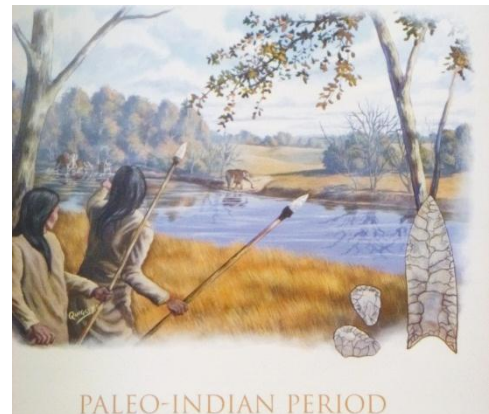


## Cultural History of Georgia: Historic Periods

### Paleoindian Period (12000-8000 B.C.)

The earliest evidence for human occupation in Georgia, as well as the entire Eastern Woodlands, dates to what is called the Paleoindian period. This cultural stage coincides with the terminal Pleistocene and the end of the last major glacial advance.

Environmentally, the Southeast was probably dominated by coniferous forests similar to boreal forests now present in northern and western North America. These conditions remained in effect until the end of the last glacial period when forests more similar to those present today began to appear.



Another notable feature of this period was the presence of large mammalian species, sometimes called “megafauna” and including such species as mammoth and bison. It is postulated that Paleoindians lived a nomadic existence; small band-level groups wandered the forests in pursuit of large game herds and smaller game such as white-tailed deer. Thus, researchers in the Southeastern United States suggest that high mobility, low population density, and hunting characterized Paleoindian occupations in the region.

In Georgia, Paleoindian sites have been found on levees, terraces, upland boundaries, and in the uplands; these sites are typically small, low density camp sites, but some sites were intensively occupied for longer periods and/or were repeatedly occupied by visiting groups.

Archaeologically, the Paleoindian lifeway is represented by a distinctive assemblage of lanceolate-shaped and often fluted projectile points. Also, lithic tool kits of thumbnail scrapers, expedient flake tools such as knives and graters, and other formal bifaces are representative of Paleoindian sites. Clovis and similar types (Quad, Suwanee, Redstone, Meserve) are thought to be the earliest types; smaller lanceolate to side notched varieties (e.g., Dalton, Hardaway) appear later in time.

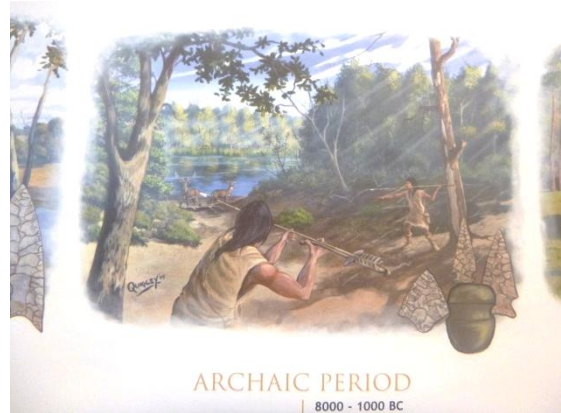
### **Archaic Period (8000-1000 B.C.)**

The Archaic period reflects dramatic changes and expansion in settlement and subsistence patterns from the previous Paleoindian cultural period as well as the beginning of the development of subregional traditions. The Archaic period can be divided into three subperiods: Early, Middle, and Late.

The Early Archaic toolkit featured a series of notched points (Big Sandy, Palmer, Kirk, Bolen) and a wide variety of cutting, scraping, and chopping implements, demonstrating a heavier reliance on the hunting and processing of smaller terrestrial animals.

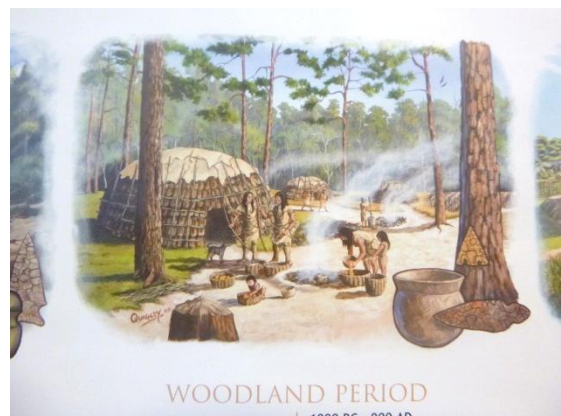
The onset of the Middle Archaic was highlighted by warmer and moister environmental conditions which led to further human adaptations. Stemmed points (Stanley, Morrow Mountain, Guilford) replaced notched varieties and were particularly adapted for use with spears. Cultural behaviors of populations in the Piedmont region of Georgia began to diverge from those in the Coastal Plain.

The Late Archaic period has been described as a time of population growth, increased sedentism, technological innovation, and expansion of subsistence strategies. Sites were typically larger and better organized occupational spheres. Plant gathering and the consumption of shellfish were added to the Archaic population's dietary strategies; Coastal Plain groups began exploiting heavily the resources of riverine environments. The Late Archaic toolkit included broad Savannah River stemmed points and the region's first pottery, made with a fiber temper. Coastal Plain sites exhibit plain and decorated varieties of this pottery, while groups in the Piedmont delayed the introduction of this technology, instead seemingly preferring to use soapstone vessels in cooking on sites.



### **Woodland Period (1000 B.C. – 1000 A.D.)**

The Woodland period in Georgia and the Southeastern United States is usually characterized by modern climatic conditions and forest species, extensive use of pottery, increased reliance on the exploitation of wild plants and later horticulture, the development of ceremonial activity, and the establishment of permanently occupied sites. Like the Archaic period before it, the Woodland period is subdivided into Early, Middle, and Late subperiods as well as phases, based primarily on pottery types.



The Early Woodland introduced changes in pottery temper, from fiber to sand, and decorations such as simple stamping and fabric marking began to appear. Smaller stemmed bifaces were used, along with smaller lithic, shell, bone, and antler tools, signaling the introduction of new technologies such as the bow and arrow. Intensive plant gathering and hunting dependence, from seasonal or more permanent base camp sites, became common during the middle part of the Woodland period. Large populations could be supported by developments in food preservation and storage.

Middle Woodland pottery included a variety of designs such as check stamped, cord marked, simple stamped, complicated stamped, and plain. At this time, the Piedmont and Coastal Plain regions seem to have become more integrated, this conclusion based in part on the similarities of pottery designs. The first burial mounds were also constructed in north Georgia during this subperiod; rock mounds and other structures are also sometimes attributed to the Woodland period.

The Late Woodland subperiod is often thought of as a transitional time between the Woodland and the later Mississippian period. This is the time period when maize horticulture is thought to have been fully developed, an advance which may have had a direct effect on subsistence/settlement strategies. Pottery types included those with cord marking (Wilmington) and complicated stamping (Swift Creek, Napier).

### **Mississippian Period (1000 – 1540 A.D.)**

Temple mound construction, ceremonialism, increased political sophistication, elaborate artifact assemblages, and a dramatic rise in the production of maize and other agricultural practices are noted characteristics of the Mississippian period.

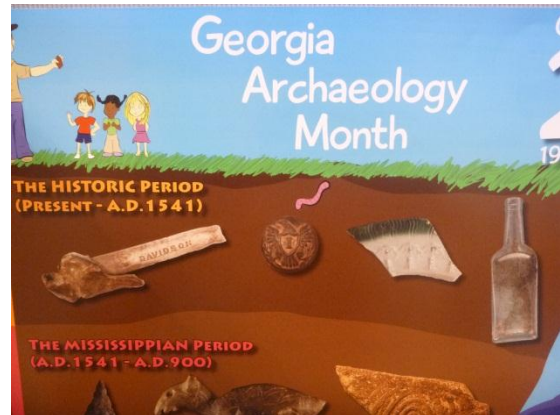
Large, sedentary population centers developed in major river valleys during the Mississippian period. Towns including mounds and defensive structures were built and became the centers of societies known as chiefdoms. Some of these sites are evident today at Etowah, Ocmulgee, and Nacoochee.



The Mississippian period has been divided by researchers into Early, Middle, and Late subperiods, based on pottery expressions such as type and vessel form. Diagnostic pottery designs included complicated stamped, check stamped, incised, and burnished varieties (Woodstock, Savannah, Etowah, Lamar), and tempering agents were often mixed and varied, with combinations of sand, grit, quartz, and shell used in different regions. The Late Mississippian Lamar subperiod ended with the entrance of European explorers such as de Soto and de Luna into the area of the Southeastern United States.

### **Historic European Period (1540 A.D. to Present)**

Historically, Georgia and the Southeastern United States have experienced periods of exploration and settlement, with European groups coming into contact with native populations. This contact led to dramatic change in the cultures and societies of the native groups, and the landscape of the region was altered with the introduction of new populations, new technologies, and new diseases. Remnants of chiefdoms coalesced to form larger societies, including those of the Creek and Cherokee.



Georgia was a point of contention among European powers, especially the Spanish, who had interests in Florida, and the English, but the Georgia colony was established in 1732 by the English. By the mid-1700s the military threat from the Spanish had been removed and Crown grants of land along the coast were awarded. With the new land grants, and the legalization of slavery in Georgia in 1751, families began to spread out across the countryside establishing farms and plantations. Land lotteries opened Georgia land to development by settlers and conflicts between groups became more frequent.

Georgia was still a relatively new colony at the time of the Revolutionary War, and its small population, lack of development, and short period of experience kept it on the periphery of the conflict. Small backcountry skirmishes occurred, and the area of Savannah came under siege, but for the most part, many Georgia residents maintained neutrality and some even loyalty to the Crown. Following the end of the Revolutionary War, the economy of Georgia began to develop, mostly due to the invention of the cotton gin and the expansion of the frontier.

While this series of events and trends was a boon to the European population, the circumstances were tragic for the native population, with the Creeks, and later the Cherokee, forced into removal from the state. The construction of railroads connecting Athens, Augusta, Macon, and Savannah was an important development of the interior of the state in the 1830s. By 1860, Georgia was becoming industrialized and was taking on an even larger population.

As opposed to its limited role in the Revolutionary War, Georgia played a vital part in the secession crisis, the founding of the Confederacy, and the ensuing Civil War. Georgia seceded from the Union on January 19, 1861. While many battles were fought on state soil, William T. Sherman's "March to the Sea" in 1864 had the greatest effect, devastating Georgia and southern morale in general. The postwar years were a time of Reconstruction, marred by political upheaval, federal and northern occupation, and racial tensions.

On the heels of this uncertain time came Henry W. Grady and his concept of the "New South," in which Atlanta would become the capital of a dynamic and progressive empire state. Despite

Grady's vision, much of the state remained agricultural in focus, and the loss of slave labor for farming led to widespread adoption of numerous varieties of tenancy, sharecropping, and crop lien systems. The social relations of blacks and whites were complex and conflicted during the early part of the twentieth century, with political and legal battles absorbing the majority of energy of the state. The introduction of the boll weevil in 1915 led to a precipitous drop in cotton production and to the migration of workers away from the agricultural way of life.

Government programs such as the WPA and the CCC put many of these people to work in the 1930s; these programs also left a structural legacy on the Georgia landscape. Georgia also attracted textile mills at this time, with its abundant population of cheap labor. During the ensuing World War, workers in the state contributed to factory productions and soldiers did their training at Fort Benning in Columbus.

In the mid-twentieth century, transportation became an important feature of Georgia, especially Atlanta with its Hartsfield Airport, and set the stage for the state's industrialization and economic prosperity. As Georgia and Atlanta became a hotbed in the Civil Rights movement, it also became the heart of the Sunbelt, an area characterized by warm temperatures and economic and demographic developments in the later decades of the twentieth century. Industries such as carpet and poultry arrived in Georgia, but the farming of traditional crops, peaches, peanuts, cotton, etc. did continue if in more limited expression. Today Georgia is experiencing a new growth, but it is still a state that is a product of its historical development. It is important to consider both the narrative of this history and its material signature when considering cultural resources, given that this is the context within which all sites will be evaluated.