



Prehistory

Fort Campbell is located in a portion of Tennessee and Kentucky that has a rich prehistory. Prehistory is defined as the time before written records. Prehistory ends with contact by European travelers who kept written diaries of their travels. The regional prehistory, beginning some 12,000 years ago, ended with the arrival of Europeans in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys. This prehistoric period is directly associated with the ancestors of the Native American peoples that Europeans encountered when they reached this region of North America. The prehistoric period of occupation in Kentucky and Tennessee, like most of eastern North America, is subdivided into four general cultural periods by archaeologists: the Paleoindian Period (circa [ca.] 12,000 –10,000 years before present [BP]), the Archaic Period (ca. 10,000–3000 years BP), the Woodland Period (ca. 3000- 1000 years BP), and the Mississippian Period (1000–350 years BP). Archaeological sites or artifacts associated with occupation during each of these cultural time periods have been found on Fort Campbell.

The Paleoindian Period (ca. 12,000 –10,000 years BP)

Native Americans during the Paleoindian period are the earliest

known people to occupy Kentucky and Tennessee. During this period, the much cooler climate supported a mixed forest, and large game such as mastodon, bison, and ground sloth. Small, highly-mobile Paleoindian groups focused on hunting these animals, but also used smaller land animals, water resources, nuts, berries, and plant materials as food sources. Paleoindians moved their camps frequently, resulting in small sites scattered across a wide area. Larger sites occur near outcrops of high quality stone for making tools and places that attracted game, like water sources. Stone outcrops identified at Fort Campbell may have made the location an attractive setting for Paleoindian peoples.

The Clovis culture or complex, named by archaeologists for the first known site in Clovis, New Mexico, is the earliest widespread and dense occupation across Kentucky and North America during the Paleoindian Period. Artifacts characteristic of Clovis sites are finely worked projectile points with concave bases are identified by the presence of thinning flakes, or flutes, that extend from the base to the tip. They served as both weapon tips, hafted to a spear shaft, and as knives for cutting and butchering.



U.S. ARMY



Other stone tools include large bifaces (worked on both sides), blades, scrapers, and graters. Bone and ivory tools are also documented within the Clovis toolkit, although they are not commonly found in eastern North America. The Adams site in Christian County (the same county where Fort Campbell is located) is a Clovis site containing a high density of a wide range of tool types including blades.

Similar to the earlier Clovis culture, the Middle Paleoindian phase had technological changes, increased diversity in tool styles and types, and occurred during a period of environmental instability which killed most of the large game resulting in a shift toward reliance on regionally available plant and smaller game resources. Use of locally available, often lower quality, raw materials demonstrates the shift to more regional economies. Sites of the Middle Paleoindian have a slightly wider distribution than Clovis sites in Kentucky.

By the end of the Paleoindian Period, there was a shift in subsistence and an increase in human population. Some large game were extinct, forcing Paleoindian groups to hunt smaller game such as whitetail deer, bear, and turkey. With resources more evenly dispersed, later Paleoindian

groups traveled less and occupied areas not previously inhabited.

Archaeological materials dating to the earlier part of the Paleoindian Period have been found at Fort Campbell. Projectile points dating to the end of the Paleoindian Period have been recovered primarily in upland settings near small intermittent creeks.



Paleoindian and Early Archaic Period Projectile Point Styles from Fort Campbell archaeological sites.

The Archaic Period (ca. 10,000–3000 years BP)

The Archaic Period typically refers to the archaeological remains of hunter-gatherers who lived after the last ice age. There are three sub-periods of the Archaic: the



U.S. ARMY



Early Archaic ranges from 10,000–8000 years BP; the Middle Archaic from 8000–5000 years BP; and the Late Archaic from 5000–3000 years BP. During this period, the climate changed from cold and dry to a warmer, wetter environment. Deciduous forests dominated the landscape during the Archaic Period and supported game animals like whitetail deer, turkey, bear, smaller mammals, and birds. By the Late Archaic, environmental conditions were similar to present day. This shift in climatic conditions led to a broadening subsistence base and greater residential stability that resulted in an increasing population, a growing sophistication in tool-making technology including the manufacture of ground stone tools like axes, establishment of trade networks, and ceremonialism. Some burials suggest special treatment of higher status individuals and contain grave goods manufactured from non-local raw materials such as copper and marine shell.

Sites associated with the Early Archaic period are present in the north and central portions of Fort Campbell. In the central portion of the base, Early Archaic projectile points are scattered through the uplands adjacent to intermittent creeks. Use of bottom land areas appears restricted to just a few Early Archaic sites.



Early Archaic, Middle Archaic, and Late Archaic Period Projectile Point Styles from Fort Campbell archaeological sites.

Middle Archaic sites, although few in number at Fort Campbell, demonstrate a continued preference for upland settings during the time period between 8950 and 4950 years BP. If site location reflects prevailing environmental conditions and/or subsistence systems, then human occupation during the Middle Archaic Period at Fort Campbell follows patterns established during the Early Archaic. A decrease in population during the Middle Archaic (and correlated decrease in number of archaeological sites from this period) may be attributed to the expansion of the barrens grasslands and loss of deciduous



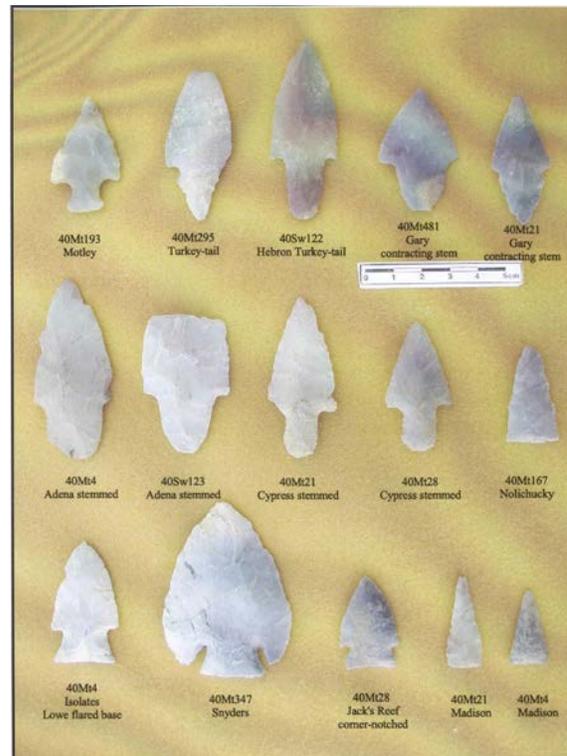
forests in the uplands of Christian County where a portion of Fort Campbell is located.

Upland settings continued to be heavily used during the Late Archaic, but there is some evidence of a diversification of landform use. Late Archaic sites are primarily clustered in the central and eastern portions of the installation, and headwater and high points overlooking creeks continued to be favored locales. A few sites on-post serve as notable exceptions to this pattern located in the valley bottomlands. Rather than displaying a spread of site locations across the uplands as in the Early and Middle Archaic, Late Archaic sites definitely concentrate close to several drainages. The Late Archaic focus on two specific drainages is nearly to the exclusion of other locations on-post.

The Woodland Period (ca. 3000- 1000 years BP)

The Woodland Period is also subdivided into three general sub-periods known as the Early Woodland (3000–2200 years BP), the Middle Woodland (2200 – 1500 years BP), and the Late Woodland (1500–1000 years BP). The major distinction between the Woodland and the Archaic Periods is the more pronounced use of ceramic technology. This technology occurs in conjunction with the development of complex,

hierarchical societies. Such societies developed after the cultivation of native plants sometime during the Archaic Period. Towards the end of the Woodland Period, this included the cultivation of squash, gourd, beans, and maize. A reliance on these crops and the development of storage techniques enabled Woodland populations to occupy more restricted territories than previous hunter-gatherers. Other characteristics of the Woodland Period include the construction of earthworks, elaboration of artistic expression, and burial rituals associated with stone or earthen mounds.



Early Woodland, Middle Woodland, Late Woodland, and Mississippian Period Projectile Point Styles from Fort Campbell archaeological sites.



By the Early Woodland Period, there was an apparent return to upland settings at Fort Campbell, with sites located near intermittent streams. Middle Woodland site locations were heavily focused on floodplain settings. It appears that sites not actually located in floodplain settings are most often situated at high points adjacent to, and above, creek valleys.

The Mississippian Period (ca. 1000–350 years BP)

Mississippian Period society is characterized by a hierarchical social organization and chiefdom-based political economy. Large Mississippian settlements typically have town centers with central plazas, cemeteries, and mounds. With emphasis on intensive agriculture, Mississippian sites are often located on floodplains consisting of large villages sometimes with enclosed wooden palisade walls. Other characteristics of the Mississippian Period include population increase, shell-tempered ceramics, bow and arrow technology, earthwork construction centered on celestial alignments, and stone box graves.



Mississippian Period Reconstructed Ceramic Vessel from Fort Campbell

The distribution of Mississippian sites closely matches the distribution of Late Woodland sites at Fort Campbell, with an emphasis upon floodplain settings, showing a continuity or reuse of these preferred site locations. The distribution of Mississippian components near water sources currently classified as year-round, shows a selection preference for bottomland settings.

The Protohistoric/Historic Native American Period (ca. 550–1000 years BP)

The period perhaps most poorly known archaeologically in the Fort Campbell area is that between the collapse of the Mississippian cultures and the region's colonization by Euroamericans after ca. 1775. Fortunately, some information on the populations of this area has been recorded by various European explorers. The first such mention comes from the



U.S. ARMY

The Official Website of Fort Campbell and the 101st Airborne Division



chroniclers of the DeSoto entrada that took place between 1539 and 1543. In these documents, the Chisca are described as occupying highlands north of what is now known as the middle portion of the Tennessee River. The Chisca were also mentioned by chroniclers of the Juan Pardo expedition, dating between 1566 and 1567, and were described as warlike mountain chiefs. The Chisca are interpreted to be the Yuchi, who split into two bands late in the 16th century. One band remained in the north while the other moved southeast and merged with the Overhill Cherokee. The next documentation of Native

Americans in the Fort Campbell area is from the late 17th century. In 1685, the French established a trading post in the vicinity of modern Nashville and indicated that the area was occupied by the Shawnee. Because of frequent warfare, the Shawnee were driven from the region in the early 1700s. It is thought that few Native American groups occupied the region after that. For the most part, with the Cherokee sale of the region to the English in 1775, Native American occupation of the Fort Campbell area ended.



References Consulted

BHE Environmental, Inc.

2006 *The Historic Context Statement for Prehistory at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky.*
Submitted to Ft. Campbell Cultural Resources Management Office, Ft. Campbell,
Kentucky. Submitted by BHE Environmental, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Fort Campbell

2013 *Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP) 2012-2016.* Prepared by
Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Krejsa, Paul P. and Michael L. Hargrave

2006 *An Assessment of Previous Archaeological Surveys at Fort Campbell
Kentucky/Tennessee.* Prepared for Fort Campbell, Cultural Resources Program.
Prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development
Center (ERDC) Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL), Champaign,
Illinois.

Pollack, David (editor)

2008 *The Archaeology of Kentucky: An Update. Volume One.* Kentucky Heritage Council
State Historic Preservation Comprehensive Plan Report No. 3. With contributions
by Darlene Applegate, Alexandra Bybee, A. Gwynn Henderson, Richard W.
Jefferies, Kim A. Mc Bride, W. Stephen McBride, Greg Maggard, Philip Mink, David
Pollack, Kary Stackelbeck, and M. Jay Stottman. Available on line at:
<http://heritage.ky.gov/nr/rdonlyres/7fd10722-66d5-4987-a3a3-19a6e27bcfa0/0/thearchaeologyofkentuckyanupdatevolume1new.pdf>.

Pollack, David (editor)

2008 *The Archaeology of Kentucky: An Update. Volume Two.* Kentucky Heritage Council
State Historic Preservation Comprehensive Plan Report No. 3. With contributions
by Darlene Applegate, Alexandra Bybee, A. Gwynn Henderson, Richard W.
Jefferies, Kim A. Mc Bride, W. Stephen McBride, Greg Maggard, Philip Mink, David
Pollack, Kary Stackelbeck, and M. Jay Stottman. Available on line at:
<http://heritage.ky.gov/nr/rdonlyres/1c205f45-0657-42c2-b6ef-c8217e11a291/0/thearchaeologyofkentuckyanupdatevolume2.pdf>

Sanders, Thomas N. and David R. Maynard

1979 *A Reconnaissance and Evaluation of Archaeological Sites in Christian County.*
Kentucky Archaeological Survey Report No. 12. Kentucky Heritage Commission.
Frankfort.