

# Florence Indian Mound & Museum

## Educator Resource Packet



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# Introduction



This Educator Resource Packet (ERP) is for the Florence Indian Mound and Museum, located in Florence, Alabama. The Florence Indian Mound Museum serves as a interpretive center for the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area. The ERP provides activities that will enrich student experience and engage students both in the classroom and on fieldtrips. The packet explores the history of the civilization that created the mound, the construction of the mound, and the environmental impact of indigenous cultures on the Muscle Shoals area.

The Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area (MSNHA) was designated by Congress in 2009 and consists of the six counties that historically were connected to the over-forty-mile stretch of the Tennessee River known as the Muscle Shoals. Those counties are Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Morgan, Franklin, and Colbert. The MSNHA is funded through the National Park Service and works to interpret, preserve, and protect the natural, cultural, and historical resources of its six-county region.

## **Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA)**

*... to secure, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the protection of archaeological resources and sites which are on public lands and Indian lands, and to foster increased cooperation and exchange of information between governmental authorities, the professional archaeological community, and private individuals (Sec. 2(4)(b)).*

Artifacts and archaeological sites are important parts of America's history and cannot be replicated or replaced. Over the past sixty years, the practice of looting Native American artifacts and human remains from public land has reached an alarming level. This practice is immoral and **highly illegal**. Once an artifact leaves its original resting place, it loses much of its historic context and is not as useful to the archaeological community as it would be if left in its original location.

In 1979, the United States government passed the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), which protects archaeological sites on public land from looting and mismanagement. Under the act, people caught and convicted of looting on public land could face jail time and a fine of up to \$20,000. This act and others help archaeological sites such as Florence Indian Mound and Museum and communities with a rich Native American history preserve their sites and artifacts so that future generations will enjoy and learn from them.

It is in the effort of preservation that we ask you, the future generation, to do your part in helping us protect archeological sites that are important to our local history. If you see someone taking artifacts from a historic or archeological site, say something. Contact the Florence Indian Mound Museum with any information regarding the looting of local sites. If you are interested in helping to prevent looting, email the Thousand Eyes Program, which is a community of individuals that helps stop the looting of Native American sites in the Tennessee Valley.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

**Brian Murphy, Florence Indian Mound and Museum**

256-760-6427

**Tennessee Valley Authority Thousand Eyes Program**

Email: [culturalresources@tva.gov](mailto:culturalresources@tva.gov)

# Alabama State Curriculum Standards

## 3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE

3.) Describe ways the environment is affected by humans in Alabama and the world. (Alabama)  
Examples: crop rotation, oil spills, landfills, clearing of forests, replacement of cleared lands, restocking of fish in waterways

- Using vocabulary associated with human influence on the environment, including *irrigation, aeration, urbanization, reforestation, erosion, and migration*

## 4<sup>th</sup> GRADE

### Social Studies: Alabama Studies (2010)

1.) Compare historical and current economic, political, and geographic information about Alabama on thematic maps, including weather and climate, physical-relief, waterway, transportation, political, economic development, land-use, and population maps.

- Describing types of migrations as they affect the environment, agriculture, economic development, and population changes in Alabama.(Ex. Trail of Tears)

2.) Relate reasons for European exploration and settlement in Alabama to the impact of European explorers on trade, health, and land expansion in Alabama.

- Explaining reasons for conflicts between Europeans and American Indians in Alabama from 1519 to 1840, including differing beliefs regarding land ownership, religion, and culture.

3.) Explain the social, political, and economic impact of the War of 1812, including battles and significant leaders of the Creek War, on Alabama.

Examples: social—adoption of European culture by American Indians, opening of Alabama land for settlement political—forced relocation of American Indians, labeling of Andrew Jackson as a hero and propelling him toward Presidency economic—acquisition of tribal land in Alabama by the United States.

- Explaining the impact of the Trail of Tears on Alabama American Indians' lives, rights, and territories.
- Describing human environments of Alabama as they relate to settlement during the early nineteenth century, including housing, roads, and place names.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Social Studies: Alabama Studies (2010)

2.) Identify causes and effects of early migration and settlement of North America.

3.) Distinguish differences among major American Indian cultures in North America according to geographic region, natural resources, community organization, economy, and belief systems.

- Locating on a map American Indian nations according to geographic region.

4.) Determine the economic and cultural impact of European exploration during the Age of Discovery upon European society and American Indians.

## **Archaeological History of Florence Indian Mound**

Until recently, the Florence Indian Mound was believed to be the work of the Mississippian mound-builder culture (1,000 C.E.–1,500 C.E.). People also believed it was a burial mound for an important figure in the Native American community. However, researchers, archaeologists, and staff at the Florence Indian Mound have been slowly gathering information that gives an altogether different picture of what the mound is, when it was built, and how it fits into the environmental history of the region.

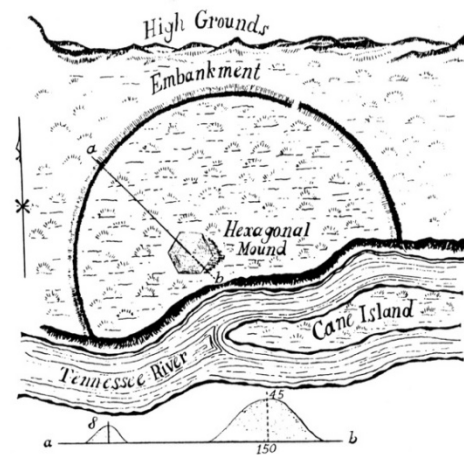
Archaeologists now believe that the Florence Indian Mound was built during the Woodland period (1,000 B.C.E.–1,000 C.E.) by a large Native American settlement that populated nearby islands in the Tennessee River. Archeological evidence from two nearby sites, Koger Island (in the middle of the Tennessee River) and Seven Mile Island (to the west of Florence on the Tennessee River), helps document life in the region during the time the mound was constructed. Archaeologists have suggested that the Florence Mound might have been the ceremonial center for the area's Native Americans. To date, the evidence gathered shows that the Florence Indian Mound is not a burial mound. However, there is still a possibility that new evidence will emerge suggesting that the mound did, in fact, serve that purpose. Burial sites are useful to archaeologists because Native Americans were usually buried with artifacts such as pottery and tools. Archaeologists use those artifacts to learn how a location was used and to gain insights about the culture of the people.

The Florence Mound is a four-sided structure and is about 43 feet-tall. It is 145 feet by 95 feet on top and was, at one time, surrounded by a wall that was somewhere between 12 and 15 feet-high (the wall no longer exists). Its builders likely constructed the mound over several years



during the Middle Woodland period (100 C.E.–500 C.E.). Archaeologists believe that Native from the surrounding area to construct the mound and the surrounding wall.

The first time the Florence Mound appears in a written historical record is on an 1818 map. This map, created by John Coffee, Ferdinand Sannoner and Hunter Peel, was used to lay out the city of Florence. The map documents the Florence Mound and two smaller mounds, which no longer exists. The other mounds were approximately half the size of the remaining mound. This image of the mound and the surrounding wall comes from an 1848 map.



Florence Mound and Earthwork (After Squier and Davis 1848)

One of the first archaeologists to explore the area and document the mound was Clarence Bloomfield (“C.B.”) Moore in 1915. Moore’s article for the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia describes the mound as the largest on the Tennessee River. Moore claimed that the mound was possibly hexagonal, or six-sided at one time.<sup>1</sup> He believed that the side of the mound that faced east toward the present-day Wilson Dam at one time had a large **causeway** that



Figure 1: Bannerstones

allowed the Native Americans to easily walk to the top of it to perform ceremonies.<sup>2</sup> Moore noted that it was difficult to walk up the sides of the mound in 1915 because of how tall and steep it was.<sup>3</sup> Trying to determine if it had been used as a burial mound, he used **shovel testing** to dig into the surface of the mound to see if he could discover artifacts or remains typically found in a burial site. Moore dug 34 holes

on the top and sides of the mound that were at least 4 feet in depth but found no evidence that the Florence Mound was used as a burial place for Native Americans. Moore was disappointed that

<sup>1</sup> C.B. Moore, *The Tennessee, Green, and Lower Ohio Rivers Expeditions of Clarence Bloomfield Moore* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002) 251-252.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

he could not find anything and wrote in his journal that his attempts to dig “were put down without so much as encountering a bone, an arrowhead, or a fragment of pottery.”<sup>4</sup> Moore did not find any artifacts in or on the mound, but he did find artifacts in the area around the mound. He wrote, “In the field **adjacent** to the mound were several rises...on which was some scattered **midden** debris.”<sup>5</sup> The objects Moore found included a **bannerstone**, which dates to the Archaic stage of pre-history and predates the Florence Indian Mound’s construction period. It is still unknown how these hills of debris are associated with the mound.

The next archaeological excavation was in 1932. The Alabama Museum of Natural History obtained a grant to explore mound sites in Alabama that might have been related to the Moundville complex near Tuscaloosa. This dig didn’t produce artifacts worth noting, but several photographs of the mound were taken as well as an aerial map that possibly shows the remains of the 12-15-foot earthen wall that once circled the mound.<sup>6</sup>

The next major stage of archaeological work on the Florence Indian Mound came in 1996 and 1997. A group of volunteers from the University of Alabama’s Anthropology Club and the Florence chapter of the Alabama Archaeological Society first worked at the site over Memorial Day weekend in 1996.<sup>7</sup> Over the course of the 1996 dig and continued excavations in 1997, the team collected artifacts that helped them figure out when Native Americans built the mound and how long they used it..<sup>8</sup>



Figure 2: Water Jug

The primary type of artifact found during the 1996 and 1997 excavations was **pottery**. Pottery sometimes can help archeologists determine how people used a structure and it also provides clues about their daily lives. The pottery discovered at the Florence Mound proves that people used the mound during both the Mississippian and Woodland

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<sup>4</sup> Hunter Johnson and Edmond Boudreaux, “Test Excavations at the Florence Mound: A Middle Woodland Platform Mound in Northwest Alabama” *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* Vol. 46, No. 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 92

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 92

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 105.



periods.<sup>9</sup> Archeologists found Mississippian-style pottery near the surface on the top and sides of the mound. This means that the mound had already been built by the time the Mississippians used the mound. While the artifacts showed that the Mississippian people used the mound, it was impossible to determine what exactly they used it for based on the artifacts discovered,

As a result of the dig, archaeologists realized people had constructed the mound during the Woodland period. The archaeological team found several styles of pottery that helped them determine that it was constructed during the Woodland Period. These styles, Mulberry Creek (50%) and Wright Checked Stamped (25%), made up over 75% of the pottery found during the dig.<sup>10</sup> The overwhelming number of pieces of Mulberry Creek pottery found deeper in the mound means that the mound was created around the same time that the pottery was used. The presence of Mulberry Creek-style pottery means that the group that made it was settled at a distinct place at a specific time-period when that style was prominent in the area. Using this data, archaeologists proved that people constructed the Florence Mound during Middle Woodland Period, or between 1 C.E. and 500 C.E.

Evidence suggests that the mound could have been used in a variety of ways. People could have used it for ceremonial purposes, gathering on the mound for different types of ceremonies and celebrations throughout the year. The broken pieces of pottery that archeologists found, along with charred plant and floral remains, led them to believe that people prepared and ate food on the Florence Mound. They also found flakes of rock, meaning that people produced stone tools on the mound<sup>11</sup> and maybe used it as a local trade and production center. Although the Woodland tribal unit did not move around as much as in previous time periods, this was when a vast trade network sprang up across the eastern United States. Perhaps different groups of people came to the Florence Mound to trade or exchange tools and goods.<sup>12</sup> Archaeologists found shards of pottery produced on and around the Florence Mound, suggesting it was a site for creating pottery and other goods. However, they also found shards not made locally. This

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 122.

suggests that the Native American groups who used the mound were part of an extensive trade network that traded and distributed different goods throughout North America.

## Environmental History of Northwest Alabama

**Environmental history** examines the relationship of humans to their natural surroundings. Environmental history also explores the evolution of human cultures throughout history and the impact they had on the area in which they lived. The Florence Indian Mound is rich in environmental history because it is a natural structure that has a strong connection to the native cultures who populated northwest Alabama well before Euro-Americans arrived. The mound is useful for studying these cultures because the artifacts gathered from the mound and surrounding areas can help us understand people's daily lives and how the environment in the local area was affected by cultural growth.

The environmental history of Northwest Alabama can best be studied by examining Native American history because different groups of Native Americans have populated the region for thousands of years. Native American occupation of northwest Alabama began during the **Paleo-Indian period**, which lasted from approximately 13,000 B.C.E. to 9,500 B.C.E. Native groups could have populated northwest Alabama as early as 12,000 B.C.E.<sup>13</sup>

### *Paleo-Indian Period*

In his *Handbook of Alabama's Prehistoric Indians and Artifacts*, David Johnston states that Alabama's prehistoric environment was different than its modern-day climate. Instead of hot summers and cold winters, prehistoric Alabama had a temperate climate, with high temperatures in the summer near 80° and low temperatures around 50 degrees. Temperature and climate affected the types of trees that grew in Alabama. The southern portion of the state was a prehistoric cypress swamp, the middle consisted of hardwoods (oak, hickory), and north Alabama had many softwoods (pine, cedar, fir, etc.).<sup>14</sup> Paleo-Indian Native American groups were made up of small **Nomadic bands**, which consisted of no more than twenty people. These nomadic bands lived a **hunter-**



Figure 3: Projectile Point

<sup>13</sup> David Johnson, *Handbook of Alabama's Prehistoric Indians and Artifacts* 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Tuscaloosa: Borgo Publishing, 2017) 69.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 74



Figure 4: Mastodon Tusk

**gather** lifestyle, which required them to live in areas with a naturally abundant food supply. Instead of the animals that we are accustomed to in Alabama today, prehistoric Alabama was home to

animals and plants now found in the northern United States and Canada because of the cooler climate. Other animals in Alabama during this period are extinct. Since the temperatures were cooler, Paleoindians had fewer food sources of wild plants. These nomadic groups followed and hunted different types of **megafauna**, including the “mastodon, giant bison, giant ground sloth, and mammoth,” all of which were larger than modern-day animals that are similar (elephants, buffalo, and sloths).<sup>15</sup> Paleoindians followed these roaming herds into Alabama, where they lived off of what they hunted until they moved out of the area following the herds. During the Paleoindian period, these nomadic bands temporarily populated sites along the Tennessee River, such as under rock shelters and in caves along the riverbank while they hunted in the region.

### *Archaic Period*

After the Paleoindian period, Native American cultures transitioned to the **Archaic**



Figure 5: Archaic stone bowl

**period**. The word “archaic” is Greek for “ancient,” and the period lasted from 9,500 B.C.E. to 700 B.C.E.<sup>16</sup> Many of the cultural traits that we associate with southeastern Native American cultures began to emerge during the Archaic and Woodland periods. People began to stay in locations for longer periods of time. Archaic people still moved from place to place but far less frequently than they did during the Paleo period.

Archaic people did not identify with a set location as their “hometown” but saw their home as wherever their family was. These groups of families moved into areas with an abundant food source, built settlements, and stayed in the area for as long as the food supply remained.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 74

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 107

During the Archaic period, megafauna from the Paleoindian period went extinct and animals such as deer, turkey, squirrel, raccoon, rabbit, turtle, snakes, small birds, and others became the primary sources of meat. Archaic and Woodland people also relied on shellfish, including mussels and oysters as a reliable food source. While the Native Americans during this time remained semi-nomadic, the abundant resources of the Tennessee River Valley allowed them to stay in this area longer than in other regions. The woods were filled with all types of animals, berries, and nuts, and the landscape of the river created **shoals**, areas of shallow, fast moving water, which were perfect habitats for freshwater mussels and fish. Native Americans also harvested wild plants, vegetables, and nuts such as hickory, walnut, and acorns that they ground and boiled as a source of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. All of these food sources meant that they stayed in the area for considerably longer than groups had during the Paleoindian period.



*Figure 5: Fishhooks*

However, change came at the beginning of the Archaic period. Archaeologists believe that the size of nomadic bands grew from an average of 50 people to larger groups of 150 people. The growing numbers of people in these groups meant that food sources could sustain them for shorter periods of time before they had to move on to new area. Around 6,000 B.C.E., an environmental shift caused the average temperature in the region to rise beyond even today's averages and the amount of rainfall to decrease.<sup>17</sup> The Archaic people, who had begun living longer and having more children because of abundant resources, now found those resources diminishing. Fewer resources and a higher population meant more competition for resources. The environmental shift affected Native American cultures in a variety of ways. Native people in northwest Alabama began to form connections and trade networks with other groups of people. They developed new tools for processing food and hunting, such as the **atlatl**. The atlatl was a spear-throwing device that gave more power and speed to the thrower. And they found themselves in conflict with other groups of people over the limited resources.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 116-118

Between 4,000 B.C.E. and 700 B.C.E., the environment changed again. The average temperature in the southeastern United States decreased and the climate grew more similar to that of today: warm and humid. Tennessee River Valley population increased, and people started to trade over longer distances with other native groups. Metals such as copper that were taken from the Great Lakes region ended up at central Alabama Archaic sites. Artifacts found in Louisiana traveled over 800 miles from the area where archaeologist determined they were



Figure 6: Drill Bits

made. This trade network grew when Native Americans started to make items like pottery that could be traded. Native Americans living in Alabama did not make pottery until 1500 B.C.E. The ability to store food in pottery caused a huge shift in the way Native Americans lived. Instead of gathering wild plants, they established small gardens and experimented to grow stronger, healthier plants. Pottery allowed them to store the food they grew. These Native Americans, however, were not farmers yet. They pulled weeds and helped plants survive harsh weather, but they did not grow enough to only rely on what they produced to survive. They could stay in one

place for much longer, but they still had to move in search of animals for meat.<sup>18</sup>

Cultural factors such as the introduction of pottery, trade, and gardening changed Archaic culture dramatically. Gardening meant that better, healthier plants could be added to Native Americans' diet, and they could stay in places for longer without destroying the area's animal population. Pottery allowed for food storage and increased trading with other Native groups. These, along with environmental changes mentioned above, created such a different way of life for Archaic people that archaeologists believed they were different enough from their ancestors that a new period of Native American history began after.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 120



## *Woodland Period*

During the **Woodland Period** (1000 B.C.E-1,000 C.E. [3,000 years ago]), many native groups began to rely on agriculture rather than hunting and gathering to produce food. The ability to cultivate food for larger groups of people allowed communities to stay in one place and establish permanent settlements. During the Woodland period, Native Americans grew crops such as corn, beans, and squash in the Tennessee River Valley.<sup>20</sup> Harvesting crops, drying meats, collecting river mussels, and gathering acorns and other nuts allowed them to form permanent settlements that could survive winters when food was less available. Along with the building of larger settlements, Native Americans began to build larger structures as ceremonial gathering places and places to bury their deceased.<sup>21</sup>

Native Americans in the Woodland period also had an enormous impact on the wildlife populations because of the adoption of new tools that made hunting more efficient. Until the advent of the **bow and arrow**, Native Americans had used devices such as spears and atlatls to hunt animals. Although the bow and arrow had been widely used in Europe since 10,000 BCE, it was not used among Native Americans in the Southeast until around 500 CE. Native Americans realized that the bow and arrow was easier to use, required less material to make, and improved their chances of killing an animal from a longer distance than the spear or atlatl. The bow and arrow enabled Native Americans to rely on meat as a more stable part of their diet. It also contributed to a decrease in the wildlife population.

During the Woodland period, places such as the Florence Indian Mound became cultural centers and helped to increase contact between different Native American groups who used them as places of celebration and trade. As trade increased and Native American societies were influenced by other groups, **complexes**--specific artifact styles or cultural traits that occur together--began to form. The people who built the Florence Mound became part of the Hopewell Interaction Sphere (HIS), a complex that covered an area from Michigan to Florida and extended to the Eastern seaboard. Native American tribes in northwest Alabama began trading artifacts made of copper and galena across the southeastern United States as part of the HIS.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 217

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 217-218

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 224-228.

Archaeologists discovered the HIS because they found artifacts made by tribes from other geographical areas while digging at burial sites and at ceremonial mounds. Burials became more complex and elaborate, possibly to indicate status in Native American society. Items such as alligator and shark teeth, ocean turtle shells, and copper jewelry might have meant that a person was valued as a warrior, trader, or religious figure.<sup>23</sup>

The population growth that occurred in the Woodland period had consequences. The ability to harvest more food and establish permanent settlements meant that groups became more territorial over resources within their area. The competition over these resources resulted in fights between different groups of native Americans. This marks a dramatic change in the way



*Figure 7: Sewing Needles*

Native Americans had lived their lives in response to the environment. During the Paleoindian and Archaic periods, Native Americans had engaged with the natural environment through hunting and gathering. In these earlier periods, Native Americans did not have strong ties to certain locations. This

meant that conflict between groups was solved by moving on to other areas. However, by the Woodland period, Native Americans had more permanent settlements and controlled large areas with resources that were key to survival. Contact between groups in the Woodland Period sometimes meant that Native Americans had to fight for their territory and resources when faced with confrontation by another group of Native Americans.

During the Woodland period, Native American groups changed their way of life significantly, beginning to closely resemble native cultures observed today. This means that during the Woodland period, Native Americans began to develop their own distinct cultures that made them different from each other. Although there were many ways that they could distinguish themselves,



*Figure 8: Mulberry Creek Pattern - Late Woodland*

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 226-227.

pottery became one of the leading ways that groups of Native Americans expressed their culture. Pottery is created by mixing clay and water along with another local substance such as sandstone, limestone, etc. to create a style of pottery unique to the group's area. The substances that Native Americans used to create their own style of pottery were often exclusive to their area. They also decorated pottery with patterns and imprints in their own exclusive designs. Archaeologists use patterns and materials to place pottery in a precise area and time period.

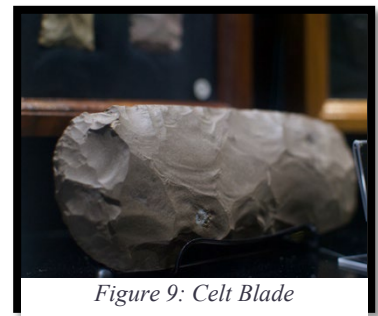
The spread of tools such as the bow and arrow allowed native people to harvest animals from their surrounding area and provide more food for community members. The establishment of villages allowed them to permanently settle in an area and develop it for their tribe's needs. The growth of villages meant that competition over food and land developed between other villages and the new weapons were necessary for survival. The competition between native peoples caused them to become more dependent on non-competitive food sources that they could grow themselves, such as corn, beans, and squash. This reveals an important change in how Native Americans responded to and used the environment to suit their needs. The clearing of land for small gardens and the size of villages meant that their environmental impact was greater than in other periods of pre-history. Other cultural aspects, including their burial practices and societal organization, became more complex as they shifted from the hunter-gather lifestyle into cultures that were firmly rooted in certain areas. The development of trade networks and burial/ceremonial mounds to show importance means that they valued the interaction of other people but also valued a connection to the environment by tying burials and trading to prominent structures made of natural resources like mounds and locating them near rivers.

Over the course of the Woodland period, Native Americans grew from a hunter-gather people with similar attributes and small differences in culture into complex societies. Their dependence on the land grew, along with their ability to grow and tend gardens. The nomadic lifestyle of previous periods slowly faded, though people often still traveled to hunt. Woodland culture became the basis for Native American tribes that encountered European explorers hundreds of years later and remain today.

## *Mississippian and Historic Periods*

The cultural advances that allowed Native Americans to stay in one place and grow enough food to feed larger groups created what archaeologists have distinguished as the **Mississippian Period** (1,000 – 1,500 C.E.). Although “Mississippi” is in the title, the Mississippian culture was made up of groups across the Southeast and along the Mississippi River. During the Mississippian period, Native American cultures developed into **agrarian societies** whose main food source came from agriculture instead of hunting and gathering. This meant that they could support even larger settlements than Woodland period tribes and could grow enough food to store crops for winter or to trade. They continued to hunt animals such as deer, fish, and turtles for meat and grow vegetables such as beans, corn, squash, and sunflowers.

Mississippian people began using new agricultural methods that produced more food. They often cleared fields by burning weeds or burning areas of the forest to create new fields. Native Americans did not have access to fertilizer that replenishes the nutrients in the soil, so they often used a field for a few growing seasons before relocating it to a new site.<sup>24</sup> Using these practices, the Mississippians were able to move their crops to new fields without having to move their entire settlement. Many of the artifacts that we have from the Mississippian period are tools that people used to cultivate and prepare food. The celt and adze were large flat sharpened stones used to cut weeds from rows of crops. Mississippians also used scrapers and other tools were used in killing and preparing meat for cooking.



*Figure 9: Celt Blade*

Although it has been established that people created and used the Florence Indian Mound during the Woodland Period, people also used the mound heavily during the Mississippian period. Archaeologists believe that Mississippian culture was **hierarchical**, and some of this hierarchy reflects in how they used mounds. There has been no evidence that the Florence Mound was used as a **domiciliary mound**-- mound that contained a structure where Native Americans lived--but in other Mississippian settlements, mounds played a huge part in the settlement’s hierarchy. Archaeologists believe that evidence found during excavations show Mississippian societies living in chiefdoms, in which a local chief ruled over a certain area. This

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 338.

was confirmed by Spanish explorers who met with powerful Mississippian chiefs while exploring the southeastern United States in search of gold at the end of the Mississippian period. Mound building was a significant part of the Mississippian culture and played into Native Americans idea of social hierarchy. Mississippians built huge earthen mounds around their settlements where prominent members of their society, including chiefs, lived. They also used the mounds along with walls built out of logs as a means of protection. The wall that surrounded the Florence Indian Mound at one time could have possibly been used as protection for Native Americans living at its base.

It is unclear how much of a role the Florence Indian Mound played in the culture of Native Americans after the arrival of Europeans during the historic period. There are no reliable records that place Europeans in the Tennessee Valley while the mound was being used. While Native Americans in the Historic period viewed the mound as a sacred and important place, it was no longer used as a center for trade and ceremony as it was during the Archaic and Woodland periods.<sup>25</sup>

After the founding of the city of Florence, the town grew up around the mound. The Katchelman family purchased the mound in the second half of the nineteenth century and grew crops on it. The family built a house at the top of the mound, but quickly relocated to the bottom because of the cold winds that came with wintertime. In 1945, Martha Ashcraft Dabney and her



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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 337-348.

daughter Ida Josephine Dabney Brabson donated the mound to the city of Florence in an effort to preserve the environmental and archaeological history of the mound.<sup>26</sup>

To learn more about the environmental history of the mound, please scan the QR code below.



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<sup>26</sup> Hunter Johnson and Edmond Boudreaux, “Test Excavations at the Florence Mound: A Middle Woodland Platform Mound in Northwest Alabama” *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* Vol. 46, No. 2, 7. & Carolyn M. Barske “Indian Mound and Museum” *Encyclopedia of Alabama* <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3686> (accessed 6.16.2020).



# Glossary

**Adjacent** – next to or adjoining something else.

**Agrarian Society** - Societies whose means of subsistence is based on agricultural production, crop-growing, and the husbandry of animals.

**Archaeology**— the scientific study of material remains of past human life and activities

**Archaic Period** - this period is divided between the Early Archaic (about 8500 to 6000 BCE), Middle Archaic (about 6000 to 4000 BCE), and Late Archaic periods (4000 to 1000 BCE). Archaic people lived in small groups and were nomadic hunter-gatherers.

**Arrowhead** - a wedge shaped tip carved from a type of stone, usually attached to an arrow.

**Atlatl** – spear thrower; lever used to gain speed and force for projectiles including spears or darts.

**Bannerstone** – used as a weight for atlatls so there was more force when thrown.

**Bow** - An offensive weapon used in hunting and war in Native American cultures after it became widely used in the Woodland period.

**Celt** – prehistoric axe-like tool or weapon.

**Ceremonial Mound** - of or relating to a structure used for Native American rituals and ceremonies.

**Complex** - term used in archaeology to refer to a period of time where Native Americans made artifacts such as stone tools or pottery a certain way.

**Culture** - the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. Also, the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time.

**Environmental History** - studying the interaction between humans and the environment in the past.

**Hierarchical** – society with different levels of importance assigned to people. Native American hierarchy was based around a person who managed a tribe or settlement.

**Historic Period** – period that occurs after European explorers made contact with Native Americans in North America and lasting to the present.

**Hunter-Gatherer** - a member of a nomadic band who lived chiefly by hunting, fishing, and harvesting wild food.

**Megafauna** - large-bodied big-game animals that lived during the Paleoindian period and some of the Archaic period. The main megafauna species in the Northern Hemisphere included mammoth, mastodon, bison, giant sloth, and sabre-tooth tiger.

**Midden** – heap of debris or things left behind (food scraps, projectile points, ash) at Native American dwelling sites.

**Mississippian Period** - this period occurred from CE 1000 to CE 1550. Mississippian people hunted, fished and farmed. They planted corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers and used hoes made from shell and/or stone.

**Mound Builder**— a member of a prehistoric American Indian people whose man-made earthworks are found from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi River valley to the Gulf of Mexico.

**Nomadic bands** – groups of people who move from place to place without having a fixed location to live.

**Paleoindian Period** - this period took place approximately 15,000 to 10,500 years ago. Some archeologists consider the Paleo-Indian Period to be the era when the first people migrated to present-day America. However, many Native nations claim that their ancestors existed in North America for tens of thousands of years before the Paleo-Indian Period.

**Pottery** - Clay that has been fashioned into a desired shape and then dried to reduce its water content before being fired or baked to fix its form.

**Sedentary** – way of life based around a single main settlement rather than involving moving camp at regular intervals.

**Woodland Period** - this period occurred from about 1000 BCE to CE 1000. It saw an increase in the planting and harvesting of crops. This allowed people to stay in a single place for a longer period of time. The Woodland Period is divided into three parts: Early Woodland (1000 BCE to CE 1), Middle Woodland (CE 1 to CE 500), and Late Woodland (CE 500 to CE 1000). Archaeologists have determined that the Woodland people constructed the Florence Indian Mound during the Middle Woodland period.



<p>Arrowhead (Sketch a Picture)</p>	<p>What is special about this artifact? (Chips, Cracks, Worn Places)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>What was it used for?</p>
<p>Description:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Notes from the Field (Summary):</p>	





















# Artifact Match

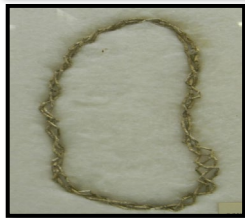
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Bow Drill



Archaic Spear Points



Mortar and Pestle



Burial Urn



Discoidals, or Gamestones



Dentalium Necklace



Shell Tempered Cooking Pot



# Artifact Match Key

ANSWER KEY: Draw a line to match the picture with the correct word.



Bow Drill

Archaic Spear Points

Mortar and Pestle

Burial Urn

Discoidals, or Gamestones

Dentalium Necklace

Shell Tempered Cooking Pot

# Native American Origin Story– The Crawfish

## Objectives:

- Students will learn about what the crawfish is and how it lives in the southeastern water regions of the United States. and also in other parts of the world. (Science)
- Students will learn of the native legends of the Crawfish of the Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations.

## Activities:

### 1. PowerPoint Presentation :

- All about the Crawfish in our lives: Environment
- **Topics-Mythology and Legend**

*Science: All about The Crawfish*

- habitat
- diet
- uses
- bait
- pets
- Invasive or Indicator Species (?).....taking care today...our Rivers

### 2. Imagination Journey to the World of the Crawfish and the Southeastern Peoples of

- Mythology
- Choctaw Legend Teacher Read Aloud *Book: Chikasha Volume One: Shared Spirit Stories Written by: Glenda Calvin and Illustrated by: Jeannie Barbour*

### 3. Create the Creation Legend on a Poster Board Table 3D Mural/adding Mussel Diorama (Whole Class Participation)

- Exhibit created with
  - poster board
  - Kinetic sand
  - Sentence Strip Labels
  - Candy Made Crawfish
  - Shells

**For help and access to supplemental materials, contact Brian Murphy at the Florence Indian Mound Museum (256-760-6427 or BMurphy@florencial.org**

## **The Foods of the Southeastern Peoples**

### **Objectives:**

- To learn how the Southeastern peoples survived and lived off of the land, no matter the season.
- Winter nutrition/diet and cooking
- Communal sharing and ceremony

### **Lesson**

#### 1. What do we need to survive from day to day?

- The teacher will ask what do we need to survive from day to day?
- The children will brainstorm what we need to live a healthy daily life. The teacher will guide the children to focus on diet and foods.  
(visual aid)
- This will be done on poster board completing a KWL graphic organizer.  
-The teacher will present a poster or visual aids of the foods grown, as well as the locations where they were grown in Alabama.  
- List foods commonly eaten by children today with the students.

#### 2. What we KNOW? Discuss with the children what they know.

(possible answers)

- We know where the southeastern peoples live.
- We know what they ate.
- We know what we eat.
- We know how it is made.

#### 3. What we WANT to know? .....

- The teacher will guide the children to discuss how foods are grown, prepared, and eaten.

### **Activity:**

PowerPoint or Google Slides Presentation showing examples of how foods are prepared and grown.

The students will fill in charts, gluing down

1. Popcorn
2. Cornmeal
3. Dried Fruits (raisins, prunes, figs, & dates)

4. Dried (uncooked) beans
5. Dried corn
6. Dried herbs

4. Conclusion- What did the foods taste like and how were they shared?

- The oldest children will serve the food
- All of the children will have a food-sharing ceremony sitting in a circle.
- The teachers will thank everyone for coming and review the objectives and conclude the class/ workshop.

### **Materials Needed**

- Poster Board
- Projector
- Dried Foods (listed below)
- 20 pieces of large cardstock

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# The Plants and Medicines of the Southeastern Peoples

## Objectives

- The student will learn how the southeastern peoples used the earth and plants for medicinal purposes.
- The student will learn how the native peoples practiced giving back to the earth after using its resources.
- The student will observe Native American Ceremony/Replenishment/Gratitude
- Communal sharing and ceremony

## Lesson

1. What happens when we get sick? Graphic Organizer Poster or Chart Paper...

- The teacher will ask the students to brainstorm
  - The student's answers will be charted on chart paper or poster board.

### OR

- Each child will also be asked to draw a picture of them being sick and how it makes them feel, which will lead them to the next question of how do we get better?

2. The children will brainstorm what we need to live a healthy daily life. The teacher will guide the children to focus on diet, foods, and medicine that might be used.

- Specific plants that can be grown and harvested from the earth. (visual aid...\*squash, corn on the cob, and beans\*)
- Poster Board with examples of plants and

## Activity

Display and explain examples of how medicinal plants are prepared and grown.

The students will sit in a circle and pass around visual aids. (A variety of plants, vegetables, and seeds.)

- Winter Squash (vitamins & antioxidants)
- Corn (vitamins & antioxidants)
- Beans(vitamins & antioxidants)
- Sunflower (oil, food, skin protectant)
- Elderberry Bottle (elderberries can be used for food and have been in the past, promotes immunity)
- Other herbs and plants will be displayed on the poster-board and discussed and shared.

The teacher will discuss how the Southeastern Peoples used the plants, foods, and herbs that were provided naturally from the earth and then gave back if possible.

- If it was not possible for the Native Americans to give back, gratitude was always shared through prayer or ceremony.
- Much of what was used was always replaced, a practice which is still in place today.
- RESPECT was something that was always used in these actions.

We will now grow our own plants to help celebrate the spring season

- We will plant
- Three Sisters Seeds
- Sunflowers to leave in gratitude to the mound

Conclusion- Ceremonial Purposes

- The children will learn how specific Medicine men and women were chosen and that wisdom was passed down.
- For many years these practices were hidden because the government banned them, but today these practices are still alive.
- The Sweet Grass Braid
- Cedar Smudging
- Grandmother Smudging Stick
- Circular Formation
- Corn Meal offering

**Materials**

- Poster board
- Live plants
- Seeds
- Corn meal
- Sunflower Seed Planters to leave for exhibit
- Sentence Strips for vocabulary words
- Teaching Poster Boards for Specific Plant Information
  - Real 3 sisters seeds
  - Soil
  - Take-home planters

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## **Timeline Activity for Native American History Month**

Have your students create a timeline of events from one of the major periods of pre-history.

1. Paleoindian
2. Archaic
3. Woodland
4. Mississippian

Be sure to include

- Major events in environmental history.
- The building of historic Native American sites by surrounding cultures.
- Development of weapons and tools that influenced Native American culture.
- Use of other food sources.

Display these timelines around the classroom or school.

### **Works Cited**

Boudreaux, Edmond, and Hunter Johnson. "Test Excavations at the Florence Mound: A Middle Woodland Platform Mound in Northwest Alabama" *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* 46, no. 2 (December 2000).

Johnson Jr., David M. *Alabama's Prehistoric Indians and Artifacts*. Tuscaloosa: Borgo Publishing, 2017.

All photographs taken by the author or MSNHA representative at Florence Indian Mound and Museum.

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