

Site Analysis

Archeologists would use a wider variety of methods to date each artifact and feature than is presented in this activity. This system allows for cross-checking of dates and confirms the reliability of information.

Layer 1

The people living at this site between 640 to 480 B.C. worked hard to provide for their needs. Most of their food was obtained through hunting and gathering. While these people may have planted some wild plant seeds, they did not plant and cultivate crops to supply a large, consistent source of food. Hunting with an atlatl and dart was easier than the spear used by their predecessors, but it still took strength and skill to use these weapons effectively. Bison, deer, rabbits, and other small game provided meat, hides for clothing and shelter, bones for tools and additional nutrition. Skilled in working with wood, bone, shell, and stone, these people created their tools from the materials in their surrounding environment. They did not yet have the knowledge to make pottery. They cooked by placing meat on sticks over the fire, hanging the stomach of a large animal over the fire to cook in (and then eating the stomach as well as the food cooked in it), or similar methods that did not require a fire-resistant container.

During the years before A.D. 1, changes took place, but they happened slowly. The atlatl and dart were used for 8,000 years, a long period of time as can be viewed on [Overhead 1: The Kansas Cultural Sequence](#).

Layer 2

This layer represents a time period when no humans lived at this site, at least according to the information available from this specific unit.

Layer 3

The people living at this site between A.D. 1470 and 1570 continued to work hard to provide for their basic needs, but they had some advantages over the people of layer 1. For one thing there were more people living in the region now known as Kansas by 1470. The amount and nutritional value of the food available to these people was greater than had been available 2,000 years earlier. The shape and function of the tools changed, but stone, wood, and bone continued to be the materials used to make them. Three of the most important changes between the cultures of layer 1 and layer 3 were the bow and arrow, plant cultivation, and pottery.

By 1470 the bow and arrow had completely replaced the atlatl and dart. People continued to hunt the same types of animals as in layer 1, but they had an easier time doing this. In addition to hunting, the people in layer 3 had acquired the ability to cultivate crops. This allowed more food to be accumulated, which meant that the surplus could be stored for use in the winter when fresh produce was not as abundant, as evidenced by storage pits. In order to cultivate crops, it is important to have a suitable location. This usually means a village with permanent housing and a ready supply of water. The grassing needle is evidence that these people lived in substantial houses. From past research archeologists know that grassing needles were used to construct

circular, dome-shaped houses, thatched with bundles of grass. The ability to make pottery meant that these people could cook in pots over the fire and carry water more effectively from rivers and streams.

A great deal changed during the 2,000 years between layers 1 and 3, but the next several hundred years brought even greater changes for Native Americans living in the Central Plains. The agents of momentous change were the first Europeans, the Coronado expedition, who traveled through the region known today as Kansas in 1541.

Layer 4

The Native Americans living at this location between the late-1600s and the mid-1700s continued to benefit from the technological innovations seen initially in layer 3 (the bow and arrow, crop cultivation, and pottery), but the artifacts left behind also signal adaptations made after contact with Europeans. These people continued to hunt with bow and arrow, but they no longer chipped their arrow points from stone. They traded for ready-made points or shaped their own from scrap metal. Items such as the glass beads and horn button indicated that other changes were occurring in regard to self-expression through decoration and ornamentation. Yet, the presence of native-made pottery demonstrated that not all traditions were relinquished, even though the people probably had access to metal pots and pans through trade. The fact that this group lived a nomadic, or semi-nomadic lifeway, is suggested by the tipi ring. The evidence of a full-sized Plains tipi in this layer indicates that these people had horses, one of the most important changes brought about through European contact. (The size of the tipi increased as the horse replaced the dog as the primary means of transporting the tipi.)

Layer 5

The people living on this site between A.D. 1968 to 1973 showed the greatest amount of change from the other groups. No evidence was found to indicate that these people hunted for, or grew, their own food. The beverage can pull tab and coin instead suggest that they probably obtained food by purchasing it. Personal ornamentation was still important, as revealed by the jewelry. It is interesting that this was the only layer in which a toy was found. This does not mean that toys were not present in previous times. It might indicate that more toys were available at this time period, increasing the likelihood that one would be found. It would take more research to prove this. It is also interesting to note that the foundation in layer 5 is rectangular in shape instead of circular like the tipi or grass house. The materials and technology available for the creation of these artifacts and feature were very different from that of the other layers. In fact, these items indicate that more change took place during these 200 years between layers 4 and 5 than during the 2,000 years between layers 1 and 2.