

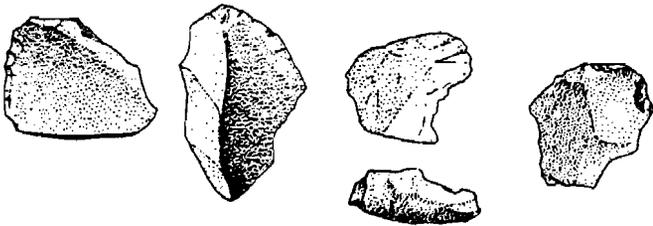
## Prehistory of Dover

### Paleoindian Period, 10,000 to 6500 B.C.

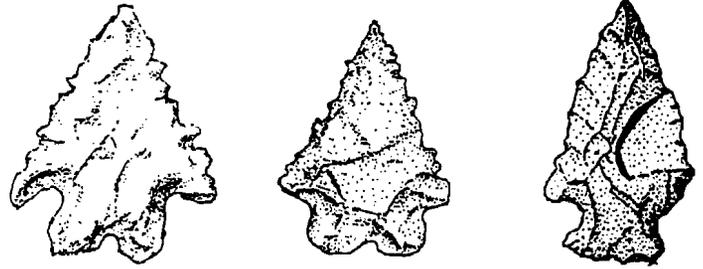
People have lived in Delaware for at least 12,000 years, since the end of the last Ice Age. Delaware was much colder 10,000 years ago than it is today, and the Dover area may have been covered by spruce forests like those of central Canada. The people of Delaware lived by hunting and by gathering wild plants. They probably lived in small groups of 10 to 50 people, called "bands," wandering over large areas in search of food. The people who camped by the St. Jones River may have travelled from as far away as New York or central Pennsylvania. Very few people lived in North America then, and there may have been no more than 50 or so in Delaware at a time. The most common artifacts from this period are stone spear points and knives. People also made tools from wood and bone, but these usually have not survived.



Clovis Spear Point, About 12,000 Years Old, ½ Actual Size



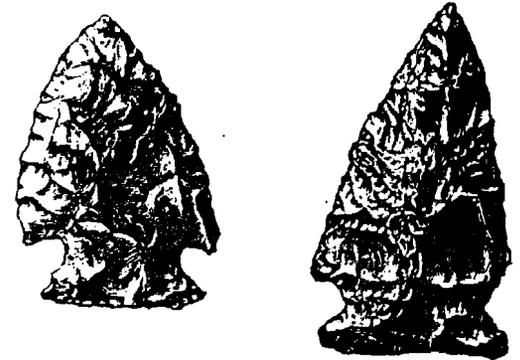
Waste Flakes from Making Stone Tools, Actual Size



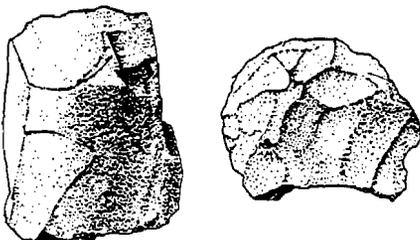
Spear Points and Knives, 7,000 to 9,000 Years Old, Actual Size

### Archaic Period, 6500 to 3000 B.C.

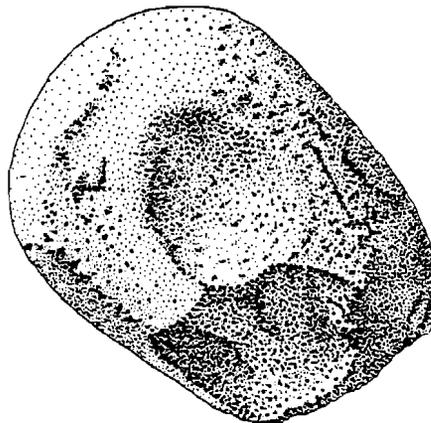
As time passed, the weather in Delaware grew warmer, until by 3000 B.C. it was much like today's. As the weather warmed, the human population slowly rose, but there were still very few people around. People still lived in wandering bands and supported themselves by hunting and gathering. We find a greater variety of stone tools from sites of this period, including spear points, knives, scrapers, awls, and pitted stones that were used for breaking rocks or nuts. We know very little about the people who lived this long ago. We do not know about their languages or their religion, or what they called themselves.



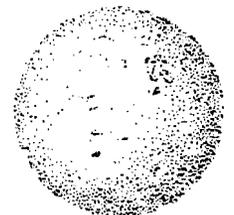
Stone Knives, About 5,000 Years Old, Actual Size



Stone Scrapers, Actual Size



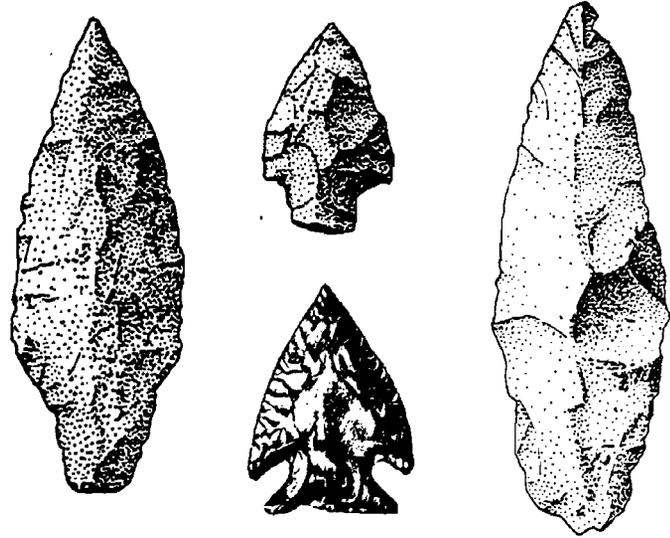
Pitted Anvil Stone For Breaking Stones or Nuts, ½ Actual Size



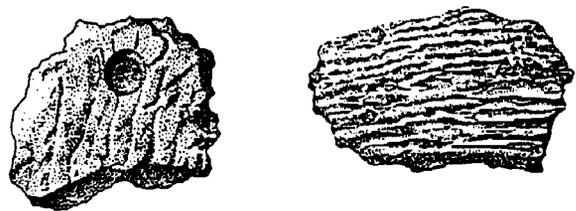
Sometimes archaeologists find things they can't identify, like this stone sphere, shown actual size. What do you think it might have been?

## Late Archaic and Early Woodland Periods, 3000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

After 3000 B.C. the population of Delaware rose sharply. Artifacts from this period are much more common than earlier artifacts. If you find a stone spear point in your yard, it probably came from this period. People still lived by hunting and gathering but they moved around less, spending much of the year at sites something like villages. They dug pits for storing food on these sites and probably built houses. These sites are almost all on large rivers or other wetlands. Several have been found on the St. Jones River, including the Puncheon Run Site. Rivers like the St. Jones were rich sources of food, including fish, clams, animals like muskrats and raccoons, birds like ducks, geese, and herons, and plants like wild rice and cattails. During this period people probably grouped their small bands into tribes, with chiefs and nobles. We begin to find evidence of religion in this period, including artifacts that we think were made for use in religious ceremonies and people who were buried in graves full of artifacts. About 1000 B.C. people began to make pottery. Pottery can be made and decorated in many more ways than stone tools, so we can use pottery styles to identify cultural changes, such as the arrival of a new tribe in the area.



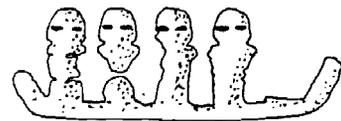
Spear Points and Knives, 1000  
to 4000 Years Old, Actual Size



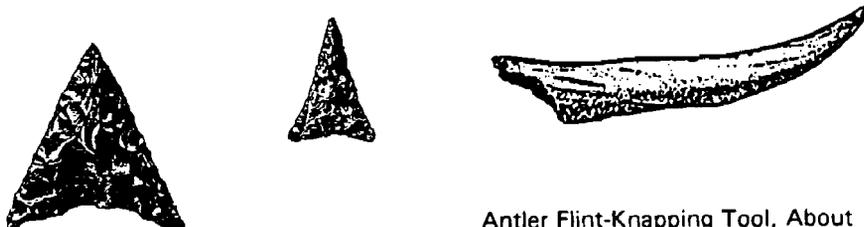
Potsherds, About 1500 Years Old, Actual Size

## Late Woodland Period, 1000 to 1600 A.D.

About 1000 years ago the people of Eastern North America began to feed themselves by farming. The main crops were corn, squash, and beans, all of which came originally from Mexico. People still hunted all of their meat and gathered wild plants, but their crops of corn and beans, which can be dried and stored over the winter, allowed them to settle down and live most of the year in one place. They built villages, some of them surrounded by stockades. The bow and arrow were introduced to this area about the same time as farming, and artifacts from this period include arrowheads, which are small triangles of stone. When the first Europeans arrived in this part of the world the Indians in the Dover area spoke the Delaware language, and belonged to tribes called the Lenape and the Nanticoke.

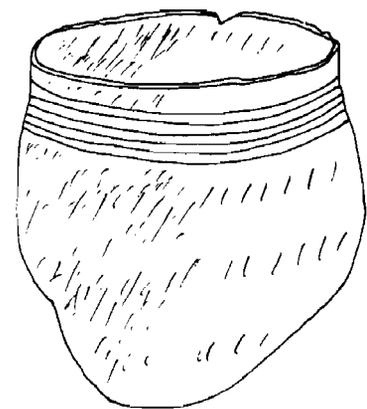


Ceremonial Object Carved from Antler, About  
700 Years Old, Actually About 6 inches Long



Antler Flint-Knapping Tool, About 1000  
Years Old, 1/2 Actual Size

Stone Arrowheads, 500 to 1000 Years  
Old, Actual Size



Pot, About 700 Years Old,  
Actually About 14 Inches Tall