

# THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

## CHAPTER

## PREVIEW

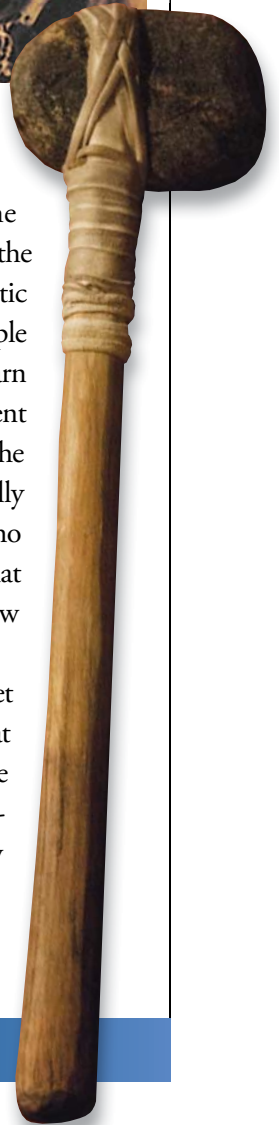
**PEOPLE:** Christopher Columbus

**PLACES:** Siberia, Bering Strait, San Salvador

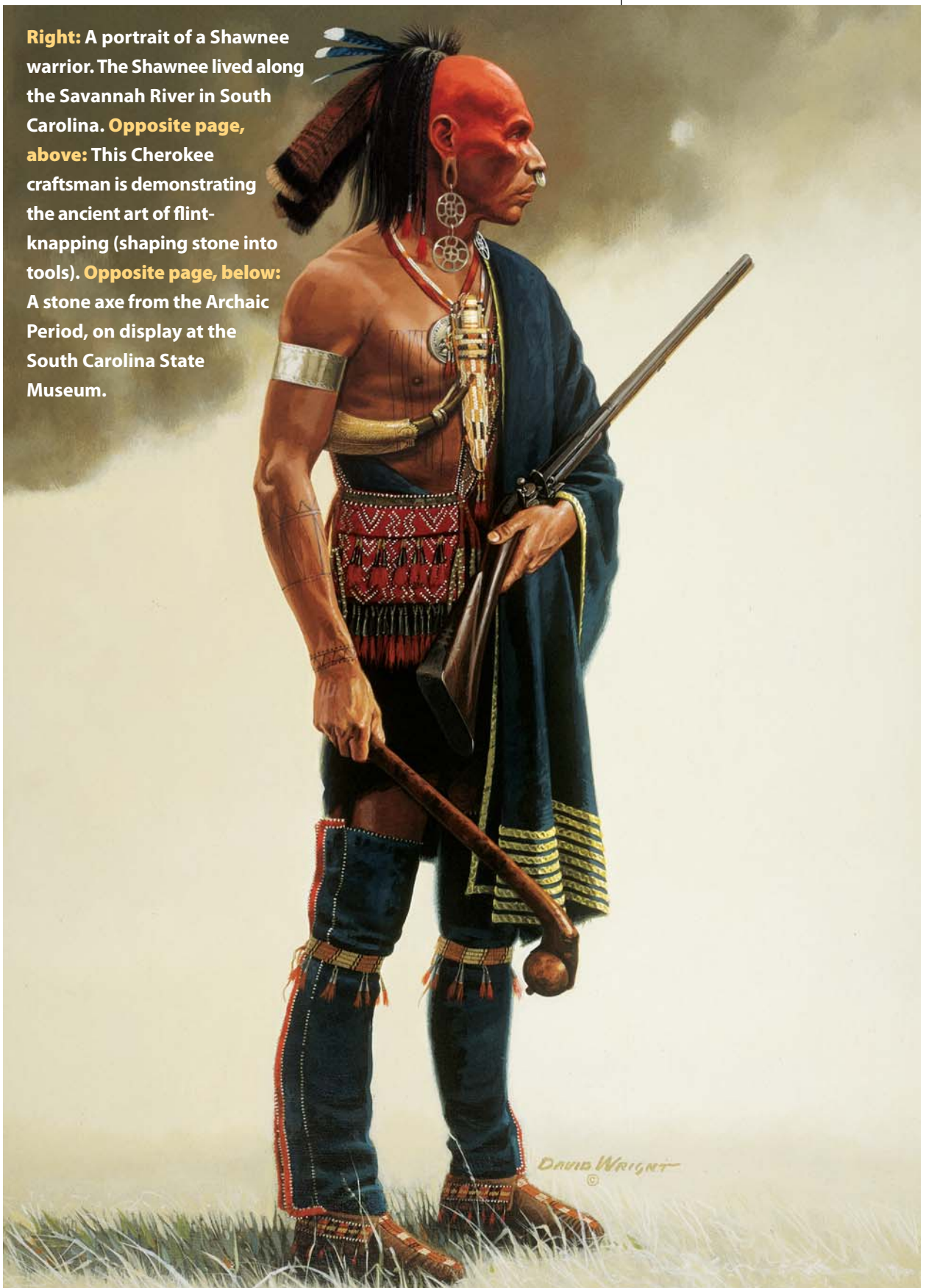
**TERMS:** artifact, archaeologist, nomadic, mortar and pestle, midden, anthropologist, agriculture, palisade, prehistory, maize, wigwam, wattle, daub, Green Corn Ceremony, matrilineal, nation, New World, microbes, Old World

One of the greatest stories in the history of humankind is one we know very little about. The earliest discovery and settlement of the American continents must have been among the most exciting adventures of all time—yet most of that dramatic story is lost to us. There are no written records because people had not yet learned to write—in any part of the world. We learn bits and pieces when we dig up stone tools used by these ancient ancestors of “Native Americans.” We learn where they lived by the location of these **artifacts** (objects made by humans, especially ancient tools and weapons). And **archaeologists** (scientists who study and interpret artifacts of past human life) can tell us what the tools were used for and, therefore, something about how the ancient people lived.

But where did these people come from? How did they get here? When did they arrive? These are important questions that archaeologists try to answer. They have come up with possible explanations, but most theories remain open to new explanations if new evidence is found. The story grows with each new discovery. Old mysteries are solved and new mysteries arise. Perhaps you will find an artifact someday that will contribute to our knowledge. Treat it with respect. It’s old!



**Right:** A portrait of a Shawnee warrior. The Shawnee lived along the Savannah River in South Carolina. **Opposite page, above:** This Cherokee craftsman is demonstrating the ancient art of flint-knapping (shaping stone into tools). **Opposite page, below:** A stone axe from the Archaic Period, on display at the South Carolina State Museum.







# SIGNS of the TIMES

## POPULATION

In 1492, the year Columbus landed in the New World, an estimated 2 to 18 million Native Americans lived in what is today North America. The estimated world population was 425 million.

## RELIGION

Native Carolinians believed in one Creator or Great Spirit. Shamans, or medicine men, dealt with good and evil spirits, and used charms, dancing, and chanting, in addition to medicines, to cure illnesses.

## FOOD

Corn (maize) was grown as early as 7000 BC in Central America, the same time that agriculture first appeared in western Asia. Native peoples of South Carolina gathered berries, nuts, and fruits, and grew beans, peas, squash, sunflowers, and pumpkins in addition to corn. They also fished, gathered shellfish, and hunted for deer and smaller game.

## SPORTS AND GAMES

Popular games among Native Carolinians were chunky and stickball.

## ARTIFACTS

Among the things left behind by early Native Carolinians are about 15 separate shell sites, which date back 2,000 to 4,000 years. Their shapes range from middens to horseshoe-shaped structures to rings. Middens seem to be merely trash heaps, but ring shapes may signify something more significant than a dumping site. Artifacts also include stone spear points, arrowheads, axes, and knives.

## LITERATURE

Native Americans followed the oral tradition of handing down stories from elders.

## NATIVE AMERICAN PLACE NAMES

At least 25 South Carolina towns and cities have Native American place names, ranging from Awendaw to Yemassee. There are also at least 20 rivers, 3 counties (Cherokee, Oconee, and Saluda), 2 lakes (Conestee and Keowee), 2 islands (Edisto and Kiawah), and 1 bay (Winyah) with Native American names.

# FIGURE 5

## Timeline: 35,000 BC to AD 1500



### 35,000-30,000 BC (approx.)

First exploration of America began;  
Paleo Indian Period began

### 10,000 BC (approx.)

Earth's climate warmed;  
glaciers receded; large game  
animals disappeared

### 10,000-8000 BC

Paleo Period ended;  
Archaic Period began

### AD 1492

Columbus arrived in the New World

### AD 1000

Leif Erikson possibly discovered  
Vinland in North America

### AD 900

Woodlands Period ended;  
Mississippian Period began

### 1000 BC

Archaic Period ended;  
Woodlands Period began

35,000BC

20,000BC

5000BC

3500BC

0

AD1500

### 33,000 BC (approx.)

Earliest cave paintings  
made in Chauvet, France

### 13,000 BC (approx.)

Famous cave paintings made  
in Lascaux, France

### 3500 BC

Bronze Age began in  
Europe and Asia

### 2560 BC

Great Pyramid of Giza  
completed in Egypt

### 2300 BC

Stonehenge stone circle erected in England

### 1300 BC

Iron Age began

### 970 BC

Hebrew King David succeeded by his son, Solomon

### 750 BC

Greek City States flourished

### 509 BC

Rome became a republic

### 336 BC

Alexander the Great became king of Macedonia

### AD 476

Fall of the Roman Empire; beginning of the Middle Ages in Europe

### AD 1400

Incans began construction of Machu Picchu in South America



# The Earliest Discoverers of America

## DID YOU KNOW?

In May 2007, a Siberian reindeer herder and his sons discovered the well-preserved body of a baby woolly mammoth, which was named Lyuba after the discoverer's wife. Little Lyuba, just four feet high, was sent to Tokyo, Japan, for scientific tests that may show why these animals became extinct. After making a grand tour of museums around the world, Lyuba returned home to Siberia, where she will have a permanent home in a museum there.



## AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- how the ancestors of Native Americans may have arrived in the Americas;
  - the hunting methods of Paleo Indians and why their hunting changed near the end of their era;
  - how advances like foraging, use of new materials and weapons, and a change from nomadic to seasonal movements led to a more structured society for Archaic Indians;
  - the introduction of the bow and arrow and agriculture by the Woodlands Indians;
  - the advanced lifestyle of the Mississippian Indians, which the Europeans discovered;
- terms: **nomadic, mortar and pestle, midden, anthropologist, agriculture, palisade, prehistory.**

**The most widely accepted theory of the earliest discovery of America** is that Asians came from Siberia, in what is now Russia, and walked into Alaska. No one can make that walk today because the Bering Strait separates Asia from North America with about fifty-six miles of water. But many thousands of years ago, Earth experienced a series of “ice ages.” In those ice ages, so much of Earth’s water was frozen into glaciers that the sea level dropped and dry land appeared, joining the two continents.

The ancient ancestors of today’s Native Americans were **nomadic** (wandering from place to place) people who took advantage of that land bridge and explored the new continent. It is also probable that some migrants to the American continents came by boat. Asian peoples could have rowed their primitive boats along the coast of Asia, working their way along the land bridge and down the western coast of North America. Similarly, European nomads might have hugged closely to ice sheets from Europe to the eastern shores of North America.

These nomadic newcomers hunted the large game that was the main source of their livelihood. The game included woolly mammoths,

# MAP 13

## Bering Land Bridge

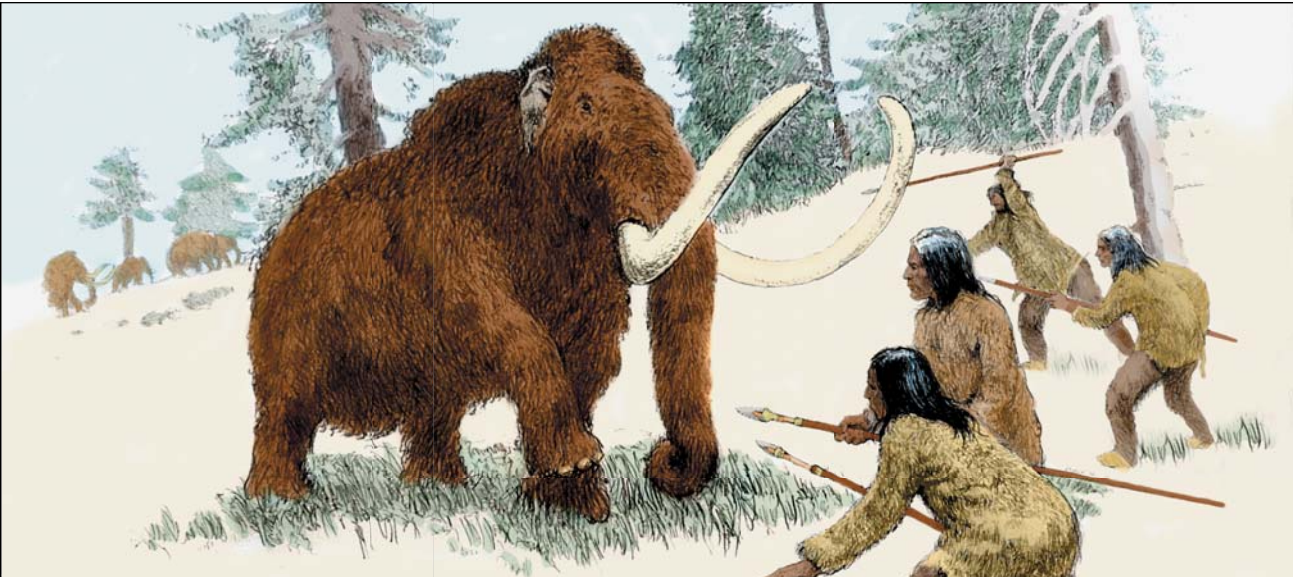
**Map Skill:** Which two continents were connected by the Bering Land Bridge?

mastodons, giant sloths, giant land tortoises, bighorn bison, and saber-toothed cats. All of these species of animals became extinct about ten thousand years ago.



**Above:** Native Americans are descended from nomadic Paleo hunters from Asia who crossed the Bering Land Bridge, starting about 37,000 years ago.





**Above:** Paleo hunters were able to bring down huge animals like woolly mammoths using stone-tipped spears (opposite page, top).

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Paleo Indians developed a throwing device for their spears that greatly increased the distance and force of the spear throw. It is called an atlatl. Today there are many atlatl enthusiasts who participate in throwing contests.



## The Paleo Indian Period

That first exploration of America began perhaps 37,000 to 32,000 years ago. Those hunters and their descendants spread across the continent and down the coast into South America. Eventually, they were cut off from Asia because the glaciers melted, the sea level rose, and the Bering Strait appeared again between Asia and North America. The era from their earliest appearance to about 10,000 years ago is called by archaeologists the Paleo Indian Period. Sometime during that time span, some of those Paleo Indians began to set up their camps in what is now South Carolina.

They hunted in small bands and attacked their prey with spears. It took many spears to bring down one mammoth or mastodon. Over the centuries, the people improved their spear points, indicating an intelligent and innovative population. Stone spear points, axes, and scrapers have been found in Allendale, Aiken, Darlington, and Lexington Counties. Some were made from local stone, but some were made from stones not native to this area. This indicates that the population was mobile, taking its tools along, or that it traded with distant tribes.

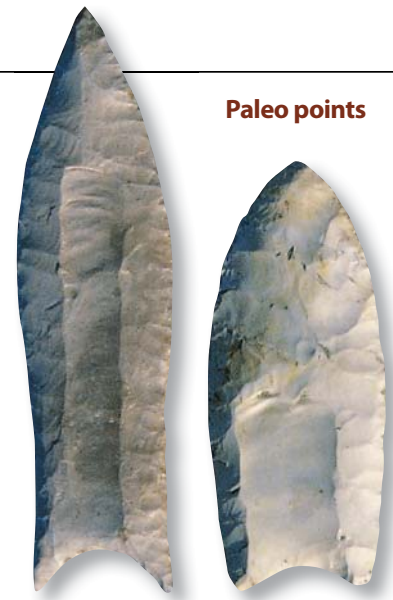
Near the end of the Paleo Period (about 12,000 to 10,000 years ago), Earth's climate began to warm and the glaciers receded. Life began to change more dramatically for humans. The large game animals so necessary for their way of life started to disappear. The reasons for extinction of the mammoths, mastodons, and others are not entirely understood, but probably had to do with climate change and overhunting by the only predator that was effective against them, the human animal.

Hunters learned to drive large herds of animals over cliffs, killing many more than they could use at one time. They also herded the large animals into bogs where mass killings could take place. This overkill was not the last time humans have thought a resource was unlimited and used it ruthlessly.

### The Archaic Period

Archaeologists refer to the era between about 10,000 years ago to about 3,000 years ago as the Archaic Period of Native American development. In this era, the inhabitants hunted and trapped small game and fish. They began to depend a bit more on *foraging* (searching and gathering) for plant food—fruit, berries, nuts, and roots. They still moved around a great deal depending on food resources, but they were not as widely traveled as their ancestors of the Paleo Period. It was in this period that Indians domesticated the dog, which became a companion and hunting partner, and was sometimes a beast of burden. After extinction of the large mammals, North America was left without a large beast of burden, such as the horse or camel.

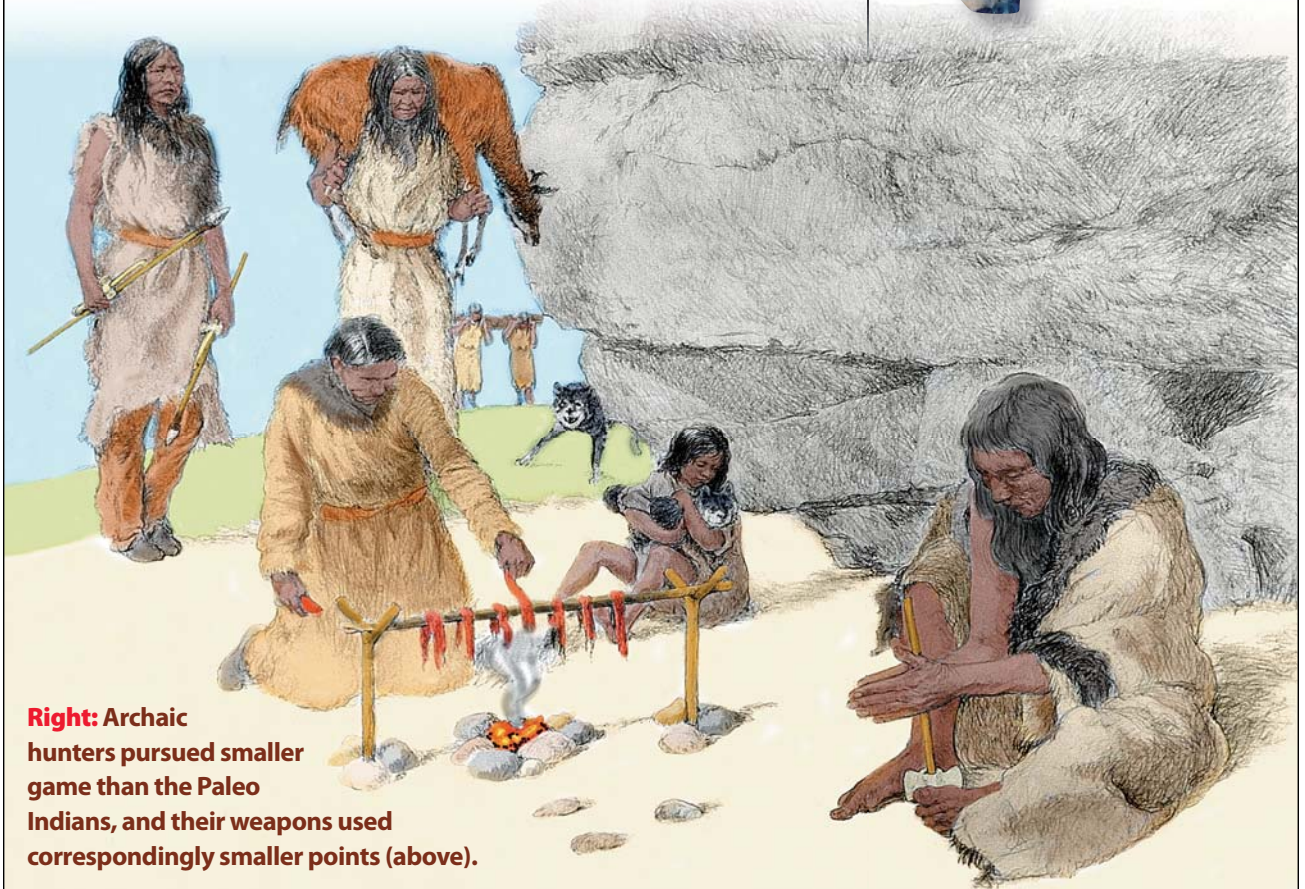
In addition to materials used earlier—wood, stone, hide, and bone—the Archaic Indians used shell, ivory, plant fiber, and copper to make the goods they needed. They fashioned a wider array of stone tools, including knives, wedges, chisels, hammers, anvils, drills, and mortars and pestles. A **mortar and pestle** is a tool consisting of a bowl (mortar) and a heavy thick rod (pestle). The end of the pestle is used for crushing and grinding hard food



Paleo points



Archaic points



**Right:** Archaic hunters pursued smaller game than the Paleo Indians, and their weapons used correspondingly smaller points (above).



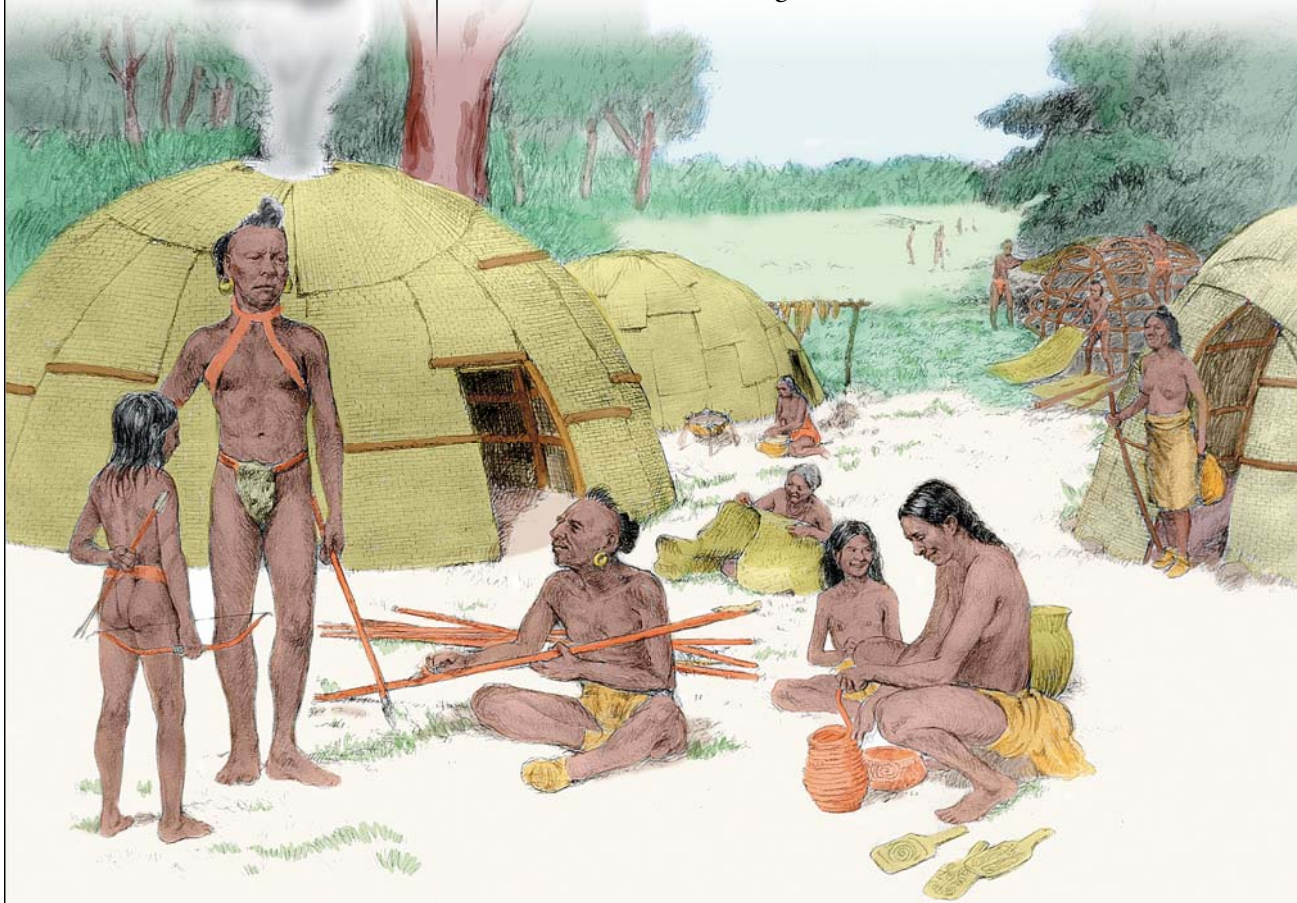


objects like nuts or grains against the mortar. They carved cooking pots and storage containers out of soft stone. Cloth weaving and basket making were developed. Late in the Archaic Period, clay pottery became an important part of the daily life of inhabitants of our section of the continent.

Baskets and pottery are symbolic of a more settled way of life, with storage of food becoming more important. They were no longer nomads but moved about, usually, on a seasonal basis. They set up semipermanent camps, mostly along rivers. The population was increasing during the middle and late Archaic Period. Society became more firmly structured and organized. Rather than small bands, the tribe became the principal social organization. Large shell middens in the Lowcountry give evidence of rather long-term residence. A **midden** is a trash heap left by prehistoric people that is a bonanza for archaeologists. In those middens, they find rubbish that tells a lot about the daily lives of the people who lived there several thousand years ago.

### The Woodlands Period

Beginning about three thousand years ago, or from 1000 BC until about AD 900, was another stage of development for the people of North America, called by anthropologists the Woodlands Period. An **anthropologist** is a scientist who studies the origin and development of humans. A great technological advance in the Woodlands era was the introduction of the bow and arrow. This made the hunting of deer, elk, bear, and smaller animals much



more efficient. The era also saw the beginnings of **agriculture** (planting and growing crops in fields rather than depending entirely on gathering food or fiber from wild plants). Agriculture is one of humans' greatest inventions, and it developed in several different parts of the world at different times.

The development of agriculture allowed the population to be even more settled in one place. The people could form permanent villages, build sturdier houses, and have a more certain supply of food. Storage of food became more important, so baskets and clay pottery were used even more than they had been earlier. The more settled life of farming and hunting allowed more time for artistic expression. The pottery began to have more decoration, with designs impressed into the wet clay before it was dried and heated by fire. Items possibly used to adorn the body are found among the artifacts from this era. Those tribal groups in the eastern part of what is now the United States were called Eastern Woodlands Indians. Their culture gradually evolved enough differences that anthropologists give it a different name.

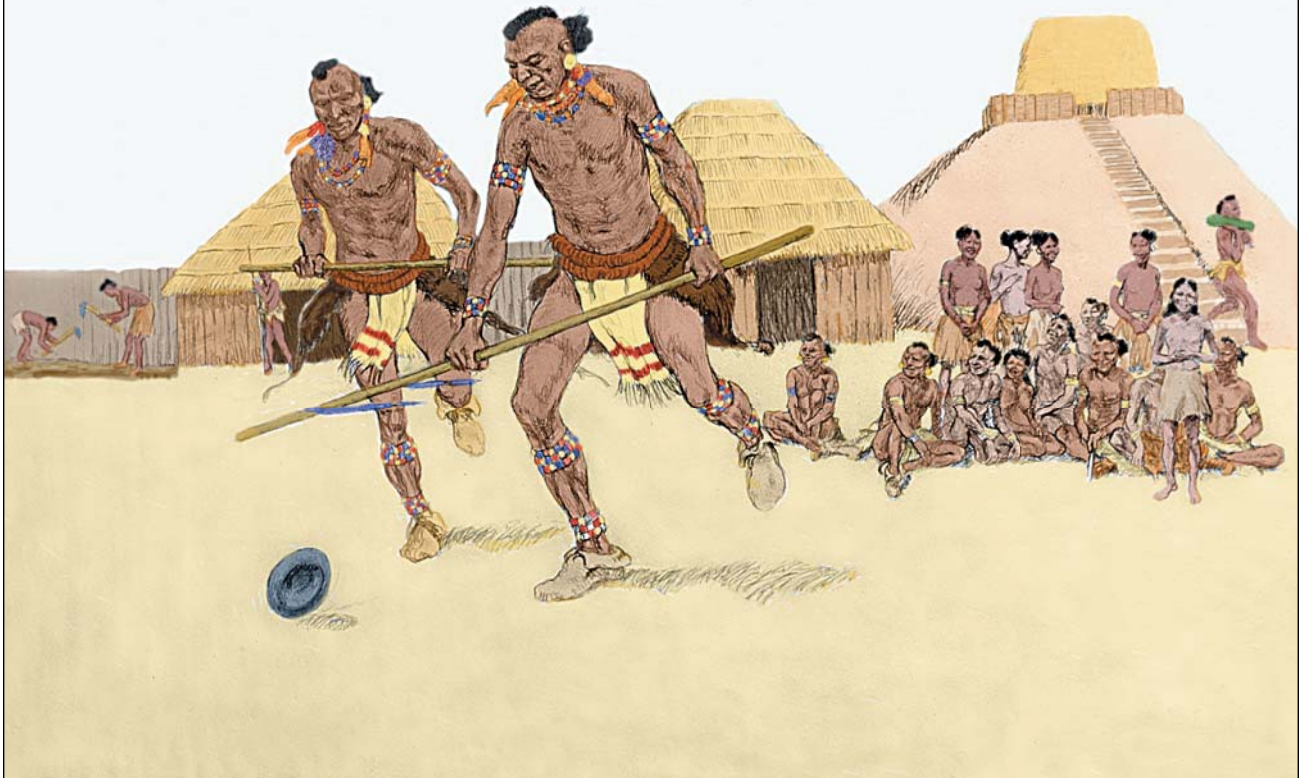
### The Mississippian Period

The final period of Indian culture before the coming of Europeans is called the Mississippian Period (from about AD 900 to 1500). The name comes from the fact that many of this culture's main features first appeared in the Mississippi River valley, then spread all over the Southeast, including South Carolina. Characteristics of this stage of Indian development include



**Above:**  
A Woodlands  
Period spear point.

**Opposite page, above:** These Archaic Period pottery fragments, found on Stallings Island in the Savannah River, are among the oldest ever found in North America. **Opposite page, below:** The Woodlands Period is notable mainly for the development of agriculture, which allowed people to settle in permanent villages. **Below:** The Mississippian Indians developed an advanced culture, with sizable towns and monumental temple and burial mounds.







**Above:** The Santee Indian Mound in Clarendon County is an example of a ceremonial mound from the Mississippian Period. During the American Revolution, the British built Fort Watson on top of the mound. It was captured by American forces led by Francis Marion and Light Horse Harry Lee in 1781.

- very highly developed agriculture,
- the building of substantial (lasting) dwellings and meeting houses,
- fortifying villages with high **palisades** (fences of sharp wooden stakes),
- building of temple mounds, and
- highly developed tribal organizations with class divisions.

This culture is the one that European explorers and settlers found here in the 1500s and 1600s; therefore, we can know much more about Mississippian Indian life because Europeans wrote about it. The era of **prehistory** (the time before written records) was over. With written accounts and some drawings and paintings, we can get a much more complete picture of Indian life. Unfortunately, those descriptions were not entirely accurate because the European observers did not understand everything they saw. Also, most of those writers were prejudiced, thinking these people in America were inferior to them. But historians can carefully *cull* (select from a group) out the prejudices and inaccuracies, learn from archaeologists' interpretations of artifacts, and get a fairly clear description of Indian life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

#### DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Define in sentence form: nomadic, anthropologist, prehistory.
2. What are three possible ways human beings arrived in the Americas?
3. What were the two most important advances in the Woodlands era?



## On an Archaeological Dig

**I**n 1997, archaeologists and volunteers began excavating the Johannes Kolb site at Mechanicsville in Darlington County. Archaeologist Christopher Judge invites students to picture themselves joining him as he digs into the past.

“If you could bring one tool with you when you join me on an expedition to the Johannes Kolb archaeology site, I would recommend that you bring your imagination. Our collective human past is a fascinating laboratory for understanding ourselves, and archaeology is a vehicle to the past. At the Kolb site, we allow visitors to help recover artifacts from our sieves, but that’s where the adventure begins—not where it ends. You would need to allow your mind to discover what we have learned as our team of experts brings the *mute* (silent) archaeology to life. Once on site, you would come to understand that the broken pieces of stone left behind by folks can be interpreted—by careful study and comparison to artifacts from similar living cultures. You must use your ability to imagine the past as a dynamic place of connections and interactions. You may not be able to smell the venison broiling over the fire or hear the rhythmic bell-like tone of a stone toolmaker striking with an antler hammer, but there are some things we can deduce from our careful research. Detailed analyses in the lab offer clues as well.

“Imagine ice age hunters moving along the banks of the Pee Dee River chasing a now-extinct mastodon with light-weight stone-tipped spears 13,000 years ago. Or imagine some of the earliest Native Americans in North America learning to fashion and use pottery jars and bowls—making them here in South Carolina using clay, water, and Spanish moss 5,000 years ago! If you

can picture these activities in your mind, you can begin to imagine what life was like in the deepest levels of our excavations—three-and-a-half feet below ground.

“About halfway down to the bottom of our excavations, we found that South Carolina native people dug deep storage pits presumably for storage of acorns, corn, and other items. When the pits fell into disuse, they filled them with household garbage. This discovery allows us to know they ate fish, deer, turkey, turtles, and freshwater mussels between 1,500 and 1,000 years ago. Like numerous native people before him at the Kolb site, Chief James Caulder of the Pee Dee Indians excavated with us in 2010 and shared his knowledge of Indian people and their lives then and now.

“Nearer to the surface, we find traces of occupants who lived at the site in the last three hundred years. We combine history and folklore with archaeology to better understand them. Imagine what Johannes Kolb, a German immigrant, must have felt as he built a house in 1732 on a sandhill by a river on lands recently acquired from native people by deerskin traders. Some of his descendants have excavated with us at the site and shared family history with us! Or picture a village of cabins with smoke wafting out of chimneys all in a row occupied by enslaved African people from 1830 to 1860, living on that same hill near fields they worked. Or picture a sawmill and workers’ camp in the early 1900s. Very little is known about these more recent occupants. History is silent on them, so archaeology is writing a history, so to speak. The Kolb site continues to offer opportunities for both archaeologists and students of all ages to learn about the South Carolina prehistoric and historic past. Visit our website at [www.38DA75.com](http://www.38DA75.com), and join us in our exciting archaeological pursuit!”



# Indian Life and Cultures

## AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- how Native Americans provided for themselves with food, shelter, clothing, and transportation;
- the religious beliefs and practices of Native Americans;
- the games and other forms of recreation that enriched Native Americans' lives;
- the social organization of the clan and tribe in a matrilineal society;
- Native American systems of justice and rules of warfare; the lives of women and children in Native America;
- terms: **maize, wigwam, wattle, daub, Green Corn Ceremony, matrilineal, nation.**



**Historians and archaeologists make many general statements** about Indian life in a certain era, but it is necessary to keep in mind that there was amazing variety among the different Indian groups in America. A rough estimate of the number of Indians scattered across what is now the United States in 1492, when Columbus arrived, is between two and eighteen million. They were divided into hundreds of tribes and language groups. Each of these tribes had adapted to the environment in which the group lived. The people developed lifestyles satisfying the tribes' needs.

In the area that was to become South Carolina, there were between thirty and fifty tribes in four major language groups when Europeans first arrived here in the early 1500s. Any general statement made about their culture may not be true for one or more tribes. The traits described here are those that apply to most tribes and groups.

### The Economy

The economy of a society refers to the process by which the people use the natural resources available to them to provide for their survival and well-being. They apply labor to those resources and use *technology* (tools and ways of getting work done) to

make their labor more effective. Perhaps the most important information we need about a group of people in order to understand them is, How do they provide for themselves? How do they make a living?

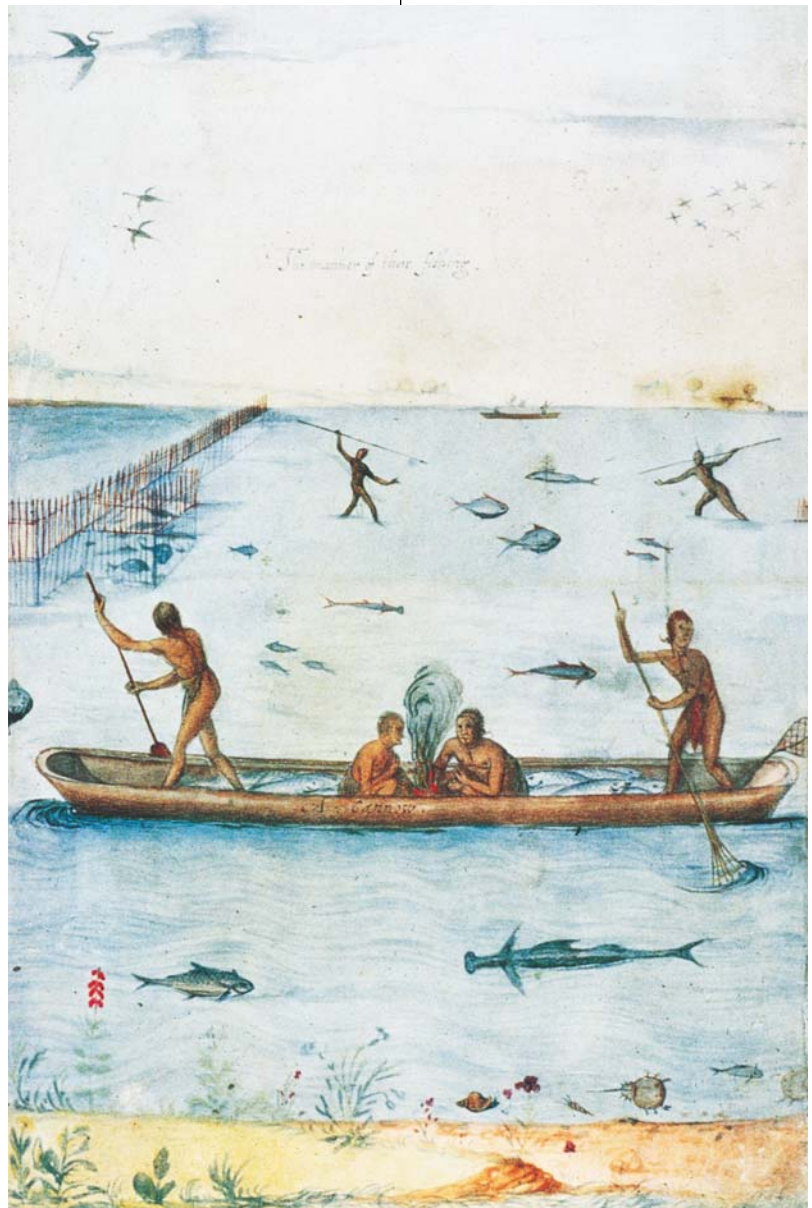
## Food

The Indians of South Carolina were very different from the Indians of the Great Plains area, which are commonly stereotyped in movies. They were not nomadic hunters following the buffalo herds. Indians in this area were farmers and hunters who lived in settled communities. Agriculture was most important in their economy. The farmers grew **maize** (corn), beans and peas of several sorts, squash, sunflowers, and pumpkins. To supplement their diet, they foraged for wild crops such as strawberries, peaches, herbs, roots, bulbs, and hickory nuts, which were used for cooking oil. The farmers also grew tobacco, which they smoked in clay pipes.

Each family had garden plots, and the village had large common fields that were tilled *communally* (by all, for all). At planting time, an elder would call the villagers—both male and female—to labor in the fields. They tilled the soil with hoes made of sharp bones or conch shells lashed to poles. The crops were planted in hills or clumps, not in rows. Corn and beans were grown in the same hills so the bean vines could climb on the cornstalks. After planting, the men left the tending of crops to the women and children. They were to keep the birds from eating the seeds and prevent wild animals from eating the plants as they grew.

The men's work consisted mainly of hunting, fishing, and, at times, making war. The Catawba called themselves "the people of the river," and they depended on fish as a main source of food. They built weirs or fences in the river to help catch fish. The hunters' principal prey among most tribes was deer, elk, bear, wild turkey, raccoons, geese, ducks, and a variety of smaller game. The bow

**These paintings of an Indian warrior (opposite page), and Indian fishing techniques (below), are by the English explorer, artist, and mapmaker John White, who sailed to the Carolinas on Sir Walter Raleigh's expeditions. While on Roanoke Island from 1585-1586, he made paintings of the native people, plants, and animals. His paintings are the most informative illustrations of Native American society of that period.**







## DID YOU KNOW?

Indians often cooked meat slowly over a low fire, calling it "barbacoa," according to the Spanish explorer, Hernando de Soto. Indians invented barbeque!

and arrow was their main weapon. (Firearms, of course, came later with the Europeans.) Boys hunted birds and squirrels with blowguns.

Along the coast, shellfish were also an important part of the diet. The coast dwellers are good examples of Indians' use of a variety of food sources. On the seacoast, they harvested oysters and clams. In the swamps, they collected roots. They used inland fields for farming, and forests for hunting deer, turkey, and other game. Most Indian groups struck a fair balance among farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering to meet their basic needs. They used a variety of ecosystems, thus not being too dependent on any one source of food and not exhausting any one source. Today we would call that excellent management of resources.

## Shelter

The houses built in the villages were sturdy buildings, but differed according to tribe and area. The most typical dwelling in the Coastal Plain was the **wigwam** (a circular or oblong house made of long saplings covered with bark). The Catawba in the Midlands and the Yemassee (sometimes spelled Yamassee or Yamasee) in the Lowcountry used this technique

extensively. Even more substantial houses were built by the tribes in the Upcountry. Many were of "wattle and daub" construction. The **wattle** was the posts of the walls, interwoven with smaller twigs. The **daub** was the clay or mud used to fill in the gaps in the wattle and form a smooth surface inside and out, making for a very warm and cozy cabin. These cabins could be quite large, some measuring up to sixteen by sixty feet. Some even had two stories. The roof was usually made of *thatch* (straw or grass) or bark. The Cherokee used wattle and daub construction, but also built log cabins after they were introduced by Europeans. The walls were made of thick logs, stripped of bark and notched at both ends so they would fit tightly





together. The log walls were covered with clay mixed with grass inside and outside. The roof was of bark or large shingles. These cabins were often large and divided into rooms. Outside many of the dwellings, there were sweat lodges, good for cleaning the body and the soul.

Every village had a public building, constructed with similar techniques as the individual houses, but much larger. This was the council house or town hall. Here the leaders of the clan or tribe met to discuss and decide issues important to the community. The building was also used for social and recreational activities—a sort of community center. In larger villages and those with religious significance, the council house and a temple might be built on a large earthen mound, giving them much more prominence.

A temple mound was built like a flat-topped pyramid, with a ramp on one side to allow easy access. With no pack animals and no carts with wheels, the men had to carry—in baskets on their backs—all the dirt for building the mounds. Often a chief's house would be built on the mound, in addition to the temple and town hall. When a chief died, his house might be burned, the ashes covered with a fresh layer of dirt, and a new chief's house built upon it.

Completing the architecture of the village was the wall around the perimeter. This palisade of poles sharpened at the tops loomed ten to twenty feet in height and helped protect the village from enemy attack.

**Above: You can step inside a reconstruction of a traditional Catawba bark house at the Catawba Reservation Cultural Center near Rock Hill. *Opposite page:* This painting by John White depicts a sixteenth-century Indian village. On the right are cornfields. In the lower right corner, a ceremonial dance is being performed. Compare their dwellings to the photo of the reconstruction above.**





**Above:** John White's painting of a chief shows him in what was probably the ordinary dress for the warm months of the year.

## Clothing

Apparently, when weather allowed, many Indians chose to wear no clothes or, perhaps, a breechcloth for the men and an apron for the women. They solved the problem of biting insects by rubbing their bodies with bear oil. Paintings and tattoos on their bodies were also common. Many of the clothes for cooler weather were made of deerskin or bearskin. The skins were prepared by soaking them in a mixture of deer brains and water. After a good scraping with oyster shells or rocks, and being cured with smoke over a slow fire, the skins were soft, pliable leather, ready to sew with deer *sinews* (tendons).

Cloth was handwoven from animal hair, usually bear or opossum, and from various plant fibers. The cloth was used to make shirts, skirts, pants, robes, blankets, breechcloths, and aprons, to name only a few. On the coast, Spanish moss was used to fashion robes for women. Any of the clothing might be decorated with woven geometrical designs, shells, dyes, feathers, belts, and other added features. Jewelry was also used to adorn the body and clothes.

Among the ornamentation were earrings, necklaces, headbands, and armbands featuring animal teeth or claws, stones, copper pieces, and shells of many varieties.

## Transportation

Indians, before European contact, had no wheels and no horses. (The American horse of Paleo Indian times became extinct thousands of years ago.) Transportation was by foot or water. That is one of the reasons most Indian villages were near rivers. The main transportation on water was provided by dugout canoes. The canoes were important for the extensive trade among various tribes and villages. But the impressive number and length of foot trails indicates that much travel and trade took place on foot. Many of these trails later became roads and some became highways. The original travelers usually found the best routes.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Spanish moss is not a true moss at all but a relative of the pineapple. Native Americans called it "tree hair." French explorers called it "Spanish beard" to insult their New World rivals. "Spanish moss" is a milder variation of the French insult.



## Religion

In Indian *mythology* (stories told to explain the mysteries of life), all animals, including humans, originated as brothers. In earlier times, the stories said, they all talked with one another in the same language. The Indians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries respected the animals and did not kill them unnecessarily, unlike their Paleo Indian ancestors of thousands of years before. When the Indians killed an animal to eat, they apologized to the animal's spirit, lest the spirit inflict them with harm. Animal spirits were seen as capable of causing disease. (Perhaps they noticed that eating spoiled meat caused sickness!) Plants were viewed as friendlier to humans, providing many medicines for cure of illness.

Shamans or medicine men were skilled in the art of dealing with the many spirits, good and evil, that inhabited the forests. They knew about medicines that were actually helpful, but also used charms and magical maneuvers, dancing, chanting, and rattling gourds to bring about a cure.

While Indians believed in many good and evil spirits, they believed in one Creator, or Great Spirit, or Creative Force. The sun was a mighty symbol of that Creative Force, but fire here on earth was also symbolic of the deity. Indians' spiritual life was fully combined with their natural life and with nature itself.

Many rituals were concerned with purity and some with beginning again. One of the most important ceremonies for the Cherokee, and for many other tribes, was the **Green Corn Ceremony**. It celebrated the new corn crop, and the villagers used it as an occasion for washing away all impurities and getting a new start. Houses were cleaned. Worn-out clothes were burned, old cooking pots replaced with new. All fires were put out and a priest kindled a new one, symbolizing new beginnings. Each family relit its fire from the priest's fire. At this time, marriages could be dissolved and crimes pardoned.

Music and dance often had religious meaning. They were performed to call forth magical powers or visions, to heal the sick, and to ensure a bountiful harvest. They also were used to observe the rites of passage—passage from childhood to adulthood or from life to death. Drums, cane flutes, clappers, rattles, and whistles accompanied the singing and chanting. Sometimes the performances lasted through the night, aided by *hallucinogens* (substances that cause people to see or sense things that aren't real). Storytelling was also an important part of ceremonies. In societies without written records, storytelling was the means of passing on the history, legends, and myths that held the people together.



**Above:** John White painted this portrait of a Secotan priest. His tasks included treating illness and conducting religious ceremonies.

### DID YOU KNOW?

An anthropologist has said that modern Americans would have to combine Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Yom Kippur, Lent, and Mardi Gras to have a holiday that approached the scope and importance of the Green Corn Ceremony!





**Above:** The game of chunky was played by Indians as early as the Mississippian Period. This artist's conception of a chunky player is based on an image on a Mississippian shell gorget (pendant). **Top:** George Catlin painted Indians playing chunky in the mid-1800s.

## Games and Recreation

Indians valued a life lived with dignity, and they were serious about dying properly—with courage and honor. But this did not mean they did not know how to have fun. Music and dancing were important in their lives, but not always serious. Indians were great game players and athletes. Running and racing were popular among children and young men. Ball games were popular, especially one played with a racket that is the ancestor of today's lacrosse game. Large numbers of players were on the field at one time, and play was rough. Broken bones were not uncommon.

Perhaps an even more significant game for warriors was the game of chunky. Every village had a chunky yard, a smooth area perhaps one hundred feet long—long enough to roll a disc-like stone for a good distance. Players would throw javelins to where they thought the stone would stop. The chunky stones were so carefully made and polished they were almost works of art. Serious gambling accompanied the game, and the competition was fierce. It was not uncommon for a player to wager all his material goods on the game.

## Social Organization

The clan (extended family) was the basic unit of social organization in Native American society. If you lived in that society, your clan identification would depend on your mother. This is called a **matrilineal** society—one in which ancestry is traced through the mother. (The European society that was soon to intrude upon the Indians was patrilineal.) The Indian father had to be from a different clan because marriage within the clan was forbidden. This was to prevent marriage of close relatives.

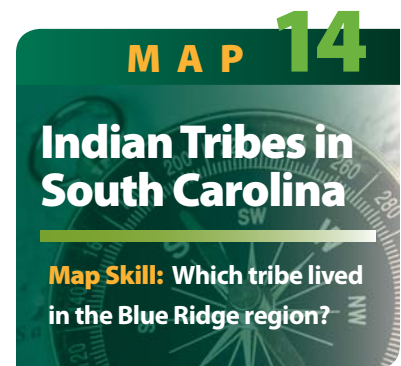
The overall organization of Native American society was the tribe. The tribe included many clans. Later, a tribe was sometimes called a nation. **Nation** is a European term for a central political organization of people of a similar cultural, language, and geographic background. Of the thirty to fifty tribes in South Carolina in the seventeenth century, some were large and powerful, like the Cherokee, Westo, and Savannah. Some were small and weak. The Yemassee were a medium-sized tribe that only arrived in South Carolina after the English came to Charleston. The Yemassee were fierce warriors, but they were looking for neighbors friendlier than the Spanish farther south.

In one tribe, the Sewee in the Coastal Zone, a chief seemed to have the power of life or death over the little “nation,” but that was unusual. In most tribes, the government structure was rather loose and individuals had a fair amount of *autonomy* (independence). It was common for a tribe to have several chiefs at the same time. They were leaders who governed by persuasion, not by coercion. The aim was to have harmony in the society, and decisions were usually made through discussion leading to a *consensus* (general agreement). The chiefs were usually older men, but not always. Sometimes there were women chiefs. Always, women were engaged in the discussions and decision-making process.

The system of justice within a tribe was usually carried out by the clans. Both crime and punishment were the collective responsibility of the clan. If you committed a crime, your whole clan was responsible for it. If you were the victim of a crime, your clan was responsible for punishing the criminal or his clan. The punishment was usually exact retaliation; that is, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life.” If you committed murder, the victim’s family was coming after you—or perhaps your brother or uncle! The death of any one of your clan members could satisfy the victim clan’s need for retaliation. Crimes of one person against another within the same clan were unthinkable. Such crimes were so unusual that Indians had no formal method of dealing with them.

## War

Wars between Indian tribes were fairly common. Like the justice system, wars were often retaliation for some wrong one tribe thought another tribe had caused. The wars were not major affairs with large armies attacking each







**Above:** John White painted the wife of a chief with her child in 1585. **Below:** A Cherokee woman demonstrates food preparation with stone tools outside a traditional dwelling.

other. The fighting was often by foes who were hidden from each other by trees or rocks. Bravery and honor did not require marching through open fields toward an opposing army, as Europeans of the era did. (Europeans eventually learned a lot about warfare from the Indians.) Usually, war parties were no more than twenty or thirty men, moving swiftly to accomplish a surprise attack. The aim was to take revenge. Often, to take a few scalps or prisoners was all that was necessary to satisfy the aim. Never was total destruction of another tribe on the agenda.

### The Role of Women

Women worked very hard in Indian society. They were keepers of the household—tending the young children; growing the garden; cooking; and making the pottery, baskets, blankets, clothes, and mats. They had the major responsibility of farming the village land, though they usually got some help from men at planting and harvest seasons. But all was not drudgery. As we have seen, women were able to take part in village and tribal decision making. They could speak and be as persuasive as men and, in rare instances, become chiefs in their tribe.

For better or for worse, the marriages of Indian couples were not necessarily permanent. Either partner could break the family tie. This gave the Indian woman a great deal of freedom that women in many cultures did not have. Leaving a husband, being without a meat provider, might seem risky. But in Indian society, if food was available, everyone ate—unless they refused to work. Members of the clan and the tribe took care of one another.



## Childhood

A newborn baby would be taken to a stream or spring and washed and rubbed with bear oil even before being allowed to suckle. The child spent most of infancy strapped onto a cradle board. This was supposed to cause the child to grow into a strong and straight adult. In some tribes, the baby's head would be strapped to the board to shape the skull in a desired fashion. After infancy, children were given a great amount of freedom and very little physical punishment. Girls were tended and provided guidance by the mother and the women of the village. Boys, after about age five, were supervised by the mother's brother and other males in her family. The main disciplinary device was ridicule, which worked quite well in a very small community.

The girls learned to become women by helping with the household tasks. They could keep the fires burning, learn to make pottery, and work in the garden. The boys learned to become men by hunting birds and other small animals with bow and arrow and blowgun. Running was very important to hunting and warfare, so footraces were good training for speed and endurance. Wrestling was popular. Boys also competed to see who could tolerate the most pain without flinching. (Maybe this is why physical punishment would not be very effective.)

The freedom children enjoyed ended abruptly with the initiation into adulthood, which was often severe, especially for boys. This rite of passage from childhood to adulthood consisted of a period of several days, weeks, or even months of cruel treatment and abuse, fasting, taking vile and powerful medicines, and, perhaps worst of all, being subjected to lectures! But when it was over, the boy came out of it battered, bruised, exhausted, and starving—but now a young warrior. He might advance in reputation by valiant fighting and become an elite warrior and possibly, if wise enough, even become a chief.



**Above:** Girls learned traditional skills like basket weaving. The pool of water at this Cherokee girl's feet helps soften the fiber.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Catawba tribe today is actively preserving the ancient methods of making and firing clay pots in wood fires without the use of kilns. They do not use a potter's wheel, but build the pot with a series of coils of clay. They smooth and polish the pots to a sheen, but never use glazes.

### DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Define in sentence form: maize, wigwam, matrilineal.
2. What were the two principal means of travel for Native Americans?
3. What was likely to happen to a Native American man who committed a crime?



# The Beginning of a New Era

## DID YOU KNOW?

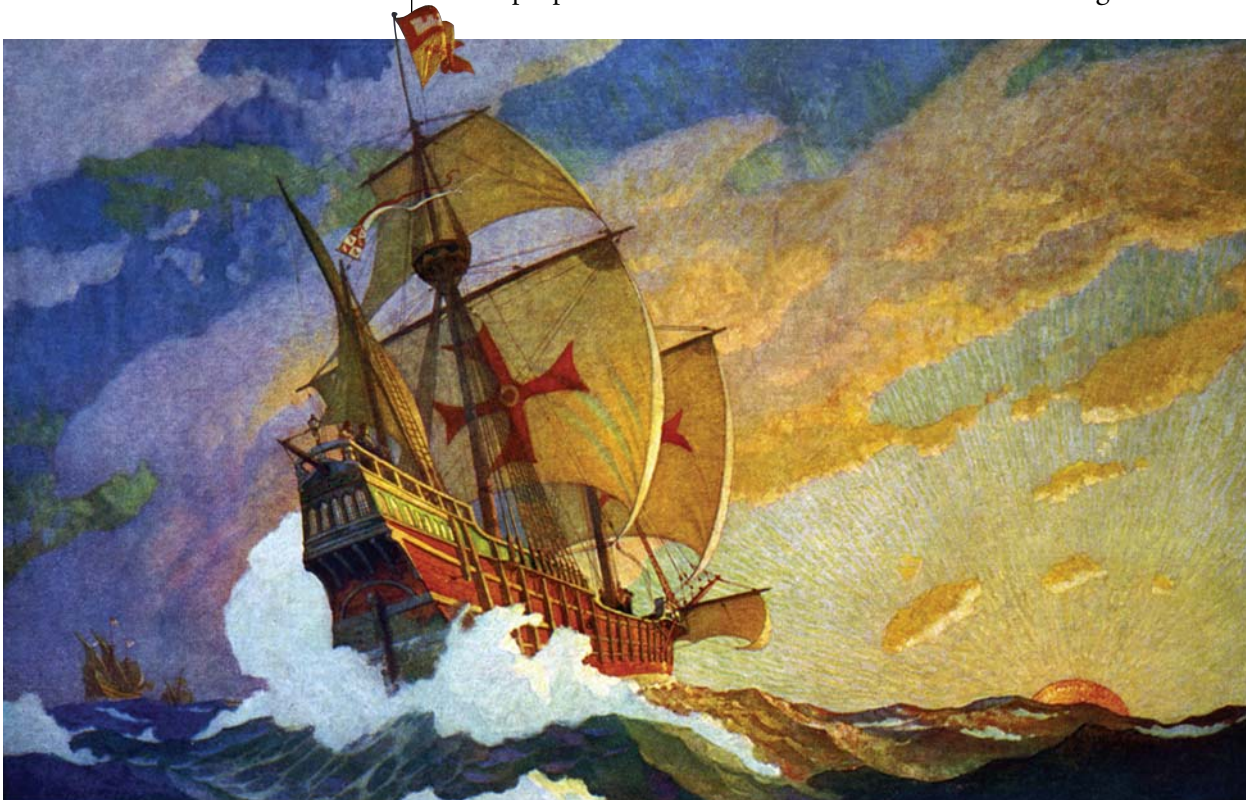
Columbus, and most knowledgeable people at the time, knew the world was round.

**Below:** When Columbus sailed west, he expected to reach Asia. Instead, he made history. **Opposite page, above:** This painting in the U.S. Capitol imagines Columbus's arrival in the New World.

## AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR

- the reasons for Columbus's voyages to the New World;
- how trade with Europeans changed the Native Americans' way of life;
- how disease, slavery, and wars contributed to a decrease in the Indian population;
- terms: **New World, microbes, Old World.**

**Native people standing on the shore of San Salvador, a small island** about four hundred miles off the tip of Florida, on October 12, 1492, might have seen three ships approaching their homeland. The *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa María* were the largest boats they had ever seen. The billowing sails and the colorful flags were something new. Even more amazing were the people who rowed ashore in small boats. The strangers' skin was





pale, their faces were hairy, they wore clothes all over their bodies, and they carried strange tools. The arrival of Christopher Columbus and his men to their island was an amazing sight. But as amazing as it was, they could have had no idea how their life was about to change.

### A New Era in America

A new era began in 1492 for Native Americans, whom Columbus, because he was lost, called Indians. He thought he was on an island off the coast of Asia, in the (East) Indies. His first impression of the native population was very favorable. He commented on the people's intelligence and generosity, their innocent and "loving nature." Despite his admiration for these people, he kidnapped a few to take back to Spain for exhibition. On his second voyage, he carried 550 natives back to Spain as slaves. Columbus began a new, *pivotal* (significant, pointing in a new direction) era for the people he called Indians, and the results were often disastrous.

Columbus's voyages began a new, pivotal era for Europeans as well. For many centuries, Western Europeans had looked eastward toward Asia and the "Middle East" for its cultural heritage and for most of its trade. Columbus, an Italian seaman sailing under the flag of Spain, was trying to reach the riches of China by sailing west—around the world. He assumed the distance to Asia sailing west was short enough to give Spain control of the very profitable trade with China, if he could only show the way. He had no idea the American continents were in the way or that the world was three times as big as he had calculated.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Christopher Columbus made a total of four voyages to the New World. Throughout his life, he maintained that he had found the true Indies and Cathay (China), despite growing evidence that he had not.**





## DID YOU KNOW?

A vaccine against smallpox was developed in 1796 by an English doctor named Edward Jenner (below). The smallpox vaccine has been so successful that, in 1980, the disease was declared to be wiped out from the earth.



Columbus's discoveries did not capture the Asian trade for Spain, but they did open a whole **New World** (the continents of North and South America, located in the Western Hemisphere) for Europeans to *exploit* (use for profit). Europeans aggressively explored the Caribbean Islands and two American continents over the next few decades. The wealth in silver and gold they found and took away from the people in Central and South America spurred great economic growth in Europe. Spain became the richest European nation for at least the next century.

## The Devastation of Unfamiliar Diseases

Contact with America made many natives of Europe richer and better fed. Unfortunately, the exchange often did not work out as well for the natives of America. The most dramatic impact of Europeans on the Indian people was caused by **microbes** (germs). Indians had been isolated from the **Old World** (the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, located mostly in the Eastern Hemisphere), where most of the people on earth lived, for twenty or thirty thousand years. They had not been exposed to the diseases the Europeans brought with them. Europeans had developed resistance to diseases to which they were almost always exposed. They sometimes died of them, but often survived. But Indians across North and South America died by the millions from smallpox, tuberculosis, measles, typhus, scarlet fever, and influenza in the first centuries after contact with Europeans.

When the English colony of South Carolina was first settled, the Indian population was about ten thousand, according to modern estimates. By 1790, only about three hundred remained. Not all of this amazing reduction was caused by diseases. Some Indians were driven out, some departed on their own, others were sold into slavery to distant places. But it seems that disease was the main reason for the population reduction. In 1699, smallpox all but wiped out the Westo tribe. Governor John Archdale thought “the Hand of God was eminently (notably) seen in Thinning the Indians, to make room for the English”! An epidemic in 1738 killed one-half the Cherokee population and perhaps as large a percentage of Catawba.

## Trade

Trade with the whites was to change the Native American economy drastically. The main items the Indians could trade were animal skins, especially deerskins, which had eager markets in Europe. Remember that Indians had traditionally killed only the animals they needed for food, clothing, and shelter. They used almost every part of the animal. The Native Americans were, in some respects, the first conservationists. They tried to live in harmony with nature and not disrupt the natural world. The lure of European products changed much of that commitment to nature.

Indians began to kill deer by the tens of thousands in order to take their hides, often leaving the meat to spoil. They could *barter* (trade by exchange-



ing goods) the hides to white traders, receiving in return axes, knives, guns, beads, trinkets, iron pots, and blankets and cloth woven on English looms. The new guns and knives made killing and skinning deer even easier, risking depletion of the deer population. Hunters had to range farther and farther from their villages to supply the number of hides that could be sold. The new trade with whites almost completely changed the economy of the villages. The Indians began to think less about mere *subsistence* (enough for survival) and more about obtaining goods and acquiring more wealth. Conflicts over trade caused many wars between Indians and whites and among various tribes.

### Indian Slavery

Many of the white explorers and settlers in South Carolina saw no wrong in capturing Indians and selling them as slaves. Even more common than capturing them was the purchase of slaves from other Indians. They paid for the human beings with English cloth, tools, trinkets, and rum. The Indians captured men and women (and some children) from other tribes with which they were at war. Sometimes they would pick a quarrel with another tribe in order to capture more slaves. Before Europeans came, Indians had made slaves of captives in war, but they were not permanent slaves. Under European influence, both the whites and the Indians made a business of capturing and selling slaves into a lifetime of bondage.

**Above: This lithograph (a type of print) depicts a Cherokee village in the late 1700s. Trade with European settlers caused a drastic change in the economy of Indian villages, as Indians started killing deer for the value of their hides instead of for food.**



Eventually, Indian slave catchers, armed with English weapons, were fanning out over areas far beyond the boundaries of present-day South Carolina, rounding up their victims. The Indian captors could profit greatly from the trade, but nothing like the white traders who bought and then

resold them. Many white Carolinians made fortunes in the Indian slave trade. No other colony made such a major enterprise from this unfortunate business. Indian slaves were sold to buyers in New England and the West Indies, where they brought better prices and were less likely to escape. A few were kept in South Carolina, but not many because of the likelihood of escape.



**Above: The Spanish made use of Indian slaves for forced labor almost from the very beginning of their colonization of America.**

### **Wars after the Europeans Came**

After Europeans came to South Carolina, wars among Indian tribes increased in number and in the amount of destruction. Often the whites encouraged wars among the tribes for their own purposes—for example, to weaken the tribes or to increase the number of Indians captured for slaves. And, of course, there were frequent wars between Indian tribes and white settlers who were taking over their lands. In addition, the guns brought by the Europeans made war much more deadly than wars fought with more primitive weapons. The result was the death of many more Indians in wars than had been the case before the Englishmen came and settled in Carolina.

Disease, slavery, and wars all contributed to the tragic decrease in the Indian population in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And, of course, a part of the population simply chose to leave the area and join tribes elsewhere. The amazing fact is that Indians did survive and continued to live in South Carolina. The influence of their culture still affects the state today, and descendants of the people of that era still maintain useful and valuable aspects of that culture.

#### **DO YOU REMEMBER?**

- 1. Define in sentence form: New World, microbes, Old World.**
- 2. Why was the Native American population in South Carolina reduced to only about three hundred by 1790?**
- 3. How did trading with Europeans change the Native American economy?**



# Of SPECIAL INTEREST

## The Columbian Exchange

**T**he sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed an astounding exchange between the New World of the Americas and the Old World of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The impact of products, plants, animals, and ideas of America on the populations of many parts of the world was dramatic and largely *beneficial* (helpful). The impact of European technology, products, plants, animals, and ideas on the populations of America was also dramatic, but not always as beneficial. Historians call this swapping of products between Europe and the New World the Columbian Exchange.

The Americas contributed to this exchange such items as maize (corn), beans of several sorts, squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, cocoa, tobacco, and turkeys. All these products became important in the Old World, but none as earth-shaking as the potato. We often call it the Irish potato because it became so important to the people of Ireland. Its cultivation spread across Europe and contributed to a doubling of the population of Europe in the eighteenth century. When it spread across Russia to China, it contributed to massive population growth there. In China, potatoes could grow where rice could not, so they complemented each other well and greatly contributed to increased nutrition.

Europeans brought to America from the Old World many animals and plants unknown to the Western Hemisphere. Most of these were to have a beneficial effect on the lives of Indians. Horses had a dramatic effect. Before

contact was made between Europe and the New World, the fastest a North American Indian could travel was as fast as he could run. The only beasts of burden were men and women, and possibly dogs. Horses changed all that. So did oxen, mules, and donkeys, all built for heavy lifting. Horses never became as essential to Indian life in South Carolina as on the Great Plains out west, but still, they were important here.

Pigs were probably more important. They reproduced with amazing speed in the rich, green American environment. And they could grub for an existence almost anywhere without much attention. Cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens all added new dimensions to the Native American diet. Unfortunately, rats also came along for the ride, as did certain microbes that had a devastating effect on Native American populations.

New plants were probably not as important to Indians' diets as the new animals, but plants provided yet more varieties of food. Wheat and rice were the most important. Cabbage, cauliflower, turnips, and lettuce were healthy additions, while onions, radishes, and sugarcane added a bit of excitement to the others. For healthy treats, the new flora from the Old World included grapes, oranges, lemons, melons, and figs.

As examples of technology and new products in the Columbian Exchange, Europeans brought wheeled carts and carriages, windmills, waterwheels, candles, lamps, steel tools, knives, swords—and guns. They also introduced the Native Americans to rum, which was to have very damaging effects on individuals and on Indian society. The story of the contact between Europe, Asia, and Africa and the American continents is filled with mighty triumphs and heartrending tragedies. It can easily be said that the whole world would never be the same again.







## Chapter Summary

The people Christopher Columbus encountered when he landed in the New World at the end of the fifteenth century were descendants of people who had walked to the Americas thousands of years earlier. It is through artifacts found by archaeologists that we know about those early inhabitants. As those native inhabitants moved across the continent over thousands of years, their lives changed gradually until they met the Europeans who were coming to their land in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Indians who lived in South Carolina had a highly developed way of life. Because their society was agricultural, they lived in communities. Religion and a system of justice were important parts of their society. The roles of men and women were well defined, and all contributed to the good of the family and the community in which they lived. Their lives would change dramatically in the sixteenth century because of new diseases and new ideas of trade, wars, and slavery brought by the explorers and settlers.

## Activities for Learning

### Reviewing People, Places, and Things

Define each of the following in a complete sentence.

1. artifact
2. midden
3. agriculture
4. palisade
5. prehistory

6. Green Corn Ceremony
7. nation
8. tribe

### Understanding the Facts

1. How did the development of agriculture allow people to stop their nomadic way of life during the Woodlands Period?
2. Approximately when did the period of prehistory in the Americas end?
3. How did Indians in South Carolina differ from Indians of the Great Plains of North America?
4. Why did Indian villages usually develop near rivers prior to the coming of European settlers?
5. How did sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Indians' view of animals differ from their Paleo Indian ancestors?
6. What role did music and dance have in Native American society?
7. What was the basic unit of social organization in Native American society?
8. What were the important responsibilities of Indian women in their society?
9. What did Christopher Columbus say about the native population he encountered on his first trip to the New World?
10. What was the most dramatic impact of European settlers on the Native American population?

## Developing Critical Thinking Skills

1. Describe what your life would have been like as a Native American in South Carolina in the late 1400s and early 1500s.
2. Explain which parts of childhood you would have enjoyed as an Indian child in South Carolina in the 1500s, and why.

## Writing across the Curriculum

You must keep a diary of your daily activities as a young Indian in the late Mississippian Period in the New World. Select a specific date and write your diary entry for that particular day from the viewpoint of either a male or a female.

## Exploring Technology

Go to the website [www.sciway.net/hist/indians/tribes.html](http://www.sciway.net/hist/indians/tribes.html) to find information about the Catawba, Cherokee, and Yemassee Indians of South Carolina. In chart form, list the similarities and differences in food, clothing, dwellings, and beliefs of these three Indian tribes.

## Applying Your Skills

1. Do some research to find out what can be learned about the Indians who lived in South Carolina centuries ago from their mounds that have been discovered during the last century. Write a short description of your findings.
2. How many different museums can you find in South Carolina that have information about Indian tribes that inhabited the state over the last five centuries? Name them.

## Building Skills: Understanding Timelines

It can be overwhelming at times when you try to keep track of all the events that you read about in history. Timelines are a valuable study tool to help you remember important historical events. You may be surprised how much you can figure out about history if you know the order in which events occurred. A timeline cannot include everything that happened because that would defeat the purpose of the timeline as a study tool. Usually, only the most important events are shown on a timeline; they will give you reference points for other events that occurred during the same time period.

Your history textbook uses timelines at the beginning of most of the chapters to give you the time frame covered by the specific chapter. Events above the timeline occurred in South Carolina. Events below the timeline occurred in the rest of the world. (In Chapter 3 only, the events above the timeline occurred in North America, and the events below the timeline occurred in the rest of the world.) This should help you tie together events that affected the world during a particular age.

Here is an exercise for you to do: Make a timeline of your life. Begin with the year of your birth and include the major events of your own life up to the present as well as the major historical events that have occurred during your life thus far.