

Inquiries into the Past Activity Sheet Answers

Although the main point of this exercise is to get students thinking comparatively about how cultures change through time, the “correct” order of the card sets in terms of North Carolina’s cultural history is, from earliest to latest, as follows: C, A, D, B.

Card set C represents the Paleoindian period (10,000 to 8000 BC). People were nomadic hunters and gatherers who lived in an Ice-Age environment and occasionally may have hunted large animals (megafauna) like the mastodon, which is now extinct. Because they were nomadic, people lived mostly in short-term camps and did not use heavy containers such as pottery vessels. Instead, they probably used baskets and containers made of wood and hide, but these materials do not survive in the soil and therefore are not found at archaeological sites.

- Foods: white-tailed deer bones (hunted); mastodon bones (Ice-Age species, possibly hunted); wild fruit seeds (gathered).
- Tools and containers: chipped-stone drill (for drilling holes in wood and bone); chipped-stone scraper (for scraping hides and other materials); chipped-stone spear point (for hunting, evidence for the use of a spear thrower or atlatl); chipped-stone adze (for woodworking).
- Settlements: short-term camps (where people camped for shorter periods of time); stone quarry (where people went to obtain stone used to make tools).

Card set A represents the Archaic period (8000 to 1000 BC). People were nomadic hunters and gatherers who lived in a modern environment, with a climate like today’s. The animals they hunted and plants they gathered are all species that exist today. People were nomadic, but they did not move as frequently as in the preceding Paleoindian period. Although short-term camps continued to be used, for parts of the year people lived in more stable settlements called base camps. Although pottery was not in general use, people occasionally made stone vessels, carved from a rock called steatite (or soapstone). Baskets would also have been used, but because of poor preservation evidence for their use is generally absent.

- Foods: wild small-grains (grown as crops); nuts (gathered); wild fruits (gathered); white-tailed deer (hunted).
- Tools and containers: stone vessel (for cooking); chipped-stone scraper (for scraping hides and other materials); chipped-stone spear point (for hunting, evidence for the use of a spear thrower or atlatl); grinding stone (for grinding seeds, and for pounding nuts); bone fish hook (evidence of fishing); polished-stone axe (for woodworking).

- Settlements: base camps (where people camped for longer periods of time); short-term camps (where people camped for shorter periods of time).

Card set D represents the Woodland period (1000 BC to AD 1000). People continued to hunt, fish, and gather wild foods. But these food sources were now supplemented by horticulture—small grains (such as goosefoot) raised in gardens. People became more settled (i.e., they were less nomadic) and lived in semi-permanent villages. Occasionally people built dome-shaped earthen mounds as ceremonial places for burial of the dead. Technological innovations included pottery vessels (which replaced stone vessels) and the bow and arrow (which replaced the spear thrower or atlatl).

- Foods: cultivated small-grains (grown as crops); nuts (gathered); white-tailed deer (hunted); wild fruit seeds (gathered).
- Tools and containers: pottery vessel (for cooking); stone pipe (for smoking tobacco); chipped-stone arrow point (used for hunting, also evidence for use of the bow); grinding stone (for grinding seeds and corn, and for pounding nuts); bone fish hook (evidence of fishing); polished-stone axe (for woodworking);
- Settlements: semi-permanent village (where people lived for part of the year); burial mound (ceremonial place where honored dead were buried).

Card Set B represents the Mississippian period (AD 1000 to 1650). This was a time of full-blown agriculture, with the principal crop being corn. This staple was supplemented by the cultivation of small grains as well as hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild foods. People lived year-round in permanent villages, which were sometimes fortified with a stockade. Some villages had earthen structures called platform mounds, which supported important community buildings such as council houses, temples, or the residences of chiefs. Pottery and the bow continue to be used.

- Foods: cultivated corn (grown as a crop); cultivated small-grains (grown as crops); nuts (gathered); white-tailed deer (hunted).
- Tools and containers: pottery vessel (for cooking); stone pipe (for smoking tobacco); chipped-stone arrow point (used for hunting, also evidence for use of the bow); grinding stone (for grinding seeds and corn, and for pounding nuts); bone fish hook (evidence of fishing); polished-stone axe (for woodworking).
- Settlements: permanent village (where people lived year-round); platform mound with building on top (ceremonial structure which served as a council house, a temple, or the residence of a chief).