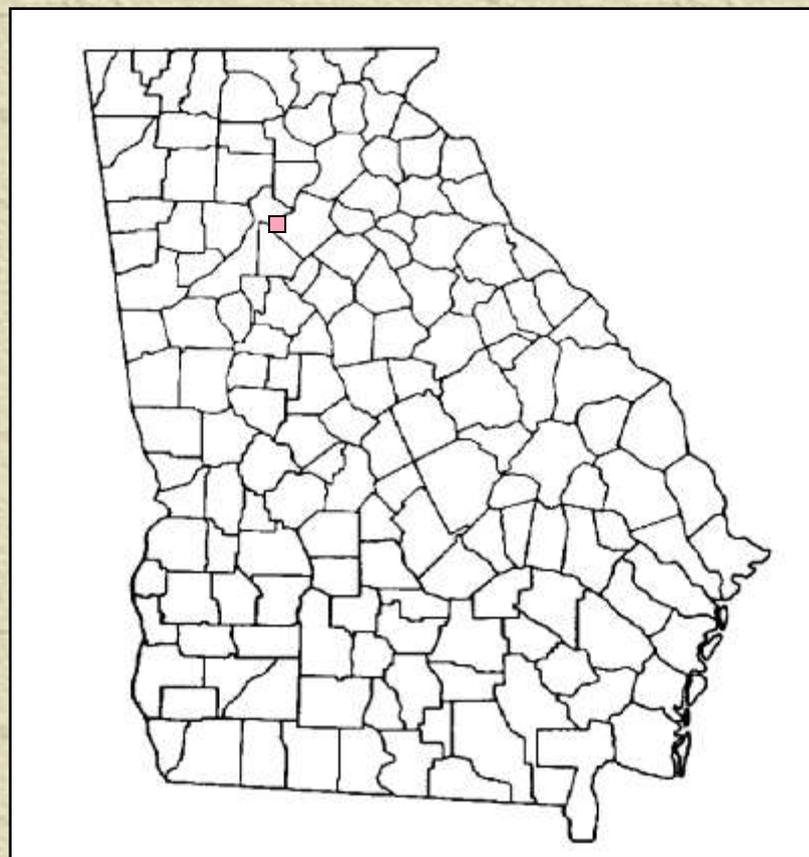




The Graves Soapstone Site Gwinnett County Georgia

2003 Archaeological
Investigations

The Graves Soapstone Site 2003 Excavations



What Is Soapstone?

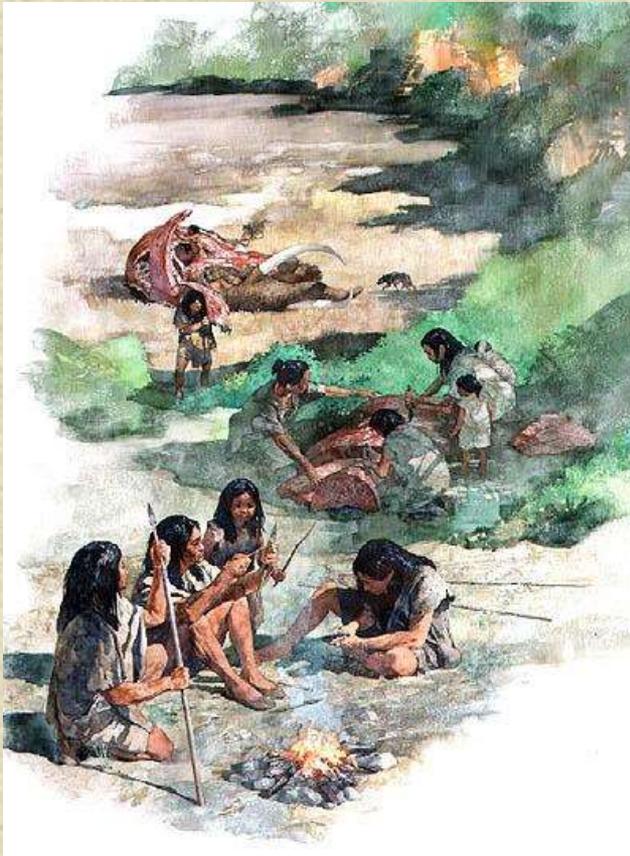
✦ Steatite (Soapstone) is a metamorphic rock, generally a talc schist. It tends to be a very soft rock, and is therefore easily worked into forms such as bowls, pipes, or figurines. Many Native Americans once used soapstone to make cooking vessels because of the ease in carving and the fact that it holds heat well. This occurred primarily during the Late Archaic period, between 5000 and 3000 years before the present (BP) (3000 to 1000 B.C.E).

Speaking of Periods...

- ✦ Old World Archaeology spoke of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.
- ✦ In American archaeology we speak of Periods: PaleoIndian, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippian, and the Historic Period.
- ✦ Within these Periods may be subdivisions and it is within the subdivisions that we speak of the basic archaeological unit, the Culture.
- ✦ A culture may be simply defined as similar archaeological materials found over a wide region (Alex D. Krieger)

PaleoIndian

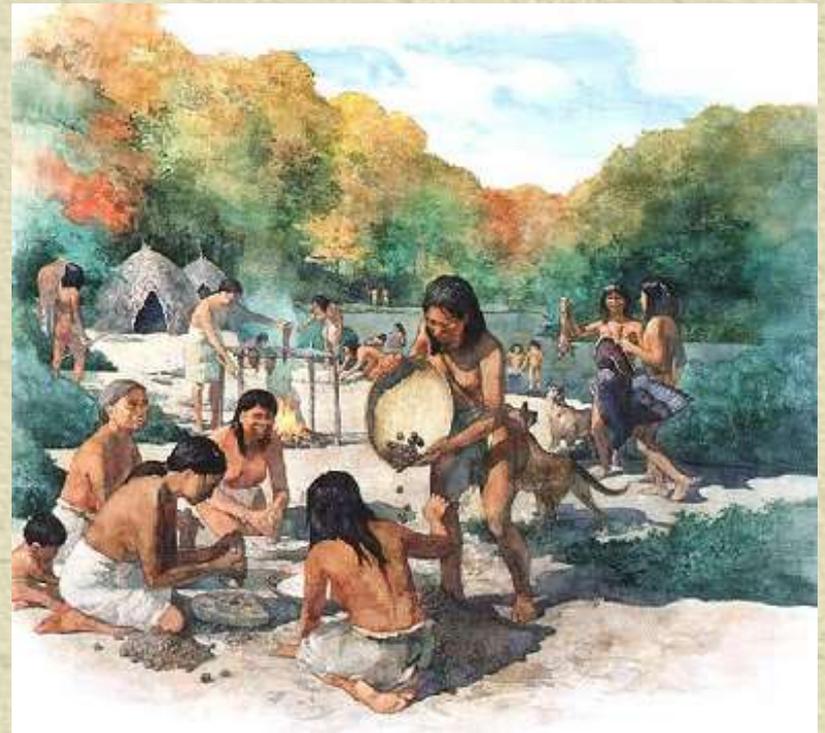
12,000 to 14,000 B.P.



- ✦ People of the *Clovis* culture hunted mastodon (an extinct elephant) with spears with large stone spearpoints (**Clovis points**); They made use of caves and rock shelters, and did not live in settlements.

Archaic Period 10,000-3000 B.P

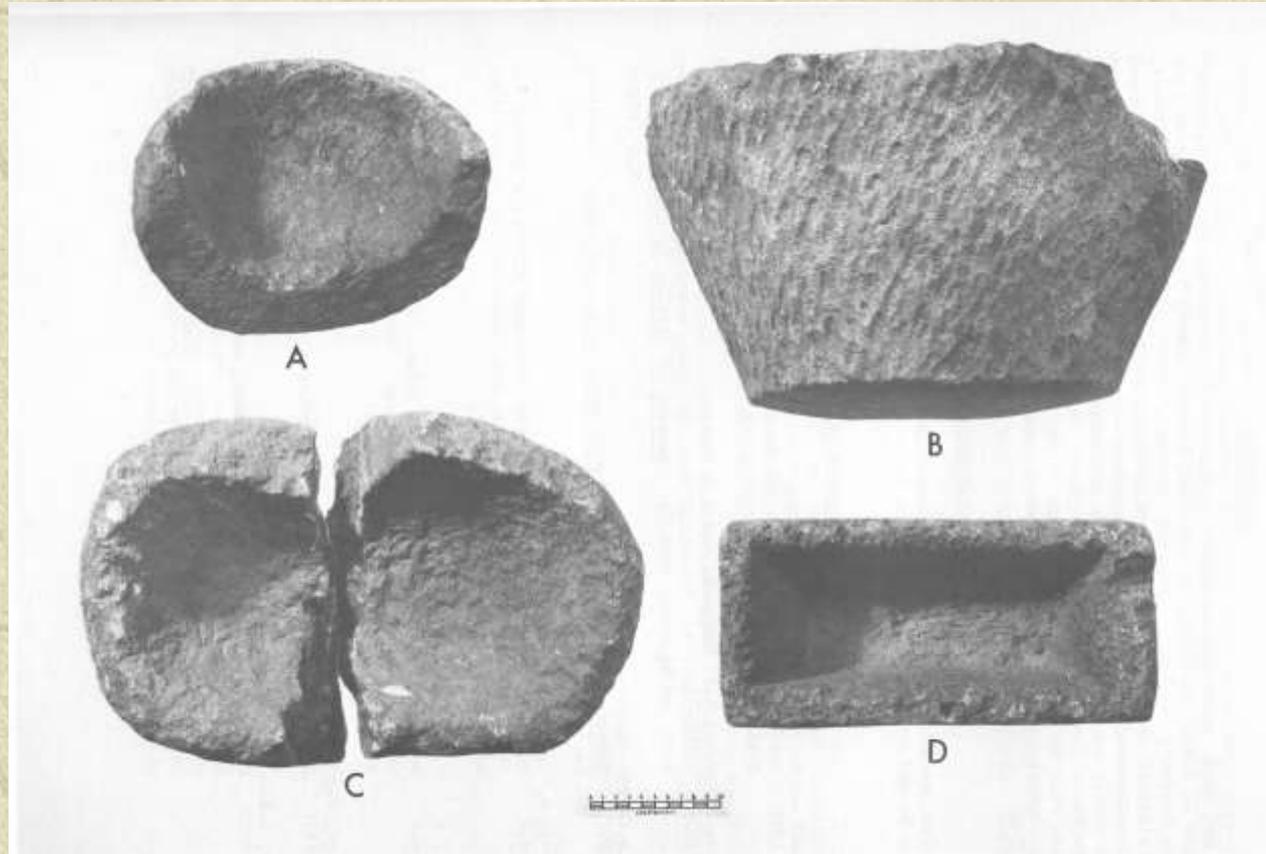
- ✦ People of the *Savannah River* culture:
- ✦ Lived in settlements with outlying hunting and gathering camps.
- ✦ Hunted deer, turkeys, bears and rabbits, and fished.
- ✦ Gathered plant foods and processed them on **metates**.
- ✦ Threw small spears or **darts** with “atlatl.”
- ✦ Used **soapstone bowls** like those from Soapstone Ridge in DeKalb County, GA. for cooking.



Soapstone Ridge, DeKalb County



Basic Bowl Forms

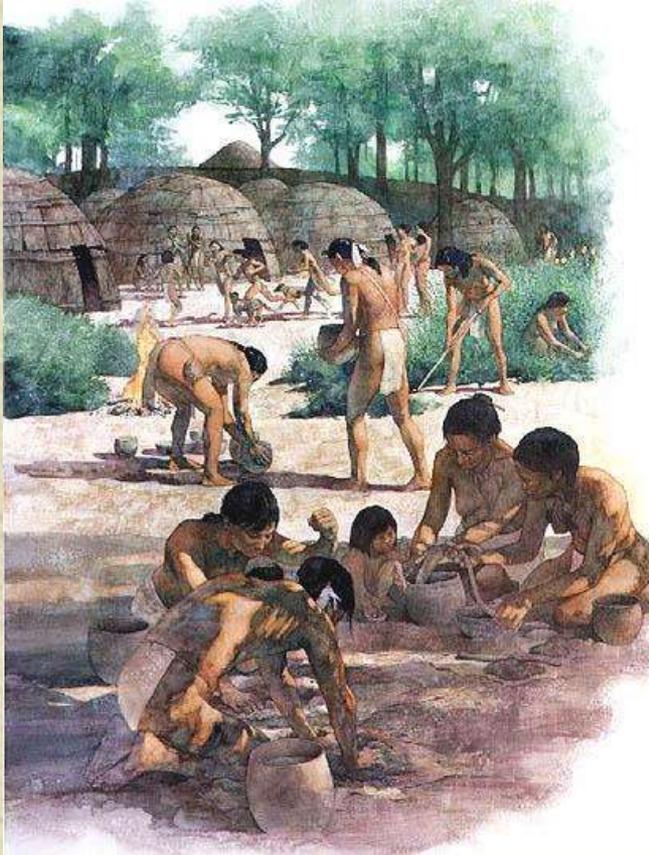


Importance of Soapstone

✦ Soapstone was a very important commodity. Soapstone pots were traded far from their origins. The manufacture and trade of soapstone objects was probably the first industry in the Southeast! One drawback to using soapstone is that it is a very dense rock, and so large bowls are quite heavy. When clay pottery was introduced about 3000 B.P., interest in soapstone turned from utilitarian pots to works of art and still is used for carving of artistic objects. Joseph B. Mountjoy

Woodland Period

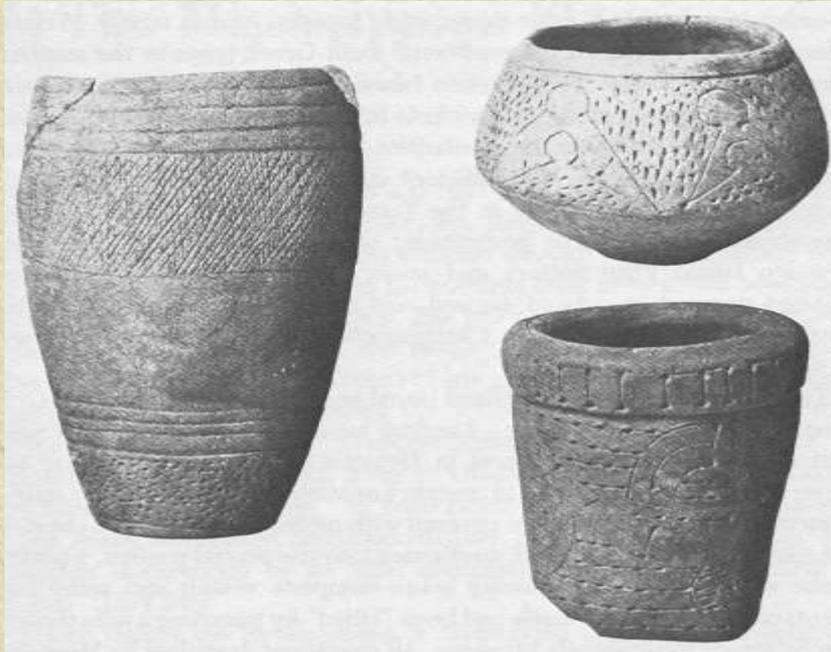
3000 - 1000 B.P.



- ✦ **Ceramic (clay) pottery** replaced soapstone.
- ✦ **Settlements were more permanent** with increased gardening of sunflowers, corn, squash.
- ✦ **Soapstone now used for jewelry and ceremonial objects** like the “bird” pipe.
- ✦ ***Hopewellian* peoples** buried dead in low earthen mounds.

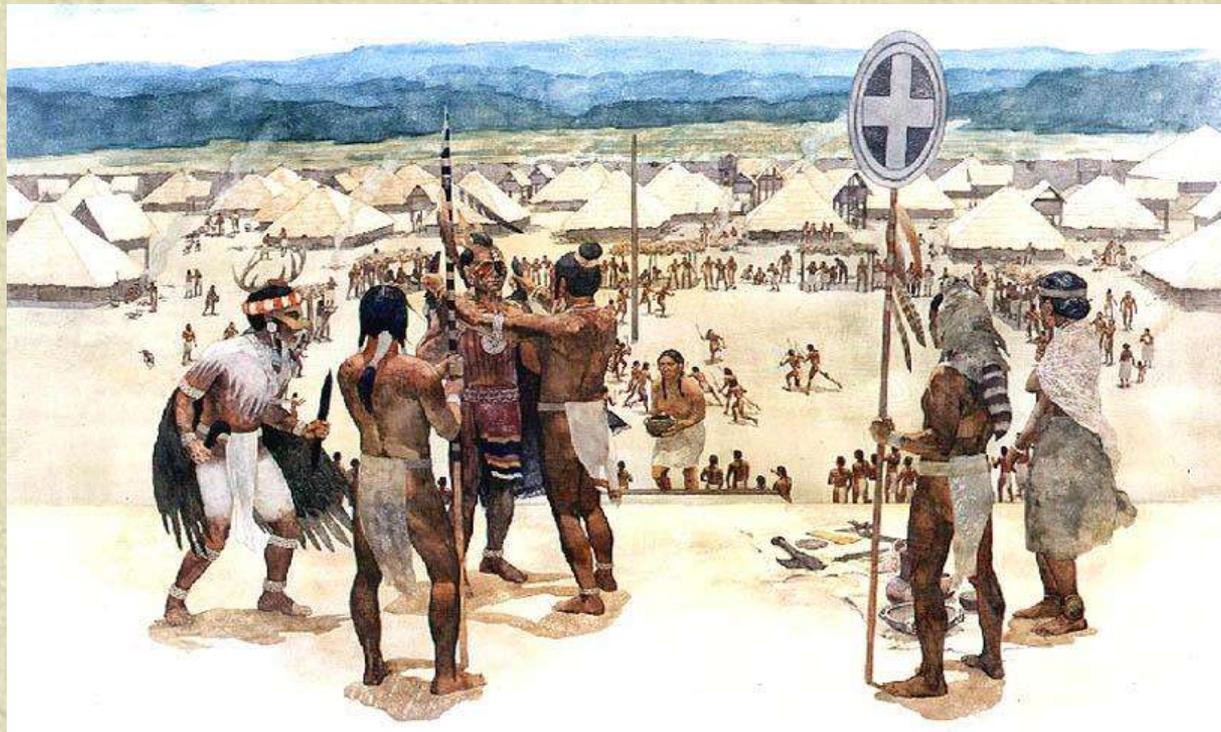
Woodland Period: The advent of pottery & fine soapstone objects

Late Woodland
ceramic pots



7.5" Bird Effigy Pipe

Mississippian Period 1000 – 400 B.P.



Mississippian Cultures...

- ✦ Beginning of stratified chiefdom societies.
- ✦ Large earthen platform mounds arranged around plazas like the Etowah Mound site in Cartersville, GA.
- ✦ Increasing dependence on **maize** cultivation.
- ✦ Use of bow and arrow with **small arrowhead point** instead of spear or atlatl dart.
- ✦ Increased warfare.

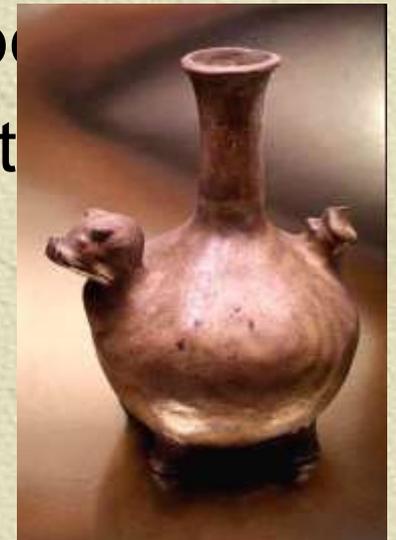
Late Mississippian Craftsmanship ~550 B.P.



✦ Monolithic soapstone ceremonial ax (left)

✦ Dog effigy ceramic bottle (bottom right)

✦ Pendant (bottom left)



Historic Period

400 B.P. to Present

- ✦ In the historic period, Euro-American explorers, travelers and scientists recorded much about the Native Americans they encountered including tribal names such as Chickasaw, Creek, Cherokee, Apache, Ute, and so on. By this time these people did not know what the soapstone scars were or anything about soapstone bowl production.



Stages of Soapstone Bowl Production

- ✦ Stage I - Roughing out preform on soapstone boulder using hafted stone tool. Note scars from earlier quarrying.



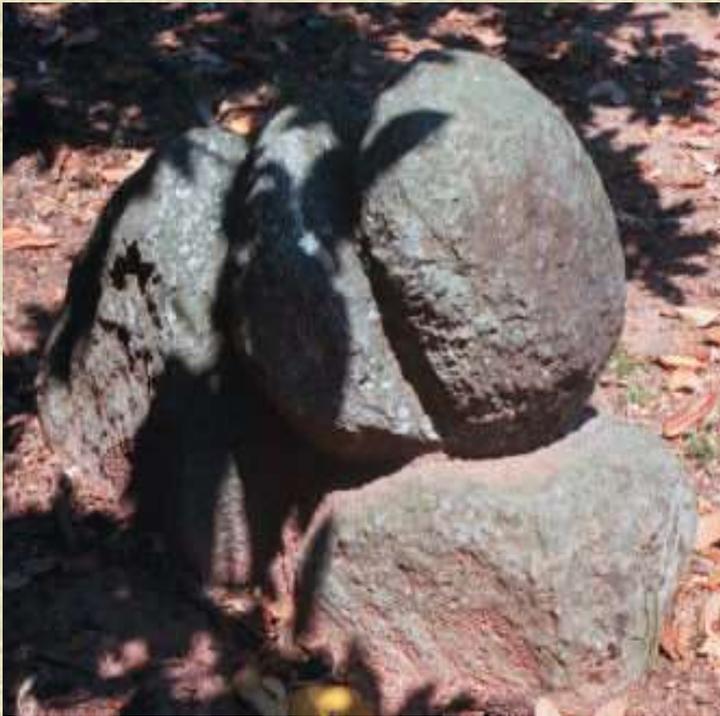
Stages of Soapstone Bowl Production



- ✦ Stage II - Using stone chisel and hammerstone, preform is almost ready to be detached. Note rough shaping of bowl exterior at this stage.

Soapstone Ridge Examples

Preforms still attached



Stages of Soapstone Bowl Production



Stage III. One possible method of detaching the preform was to use a large stick as a pry bar. Another possible method of detaching a preform was to use a **hafted** stone tool. At this point it was easy to break the preform. The ancient Indian name for this was, “Uh-Oh.”

UH-OH!

Probable preforms, excavated at the Graves site, that may have broken while preparing the top of the bowl (bottom side is up in the photos) before carving out interiors (both on display in the museum).



Another View

✦ View of top of “A.”

Note smoothed,
abraded surface on
top.



Stages of Soapstone Bowl Production

Stage IV - Chip and carve out the inside of the preform using **hafted or hand held tools. This is the stage when many almost –finished bowls were broken, like the two examples from the Graves site on the next page. The ancient Indian word for this was: “Oh-No-Not-A-Gan”.**



“Oh-No-Not-A-Gan”

A. Stage IVa

B. Stage IVb



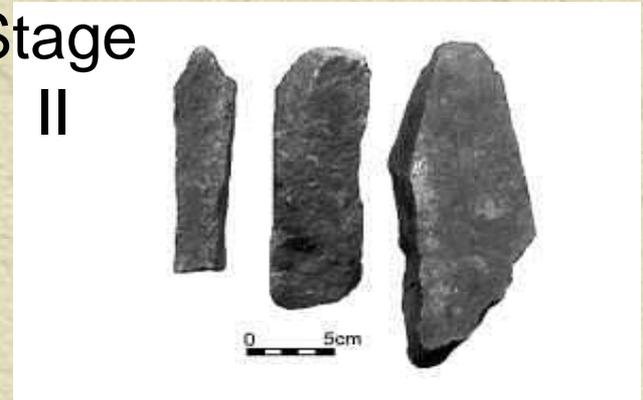
Tools of the Trade

John Erwin Fleur De Lys Archaeological Project, Newfoundland

Stage I



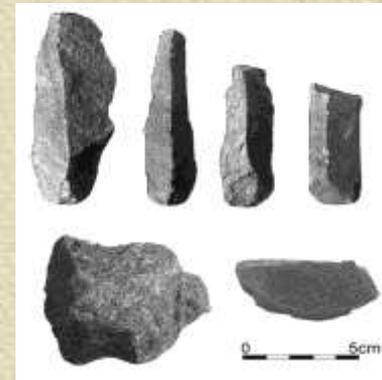
Stage II



Stage III



Stage IV



Tools of the Trade

TRC Garrow Associates

Graves Soapstone Site



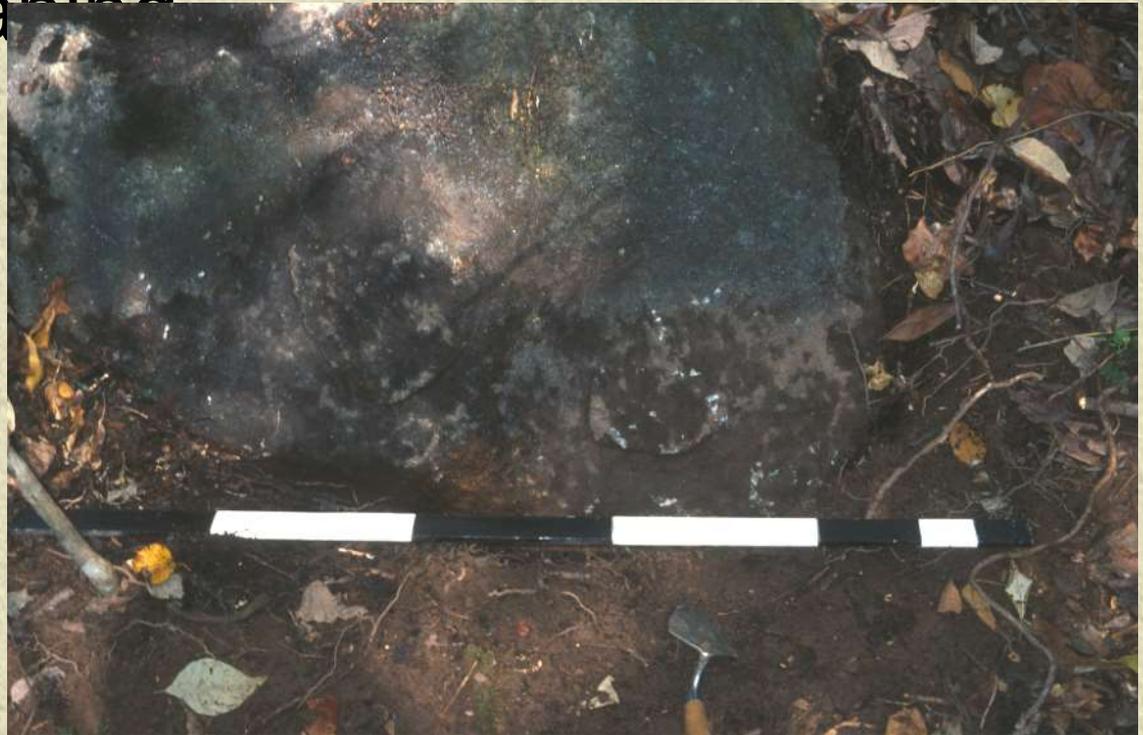
Investigations at the Graves Site...

-
- ✦ Site as it appeared during 2002 Reconnaissance Survey...



2002 Reconnaissance

- ✦ Scars “A” and “B” as they appeared after cleaning



2002 Reconnaissance



✦ Scar "C"...



2002 Reconnaissance



✦ Scar “D” ...



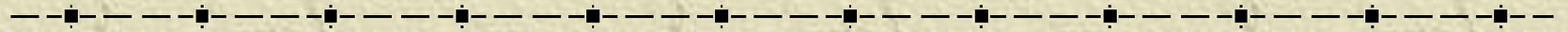
2002 Reconnaissance



✦ Scar “E” ...



The Answer Lies Below...



- ✦ 10 meter area around main outcrop cleared

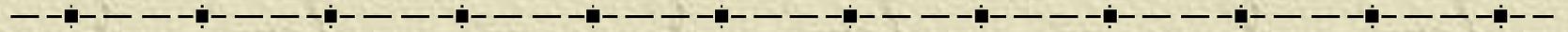


Initial mapping of study area...

- ✦ Elevations taken from site datum on main boulder and...



Initial mapping of study area...



- ✦ all surface features and artifacts tagged and mapped in.



Gridding and shovel testing...

- ✦ Shovel tests within study area help characterize “what lies below.”



Test Unit Locations staked out...



- ✦ Test Units 1 & 2 located below Scars A & B.



Excavating test units...

- ✦ All excavated material is screened in ¼" wire mesh...

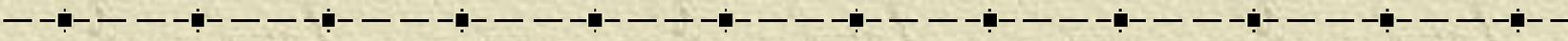


Some Days Are Diamonds...

A quarry workman's tool cache is
uncovered.



The Cache is a Tool Kit... a Kit Cache?

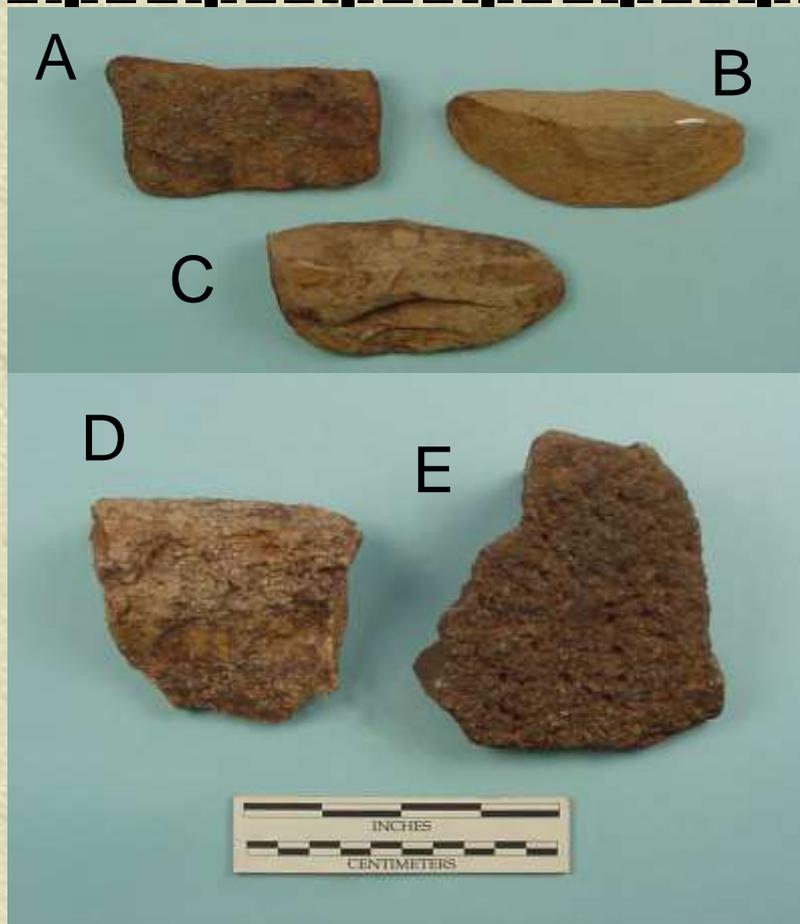


Importance of the Cache...

- ✦ Tools are all same material – diabase
- ✦ Tools are unused
- ✦ Kit may contain an excavation tool (A)
- ✦ Tools are shaped by flaking.
 - ◆ Therefore differences are intentional.



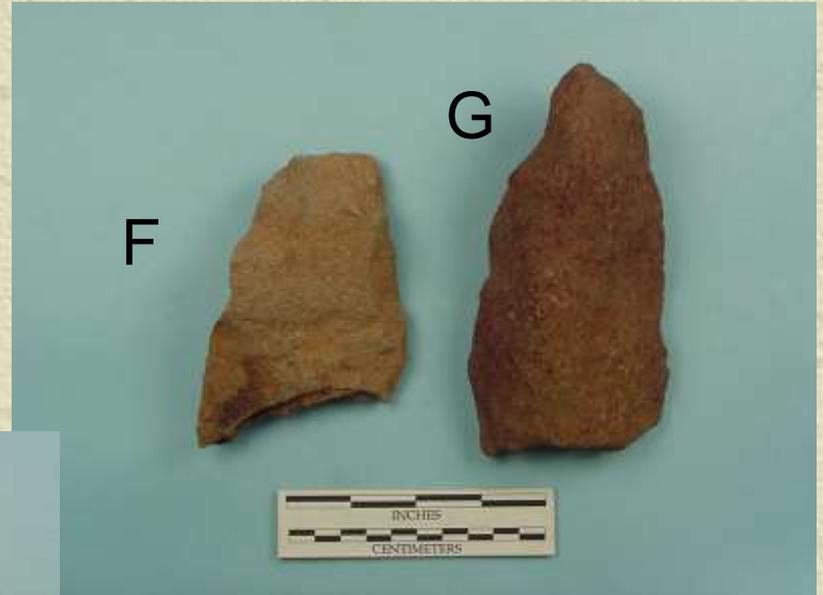
Other tools excavated (about 20)



- ✦ Some are different materials (D – quartz; A & E - amphibolite)
- ✦ In our sample, quartz & ampibolite tools are natural, not shaped.
- ✦ All diabase tools are shaped.
- ✦ Diabase tools appear to have “snapped” B,C and

Other tools...

- ✦ ...and F.
- ✦ ...possibly G too.
- ✦ More natural shapes, H & I.



The End

