



Early Cultures: Pre-European Peoples of Wisconsin

OVERVIEW OF THE ARCHAIC TRADITION

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Tradition Name	Archaic
Lifeways	Hunters and gatherers
Time	8,000 - 500 B.C.
Climate	It grew warmer as the glaciers retreated, then it became warmer than today, and finally changed to about today's conditions.
Environment	Oak, hickory, and maple forests replaced the evergreens in the southern part of the state. A large quantity and variety of plants and animals were present.
Settlement	Small bands continued in seasonal camps. Summer camps consisted of 25 to 30 people. During the winter the people may have lived in smaller groups in sheltered areas such as caves or rockshelters. They were roving less and territories were beginning to develop.
Food	They used a wide variety of large and small game, mainly deer. Plant foods became more important. They used mainly nuts, but seeds, fruits and berries were also very important.
Tools	Most of the tools used during Paleo times were also used during this time period. Axes were used to cut down trees. During the middle of this period the use of copper began. It was used for spear points and decorative and ceremonial objects.
Toolkit	Spear points, atlatl, knives, modified flakes, hammerstones, ground stone axes, nutting stones
Household	Heavier household goods were now being used, for they could be left at a campsite. Textiles and basketry originated during this time. Grinding stones were used to process food products. Containers may have been made from gourds and skins.
Religion/Rituals	Decorative and ceremonial pieces were introduced. Cemeteries and special individual burials are known, particularly from the end of the period.
Social/Political	Social organization was still based on the family. Hunting was no longer always in large groups. People were doing more individualized hunting.
How Different From Previous Group	The glaciers had retreated to the north. The people during this period adapted to and fully exploited the environment in which they lived. They began to use different food types, developed localized territories, used copper and had some special burial practices.
Major World Events	6,000 B.C. - Earliest writing in Mesopotamia 2,500 B.C. - Egyptian pyramids 1,200 B.C. - Stonehenge in England 1,000 B.C. - Beginning of Mayan civilization