

the Russell Cave inhabitant's way of life remained unchanged until the end of the period.

THE WOODLAND PERIOD— 500 B.C. TO 1000 A.D.

Beginning about 500 B.C., the implements of the Russell Cave inhabitants underwent a dramatic change. Pottery appears for the first time and in quantity. Smaller weapon points suggest that the bow and arrow had replaced the earlier throwing stick. Bone tools are better finished, and there are a variety of bone and shell ornaments.

These changes, widespread throughout the Eastern United States, mark the beginning of the Woodland Period. It was during this time that burial mounds came into use and ceremonialism increased.

The richer and more complex way of life indicates that the Woodland Indians had more time for activities not directly concerned with staying alive. Probably a stable and more abundant economy underlay this development. Increased use of plant foods, perhaps even rudimentary farming, provided this base. At least, we know that by the end of the Woodland

Period primitive agriculture had taken hold in the East.

In this period the Indians used Russell Cave only seasonally. When they left in the spring, they probably joined other groups as part of a summer village that was larger than those of the Archaic Period.

Changes in the shape and style of artifacts are the basis for subdivisions within Woodland Period at Russell Cave. The early pottery is decorated with fabric impressions on the surface. Later pottery is decorated with impressions from wooden paddles carved in a variety of designs. The shapes of projectile points also changed during the period.

THE MISSISSIPPIAN AND HISTORIC PERIODS

Shortly after A.D. 1000 the Indians began to make less use of Russell Cave. Occasionally small parties, probably hunters, left a scattering of objects that differed from those of the Woodland Period. But the basic way of life had changed. Now the Indians lived in permanent villages. Rich bottomlands near the river supported their fields of corn

and other plants. This time of settled villages, most often containing large flat-topped temple mounds, is known as the Mississippian Period.

In historic times the Cherokee Indians occupied this part of the Tennessee Valley. The Cherokees and the white settlers who followed them made little use of the cave. The few objects they left are found very close to the surface.

MONUMENT OPEN FOR VISITATION

Russell Cave National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation on May 11, 1961. An area of 310.45 acres, a gift of the National Geographic Society to the people of the United States, was set aside for the protection of the site and its surroundings. It is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The monument is open all year except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Days. Exhibits are in the visitor center, an exhibit of the archaeological excavations is in the cave.

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RUSSELL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT



*8,000 Year Record
of
Man's Life*

**Bridgeport, Alabama
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

