

Artifact #1: Engraved Shell Gorget

Time Period: Late Woodland Period
(AD 1500-1600)

Location: Hairston Site in Stokes County, NC



About this artifact:

This engraved shell gorget was recovered in Stokes County, NC. It measures approximately 57 millimeters in length and 52 millimeters in width. Do you notice the two holes at the top of the gorget? This indicates the gorget was likely suspended using string fed through the top and worn as necklace. The gorget is made from marine shell, which is a lot more interesting than it sounds. Since the gorget was recovered in western North Carolina--far from the ocean--it likely means this particular item was traded from a tribe that lived near the Atlantic or Gulf Coasts. Considering the detail, the intricate engraving, and the rare material, this gorget likely belonged to someone of importance! The archaeologists that recovered this item say they see a coiled snake at the gorget's center. What do you see in the engraving?

Artifact #2: Stone Bowl

Time Period: Late Archaic Period
(3000-1500 B.C.)

Location: Ashe County, NC



About this artifact:

This stone bowl was recovered in Ashe County, NC. It is made of a unique material called soapstone. It measures approximately 3 meters long and 2 meters wide. Soapstone gets its name from its texture. Many who handle soapstone say the material feels like a bar of soap! Soapstone is a great conductor of heat. Due to this, it shouldn't be a surprise that these stone bowls were often used for cooking or preserving hot food. They were made from boulders in the ground. The American Indians would use the ground as an anchor to keep the boulder in place. From there, they would carve mushroom-cap shapes on top of the boulder, remove those pieces, and then hollow out the center. The bowl was usually hollowed with a wooden mallet and a chisel made from deer antlers or animal bones. Do you see the similarities in the shape of this bowl compared to bowls we use today?

Artifact #3: Grooved Axe

Time Period: Late Archaic Period
(3000 B.C-1000 B.C.)

Location: Doerschuk Site in Davidson County, NC



About this artifact:

This grooved axe was recovered in Davidson County, NC. This axe measures 178 millimeters long and 82 millimeters wide. Most axes from this time period were made using very sturdy stone. This particular grooved axe is made from granite. This is known as a “grooved” axe due to the flat groove made towards the rear. The groove was created by using another stone to grind this edge down (left side in this picture). This spot allowed for a sturdy wooden handle to be fastened to it. The “business” (sharp) side of this axe can be seen on the right side of the image. This side of an axe was the part used for striking and cutting. Grooved axes were common tools in the Archaic Period, as natives began to clear paths and cut down large trees in forests. By clearing trees, the Archaic people made way for plots of land that could be used to grow crops as food. They could also use the wood from cut down trees to build housing structures and canoes. What similarities do you see with the shape of this axe and the axes we use today?

Artifact #4: Kirk Serrated Point

Time Period: Early Archaic Period
(7000-6000 B.C.)

Location: Hardaway Site in Stanly County, NC



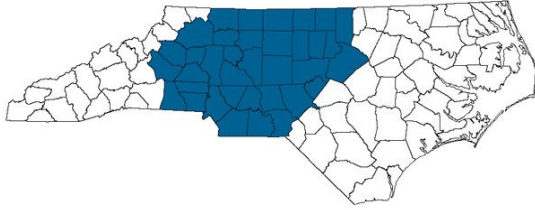
About this artifact:

This Kirk Serrated Projectile Point was recovered at the Hardaway site in Stanly County, NC. It is 66 millimeters long and 25 millimeters wide. Due to the size of this projectile point, it was too heavy to be attached to an arrow from a bow. Instead, this projectile point was attached to a spear and used for hunting. Kirk Serrated Points have very sharp, jagged edges. These edges came in handy not just during hunting but during the butchering process. Kirk Serrated Points could easily cut through meat and flesh, helping remove all of the meat and skin from the animals killed. Projectile points are made through a process called flintknapping. American Indians would take larger stones and repeatedly strike smaller stones, chipping flakes from them and shaping them into points. The divots seen across this particular projectile point show the pieces that were flaked off when struck by a bigger stone.

Artifact #5: Clovis Point

Time Period: Early Paleoindian Period
(10,000–9,000 B.C.)

Location: (Unspecified) Piedmont Region of NC



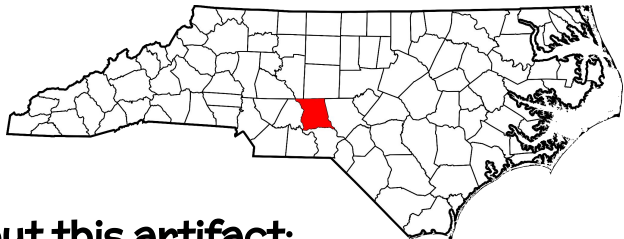
About this artifact:

This Clovis Point was recovered in an unspecified location in the Piedmont Region of NC. This Clovis Point was made from metavolcanic rock. It is 85 millimeters in length and 33 millimeters wide. Due to its size, this projectile point was likely attached to a throwing spear, called an atlatl. Throwing spears were needed during this time period, as the Paleoindians hunted megafauna like woolly mammoths and mastodon. The base (bottom) of this spearpoint was ground using sandstone in order to fasten it to a throwing spear more easily. Projectile points are made through a process called flintknapping. American Indians would take larger stones and repeatedly strike smaller stones, chipping flakes from them and shaping them into points. The divots seen across this particular projectile point show the pieces that were flaked off when struck by a bigger stone.

Artifact #6: Pee Dee Stamped Jar

Time Period: Mississippian Period
(AD 1150–1400)

Location: Town Creek Site in
Montgomery County, NC



About this artifact:

This Pee Dee stamped jar was recovered at the Town Creek site in Montgomery County, NC. It is approximately 12 centimeters high and has a diameter of 12 centimeters as well. Mississippian people used pots and jars made from clay, for cooking and storage. This particular jar was hand-coiled. Mississippian people created these pots by rolling thin strips of clay between their fingertips and then layered the coils on top of one another to form the shape of a bowl. They then used a wooden paddle and stamped the exterior of the clay, which allowed the coils to mush together. The wooden paddle also gave the exterior of the pot a unique texture. Lastly, they fired the clay to harden it, forming a sturdy pot for use!

Artifact #7: Brass Kettle

Time Period: Historic (1700)

Location: Fredericks Site in Orange County, NC



About this artifact:

This brass kettle was recovered at the Fredericks Site in Orange County, NC. It has a diameter of approximately 20 centimeters. Archaeologists were worried that by removing it from the dirt, they would crumble the kettle. Instead, they dug a portion of the soil out with it and plastered the base to preserve the kettle's condition. This is not an artifact created by American Indians, as they made pots from clay. At the time, American Indians did not mine for metals and use them to create daily materials. Instead, this particular kettle was introduced to American Indians by the Europeans. Beginning in the late 1400's, explorers from European countries like England, Spain, and Portugal (among others) sailed the world in exploration of new land and resources. English colonizers began to settle along the East Coast in the 1500's and eventually expanded westward. Europeans traded things like tobacco, glass beads, firearms, and alcohol with American Indians in exchange for animal hides and crops.

Artifact #8: Iron Axe

Time Period: Historic (1700)

Location: Fredericks Site in Orange County, NC



About this artifact:

This iron axe was recovered at the Fredericks site in Orange County, NC. It is 145 millimeters long, 72 millimeters wide, and 36 millimeters thick. This is not an artifact made by American Indians, as they created grooved axes using stone. Instead, this axe was introduced to the American Indians by the Europeans. This particular axe is made from iron. As you examined the 3-D model, you probably noticed the hole through the butt of the axe (left side in the picture above) where a wooden stick could fit through. The "business" side (sharp side) of the axe (right side in the picture above) was used for striking and cutting. Iron axes had sharper edges than stone axes. This made them a valuable commodity for American Indians. Beginning in the late 1400's, explorers from European countries like England, Spain, and Portugal (among others) sailed the world in exploration for new land and resources. English colonizers began to settle along the East Coast in the 1500's and eventually expanded westward. Europeans traded things like tobacco, glass, firearms, and alcohol with American Indians in exchange for animal hides and crops.