

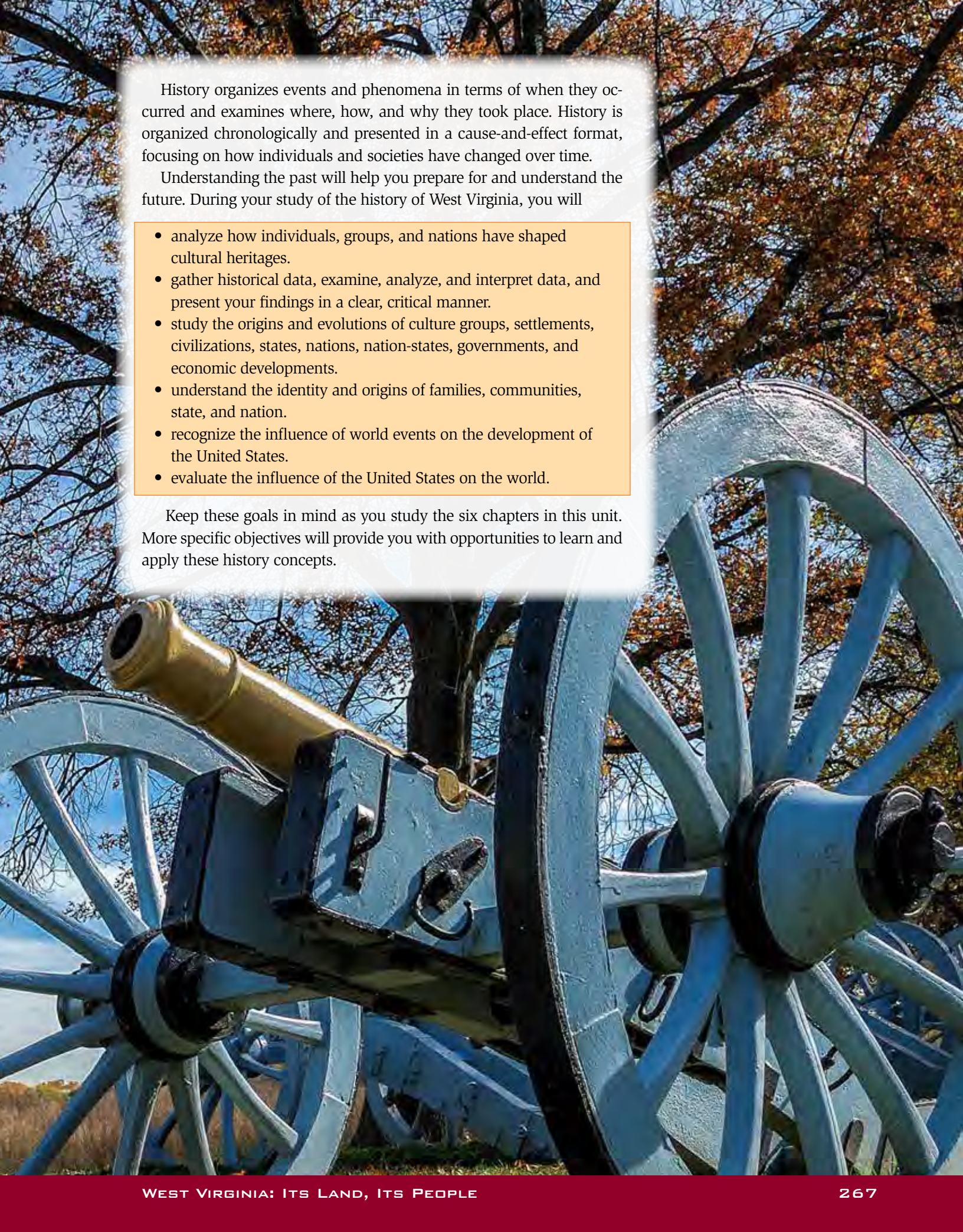
UNIT 4

What Is Western Virginia's Early History?

Until June 20, 1863, West Virginia's history was actually part of Virginia's history. But even before there was a Virginia, the primeval forests of the land that became West Virginia were populated by prehistoric as well as historic Indian cultures. Later, European explorers, searching for water routes to Asia, visited and mapped the region. These explorers were followed by settlers of different nationalities who created permanent towns and communities.

Conflicts between Native Americans and French and English settlers over ownership of the land in the area west of the Appalachian Mountains resulted in the French and Indian War. British policies after that war contributed to a larger, world-changing event—the American Revolution. After the United States gained its independence from Great Britain and Virginia became one of the original thirteen states, Virginians found themselves facing the same issues that faced the new republic.

Events in Virginia paralleled what was happening nationally. Although there was much unity in the nation, there were also growing differences as **sectionalism** (putting one's section of the country ahead of the nation as a whole) caused political and social division. As the nation pulled apart, eastern and western Virginia pulled apart. When the Civil War erupted, the State of Virginia decided to cast its lot with its sister states of the Deep South. This action led western Virginians to realize that the time had come to make a statement about their future as well. It was during the Civil War that the history of western Virginia ended and the history of West Virginia began.



History organizes events and phenomena in terms of when they occurred and examines where, how, and why they took place. History is organized chronologically and presented in a cause-and-effect format, focusing on how individuals and societies have changed over time.

Understanding the past will help you prepare for and understand the future. During your study of the history of West Virginia, you will

- analyze how individuals, groups, and nations have shaped cultural heritages.
- gather historical data, examine, analyze, and interpret data, and present your findings in a clear, critical manner.
- study the origins and evolutions of culture groups, settlements, civilizations, states, nations, nation-states, governments, and economic developments.
- understand the identity and origins of families, communities, state, and nation.
- recognize the influence of world events on the development of the United States.
- evaluate the influence of the United States on the world.

Keep these goals in mind as you study the six chapters in this unit. More specific objectives will provide you with opportunities to learn and apply these history concepts.

CHAPTER 7

Western Virginia's First People

CHAPTER PREVIEW

TERMS

sectionalism, prehistoric, archaeologist, anthropologist, geologist, nomad, atlatl, tribe, clan, matrilineal, migration, famine, immunity

PEOPLE

Paleo Indians, Archaic Indians, Woodland Indians, Adena culture, Hopewell culture, Shawnee, Cherokee, Delaware, Mingo

PLACES

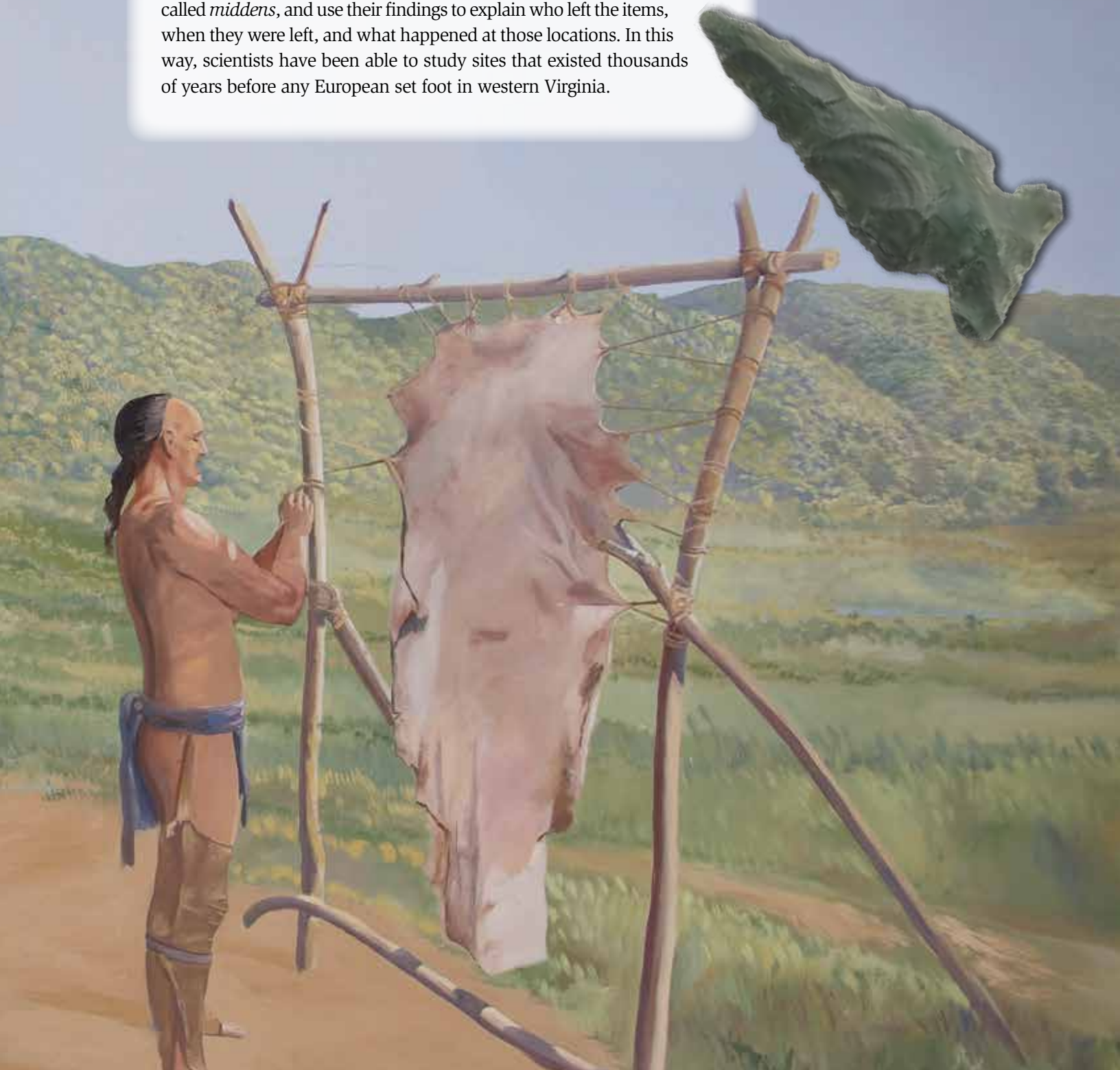
Bering Strait, Grave Creek Mound, Creil Mound, Mount Carbon, Ben's Run



The first people to visit what is now West Virginia were **prehistoric** cultures (people or cultures who lived before written records). Although we do not have written records describing how the earliest people lived, we have learned many things about their lives from the clues they left behind. **Archaeologists** (scientists who study the items left behind by ancient peoples) have interpreted clues found where groups of people prepared food, made tools, built shelters, and conducted ceremonies. Archaeologists dig through ancient garbage dumps, called *middens*, and use their findings to explain who left the items, when they were left, and what happened at those locations. In this way, scientists have been able to study sites that existed thousands of years before any European set foot in western Virginia.

Below: Indian arrowhead.

Background: Point Pleasant mural showing early Indian culture.





SIGNS of the TIMES

GEOGRAPHY

Long ago, Ohio Valley streams flowed into the Great Lakes basin. In Wetzel County, near Locust Roadside Park, ice from glaciers once blocked the path followed by the streams, causing a lake to form. Eventually the Ohio River broke through the highlands and found an outlet to the Gulf of Mexico.

HISTORY

It is estimated that the Grave Creek Mound, located in Marshall County, contained 57,000 tons of soil. Assuming that one basketload of soil contained one cubic foot of earth, the Adena built Grave Creek Mound by carrying about 1.2 million basketloads of soil to the site. It is believed the mound was built in successive stages, over a period of 100 or more years.

GOVERNMENT

Many Native American tribes had two chiefs—one for war and one for peace. Native American villages were often ruled by a headman, assisted by a righthand man, a messenger, and a chief of sacrifice. The village headman and other elders made up a council that advised the tribal chief. Many tribes had a law of retaliation that allowed a person or group to strike back or get even. This law was used to prevent feuds and preserve the peace.

ECONOMICS

Native Americans used a barter system in which they exchanged goods and services without the use of money. Items for trade included beaver furs, canoes, deer skins, corn kernels, arrowheads, beads, and other items considered valuable by the trader.

EVERYDAY LIVING

Literature: Songs and stories were handed down from one generation to another.

Art: Intricate ceremonial jewelry, statues, especially of a spiritual nature, cave drawings.

Music: Drums, chants, songs, and dances.

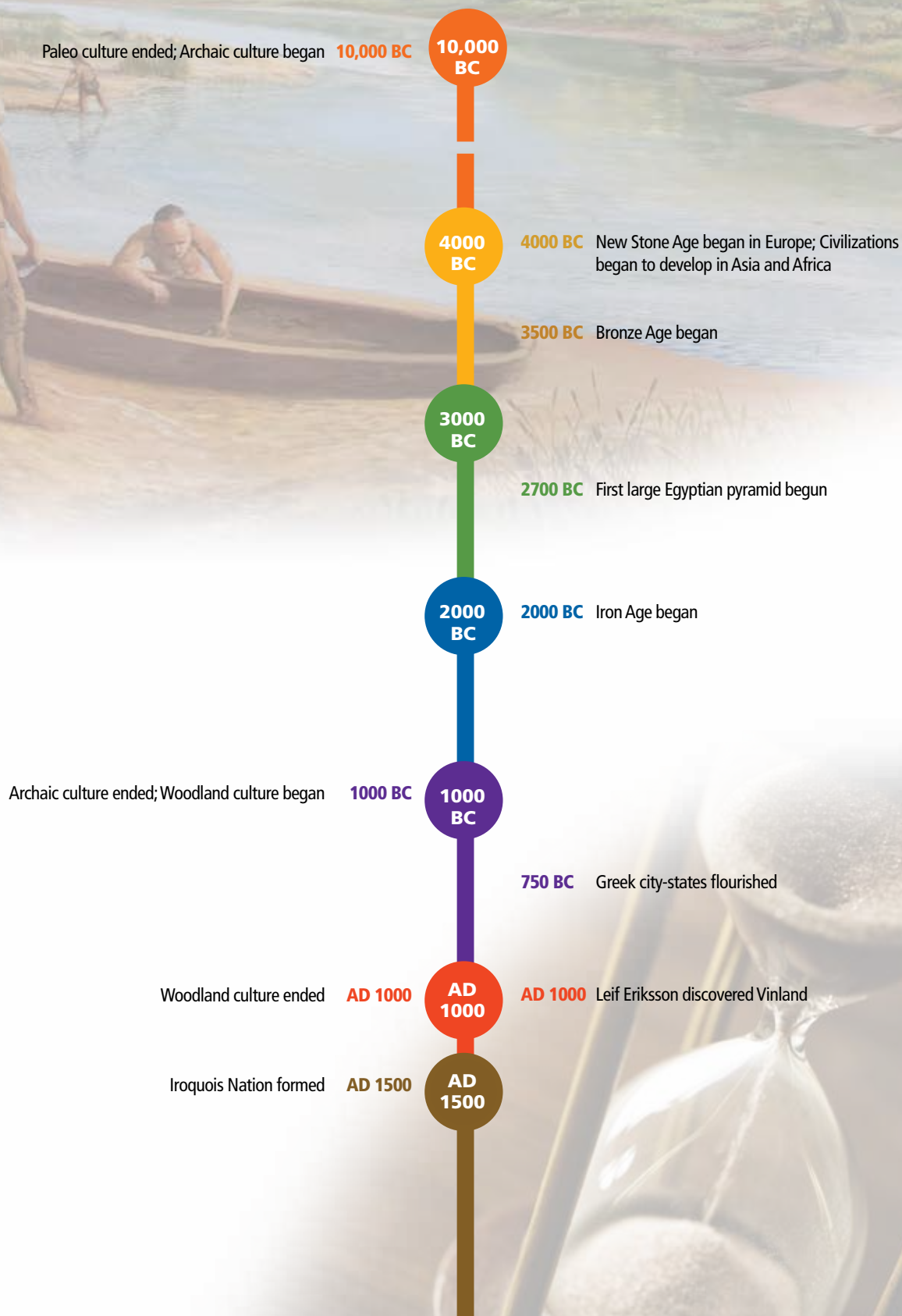
Fashion: Ranged from simple animal skin coverings to intricately beaded hand-sewn garments and headdresses made from softened animal skins.

Life Expectancy: 25 years of age for males; slightly higher for females.



Figure 7.1

Timeline: 10,000 BC - AD 1500



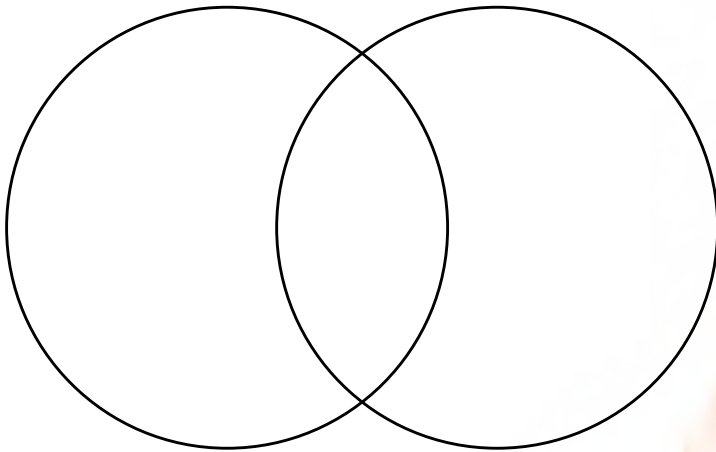
Comparing and Contrasting

DEFINING THE SKILL

Comparing and contrasting is a reading strategy that enables you to identify similarities or differences between two or more events, people, places, or periods of time. When comparing or contrasting, writers often describe one event, person, place, or thing and then write about a second similar or different event, person, place, or thing. Sometimes, however, you might see words like *and*, *same as*, *as well as*, *not only... but also*, *like*, *also*, *both* and *at the same time* used to describe two things that are similar. When contrasting two or more items, authors may use words like *however*, *on the other hand*, *but*, *on the contrary*, *in contrast*, *as opposed to* and *different from*.

PRACTICING THE SKILL

After reading Section 1, make a list of the characteristics of the prehistoric Indian cultures found in western Virginia. After reading Section 2, make a similar list of characteristics of historic Indians. Then, draw a Venn diagram like the one shown here. Label the circle on the left "Prehistoric Cultures" and the circle on the right "Historic Cultures." Label the area where the circles intersect "Similarities." Record the information you gathered from reading the two sections in the appropriate sectors.



SECTION 1

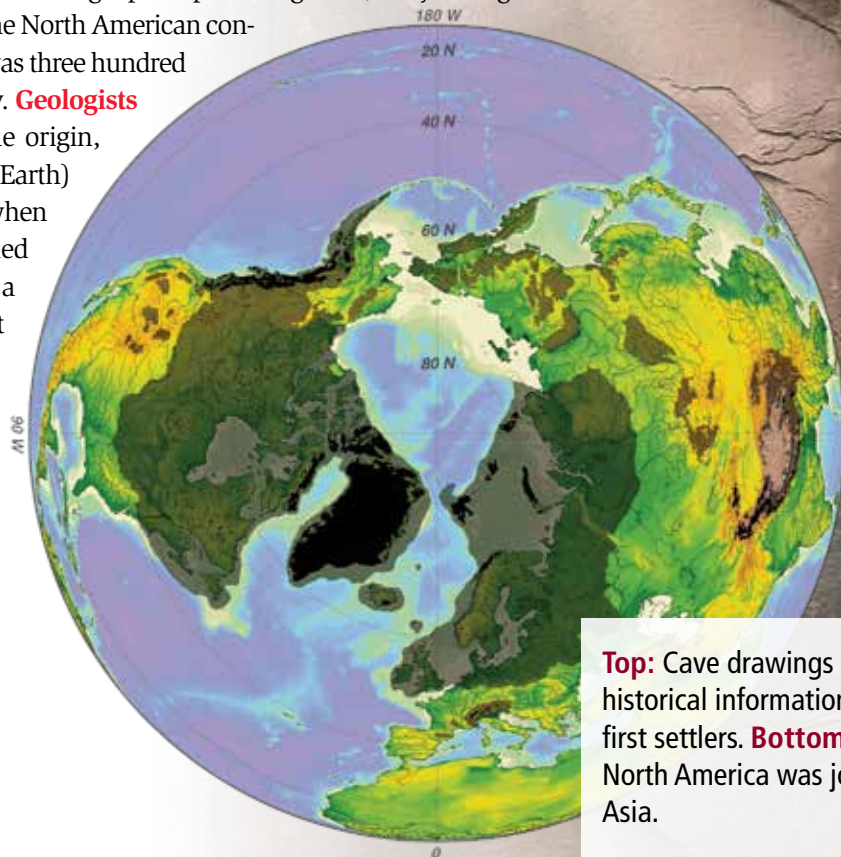
Prehistoric Cultures

As you read, look for

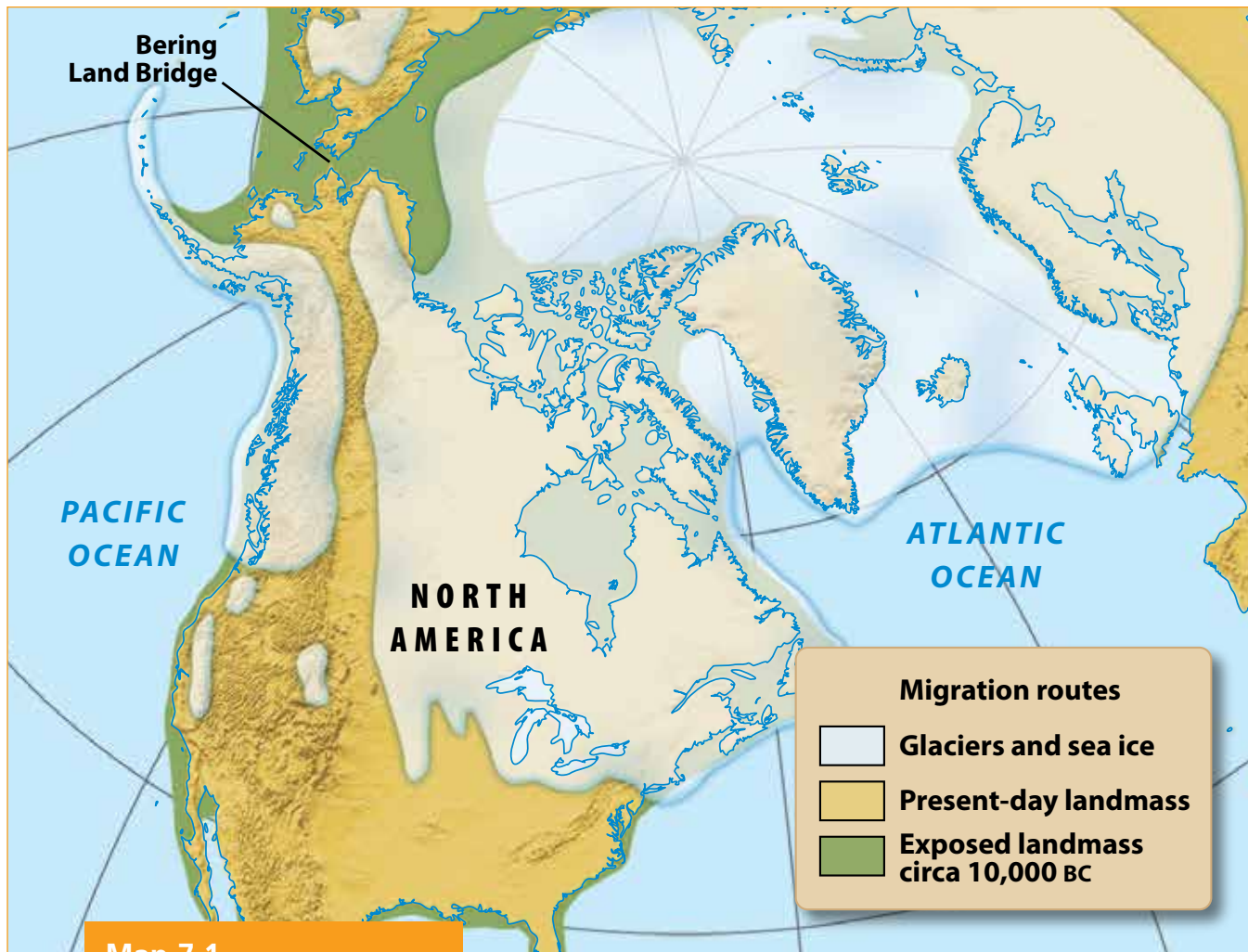
- theories about how the first inhabitants came to North America;
- methods used by archaeologists to interpret clues from the past;
- characteristics of the Paleo, Archaic, and Woodland cultures;
- locations of ancient mounds and walls in West Virginia;
- terms: **anthropologist**, **geologist**, **nomad**, **atlatl**.

No one knows for certain when or from where the earliest people came to the area that became western Virginia. We do know, however, that when they came it was much colder than it is today. Winters lasted longer, and temperatures dropped a lot lower. Much of the land was covered by spruce and fir trees.

The most commonly accepted theory of how people arrived in North America is that they came across a land bridge from Asia. **Anthropologists** (scientists who study artifacts, cave drawings, and oral history to learn about the culture of a group) have concluded that these people came in small groups during the last Ice Age—perhaps as long as 20,000 years ago. Glaciers covered part of the North American continent, and the sea level was three hundred feet lower than it is today. **Geologists** (scientists who study the origin, history, and structure of Earth) believe there was a time when North America was joined to northeastern Asia by a strip of land along what is now the Bering Strait. As a result, **nomads** (wanderers) might have traveled along this land bridge in search of animal and plant life.



Top: Cave drawings provide some historical information about the first settlers. **Bottom:** At one time, North America was joined with Asia.



Map 7.1

Bering Land Bridge

Map Skill: What two continents were connected by the Bering land bridge?

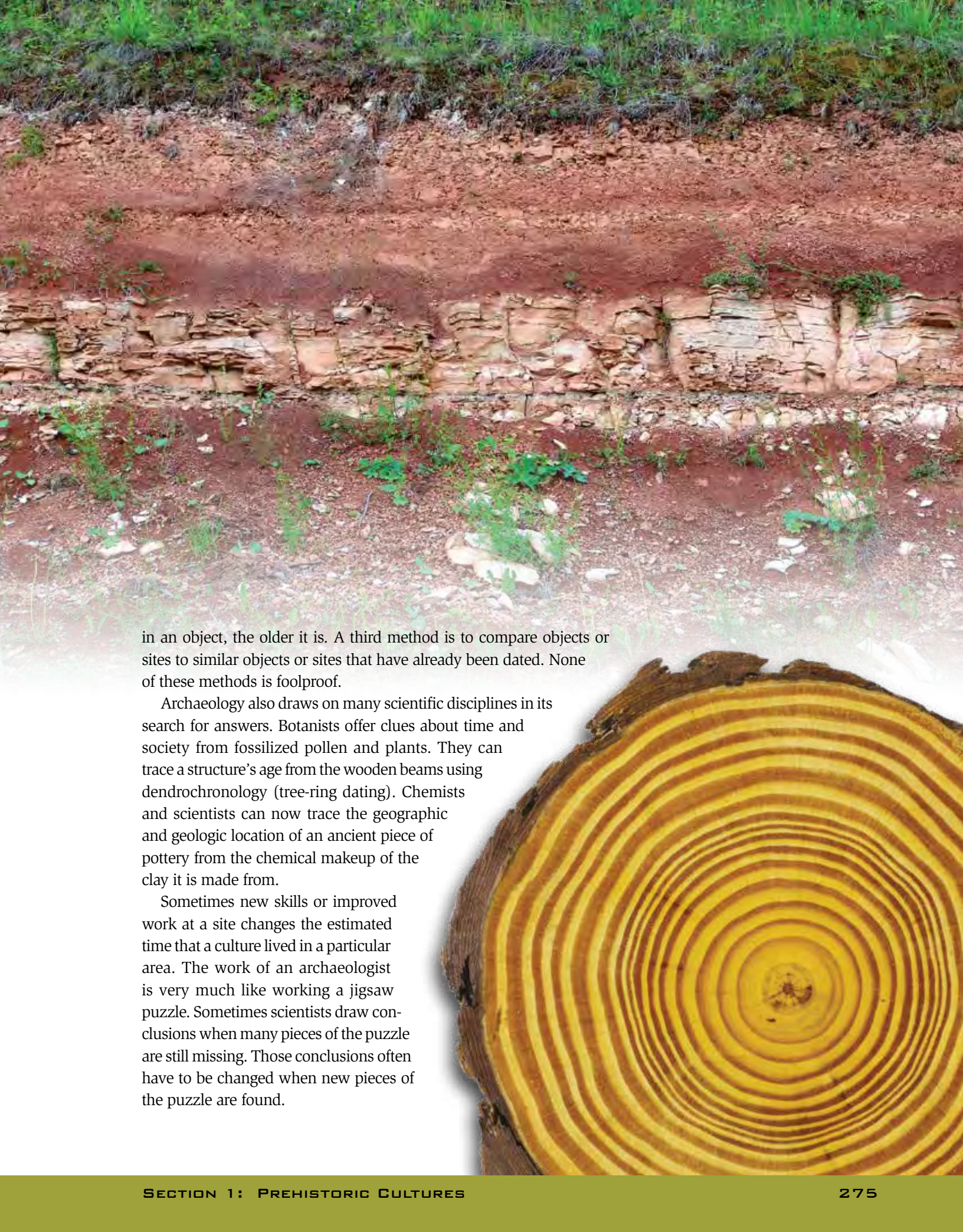
When the planet began to warm, the glaciers melted. The oceans began to rise and covered the land bridge. During this time, some of the nomads returned to Asia, while others moved farther south. Some archaeologists believe descendants of these early people eventually spread throughout North America, perhaps finding their way into what became western Virginia.

Dating Prehistoric Cultures

Archaeologists have used several methods to guess when a prehistoric people lived. One method identifies time periods based on how deep in the ground artifacts are found. In heavily populated areas of Asia, cities were actually built on top of older cities. Observing the layer of soil in which a certain city was established helps archaeologists determine its age. The color of the soil can also help to identify periods of time or activities that might have taken place at a particular site. Depth is not always accurate, however, since a site may be damaged or changed by a plow or even an animal digging in the earth. A second method measures certain trace elements, such as carbon-14, which are known to break down at a certain rate over a period of time. Generally speaking, the less carbon-14

Opposite Page, Top: Layers in the soil help archaeologists determine historical activity.

Opposite Page, Bottom: Rings in a tree show how old it is.



in an object, the older it is. A third method is to compare objects or sites to similar objects or sites that have already been dated. None of these methods is foolproof.

Archaeology also draws on many scientific disciplines in its search for answers. Botanists offer clues about time and society from fossilized pollen and plants. They can trace a structure's age from the wooden beams using dendrochronology (tree-ring dating). Chemists and scientists can now trace the geographic and geologic location of an ancient piece of pottery from the chemical makeup of the clay it is made from.

Sometimes new skills or improved work at a site changes the estimated time that a culture lived in a particular area. The work of an archaeologist is very much like working a jigsaw puzzle. Sometimes scientists draw conclusions when many pieces of the puzzle are still missing. Those conclusions often have to be changed when new pieces of the puzzle are found.

Below: Using stone-tipped weapons, Paleo Indians killed mammoths and other large animals. These large, hairy elephants were native to the New World until about 6000 BC.

Because of new technology, archaeologists have recently offered different theories about how early people arrived in North America. Those new theories are based on more accurate ways to test clues that are thousands of years old. Some of these studies, which include DNA testing of human remains, indicate that the earliest people were actually in North America about 1,000 years before those who crossed the land bridge. These people may have come by boat traveling along the west coast of North America.

Because of the artifacts that have been found, archaeologists have divided western Virginia's prehistory into three periods of time—Paleo, Archaic, and Woodland. The Woodland period is further divided into early, middle, and late periods. The periods are distinguished by changes in movement, weapons and tools, food, and religious practices. These changes happened very gradually, and these periods are considered useful ways to organize time.

Figure 7.2

Prehistoric Cultures

The Paleo Period

The earliest primitive hunters belong to the Paleo culture. The word *paleo* actually means “very old”; therefore, it might be said that these peoples were old hunters. They lived between 20,000 and 10,000 BC, although some scientists say they may still have lived here around 5000 BC.

CULTURE	TIME PERIOD
Paleo	20,000 BC – 10,000 BC
Archaic	10,000 BC – 1000 BC
Woodland	1000 BC – AD 1000



It is believed that some of these people lived in small family units. Others were nomads who followed the large animals, like mastodons and mammoths, that they depended upon for food and clothing. Since they had little more than spears for weapons, they had to get close to their prey. Some may have disguised themselves under animal skins, or they may have driven the animals into natural traps or stampeded them over cliffs.

One of the few artifacts of these prehistoric people is the spear point they used. The Clovis point could kill a large animal or cause a severe wound. The spear point was made by chipping away at or applying pressure to the stone to create a rough fluted (ruffled) edge. It took hours of very careful work to make a spear point. Too much pressure or striking could crack or break the stone, which meant that the craftsman had to start over. The making of spear points is known as *flint knapping* and requires great skill even today.

The existence of the Paleo culture in western Virginia has been confirmed through the discovery of stone weapons in the Kanawha and Ohio Valleys, at Peck's Run in Upshur County, and on Blennerhassett Island in Wood County. A great number of artifacts have been found between St. Marys in Pleasants County and Parkersburg in Wood County. We know little about the daily life of the Paleo culture, however, because archaeologists have been unable to excavate any of the sites in present-day West Virginia that date from that time period.

The Archaic Period

When warmer weather returned about 10,000 years ago, people formed foraging communities to help one another hunt game and gather nuts and berries from the forest. The foragers moved from place to place according to the season. As hickory nuts, black walnuts, and oak acorns became more plentiful, people grew healthier. Their flint tools became more complex. Scrapers made from sharp flint could take the fur off a bear or deer skin and provide clothing. Elongated river rocks were made into the first hammers, some of which were used to open the hard shells of the nuts.

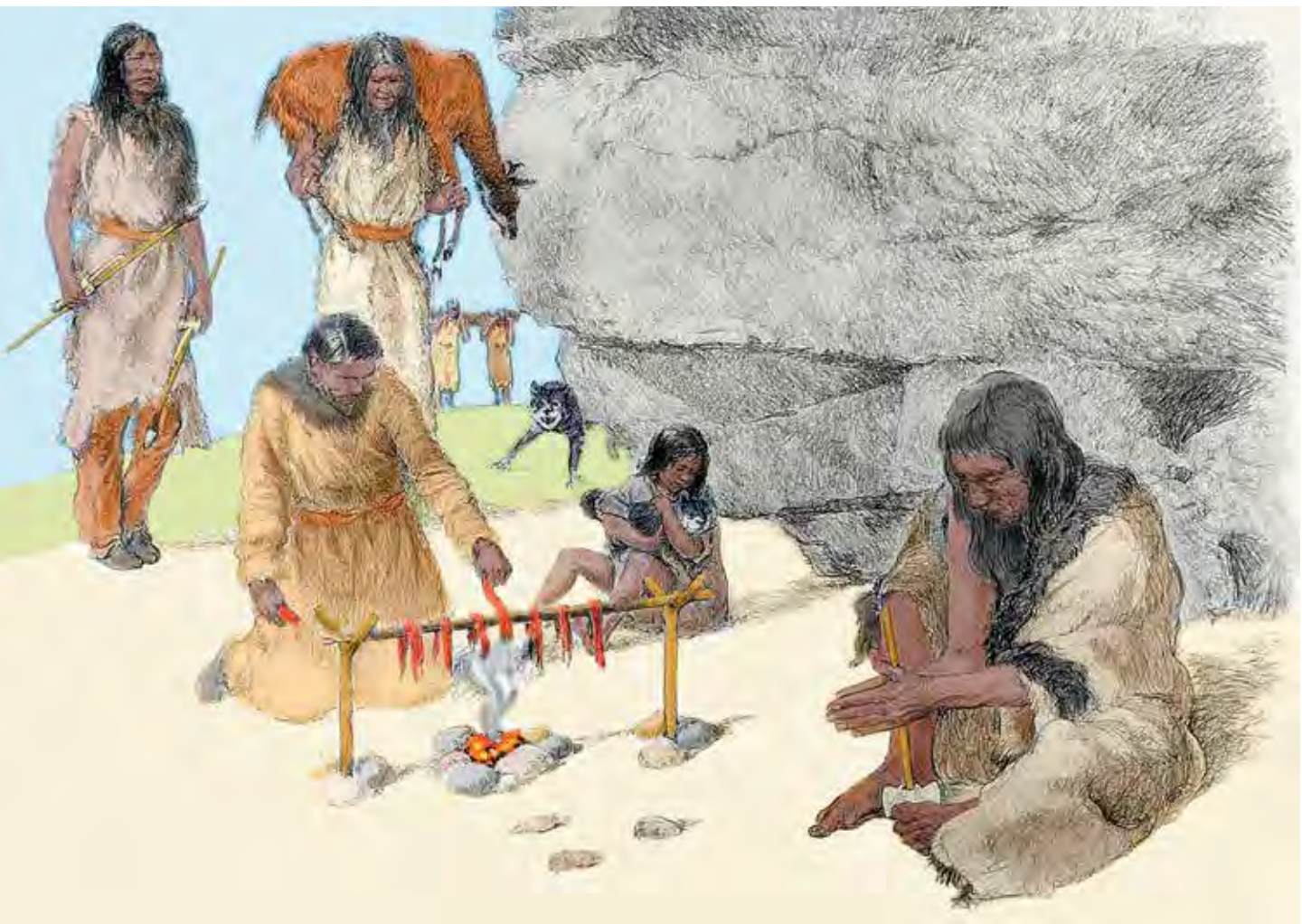
As smaller animals appeared, hunters had to change their methods of hunting. They began to make a finer spear point—the Folsom point—which was much smaller and more fluted. It had a flat center section that could be easily attached to a shaft. Hunters learned that they could fling their spears a longer distance if they used a “launcher.” The **atlatl** was a carved stick that had a base at right angles to the shaft. The hunter could set a spear on the atlatl and then fling the spear forward with more force and speed. Hunting improved. In fact, for the first time, smaller groups of people could provide food for a larger number of people. It was no longer

something extra!

The early spear points are named “Clovis” after the Clovis, New Mexico, archaeological site where the points were first identified.



Top: Spear points were formed from stone. **Above:** An atlatl was used to launch spears for more effective hunting.



Above: This campsite was typical of the Archaic people who relied on gathering natural food and hunting smaller animals after the large game died out. An Archaic site within the city of St. Albans in Kanawha County has provided much insight into the early Archaic period.

necessary to use a lot of people to corner the prey before killing it. Once again, life improved, diet became better, and the population increased.

The Archaic Indians also wove nets from plant fibers and used them to snare small animals and to carry household goods. They wove strings from plant roots to use with stone hooks for fishing or hanging food. The women shaped shallow basins or bowls out of sandstone or rock. They placed seeds, nuts, berries, and grains in the bowls and pounded them with a rock to crack the grains for cooking or to make flour. Grains and flours were stored in baskets made from reeds and plants. The women used long rocks in bowls to grind meat, nuts, and grease together. This mixture, called pemmican, was a long-lasting and nourishing food.

Because of the change in their lifestyle, the Archaic Indians settled in one place longer than the Paleo Indians. They sometimes built huts or took shelter in natural caves or bluffs along rivers and creeks. A site in Brooke County contained a large number of freshwater clamshells, indicating the Indians probably ate freshwater clams from the nearby Ohio River. Other artifacts have been found at Globe Hill in Hancock County, Buffalo in Putnam County, and St. Albans in Kanawha County. Some historians believe that the St. Albans site, perhaps dating back 8,000 years, may actually have been the first permanent settlement in western Virginia.

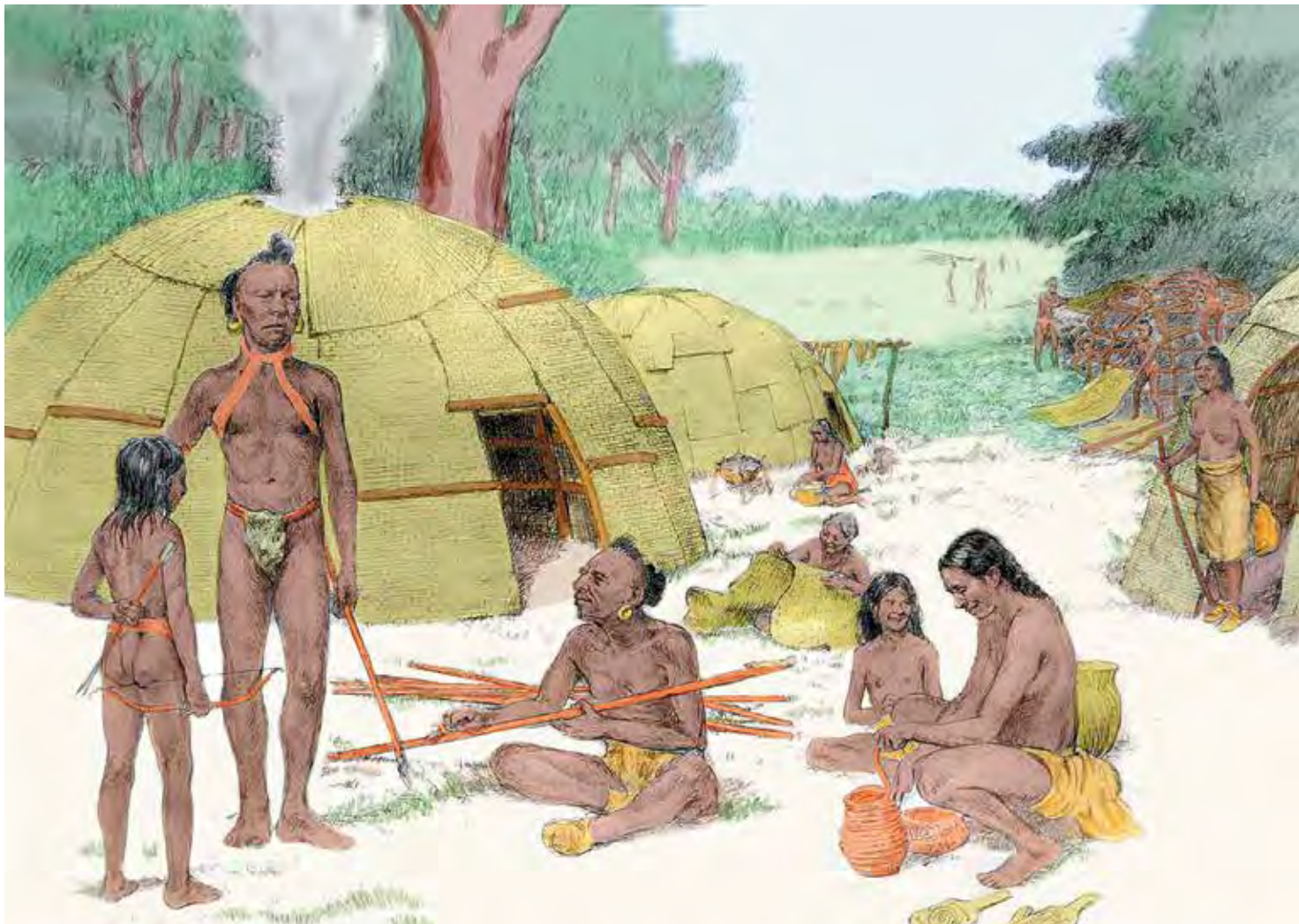
The Woodland Period

Although some artifacts indicate that Paleo and Archaic Indians lived at least for a time in western Virginia, the earliest cultures about which much information exists are the Adena and the Hopewell. Anthropologists have assigned them these names since no one knows what they called themselves. Both are considered Woodland cultures—the Adena from the early period and the Hopewell from the middle era. Both are believed to be the ancestors of the later Eastern Woodland Indians. It appears that they began migrating into the area around 1000 BC and stayed until about AD 1000.

Although the Adena and Hopewell cultures are believed to have lived at different times, the two cultures were quite similar. Both Adena and Hopewell cultures were hunters and gatherers. There is some evidence to suggest that the Adena may have experimented with agriculture (farming), perhaps growing and harvesting sunflowers for their seeds. Corn may have been introduced by the Hopewell during the Middle Woodland period.

During the Woodland period, Native Americans developed highly organized societies. The most lasting remains of these prehistoric inhabitants are the many mounds and walls that they built. The earthen works

Below: The expansion of farming allowed more stable settlements and free time for the Woodland peoples.



Bottom: The Criel Mound was probably built the same time as the Grave Creek Mound.

range from small knolls to large mounds. As time passed, some of these constructions became difficult to recognize. Covered with trees and other vegetation, the smaller ones were even mistaken for natural elevations.

Burial Mounds

Mounds existed in many parts of the United States, supporting the idea that these cultures were widespread. The majority of the identified mounds in West Virginia are located in the Ohio, Kanawha, and Potomac River Valleys. The Grave Creek Mound, located in Marshall County, is the largest conical mound in the United States. The burial chamber, probably built between 250 and 150 BC during the late Adena period, was 295 feet at the base, 69 feet high, and 60 feet across its flat top. Some 60,000 tons of dirt had to be moved to build it. There was also a moat, 40 feet wide and 5 feet deep, encircling the mound.

Joseph Tomlinson first discovered the Grave Creek Mound in 1770, but it was not disturbed until 1838 when Jesse Tomlinson and Thomas Biggs decided to explore its contents. Digging from the side of the mound, the two men discovered a burial chamber near the center. The chamber contained two skeletons—a male and a female. The male was buried with an atlatl, and shell beads surrounded both individuals. A second burial chamber, believed to have been built 25 to 30 years after the first one, was discovered more than 30 feet above the lower chamber. This area contained one skeleton adorned with copper bracelets. Shells and mica were scattered throughout the tomb.

In 1909, the State of West Virginia gained possession of the mound and put it under the care of the inmates from the Moundsville Penitentiary, which was located nearby. Today the mound is part of the Grave Creek

something extra!



Explorers of the Grave Creek Mound also discovered a small stone tablet with unfamiliar markings, referred to as the "Grave Creek Inscribed Stone." Officials who examined the stone suspected it was not an Adena artifact, but rather a hoax.



Mound Historic Site, one of two National Historic Landmark archaeological sites in West Virginia. The Delf Norona Museum, which houses artifacts and exhibits that interpret the lifestyle of the Adena culture, is adjacent to the mound. In 2008, a state-of-the-art facility to house and study ancient remains was opened at Grave Creek Mound.

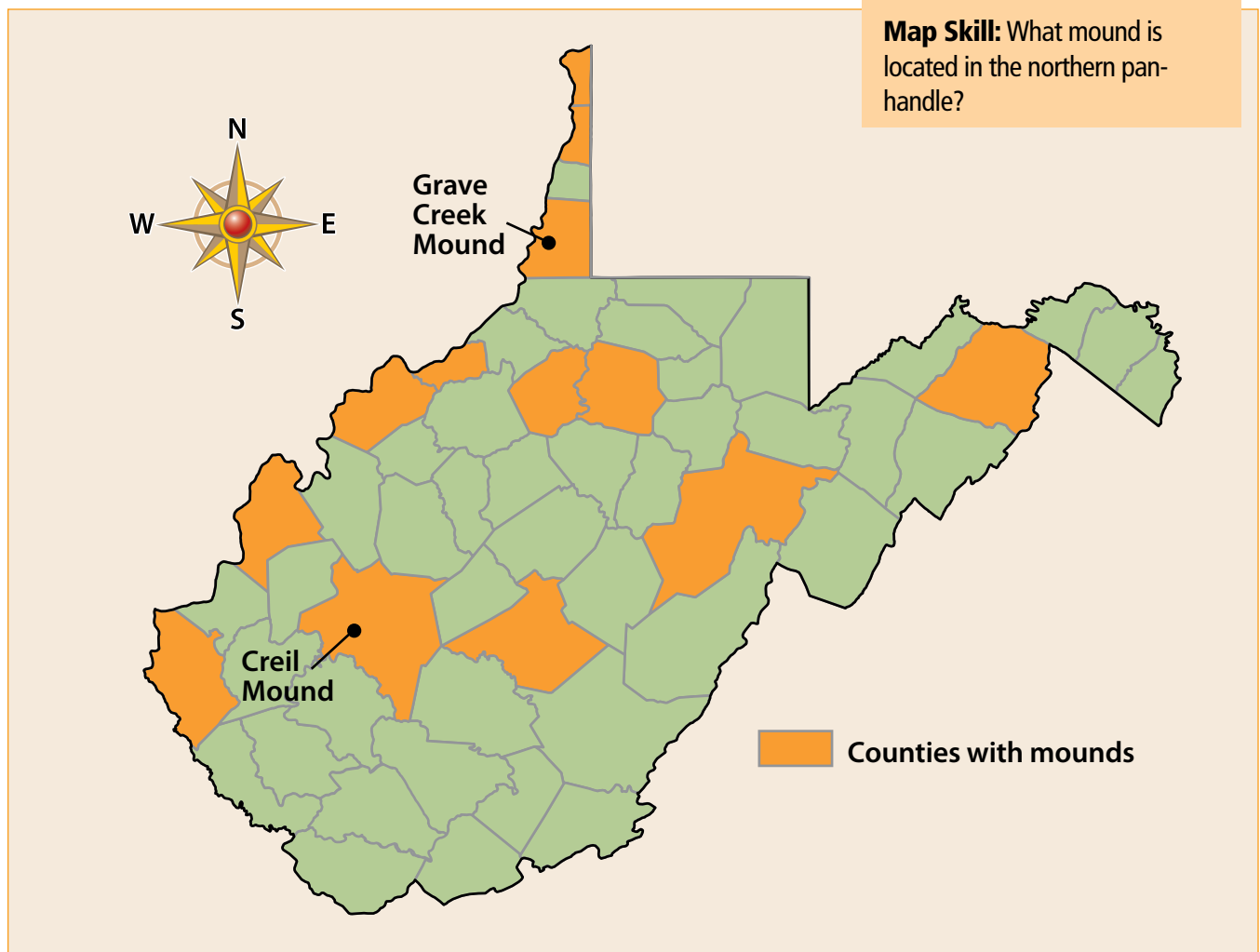
The second-largest mound in West Virginia is the Creil Mound, found in South Charleston in Kanawha County. The mound was probably built about the same time as the Grave Creek Mound, between 250 and 150 BC. It may have been a burial ground for a village that may have existed as late as 1650. It was excavated in 1883-1884 under the direction of Colonel P. W. Norris of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, DC. The mound, originally 175 feet at the base and 35 feet high, was probably rounded at the top.

After carefully cutting into the top of the mound, archaeologists dug down 3-4 feet and found human remains. Artifacts found with these remains were not from the Adena people. The artifacts are believed to have come from people who lived during a later period of time. Excavators continued to dig; at 31 feet below the top of the mound, they found the original burial chamber. This chamber contained the remains of eleven individuals who are believed to be from the Archaic Period.

Map 7.2

West Virginia's Mound Sites

Map Skill: What mound is located in the northern panhandle?





Above: This rolled copper necklace from the Middle Adena period was found at the Grave Creek Mound site in Moundsville.

Ten of the individuals surrounded the eleventh, who was found with the copper remains of a headdress. There were rumors that one of the eleven bodies was that of a seven-foot “giant,” but reports filed by the archaeologists who excavated the mound do not support that theory.

Because these ancient cultures left no written records, archaeologists and anthropologists have pieced together a picture of what they might have been like, based on the artifacts found in the mounds. In order to construct the mounds with accuracy, the mound-builders needed some knowledge of mathematics and measurement. Because they buried their dead in vaults to preserve their bodies, these peoples must have believed in some type of afterlife. The jewelry that was found is the work of skilled artisans who knew how to mold copper metal. The moundbuilders apparently traveled or traded for the shells and mica used in some of their jewelry. There is some evidence to indicate their society was based on a class system and that they had some sort of organized government. The placement of the bodies in the Creil Mound has led anthropologists

to believe that the tall, central figure was an important person and those surrounding him were figures of lesser status. The amount of jewelry on the central figure suggests that he was a chief, which supports the theory of a structured government.

Mounds appear to have been important to both the Adena and the Hopewell, although the Hopewell seem to have practiced simpler burial methods. The largest Hopewell mound east of the Ohio River, dating from AD 500-1000 during the Middle Woodland period, is located at Romney’s Indian Mound Cemetery.

Additional mounds have been discovered in Brooke, Doddridge, Hampshire, Hancock, Harrison, Mason, Nicholas, Pleasants, Randolph, Wayne, and Wood counties. Most of the mounds were built of earth, but some were made of rock. A few were both rock and earth. Although most appear to have been constructed for burial purposes, others may have been used as temples to worship the sun.

Other Archaeological Sites

West Virginia has other archaeological structures in addition to the mounds. High up on Mount Carbon in Fayette County lie the remains of several long walls. It is difficult to see them because they are in ruins, partially destroyed by the surface mining that was done in the area. Originally, there were six walls running between two creeks south of the Kanawha River. The walls appear to have been about 6 feet high and about as wide as they were high; they may have been as much as 10 miles long. Two theories exist about the purpose of the walls. The first states

Buffalo Village: The Discovery of an Early People

In the late 1600s and perhaps early 1700s, a group of Native Americans lived in what is now Putnam County, south of Buffalo. The Buffalo Indian Village, along the Kanawha River, was one of the largest known Indian settlements in western Virginia. Today, the land that once was Buffalo Village is a cornfield, owned by American Electric Power, which operates the John Amos Power Plant. A new bridge, designed to carry increased traffic to and from a busy Toyota plant, was built in the area, near the cornfield.

There has been much speculation about the peoples who lived in the village. Some believe they were Shawnee; others think they were from a Siouan-speaking group. Many Native American traditionalists say that the village's people were likely made up of people from many different groups, including Cherokee, Shawnee, and Sioux. They base this theory on traditional oral history references to several multitribal villages that existed at that time in western Virginia.

In 1963-1964, a state archaeologist excavated the Buffalo Village site, which at that time was owned by Union Carbide. Based on archaeological findings, the Buffalo Village is believed to have included a palisade, perhaps a half-mile in circumference, to protect the inhabitants from intruders. Inside the protective wall, the people lived in longhouses with thatched roofs around a central plaza. The Native Americans fished and gathered shellfish from the nearby river. The artifacts that were found included arrowheads, pendants, pieces of pottery, bone fragments, and more than five hundred skeletons. All of the artifacts were shipped to a number of universities in West Virginia and Ohio; they were almost discarded until a professor at the Ohio State University collected them and stacked them along the walls of his laboratory.

In 1990, a federal law, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), gave recognized tribes the right to reclaim remains and artifacts from museums and universities. The Buffalo remains are "culturally indefinable"; that is, they cannot be linked to any modern-day tribe. As a result, the law does not apply to them.

Over the last decade, some people have suggested that the remains of the people from Buffalo Village should be returned and reburied on their land. In March 2008, the Ohio State University transferred the legal control of the skeletal remains of about six hundred Buffalo people to the Putnam County Commission, which favors reburying the ancient people. Some archaeologists say that reburial would end any chance of future scientific discoveries about the Buffalo people.

In 2009, the remains of the Buffalo people were taken to Grave Creek Mound's new archaeology collection facility. The 9,600-square-foot addition provides state-of-the-art storage and laboratory areas that are attracting scientists from around the world. Current technology will allow much more to be learned about these people than the limited resources of the 1960s.



Below: Rock walls, built by the Adena or Hopewell cultures, provide more information on prehistoric people in what is today West Virginia.

they were for defense; the second suggests they were sacred areas used in worship. Whatever their purpose, it took organization, patience, and hard work to build them. The same type of wall has been discovered within a 20-mile radius of Mount Carbon. All of these walls have been reduced to piles of stone and are difficult to recognize. However, archaeologists believe those built in Kanawha and Raleigh Counties were constructed by the Adena or Hopewell culture.

Another set of walls exists at Ben’s Run in Tyler County near the Pleasants County border and the Ohio River. Two concentric walls (having the same center) about 120 feet apart enclose about 400 acres. Inside the walls are two small mounds. South of these structures are two more curved walls, which are about 300 feet apart and parallel to the outer walls. In the same area are ancient burial grounds, temples, and roadways. The organization of the structures has led anthropologists to believe the people who built them were sun worshippers.

Reviewing the Section

Reviewing the Content

1. How are an archaeologist, a geologist, and an anthropologist different?

2. What is the most widely accepted theory of how the first inhabitants reached North America?

3. What are some characteristics of the Adena and Hopewell cultures?

Using the Content

1. It has been reported that West Virginia’s archaeological sites have been damaged by surface mining and erosion. What can be done to protect these historic sites?

2. Make a list of things that are found around your house that archaeologists thousands of years from now might classify as artifacts. What could those things tell future generations about life during the present time?

Extending the Literacy Skill

Copy the following chart onto a separate sheet of paper. Use the chart to describe the differences among the Paleo, Archaic, and Early Woodland cultures. Then summarize how the three cultures were different.

Paleo Culture	Archaic Culture	Early Woodland Culture

Focus on Technology

LEARNING SKILL: COLLABORATION, EVALUATION

Work with a partner to gather information from several sources on a specific topic. Evaluate each source for its appropriateness and validity.

TECHNOLOGY TOOL: SEARCH ENGINE, BOOKMARKING

Use search engines and bookmarking features to locate and save websites from which to gather information to complete the assignment that follows.

Descriptions of events found on the Internet may contain conflicting information, depending on the website. Use a search engine to find several descriptions of the excavation of the Creil Mound. Make a list of at least fifteen “facts” that are the same in the articles you read. Make a second list of any “facts” that are different. Evaluate the validity and usefulness of the websites you found.



SECTION 2

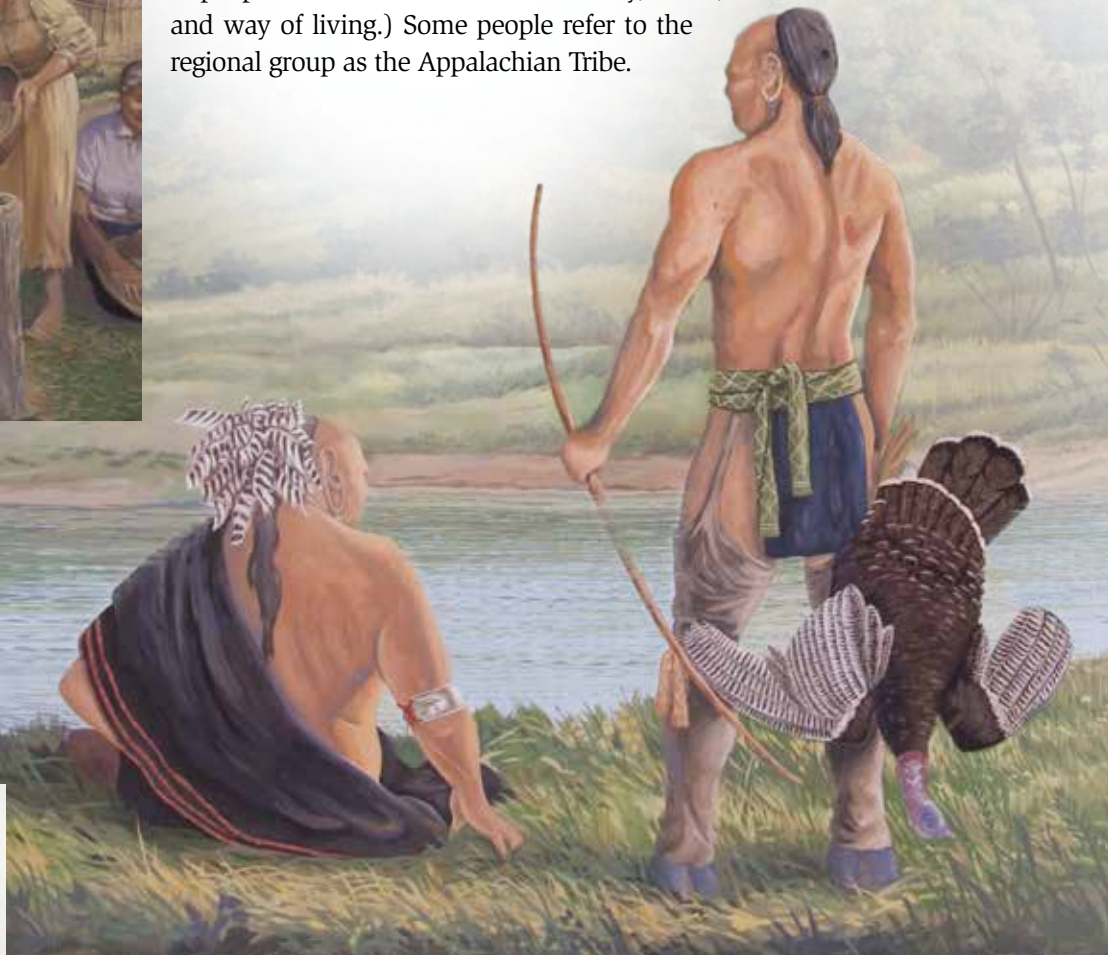
Historic Native Americans

As you read, look for

- the location of the Shawnee, Cherokee, Delaware, and Mingo in western Virginia;
- the lifestyle of the Late Woodland Indians;
- the importance of the clan;
- reasons for the disappearance of Native Americans from western Virginia;
- terms: **tribe, clan, matrilineal, migration, famine, immunity.**



Beginning around AD 1000, during the Late Woodland period, more familiar Native American cultures began to appear. These peoples were collectively called the Eastern Woodland Indians. This name was used to refer to a regional group rather than a single tribe in the traditional sense. (A **tribe** is a group of people who share a common ancestry, name, and way of living.) Some people refer to the regional group as the Appalachian Tribe.



Above: The murals at Point Pleasant depict several aspects of the Indian lifestyle.

Historic Tribes

Specific tribes that lived or hunted in western Virginia included the Shawnee, Cherokee, Delaware, Seneca, Wyandot, Ottawa, Tuscarora, Susquehannock, Huron, Sioux, Mingo, and Iroquois. Because they were included in the written records of the Europeans, archaeologists classified these later groups as *historic peoples*.

Shawnee

The Shawnee originally settled in southern Ohio, western Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. In western Virginia, the Shawnee settled in villages along the Ohio River, mainly in the area between present-day Wood and Cabell Counties. The name *Shawnee* comes from the Algonquin word *shawun* meaning “southerner,” a reference to their original location in the Ohio Valley. After the construction of Fort Pitt, the Shawnee moved farther into Ohio, but frequently visited western Virginia to hunt and fish.

Cherokee

Originally, the ancestors of the Cherokee lived in the upper stretches of the Ohio River. The Cherokee called themselves *awiyunwiya* (“the people” or “the principal people”). The word *Cherokee* may be a variation of a Mississippian word for “people who live in caves,” a reference to their mountain homes. When whites first arrived in North America, the Cherokee controlled a mountain region of 40,000 square miles, including parts of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, northern Alabama and Georgia, and western Virginia. The Cherokee were driven from their original homes after years of fighting with the Iroquois.

something extra!

Many West Virginia place names are of Native American origin. *Shenandoah* means “daughter of stars,” *Monongahela* means “river of caving banks,” *Pocatalico* means “river of plenty of fat doe,” and *Kanawha* means “river of evil spirits.”



Above: The Shawnee were one of the tribes living in western Virginia when the Europeans came into the area. This portrait of a Shawnee warrior is by David Wright.



Delaware

“Delaware” is not a Native American name. An English explorer named a large bay in honor of Sir Thomas West, Third Lord de la Warr, the first governor of the Jamestown colony. English colonists later used the word *Delaware* to describe the bay, the river, and the native people who lived there. The Delaware actually called themselves *Lenape*, translated as “original people” or “true men.” It is widely believed that the Lenape were the original tribe of all the Algonquin-speaking peoples and the first Indians to come into contact with the Europeans. The Delaware originally lived in the Delaware River Valley extending north to include the west side of the lower Hudson Valley in southern New York. White settlement forced the Delaware to relocate, and they eventually found themselves in western Virginia among several other locations.

Mingo

The Mingo were not actually an Indian tribe, but rather a cultural group that established several communities within western Virginia. The group lacked a central government and was subject to being controlled by the Iroquois. The Indians originally lived closer to the Atlantic Coast, but European settlement pushed them into Virginia and eastern Ohio.

something extra!

According to the United Nations, the four staples of diets around the world are wheat, rice, corn, and potatoes. Two of the four—corn and potatoes—were developed by Native Americans.

Native American Habits and Beliefs

The Woodland culture had become so common by the 1500s that the tribes shared many beliefs, habits, and customs. For example, all tribes hunted, with deer being the most valuable prey, both for its meat and its skin. All depended upon the same products from the forest, including berries in season and nuts like chestnuts, black walnuts, and hickories. Often, tribes supplemented their diets during the cold winter by finding holes in trees where squirrels had hidden their supplies. If they could catch the squirrel as well, they ate it too.

All tribes planted the “three sisters”—corn, beans, and squash—all of which were dried and preserved. The vegetables balanced the tribe’s diet in winter when game was scarce. Algonquin groups, for example, mixed corn and beans with meat and grease for a dish they called succotash.

Village Life

Village life was the norm for all Native American groups by this time. Shelters ranged from wigwams to rectangular and long houses. The Cherokee often had two houses for each family group, a sturdy one in winter and an open-air one in summer.

Each village followed rules and customs that helped individuals find their way through life and have a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Above: Descendants of the Late Woodland Indians included the Delaware. **Opposite Page:** The murals at Point Pleasant provide a good representation of the life of the Native Americans who lived in the area.

Because a growing population meant competition for resources, most villages had palisades (fences of sharpened poles) around them, to keep out bears, wolves, and braves from other tribes.

Woodland Indians established their kinship ties through the women of the tribe. All children belonged to the **clan** (an extended family of people with a common ancestor) of their mothers. (Today, we call this a **matrilineal** society, where the “line” is traced through the “matri” or mother.) Children were raised by members of the mother’s family. The grandmother had great influence over all her grandchildren. Uncles acted almost like fathers to the boys of the group. The father, by rule, came from another clan, to ensure the physical diversity of the tribe. When a man married, he came to live in the household of his mother-in-law. He might be kind and loving to his children, but he actually had duties back in his own mother’s house, where he was an uncle to young members of his own clan.

The Woodland culture divided work fairly



Below: This mask is an example of something that would be worn during a Native American Booger Dance.

between men and women. Men helped clear the ground in the spring for planting, but women owned the seeds and planted and nurtured them. Men spent long periods hunting, usually after planting and after the harvest. The men groomed their hunting areas with the same care that the women did their gardens. They sometimes burned off their best hunting grounds to help them see their prey.

Most tribes governed by consensus, meaning they discussed their problems until almost everyone agreed to the same action. Older men and women were often consulted in major decisions, and it was considered very impolite to interrupt elders until they were completely finished talking. Often, tribes had two different sets of leaders, one who governed in peacetime, and another whose role was to lead the tribe in warfare.

Belief Systems

All Native Americans respected nature as much as they did their elders. They knew that their very survival depended on their interaction with their environment. In significant ways, their religion was about nature. At the core of their beliefs was a reverence for the spiritual qualities of all things, from rocks to plants to animals to the very sky above. Native

Americans believed a spirit could be found in all things. A hunter, for example, would pray for forgiveness to the spirit of a deer just before he killed it. This would free the spirit from the animal and enable it to find a home elsewhere in the natural order. A conjurer, what white people later often called a “medicine man,” might ask the wind to spread the heat of a sick person’s fever into the nearby woods, giving the patient relief. Participants in the Booger Dance wore fearsome masks made from a variety of natural materials. The design of the masks called on various spirits to ward off any evil that might come into the village.

All Native Americans also told stories over and over again to gain an understanding of how nature worked. The stories often involved monsters and beasts, much the way Europeans told “fairy tales” about strange things that happened in the woods. The Cherokee, for example, believed that both hunting and farming came from a cave where

Kanati the Hunter and his wife Selu Cornwoman lived. When Kanati hunted, he let one animal at a time out of the cave and then killed it. Selu, who controlled the growing of crops, hoarded all the seeds deep



Snowbird, A Seneca Indian Princess

Snowbird was the daughter of Chief Bald Eagle and his wife, White Rock. As a child, the young princess played at the base of Seneca Rocks. Intrigued by the rocks, she was determined one day to climb to the highest peak.

By the time she grew into a beautiful maiden, she had accomplished her goal of scaling the rugged rocks. Now, however, as the day was approaching for the princess to think about marriage, she faced a dilemma. Because of her beauty, many suitors vied for her hand, and she was uncertain how to choose the best candidate. As she thought about what to do, she looked at her beloved rocks and thought about the joy she got from climbing them. That gave her an idea!

Snowbird decided to have a contest to decide who would become her husband. When the day arrived for her to choose a mate, all the suitors assembled in a semicircle facing the mighty Seneca Rocks. Snowbird faced her suitors and quietly told them, "I have spent the most enjoyable days of my life climbing these rocks. Since I am the only Seneca Indian who has ever accomplished this feat, I have decided to marry the brave who can overcome his fear and follow me to the tallest pinnacle."

Seven suitors accepted Snowbird's challenge and set out on a journey to win her hand. Snowbird led the group up the rocks. As the climb became more difficult, some turned back and others crumbled in a heap. Snowbird kept climbing up and up until she reached the summit. Then she stopped and turned to see which brave was the closest behind her. The persistent suitor was only a few feet from the princess when his foot slipped on the edge of a rock. Snowbird hesitated. What should she do? Should she help him or let him face his own fate? Quickly, she turned and caught the falling brave, bringing him safely to her.

Before descending the trail at the rear of the gigantic rocks, Snowbird and her future husband sat and talked about their future. As darkness approached, the young couple made their way down the trail. At the bottom, they were greeted by Bald Eagle and White Rock. Bald Eagle conferred the honor of becoming his successor as chief of the Seneca tribe to his newfound son-in-law.





something extra!



Smallpox epidemics in 1738 and 1753 killed almost half of the Cherokee. The epidemics were also devastating to the Cherokee priests, who were unable to cure the disease and lost most of their tribal influence.

inside the cave. Because of the actions of Kanati and Selu, the Cherokee went hungry. One day, according to legend, the Little People, who lived under rocks and roots, came and killed Kanati and Selu. They let all the animals out of the cave and spilled the blood of Kanati and Selu on the ground. From that time on, all the people could hunt the animals and plant the seeds.

The Exodus of the Native Americans

Several theories have attempted to explain the Indians' **migration** (moving from one area or country to another) from western Virginia. One suggests that hunger and **famine** (an extreme shortage of food) led them to seek a new area to settle. This theory does not seem likely, however, since western Virginia had an abundance of game and edible natural vegetation. A second, more reasonable theory is that disease drastically reduced the Native American population. Europeans coming to the New World (the Americas) brought diseases for which the Native Americans had no **immunity** (natural resistance to disease). Smallpox was especially devastating. Once this disease broke out, it spread like wildfire. To avoid the disease, the tribes may have fled westward.

The most likely reason for the Indians' migration, however, is that the powerful Iroquois Nation drove out the less powerful tribes. In the late 1500s, five tribes—the Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Seneca—joined together to form the Iroquois Nation. (When the Tuscarora joined in 1722, the league became known as the Six Nations.) This powerful confederation may have forced the Shawnee, Mingo, Delaware, and the other smaller tribes to move west of the Ohio River. However, there was a Shawnee tribe near Point Pleasant, a Delaware tribe near Bulltown in Braxton County, and a Moneton village at Buffalo in Putnam County at least until the mid-1700s.

With the exodus of the Native Americans, the area that was to become West Virginia became a hunting and fighting ground. Although they did not live there, the Native Americans visited to hunt and acquire salt. Soon





the area became a battleground for rival tribes competing for the same hunting grounds and salt licks.

Reviewing the Section

Reviewing the Content

1. What were the historic Indian groups found in western Virginia?
2. What was the diet of the Woodland Indians?
3. How did Native American cultures govern themselves?

Using the Content

1. Give examples that show the respect that the Native Americans had for nature.
2. Use a Venn diagram to compare Native American habits and beliefs with the beliefs and habits of people living in the twenty-first century.

Extending the Literacy Skill

Copy the chart below to a separate sheet of paper. Use it to compare historic tribes like the Shawnee, Cherokee, and Delaware. Then write a paragraph describing the differences you noted.

	Shawnee	Cherokee	Delaware
Where did the tribe live?			
What was the meaning of the tribe's name?			
What happened to the tribe?			

Above: The Iroquois Nation drove out many less powerful tribes.

Opposite Page: Smallpox was especially devastating to the Native Americans.

Native American Fairs and Festivals

Native Americans were the first groups of people to live in western Virginia. It is believed they began their trek from Asia by way of a land bridge more than 20,000 years ago and were present in western Virginia by 10,500 BC. Their existence has been documented through the discovery of stone weapons in Upshur, Wood, and Pleasants Counties and in the Kanawha and Ohio River Valleys. The mounds and walls the Woodland people built in Brooke, Doddridge, Fayette, Hampshire, Hancock, Harrison, Kanawha, Marshall, Mason, Nicholas, Pleasants, Raleigh, Randolph, and Wood Counties offer the most significant evidence of their existence. These peoples are believed to have disappeared from western Virginia by the time European settlers arrived.

During the period of early European settlement, historic tribes, like the Shawnee, Delaware, Cherokee, and Seneca (who were members of Iroquoian-speaking groups) often passed through western Virginia but did not settle there. Because western Virginia did not have a Native American population when the area was being settled by Europeans, the state of West Virginia does not have any federally recognized American Indian tribes.

Native Americans who live in West Virginia today either came from somewhere else or are descendants of earlier Indians who settled here. It is difficult to get an accurate count. After the massacre at Wounded Knee (in today's South Dakota) in 1890, it became illegal for Indians to gather publicly, resulting in their being afraid to talk about their heritage. They often classified themselves as "white" on Census surveys. This changed after World War II when Indians began to classify their ethnicity correctly. The 2010 Census listed 3,787 American Indians and Alaska Natives—along with 9,527 people of mixed Indian ancestry—as living in West Virginia, bringing the total number to 13,314.

Today, several fairs and festivals—Pow Wows and Gatherings—focus on the culture of Native Americans in West Virginia. A Pow Wow is not traditional to the Eastern Woodland nations (those mainly



found in West Virginia). It is commonly associated with the Plains Indians, but both celebrations focus on many of the same cultural activities.

One of the largest festivals is the Mountain Spirit Pow Wow held annually at the Mason-Dixon Historical Park in Core, located about nine miles from downtown Morgantown. The park is located on Brown's Hill where the two surveyors of the Mason-Dixon Line ended their survey some twenty-three miles short of their goal. This celebration features Native American singing, dancing, drumming, and arts and crafts, e.g., jewelry, knives, and blankets. There are also opportunities to learn about birds of prey and flintknapping (the art of making flaked or chipped stone tools and arrowheads).

The drum circle, a celebration of life, is a highlight of the festival. Drums played an important role in Native American ceremonies. The drum circle symbolizes the close relationship the Indians had with their creator. Native Americans consider the drum a living, breathing entity. They believe the beats of the drum call out the spirits of the tree and animals from which it was made.

Demonstrations using birds of prey (sometimes called raptors) are also part of Native American festivals. The hawk, eagle, woodpecker, owl, and falcon were regarded as special messengers from the spirit world. Many Indian ceremonies included wearing costumes and/or masks made from the feathers of these birds. The importance of birds is evident in the myths and legends of various tribes. Storytelling is another activity found at various fairs and festivals.

Besides the festival in Core, other festivals are held throughout the state. These include Shepherd University, Prickett's Fort, and Point Pleasant.



Chapter Summary

Section 1: Prehistoric Cultures

- The earliest inhabitants in North America most likely came across a land bridge from Asia. However, technology has resulted in new theories about when and from where the first inhabitants of North America came.
- Archaeologists have divided western Virginia's prehistory into three periods—Paleo, Archaic, and Woodland.
- The earliest primitive hunters were the Paleo people. The Paleo people used the Clovis spear point when hunting.
- The Archaic people were hunters and gatherers. They changed their hunting methods because of the supply of smaller animals. One new hunting tool, the atlatl, allowed the Archaic Indians to fling their spears farther and with more force.
- The Adena lived during the Early Woodland period. The Hopewell lived during the Middle Woodland period.
- Mounds and walls, built by the Adena and Hopewell cultures, are the most lasting remains of prehistoric inhabitants of western Virginia.
- Grave Creek Mound is the largest conical mound in the United States. The Creil Mound in South Charleston is the second-largest mound in West Virginia. The largest Hopewell mound in West Virginia is located in Romney.
- Ancient walls built during the Woodland period might have been used for defense as well as for worship.

Section 2: Historic Native Americans

- During the Late Woodland period, more familiar Native American cultures appeared.
- The Shawnee settled along the Ohio River.
- The Cherokee had been driven from their original homes by the Iroquois, while settlement forced the Delaware into western Virginia.
- The Mingo were a cultural group rather than an independent tribe.
- All of the Woodland cultures hunted, and deer was the most valuable prey.
- All Native American tribes planted the "three sisters"—corn, beans, and squash.
- Woodland Indians established their kinship ties through the women of the tribe.
- Most tribes governed by consensus.
- All Native Americans respected nature as much as they did their elders.
- Native Americans told stories to explain natural phenomena.
- Reasons for the disappearance of the Native Americans from western Virginia include moving due to a famine, death from disease, and forced movement due to conflict with the powerful Iroquois.

Western Virginia's First People

Recalling the Facts

1. What prehistoric peoples visited or lived in what is now West Virginia?
2. What evidence can you find in the textbook that shows the Archaic Indians were more advanced than the Paleo Indians?
3. How were the Paleo and the Archaic peoples different?
4. Name two Woodland cultures that lived in western Virginia.
5. Why are tribes like the Iroquois, Seneca, and Tuscarora considered historic?
6. What was village life like for the Cherokee?
7. Describe some of the spiritual beliefs of Native Americans.

Learning Skill

1. Compare the Adena and Hopewell Indians.
2. What was the most interesting thing you learned about historic Native Americans?
3. What do you think caused the disappearance of Native Americans from western Virginia?
4. How might history have been different if so many Native Americans had not died from disease brought by Europeans?

Community Connection

1. Native Americans had an oral tradition of passing down tribal history, religious beliefs, and folklore to younger generations. Ask your parents or another adult to share a story that has been handed down through their family. Share the story with the class.

Chapter Review

2. Research to find the location of archaeological sites in your county. Visit one of those sites and take a photograph to share with the class.

Literacy Skill

1. Imagine that you are an archaeologist who participated in the excavation at South Charleston. Write an article that might have appeared in the newspaper about the event.
2. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in response to the decision to take the remains of the Buffalo people to Moundsville for further study.

Technology Tool

1. Go to <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/nacherokeelegends/> or <http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/cher/motc/index.htm> and choose one or more of the legends listed on the site to read. After reading a couple of legends, write your own version of a legend that might have been handed down through generations of Native Americans.
2. Choose one of the Native American groups discussed in the chapter. Find at least three websites that provide information on your chosen group. Evaluate the sites as to the usefulness and variety of the information they provide. Did you find any discrepancies in the way the "facts" were presented? If so, give examples.