



## Graphic #1 label

### Native American Woman Using a Bison Scapula Hoe

Native Americans used the scapula bone, or shoulder blade, of the bison as a digging tool. Its large, flat surface, triangular shape, and thin edges adapted into a tool with very little alteration.

The scapula had many uses as a tool. For gardening the bone was fastened to a stick with sinew (tendon or other connective tissue). Native Americans used the hoe to cultivate such crops as corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, and sunflowers. It was also useful in digging storage pits and shallow depressions for houses constructed in pits. Sometimes this tool functioned as a cleaver, or squash knife, when used for cutting.

The scapula was such an effective tool that the Pawnee continued to use bison scapula hoes even after metal trade hoes became available. Archeologists find scapula tools worn down to a fraction of their original size and repaired after having cracked.

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This image is adapted from the drawing by F.N. Wilson and taken from *A Place to Call Home*, Archeology Department, Kansas State Historical Society

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