

# PREHISTORIC PERIODS CHARACTERISTICS

## Paleo-Indian Period (ca. 10,000 to 8,000 B.C.)

- ▶ Colder climate with associated vegetation including spruce and fir trees.
- ▶ People organized in very small, nomadic bands.
- ▶ Lifestyle focused on hunting of large mammals, many of which are now extinct including the mastadon, saber tooth tiger, giant beaver, and giant short-faced bear.
- ▶ Major hunting weapon is a wooden spear shaft tipped with a medium-to-large finely chipped stone point.

## Archaic Period (ca. 8,000 to 500 B.C.)

- ▶ Gradual warming of climate. Environment becomes more similar to present.
- ▶ People make transition from nomadic to semi-sedentary living as group size increases from family bands to at least seasonal aggregations of multiple bands.
- ▶ Hunting of smaller species, including white tail deer, using spear and atlatl (spear thrower).
- ▶ Spear points include side notched, corner notched, and stemmed varieties of medium-to-large size.
- ▶ Gathering of wild foods, including nuts, and fishing complement hunting.
- ▶ Regional trade and exchange networks appear and toward the end of the period earthen mounds and ceramic pottery occur.

## Woodland Period (ca. 500 B.C. to 1000 A.D.)

- ▶ Large, permanent villages develop.
- ▶ Hunting continues, with corn agriculture becoming increasingly important.
- ▶ Tribal organization arises.
- ▶ Burial mounds become common.
- ▶ Pottery appears in many forms, functions and decorative treatments.
- ▶ Toward the latter end of this period the bow and arrow appears as indicated by very small chipped stone projectile points.
- ▶ Fortified villages and arrow points imbedded in human skeletons reveal a tendency to warfare among native groups.

## Mississippian Period (ca. 1000 to 1550 A.D.)

- ▶ Large temple mounds denoting ceremonial sites appear along with extensive villages.
- ▶ Multi-level societies called chiefdoms replace tribal organizations in many areas.
- ▶ Warfare increases.
- ▶ A wide variety of pottery occurs, characteristically including shell as a tempering agent.
- ▶ Agriculture incorporating corn, beans, and squash becomes the dietary mainstay, although hunting, gathering, and fishing continue.
- ▶ Intensive regional and interregional trade in both raw materials and finished products is ongoing.