

CHAPTER ONE

Pre-Contact: The Evidence from Archaeology

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Human beings have been present in the New World for perhaps 15,000 years, a span of time thirty times longer than the five centuries since AD 1492. During the pre-Columbian period, profound technological and social advances occurred, and population levels over the hemisphere grew from a few hundred to millions of people. The changes that occurred in these societies, and the remains they left behind, have long held a fascination for archaeological researchers in eastern North America. The first monograph produced by the Smithsonian Institution, in fact, was devoted to the mounds and earthworks of the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys (Squier and Davis, 1848). While this early literature provided valuable descriptions of sites since destroyed or modified by the growth of our own civilization, many of the ideas advanced about the mound builders themselves were quite fanciful, invoking peoples from all over the world (Silverberg, 1968). By the 1880s, however, technical monographs and papers documenting archaeological investigations in the East were appearing every year, by individuals in institutions like the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology and the Harvard Peabody Museum, as well as through the efforts of many private citizens. A major triumph of late nineteenth-century American archaeology was the demonstration, based on survey and excavation data from hundreds of sites, that the mounds and earthworks were the work of American Indians (Thomas, 1892; Willey and Sabloff, 1974, pp. 49–50).

Archaeological research in the East grew dramatically throughout the twentieth century. The discipline has been the beneficiary of major federal support since the earliest years of the Great Depression, when huge field projects were funded to provide relief to unemployed workers, support continuing with the reservoir salvage programs of the 1940s and 1950s (Lyons, 1996). The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, mandating archaeological survey and excavation in cases where significant historic properties are threatened by federally funded or licensed activities, has prompted a vast amount of fieldwork and reporting in recent years (Fagan, 2000; Smith and Ehrenhard, 1991). As a result, a massive technical literature documents the development of North American Indian culture, much of it in the form of highly specialized archaeological reports, encompassing far more information than any one person can readily access or read. Accordingly, our goal in this chapter is to provide a broad general synthesis of this research, and let the reader know where to go to find

more specific data. Our discussion spans the period of initial human colonization in the late Pleistocene through the mid-seventeenth century, and focuses on changes within American Indian societies. Major research findings from the 150 years of archaeological investigation that has occurred in eastern North America are emphasized, as well as the kinds of questions that remain to be answered. Several detailed syntheses on eastern North American prehistoric and early historic period archaeology exist, to which the interested reader is referred (Anderson and Mainfort, 2002; Anderson and Sassaman, 1996; Bense, 1994; Brown, 1994; Fagan, 2000; Grumet, 1995; Sassaman and Anderson, 1996; Smith, 1986, 1992a; Snow, 1980; Steponaitis, 1986; Willey and Sabloff, 1974).

In the course of presenting the results of archaeological research in the East, we will also outline some of the major research topics and questions that occupy the attention of contemporary scholars, as well as various competing positions when no clear agreement exists. For some of these subjects, such as the date of initial human colonization, or why complex agricultural societies arose in some areas and not in others, there are no clear answers, and the debate can be highly contentious, with research going in a number of directions. In chronological order, we discuss: (1) the peopling of the New World, (2) the beginnings of sedentary life, (3) increasing ceremonialism, (4) the rise of cultivation, (5) the beginnings of political complexity, and (6) the effects of European contact. In our discussion we will frequently refer to major time periods that also correspond to major periods of cultural development across the region. Briefly, these include (1) the Paleoindian period, which lasted from the unknown date of initial colonization until approximately 11,000 BP (years before present) or 9000 BC, and encompassed the highly mobile hunting and gathering ice-age inhabitants of the region; (2) the Archaic period from 9000 to 1000 BC, which included populations adapted to hunting and gathering, yet that also witnessed the beginnings of plant domestication, the construction of ceremonial mounds and earthworks, and the establishment of long-distance exchange networks across the region; (3) the Woodland period, which lasted from 1000 BC to AD 1000 in the Southeast, and until European contact in the Northeast, and was characterized by the widespread adoption of pottery, simple agriculture, earthen mound construction, and settled village life; and (4) the Mississippian period, which lasted from AD 1000 to 1650 in the Southeast, and was characterized by the emergence of chiefdoms, societies with hereditary rulers supported by tribute-based economies, and in many areas highly dependent on intensive maize agriculture.

The Peopling of the Americas

Archaeologists have long been interested in beginnings . . . what are the first stone tools like, where did plant and animal domestication occur, what is the earliest evidence for the use of fire, or artwork, or language, and so on. Careers have been made and in some cases tarnished by this quest for primacy. While it has become fashionable and indeed correct to say that the goals of archaeology include the resolution of broad adaptational patterns and historical processes, as well as the reconstruction of specific events and lifeways, great renown still accrues to the earliest sites of a particular type and, of course, to their discoverers. Resolving the origins of the first Americans, or Paleoindians, is no exception to this trend. While hundreds of archaeological sites are excavated in the New World every year, the popular media typically devotes consider-

able attention to those few for which a great antiquity has been advanced. While sites dating back 15, 20, and even 30 thousand years have been reported from time to time, until quite recently the evidence in support of these claims was almost invariably found to be deficient in some respect (e.g., Dincauze, 1984). Until a few years ago, in fact, no sites more than roughly 13,000 years old were accepted by more than a few members of the profession. In 1997, however, after years of debate, a site in Chile that had been dated to 15,000 years ago was accepted as valid by many archaeologists (Meltzer et al., 1997). With this finding, it became apparent that people were present in the New World much longer than previously thought, a somewhat revolutionary interpretation.

Throughout prehistory, Indians across the Americas made spear and arrow points of stone, bone, or ivory. These tools exhibit appreciable stylistic and technological variability, and as a result many forms can be dated to within a few hundred or at the most a thousand or so years. As such, the occurrence of diagnostic projectile points is one way archaeologists can quickly identify the approximate age of particular sites. Most sequences of cultural development in the Eastern Woodlands, particularly prior to the development of radiocarbon and other dating procedures, in fact, have been based on sequences of projectile point forms and, after about 3,000 years ago, when the use of ceramics became widespread, pottery types.

In 1926 a distinctive type of projectile point, characterized by a pronounced thinning flake scar running upward from the base on each face, was found in association with an extinct form of bison at Folsom, New Mexico. While these points had been reported in the technical literature prior to this, their great antiquity had not been recognized. With the Folsom discovery, which was witnessed by some of the prominent archaeologists of the day, "fluted" points were recognized as a signature of early human occupation, and they were soon found to occur throughout North America in areas that had not been covered with ice sheets or glacial lakes during the Late Pleistocene. A number of stylistic variants or types of fluted points were soon recognized, of which the earliest stratigraphically was called Clovis, after a town in eastern New Mexico near where this antiquity was demonstrated.

From the 1920s onward fluted points were found in great numbers – more than 12,000 have now been reported in the literature from the United States and Canada – sometimes in direct association with the butchered remains of large, extinct animals such as mammoth, mastodon, ground sloth, and a giant form of bison (Anderson and Faught, 1998, 2000). By the 1960s Clovis points had been radiocarbon dated to around 13,000 years ago, and were assumed to represent the first wave of colonization by people from the Old World, big game hunters that were so successful that they drove many species to extinction (Haynes, 1992). Whether what is now called the "overkill" model is correct remains a subject of heated debate among paleontologists and archaeologists, but there is one compelling piece of evidence to support it. Over the past two million years upwards of ten complete glacial-interglacial cycles have occurred worldwide, on a periodicity of about 100,000 years, and only at the end of the last one, about the time the first peoples arrived, did massive extinctions occur in North and South America. How humans may have brought about or contributed to such a dramatic event in the history of life is unknown, although superb hunting abilities, the introduction of new diseases, or the uncontrolled or widespread use of fire have all been suggested mechanisms, none of which are widely accepted. Some

archaeologists, in fact, question whether these people hunted big game very often or in many areas, particularly in eastern North America, suggesting instead that they were likely more generalized foragers, exploiting a wide range of animals and plants (Meltzer and Smith, 1986). Unfortunately, few sites yielding well-preserved subsistence remains have been found anywhere in the East at present, so this argument remains unresolved.

Throughout most of the twentieth century, efforts to document earlier, pre-Clovis cultures in the Americas were singularly unsuccessful. While many such sites were proposed, and sometimes received great fanfare, as each came to be carefully examined doubts would emerge. Learned papers were written on the rigorous standards of evidence needed to unequivocally demonstrate pre-Clovis occupations, and each new discovery was evaluated by them and debunked or deemed questionable (e.g., Dincauze, 1984; Fidel, 2000). As a result, by the 1960s it became conventional wisdom that the makers of Clovis points were the first people in the hemisphere, and that they arrived around 13,000 years ago. Earlier sites continued to be announced, and since no diagnostic projectile points were found at these locations, it was thought by some archaeologists that pre-Clovis sites would be "pre-projectile point" as well, that is, with simple flaked stone tool industries.

Eastern North America produced its share of these possible pre-Clovis sites. The most controversial was Meadowcroft Rock shelter in Pennsylvania, where nondescript tools were found in strata with associated radiocarbon dates as early as 17,650 BC (Adovasio et al., 1978). The Meadowcroft dates were immediately questioned, and an extensive and sometimes acrimonious debate has been fought back and forth in the journals for almost 20 years with no end in sight (e.g., Haynes, 1992). Meadowcroft was not alone, however. At the Page-Ladson site in northern Florida, several radiocarbon dates between 14,000 and 14,500 BP were obtained from a level containing a mastodon tusk with possible cut marks on it (Dunbar and Webb, 1996). A radiocarbon date of $12,030 \pm 200$ (c. 14,000 BP) was obtained from the Little Salt Springs site in southern Florida on a wooden spear apparently used to kill a giant Pleistocene tortoise (Clausen et al., 1979).

But the nail in the coffin for the view of the primacy of the Clovis culture did not come from eastern North America, but from excavations at the Monte Verde site in Chile (Dillehay, 1989, 1997). Here in the extreme end of the hemisphere, an occupation dating back to around 14,000 years ago was found and extensively documented. Like the original Folsom discovery, Monte Verde was visited by a blue ribbon panel of experts, including some of the top proponents of the "Clovis First Model," who pronounced it authentic (Meltzer et al., 1997). The one difference, however, is that this time the visit occurred after the excavations were over, and so a few skeptics remain unconvinced (i.e., Fiedel, 1999, 2000). Their position, however, is now viewed about the same way that scholars advancing pre-Clovis sites were received previously. Breaking the "Clovis Barrier" however, took archaeologists almost three-quarters of a century, and in the new frontier we no longer have any clear idea as to when people actually did arrive, although most scholars think 15,000 years ago is a probable minimum age.

If people could reach lower South America by 14,000 years ago, they could have likely reached most other areas by then or even earlier, including eastern North America. It is now widely accepted that there were people in the Americas prior to the Clovis

culture, and the hunt is on for their sites. At both the Cactus Hill site in Virginia and the Topper site in South Carolina, stone tool industries have been found stratigraphically below Clovis, although dating and associations remain somewhat uncertain (Goodyear, 2000; McAvoy and McAvoy, 1997). Interestingly, at Cactus Hill large triangular stone projectile points were found in the lowest levels which have been traditionally assumed to date much later in time. Pre-Clovis, accordingly, may not necessary have been pre-projectile point. Instead, the points that were used by these first peoples resembled later forms, and are only now being recognized. The fact these early remains are so few and far between, however, suggests that they likely represent visits by very small groups who died without issue, so-called “failed migrations,” or else the remains of early continuous settlement, by such low numbers of people that the archaeological record they produced is nearly invisible.

Where the distinctive Clovis fluted point manufacturing technology itself originated remains unknown, however, and appreciable effort has been directed to locating source areas, in places as far removed as extreme northeastern Asia, Alaska, on the High Plains, in the Southeast, or even the Upper Paleolithic of western Europe. To this day we don't know where the “first” fluted points were made. Even though by far and away the greatest numbers of fluted points occur in eastern North America – almost ten times as many occur east of the Mississippi than west of this drainage – only a few scholars have argued that Clovis technology could have originated in this region. It remains identified, perhaps incorrectly, as a High Plains/southwestern culture, a lingering legacy of the fact that this was where the first major sites were found. Perhaps the most important archaeological development in recent years has been the profession's shift away from the Clovis first model. A major research focus for the foreseeable future, however, will continue to be “When and how were the Americas first peopled?”

Settling In: Beginnings of Sedentism in Eastern North America

The end of Clovis culture occurred about 12,500 BP, about the same time that the major Late Pleistocene extinctions were over. The last 1,500 years of the Paleoindian period, from 12,500 to 11,000 BP, witnessed a diversification of point forms across the Eastern Woodlands, and a dramatic increase in the number of sites. Populations were clearly growing, although we remain uncertain about the rate. Many of the new point forms were restricted to fairly small areas, no more than a few hundred miles in extent, and it is thought that these marked the beginnings of distinctive subregional cultures. Projectile point use changed as well, from lanceolate-shaped forms used primarily for spearing game, to serrated forms that were used as combination spear points and knives. Point edges were sharpened over and over by the removal of small flakes until some showed distinct beveling along their margins. The change in point forms is thought due, in part, to an increased need to kill and process large numbers of small animals, such as deer, rather than the occasional larger animals like mammoth or mastodon that were taken previously. While this trend toward smaller game is undoubtedly correct, it is also likely that human populations at all time levels, including the earliest Paleoindian peoples, ate whatever they could get when food supplies were low.

The Archaic period, which begins after 11,000 BP, was traditionally thought to have been the time when human populations in eastern North America became fully adapted

to post-glacial climate, vegetation, and animal populations. Over time, and as human populations grew, group ranges became progressively smaller, first perhaps along one or more river systems, then to within a single drainage, and finally to within portions of single drainages. Until recently, conventional wisdom had it that Archaic peoples were primarily mobile hunters and gatherers. There was little evidence for sedentism, the permanent, year-round occupation of specific locations. As group ranges contracted, and peoples spent more and more time in smaller and smaller areas, some places came to be visited over and over again. In some areas, both on the coast and along rivers in the interior, massive piles of shellfish and other debris ("midden" in archaeological parlance) accumulated, suggesting extended occupations. These sites only rarely produced evidence for substantial structures that could have been used year round, however, and examination of the plant and animal remains (to determine what season they were collected) suggested that many interior sites were seasonal rather than year-round occupations (Marquardt and Watson, 1983).

Existing models of settlement during the Early Archaic period, from *c.* 11,000 to 8500 BP, include appreciable seasonal movement of small band-level societies (i.e., small groups of *c.* 25–50 people related by kinship and marriage ties), with annual fall aggregation events by multiple bands for trade and marriage purposes. That extensive group movement occurred is accepted by everyone, although appreciable debate centers on the details, such as how often and how far people may have moved from season to season, where aggregation events may have occurred and how many people may have participated, and what species of plants and animals were exploited. Wild plant and animal foods made up the entire diet, although local populations were undoubtedly growing increasingly familiar with their natural environment, and some plant species that were later domesticated may have begun to be collected intensively at this time.

By the Middle Archaic period, from *c.* 8500 to 5500 BP, there is evidence for more restricted mobility in many parts of the region, something unquestionably brought on, in part, by increasing population levels. Post-glacial warming was at its peak at this time, with average temperatures warmer than at any point in the last 10,000 years, save perhaps for the past decade. As such, this mid-Holocene warm interval may offer clues to what climate might be like in a few decades if global warming trends continue (Anderson, 2001). Some areas in eastern North America appear to have been abandoned or greatly depopulated, particularly portions of the southeastern Gulf and Atlantic coastal plains, where pine forests replaced hardwoods, providing less food for both game animals and the human groups that preyed upon them. What conditions were like for human populations over the region, in fact, is the subject of appreciable research and debate. Large sites characterized by dense accumulations of occupational debris, particularly shellfish, for example, appeared in a number of the major river valleys in the Southeast and Midwest, and towards the end of the period large shell middens were present along the coast as well. The occurrence of these sites has long been thought to have been due, in part, to a retrenchment of populations into particularly favored areas during the mid-Holocene.

Large sites continued to occur in many areas of the Southeast and Midwest throughout the Late Archaic period, from approximately 5500–3000 BP. In many cases the accumulated deposits were several feet thick, and had large numbers of firepits, human burials, and postholes from structures. Appreciable research has been directed to delimiting whether these were occupied seasonally or year round, and hence reflect the

beginnings of true sedentism. While most occupations continued to be seasonal, some sites do indeed appear to have been occupied throughout the year, at least in coastal areas, such as at Horr's Island in southern Florida (Russo, 1991). Conversely, there is little evidence of sedentary life in New England during the Middle Archaic, although there are some (seasonally?) occupied shell middens (Snow, 1980).

During the Middle and Late Archaic periods across much of eastern North America, appreciable evidence appears for substantial house construction activity (Sassaman and Ledbetter, 1996), the beginnings of violent conflict between groups (Maria Smith, 1996), the establishment of long-distance trading networks spanning much of the region (Johnson, 1994) and, as will be detailed in the next section of this chapter, increasing ceremonialism manifested in large-scale earthwork construction. Wild plants were utilized extensively, and by the Late Archaic, some local plants were being cultivated for their starchy or oily seeds, such as chenopodium, sunflower, and maygrass, as well as a local squash (B. Smith, 1992a; Cowan, 1997). The Late Archaic also witnessed the so-called "container revolution" in which pottery or stone vessels appeared from Florida through the Carolinas, but this technology did not spread very far until the subsequent Woodland period (B. Smith, 1986; Sassaman, 1993). How sedentism ties in with all of these other changes that were occurring is a topic that will receive much more research in the near future. Crucial to this will be the careful analysis of seasonal indicators found in archaeological sites, such as plant and animal resources available only at certain times of the year.

Ceremonialism, Warfare, and Exchange

While all modern human groups engage in religious and ritual activity, in many hunting and gathering societies archaeological evidence for this kind of behavior tends to be rare. The same is true in eastern North America, at least during the Paleoindian and Early Archaic periods. Few clearly ritual or ceremonial artifacts are known, although in some areas unusually large and well-made projectile points have been found that are thought to have been used in some kind of ritual behavior, possibly intended to promote interaction and alliances between groups (Walthall and Koldehoff, 1998). Typically, burials tend to have few associated grave goods, as was the case at the terminal Early Archaic/initial Middle Archaic period Windover site in Florida, where bodies were wrapped in cloth and placed in pond/bog deposits, offering excellent preservation of the textiles, but also showing little else was present (Doran and Dickel, 1988). Exceptions sometimes do occur, such as at the Sloan site late Paleoindian period cemetery area in northeast Arkansas, where a number of burials were found with clusters of finely made stone tools, many in mint condition (Morse, 1997). Caches of unusually well-made stone tools are also sometimes found with no evidence for an associated burial, which may also reflect some kind of ceremonial behavior. Elaborate artwork on cave or rockshelter surfaces, or rock art in general, however, has not been well documented until the Woodland period and after in eastern North America (Simak et al., 1997).

Beginning in the Middle Archaic, evidence for extensive ceremonial behavior appears in a number of parts of eastern North America. Burials with elaborate grave goods of worked shell, bone, stone, and copper, signaling individual status and in some cases group affiliation, appeared in many parts of the region. Many of these

goods were exchanged over great distances, suggesting increased interaction between groups. Not all of this interaction was friendly, as many burials resulted from violent death, as evidenced by broken bones, embedded projectile points, and scalping marks. As populations grew and mobility decreased, competition and interaction between groups appears to have increased, perhaps as people were forced closer and closer together on the landscape. This competition was held in a number of arenas, such as for personal status items as indicated by the growth in exchange networks, for food or other natural resources as suggested by the increased evidence for warfare, and in collective ceremonial behavior, as reflected in the construction and use of elaborate mound centers. Some of these processes may have been mutually exclusive while others worked in tandem.

While some scholars might argue that ceremonialism would more likely have increased following the adoption of a sedentary lifestyle, complex ceremonialism in the form of mound building is actually earlier than any conclusive evidence for sedentism in many parts of eastern North America. Years ago, James Tuck (McGhee and Tuck, 1977) demonstrated burial mound construction at the L'Anse Amour site in Labrador dating back to 8000 BP. This was a small mound constructed of stone and earth covering the burial of a 12-year-old child. The people who constructed this monument were seasonally mobile hunters and gatherers.

In the lower Mississippi Valley, the conventional archaeological wisdom until quite recently held that earthen mound construction was first practiced by the Poverty Point culture of the Late Archaic period, from around 4200 to 3000 BP. Poverty Point is an elaborate site located in northeast Louisiana with a massive bird effigy mound some 70 feet high, making it the second tallest earthen mound in Eastern North America. In addition, a number of smaller mounds are nearby, and the primary mound fronts on an elaborate complex of six concentric earthen rings some 1,200 meters ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile) in diameter. There is an abundance of occupational debris, suggesting many people lived at the site, although at present it is not known whether residence was year-round or less permanent. Poverty Point was the largest of a number of contemporaneous mound centers in the vicinity of the lower Mississippi Valley, and these peoples exchanged a wide range of materials back and forth, and obtained raw materials from across much of the lower Southeast and into parts of the Midwest. That such an elaborate culture could seemingly spring up so quickly, however, puzzled archaeologists for many years (Gibson, 1996b).

We now know that massive earthen mound complexes were being built at a much earlier time in parts of the region, well back into the Middle Archaic period prior to 5000 BP (Russo, 1994a). In Louisiana, the Frenchman's Bend site has radiocarbon dates between 5100 and 5600 BP, the Hedgepeth site has dates from 4900 to 7500 BP, and the Watson Brake site has dates from 5300 to 5900 BP (Saunders et al., 1994, 1997; Gibson, 1996a). These are not isolated mounds, but are huge complexes with multiple mounds in some cases connected by earthen embankments. One of the most complex sites is Watson's Brake, where the main period of construction occurred between about 5400 to 5000 BP (Saunders et al., 1997). This site consists of 11 mounds, seven of which are connected by a circular ridge/midden deposit. The largest mound is over 7 meters high, and the entire complex extends almost 300 meters across. Analyses of plant and animal remains from the site suggest seasonal occupation, in the spring, summer, and fall. The recognition of these large, complex Middle Archaic mound sites, dating up to 2,000 years earlier than Poverty Point, has been another revolution-

ary change in our understanding of eastern North American prehistory in recent years, comparable to the implications of the Monte Verde dating (Russo, 1994a).

These Louisiana sites are not alone in their antiquity. Mound sites from Florida are also very early, although in this region both shell and earth were used as construction materials (Russo, 1994b). At the Horr's Island site on the southwest Florida coast, a complex arrangement of mounds was constructed between 4600 and 5000 BP. Analysis of subsistence remains indicates that this site was occupied year around, furthermore, indicating true sedentism, the earliest evidence for this in the region. Apparently the abundant marine resources allowed an early sedentary lifestyle. Excavations at Horr's Island found minimal evidence for social differentiation, suggesting the mound building was likely the work of an egalitarian society, albeit one in which some groups may have had higher status or prestige than others (Russo, 1991). Other societies were also building elaborate mounds at an early date. The Tick Island mound site in northeastern Florida, for example, was built about 5,000 to 5,500 years ago (Russo, 1994b, pp. 106–8). Rock and earthen mounds were also built in the Nebo Hill culture of the lower Missouri River valley, and in the Helton and Titterington phase cultures of Illinois and Missouri from 5000 to 4000 BP (Claassen, 1996, p. 243).

Other elaborate Middle and Late Archaic cultures are known from across eastern North America, among which perhaps the best known archaeologically are the Shell Mound Archaic cultures of the mid-South and lower Midwest (Claassen, 1996; Marquardt and Watson, 1983), the Benton Interaction Sphere in the lower mid-South (Johnson and Brookes, 1989), the Stallings Island Culture of Georgia and South Carolina (Sassaman, 1993), the Mount Taylor culture of the St. Johns river valley of northeastern Florida (Piatak, 1994), and the Old Copper culture of the Great Lakes region (Stoltman, 1986). All appear to have been involved at varying levels of participation in the long-distance exchange networks spanning much of the region at this time. While still considered egalitarian societies, it is clear that some were fairly complex, and that some individuals had much higher status than others, and likely competed with other such individuals in their own and other societies for recognition and leadership in warfare, exchange, and probably the direction of public construction episodes and ceremony.

What is the significance of mound building activity? Mike Russo (1994b: 108) believes that the early mounds served the same purposes as later mound constructions, that is, they were built as “sacred places, as burial places, as centers of ceremony and ritual, and as territorial markers” and that mound building may have been a “mechanism for integrating the society.” Were these populations sedentary? Jon Gibson (1994) points out that many of these sites are located in highly favorable ecological niches that might have promoted a sedentary lifestyle. He goes on to note, however, that we simply do not have firm archaeological data, in the form of sufficient food remains, house remains, and trash deposits, to determine if many early mound builders were sedentary or mobile hunter-gatherers. Research will continue on this problem of the relationship of sedentism and mound building, as well as how these factors tie in to evidence for exchange, warfare, and more complex forms of social organization.

The Emergence of Agriculture

Eastern North America represents one of the few areas on earth where the independent domestication and subsequent extensive cultivation of a number of native plant

species is thought to have occurred. Between 4000 and 3000 BP, at the close of the Late Archaic period, morphological changes indicative of domestication are observed in a number of local plants whose remains have been found on archaeological sites (Smith, 1992a, p. 287). These changes include an increase in seed size to well beyond the average occurring in wild populations in sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) and sumpweed (*Iva annua*), and a decrease in seed coat thickness in goosefoot (*Chenopodium berlandieri*). Other plants that were domesticated include maygrass (*Phalaris caroliniana*), knotweed (*Polygonum erectum*), little barley (*Hordeum pusillum*), and local cucurbits or gourds. Knotweed, maygrass, and little barley are assumed to have been cultivated since they are found in archaeological settings far outside their natural range. It has recently been argued that a local variety of squash was also domesticated (Cowan, 1997). Taken together, these species are sometimes referred to as the "Eastern Agricultural Complex." This was apparently a true independent domestication of local plants by indigenous populations, who had been collecting them for millennia prior to this in their wild state.

Tropical species like maize, tobacco, and beans appear to have come into the East appreciably later, well into the Woodland period. These introductions occurred well after local domestication was under way, although evidence for earlier contact has not been unequivocally ruled out. It should be noted in passing that these tropical domesticates are the only "artifacts" of unequivocal, albeit very indirect Mesoamerican origin known from eastern North America. That is, there is no evidence at present for direct contact between the two regions, although over time agricultural products appear to have moved across the intervening areas, probably as they were adopted from group to group. The nutritional value of the Eastern Agricultural Complex plants is extremely high, with some "oily seeds" like sunflower and marshelder proving to be excellent sources of fat, and other "starchy seeds" like goosefoot, maygrass, and knotweed excellent sources of carbohydrates. Harvest yields comparable to those for maize can be obtained from some of these plants, on the order of 500 to 1,000 or more kg of seeds per hectare, although whether yields of this magnitude were obtained in the prehistoric Eastern Woodlands remains unknown (Smith, 1992a, p. 177). The role of these plants in the economies of eastern North American populations has become an important area of research. Bruce Smith (1986) has suggested that Woodland peoples in some parts of the mid-South and lower Midwest may have grown large fields of *Chenopodium* and other crops, and were true agriculturists, not simple gardeners. Human paleofeces recovered from Salts Cave in Kentucky show that some of these plants made a substantial contribution to the diet of Woodland peoples in this area. Pollen analyses suggest that fairly extensive forest clearing was taking place in some parts of the region by the middle portion of the Woodland period, additional evidence for possible cultivation. Taken together, these lines of evidence suggest that cultivation of plants was growing increasingly important (Smith, 1992b, pp. 108-11).

Two competing theories about how the process of domestication occurred are now debated. The first, the "weedy floodplain" hypothesis, suggests that these plants were first collected from and then encouraged to grow in the disturbed habitats in and near major earth and shell mound sites of the mid-South and lower Midwest (Smith, 1992a). An alternative hypothesis suggests that these plants were collected in adjoining upland areas, or in more hilly and mountainous parts of the Southeast like the Ozarks and the Cumberland Plateau, since that is where many of the domesticated specimens are found

(Gremillion, 1996, 2002). These two perspectives may be complementary, related more to factors of preservation, which are better in upland dry caves and rockshelters than in damp floodplain areas, although this remains to be fully explored.

While steps toward domestication were being taken in some parts of the region, and cultigens were assuming increasing importance in the diet, in other areas the hunting and gathering of wild foods continued well into the Woodland period (Fritz, 1993; Fritz and Kidder, 1993; Gremillion, 2002). Evidence for the use of domesticates during the Archaic and Woodland periods is rare on the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain and in Florida, and in the lower Mississippi Valley. Why this is the case is uncertain, although it is thought that in areas of low population density such resources were not needed, while in ecologically rich areas they were unnecessary.

With regard to this latter point, in the 1950s, Joseph Caldwell (1958) coined the phrase "Primary Forest Efficiency" to describe the economic basis of eastern North American populations that made only minimal use of agriculture. In his view, after dozens of generations of experimentation with plants and hunting strategies during the Archaic period, by the Late Archaic or Woodland period local populations had achieved the ability to maximize the subsistence potential of wild plant and animal resources. Caldwell had excavated archaeological sites in parts of the Midwest and Southeast with large storage pits full of acorns, hickory nuts, and other local resources, and believed that efficient use of wild resources, along with well-developed storage techniques, could enable people to live a sedentary lifestyle in permanent villages. This process, he thought, had taken thousands of years. We now know that far back into the Archaic local peoples were aware of the subsistence potential of many of the plant and animal species around them, yet chose to avoid a sedentary life (e.g., Ford, 1985; Smith, 1992a). Given a low regional population density, they did not need to turn to these resources, or intensify their production, or settle at one location for very long, except perhaps during times of stress.

Eastern North America is thus an important area to study the beginnings of plant domestication and the shift from a primarily hunting and gathering economy to one based largely on domesticated plants. Questions that are being explored include how the process of plant domestication proceeded, and how agricultural food production may be related to population pressure, decreased group mobility, local and regional environmental conditions, or sociopolitical complexity. A particularly promising area for research encompasses the signatures various diets leave behind in human skeletal remains. People ingesting appreciable quantities of tropical cultigens such as maize, for example, have different ratios of stable carbon isotopes than people who ate local wild or domesticated plants. Because of this, we know that although maize was introduced into the East some time around 2,000 years ago, it did not contribute much to the diet of local peoples until a thousand years later, in the Mississippian period in the Southeast and Midwest, and not until appreciably later in parts of the Northeast. In some areas, in fact, maize agriculture was never adopted, or else played a minor role in subsistence. Why this was the case is unknown, as are the reasons why most of the Eastern Agricultural Complex species were apparently largely replaced by maize during the Mississippian period. Was maize easier to grow, harvest, or process, or more nutritious when used in combination with other species like beans and squash? All of these questions will be the subject of appreciable research in the years to come.

Rise of Political Complexity

Anthropologists have been interested in understanding how complex societies developed since the very beginnings of the field in the mid-nineteenth century. Many early anthropologists were avowed evolutionists, as exemplified by works like Lewis Henry Morgan's (1877) *Ancient Society*, which classified human societies into a series of successive stages from Savagery to Barbarism to Civilization. Interest in cultural evolution has waxed and waned within the broader discipline of anthropology over the past century, but within archaeology itself there has always been strong interest in first recognizing cultural change and then trying to understand the circumstances and processes that brought it about. Given archaeology's subject matter, the material remains of past human behavior that typically accumulated over long periods of time, it is not surprising that appreciable effort should be directed toward learning how and why the archaeological record formed the way it did. That is, to understand the behavior that produced the sites and assemblages that we find, we need to consider what past settlement, subsistence, and political systems were like, and the changes they may have undergone over time.

Eastern North America is an ideal laboratory to explore the evolution of cultural complexity. Complex tribal and perhaps chiefdom level societies are assumed to have emerged in parts of the region during the Woodland period, from about 1500 BC to AD 1000, and continued into the Mississippian period. During the Paleoindian and earlier parts of the Archaic period, in contrast, populations in the East likely lived in small bands of from 25 to 50 people. These groups met from time to time and interacted over large areas, but each was autonomous in subsistence production. All were essentially egalitarian, with no formal leadership positions beyond those individuals could achieve through their own abilities. Sometime in the Archaic, and certainly by the Woodland period, more complex, tribal-level social formations emerged. Tribes are groupings of numerous bands or somewhat larger sized social segments that are fused together through the existence and operation of institutions such as systems "of intermarrying clans, of age grades, or military or religious societies, which cross cut the primary segments" (Sahlins, 1961, pp. 93-4). Exactly when tribal organizations emerged in eastern North America is unknown, and they are particularly difficult to recognize archaeologically (Braun and Plog, 1982; Parkinson, 2002). The large mound complexes of the Middle Archaic are, however, increasingly thought to have been built by peoples with this kind of social organization (Anderson, 2002).

Chiefdoms are much easier to recognize archaeologically. These societies were characterized by hereditary leadership classes, and typically extended across a number of communities, with decision-making centralized in the hands of elites. Individual communities in chiefdoms, like those in tribal and band-level societies, were economically self-sufficient. Access to resources within local populations, however, was unequal. The chiefly elites could mobilize tribute from commoners to fuel their social, religious, or political agendas, although their ability to do so appears to have been scale-dependent, that is, related to the size and complexity of the chiefdom (Feinman and Neitzel, 1984, p. 57). A substantial literature documents the archaeological recognition of chiefdoms, with procedures including the analyses of site distributions for the presence of settlement hierarchies, the inspection of burials for evidence of different social strata, and examination of housing, settlement size, and

artifact categories for status markers or other evidence indicating unequal access to resources.

Woodland societies across much of eastern North America are considered to have been predominantly tribal-level societies, while Mississippian societies in the Southeast and lower Midwest were chiefdoms. How did these social forms emerge and evolve over time? Competition between individuals and societies in the region for prestige goods, natural resources, and status, we have seen, dates back thousands of years, well back into the Archaic period. The fact that monumental construction activity, long-distance exchange, and warfare were all occurring upwards of 5,000 years ago in parts of the region suggests that societies more complex than simple bands had emerged (Anderson, 2002; Bender, 1985). Perhaps the clearest evidence for the emergence of tribal societies during the Archaic period is monumental architecture, whose construction was likely conducted by a great many cooperating people linked together by common ritual or purpose. How to recognize the existence of pan-tribal social institutions linking tribal segments together over large areas, of course, is a major challenge. It is also possible that the earliest tribal forms were the most weakly integrated, making their recognition even more difficult. The major centers of the Middle and Late Archaic, however, may well have been formed by the actions of one or more tribal-level groups, whose segments were ordinarily dispersed across the landscape, but that periodically came together for exchange, ritual, and cooperation in construction.

During the early part of the Woodland period after about 1500 BC, pottery, which had appeared about 1,000 years earlier in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, was widely adopted and used across the region. Long-distance exchange declined markedly, however, and across the region people appear to have been living in small, more-or-less egalitarian groups, with community size on the order of a few dozen people, or several families. Earthen burial mounds occur in many areas, and for much of the twentieth century archaeologists considered the Woodland period to be the time when mound building and pottery use originated, something we now know to be incorrect. Mortuary facilities were often located away from settlements, suggesting they served to bring together peoples from a number of communities (Clay, 1998). Over time and in some areas, mound burial came to be reserved for fewer, presumably higher status individuals.

By the Middle Woodland period, from about 300 BC to AD 400, long-distance exchange networks had re-emerged, spectacular mounds and earthwork complexes were built in many areas, similarities in iconography and ritual behavior are evident across wide areas, and some individuals were buried in elaborate tombs within or under massive mounds. This behavior has come to be known as Hopewellian interaction, after the type site in Ohio where spectacular remains were found late in the nineteenth century (Brose and Greber, 1979; Pacheco, 1996). Many differing societies were present within the region, of course, whose participation in this interaction network varied greatly. Native cultigens are thought to have played a major role in the diet in some areas, although this remains to be well documented. Maize, while present in some areas, was not used extensively. Tribal societies are assumed to have been present, since there is no evidence for hereditary leadership positions. Besides enhancing individual status, tribal-scale interaction and exchange likely helped reduce the possibility of warfare and subsistence uncertainty for everybody, by creating ties between different groups.

The spectacular individual burials and associated grave assemblages are assumed to commemorate highly successful individuals, who were able to enlist the help of their communities in the pursuit of their social and ritual agendas. These have been called "Big Man" societies (B. Smith, 1986), a form of social organization best known from Melanesia. It must be noted, however, that the ethnographic examples offered of Big Man societies are nowhere near as complex as some of the Hopewellian societies of the Eastern Woodlands appear to have been (Sahlins, 1963, 1972, pp. 248–55). In the ethnographic cases, the Big Men typically had reputations for generosity and gift giving, while many of the Eastern Woodlands folks apparently "took it with them" when they died. Likewise, monumental construction is absent or minimal in most of the ethnographic cases. Accordingly, if Big Men (and Women) were present, how these individuals participated in the collective ceremony and monumental construction that characterize the more elaborate Middle Woodland societies needs to be determined.

During the Late Woodland period from *c.* AD 400 to 1000, a marked decline in interaction occurred, evidence for warfare increased, and major population growth is indicated in many areas, with settlements found scattered over the landscape. The bow and arrow appeared and spread rapidly over the region. While the bow was once thought to have contributed to the collapse of Hopewellian interaction, by making warfare more advantageous than exchange or ritual, we now know the actual introduction of this technology dates several hundred years later in many areas, to between *c.* AD 600 and 800 (Blitz, 1988; Nassaney and Pyle, 1999). By the end of the Woodland period, chiefdoms are thought to have emerged in the central and lower Mississippi Valley, and intensive maize agriculture was practiced in some areas. Major civic-ceremonial centers characterized by temple/mortuary mounds arranged around plazas appeared at this time in the lower Mississippi Valley. This site type is the hallmark of chiefly centers in the ensuing Mississippian period, from *c.* AD 1000 to 1550, when they occurred widely across the Southeast and lower Midwest.

During the Mississippian period, chiefdoms based on intensive maize agriculture were present in many parts of the region, long-distance exchange networks reemerged, and warfare was endemic in many areas. Chiefdom societies formed, expanded, and collapsed across the region, with the growth of one society typically at the expense of others. Regional maps constructed covering this interval at century by century intervals show whole areas being occupied and abandoned, in pattern akin to blinking Christmas tree lights (Anderson, 1991; Milner et al., 2001). Few of these societies appear to have lasted more than a century or two (Hally, 1993). The emergence and collapse of these societies at a regional scale, in fact a process that has come to be called chiefly cycling, has become the focus of appreciable research in eastern North America and beyond (Anderson, 1994a; Blitz, 1999; Earle, 1991).

How did chiefdoms emerge? Theories about the emergence of complex societies in the Eastern Woodlands have emphasized the importance of population pressure, intensive agriculture, warfare, the pivotal role specific individuals might have played, historical conditions, and the control over the exchange of desired items or "prestige goods." A massive literature, in fact, explores this question, and grows yearly (e.g., Anderson, 1994a; Knight, 1990; Muller, 1997; Pauketat and Emerson, 1997; Scarry, 1996; Smith, 1990). While it would be comforting if there were a simple answer to the evolution of cultural complexity, that does not appear to be the case. All of these

factors, and many more, appear to have played a role in the changes observed in the Eastern Woodlands, albeit some were more important than others in specific cases.

How did the chiefdom organizational form spread? In part, peacefully through a process known as competitive emulation (e.g., Clark and Blake, 1994) and, in a less tranquil manner, through the threat of warfare (Carneiro, 1981). That is, attractive characteristics of chiefdoms may have been copied by neighboring societies. In the Eastern Woodlands the most dramatic Mississippian society in terms of size and complexity was also one of the earliest, at Cahokia in the central Mississippi Valley. It undoubtedly attracted a great deal of attention, and exerted a lot of both direct and indirect influence on other societies in the region (Anderson, 1997; Pauketat and Emerson, 1997). At the same time, the military advantage a chiefdom would have over a less complex society likely prompted a defensive reaction and reorganization among its neighbors, who would have had to adopt or be absorbed. Warfare was a major part of Mississippian life and, given the fact that warfare was already widespread in the late Woodland, appears to have shaped both the emergence and subsequent development of chiefdoms in the region (DePratter, 1983; Dye, 1990).

Why were chiefdoms in the Eastern Woodlands seemingly so unstable and short-lived? The primary reason appears to be the unstable nature of the chiefdom organizational form itself. The fact that leadership was determined by genealogy meant that there were likely a number of potential claimants for the position of chief. Unless these individuals were co-opted or eliminated, they could prove a threat. Factional competition is, in fact, rife in chiefdom societies, and the Southeast was no exception (Anderson, 1994b; Brumfiel and Fox, 1994; Hally, 1993). Changes in climate also appear to have played a role. In societies heavily dependent on intensive agriculture, repeated crop failures brought on by prolonged drought or other factors would have had disastrous effects. Most of these societies, however, appear to have developed elaborate cropping and storage strategies to reduce the effects of drought, but they were not always successful (Anderson et al., 1995).

Political complexity evolved in a different direction in the Northeast. Instead of hereditary chiefdoms, northeastern peoples developed elaborate confederacies. Bruce Trigger (1985, pp. 86–110) has documented changes from approximately AD 1000 to European contact. During the Early Iroquoian period, Native northeasterners lived in villages of 100–400 occupants. Trigger suggests that these communities were “continuations of the hunting bands of the Middle Woodland period” (1985, p. 86). We must remember that Trigger’s perspective is from Canada, where there is no evidence for agriculture during the Middle Woodland. The Middle Iroquoian period of the fourteenth century saw major changes take place. There was a shift to larger communities, as apparently separate bands joined together in aggregate settlements. Villages were fortified, suggesting conflict. Conflict may have been one way males could obtain social status, something that may have been important given these were matrilineal societies where women provided much of the subsistence through horticulture. The joining together of several clans would necessitate increasing complexity of political organization – probably the formation of more formal village councils made up of clan representatives. Trigger also suggests that there may have been peace and war chiefs at this time.

By the Late Iroquoian period, AD 1400–1600, Trigger argues that the historically

known tribes such as the Huron, Neutral, and Five Nation Iroquois had developed in the areas where Europeans found them. Community size continued to increase, as amalgamation reduced the number of villages but increased their size. Communities of 1,500 people became relatively common, greatly outnumbering the populations of typical Mississippian communities in the Southeast. Some villages, such as the Draper Site in Ontario, may have reached populations as large as 3,000. These large communities used appreciable quantities of natural resources (fertile soil, firewood, etc.), necessitating frequent village relocation.

Trigger also notes that there was a tendency of several villages to settle near one another, forming the "Tribes" known in the historic period. Tribal councils must have been formed to deal with these multicomunity settlements. Towns may have been linked by clan ties and medicine society membership. According to the Iroquois oral tradition, confederacies, such as the Huron and Five Nation Iroquois, were formed prior to European contact. Trigger sees these formations as natural extensions of the evolution of political complexity in the region.

European Contact and Culture Change

A tremendous amount of research has been expended on attempts to understand the effects of European contact on Native American groups, which were for the most part devastating in eastern North America. Early research by Henry Dobyns (1966) and Alfred Crosby (1972) focused research on the timing and intensity of the introduction of Old World infectious diseases. Dobyns (1983) suggested sweeping "pandemics" that spread across the North American continent from introduction points such as Mexico or Spanish Florida. In a largely theoretical study, George Milner (1980) suggested that Native polities and the uninhabited buffer zones that separated them would have inhibited the spread of disease in the southeastern United States. Later archaeological studies in the Mississippi Valley (Ramenofsky, 1987) and the interior of Georgia and Alabama (M. Smith, 1987) suggested major population reduction in the sixteenth century. The Southeast was traversed by a number of large Spanish expeditions, which could and in all likelihood did introduce deadly infectious diseases directly to the Native American inhabitants of the region. Smith in particular thought that there was evidence for the continuing introduction of disease into the interior Southeast even after the period of initial Spanish exploration. He saw a rapid destruction of Native political organization following the wake of initial contact.

While researchers in the Southeast suggested early and devastating effects of contact, conditions in the Northeast appeared to be significantly different. There, the first evidence for epidemic disease in the Iroquois area dated to the mid-1630s (Snow and Starna, 1989; Snow and Lanphear, 1988). From that time on, epidemics ravaged the Iroquois periodically. Why was there such a delay in the introduction of disease, compared with the Southeast? Both general areas saw European exploration in the mid-sixteenth century (e.g., De Soto in the Southeast and Jacques Cartier in the Northeast, followed by relatively constant coastal contacts in both areas). Both areas had societies that lived in compact villages; indeed, the northeastern tribal societies actually had larger settlements than many chiefdoms of the Southeast. Perhaps one important difference was in long-distance trade connections. The Southeast had a long tradition of

long-distance trade, while most northeastern Woodland societies were just beginning to focus on long-distance trade, especially in marine shell, about the time of European contact (Pendergast, 1989). Perhaps this emphasis on trade, as well as more frequent direct contact with Europeans, explains the seemingly different timing of early epidemics.

It may also be relevant that the northeastern groups had a practice of incorporating vanquished enemies into their tribes by adoption. Thus, as warfare increased following European contact, if one group obtained European weapons prior to its enemies, wholesale adoptions (rather than the killing of defeated enemies) may have augmented populations suffering from European diseases (see Snow, 1996 for a discussion of the Mohawk; Bradley, 1987, p. 119 on the Onondaga). Thus, powerful groups such as the Five Nation Iroquois and the Susquehannocks may appear to have maintained large populations, even in the face of severe epidemics. When research is conducted on a regional scale, it becomes apparent that the Ohio Valley and much of the central Great Lakes area were being depopulated while Iroquoian groups were maintaining their size. Population loss from disease may be more significant than was readily apparent. More research is needed in this area.

Many other areas of aboriginal culture changed as a result of contact. Smith (1987, 2000) has demonstrated that for the Coosa valley of Georgia and Alabama, there was rapid disintegration of political complexity from hereditary chiefdoms to simpler tribal organization from *c.* AD 1540 to 1650. However, Knight (1994) has suggested that southeastern societies of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries maintained more of their chiefly organizational heritage than has been recognized by most researchers. By way of contrast, the League of the Iroquois, assumed to have formed in the late prehistoric era, appears to have grown stronger in the century after European contact. Contemporaneous societies that were not organized into strong confederacies (and even some who were such as the Huron and Neutral) were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Five Nation Iroquois. The Iroquois remained strong, while their competitors all but vanished from the scene, some either joining or being adopted into the confederacy, while others fled to the west.

In the Northeast, European technology quickly replaced its aboriginal counterpart. Metal tools quickly replaced their stone counterparts, aboriginal ceramics were replaced by European metal cooking containers in many cases by the middle of the seventeenth century, and Indian reliance on firearms came as early as the 1640s (Bradley, 1987; Kent, 1984; Wray, 1973). In contrast, the century following European contact in the Southeast saw relatively little technological change (Smith, 1987). While metal axes and hoes were introduced by the Spaniards, metal cooking pots and firearms were all but absent in the Southeast prior to the founding of Charleston and the subsequent expansion of English trade in 1670.

Major changes in subsistence occurred after this time across the region. The fur trade in the North and the deerskin trade in the South made commercial hunting a way of life for many Native men. In both areas there were competing European powers to bid for the Native furs and hides. New crops were added to Native horticulture, such as peach and watermelon, which spread quickly across the Southeast. With the possible exception of chickens, Old World domesticated animals were not a fixture in either area until the eighteenth century. Efforts to understand the full effects of European contact remain a continuing theme of research.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted, in a few pages, to give some sense of the great time depth to Indian settlement in eastern North America, and the dramatic changes in culture that occurred over this interval. Regional population grew from the hundreds to the hundreds of thousands, and egalitarian hunting groups were transformed into complex agricultural societies. Archaeology explores evidence for these changes, and attempts to develop explanations for them. While our knowledge of the past is far better than it was a century ago, our understanding of what happened in prehistoric eastern North America is still far from complete or certain.

As new information becomes available, even our most fundamental assumptions and interpretations are subject to change. In recent years, for example, the date of initial human entry into the New World has been pushed back appreciably in time, and the origins of agriculture, mound building, and complex society in eastern North America are now known to have occurred much deeper in the past than we once thought. For every question archaeology has been able to answer, however, new questions have emerged. While we now know people were here 15,000 years ago, we still don't know when they first arrived, or how much of a role they played in the massive animal extinctions that occurred after this time. Likewise, while we now know that people in eastern North America had domesticated a number of local plants by roughly 4,000 years ago, we still don't understand the details of the process, or how important these foods were in subsistence. Did initial domestication occur in floodplain settings along major drainages, or in the hilly uplands of what may have been backwater areas? Did agriculture emerge because of population pressure, and why did some people adopt it while others did not?

These questions are signs of a healthy discipline, one whose information base is growing at a rapid rate, forcing the continual evaluation and refinement of our ideas. This research has a great deal of value to our modern world, particularly regarding the effects of long-term climate change, and why cultures change over time. The end of the ice age and the mid-Holocene warm interval were fairly dramatic episodes, and we now may be entering a third period of fairly rapid climate change. The eastern North American archaeological record indicates that while pronounced changes in climate did sometimes occur, local cultures were able to adapt and continue, to prevail and not merely to endure (Anderson, 2001).

From a purely intellectual or academic perspective, eastern North America is an exciting place to study broad patterns of historical development. Within the region the domestication of plants and the evolution of complex societies occurred, and we now know that this was no simple unilineal process of ever-increasing complexity or change within societies progressing in lockstep through time. Instead, the landscape was highly varied, characterized by societies of differing (albeit generally similar) levels of technology and organizational complexity. We now have dozens of well-documented cases dating back over the millennia of the emergence, expansion, and collapse of individual societies within the larger regional political landscape, and are beginning to understand why they changed the way they did. At an even broader scale, we are beginning to recognize much longer cycles of interregional exchange, warfare, and monumental construction. Both for its ability to provide information about specific events in the past, as well as broad general explanations, archaeology

provides a valuable complement to history in the study of the Native peoples of eastern North America.

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