

## Mound Building Spreads 5.1.2 5.1.3

The tradition of building mounds spread along the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio river valleys. It influenced people from the Appalachian Mountains west to present-day North Dakota.

### The Hopewell

Between 200 and 100 B.C., mound builders we call the Hopewell appeared in the Mississippi River valley. Like the Adena, the Hopewell built burial mounds. They also built mounds for religious dances and ceremonies. The Hopewell built cities of square, cone-shaped, and oval mounds, and surrounded them with high walls made of earth. The Hopewell

also used the mounds as places to study the sky. They could tell the change of the season by the angle at which the sunlight fell on the mounds.

### Hopewell Ways of Life

In addition to the Three Sisters, Hopewell farmers grew pumpkins and sunflowers. They used very sharp knives made of **obsidian**. Obsidian is a glassy rock that forms when the soft lava from volcanoes cools very quickly. The Hopewell had many different kinds of craftspeople. Artists carved ceremonial pipes in the shape of woodland and river animals. They also made pottery, jewelry, mirrors, spear points, and knives.

Successful farming and trading made the Hopewell a wealthy people. The many groups who made up this culture were organized into communities under local chiefs. For reasons no one knows, the Hopewell culture faded away around A.D. 400.

### The Mississippian

Between A.D. 700 and 900, another civilization developed in the Mississippi River valley. Called the Mississippian culture because it flourished along the Mississippi River, its influence lasted until the coming of Europeans in the 1500s.



◀ This Mississippian figure has a weeping eye.

The Mississippian used a circle of tree trunks to tell the patterns of the seasons. They were excellent farmers and created large enough surpluses to feed thousands of people. Like the Hopewell, the Mississippian buried their dead in grave mounds, but their mounds were reserved for the wealthiest people.

The greatest Mississippian city was called Cahokia. Built near what is today St. Louis, Missouri, Cahokia at its peak had more than 20,000 people living there. Around the great mound cities were villages of thatched homes. High log fences called **palisades** defended the villages against attack.

Historians think that climate change, wars, and disease may have caused Cahokia's population to fall, beginning about A.D. 1200. By A.D. 1300 the city was abandoned.

**REVIEW** How did the Hopewell and Mississippian peoples use earth mounds?  
*Summarize*



▲ Mississippian-carved shell with spider

## What You Learned

- 5.1.1** The Adena culture began in the Ohio River valley around 500 B.C. and spread east by traders into what is today the northeastern United States.
- 5.1.3** The Hopewell and Mississippian peoples built great earthworks used as burial mounds, ceremonial centers, and places to study the sky.

## Lesson Review

- 1. Focus Question** How did the Mound Builders develop their powerful empires?  
**5.1.1** develop their powerful empires?  
**5.1.3**
- 2. Vocabulary** Write a paragraph about the Mound Builders. Use these words in your writing.  
**5.1.1** mound    obsidian    palisade
- 3. Science, Technology, and Society** How could the Hopewell tell when the season changed?  
**5.1.1**
- 4. Critical Thinking Make Generalizations** How did Mississippian burial customs differ from those of the Adena and Hopewell peoples?  
**5.1.2**
- 5. Reading Strategy**  
**5.1.1** **Summarize** Summarize what made the Hopewell a civilization.  
**ELA R2.3**
- 6. Write about THE BIG IDEA** Write about how the location of the Mound Builders helped them to grow and spread.  
**5.1.1** **ELA W1.2**
- 7. Link to Mathematics** The Grave Creek Mound in West Virginia probably held 72,000 tons of earth. Historians think that Mound Builders could carry 60 pounds of earth at a time in a basket. Since there are 2,000 pounds in a ton, about how many baskets would it take to build the Grave Creek Mound?
