Native Americans of North Carolina

Section 1: Physical Geography

- Cenozoic Era
  - Tertiary and Quaternary Periods
    - Pleistocene and Holocene Epochs
- Pleistocene (1.8 mya – 10,000 ya)
  - Known to many as the “Ice Age”
  - 4-5 glacial periods
  - ~ 30% of Earth surface covered with ice at max.
  - Global warming begins after last glacial maximum 18,000 ya and ends 10,000 ya
  - Includes the appearance of *Homo Sapiens*
- Holocene
  - ~ 10,000 ya to present
  - Glacial retreat
  - Rise in global sea-level
  - Natural environmental changes
    - Changing weather patterns
      - Advance of deserts in places
      - Forestland to steppe
    - Environmental changes brought about by humans
      - Agriculture
        - Selective breeding of plants
        - Land clearing
        - Plowing – soil degradation
        - Urban land usage
        - Water diversion, and well drilling
      - Domestication of animals
        - Selective breeding of animals
      - Industrial activity
        - Soil and water pollution
        - Rise in Greenhouse Gases
        - Industrial and Urban land usage
        - Altering natural water systems

The Pleistocene Environment

- Mammals
  - Notably mammoths, mastodons, saber-toothed cats, giant sloths, wooly rhinoceros (extinct) elephants, bison, reindeer, moose
  - Extinct mammals in the Americas include mammoth, mastodon, saber-toothed cats, giant sloths (extinct everywhere), camels, horses, oxen (in the Americas before European contact)
  - Cause for large mammal extinction in the Americas once attributed to humans, now in dispute
Isostasy: Lithosphere is depressed by an external load, Asthenosphere exerts an opposite force from below
Eustasy: transgression and regression of mean sea level relative to the level of the land
Evidence for these processes can be found in landforms and by examining sequence stratigraphy
Sea-level regression during the Pleistocene exposed the Bering land bridge connecting Eurasia to North America (Siberia to Alaska) – about twice the size of Texas, exposed for most of the Pleistocene, completed covered by rising water ~ 11,000 ya
Beringia was not ice covered – similar to parts of Alaska today – steppe
Home of large predators including wolves, bears, and surprisingly lions
Windy, cold most of the year

Section 2: The Paleoindians

Early blood group research indicated two waves of settlements in the Americas after breaking out of Beringia – (distributions of “A blood group” and “O blood group” in Native Americans)
Can be traced back to the Chukchi of Siberia (Spencer Wells)
Small groups of hunters
Recent research with mtDNA suggests Paleoindian dispersal into the Americas from Beringia via the Pacific coast from 17 to 15 kya – likely more than one language family (Current Biology, 19, 1-8, January 13, 2009)
Hunted the northwest plains – included woodlands during the Pleistocene
Small bands of hunters dispersed throughout North American over ~ 1,000 years.

Periods in the Southeast

Early Paleoindian – 13,450 to 12,900 ya
  - Southeast – ranging from cool climate forests to subtropical scrub
Middle Paleoindian – 12,900 to 12,500 ya
  - Archaeological sites in the Southeast suggest a more settled existence
Late Paleoindian – 12,500 to 11,450 ya
  - Appearance of the Dalton Point for small game, use of local materials
Early Archaic – 11,450 to 8,000 ya
  - Point technology improves
Middle Archaic – 8,900 to 5,900 ya
  - Grinding tools for food processing, shellfish collection, food storage pits
Late Archaic – 5,900 to 3,200
  - Trade networks, seed crops, sedentary settlement exploiting local plants and game, early pottery

Early Agriculture in the Americas

Bottle gourd – first domestic plant – 11 to 9.5 kya; Beans in Mexico 10.5 to 9 kya; Maize in Mexico as early as 9.5 kya; Potatoes in Columbia at 10 kya; agriculture as a main source of food at ~ 4 kya (Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, Piazza)
Agriculture base needed for urban society – Caral (Peru), 4,600 ya; Cahokia (near present-day St. Louis) AD 1,100 (existed from AD 700 – 1600)
30,000 inhabitants by around 1200 AD
Cahokia

- Near present-day East St. Louis
- Mississippian Culture
- Unified by the Mississippi and Great Lakes watershed
- Riverine trade network
- Permanent houses – pole and thatched, central hearth, storage pits
- Mound building - burial, public buildings, ceremonial
- Agricultural
  - Maize – 2 crops per year
  - Beans
  - Squash
  - Sunflower
- Crafts center
- Woodland cultural roots
- Cultural and ideological influence from Mesoamerica via the Southwest and Gulf of Mexico
- Cemetery skeletal findings for 13 century Mississippian settlements clusters
  - Poor nutrition
  - Diseases
  - High birth rate
- Class structure
  - Central place hierarchy
  - Farmers
  - Craftsman
  - Priestly class
- Cahokia was the largest urban center in what would become the United States before 1800
- Peripheral influence to Woodlands tradition
  - Shift from small oval dwelling to the longhouse
  - Agricultural villages

Town Creek Mound

- Between the Uwharrie Mountains and the NC/SC line
- Not part of the Piedmont Village Culture
- Southern Mississippian Culture extending to the coast of Georgia
- 1000-1400 AD
- Infants and children buried in clay urns
- Use of copper tools
  - Mound building
- Reburied bone bundles
- Post construction
- Agricultural
- Connected to trading networks
- South Appalachian Mississippian Culture faded between 1550 and 1650
Section 3: The Native Americans of North Carolina at the time of European Contact

Observations of John Lawson

- A New Voyage to Carolina – published in 1709 (pages 167-177)
- Lawson’s description of dwelling
  - Supporting structure of bendable pine, cedar or hickory poles
  - Cypress or cedar covering – even if it has to be brought from a distance
  - Sweet and clean smelling interior, unlike musty European houses
  - Loose earth floor
  - Oven located in the center of the structure with a hole in the roof for smoke
- Refers to the dwelling as a cabin (?) and hut (page 16)
  - A “wigwam,” domed (Barrel and gabled roof used in NC)
  - Santee Indians built corn cribs – seven feet off the ground with clay daubed on the lath of the walls to prevent insects from getting to the corn – a gabled roof
  - Burial Mound building (page 21-22) – SC Indians
  - The Waxhaw – pyramidal roof on communal house – unlike dwelling, thatched with cane rather than bark. Cane benches attached to the wall.
    - Hand washing before food preparation
    - Communal feasting
  - The Cape Fear – accounts of Antony Long, William Hilton, and Peter Fabian – 1663/64 (pages 66-73)
    - Necoes – an Indian Plantation on the Cape Fear
    - Stag-Park, Rocky Point on NE named during this expedition; corn fields on the banks of the river
    - Interior of Indian “hut” contained deer skins and mats, baskets of acorns, pots, platters, and spoons
    - Indians acquired English cattle (Page 73) from New England settlement traders visiting the region
    - Cape Fear River lands – Wat-Coosa in the Indian language of the region (Page 73)

The Language Families

- Iroquoian
  - Cherokee
  - Tuscarora
  - Meherrin
  - Coree
  - Neusioc (Neuse River)
- The Cherokee inhabited the mountains and the western regions
- The Tuscarora, Meherrin, Coree, and Neusioc inhabited the Coastal Plain
- Siouan
  - Cape Fear*
  - Catawba
  - Cheraw
  - Eno**
The Siouan people of the Lower Cape Fear were considered extensions of the South Carolina tribes.* The Tutelo were located at the headwaters of the Yadkin. The Saponi were located on the Rocky River – a tributary of the Haw River and part of the Cape Fear River Basin. The Keyauwee were located in the Uwharries (near Asheboro). The Occaneechi were located near Hillsboro. The Sissipahaw lived on the Haw River. The Eno lived in what is now Orange County, NC. The Eno and Shakori shared a town near present-day Durham. ** The Woccon lived on the Lower Neuse River near the Tuscarora. The Cheraw lived in villages in the Piedmont from near present-day Danville, VA to Camden, SC. The Catawba Nation was an alliance of the remnants of several Siouan tribes. They became known by this name after the Yamassee and Cheraw Wars (1715-1718). The remnants of the Cheraw eventually joined the Catawba.

Algonquian
- Bear River
- Chowan
- Hatteras
- Machapunga
- Moratok
- Pamlico
- Secotan
- Weapomeoc

These tribes were located on the Tidewater of the state. E. Lawrence Lee placed there number to be around 500 in 1710 – 200 around Albemarle Sound and 300 in the Pamlico, Hatteras, Bear River (Bay River in Pamlico County), Machapunga lived on the Pungo River and Lake Mattamuskeet in Present-day Hyde County.

General Attributes of Native American Dwellings in North America north of Mexico
- Use of readily available materials
- Central oven or fire pit, opening in roof for smoke
- Permanent dwellings in agricultural settlements
- Tipi used by western plains hunters – tipi with canvas or woven cloth introduced by Europeans
- Adobe in the American Southwest
- Plank houses, similar to European houses, in the American Northwest
- The Pit House – an early form