Houses of Prehistoric Ohio

Many different people have lived in Ohio over the past 13,000 years. The people that lived in the area we now call Ohio before the European explorers first visited left behind no written records. Historians refer to these early people as prehistoric (before written history). Though they left no written records, they did leave behind large mounds and embankments of dirt, fragments of pottery, stone tools, and the remains of fire hearths. Sometimes archaeologists find evidence of structures used by the people for homes and temporary camp sites. We can learn a great deal about these ancient peoples from the artifacts they left behind.

Paleo Indians 13,000 - 7,000 B.C.E

Thirteen thousand years ago Ohio was much different than it is today. A large sheet of ice called a glacier covered the northwestern part of the state. Only about one third of the state was ice free and the climate was much colder than it is now. The people living in Ohio from 13,000 B.C.E. to 8,000 B.C.E. hunted the now extinct Wooly Mammoth and Mastodon. They lived in rock shelters, caves, and in simple windbreaks made of a stick frame covered with brush or animal hides. Moving frequently to keep up with the grazing herds of Mastodon meant they needed to take only their weapons and tools with them. Everything else they left behind. Archaeologists have found man made flint tools and fire hearths from this time period.

Archaic Indians 8,000 - 500 B.C.E

As the climate became warmer and the glaciers shrank, new plants and animals began to enter the area. Glaciers, Wooly Mammoths, and Mastodons were replaced with forests and animals such as deer. The tools people used changed as well. The long spears used for hunting Mastodon and Mammoth were replaced by shorter spears with a detachable handle (Atlatl), the axe for woodworking and the a polished stone knife (Ulu) for hide-working. The people were still living in temporary houses similar to those used in the Paleolithic era. Archaeologists have found small fire hearths surrounded by circular stais that represent temporary camp sites from the archaic period.

Adena 1,000 B.C.E. - C.E. 100

The Adena people are best known for their conical shaped burial mounds. Other Adena mounds are shaped like animals and were probably used for ceremonial gatherings. They still hunted wild game but also began to grow gardens of squash, tobacco, gourds, and sunflowers. Archaeologists have found small village settlements with post stain patterns for circular houses. Archaeological evidence shows that the houses were made of wooden poles and willow twigs covered with bark. The Adena made pipes, axes, and pottery and traded for goods such as shell, copper, and mica from other areas of the country.

Hopewell 100 B.C.E. - C.E. 500
The Hopewell people were also traders and mound builders like the Adena that came before them. The earthen structures included geometric shapes as well as earthen walls that surrounded ceremonial and community activity centers. Artifacts found by archaeologists at Hopewell sites show that the Hopewell traded with people from the Rocky Mountains, the Upper Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, and the southern Appalachian Mountains. They lived in farmsteads situated along rivers, lakes, and streams in bark covered wigwams. They farmed native plants such as Goosefoot, gourds, squash, and sunflowers.

Fort Ancient C.E. 1,000 - 1650

The Fort Ancient were the first people in Ohio to farm maize (corn). They lived in well organized permanent villages near streams and rivers and hunted for game with the bow and arrow. Their houses were rectangular with a gabled roof. Houses such as those seen at the SunWatch site were constructed of a wooden frame, daubed walls, and thatched roofs. Their most popular trade item was shell from the Gulf of Mexico. The Fort Ancient were the last of Ohio’s pre-historic peoples.

Instructions

Houses
1) Cut around the outside of the structure along solid lines carefully. Fold along dotted lines. Glue tabs to adjoining walls to form the base of the structure and to form the roof. Glue house tabs to the underside of the roof. (Figure 1)

People
2) Cut out around solid lines. Glue front to back above the dotted lines. Fold on the dotted line to form a base for figures to stand. (Figure 2)
To assemble house: Cut around outside of the building along the solid line. Fold along the dotted lines and paste tabs to the underside of the adjoining wall or roof extension.

Paste flap to underside of roof extension.
Adena Structure
Roof
Paleo Indian Structure
Hopewell Structure
Hopewell Structure
Side opening