

A low-angle photograph of the Georgia State Capitol dome and the Statue of Liberty, set against a blue sky with white clouds. The dome is a large, golden-yellow structure with a dark, ornate top section. The statue, holding a torch, is positioned at the very top of the dome. The text of the title is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# Georgia Studies

**Unit 1: Geography of  
Georgia/Georgia's  
Beginnings**

**Lesson 3: Prehistoric  
Peoples**

**Study Presentation**

# **Lesson 3: Prehistoric Peoples**

- **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**
  - What were the major characteristics and time periods for the Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian Periods?

# Early Migration

- Migration – Movement of people from one place to another.
- The first people migrated to North America between 30,000 BC to 10,000 BC.
- During this time the world was experiencing an ice age. The extra ice, at the North and South poles, lowered ocean levels. This created a land bridge (Bering Land Bridge) that made it possible for people to walk from Asia to North America.
- As the ice melted the ocean levels rose and covered the Bering Land Bridge separating people on different continents.



The Bering Land Bridge

# Paleo Period

- 10,000 BC to 8,000 BC
- Paleo (from Greek, “Very Old”)
- Also called Old Stone Age. Most tools and spear points made of stone.
- Used an “atlatl”: stone sling-like implement that threw darts from a longer distance
- Nomadic (roaming) hunters. Mainly hunted:
  - Mammoths, Mastodons, Bison, Ground Sloth, Caribou, and Moose
- Because of constant migration the Paleo people frequently dug pits to use as a temporary shelter (dwelling).
- Archaeologists have found two Paleo skeletons buried with artifacts and covered with red powder. Archaeologists believe that this may indicate a belief in an afterlife and/or religious beliefs.



# Archaic Period

- 8000 BC to 1000 BC
- Archaic (means “Old”)
- Migrated with each season to find best food resources. As larger game (animals) such as mammoths and mastodons became extinct the Archaic people began to hunt smaller game. Mainly hunted:
  - Deer, Bear, Turkey, Rabbit, Reptiles, Game Birds, Fish and Shellfish
- Due to the fact that the Archaic people migrated less often they began to live in semi-permanent shelters (huts made of sticks and other natural materials) arranged in small villages.
- During the late Archaic period, horticulture (the planting of crops) allowed the Archaic to be less nomadic as they were able to grow most of their necessary food.
- Made tools such as choppers, drills, chipping tools, and fish hooks from deer antlers and bones. Also, began using grooved axes to clear trees and bushes. Continued to use the spear and atlatl for hunting but the Archaic people refined these to make hunting easier.
- Burial of the dead began to become important. Tools, weapons, and body ornaments have been found in some burial pits.

# Woodland Period

- 1000 BC to AD 1000
- Continued to seasonally migrate (less movement than the Archaic people) and lived in tribal villages. These tribes (group of people with a common ancestry) would live and work together. The knowledge of agriculture (horticulture) continued to increase allowing the groups to grow most of what they ate. Woodland people would grow and/or harvest:
  - Squash, Beans, Corn (Maize), Sunflowers, Berries, and Nuts
- Woodland people continued to hunt:
  - Deer, Bear, Turkey, Rabbit, Reptiles, Game Birds, Fish and Shellfish
- Built domed-shaped huts using trees and other natural materials. The Eastern Woodland people built wattle and daub homes (wooden frame covered with reed mats and plaster).
- Began to use the bow and arrow as the main tool for hunting. Arrow points were frequently made out of stone, shark teeth, and deer antlers.
- Elaborate religious ceremonies were introduced during this time period and were spread through trade amongst the different tribes. Began building cone shaped burial mounds and adorned the body with jewelry. Archaeologists believe that this may indicate a belief in an afterlife and/or religious beliefs.

# Mississippian Period

- AD 700 to AD 1600
- The Mississippian people continued to live in tribes and lived in permanent shelters and villages. Tribes began to join together during this time period and formed larger nations (allowed for division of labor and increased protection and safety). The knowledge of agriculture (horticulture) continued to increase allowing the groups to grow most of what they ate and began storing extra food to keep a supply for the entire year. Mississippian people would grow and/or harvest:
  - Corn (Maize), Beans, Pumpkins and Squash
- Due to the division of labor the Mississippian people had more time to dedicate to the arts (advanced pottery, jewelry, and clothing).
- Continued to improve wattle and daub houses (wood and clay) and began to protect their villages through the use of moats and palisades (wooden walls).
- Improved upon the bow and arrow as the main tool for hunting and for defense. Arrow points were frequently made out of stone, shark teeth, and deer antlers.
- Continued to build burial mounds and religious centers for religious ceremonies and priests/chiefs.