

CAPITOL PARK MUSEUM

A LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM

NATURAL ABUNDANCE: POVERTY POINT EDUCATION RESOURCE BUNDLE

**INCLUDES: K-12 ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS ON
TOPICS RELATED TO OUR GALLERY SPACE**

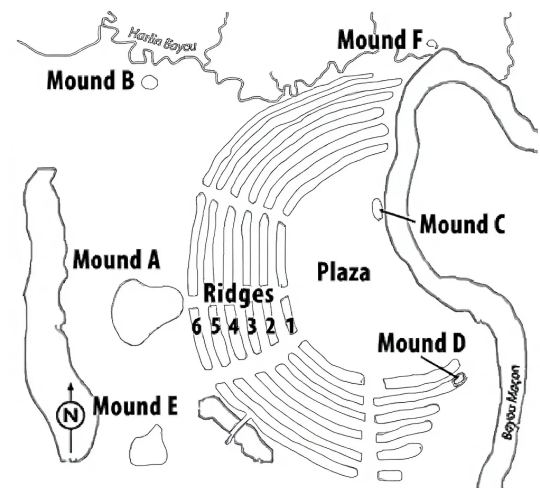
UNDERSTANDING MOUND BUILDERS

Native American peoples built mounds for many reasons such as for burial purposes, worship, sports, defensive holdings, and community gathering spaces. In our state, there are numerous ancient earthworks that can found at various historic locations.

POVERTY POINT

Located along the Macon Ridge, Native American groups built the largest earthworks site found in Louisiana: **Poverty Point**. *(A name that has been given to the site by modern-day archaeologists and historians.)*

Built between 1700 B.C. and 1100 B.C., the site contains six mounds and one large structure that is a concentric ring of ridges, with a plaza in the center. Archaeologists have concluded that it took millions of baskets of soil to construct some of these structures - a true monumental feat!



This site map was created from the the Louisiana Division of Archaeology's LiDar (Light Detection and Ranging) testing results.



MOUND BUILDERS ACTIVITY

Directions: Try creating the three different type of mounds made by Native American peoples discovered by archaeologists across our state.

Note: the pictures below are not of *actual* mound sites in Louisiana, but rather examples of the *type of mounds* that have been found.

Materials:

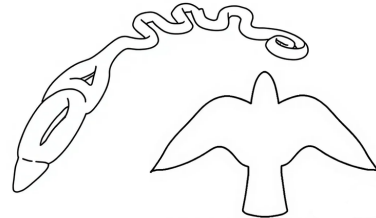
- Playdough, modeling clay, moldable sand or dirt
- Paper plate (surface to build on)
- Paper towels
- *Optional:* Shaping tools to get defined grooves

Conical/Dome Mound



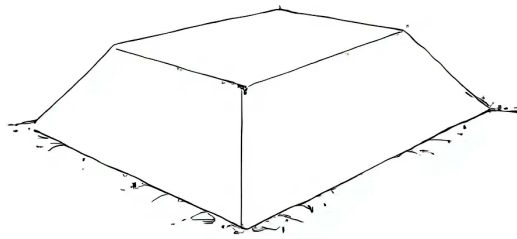
Dome or cone shaped

Effigy Mound



Built in the shape of animals, spirits, or humans

Platform Mound



Flat on top



POVERTY POINT COOKING

Directions: Let's learn about how Native groups cooked at Poverty Point by creating Poverty Point cooking balls! Try creating the various cooking balls found on the infographic page. Then, working in groups or with an adult, discuss the questions on the last page.

Materials:

- Playdough or modeling clay
- Paper plate (surface to build on)
- Paper towels
- *Optional:* Shaping tools to get defined grooves
- *Optional:* Loose leaf paper for discussion questions

History:

Poverty Point People used many different sized and shaped **cooking balls**, or known by Archaeologists as **Poverty Point Objects (PPOs)**, to cook their meals. These balls were made with **loess soil and water**. Loess soil is a yellowish-brown, wind-deposited sediment that is only found in certain parts of our state. Poverty Point People would make a mud pie with the soil and some water and then skillfully create the PPOs with their hands. Once dried, they could be used in cooking.

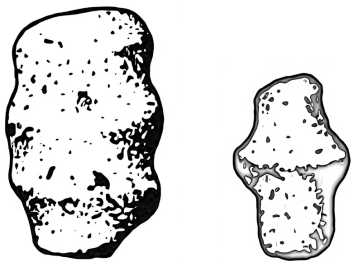
The typical cooking process at Poverty Point centered around **earth ovens**. To make an oven, early groups dug a hole in the ground and filled it up with 1) hot coals, 2) food, and 3) heated cooking balls. The hole was then sealed to make the oven.

Earth ovens were usually 12 to 24 inches in diameter and 9 to 20 inches deep. And, interestingly, archaeologists have found between a dozen to over 100 cooking balls in some of the site's earth ovens. This might explain why food usually cooked within a two hour period!

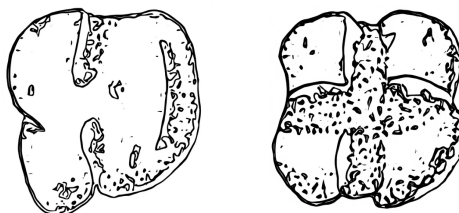
Special Thanks to the Division of Archaeology at Poverty Point



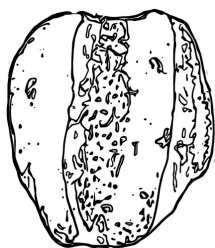
POVERTY POINT COOKING BALLS INFOGRAPHIC



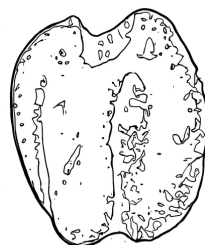
Cylindrical grooved



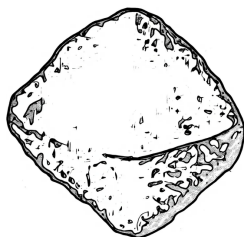
Cross grooved



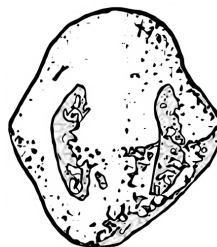
Melon shaped



Melon shaped with
end grooves



Biconical



Biconical grooved

Special Thanks to the Division of Archaeology at Poverty Point

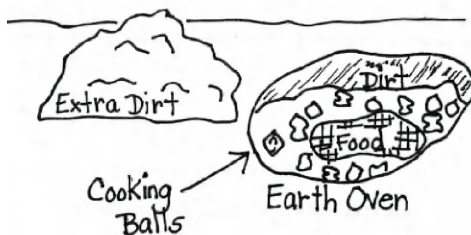


LET'S DIVE DEEPER



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1. What benefits do you think there are to cooking in an earth oven contrary to cooking over an open fire?
2. How do you think the Poverty Point People regulated the temperature of the oven?
3. Why do you think the Native Peoples at Poverty Point shaped these objects like this? Why did they make different sized and shaped objects?
4. Did you struggle to make any of the objects? Were there others around you who had an easier or harder time?
5. Do you think there were some people at Poverty Point who were really good at making these objects and others who were not?
6. Thinking back to question #5, do you think this led to divisions of labor? (Meaning some people were in charge of making the cooking balls, while others were in charge of the actual cooking process?)
7. In your opinion, would you consider this to be a skilled craft?
8. What possible implications could skilled pottery labor have on the trade network?



Special Thanks to the Division of Archaeology at Poverty Point

MYSTERY BOX CHALLENGE

Let's learn about the diets of the Poverty Point People by donning an apron and cooking a meal on this week's episode of "MuseumChef."

Directions: With your guardian's permission or help, pick at least two of the ingredients listed below and cook a meal. You can only use your oven as your heating/cooking source, which is most similar to the Poverty Point People and their use of earth ovens. Then, answer the questions on the next page.

History: Native groups at Poverty Point were hunters and gatherers. Their primary sources of protein were local fish and game. For their carbohydrates, they ate fruits, nuts, and seeds. Unfortunately, it is hard to know what other plants they ate because these things did not preserve well enough to be studied by archaeologists.



Ingredient List:

- Catfish
- Bass
- Venison
- Rabbit
- Turkey
- Pecans
- Walnuts
- Persimmon
- Grapes



QUESTIONS



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Recipe Name: _____

Chosen Ingredients: _____

How long did it take you to acquire your ingredients? _____

How long did it take you to cook your meal? _____

Looking at the ingredient list provided on the other page, what does this tell you about the diet of the Poverty Point People? _____

How long do you think it would have taken a single person from 1700 B.C. to acquire the same ingredients that you used? _____

And, how long do you think it would have taken them to prepare and cook the meal using early man-made tools and the earth oven method? _____

How different do you think an earth oven was from your modern-day oven? _____

Did you find it difficult to only have the oven as your heated cooking apparatus? _____

What would you do different if you had to do this again? _____

FOOD UNSCRAMBLE



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Directions: Unscramble the words to learn about the things Poverty Point People ate from 1700 to 1100 B.C.

PCEASN

GRA

GPERAS

VNEONSI

CHAFSTI

TYUKRE

SFIUSNH

BSAS

WSLNAUT

DSCKU

RBBSATI

PNEORMSMI

ANSWER KEY



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PCEASN

PECANS

GRA

GAR

GPERAS

GRAPES

VNEONSI

VENISON

CHAFSTI

CATFISH

TYUKRE

TURKEY

SFIUSNH

SUNFISH

BSAS

BASS

WSLNAUT

WALNUTS

DSCKU

DUCKS

RBBSATI

RABBITS

PNEORMSMI

PERSIMMON

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



PBS Learning Media:
Poverty Point: A
Prehistoric
Indigenous Site in
Louisiana



Poverty Point World
Heritage Site:
History and Artifacts
of Poverty Point
Article



64Parishes:
Poverty Point
Culture Article



64Parishes:
Native American
Mounds Article



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