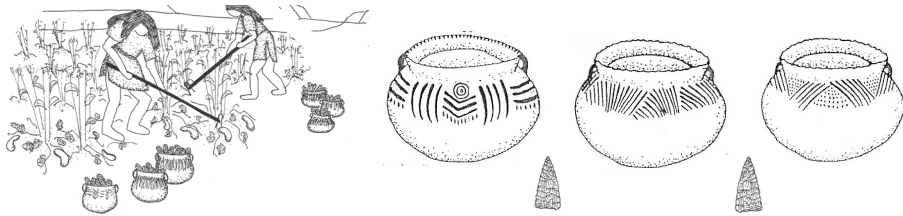


Mississippian and Oneota Traditions: Farming

Mississippian: At about AD 1050, the Cahokia site near East St. Louis, Illinois, grew to a city of more than 20,000 people and became the center of a new Middle Mississippian Tradition. Mississippian communities, supported by corn agriculture, had elaborate earthworks, extensive long-distance trade networks, and a hierarchy of small farmsteads to large villages. Cahokian people established an “outpost” colony at Trempealeau, Wisconsin, and interacted with local Woodland peoples in other locations such as Red Wing, Minnesota, and Aztalan, Wisconsin. Cahokia’s influence declined sharply after AD 1150, but adoption of some Mississippian practices – especially corn agriculture – were part of the transition to a lifeway archaeologists call “Oneota.”



Oneota: Oneota village sites on the Mississippi River terraces and along some smaller rivers were occupied for about 350 years (AD 1300–1650) in what is now La Crosse, Wisconsin. These large sites are marked by deep pits dug for storing agricultural crops and abundant shell-tempered pottery, triangular arrowheads, end scrapers, and hoes made from bison shoulder blades. Oneota peoples hunted local game, gathered resources from the Mississippi floodplain, and grew corn, beans, and squash in large ridged field systems.

Contact and Postcontact Eras

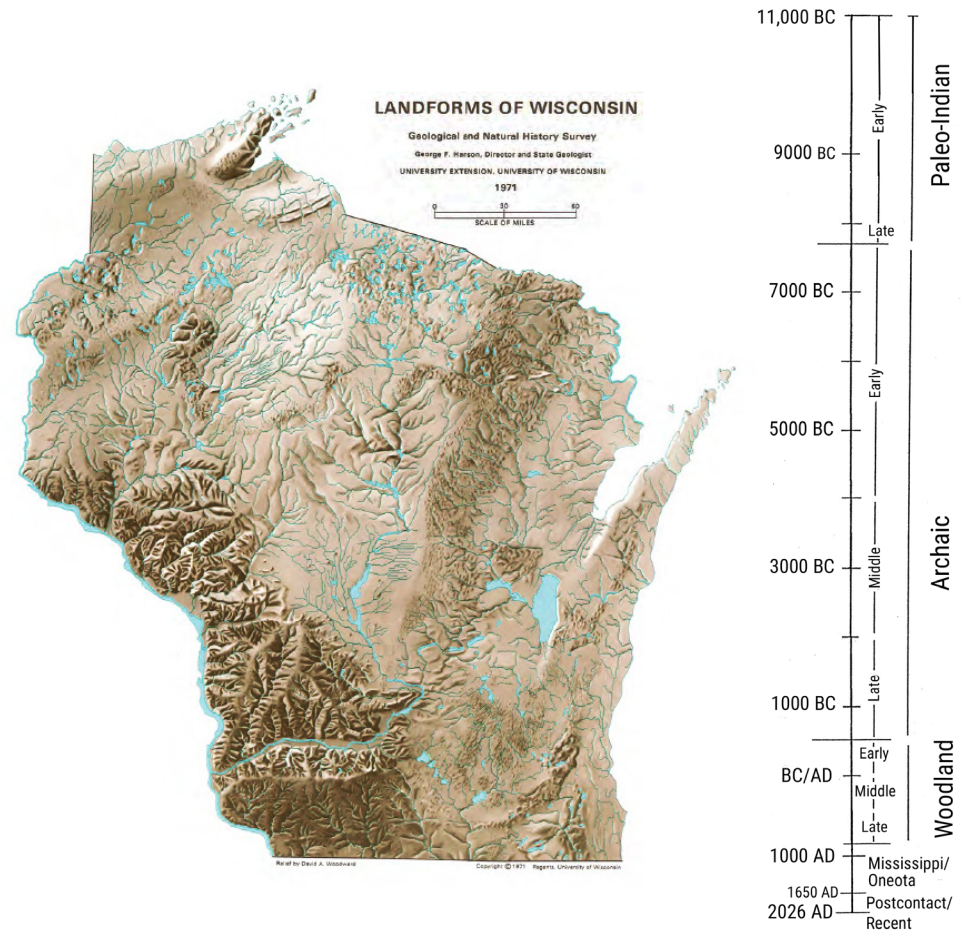
Even before French explorers first reached southwestern Wisconsin, the arrival of Europeans in other regions led to massive impacts on Native communities and lifeways. The expanding European presence brought new diseases, technologies, and pressures that led to epidemics, population loss, displacement, and cultural disruption. Throughout these sweeping changes, Ho-Chunk and other Indigenous peoples survived and continued to adapt as they had for thousands of years, preserving their identities and ties to the land. Along with traditional knowledge and written records, archaeological sites hold important information on this process, from the early contact era to more recent times.



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER

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SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN THROUGH 13,000 YEARS OF ADAPTATION



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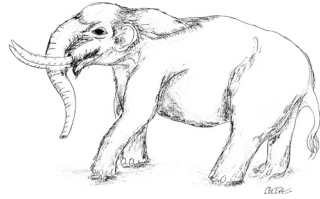
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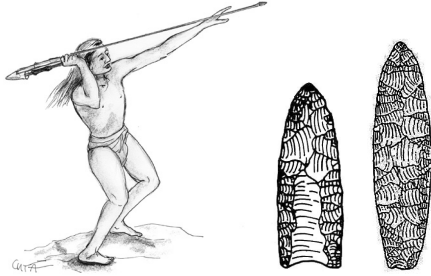


Paleo Tradition: Big Game Hunting

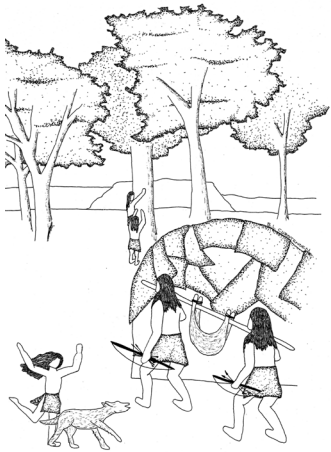
Early Paleo: People were living in the Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin at least 13,000 years ago, when glaciers still covered northern and eastern Wisconsin. These nomadic hunters traveled in small family groups, pursuing large Ice Age mammals (megafauna) that lived south of the glaciers. Few of their artifacts remain, but fluted stone spear points have been found with some mastodon remains.



Late Paleo: As the glaciers retreated, most megafauna became extinct. By 8,000 years ago, people had adapted to warmer conditions. Smaller spear points marked a shift to deer hunting in the woodlands and bison hunting to the west on the Minnesota plains.



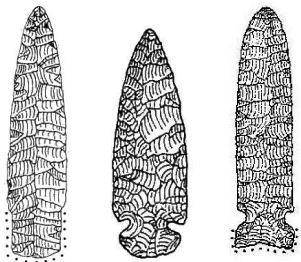
Archaic Tradition: Hunting and Gathering



From 8000 to 2500 years ago, as the weather approached modern conditions, people expanded into all the areas of the Midwest formerly covered by glaciers. Sites appeared on uplands and terraces and also on river bottoms, indicating use of floodplain resources.

Extended families shifted seasonally between rockshelters and river camps. They hunted deer, elk, and smaller game and collected nuts, fruits, and berries. Fragments of gourds suggest early efforts at plant domestication. Point styles varied by region and era.

Stone axes and other groundstone tools became more common as woodlands expanded. Exchange networks brought marine shells and exotic stone to the region. Copper from Michigan's Upper Peninsula was traded widely and used for making tools, weapons, and ornaments.



Woodland Tradition: Hunting, Gathering, Fishing, Gardening

Early: Pottery first appeared around 500 BC, marking the beginning of the Woodland Tradition. Early vessels were thick, made with clay that was tempered with sand or crushed rock. Later vessels were thinner and featured incised or cord-marked designs. In warm months, Early Woodland people lived by rivers to fish, gather wild foods, and cultivate small plants such as goosefoot, knotweed, and sunflower. During colder months they camped in interior rockshelters, hunted deer and small animals, and collected nuts and berries.

Middle: Around 2,000 years ago, Woodland cultures in the region were influenced by the Hopewell Tradition from southern Ohio and Illinois. Hopewell is characterized by construction of earthen mounds and use of distinctive artifacts such as obsidian blades, copper items, imported pottery, and bear tooth pendants. After AD 400, Hopewell influence declined, and local people continued hunting, gathering, fishing, and cultivating native plants.

Late: At around AD 800, the region's Woodland peoples began building linear and animal-shaped effigy mounds, making cord-impressed pottery, and crafting small triangular bow and arrow points. Corn horticulture appeared around AD 900 in southern Wisconsin. Northern Wisconsin groups did not build mounds and had different designs on their ceramics, suggesting territorial differences.

