

Sturdy Structures

Adapted from “Wattle You Build Next?” in Poverty Point Expeditions produced by the Louisiana Division of Archaeology

Objectives

Students will examine the main form of prehistoric dwellings in North Carolina.

Grade Level

Grade 4

North Carolina Education Standards

1.04 Evaluate ways the people of North Carolina used, modified, and adapted to the physical environment, past and present.

1.05 Assess human movement as it relates to the physical environment.

2.01 Locate and describe American Indians in North Carolina, past and present.

2.03 Describe the similarities and differences among people of North Carolina, past and present.

3.01 Assess changes in ways of living over time and determine whether the changes are primarily political, economic, or social.

Materials

- Wire basket from a garden center or available framework material. Chicken wire can also be used, but requires additional time to form into a dome structure.
- Vines or wreaths from your local craft store (break apart the wreaths so that students will have individual vines to form the structure of their longhouse).
- Cedar chips, bark, or a similar material that is available
- Square foam board or sturdy cardboard for a base of structure
- Glue (glue gun or craft glue)
- Scissors

Time Required

1 hour

Background

“Sir Walter Raleigh’s first expedition to North America inspected an Algonquian settlement near the present-day North Carolina coast. He found a ‘village of nine houses, built of Cedar, and fortified round about with [sharp] trees, to [keep] out their enemies, and the entrance into it made like a [turn] pike very artificially [artfully].’ From other early reports we know that while some Algonquian villages along the Atlantic Coast were similarly modest in size, others held upward of fifty structures and were spread over 100 acres. Village locations were selected for good visibility – which meant high ground – and access to running streams, stands of trees, and promising garden spots. Often they were protected by timber palisades” (Nabokov and Easton 1989:55).



Figure 1. Watercolor drawing “Indian Village of Secoton” by John White (c. 1585-1586). © British Museum.



Figure 2. Watercolor drawing “Indian Village of Pomeiooc” by John White c. 1585-1586. © British Museum.

Procedures

- Review the history of Native American dwellings in North Carolina.
- Show students the watercolor drawings of John White so that they can have a frame of reference for the structures they are going to create.
- Hand out materials for making mini-structures. Students can either work individually or in small groups.
- In order to save some time, you can choose to pre-build the frames of the structures from chicken wire if pre-fabricated wire baskets are unavailable.
- Students should first place their structural frame (wire basket or chicken wire) on their foundation.
- Cedar chips and other materials should then be applied to the structural frame using glue.
- If there is available time, allow students to experiment with adding additional structures and environmental elements to their foundation (i.e., palisade walls, trees, and water).

Teacher Tips

- This is an activity that can be completed over the course of multiple class sessions.
- Please keep in mind that if chicken wire is the structural frame of choice, that it would be best for you to pre-fabricate it. This material is both time consuming to form into the appropriate pre-fabricated structure, and will have sharp edges.

Additional Resources

First Immigrants: Native American Settlement of North Carolina

<http://ncpedia.org/history/early/native-settlement>

Native American History in North Carolina

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/nativeamericans.html>

North Carolina Archaeology: Online Reports & Summaries of North Carolina Archaeological Sites & Studies: The Prehistory of North Carolina: A Basic Cultural Sequence

<http://www.archaeology.ncdcr.gov/ncarch/articles/basicseq.htm>

Claggett, Stephen R.

North Carolina Archaeology: Online Reports & Summaries of North Carolina Archaeological Sites & Studies: North Carolina's First Colonists: 12,000 Years Before Roanoke

<http://www.archaeology.ncdcr.gov/ncarch/articles/1stcolo.htm>

Wattle You Build Next?

<http://www.crt.louisiana.gov/archaeology/ppexpeditions/wattleyoubuildnext.htm>

Evaluation

Discuss with your students what they learned about the prehistory of the area now known as Camp Lejeune. What did they learn about the prehistory of North Carolina, the Native Americans who once lived here, and the structures they once lived in? For a more advanced discussion, questions about the archaeological record of such structures can be presented to your students. Have students think about the presence of postholes/postmolds, trenches, pits, and other features that will appear in the archaeological record to indicate these structures once existed on the landscape.