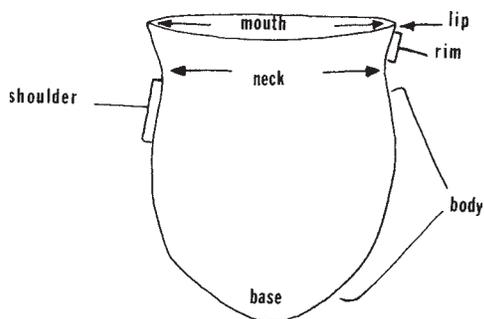


WOODLAND

THE TRANSITION FROM the Archaic period to what has traditionally been called the Woodland occurs in some parts of the U.S. about 3,000 years before present (BP). In theory the Woodland is characterized by the occurrence of three traits—pottery, burial mounds, and cultivated plants. Ideally it is these three characteristics which separate the cultures of the Woodland from those of the Archaic.

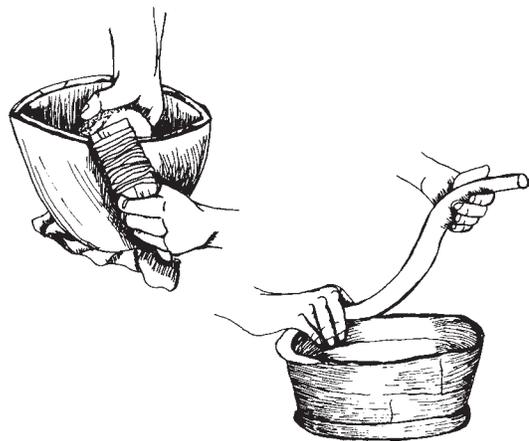
If we look at any particular area of the U.S. after this time, however, we find that there are problems in applying this definition of the Woodland. While there is evidence that these three traits spread across much of the U.S. east of the Rocky Mountains, they were not adopted as a package, at the same time, or by all societies. For instance, in eastern Iowa the Turkey River mounds contain burials covered with red ochre (iron oxide) and a variety of grave goods such as leaf-shaped blades, straight-stemmed projectile points, and cylindrical copper beads, but no pottery. Some archaeologists classify them as Late Archaic and others as Early Woodland. At about the same time in southeastern Iowa, evidence of cultivated squash, goosefoot, and marshelder occur in a Late Archaic context at the Gast Spring site. Once again, there is no evidence of associated pottery. It is possible that the people who built the Turkey River mounds or left evidence of early cultivated plants at Gast Spring about 3,000 years ago made the earliest known ceramics in the state, but if they did we have no evidence of it.



Archaeologists use specific terms to describe ceramic vessels.

For many archaeologists the appearance of pottery marks the beginning of the Early Woodland period in Iowa. Ceramics are important to the archaeologist. They are highly breakable, and yet pieces of broken pottery (called potsherds or, simply, sherds) are almost indestructible. This means that pottery broken thousands of years ago has remained in the ground for the archaeologist to find and recover through excavation. Ceramics were also an avenue of artistic expression. Prehistoric potters decorated their vessels in a wide

variety of styles which became popular and were copied by other potters in the society. Often we are able to study the development of a pottery style from its earliest beginnings to its peak of popularity when it became very common and was copied on dozens of vessels, and then see its decline and replacement by newer more popular styles.



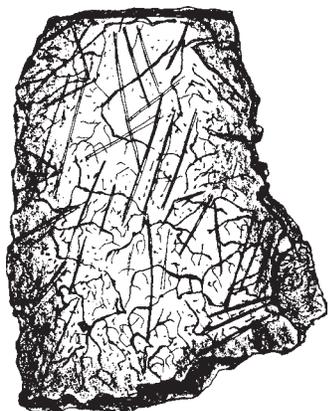
Techniques of pottery manufacture.

The very first potters of the Early Woodland period may have copied the shape and design of their pots from basketry or leather containers. These first vessels tend to be thick, straight-walled, flat-bottom pots, which were probably coiled and paddled into shape. In coiling the potter rolls a lump of clay into a coil and gradually builds up the vessel wall by adding on additional coils. Each coiled layer is pinched to the layer beneath it. Subsequently, the coils are thinned by squeezing them between the potter's thumbs and fingers. The coil junctures are smoothed out sometimes by paddling the exterior walls using a wooden paddle. To form a vessel by paddling, a lump of clay would be taken and pounded into shape by holding the clay against an anvil stone and paddling it with a wooden paddle. Often these paddles were covered with woven fabric or cordage, and the fabric or cord markings became impressed into the clay walls as the vessel was paddled.

The earliest ceramics tend to contain large amounts of grit (crushed stone) temper. Temper consists of material like crushed stone, shell, sand, ground sherds, or plant fiber which was added to the wet clay to prevent the pot from cracking during the drying and firing process. Early Woodland ceramics almost always contain fiber or grit.

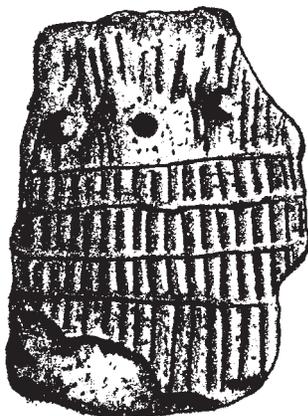
The earliest type of pottery in Iowa is referred to as Marion Thick. Marion Thick ceramics are straight-walled, flat-bottom vessels with cord marking on both the inside and outside surfaces. Marion Thick has been found at mound and habitation sites in the eastern part of the state along or very close to the Mississippi River. Locations include the Elephant Terrace site, and the Sny-Magill and Turkey River mounds in the northeast as well as the Smith, Gast Farm, and Sand Run Slough sites in the southeast.

An Early Woodland potsherd



At sites somewhat later than those containing Marion Thick pottery, a second type of Early Woodland ceramics, Black Sand pottery, occurs. Sites containing Black Sand pottery are often found on sand ridges in the valley bottoms of large rivers in eastern Iowa such as the Mississippi, the lower Skunk, and the lower Iowa. Black Sand pottery is somewhat better made than Marion Thick and contains cord or fabric marking on the exterior surface only. Before pots were fired the people who made Black Sand pottery incised or scratched designs of lines, triangles, and dashes onto the surface of the wet clay using a pointed bone or wooden tool. Ceramics similar to Black Sand occur throughout the state although many may have been made at later times.

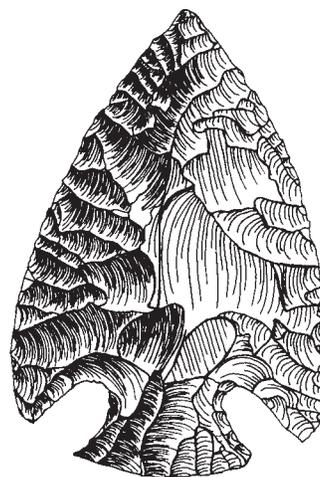
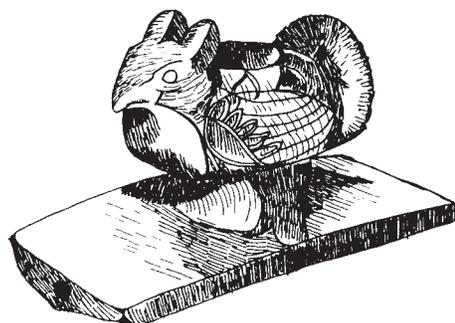
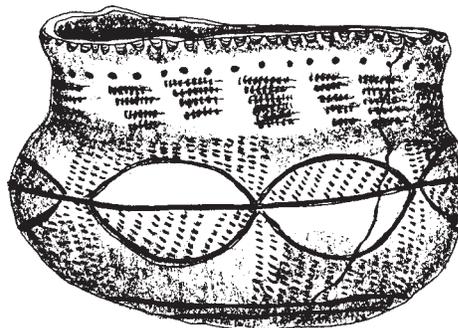
Spring Hollow Incised pottery, a regional version of Black Sand, was decorated by scratching the soft clay with a pointed implement probably of wood or bone.



In the Central Illinois Valley and the adjacent valley of the Mississippi River we find the development of a Middle Woodland ceramic tradition called Havana. This tradition eventually spread as far west as Oklahoma and the Missouri Valley of southwestern Iowa. Havana pottery, like Early Woodland ceramics, is also characterized by thick, bag-shaped vessels with large amounts of grit temper. Its distinguishing features are a variety of dentate (toothed) and rocker-stamped designs and areas of geometric patterns. Rocker-stamped designs were those produced by rocking a sharp-edged implement back and forth over the clay while it was still soft.

The Middle Woodland Period begins about 200 B.C. in parts of southeastern Iowa with the appearance of large village sites containing Havana pottery such as the Yellow River

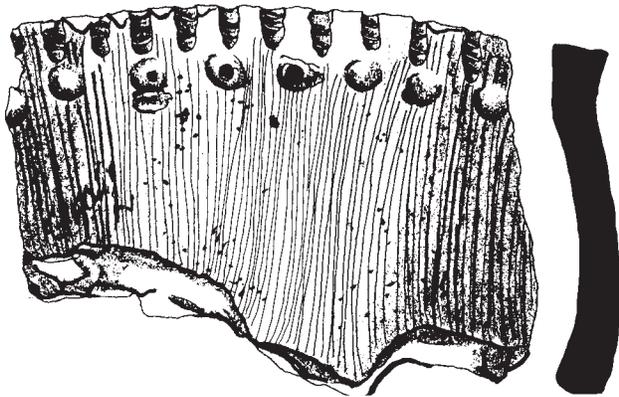
Village, Kingston, Gast Farm, and Wolfe sites. While some of these habitation sites have been excavated, most interest in the Middle Woodland has centered on mound exploration, much of which was conducted by the Davenport Academy of Natural Sciences and the Muscatine Academy of Science in the late nineteenth century. These Middle Woodland mounds fall within the well-known Hopewellian complex. Hopewell represents one in a series of mortuary traditions that existed in the eastern U.S. between 3,000 B. P. and the time of historic contact with Europeans.



Artifacts similar to Hopewellian items found in Iowa occur at sites throughout the eastern United States.

Hopewellian sites are characteristically cemeteries of mounds that often contain multiple burials sometimes placed inside log tombs. Both inhumations and cremations occur. Elaborate artifacts, frequently made of exotic raw materials such as Gulf Coast conch shell, obsidian (volcanic glass)

from the Rocky Mountains, Appalachian mica, and Great Lakes copper, were placed with the burials as grave goods. Such items suggest that the people with whom they were buried may have held a position of high social standing within the society, one that allowed access to these luxury goods. They also suggest the existence of an elaborate trade network that stretched over a wide geographical territory. The similarity of items found accompanying burials, as well as the exotic raw materials, suggest that societies participated in frequent interaction linking them with groups thousands of miles away. While local traditions in pottery making and the manufacture of chipped stone tools continued, burial artifacts such as mortuary pottery, ceramic and finely carved stone pipes, human and animal figurines, stone and copper axes, panpipes, and finely chipped flint, chert, and obsidian projectile points are duplicated in sites from Iowa to New York and from Wisconsin to Florida.



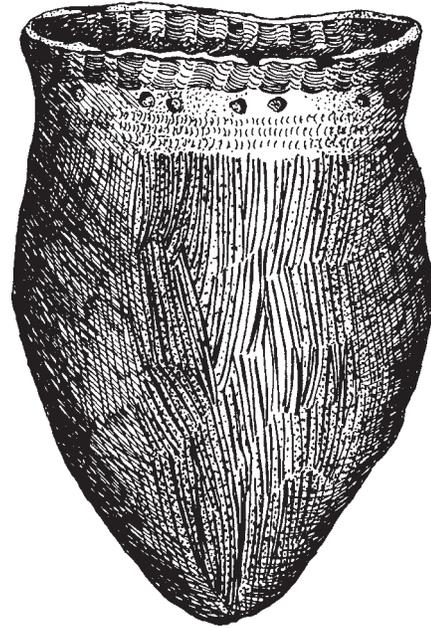
Although little is known of the Middle Woodland Period in western Iowa, examples of Havana pottery have been found.

Mound groups, such as those at Toolesboro in Louisa County and the Cook Farm Group in present-day Davenport, are certain evidence of the extension of Hopewell into Iowa. The Boone Mound on the Des Moines River was perhaps the largest Middle Woodland mound west of the Mississippi. Related mound groups in northeastern Iowa pro-



Exotic materials were traded over long distances during Woodland times.

vide additional confirmation of Iowa's participation in funerary traditions and long-distance trade with societies throughout the eastern U.S. In western Iowa there is much less evidence of participation in Hopewellian traditions although exotic trade items did find their way into this area.



Lane Farm Cord-Imprinted pottery, a possible precursor to Effigy Mounds pottery

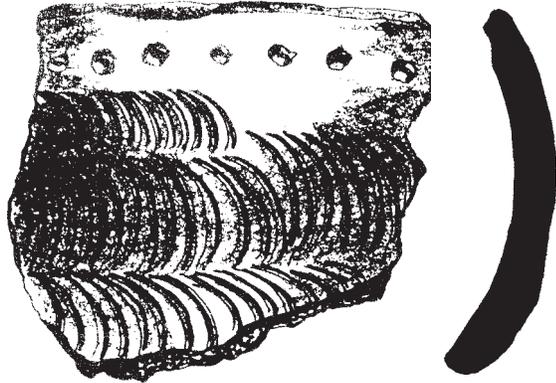
A.D. 500 is a convenient date for separating the Middle Woodland Period from the Late Woodland Period in Iowa. By this time, smaller Woodland campsites replaced the large Havana villages in southeastern Iowa. Mounds were still being used as monuments to the dead, but they are smaller and lack most of the exotic trade items found in the Hopewellian mounds. Late Woodland mounds were not confined to the generally conical shape of most of Iowa's Middle Woodland mounds; they are commonly oblong (linear) and in northeastern Iowa were frequently made into the shape of animals. These animal-shaped or "effigy" mounds are found primarily in Allamakee and Clayton counties although they extend as far south as the city of Dubuque and west to Hardin County. While some contain burials, others do not.



The Marching Bear Effigy Mounds

The bag-shaped pottery of Early and Middle Woodland sites gives way to more rounded vessels by Late Woodland times. This pottery tends to have a narrower opening and at

first was decorated with fairly simple designs. Later, in some areas decoration included impressing a woven belt or collar around the neck and shoulder of the pot. Weaver, Linn, Madison, Minnott's, Henry, and Hartley wares are common types of Late Woodland pottery found in eastern Iowa sites. To the west Madrid, Held Creek, Sterns Creek, Fox Lake, Saylor, Loseke, and Lake Benton wares have been defined.



Rocker stamping on Late Woodland Linn Ware was made by impressing a sharp-edged object (such as a shell) into the soft clay and rocking it back and forth.

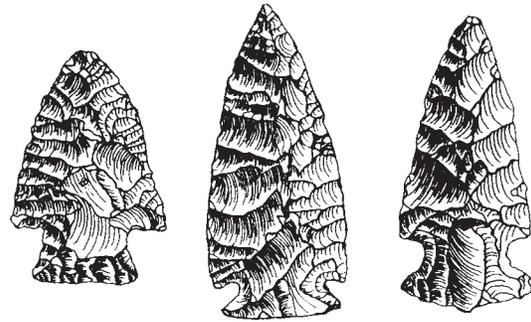
While a number of Woodland habitation sites have been excavated, including the Keystone and Hadfield rockshelters and Gast Farm in eastern Iowa, and the Rainbow site in the west, we know far less about the type of houses built by Woodland peoples and much more about the mounds they erected over their dead. The basic social unit was probably the immediate family. Larger social groups may have formed during certain seasons of the year when native plants and animals were abundant. It has been suggested that the Effigy Mounds and related mounds of Allamakee and Clayton counties were constructed not only as refuges for the dead, but to mark territorial boundaries between groups and to strengthen social ties. Perhaps the mounds were ceremonial centers that acted to draw people together from a wide area on certain occasions.

Marshelder, or sumpweed, one of the first native plants cultivated.



We now know that throughout the Woodland people in Iowa cultivated a growing number of plants including ones familiar today like gourd, squash, sunflower, and tobacco, as well as lesser known, small seed varieties such as lamb's quar-

ters, marshelder, little barley, and erect knotweed. By the Late Woodland, however, corn or maize was becoming a mainstay in the diet of many communities.



Woodland projectile points

The use of the spear or dart in hunting seems to have continued throughout the Woodland Period. Straight-stemmed or side- and corner-notched projectile points of a variety of styles are commonly found at sites. However, by Late Woodland times, the bow and arrow were being used. This is suggested by the occurrence of smaller, notched and unnotched triangular-shaped points.



After about AD 900 we see for a time the persistence of the Late Woodland lifestyle at Iowa sites such as Sweeting in Washington County and Hartley Fort in Allamakee County. However, the adaptation to a full horticultural economy based on corn, the acceptance of new styles of ceramics, and the acquisition of the bow and arrow brought about new patterns and we can begin to identify a number of distinct late prehistoric cultures in the state.

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