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Student Reading 5.2: Defining Ohio's Ancient People:

Paleoindian & Archaic

Paleoindian Period 13000 B.C.E. to 7000 B.C.E.



(Flint spearpoints. Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.)

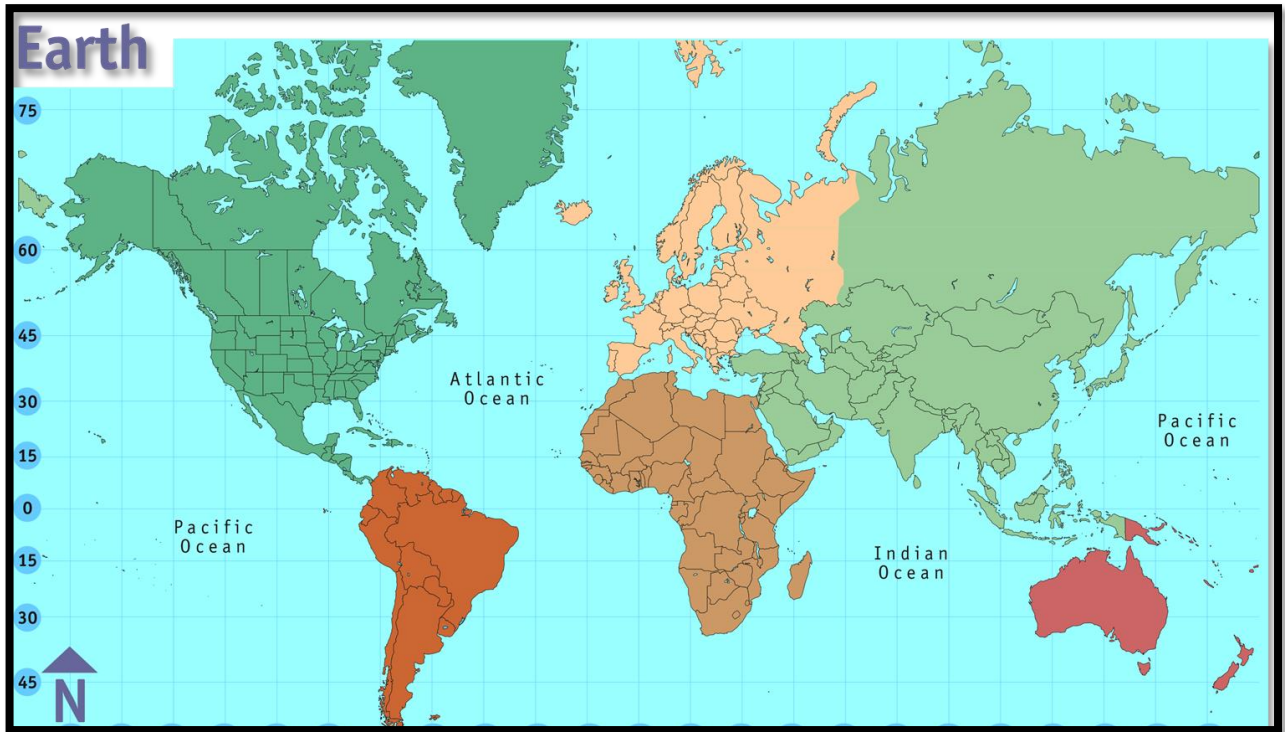
Paleoindians are believed to be the first people in the Americas. They hunted large and small game animals, fished in lakes and streams, and gathered nuts and berries. Since they were always on the move, their shelters were tents made of wood poles covered with bark or hides. An important resource for Paleoindians in Ohio was flint, which they used to make tools.

Paleoindian Period (13000 B.C.E. to 7000 B.C.E.)

- Lived in small (30-40 people) mobile groups
- Occupied small temporary camps in response to seasonal availability of food
- Hunted various animals with spears tipped with flint points
- May have collected plant foods a deciduous forests
- Workshops were located near outcrops of flint where they made their distinctive tools

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(Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.)

Paleoindian peoples reached the Americas by traveling over land through Siberia into Alaska. They migrated across the Bering Strait in the winter when the temperature was cold enough to create an ice bridge between Asia and America, or walked across dry land at the times when low sea levels revealed the broad continental shelf connecting these two landmasses. These people lived in the land that became Ohio during the last centuries of the Ice Age.

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One of their most important natural resources was flint. Flint is a stone that is easy to work into tools and spear points, since it flakes easily. Flint can be found in many places in Ohio, but the favored sources during the Paleoindian period were Upper Mercer flint from Coshocton County and Flint Ridge flint from Licking County. Tools made from flint supplied Paleoindians with what they needed to survive.

Archaic Period 8000 B.C.E. to 500 B.C.E.

The people of the Archaic period were very similar to the Paleoindians. The biggest difference was that the Ice Age ended, so it was



(Grinding stones. Courtesy of Ohio.)

warmer, and thick forests started to grow in Ohio. As this period went on, the Archaic people moved less and started to settle in areas and build houses. Like the Paleoindians



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before them, Archaic people hunted large and small game animals, fished in the lakes and streams, and gathered nuts and berries.

Archaic people made sturdy axes from hard stone. They used these axes to chop down trees and shape the wood into dug-out canoes. They also carved and polished pieces of rock called slate, making it into a variety of shapes. Many of these artistic carvings were used as weights or decorations for their spear-throwers. A spear-thrower, or **atlatl**, is a wooden shaft with a handle at one end and a hook at the other. The spear-thrower was used to catapult spears much farther and with more force than if they were thrown with the unaided arm.

Archaic Period (8000 B.C.E. to 500 B.C.E.)

- Depended on hunting, fishing, and collecting plants
- Domesticated squash around 2,300 B.C.E.
- Established camps in different parts of territories according to seasonal availability of food
- Some camps remained fairly permanent bases where sizable groups of people gathered
- Made a variety of spear points and knives by chipping flint
- Made axes and various food processing tools by grinding and polishing hard stone
- Growing emphasis on trade and ceremonialism

