

MISSISSIPPIAN TUB

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
30 Ramey St.
Collinsville, IL. 62234
618-346-5160

INTRODUCTION

Prehistoric and even contemporary Indian life are very different throughout North America. When studying Indian culture and history, we have to treat each group of Indians as an individual culture. Culture is the way of life of any given group of people. To help simplify the study of Indian culture, North America has been divided into culture areas, each of which encompasses similar cultures, environments and climates. These cultural areas have been named the East, Plains, Southwest, Great Basin, Plateau, California, Northwest Coast, Subarctic, and Arctic.

Our area of the Midwest is located in the cultural area of the East. During the prehistoric period, the Indians' life style did not remain the same. From the time the Indians first entered North America and until contact with Europeans, these cultures evolved.

Prehistory in the East has been divided into four periods. These are not exactly time periods, but are referred to as cultural periods. These cultural periods did not suddenly begin and end, but each evolved gradually into another cultural period. This evolution is called transition.

Archaeologists learn about the prehistoric people of the Midwest through archaeology, historical accounts and ethnographic studies. Archaeology is a social science which studies past cultures through material remains, and pursues the preservation of archaeological sites, which are in danger of destruction.

We know the ancestors of the Indians migrated from Siberia. The first migration might have taken place some 12,000 years ago during the Ice Age. This period is referred to as the Paleo or Big Game period. During this period, the Indians would wander great distances after the large animals. They lived in rock shelters or made make-shift hide shelters. Their weapons were spears, and they used tools made of stone, bone and wood.

Archaeologists noticed a change in this culture beginning around 8,000 B.C. with the disappearance of the large game animals. A new culture emerged which we call the Archaic Period. They began to take care of plants, hunting small game, and making stone tools with a pecking and grinding method. The use of the canoe appeared at that time.

The Archaic Period lasted until about 1,000 B.C. when another change took place. The Woodland Period developed due to the Indians' interest in and care of certain wild plants they harvested. The Woodland Period is best known for the introduction of pottery around 600 B.C. and the bow and arrow around 500 A.D. Early in this period round-top mounds were first built for burials.

INDIAN GAMES

Corn Darts - This game is similar to yard darts. The hoop is made from corn husks. The corn husks were soaked then twisted together into a hoop. They were tied with cordage to keep them together and to hold its shape. The Indians made cordage from milkweed, Indian hemp, or the inner bark of trees. The darts are feathered corn cobs with wooden sticks for points.

To Play:

- Step 1 - Place the hoop a few feet ahead of a designated point.
- Step 2 - Throw the dart towards the center of the hoop.
- Step 3 - A dart must land in the middle of the hoop to receive one point.

Dice - Many of the games played by the Indians were adult games of chance. Historical accounts by the early explorers tell how the Indians bet heavily on the games. Local historical tribes (after 1600 A.D.) played stone dice. The Choctaw Indians played a corn dice game called Baskatanje. The Cherokee and Creek played dice with six beans or seeds with one side darkened. Based on excavations, archaeologists believe the Indians who built the mounds (Mississippians, 800-1450 A.D.) could have played this game also. The dice were made of plum pits which were ground down on a stone. Designs would have been carved or burnt on one side of the dice.

To Play Dice:

Step 1 - Players take turns gently tossing the dice.

Step 2 - Points are received by how the dice land. Scores can be kept with corn kernels, sticks, etc.

Step 3 - The player that reaches 25 points first wins.

Step 4 - Scoring Information:

all dice marked side up	6 points
all dice blank	6 points
5 dice marked side up	5 points
4 dice marked side up	4 points
and so on down to one point	

The Mississippian cultural period emerged about 800-900 A.D. and lasted to about 1400 A.D. This Mississippian culture spread as far north as Wisconsin and as far south as the Gulf Coast. To the East it spread to the Smokey Mountains and to Oklahoma in the West.

Cahokia was the regional center of the Mississippian culture. Its role can be compared to a big trading center like New York City. Important items came into Cahokia Mounds and then were redistributed. Cahokia Mounds covered six square miles. It is believed that 10,000 to 20,000 people lived in and around the city. The working class of the city built more than 120 mounds.

Three types of mounds were built by the Mississippians at Cahokia Mounds. Round-top mounds were used as burial mounds; flat-top mounds had public buildings and private residences placed on them; and ridge-top mounds marked important places and the boundaries of the city.

A stockade wall was built four times, each time using 15,000 to 20,000 trees. The stockade wall served as both a social barrier and for defensive purposes.

A seasonal calendar, we call Woodhenge, was also constructed at Cahokia Mounds. From archaeological excavations, it has been determined that this calendar system was built five different times between 900-1100 A.D.

Cahokia Mounds reached its peak between 1100 to 1200 A.D. It is believed the Mississippian period at Cahokia Mounds began to decline about 1200 A.D., and the site was abandoned by the 1400's.

From the lack of a written record and the limits of archaeological technology, there are some questions that we will never be able to answer, questions such as: What did they call themselves? What language did they speak? Where did they go? What tribe did they become?

Remember, the terms, Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian are not the names of the people. These are just names we have assigned to help us identify these different cultures.

The following information is about the Mississippian culture as it pertained to Cahokia Mounds. Please take care not to confuse it with other cultures. The Mississippian culture is different and distinct from others such as the Plains, Northwest, or Southwest. We at Cahokia Mounds hope the information in this Traveling Kit can be used in the classroom to clarify the differences in cultures and teach about the Mississippian culture.

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **Archaeology** - The scientific study of the life and culture of people by recovering, analyzing and interpreting what they left behind.
2. **Artifact** - An object made by humans, especially a tool, weapon, ornament or pottery.
3. **Culture** - The collected ways of life followed by a group of people, including all their knowledge, customs, institution and material goods.
4. **Effigy** - A portrait, statue, or likeness of a person or animal.
5. **Elite** - The group or part of a group selected or regarded as the finest, best, most distinguished, most powerful.
6. **Embossing** - To mold, carve or raise the surface in relief for decoration.
7. **Ethnographic** - A branch of anthropology that deals with the study of socio-economic systems and cultural heritage in technologically primitive societies.
8. **Excavation** - The process of exposing or uncovering by digging.
9. **Figurine** - A small molded or carved figure made from clay or stone.
10. **Gorget** - A pendant worn at the throat produced from the walls of marine shells (whelks). They are usually round and may be engraved with various designs.
11. **Plaza** - A public square or marketplace in a city or town.
12. **Prehistoric** - Before written history, learned from archaeology.
13. **Repousee** - Shaped or decorated with patterns in relief formed by hammering and pressing on the reverse side.
14. **Status** - Position; rank; standing

STATUS

The Mississippians acquired status and privilege through birth, marriage, or achievement. Their clothing, jewelry and body decorations reflected this status. From human effigy pipes, pottery, and shell and copper engravings left by the Indians, archaeologists know that the leaders, priests and nobles wore shell, ceramic and copper jewelry. They also wore elaborate clothing made of feathers and woven materials.

The Great Sun was the head of Cahokia's system of social control. He and his family led a life of privilege, waited upon by others. An elite class of priests and chieftains counseled the Great Sun in matters of religion and government. The day-to-day leaders were the headmen of clans and communities. Under direction of the elite, leaders designed and supervised construction projects and farming activities.

Most Mississippians, however, were commoners. They grew the corn, built the mounds and stockade wall, and made their living as tradesmen, artisans, warriors, hunters and fishermen. The more common people such as farmers probably could not afford these luxuries. Their clothing was made from furs and hides. They could rise in status through marriage, payment of tribute, or war deeds.

Symbols of Rank and Status:

Ear Spools - copper from the Lake Superior region must be traded into the area

Shell Gorgets - made from whelk shells from the Gulf of Mexico

Mica Beads - rare from Smoky Mountains

Maces and Spuds - made from ground and polished stones in a variety of sizes and styles - Were carried as symbols of authority

Woven Materials - Harder to obtain

FACE PAINTING AND TATTOOING

Prehistoric Indians, men and women, decorated or improved their appearance in many ways. All of the social classes probably tattooed or painted some types of designs on their bodies. The type of design used may have shown the status of the individual. We know about some of their designs from the pottery and jewelry found by archaeologists.

Face paints were made from earthen pigments, not berries as is commonly thought. The paints were made from hematite, charcoal, ochre, and galena. The pigments were ground on sandstone or crushed between two rocks. Water or grease would then have been added to the pigment to make a liquid. The liquid was applied with a finger, a feather, or a stick. The stick could have been chewed on one end in order to separate the fibers, and used much like a paint brush. The paint was also used for decoration on hides, clothing, walls and pottery.

Artistic designs were tattooed on the face, chest, arms and legs by puncturing the skin with sharp bone needles and then introducing pigments for a permanent stain. Tattoos were worn to enhance their looks, indicate status or rank, and also might have shown exploits or achievements. Instructions for designs may have come from dreams or may have been required by social customs.

(Tattoo designs)

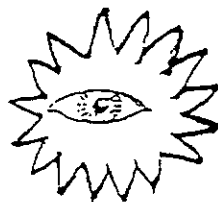


ACTIVITY: The following designs were used by the Mississippians. *Teachers: If you wish to use these designs to face paint, you may use ground red ochre which may be found in local specialty shops. Mix the red ochre with water. It can then be washed off the face with soap and water. If you use another type of paint, follow the manufacturers instructions.

Three designs used by the Mississippians are as follows:

The Sun

(Placed around the eye area)



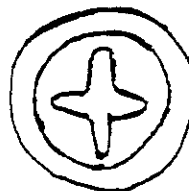
Weeping Eye or Forked Eye of Falcon

(Placed around the eye area)



The Four Directions

(Circle & Cross)(Placed on the cheek)



MISSISSIPPIAN CLOTHING STYLES

Prehistoric Indians used animal hides to make their clothing. They used deer and rabbit. The hides were sewn together with a needle and thread. The needle was made from a bird bone or leg bone of a deer. The needle was not strong enough to penetrate the hide, so the Indians had to use a bone awl to punch a hole into the hide so the needle could pass through it. The thread used by the Indians was called sinew. It is found on their side of the back bone or legs of the deer. When you beat sinew, it becomes stringy. The Indians then used it as thread.

Most of the men wore breech cloths made of deer hide. Important men not only wore breech cloths, but they also wore woven skirts and capes.



Women wore woven skirts. They also would take a deer hide and wrap it around their waist for a skirt. The women did not wear tops. These people lived at a different time and this is how they dressed. One reason for the men and women not wearing tops is that they wanted their arms free to perform different tasks. You might think these people were cold. They were use to the weather. We are accustomed to a furnace in winter and air conditioning in the summer. If we didn't have an air conditioner or furnace, we would get accustomed to the weather also.



During the time of the prehistoric Indian city children probably didn't wear much, especially in the hot summer.

Capes would have been worn when the weather got cold. It could be made of deer or rabbit skin. The furry side would be worn to the inside. This made the cape warmer. Air warmed by the body remained trapped among the hollow hairs of the garment. If a double layer of clothing is worn the warmed air will be trapped between the two layers also. The outer layer would have the fur facing out. Women would wear the cape with one shoulder and arm exposed. They needed an arm free to perform their tasks. If a person was of high status, their capes would have been decorated beautifully. Shell and Bone beads, feathers, porcupine quills, and seeds would have been sewn onto the cape.

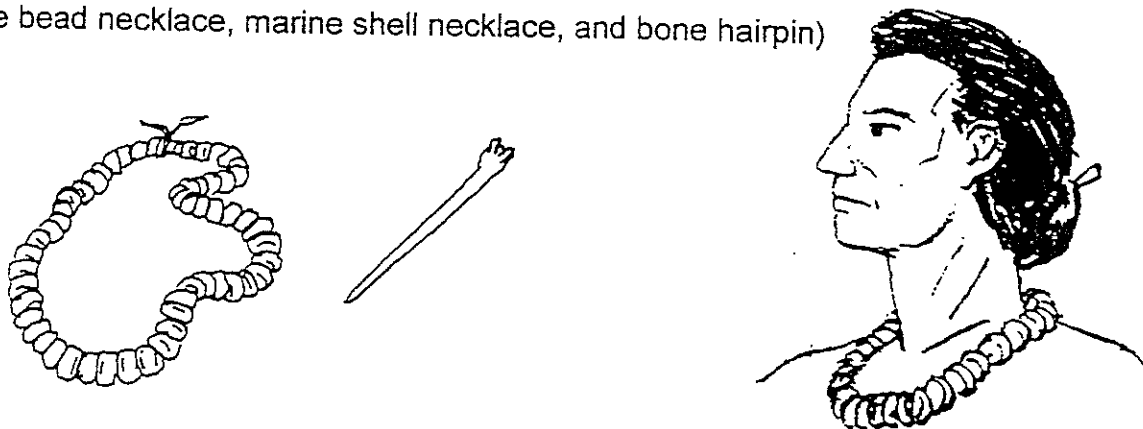
Men and women wore moccasins made from deer skin.

JEWELRY

Cahokia craftsmen fashioned jewelry and tools from marine and freshwater shells. Shells were cut and shaped as part of the bead manufacturing process or for tools. Whelk shells from the Gulf of Mexico were used to make beads, gorgets/pendants, pins and other ornaments for necklaces or grave goods. Smaller marginella and olivella shells were left whole or ground slightly and fashioned into small ornaments or sewn onto clothing. Freshwater mussel shells were easily found in streams around Cahokia. Prized more for utility than for beauty, mussel shells were made into digging tools and spoons or ground up to make tempering material for pottery.

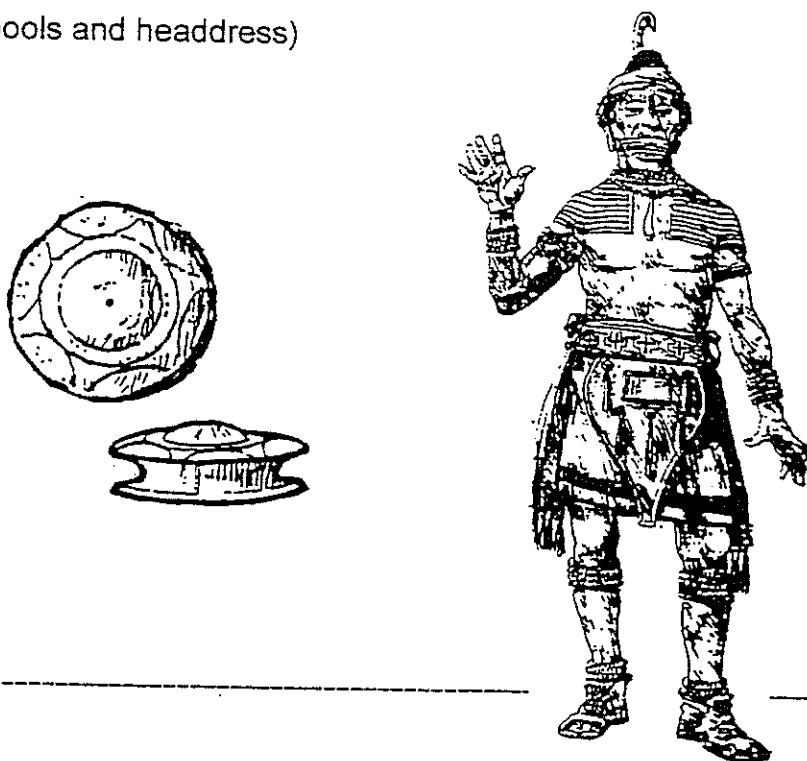
Bones were cut up or snapped and then shaped on a sandstone abrader to make beads. The beads could then be strung onto a length of tanned deer hide. Bone hairpins often had designs carved on them.

(bone bead necklace, marine shell necklace, and bone hairpin)



Copper from the Great Lakes was also used as jewelry in the form of ear spools and headdresses. Copper nuggets were pounded into the desired shape.

(Ear spools and headdress)



REPOUSEE COPPER

Copper was an important medium for artistic style in Mississippian art. Copper was shaped or decorated with patterns in relief by hammering and pressing on the reverse side, which is called repousee. Southeastern repousee copper tradition has broad stylistic and iconographic characteristic elements. Repousee copper moved more freely across the Southeast than other artifacts because of its portability and sturdiness. It may have been used to carry artistic styles to other areas of the Southeast. These styles could then be used on other art mediums such as shell engravings and pottery.

The distribution of copper artifacts in the Southeast was a broad arc across the interior from the south Georgia coast to north Florida, avoiding the Gulf Coast, through the Mississippi delta and its western tributaries, the Red and Arkansas rivers. Artifacts could travel overland from one end of the arc to the other. The greatest quantity and most diverse repousee copper was found at Spiro, Oklahoma in a burial precinct. It is the only site that produced copper plates in unfinished form, except for Cahokia in Collinsville, Illinois. Etowah, Georgia is near a known deposit of copper. Copper artifacts were also found in its burial precinct. Moundville, Alabama was the location of a unique carved wooden plaque that may have been used as a template for the manufacture of repousee copper plates.

The similarity of copper artifacts suggest a unified artistic idea and a single source of manufacture. Some archaeologists believe that Etowah was its source. But new materials with a different style were coming from the surrounding area of Etowah. This shows that Etowah was not the single source of copper. Etowah and Spiro lack evidence of local manufacturing. They seem to be the redistribution centers instead of the production centers.

There were several sources for copper. Most of the copper came from Lake Superior. Small nodules of copper were found in certain parts of the Southeast. Copper could be found in the southern Allegheny Mountain region from Virginia to Anniston, Alabama.



Figure 228. The Upper Bluff Lake repoussé copper plate, from a stone grave cemetery in Union County, Illinois, redrawn from Thomas 1894, fig. 85; size 6 x 6½ inches.

MANUFACTURING AND CARE OF COPPER BY THE MISSISSIPPIANS

Manufacturing:

- nuggets were worked by hammering, annealing, grinding, rubbing, and polishing into sheets.
- thin sheets of copper could be obtained from seams in copper bearing rocks such as in the Lake Superior area.
- plates were embossed, perforated, riveted and cut
- embossing tools:
 - sharp-pointed line tool: antler tine or bone awl
 - round-ended bead tool: antler tine or bone awl
 - relief tool: spatula used to model out legs
 - fine line groove tool: chert with its edge ground so not to cut
 - scalloping tool: chisel type edge tool to make small straight overlapping lines
 - leather or pitch of the right consistency were used as pads on which to work
 - sharp chert: to cut out figures
- copper was impressed onto wooden plaques, which had designs carved onto them. Wooden forms with and without copper covering were found at Spiro.
- to keep the edges from being bent, they were straightened by tooling the edges in alternating raised and depressed lines

Buffing:

- some plates showed signs of buffing. The plates may have been cleaned and buffed to a shine before being used in a ceremony. Some front sides showed signs of being worn smooth and rounded on the ridges.
- grinding stones and water were used for polishing

Repairing and enlarging copper:

- plates were found that had been repaired or enlarged. One plate had been enlarged by using two pieces of copper with the upper piece slightly overlapping the lower one. A large patch had been placed on the back beneath the lapping to add strength. They were held together with rivets.

USES OF COPPER:

- hair buns, headdresses
- beads, gorgets, rings, bracelets, armbands, ear & nose ornaments
- clothing ornaments, dangles on belts
- points on pikes, knives, sweat scrapers
- copper covered wooden or stone earspools and plaques
- plates / plaques: Among the historic Creek, respected elderly women would be in charge of the plates. They were used in connection with the renewal of the faith and purification for the coming year at the beginning of the Green Corn Ceremony. Three days before the stomp dance, the plates were taken out and rubbed. It was said the rubbing was done to tell if it was the proper time to hold the ceremony. The plates were polished and prepared to be displayed. The dance ground was cleaned of all growth and litter, along with removing some of the top soil. The soil was banked at the sides and could be as high as 2 ft. The plates were carried in the stomp dance by the chiefs, headmen, and certain warrior representatives.

About the Designs:

Spider

A spider appears in the center of the circle. The spider is believed to carry the world on its back as seen here. The world symbol is the circle and cross. The cross represents the four cardinal directions (N, S, E, & W). The circle is symbolic because it has no beginning or ending. The circle goes on for ever.



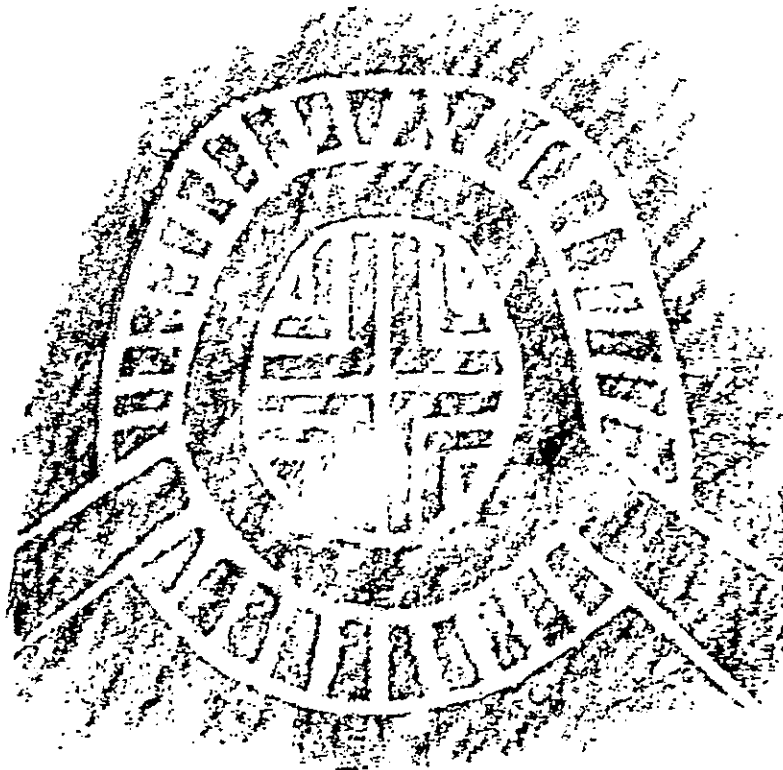
Birdman

The birdman sandstone tablet was discovered on the east side of Monks Mound. The tablet dates to around 1300 A.D. The front is a man dressed in a bird costume. The man probably represents the earth and the bird represents the sky. On the back side of the tablet is a cross-hatch design. The cross-hatch probably represents a snake skin and the underworld.



Woodhenge Winter Solstice

This design was discovered on a broken piece of pottery recovered from archaeological excavations at Woodhenge. The symbolism has been interpreted to represent the sun going across the sky on the first day of winter. On the lower right area of the design, is an open line leading into the circle. This represents the sun rising and going across the sky. The circle and cross motif representing the world can be seen in the center of the design.



ACTIVITY: EMBOSSING A COPPER NECKLACE

Gorgetts were worn as necklaces. They were made of shell, stone or copper. Some had designs engraved or embossed on them. Two holes were drilled through the gorget, so that they could be strung onto a cord.

You can make a gorget out of paper, aluminum or copper. To emboss a design you can use a template or photo-copied design.

TEMPLATES:

Place the material on the template. If you are using copper colored aluminum and place the copper side face down. The design will be raised. If the aluminum side is face down. The design will be incised.

Using the wedge end of the wooden stylus gently rub over the material. The design will start to appear. Go back over the design with the pointed end of the wooden stylus to reinforce and strength the design.

PHOTO-COPIED DESIGNS:

Designs should be photo-copied so that the originals may be retained for future use. Photo-copies may also be reduced or enlarged to fit copper blanks, and for reversed pairs, etc. Designs are 3" x 3" squares. **DO NOT USE ORIGINALS** to trace directly onto copper.

Place the design onto a square of copper colored aluminum. Lightly trace the design with the pointed end of the wooden stylus. The design can be traced onto either side of the copper colored aluminum. Symbols on the design pattern refer to which side should be tooled.

N = Negative Space. Refers to all areas which should be tooled from the front or copper side.

P = Positive Space. Refers to all areas which should be tooled from the back or aluminum side.

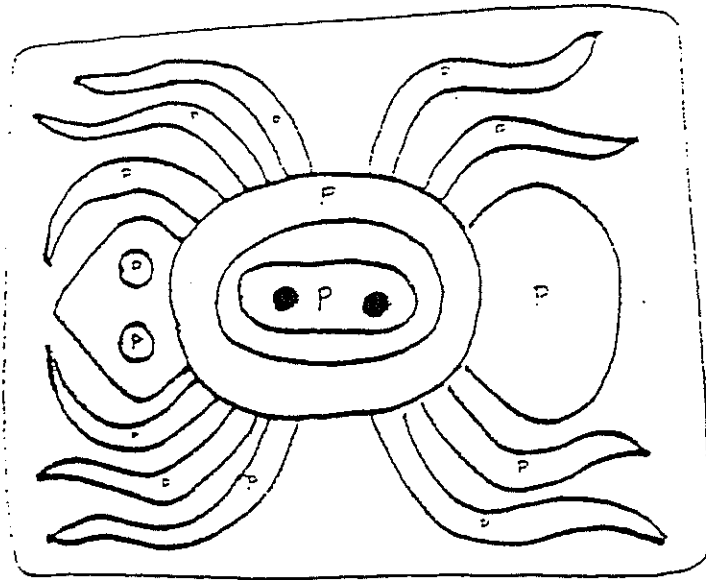
Solid Lines. Solid lines should be traced from the front side.

Dash Lines. Dashed lines should be traced from the back side.

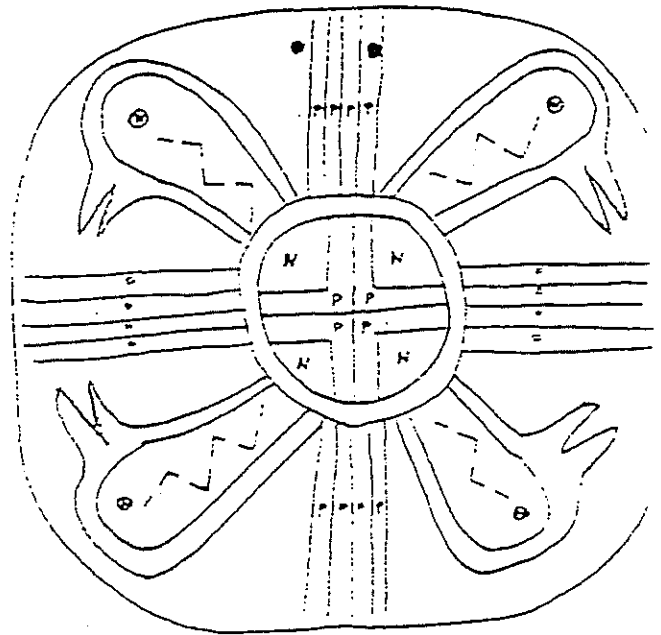
Remove the design pattern from the copper. Place a small pad of newspaper under the copper. Retrace the lines to reinforce and strengthen them. (Note: Too much pressure will puncture and split the metal.) Use the wedge end of the wooden stylus to model or raise large areas. All lines and areas that are traced or modeled from the back side will appear raised when viewed from the front. If traced from the front side the lines will appear incised.

REMEMBER: Fold over the edges of the aluminum to guard against cuts from the metal. To make the copper plate into a gorget, punch two holes at the top and run a string through it.

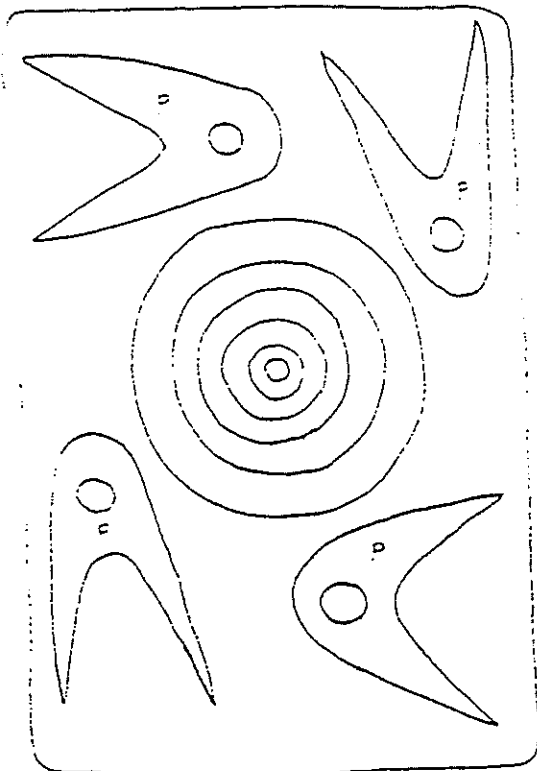
SPIDER:



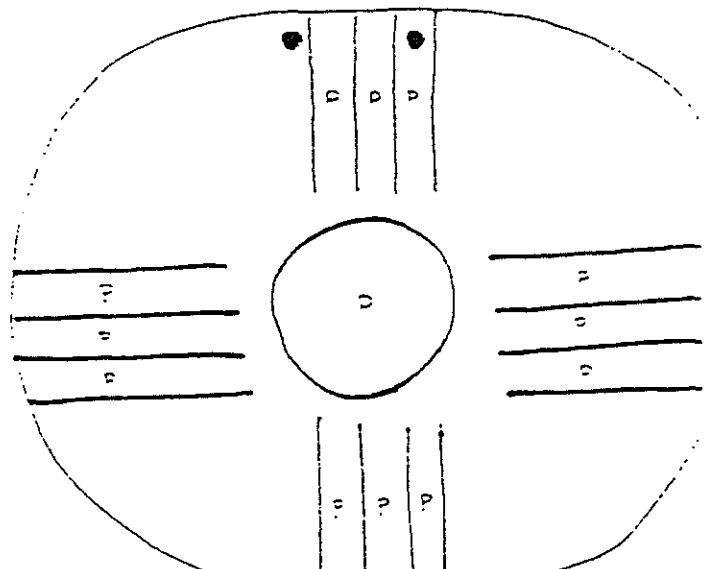
WOODPECKER:



FORKED EYES AROUND CONCENTRIC CIRCLES:



CROSS IN A CIRCLE:



WEAVING

Weaving is an ancient art, but woven material is only found occasionally in most archaeological contexts due to the perishable nature of the materials. In general, only stone, shell, bone, and pottery have lasted through the centuries. Occasionally fiber or wood materials that have been carbonized (burned to charcoal) are preserved.

Weaving involves working two basic elements: the warp and the weft. Both consist of parallel threads, cords, rods or other pliable material with one placed at a right angle to the other. The warp is the foundation or base around which the weft is interlaced.

By finger weaving, braiding, and twining, the Mississippians created fiber products.

Fiber Types:

Hair or Fur from dogs, rabbits and other fur-bearing mammals could be spun into thread for weaving or sewing.

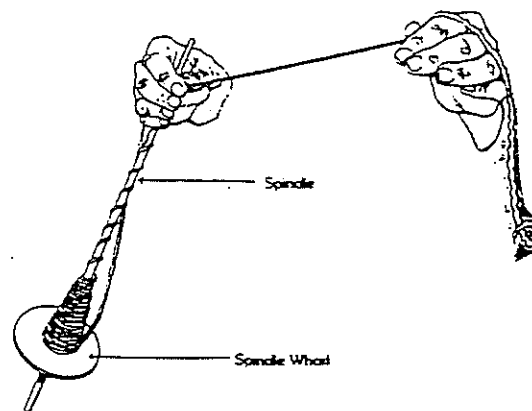
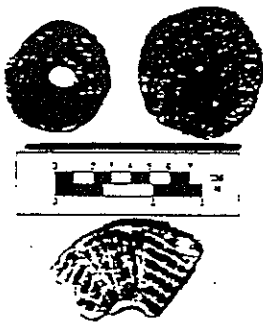
Milkweed, dogbane and nettle plants have strong, silky fibers in the stems. The stems were processed for thread for sewing and other uses.

Sinew (animal tendons, pounded and separated into fibers) was used for sewing hides together.

The inner bark of trees was used to make baskets, cordage, and some fabrics.

Spindle whorls made from broken pieces of pottery served as weights on spindles that twisted fibers together to produce thread. Gravity pulling down on the spindle twisted together the fibers that suspended it.

(Spindle whorl)



ACTIVITY: FINGER WEAVING

Finger weaving is a very old method of weaving. It is referred to as finger weaving, because you use your fingers as a loom.

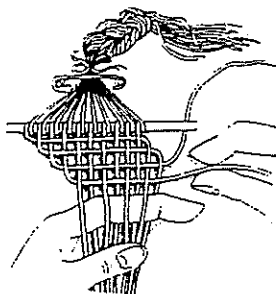
To Finger Weave

Needed Material:

4-ply yarn cut into 20 2 ½ yard lengths
¼" dowel rod or stick about 6" long
Safety pin
Small pillow

Directions:

1. Loop the middle of each length of yarn around the dowel.
(Dividing the yarn in the middle makes it easier to work with and eliminates tangles.)
2. Tie a piece of yarn around the 20 threads just above the dowel rod and secure it to the small pillow with the safety pin. See Illustration



To Begin:

1. In front of the dowel, start with the left outside thread, placing it under the second thread and then over and under all the other threads to the right. Place this thread you have over the strings of the dowel rod and out of the way. Note: It is very important to keep the order of the threads in parallel lines.
Do not allow the threads to cross out of position.
2. Go to the next thread on the left and repeat the process. When the second thread is woven to the right, pull the first thread, which you previously put under the dowel, down over the second thread. The first thread now becomes the far right thread.
3. Continue to weave from left to right.

4. In order to continue in the same direction when weaving the second half of the belt, re-pin the belt to the pillow at a point near the dowel and then remove the dowel. Take a firm hold of the loose half of the threads and pull the loops straight. Turn the belt around. Be sure you are turning the work around, not over.

5. Weave the left outside thread toward the right. Repeat with each following left thread. Continue until the second half is the same length as the first half.

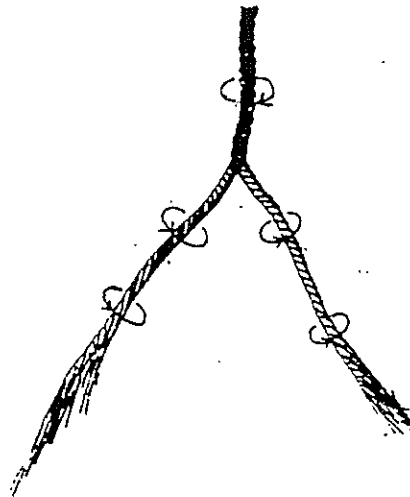
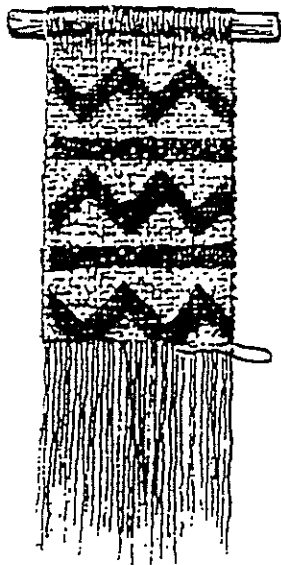
Making Fringe:

The Indians often finger weave these belts to the exact waist measurement and then make a long fringe for tying.

6. You can make fringe in different ways:
You can braid three or four strands or ply two or four ends.

To ply two ends, take the first one between your thumb and forefinger and twist tightly (until it kinks) to the right. Place a clip clothes pin on the end of the twisted strand and then place it where it will not unwind - under the pillow will do. Now, twist the second thread tightly to the right. Then pull both ends firmly together, at the same time removing the clothes pin. Start the two ends twisting to the left. The two easily ply. You may ply each pair of ends in the same way. Tie a knot at the end of each plied pair of threads and cut the fringe to an even line at the bottom.

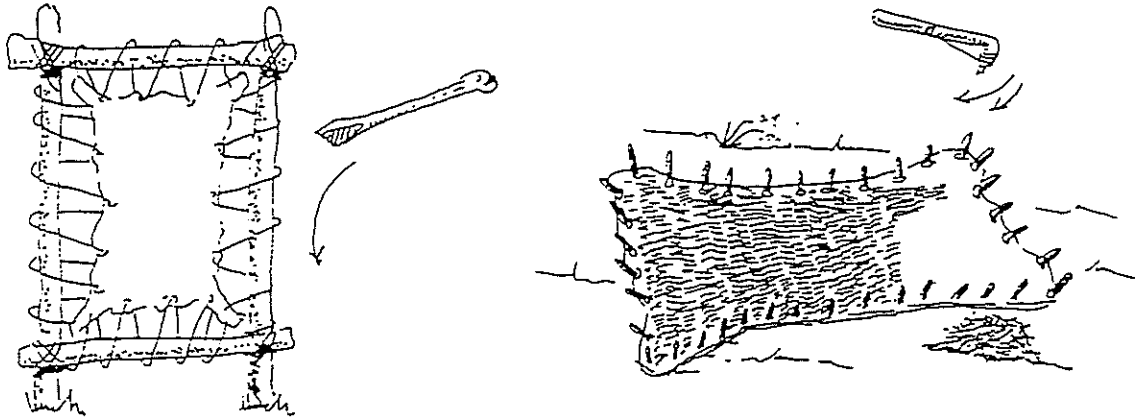
Press the belt with a damp cloth with the iron gauge set at "wool." Your first woven creation is completed.



HOW TO MAKE RAWHIDE AND TANNED DEER HIDE

The Mississippians wore tanned deer hide for much of their clothing. The following is a brief outline of the steps taken in tanning a deer hide.

A fresh hide would have been stretched on a wooden upright frame or staked on the ground. At this point a bone tool called a flesher or a chert (a form of flint) tool called a scraper was used to scrape off all the meat, fat, and membranes of the hide.



Hair removal was accomplished in two ways: 1. It could have been taken down from the frame, put in a large piece of pottery fill with water and hardwood ashes, and stirred until the hair was removed. -Or- 2. The hide was left on the frame, and the hair was scraped off with a chert scraper, starting at the neck and working down.

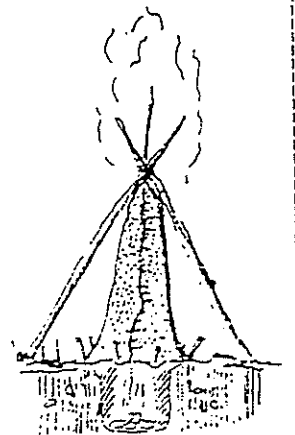
After the hair was removed, the rawhide could be stored away for later use. Rawhide was used to make drums or it could be cut into strips for lashings or lacings.

To soften the rawhide, the Mississippians would have brain-tanned the hide. They boiled the brain of a deer in water and then either rubbed the mixture into the hide or soaked the hide in the mixture. They then rolled it up and let it sit for a few hours. Then they would pull it back and forth, working the brains into the fiber, until the hide was completely dry.

Just as a baseball glove today is oiled and pounded with a fist, the rawhide was oiled (with brains) and pounded (pulled) to make it soft and pliable.



Next the hide needed to be water proofed so that if it got wet it would remain soft and flexible. This was done by allowing smoke to penetrate the hide. To smoke the hide a small pit was dug and filled with rotten wood. The wood was allowed to burn until there was no flame. Damp wood would have helped create the smoldering. A tripod of sticks was placed over the fire. The hide was sewn together to make a cone with one open end. The hide was placed over the tripod. The smoke would penetrate the hide. Both sides of the hide were done like this. The hide was then ready for use.



Chunkey Player Gorget

Chunkey was played by most of the Southeastern Indians during the contact period. The object of the game was for one player to roll a polished stone disc while his opponent threw a pole trying to hit it or to land near the disc's resting place. Prehistoric Indians depicted chunkey in their artwork.

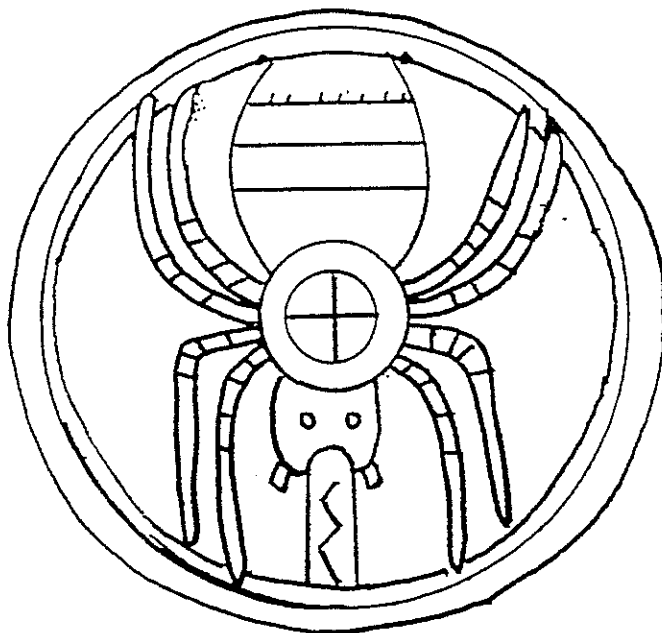
Seven chunkey player gorgets have been documented. This gorget was found in Eddyville, Tennessee. It shows a player about to roll a chunkey stone. In his left hand he is holding a broken chunkey pole. A gorget was worn as a necklace. It was made from a whelk shell from the Gulf Coast. The shell was cut and ground into a circle, then a design was craved into it. Dark pigments were rubbed into the grooves to make the design stand out.

*Teacher - You may make a copy of this page for your students to color.

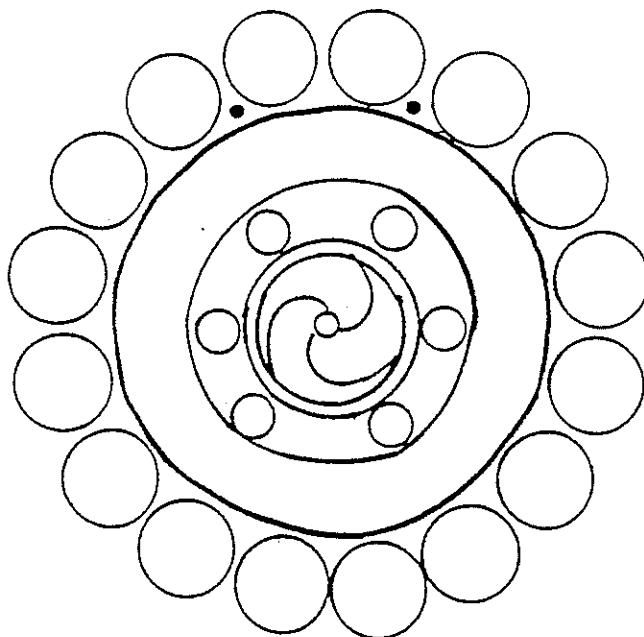
To make your own gorget, color the picture below and cut it out. Cut out the two dark circles at the top of the gorget and string some yam through the holes.



MAKE A GORGET

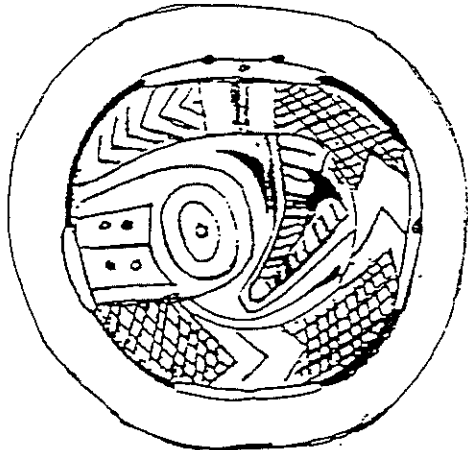
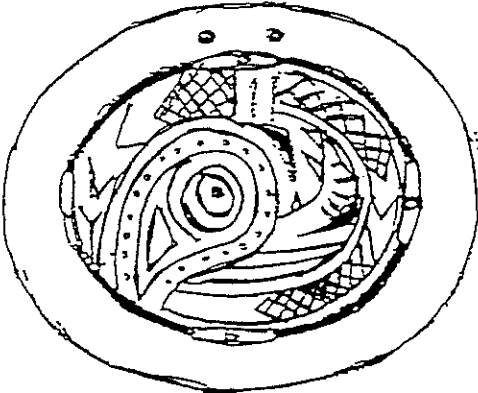
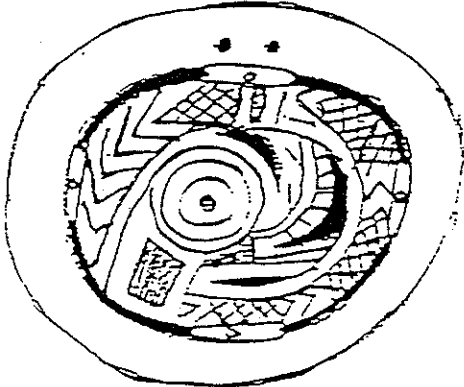
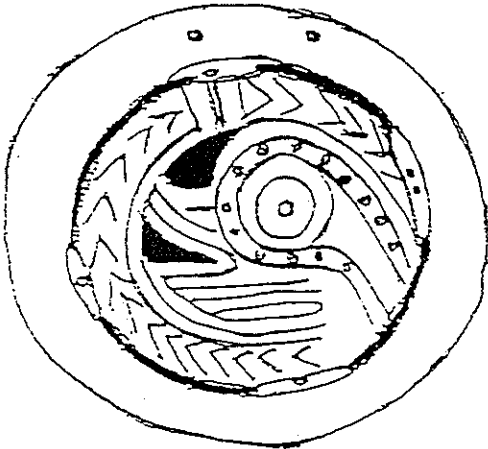
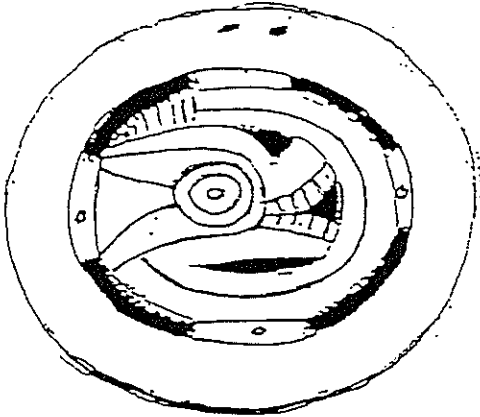
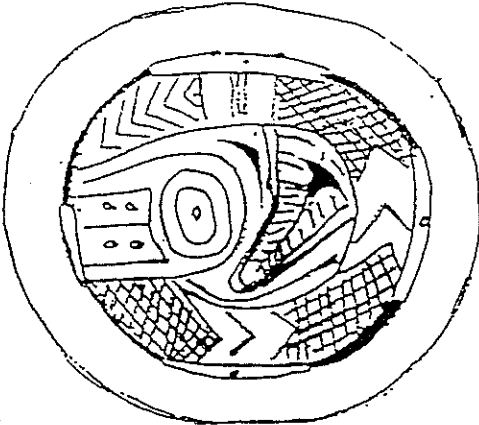


Spider Gorgets were found in both Missouri and Illinois Mounds. To make your own, simply color the picture and string some thin jute string between the two dark holes.



To make a Scalloped Gorget, simply color the picture and string some thin jute string between the two dark holes.

MATCH THE GORGETS



ALL THESE SHELL GORGETS ARE DIFFERENT, EXCEPT TWO.
FIND THE TWO AND COLOR THEM IN.

Taken from "Myths of the Cherokee" by Mooney

THE SPIDER AND THE FIRE

In the beginning, a long, long time ago, there was no fire to warm beside or use to cook. The whole world was cold...until the Great Thunders who lived high in the Upper World, sent their lightning during a terrible storm and put fire into the bottom of a hollowed out Sycamore Tree on an island.

The animals across the water on the mainland knew it was there, because they could see the billows of smoke coming out of the top of the tree. But how could they get to it? How could they cross the water and carry it back? The animals decided to hold a meeting or council to decide what to do.

Every animal that could fly or swim wanted to go after the fire. The Raven offered first. Because he was so large and strong, the group decided he could do the work and agreed to send him. The Raven flew high into the air and far across the water. Finally, it alighted on the Sycamore Tree, but while he was wondering what to do next, he looked down and saw that the heat had scorched all his beautiful feathers black. He was so frightened and upset he flew back to the mainland, totally forgetting about the fire.

Another volunteer was needed. The Screech Owl said he would go. He didn't have any trouble getting to the island and the Sycamore Tree, but while he was looking down into the hollow tree, a blast of hot air came up and nearly burned out his eyes. He struggled to fly back to the mainland, forgetting the fire. It was a long time before he could see well, and his eyes are still red to this day.

The Hooting Owl and the Horned Owl tried too, but by the time they got to the Sycamore Tree, the fire was burning so fiercely that the smoke nearly blinded them. The ashes that were carried up by the wind made white rings about their eyes. They, too, had to come back to the mainland without the fire. Even though they rubbed and rubbed, they were never able to get rid of the white rings.

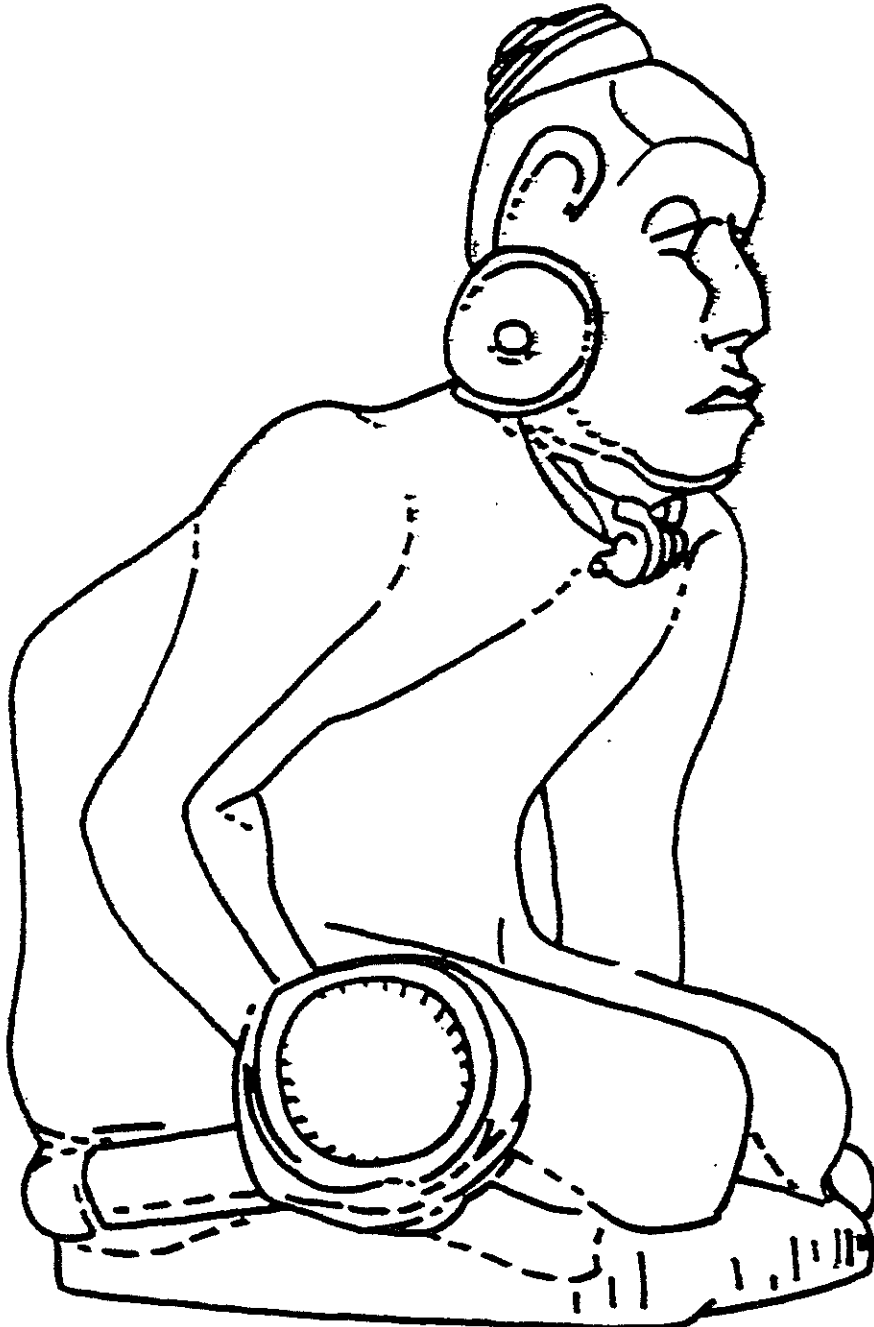
After all this trouble, none of the birds wanted to try to reach the fire. This time the little snake, the Black Racer, said he would go through the water and bring back the fire. He swam across the water to the island, slithered through the grass, and went into the tree by a small hole at the bottom. The heat and smoke were too much for him, and after dodging back and forth blindly over the hot ashes until he was almost on fire himself, he was able, only by luck, to get out again by the same hole. His entire body has been scorched black, and he has ever since had the habit of darting back and forth and doubling back on his tracks as if he were still trying to escape the burning tree.

Chunkey Stone Pipe

This carved bauxite pipe of a chunkey player was found in Eastern Oklahoma. It shows a player kneeling and rolling a chunkey stone. This pipe may have been smoked during a ritual associated with the chunkey game.

*Teacher - You may make copies of this picture for your students.

What does this carved pipe tell you about the prehistoric Indian culture? Look at the jewelry and hairstyles. Color the picture below.



Origin of the Moon

Cherokee Myth

Some elders say that the moon is a ball, which was thrown against the sky a long time ago. Two towns were playing a ball game against each other. One had the best runners and had almost won the game when the leader of the other side picked up the ball with his hands. This was not allowed in the ball game. He tried to throw it through the goal, but it struck against the solid sky vault and stayed there. Today it remains there to remind the players never to cheat.

Today when the moon looks small and pale, it is because someone has touched the ball unfairly. For this reason the ball game is only played during the time when the moon is full.

* Taken from Myths of the Cherokee. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Collected by James Mooney. pt.1 p. 257. 1900.

What is the moral of this story?

How does the story explain why the moon sometimes look small?

The Great Ball Game

A Cherokee Myth

The four footed animals once challenged the birds to a great ball game, which the birds accepted. The leaders from each team got together to make arrangements for the game and to place bets. The players gathered at the appointed spot for the ball dance. The animals met on a grassy area near a river. The birds flew to the tree tops by a ridge.

The Bear was the captain of the animal team. He was so strong that he could knock opponents out of his way. To prove his strength the Bear picked up a log and tossed it into the air. He bragged that he would do the same to the birds. The Deer was the fastest of all the animals. He could outrun all of the other animals. The Great Turtle had a tough shell, which would protect him from blows. The Great Turtle raised up on his back legs and dropped to the ground, bragging that he would crush the birds if they tried to take the ball from him. On the side of the birds were the Eagle as captain, the Hawk and the Great Tlaniswa, all of whom were powerful and swift in flight.

After the dance the birds preened their feathers and watched the animals below. They saw two little creatures, about the size of a mouse, climbing up the tree on which the captain of the birds was sitting. They asked the captain of the birds to let them play in the game. The captain looked at them and saw they were four footed. He asked them why they did not go to the animals and ask to play. The little creatures said that they had, but the animals had laughed at them because they were so small. The

The Great Blacksnake, "The Climber," decided he would try his luck. He swam over to the island and climbed up the tree on the outside, as the Blacksnake always does, but when he stuck his head down into the hole, the smoke flew up into his face, choking him. He choked so hard that he fell into the burning tree. Before he could crawl out, he was as black as the Black Racer.

Another council was called, because there was still no fire. The world was still cold. Yet, the birds, snakes, and four-footed animals all had one excuse or another for not going. They were all afraid to go near the burning Sycamore Tree. They had seen what had happened to the Raven, Screech Owl, Hooting Owl, Horned Owl, Black Racer and Blacksnake.

Finally, the Water Spider spoke. "I will go," she said quietly. Now this is not the water spider that looks like a mosquito, but the other one, with black, downy hair and red stripes on her body. She can run on top the water or dive to the bottom. She would have no trouble getting to the island, but the question was, how would she carry the fire back?

"I'll take care of that," assured the Water Spider; so then she spun a thread from her body and wove it into a "tusti" (a small bowl). She fastened the bowl on her back and started across the water. When she reached the island, she cut through the grass to the tree where the fire was still burning. She carefully placed one small coal of fire into her bowl and set off toward the mainland. When she arrived, the fire was still burning, and we have had fire ever since. The Water Spider still keeps her "tusti" (a small bowl) on her back today.



captain of the birds felt sorry for them, but how could they join the birds if they did not have wings.

The birds gathered together to come up with a solution. They decided to make wings for the little creatures. But how? Someone remembered that the drum they had used in the dance was made of groundhog skin. They got the drum and cut off a corner to make two wings. They stretched the wings with cane splints and attached them to the legs of the small creatures. They became Tlameha, the Bat. To test their new wings the captain of the birds tossed the ball into the air and told the bats to catch it. They dodged and circled, keeping the ball moving and never letting it fall to the ground. The birds were happy they let the bats join their team.

The birds saw another little creature, but they had used up all the rawhide to make the Bats' wings. There was not enough time to send for more material. Someone suggested that maybe wings could be made by stretching the animal's own skin. Two large birds grabbed the creature from opposite sides with their strong bills. They tugged and pulled and tugged and pulled until they had stretched the skin between his front and back legs. When this was done, there was Tewa, The Flying Squirrel. To test the squirrel's new skill, the captain threw the ball up into the air. The Flying Squirrel jumped off the branch and caught the ball in its teeth. He carried it through the air and landed in another tree 100 feet away.

The game was now ready to begin. The ball was tossed into the air. The Flying Squirrel caught it and carried it up into a tree. He threw it to the birds, who kept it in the air. It finally dropped towards the ground. The Bear rushed in to get it, but before it hit the ground the Martin darted in and threw it to the Bat. The Bat dodged past even the swiftest animal and threw it into the goal, winning a victory for the birds.

The Bear and Turtle who had bragged they would beat the birds did not even get to touch the ball. After the game the birds gave the Martin a gourd because he caught the ball before it hit the ground. He built his nest inside of it and he still has it today.

Because of the help the Bat and Martin gave to the bird team, ball players ask the Bat and Martin to make them quick by tying a small piece of bat wing or feather to their ball sticks or fasten it to the frame on which the sticks are hung during the ball dance.

* Taken from Myths of the Cherokee. Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Collected by James Mooney. p. 286. 1900.

According to the Cherokee myth, how did the Flying Squirrel get his Wing?

How did the Bat help the bird team win the game?

What gift did the birds give the Martin for his help in the game?

What do Cherokee ball player carry in the game to make them swift?

What is the moral of this story?

Taken from "Myths of the Cherokee" by Mooney

P&AFIP Trunk
Property of Illinois Department of
Natural Resources
Springfield, Illinois