

Woodland Period

Traditionally, the Woodland Period is marked by the appearance of ceramics, complex mortuary practices, long distance trade networks, the construction of burial mounds and other earthworks, and the rise of agriculture. Peoples begin to expand into and use complex environmental and ecological zones as populations increased and people become more sedentary.



By the Early Woodland Period, people had begun to use true ceramic vessels as they continued to hunt, gather, and grow their foods. The Early Woodland Period has become synonymous with what is known as the **Adena Culture**, a phenomenon based upon similarities observed in burial practices and mound construction throughout the region. [Grave Creek Mound](#) in Moundsville and the **Criel Mound** in South Charleston are examples in West Virginia.

The Middle Woodland Period is most often thought of in terms of the **Hopewell Culture**. Hopewell sites often contain artifacts made of exotic materials such as obsidian from Yellowstone, copper from the Great Lakes and shell from the Gulf of Mexico. Their presence in this region indicates the establishment of far-reaching trade networks. Middle Woodland peoples lived in small semi-permanent villages called hamlets and grew plants such as amaranth and sunflower. Although they were becoming more dependent on agriculture, they still hunted and gathered food.

During the Late Woodland Period, people first began to use the bow and arrow; this is indicated by the appearance of true arrow points at Late Woodland sites. People also first began to grow maize (corn). Other plant and animal remains that have been found at archaeological sites suggest that Late Woodland people were hunting white-tailed deer, turkey and box turtle as well as gathering wild foods such as blueberry, wild grape, acorn, hickory and walnut.