

Class Set!

8th Grade Frameworks for the Georgia Standards of Excellence in Social Studies

Georgia's Early Beginnings-American Indians

Georgia's first people were the **Paleo** who moved from the Great Plains about 12,000 years ago into what is today Georgia. For the first 2,000 years, the Paleo roamed the Mountain, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain regions of Georgia hunting large animals such as mastodons and giant bison. When the big animals disappeared about 10,000 years ago, the Paleo had to change the way they lived. They learned to hunt small game such as deer and turkey. The Paleo people made spears with flint or stone points attached called Clovis points. They also gathered berries, nuts, and other plant food. Their homes were made of animal skins which could be easily moved from place to place as they traveled to gather food.

With the passing of time, the larger animals disappeared, and the new generations of Indians had to learn new ways of doing things. They cleared parts of the forest to attract game. They made a new kind of spear which could be thrown rather than jabbed, called an atlatl. They developed stone tools such as the axe. They also discovered how to make pottery from clay. These generations of people were known as the **Archaic**.

About 3,000 years ago, the people living in what is now Georgia learned to hunt with bows and arrows rather than jabbing or throwing spears. They also learned simple farming techniques. They saved seeds and planted crops in forest clearings and along rivers. They also continued hunting, fishing, and gathering, but farming let them live in one place for longer periods of time. Because they did not have to move frequently, they made houses out of wood, leaves, and bark. Bands joined together to form tribes and these **Woodland** people lived in small villages.

About 1,000 years ago, a new people moved into the area that is now Georgia. Because the ancestors of these people came from the valley of the Mississippi River, they are called the **Mississippians**. They brought a new culture with them, including a new way of farming. They grew many kinds of foods and then saved their harvest in storehouses. They were able to stay in one place without having to move, so they built large villages close to rivers. They also formed chiefdoms, or nations, in which multiple villages were ruled by a priest-chief. In their villages they built large, flat-topped mounds of earth for religious and social activities, graves and platforms for buildings. The Mississippians are also called the "mound builders". The Mississippians lived in peace with the Woodland Indians for hundreds of years.

When the first Europeans came to Modern Georgia, the Mississippians disappeared. It is thought they died of diseases brought by the Europeans. The Woodland people survived and they eventually learned many of the cultural ways of the Europeans such as how to make metal tools and how to use guns. Over time, two nations were formed: The **Cherokees** and the **Creeks**. The Cherokees lived in the mountains while the Creeks lived in the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain regions.

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