

**NOTES ON INDIAN HISTORY**

Little Axe Indian History Class  
February 26, 1969

**MORE ON THE PALEOINDIAN BIG GAME HUNTERS: THE CLOVIS PEOPLE**

As we have seen, people probably first started coming to America from Asia about 20,000 years ago, and began to spread out over the country, drifting south and east. Eventually there were groups of people all over both North and South America, adapting themselves to the different kinds of country they found. They probably hunted, fished, and gathered wild plant foods. Eventually they began to develop distinctive ways of life. One of the earliest ways of life that is known for North American is called "The Big-Game Hunting Tradition," because the people who practiced it were mainly hunters of large animals that lived in herds on the Great Plains area in those times. At this time--12,000 to 8,000 years ago--the climate was cooler and wetter than it is now. There were many shallow lakes in the plains region, and an abundance of grass and other vegetation. Herds of mammoths, giant buffalo, camels, and horses lived there in those days. We know this because geologists and archaeologists have found bones of these animals preserved in certain deposits in the earth.

Some of these early Big-Game Hunters are called the "Clovis" people because a number of their stone tools have been found with the remains of mammoths in a draw near the town of Clovis, New Mexico. Similar kinds of tools and mammoth bones have been found in other places, too, such as eastern Arizona and west Texas, but the name, Clovis, is used for all of these remains of people who seemed to follow the same way of life. The Clovis people hunted mainly mammoths. They probably hunted these animals around shallow lakes and swamps, where the large animals would have difficulty in moving quickly. Probably groups of hunters concentrated on one animal, driving it into the muck, and wounding it with stone-tipped spears, until it weakened and died. Then they butchered the animal where it fell, cutting it up with sharp-edged stone tools. Many of these tools and spear points have been found with mammoth bones, indicating that these animals were killed and butchered by men. Probably the meat was cut into large chunks and carried off to the camp, which was usually on a hill or ridge overlooking the shallow lake or swampy area.

The Clovis people used a point that is quite distinctive in appearance. It is fairly large, and thus is believed to have been a spear point. Most archaeologists believe that the "atlatl" or "spear thrower" was unknown in these early times. Clovis points were made so that one large flake was removed from the base of the point on each side. This left a channelling or fluting of the point, and these points are thus called "Clovis Fluted Points." Some Clovis points have been found in western Oklahoma, and many have also been found in the eastern United States. The Clovis Big-Game Hunters lived from 10,000 to 12,000 years ago.

**THE PALEOINDIANS: THE DESERT PEOPLE**

Some of the Indian people who lived in North America thousands of years ago lived quite differently from the big-game hunting Folsom and Clovis peoples we have been considering. In the western United States--in the