

TECHNOLOGY

Living Archaeology Weekend

GLOSSARY

General Archaeology Vocabulary

Archaeology - The study of past human cultures based on analysis of **artifacts** and **sites**. Archaeologists do not typically look for dinosaurs (those are **paleontologists**) and they don't act like Indiana Jones.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) - A federal law that protects the remains of ancient and historic cultures on Federal and Indian lands, making it illegal to excavate, remove, damage, or alter archaeological resources without a permit. Damage to archaeological sites is an on-going problem, especially in Red River Gorge. Report recent or active looting and vandalism to the proper law enforcement authorities.

Artifact - Any object made or used by humans, such as **arrowheads**, **ceramics**, and **hominy holes**.

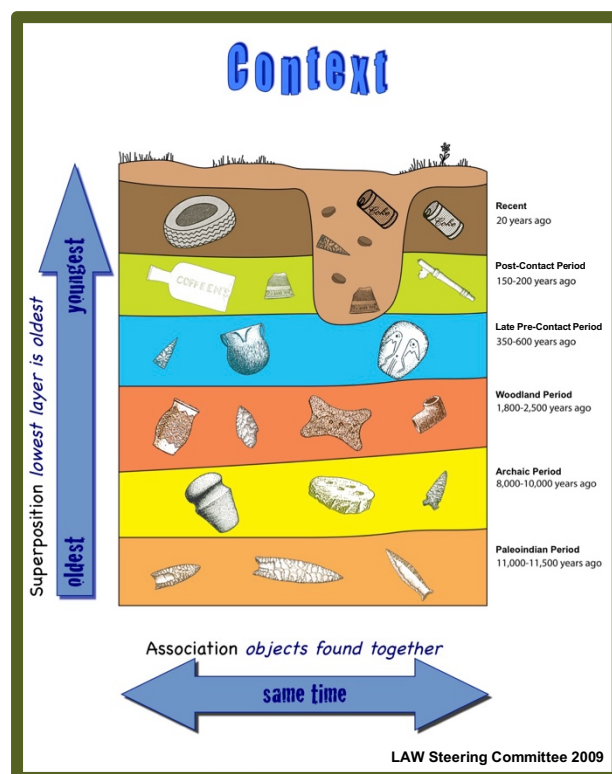
Collecting - The legal and ethical recovery of **artifacts** by people other than archaeologists. Contrast **collecting** with **looting**.

Context - The three-dimensional location of an **artifact** and its spatial relationship to other artifacts. When an object is removed from its context without documentation, much information is forever lost.

Feature - A soil anomaly produced by a past human activity, such as an **earth oven**, **hearth**, or **post mold**.

Hearth - (1) The remains of an ancient campfire, and (2) the area in front of a historic fireplace, often used for cooking. Also (3) a place where humans **domesticated** plants and animals

Historic - Traditionally defined by archaeologists as the time period after the invention or adoption of writing. Archaeologists now refer to this time period as **Post-Contact**.



Kentucky Antiquities Act – A state law that protects the remains of ancient and historic cultures on state, county, and city property, making it illegal to excavate, remove, damage, or alter archaeological resources without a permit.

Looting (Pot Hunting) – The illegal or unethical destruction of archaeological resources to obtain artifacts like **arrowheads**, **pottery**, or glass bottles for personal use or for sale.

National Register of Historic Places – A listing of our country's most significant historic, architectural, and archaeological places, such as Red River Gorge.

Paleontology – The study of ancient animals and their lifeways; including dinosaurs and other long-dead animals, plants, and microorganisms. Often mistakenly confused with **archaeology**.

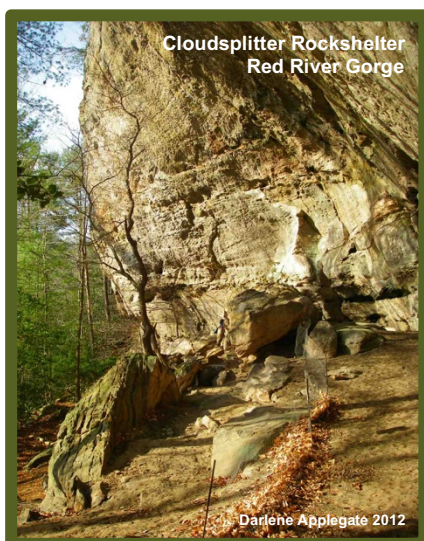
Post Mold – A darkened soil stain created when the underground portion of a house post or fence post decomposes.

Post-Contact – The time period following when Native peoples encountered people from Europe, Asia, and Africa in North America.

Prehistoric – Traditionally defined by archaeologists as the time period before the invention or adoption of writing. Archaeologists now refer to this time period as **Pre-Contact**.

Pre-Contact – The time period preceding when Native peoples encountered people from Europe, Asia, and Africa in North America.

Preservation – A program or plan to prevent damage or destruction of an archaeological **site** or other cultural resource.



Rockshelter – A recessed area under a rock overhang that people used for a variety of reasons, such as shelter, storing crops, and corralling livestock.

Site – A place on land or underwater where past human activities occurred, with material evidence of those activities.

Stratigraphy – The layering of deposits in archaeological **sites**. **Artifacts** and natural items and sediments become buried in layers or **strata** over time. According to the law of **superposition**, the layer on the bottom is the oldest, the layer on top is the youngest. (See **Context**)

Technology Vocabulary

Arrowhead - The small (generally less than 2.5 inches) stone, bone, or metal tip of an arrow. Larger points are regarded as spear points or knife blades and are associated with spear and dart hand-thrown delivery systems or hafted cutting.

Ceramics - Baked or sun-dried clay objects like pots, plates, and figurines. Also called **pottery**, these items will usually be found in small pieces (**sherds**), since whole objects are rare at archaeological **sites**.



Earth Oven - A pit in the ground lined with heated rocks and covered with soil, used for cooking wrapped meats, squash, and other foods.

Fleshing - The act of removing the flesh and fat from an animal hide, as part of the **tanning** process.

Mussel - A common mollusk found in Kentucky's rivers with shells that Native peoples used as spoons and in the manufacture pottery and personal adornments, like beads and pendants.

Petroglyph - Images that have been carved, pounded, incised, or ground into a rock surface.

Pictograph - Images that have been painted or drawn on a rock surface, often with charcoal or pigments like iron oxide suspended in animal fat.

Pottery - Baked or sun-dried clay objects like pots, plates, and figurines. Also called **ceramics**, these items will usually be found in small pieces (**sherds**), since whole objects are rare at archaeological **sites**.

Projectile Point - A pointed stone, bone, or metal object attached to the tip of a weapon shaft, such as a spear or an arrow. All **arrowheads** are projectile points, but not all projectile points are arrowheads; some were spear or dart points and used before the bow-and-arrow was invented.

Sherd - A broken piece of a **ceramic** or **pottery** object, such as a pot or figurine.

Rock Art - Any design or picture created on a rock surface, including **petroglyphs** and **pictographs**.

Spear Thrower - A hand-held bone or wood tool that functions as a lever to propel a spear with considerable thrust and distance.

Tanning – The process of cleaning and softening an animal hide, in preparation for using the hide for clothing, footwear, structural wall coverings, and other purposes. Includes **fleshing** and **breaking**.

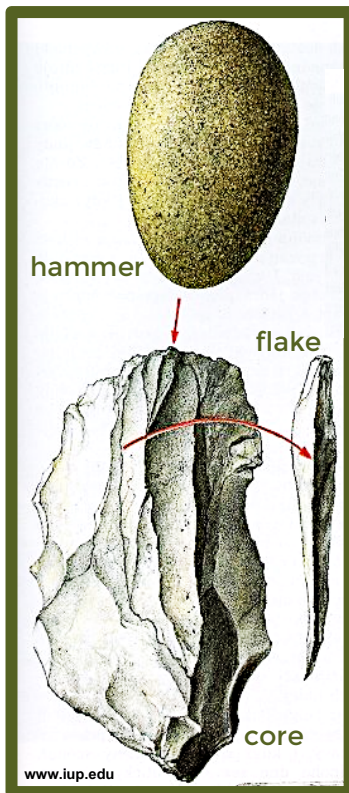
Temper – Sand, stone, shell, clay, or plant fibers added to clay to prevent **ceramics** or **pottery** from shrinking or cracking during firing or drying.

Flintknapping Vocabulary

Billet – A soft antler, bone, or wood tool used by **knappers** making a **chipped-stone** tool.

Chert – A fine-grained rock that can be shaped into tools by chipping flakes off a core. In the United States, archaeologists use chert to mean the same type of rock as **flint**.

Chipped-Stone Tool – Any tool made by altering a piece of brittle raw material like **chert**.



Core – A piece of raw material from which a **knapper** makes a chipped-stone tool.

Debitage – The chips or material left over after making a stone tool from **chert**.

Debris – Angular-shaped **debitage**.

Flake – Flat-shaped **debitage**.

Flintknapping (Knapping) – The process of making a stone tool, such as an **arrowhead** or **scraper**, from brittle rocks like **chert** by striking or applying pressure the raw material.

Ground-Stone Tool – Any tool, such as some **grinding** stones, made by pecking and grinding a piece of non-brittle raw material like sandstone or limestone.

Hafted – A tool that is attached to and held by a handle or shaft.

Hammer (Hammerstone) – A hard stone tool used for **percussion flaking** by **knappers** making a **chipped-stone** tool.

Knife – A sharp hand-held or **hafted chipped-stone tool** used for cutting and slicing.

Lithics – Artifacts made of rock, such as **arrowheads** and **grinding stones**.

Pecking – A method of making **ground-stone tools** by striking the rock with quick, short blows from a stone **hammer**.

Percussion Flaking – A method of making stone tools by striking the rock with blows from another stone, antler, or bone.

Pressure Flaking – A method of making stone tools by applying pressure to the tool edges with an antler or bone. Usually the final step in shaping a **projectile point**.

Scraper – A sharp hand-held or **hafted chipped-stone tool** used for scraping, such as removing soft tissues from animal hides.

Baskets and Textiles Vocabulary

Canebrake – A large, thick stand of river cane.

Cordage – A thread or string made by twisting two or more strands of plant fibers together.

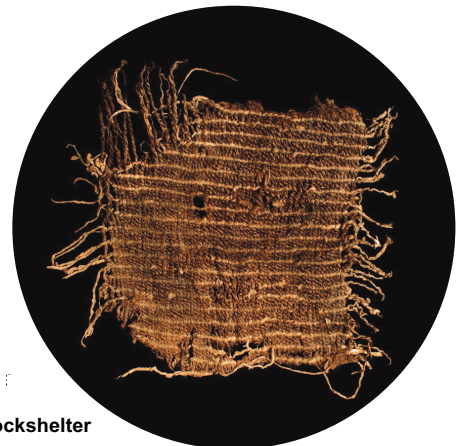
Diagonal Weave – A method of **weaving** in which the elements interweave with themselves.

Double-Woven Basket – A basket that is woven to be two layers thick.

Plain Weave – A method of **weaving** that is done as over one, under one.

River Cane – One of the common names used for *Arundinaria gigantea*, a species of bamboo native to the U.S. The others are *Arundinaria tecta* (Swamp Cane, Switch Cane) and *Arundinaria appalachia* (Hill Cane, Mountain Cane).

Textile – Any fabric, cloth, or object made of plant material (leaves, stems, stalks, bark) using a variety of methods like **twilling** and **twining**. Examples include clothing, bags, blankets, sleeping mats, and nets.



2,000-Year-Old Twined Textile Fragment from Menifee County Rockshelter
William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology

Twilling – A method of making baskets and **textiles** that produces parallel diagonal lines.

Twining – A method of making baskets and **textiles** that involves twisting the plant fibers to produce parallel horizontal lines.

Warp – The horizontal or lengthwise threads or cords of a basket or **textile**.

Weaving – A method of making baskets and **textiles** that involves winding the plant fibers in-and-out.

Weft (Woof) – The vertical or crosswise threads or cords of a basket or **textile**.

Spinning and Weaving Vocabulary

Distaff – A tool that keeps fibers untangled and makes spinning easier. Unspun fibers are wrapped around it, then tied in place with a piece of ribbon or string. A distaff is most commonly used to hold flax and sometimes wool, but it can hold any type of fiber.

Drop Spindle – A wooden spike weighted at one end with a circular **whorl**. It is used for spinning wool and other plant, animal, or synthetic fibers into thread.

Niddy-Noddy – A tool used to make **skeins** from yarn. It consists of a central bar with two crossbars at each end, offset from each other by 90 degrees. This is the hand-held version of the **spinner's weasel**.



Spinner's Weasel – A mechanical yarn-measuring tool attached to a wooden stand. This spoked wheel has an internal ratcheting mechanism that clicks every two revolutions. It makes a "pop" sound after it has measured out the desired length of yarn.

Skein – A loosely coiled length of yarn or thread wound on a reel.

Spinning Wheel (Charkha) – A foot-and-hand-operated device used to make yarn or thread from plant, animal, or synthetic fibers.

Whorl – A weight attached to a **spindle** that acts like a flywheel, adding momentum to the spindle.

Flutes Vocabulary

Duct Flute – Equipped with a mechanism to guide the air from a blow hole to the sounding edge without requiring embouchure.

Embouchure – The technique of using the lips to shape and direct the air onto the sounding edge.

End Blown Flute – A flute the player holds vertically.

Fipple – A block inserted in the end of a flute, either internally or externally, to guide the air.

Fipple Flute – A type of flute notched near from the mouth end, with a block inserted in the end to guide the air. Examples include recorders, tin whistles, flageolets, and eagle bone whistles.

Rim Blown Flute – A flute played by blowing across the top of a tube, sometimes with a notched or beveled edge. Examples include Anasazi, Mojave, Shakuhachi (Japan), Ney (Middle East), Xiao (China), Quena (Andes) flutes and most panpipes.

Side Blown or Transverse Flute – A simple flute the player holds horizontally. Examples include modern concert flutes, Celtic and Renaissance style flutes, fifes, the Chinese Dizi, and many others.



Simple Flute – A hollow tube. The player blows directly on the sounding edge to make sound, requiring embouchure. This is the oldest known type of flute, found nearly worldwide in ancient cultures. The oldest European and Asian examples were used over 35,000 years ago.

Sounding or Splitting Edge – The beveled edge that, by splitting the player's breath stream, produces vibrations that produce sound.

Two-Chamber Native American Flute – Flutes that contain a Slow Air Chamber (SAC) with a divider that separates it from the sounding column/variable tube.

Variable Tube – A tube with finger holes or a sliding "blockage" that will change the length of the vibrating air column and thus, the pitch.

Vessel Flute – A type of flute that often contains an internal or external fipple, but the resonating chamber is an enclosed vessel. An example of this kind of flute is an ocarina.

Food Production Vocabulary

Agriculture – The intensive production of **domesticated** plant and animal foods on a large scale with complex tools and methods. Compare to **horticulture**.

Domesticate – Human control of the breeding process so that plants and animals develop traits (like large seed size and increased milk production) making them more useful to humans for food and other uses.

Eastern Agricultural Complex – A set of eight seed-producing plants (sunflower, sumpweed or marshelder, goosefoot or lambsquarter, maygrass, erect knotweed, giant ragweed, amaranth, and little barley) that formed the basis of early **horticulture** in eastern North America beginning 5,000 years ago.



Grinding Stones – Hand-held stone or wood tools in a variety of shapes (like conical mortars-pestles and flat manos-metates) that past peoples used to grind nuts, corn, and other plant foods.

Hearth – (1) A place where humans **domesticated** plants and animals. Also (2) the remains of an ancient campfire, and (3) the area in front of a historic fireplace, often used for cooking.

Hominy Hole (Bedrock Mortar) – Cylindrical holes in sandstone or limestone rocks that Native peoples may have used to grind nuts and other plant foods.

Horticulture – The production of **domesticated** plant foods on a small scale with simple tools and methods. Compare to **agriculture**.

Maize – A Spanish word for **corn** derived from a native word *mahis*.

Parched Corn – The process of drying and cooking corn that was used by Native peoples and early Settlers to make corn last longer. One of the streams in Red River Gorge Area is called Parched Corn Creek.

Milling Vocabulary

Chaff – The inedible outer layers of grain kernels.

Corn Mill – A large building where corn kernels are ground into **meal** in large amounts on **mill stones**.

Grinder (Hand Grist Mill) – A portable metal tool for grinding corn kernels or other grains into **meal** in small amounts.

Grist – Grain kernels that have been separated from **chaff** in preparation for grinding. It can also mean grain that has been ground at a **grist mill**.

Grist Mill – A large building where whole kernels of wheat, rye, and grains other than corn are ground into **meal** in large amounts on **mill stones**.

Meal – A coarse flour made from grinding grains, such as corn, wheat, and oats.

Mill Stones – A pair of large, heavy, disk-shaped stone made of durable fine-grained sandstone with deep grooves on the flat surfaces that function to grind grains into small pieces and push the ground **meal** out from between the stones. Used in a **grist mill** or **corn mill** to grind corn and other grains.

Mill Race – A fast-moving channel of water that provides power to turn the **mill stones** in a **grist mill** or **corn mill**.

Mortar – A hard, heavy bowl designed to hold materials to be ground into small pieces or powder by means of a **pestle**.

Pestle – Made from a hard material like dense wood, this rod-shaped object with a rounded end is used for crushing or grinding substances in a **mortar**.

Sheller – A portable metal tool for removing corn kernels from the cob.



Blowguns Vocabulary

Blowgun – A tube made of **river cane** or a similar hollow plant that Native peoples used to hunt small game such as rabbits, squirrels, and birds.

Dart – The projectile that is shot from the **blowgun**.



Fletching - The material on the end of the **dart** (**thistle**, feathers, cotton, and animal furs) that clogs up the bore of the **blowgun**. It allows pressure to build up, causing the **dart** to shoot out. Fletching also stabilizes the **dart** in flight.

River Cane - The most common material for making **blowguns**. (see Baskets and Textiles Vocabulary)

Shaft - The stick that the **fletching** is applied to. Traditional shafts were locust, hickory, oak, and **river cane**.

Thistle - A thorny weed with purple flowers that grows along roadsides and in hayfields today. Thistle (many different species were used) is the most recognized type of **fletching**.

Quiver - A holder for **blowgun darts**. Although no one has recovered any archaeological examples, the technology of the time suggests Native peoples would have made them from bark, gourds, rawhide, or buckskin.

Blacksmithing Vocabulary

Anvil - A basic blacksmithing tool, an anvil is a stationary block with a hard surface on which another object is struck. Because the anvil is so heavy, all the blacksmith's energy and strength can be transferred to the piece being worked on.

Bellows - A tool that delivers a certain amount of pressurized air to a particular place, used to make the fire or coals hotter.

Bending - Heating steel to a yellow-orange heat allows bending. The blacksmith can bend a piece using the hammer to swing it over the horn or edge of the **anvil**; or the blacksmith can insert the piece into one of the holes in the top of the anvil and swing the free end to one side.

Drawing - Lengthening the metal by reducing one or both of the other two dimensions. The opposite of **shrinking**.

Finishing - The final step in the process of blacksmithing. There are many different ways to finish a piece. The blacksmith can hit it on the **anvil** to break off **scale**, then brush the piece with a wire brush. They can use files to finalize the shape, remove burrs and sharp edges, and smooth its surface. Using grinding stones, abrasive

paper, and emery wheels also can help further shape, smooth, and polish the surface. The blacksmith can apply paint, varnish, oil, or wax to the surface to change how the piece looks and to help prevent rust.

Flux - Powdered borax, silica sand, or a combination of the two used to clean surfaces to be **welded**.

Forging (Sculpting) - The process of shaping metal. The iron is hammered into shape in five basic steps: drawing, shrinking, bending, upsetting, and punching, generally with a hammer and **anvil**.

Heat Treating - An operation involving the heating and cooling of a metal in the solid state to alter the physical, and sometimes, chemical properties of the metal.

Punching - A blacksmith may do this to make a hole or to decorate a piece. A chisel is used to cut or slit a piece.

Scale - A dark-colored deposit that forms on metal surfaces during heating.

Shrinking - Shortening the metal by increasing one or both of the other two dimensions. The opposite of **drawing**.

Upsetting - Making metal thicker in one dimension by shortening it in the other dimension.

Vise - A tool used to hold or clamp a piece steady to allow work to be performed on it.

Welding - Joining together pieces of the same or similar kind of metal.



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