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Introduction

Every area of the world is complicated with regard to its physiography, climate, and cultural heritage, and Florida is no different. However, unlike any other region in the United States, Florida is bounded almost completely by water. The northern panhandle of Florida is contiguous with the terrestrial United States, while the southern peninsula extends south into a maritime environment. Thus there are radically different ecological niches and potential exploitation areas for humans in northern and southern Florida.

Through time, as in many regions of the southeastern United States, the populations inhabiting Florida experienced changes in the way they organized themselves, the ways they made a living, the beliefs they had about death and burial, and numerous other aspects of their lives. Here I present a general overview of those changes for populations inhabiting eastern North America. Chapter 2 explores those changes in detail for Florida.

The earliest humans to inhabit the southeastern United States were Paleoindians (10,000–8000 B.C.) whose camps and resource extraction areas indicate a way of life focused on mobile foraging and hunting, perhaps hunting focused on large mammals as has been demonstrated for the Southwest. The following Archaic period (8000–1000 B.C.) began with the warming trend of the Holocene epoch.

It was during the Archaic period that sea levels rose substantially and populations in the southeastern United States underwent the first dramatic transformation in their lives (Steponaitis 1986:370). Although it was largely a subsistence transformation that expanded the dietary repertoire to include numerous foraged plants and aquatic resources, other cultural changes took place as well. Among these were the formation of larger and more permanent settlements, the construction of earthen

mounds and other earthworks, long-distance trade, and burial ceremonialism that incorporated personal utilitarian and exotic adornment items (Bense 1994; Smith 1986; Steponaitis 1986). Apparently some plant cultivation was conducted with gourds and hard-rind squash by 5000 B.C., but the fruits appear to have been used as containers rather than as food (Doran et al. 1990).

Artifact diversity in the Archaic increased over that of the Paleoindian period, and new artifacts made of stone, such as groundstone axes and celts, appeared, as well as more diverse chipped stone point types with notches and stems (Smith 1986; Steponaitis 1986). The use of shell for ornaments and tools became important. Textiles made of plant fibers, including nets, bags, baskets, and clothing, have been found in contexts where preservation is possible, such as submerged sites and dry caves.

The Woodland stage (1000 B.C.–A.D. 1000) represented a time of gradual change with continued emphasis on innovations that began during the Archaic period, such as plant cultivation of seed-bearing plants, increased sedentism, and mortuary ceremonialism (Steponaitis 1986:379). Populations increased in size during the Woodland period, and many clustered in river valleys and along the coast. Pottery manufacture became prevalent and incorporated technological innovations such as coiling, tempering, and shaping of bases. These pottery innovations occurred earliest along the South Carolina and Georgia coastal plain at the termination of the Archaic (DePratter and Howard 1981, 1983). The bow and arrow was an important technological advance for hunting.

Mortuary ceremonialism was particularly important during the Woodland stage and is well documented for the Middle Woodland period (A.D. 1–500), especially for the Adena and Hopewell traditions of Ohio and Illinois (Bense 1994). Burials associated with the Adena and Hopewell traditions were placed in log and stone crypts that were covered by earthen mounds, which were apparently used in ritual cycles of several decades (Hutchinson and Aragon 2002). Objects made of exotic trade materials such as copper, marine shell, galena, and greenstone often accompanied burials (Steponaitis 1986).

The elaborate mortuary traditions of the Adena and Hopewell were transfigured for later cultural traditions; although they continued to emphasize ritual cycles, sometime after A.D. 1000 charnel houses entered into the mortuary repertoire. They were described by the Europeans (Le Page du Pratz 1947) and are documented archaeologically at sites such as Angel (Black 1967) and Fatherland (Neitzel 1965).

In many areas of the eastern United States, horticulture began sometime shortly after A.D. 700, and it was one of the most influential, if not *the* most influential, change that occurred in the economic lives of humans. Plant cultivation of chenopods, amaranths, and cucurbits had undoubtedly occurred prior to that time as indicated at several archaeological sites (Smith 1986), but after A.D. 700 many populations began to focus their attention on domesticated plants, particularly maize (Bender et al. 1981; Dunn 1981; Gremillion 1996; Jeffries et al. 1996; Moore 1985; Reitz 1982, 1988; Scarry 1993a,b; van der Merwe and Vogel 1978; Vogel and van der Merwe 1977; Watson 1989; Wymer 1987a,b; Yarnell and Black 1985).

The "wholesale adoption of maize agriculture" (Steponaitis 1986:388) is particularly well documented for populations inhabiting the interior Southeast from the central Mississippi Valley to the western Appalachian piedmont. In those areas, maize adoption and a suite of other traits that appeared between A.D. 800 and 1000 have been referred to collectively as the Emergent Mississippian (Steponaitis 1986:386–387). After A.D. 1000, beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) are commonly found in archaeological contexts as well (Blake and Cutler 1979; Chapman and Shea 1981).

In general, the agricultural transition was associated with larger settlements, denser populations, specialized labor, ranked social systems, and monumental architecture (Smith 1986; Steponaitis 1986). In the eastern United States, these changes were especially marked for Mississippian cultural groups, who predominated in river valleys such as the Black Warrior River (Scarry 1993a,b), the Illinois River (Johannessen 1993; Johannessen and Whalley 1988), and the Ohio River (Wymer 1987b).

Ranked hierarchical sociopolitical systems known as chiefdoms were an important part of the Mississippian transition (A.D. 1000–1500; Bense 1994; Smith 1986; Steponaitis 1986). The emergence of ranked social and political systems required a loss of regional autonomy with concomitant regional integration. The Southern Cult (sometimes called the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex) undoubtedly functioned as the central worship system of the people of the Mississippian stage and provided the fundamental symbolic means for regional integration. The artistic artifacts left behind from the Southern Cult appear to emphasize a few major themes that include ancestor worship (depicted through iconographic images of charnel houses, sacred totems, and mortuary inclusions), war (depicted through decapitated heads and weapons such as axes), and fertility (de-

picted through statuary such as the Birger stone figurine) (Bense 1994; Prentice 1986).

Many would argue that a correlate of stratified societies is the use of force to enforce legitimacy as well as to gain new territory and human labor (Fried et al. 1968). As demonstrated through the Southern Cult iconography, warfare was at least symbolically important, if not important as well in practice. Other indicators of increased intergroup violence appear to support the symbolism expressed in Southern Cult iconography. For instance, stockades are found at many late prehistoric sites such as Lubbub Creek (Peebles 1987), Cahokia (Milner 1990), and the Savannah River valley (Anderson 1994).

Skeletal indicators of intergroup aggression are present in late prehistory in many areas of the Southeast. These include mutilations such as scalping (Bridges 1996), embedded stone and bone projectile points (Bridges 1996), and parry fractures (Smith 1996). Furthermore, Smith (2003) notes that different kinds of violence characterized different time periods in Tennessee and that only intergroup violence increased during the late prehistoric period.

There are substantial data indicating that human populations experienced a decline in health and nutrition following the increased focus on domesticated plants (Cohen and Armelagos 1984; Larsen 1995). Undoubtedly, some of the changes in health were due to the lower nutritional quality of maize as a vegetable resource, and to decreased dietary breadth that seems to have accompanied the adoption of agricultural products (Cohen and Armelagos 1984; Larsen 1995).

Other factors that were part of the agricultural transition were also influential in health declines, including aggregated settlements, increased population pressure, centralized water supplies, and potentially differential access to food resources based on status, age, and sex. Regardless of the direct causes, at the time that many populations increased their use of agricultural products and became more sedentary, health declines occurred.

However, not everyone in the southeastern United States adopted the Mississippian cultural system. Some societies continued to practice foraging alongside the development of ranked societies and larger urban centers (Bense 1994). For instance, in coastal North Carolina and Georgia, larger population centers appear to have occurred prior to the emphasis on domesticated plants (Anderson 1994; Hutchinson 2002a). Furthermore, it appears that maize horticulture was not a prerequisite for the development of more complex social and political organization.