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Chapter 7: West Virginia's First People

Quick Notes

CHAPTER 7

WESTERN VIRGINIA'S FIRST PEOPLE

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SECTION 1

Prehistoric Cultures

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When the earliest people first came to what is now West Virginia, it was colder than it is now. Winters lasted longer.



Glaciers covered part of North America.

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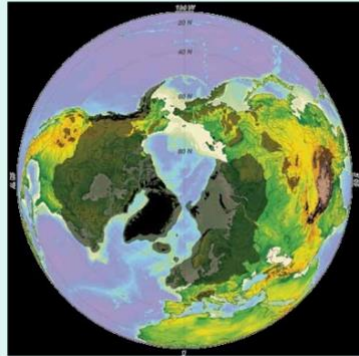
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Much of the land was covered by spruce and fir trees, much like the ones found in Cathedral State Park.



DNA tests have revealed that the earliest people were actually in North America about 1,000 years before those who crossed the land bridge.

At one time, North America was joined with Asia.



At another time, North America was joined to northeastern Asia by a strip of land along what is now the Bering Strait.



The most common theory of how the earliest people arrived in North America is that they came across a land bridge from Asia.

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Dating Prehistoric Cultures

Archaeologists, scientists who study the items left behind by ancient peoples, use a number of methods to guess when certain groups of prehistoric people lived.



One method identifies time periods based on how deep in the ground artifacts are found. This is not always reliable because sometimes the site may have been damaged or changed over time.



A second method, **carbon dating**, measures certain trace elements, such as carbon-14, which are known to break down at a certain rate over a period of time. Generally, the less carbon-14, the older a site is.

A third method is to compare objects or sites to similar ones that have already been dated.

Botanists identify the age of wooden structures using **dendrochronology** (tree-ring dating).



Chemists use the chemical makeup of a piece of pottery to determine its age.



More recently, **biologists** use DNA testing of human remains to determine when certain groups of people lived.



Because of the artifacts that have been found, archaeologists have divided western Virginia's prehistory into three periods.

Culture	Timeline
Paleo	20,000 B.C.—10,000 B.C.
Archaic	10,000 B.C.—1,000 B.C.
Woodland	1,000 B.C.—1,000 A.D.

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The Paleo Period

The word "paleo" means very old.

These people lived between 20,000 B.C. and 10,000 B.C.

These people were mostly nomads.

They followed large animals, like the mastodon.



They used spears for weapons. The clovis point on the end of the spear could kill large animals.



The Archaic Period

These people were foragers.

They wove nets from plant fibers and used the nets to catch small animals.



Their tools became more complex and they began to use flint to make **scrapers** which could remove the fur off a bear. They also used elongated river rocks to make **hammers**.



They used a finer spear point to hunt smaller animals.

The **atlatl** enabled hunters to fling their spears with more force and speed.

They wove strings from plant roots to use with stone hooks for fishing.

They began to stay in one place for longer periods of time.

The diet of the prehistoric people became more healthy during the Archaic period.



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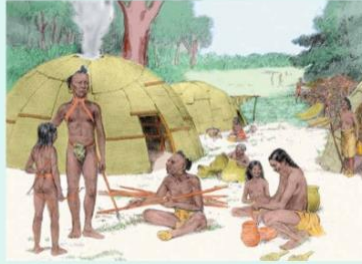
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The Woodland Period

There is more information about this cultural group and the role the people played in the history of western Virginia. The Woodland Period is divided into an Early, Middle, and Late Period.

The Adena lived during the early Woodland Period, and the Hopewell lived during the middle Woodland Period.

Although these two groups lived at different times, they were quite similar.



Adena and Hopewell

The Adena experimented with farming (grew sunflower seeds) and the Hopewell were thought to have introduced corn.



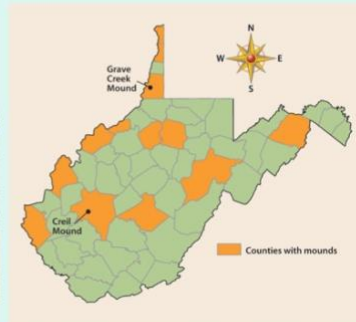
Both groups built mounds as burial sites.



Adena mounds are Grave Creek Mound and Creil Mound

The Hopewell seem to have practiced simpler burial methods.

Hopewell mound in Romney's Indian Mound Cemetery



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Other archaeological sites in West Virginia

[Mount Carbon Stone Walls](#), Fayette County



SECTION 2

Historic Native Americans

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The **Late Woodland Period** began around 1000 A.D. The Native Americans who lived during this time were collectively called the Eastern Woodland Indians.

Specific tribes that lived and hunted in western Virginia were.

- The Shawnee**
- The Cherokee**
- The Delaware**
- The Mingo**



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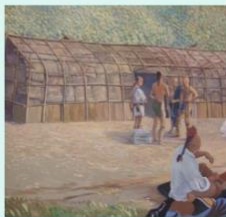


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<p>The Shawnee</p> <p>Settled along the Ohio River, mainly between Cabell and Wood counties</p> <p>After the building of Fort Pitt, the Shawnee moved out of western Virginia.</p>	<p>The Cherokee</p> <p>Settled in the upper parts of the Ohio River</p> <p>Driven from their original homes by the Iroquois</p>
<p>Where Did They Live?</p>	
<p>The Delaware</p> <p>Called themselves Lenape</p> <p>Believed to be the first Indians to come into contact with Europeans</p> <p>Moved into western Virginia from the Delaware Valley</p>	<p>The Mingo</p> <p>Not actually a tribe</p> <p>Originally lived near the Atlantic Coast</p> <p>European settlement pushed them into western Virginia.</p>

VILLAGE LIFE

Shelter for Native Americans included

 <p>Wigwams</p>	 <p>Long Houses</p>
 <p>Rectangular Houses</p>	 <p>Many villages were surrounded by palisades for protection.</p>

Some tribes had summer houses and winter houses.

Woodland Indians were matrilineal societies.

Children were raised by members of the mother's family.

The grandmother was a great influence over all her grandchildren.

Uncles acted almost like fathers to the boys in the clan.



When a man married, he went to live in the household of his mother-in-law. But, he had duties in his own mother's home. Among the duties was acting an uncle to members of his own clan.

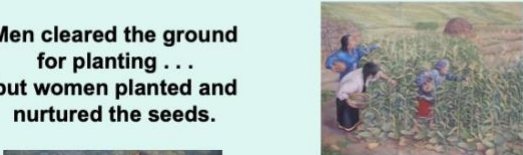

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Men and women shared responsibility for the work that had to be done.

Men cleared the ground for planting . . . but women planted and nurtured the seeds.

Men hunted small animals for food and clothing . . . but women cooked the food and made the clothing.


BELIEF SYSTEM

Native Americans respected nature because they knew their very existence depended on their interaction with their environment.

In significant ways their religion was about **nature**.

They believed all things had a spiritual quality.

They made masks of natural materials in many different designs and used them to ward off evil spirits. They called upon forces in nature to help them. For example, they might ask the wind to spread the heat from a person's fever into the nearby woods.



Native Americans told stories to explain natural phenomena that they did not understand. These stories, examples of oral history, help anthropologists to understand the lifestyle of Native Americans.

Some of the stories described . . .

[The Origin of Rain](#)

[The First Fire](#)

[Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun](#)





The stories often involved monsters and beasts.

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By the time European settlers came to western Virginia, most of the Native Americans were gone. There are several theories to explain their exodus.



Disease drastically reduced the Native American population.

Hunger and famine led Native Americans to seek new areas to settle.



The powerful Iroquois Nation drove the less powerful tribes out of the area.

Which theory seems the most reasonable?

The exodus of the Native Americans left western Virginia a vast hunting ground.

The need to hunt, brought the Native Americans back to this hunting ground periodically.



The periodic visits caused conflicts between the Indians and the white settlers who had moved into the western lands. These conflicts eventually turned western Virginia into a fighting ground.

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