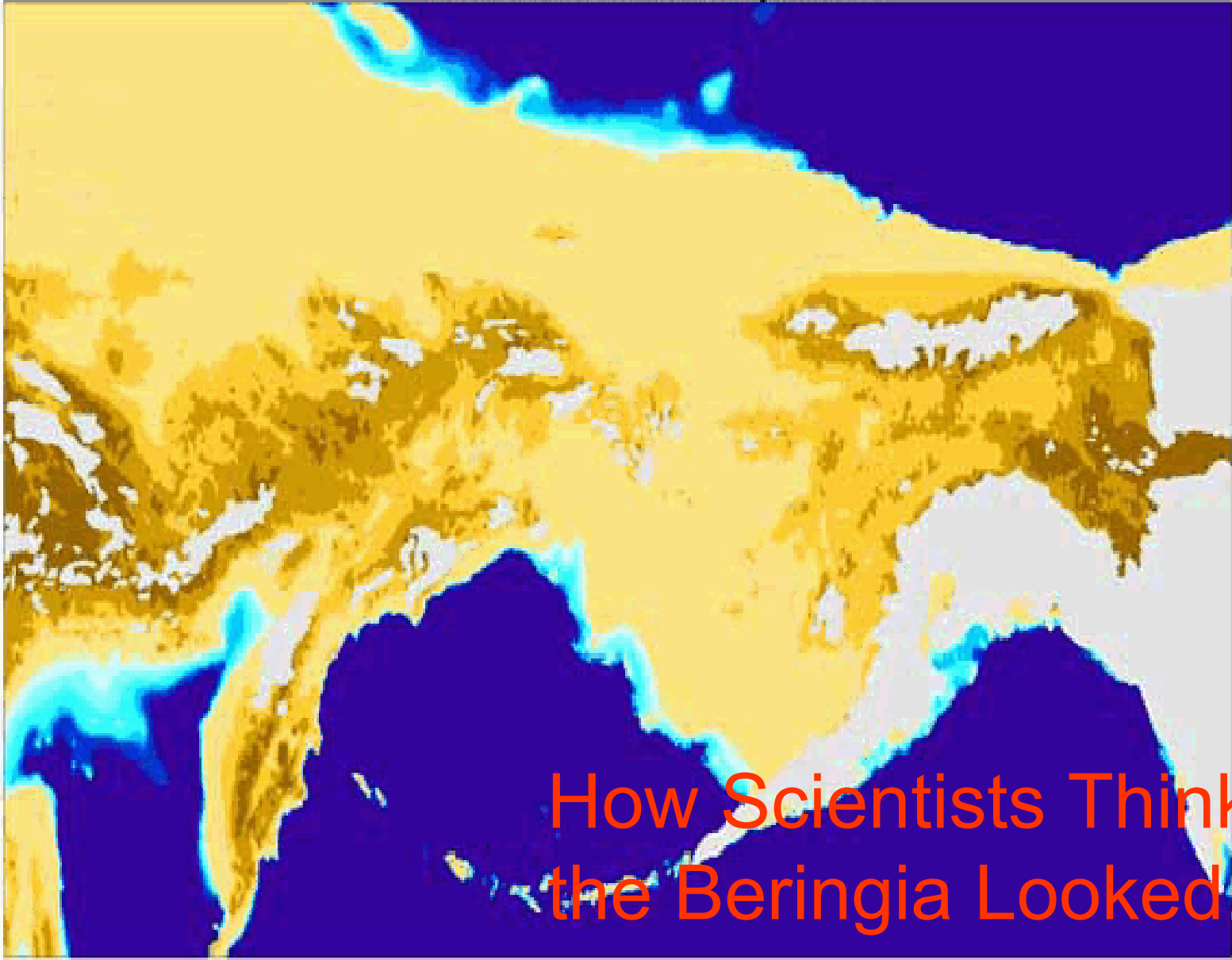
Shallow oceans had **land bridges** connecting continents.

As the glaciers melted, **paths** across continents appeared. People and animals could travel through these paths.



PALE Paleoenvironmental Atlas of Beringia

Coastline 21,000 Cal years BP



How Scientists Think
the Beringia Looked...







10,000 - 8,000 BC



Cultural Periods in Georgia History: Paleo

- **Paleo (from Greek, “Very Old”)**
- **Also called Old Stone Age**
- **10,000-8000 B.C.**

Nomadic (Roaming) Hunters



Band

25 – 50 People





Courtesy of Larry Porter, artist

**Most tools
and spear
points made
of stone**



Clovis and related projectile points from this time period have been found throughout Georgia.

Paleo-Indian Points



Clovis

11,500 - 10,900



Folsom

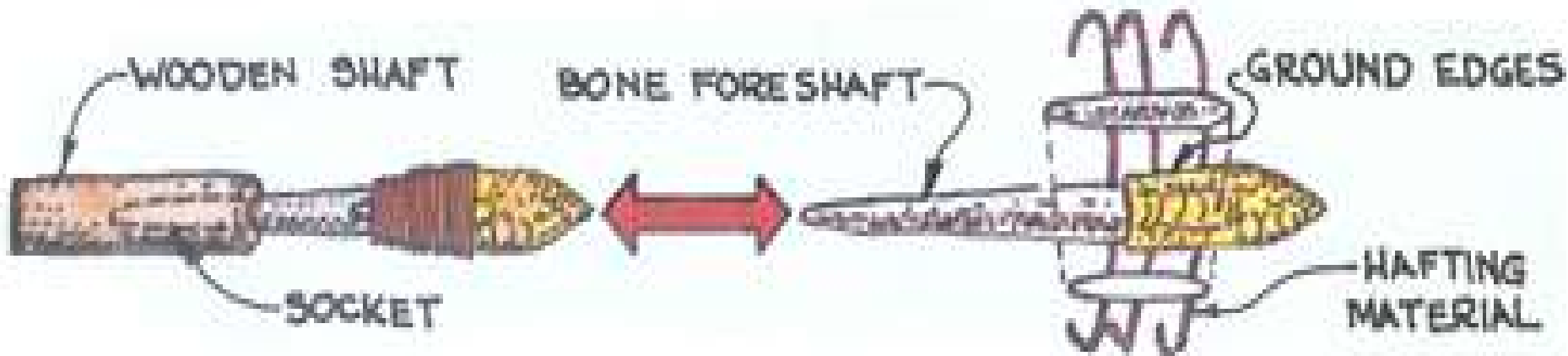
10,900 - 10,200



Plainview

10,200 - 8,000

Clovis Point



- Clovis points, along with a number of other stone tools, found at Macon Plateau were the first Paleoindian points unearthed in eastern North America.



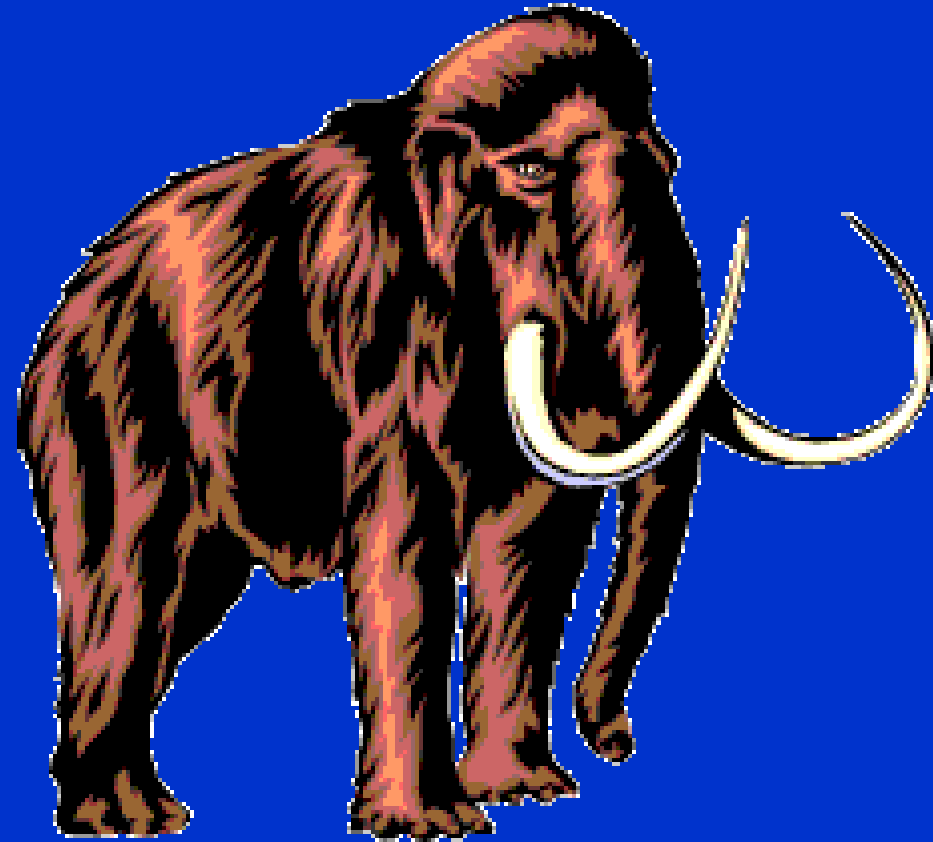
DRILL



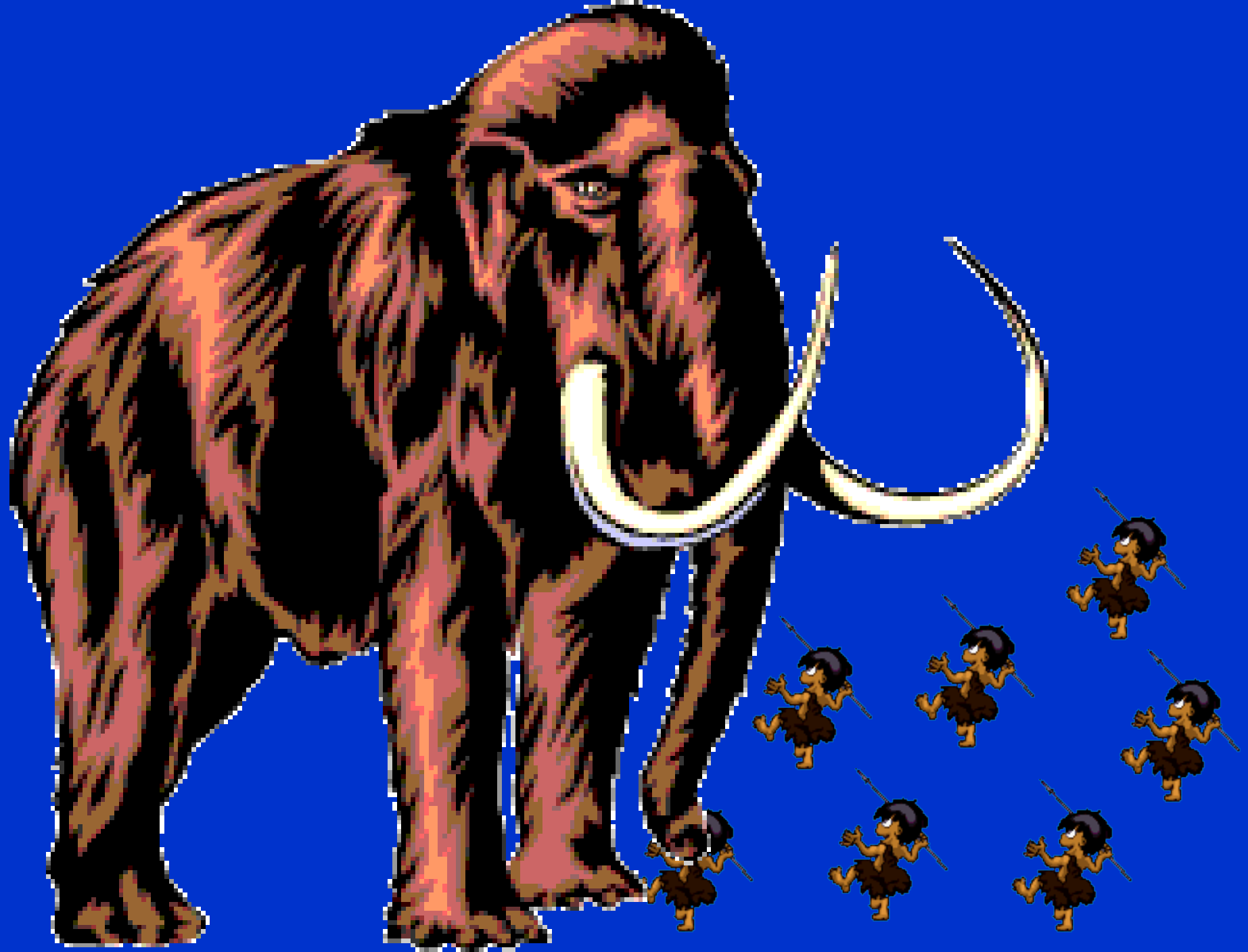
Food



Giant Sloth



Mammoth



Paleo

Dates	10,000 – 8,000 B.C.
Weapons	Heavy Spears with Clovis Points, Atlatl
Food	Bison, Mastodons, Giant Sloths, Other Large Mammals, Small Game, Berries, Fruit, Vegetables
Dwellings	Non-Permanent Pits or Brush Covered with Hides or Bark
Evidence of Religion	Burial of Dead with Artifacts

8,000 - 1,000 BC



Cultural Periods in Georgia History: Archaic

- **Archaic (means “Old”)**
- **Three time spans:
Early, Middle, Late**

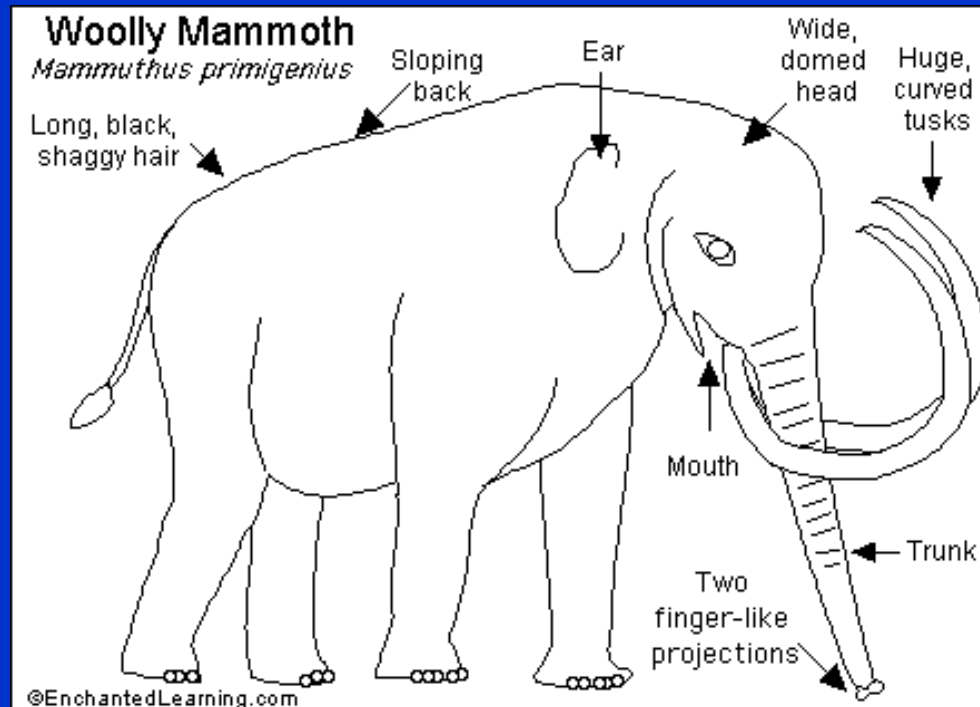
Cultural Periods in Georgia History: Early Archaic

- **During this time, most of Georgia was covered with oak-hickory hardwood forests.**

FOOD

- **Hunted white-tailed deer, black bear, turkey, and other large game animals.**
- **Collected nuts, roots, fruits, seeds, and berries.**
- **Caught turtles, fish, shellfish, birds, and smaller mammals.**
- **Food was easier to find; people moved around less nomadic**

- The large prehistoric animals such as bison, mastodons, mammoths, and camels had become extinct.



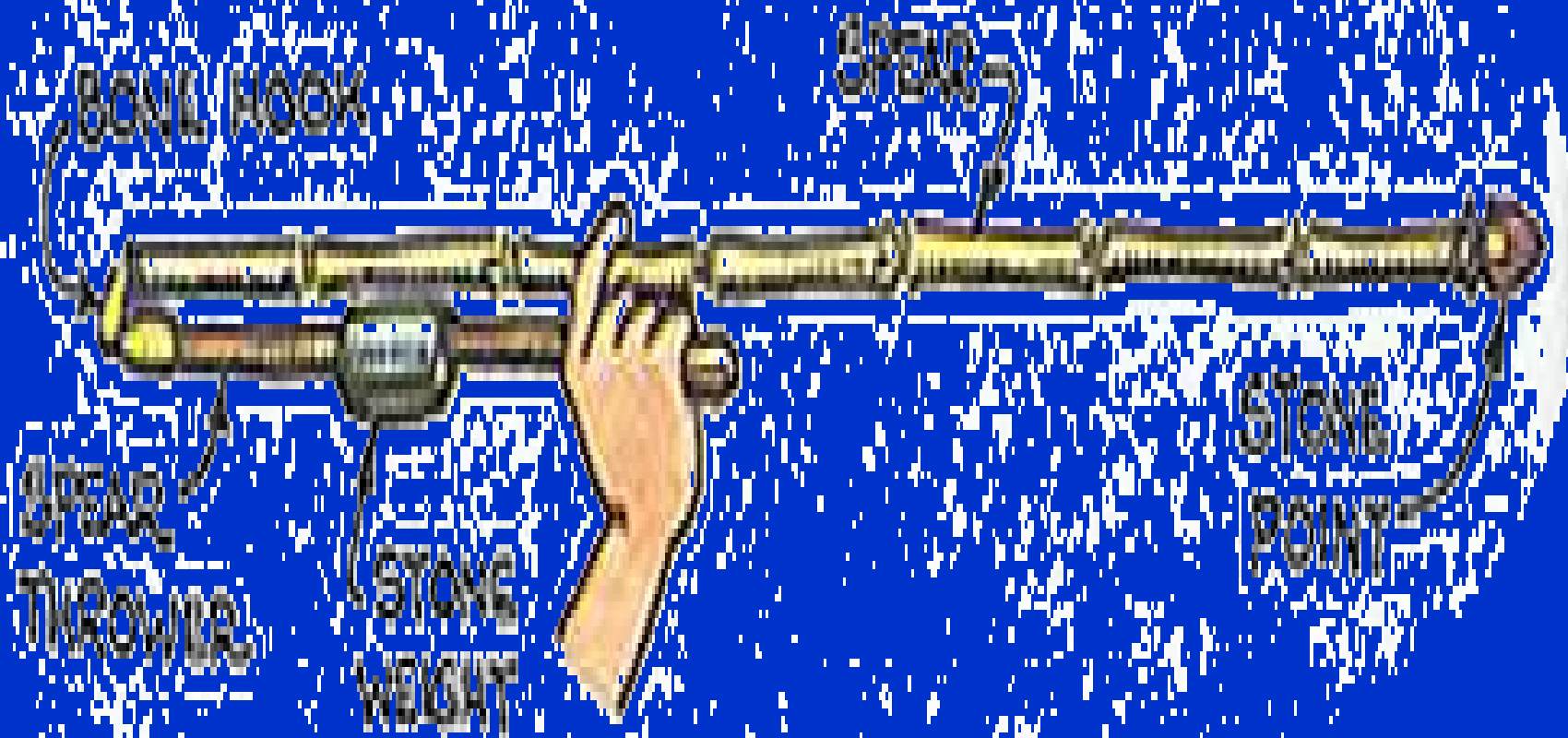
The Woolly Mammoth probably went extinct because it couldn't adapt to the combined pressures of the climatic warming that occurred when the Ice Age ended, together with predation from humans.

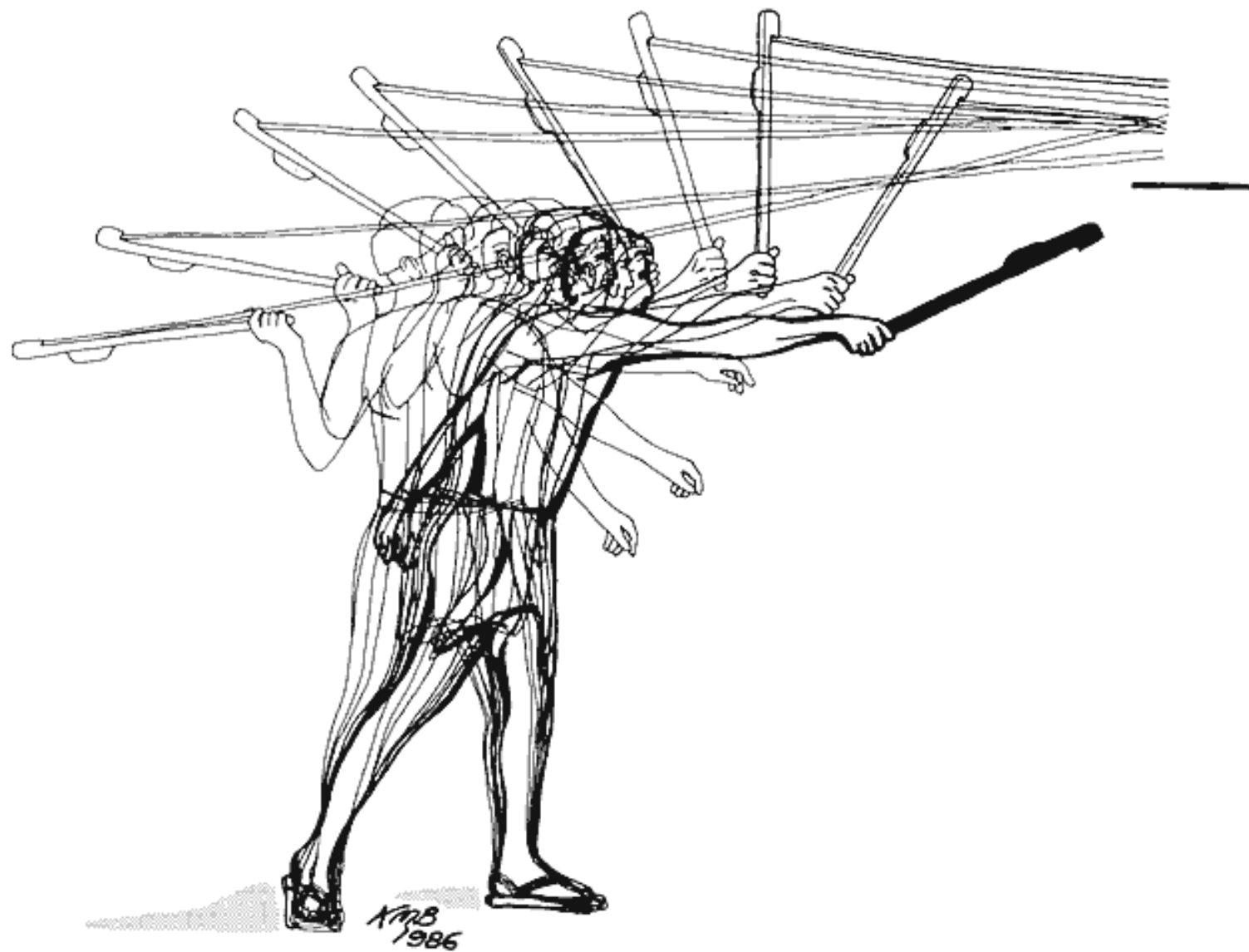
Cultural Periods in Georgia

History: Late Archaic

- Created grooved axes to clear trees and bushes
- Improved pottery making techniques. Use of pottery to saving and planting seeds for plants and seeds for growing seasons (horticulture)

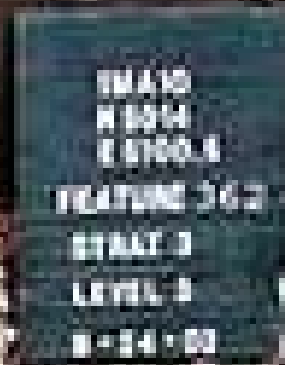
Atlatl







Shellfish was a
more
common food



MIDDENS

Pottery first appears





HUNTING

GATHERING

MAKING BOWLS

MAKING FIRE

SHELLFISHING

Archaic

Dates	8,000 – 1,000 B.C.
Weapons	Spears with Atlatls
Food	Deer, Bear, Small Game, Wild Fruits and Vegetables, Oysters, and Shellfish
Dwellings	Semi-Permanent Shelters
Evidence of Religion	Burial of Dead with Tools, Weapons, and Body Ornaments

Woodland Indians

1,000 BC - 1,000 AD



Cultural Periods in Georgia History: Woodland

- **1,000 B.C. to 1,000 A.D.**
- **Tribes**
- **Shelter**
- **Tools**
- **Food**
- **Pottery**
- **Religion**

Tribes

group of people
sharing common
ancestry,
name, and way of living

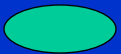
Built domed-shaped huts with trees



**Used Bow & Arrows
to Hunt**



Hunted large
animals
and small game



Improved Pottery







Effigy Mound

Kolomoki Mounds



Located in Southwest Georgia

Largest Woodland Settlement in State

Contained at Least 8 Mounds

Woodland

Dates	1,000 B.C. – 1,000 A.D.
Weapons	Bow and Arrow
Food	Deer, Small Game, Nuts and Seeds, Squash and Gourds
Dwellings	Sturdy Houses in Villages
Evidence of Religion	Burial Mounds, Some with Ceremonial Objects

(1000 – 1600 AD)



Cultural Periods in Georgia

History: Mississippian

- Also called the Temple Mound period
- Farmed with homemade tools and grew most of their food.
- Thousands might live in a single settlement, protected by fences and moats
- Very religious; used jewelry and body art





Mississippian carved shell gorget

- **Decorative collarpieces created by the Mississippians**

Horticulturalists

- They grew much of their food in small gardens.
- Used simple tools like stone axes, digging sticks, and fire.
- Corn, beans, squash, sunflowers, goosefoot, sumpweed, and other plants were cultivated.
- Wild plants were also eaten.





Three Sisters

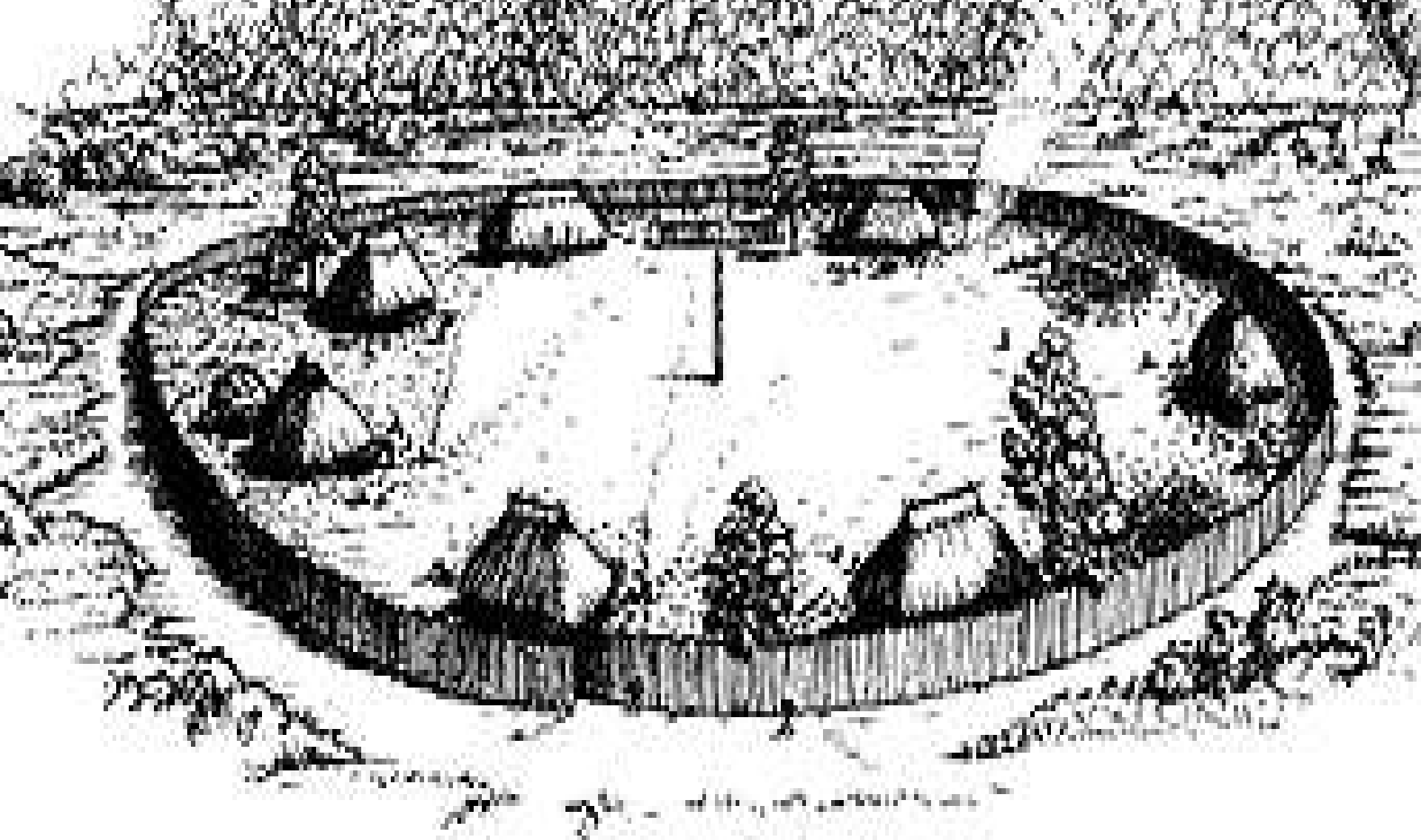
The Native Americans called corn **maize**. It was their most important food. Because corn was so valuable, the Natives thought of it as a gift from their gods. The ancient Native Americans believed the **sun god** and **rain god** helped them have a good harvest.



Villages located near waterways

Villages

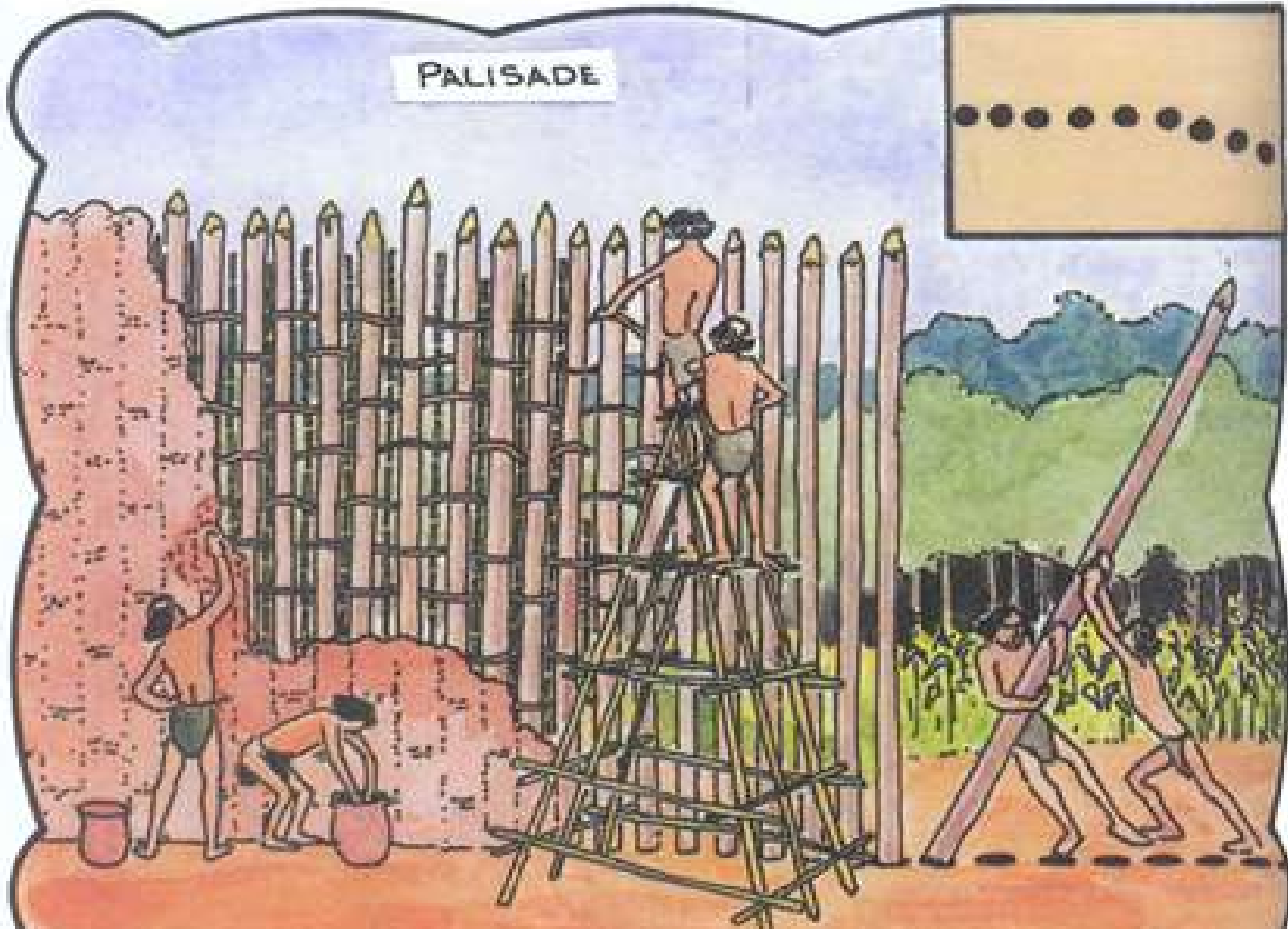
- Plaza (located in the center of the town) served as a gathering place.
- Religious to Social Gatherings
- Houses were built around the plaza.
- Often arranged around small courtyards.
- Towns containing one or more mounds served as capitals of chiefdoms.



Palisaded Fort Ancient village

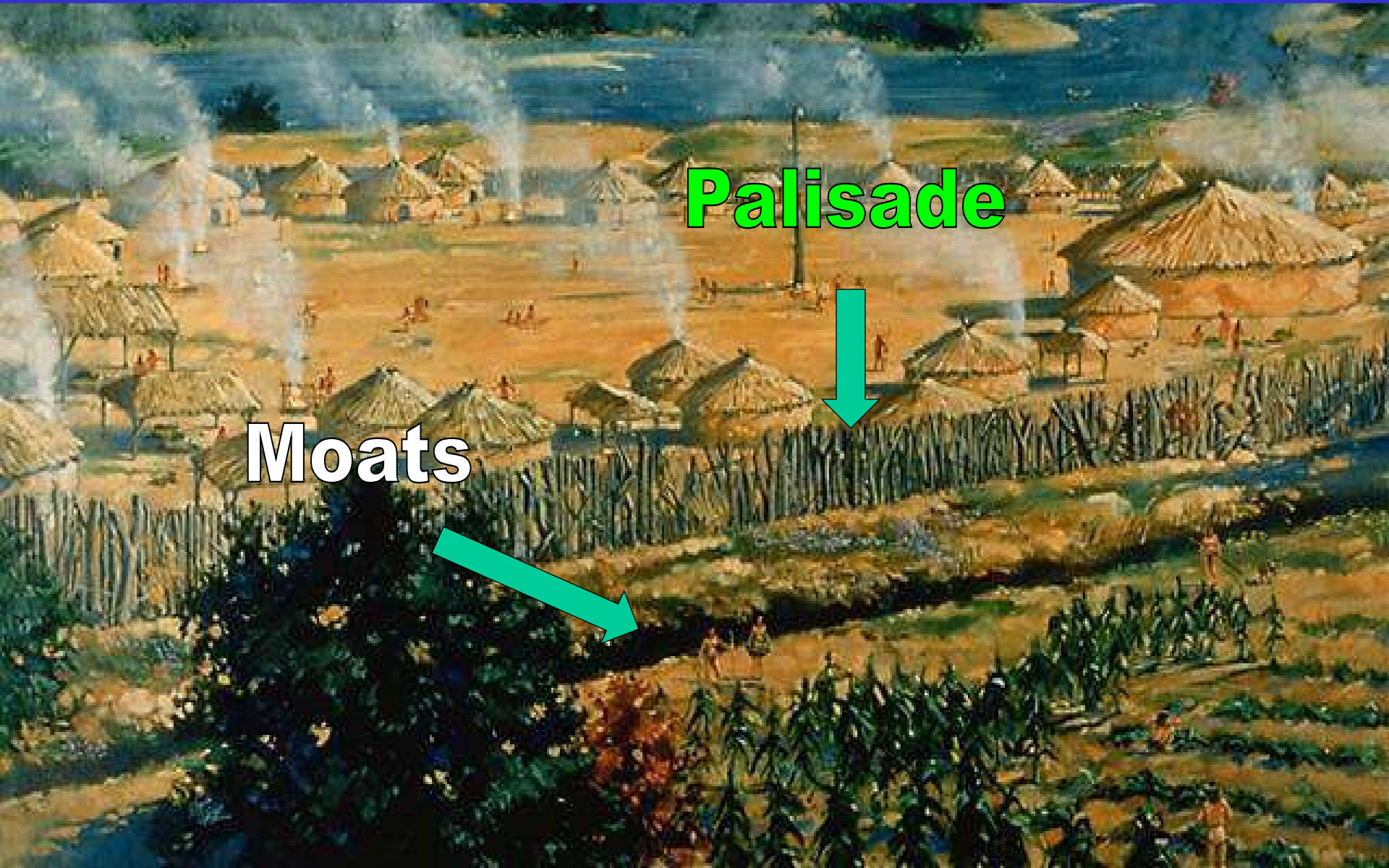
(artwork by Jimmy A. Ralley, 1989, © Kentucky Heritage Council)

PALISADE



Some Mississippian villages has defensive structures.

Helped keep unwelcome people and animals from entering the village.



Palisade

Moats

Houses

- rectangular or circular pole structures
- Walls were made by weaving saplings and cane around poles.
- Outer surface of the walls was sometimes covered with sun-baked clay or daub (wattle and daub)
- Roofs were covered with thatch, with a small hole left in the middle to allow smoke to escape.
- The hearth dominated the center of the living space.
- Low benches used for sleeping and storage ringed the outer walls.



Ocmulgee Mounds

- As impressive as the Kolomoki Mounds were, the Native Americans of Georgia will outdo themselves with the Ocmulgee Mounds.
- Located in Macon.
- Consist of 7 mounds and associated plazas.
- Built on top of the Macon Plateau – rise 56 feet high.



Etowah Mounds



- Located in Cartersville.
- 54-acre site contains six earthen mounds, a plaza, village area, borrow pits and defensive ditch.
- Most Impressive chiefdom capital at this time.

Most intact Mississippian Culture site in the Southeastern United States.

- The Etowah Indian Mounds symbolize a society rich in ritual.
- 63-foot flat-topped earthen knoll was likely used as a platform for the home of the priest-chief.
- In another mound, nobility were buried in elaborate costumes accompanied by items they would need in their after-lives.
- Many artifacts show how the natives of this political and religious center decorated themselves with shell beads, tattoos, paint, complicated hairdos, feathers and copper ear ornaments.
- Well-preserved stone effigies and objects made of wood, sea shells and stone can also be seen here.



Earthen Lodge



Ritual Ceremony Taking Place in a Plaza



Social Structure

- Organized as chiefdoms or ranked societies.

Elites	Commoners
Received special treatment (larger homes and special food and clothing); didn't have to work doing hard labor.	Grew food, made crafts, and served as warriors and as laborers for public works projects.



Mississippians

Dates	1,000 – 1,600 A.D.
Weapons	Bow and Arrow
Food	Deer, Turkey and Other Small Game, Corn, Beans, and Other Vegetables
Dwellings	Permanent Settlements with Wattle and Daub Houses
Evidence of Religion	Burial Mounds with Food and Ceremonial Objects