

Southeast and Midwest at this time. Materials associated with this interaction sphere include cut mica, worked galena, copper-covered panpipes, copper ear spools, copper beads, Flint Ridge chalcedony blades, and fine gray-blue flint blades. Swift Creek sites are also limited in the Okefenokee Basin, except for one locale on Trail Ridge with significant quantities of Swift Creek pottery (Trowell 1998a). The low numbers of Swift Creek deposits encountered within the Basin is intriguing given that Swift Creek occupations are prevalent in surrounding areas, including along the Georgia coast, as late as A.D. 850 (Kirkland and Cook 2007:17).

The Middle and Late Woodland periods saw an increase in human occupations attributed to the Weeden Island culture in the Okefenokee Basin based on the presence of larger sites with conical sand mounds from ca. A.D. 500. Elliott et al. (1995) described the analytical types associated with Weeden Island assemblages as sand-tempered Carabelle Incised, Carabelle Punctated, Weeden Island Plain, and Weeden Island Red Painted. In many areas in Georgia, Swift Creek ceramics are also found in association with Weeden Island wares. Late Weeden Island ceramic types including Weeden Island Incised, Punctated, and Plain; Carabelle Incised and Punctated; Keith Incised; Tucker Ridge-Pinched; and Wakulla Check-Stamped are found throughout the basin. Villages attributed to the Weeden Island culture appear to have been preferentially placed within oak hammocks and islands within the swamp with a concentration of Weeden Island sites located southwest of the swamp. In the latter half of the Woodland period, the bow and arrow entered into common use. The change in technology allowed greater capability to kill smaller game, but also led to greater conflicts in society as is evidenced by fortifications and mass burials. By A.D. 1000, cord-marked pottery of undetermined cultural affiliation appears in the basin and is commonly located along the eastern rim and within areas of Floyds Island, Billys Island, Jones Island, Hickory Hammock, and Mixons Hammock (Trowell 1998a; Kirkland and Cook 2007:17).

MISSISSIPPIAN

The Mississippian period (1,050 to 410 B.P.) represents the last major period of unadulterated Native American cultural development in the Southeast. It can also be said that this period was witness to the zenith of eastern Woodland culture in terms of organization and complexity. Indeed, this was a time when almost simultaneous expansion occurred over many parts of the Southeast. This resulted in the development of large, hierarchical societies centered at impressive mound complexes such as Cahokia in present-day Illinois, Spiro in Oklahoma, Moundville in Alabama, and Etowah in northwest Georgia. The hallmarks of the Mississippian culture include intensive corn agriculture, sedentary communities, platform mound construction, extensive exchange networks involving raw materials and ornately-crafted goods, shared symbolism, and most importantly, a hierarchical sociopolitical structure (Schnell and Wright 1993).

At around 1000 B.P., cord-marked pottery of an uncertain cultural affiliation appears at some sites along the eastern rim of the swamp and on Floyds Island, Billys Island, Jones Island, Hickory Hammock, and Mixons Hammock. Sherds are described as resembling either Prairie Cord Marked from north-central Florida, Omulgee Cord Marked from south-central Georgia, or Savannah Cord Marked from northern coastal Georgia. Some sites, however, are interpreted as containing only Savannah phase ceramics such as Savannah Complicated Stamped (Trowell 1998a; Kirkland and Cook 2007).

Compared to some portions of the southeast that saw increasingly intensive Mississippian Period occupations, the Okefenokee Swamp area may be characterized by a decline in utilization of the area based on decreasing frequencies of Mississippian ceramic types compared to earlier Weeden Island types. An alternative explanation for the pattern observed in the region is that the Woodland tradition persisted into the Mississippian Period within the Okefenokee Swamp area (Schnell and Wright 1993:35-36).