

## Woman pounding corn

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Black and white photograph of an American Indian woman pounding corn with a large mortar and pestle. Maize, which the Europeans came to call "corn," has an ancient and interesting history and plays central roles in many native myths and legends. Its most important practical use was as meal. To make meal, harvested maize was dried and then stored. As needed, the natives, and later Europeans, too, used a mortar and pestle like this to grind, or "pound," the dried kernels into a powder that could be baked to make a variety of breads or soaked to make grits. Mortars and pestles, which were commonly called "corn pounders," were used so frequently that they were usually kept by the front door.

From *The Pink Rhubarb*: "This photograph was taken by the photographer Brock at the request of Fred Olds on a trip to Cherokee, North Carolina in 1908. On this trip Olds was collecting baskets and other artifacts from the Cherokee Indians for his own personal collection and also for the Hall of History in Raleigh, North Carolina. A 1914 publication, "Guide to the Hall of History of North Carolina" prepared by Fred A. Olds and published by the North Carolina Historical Commission mentions that a special study was made of the Cherokee Indians and that the photographs taken were exhibited in the Hall of History."



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Olds, Fred. *Cherokee Woman Grinding Corn in a Mortar* 1908. Photo. From *The Pink Rhubarb* blog. <https://thepinkrhubarb.com/corn-meal/>.

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