

# Glossary

**Coprolites:** Coprolites are preserved human feces. Archaeologists are usually interested in analyzing human coprolites. This is because coprolites can offer a lot of detailed information about people's diet and health.

**Early Woodland Period:** (800 B.C. to A.D. 1) This period is known in Louisiana for the first widespread use of pottery. However, although people made a lot of pottery, it was mostly of very poor quality. The Tchefuncte culture is associated with this period. At this time, Tchefuncte-style pottery was made at sites throughout the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

**Earthworks:** At many sites, American Indians built mounds and embankments of soil. Since these are made of earth, they are called earthworks.

**Late Archaic Period:** (2000 B.C. to 800 B.C.) In Louisiana, the Late Archaic period is often described as a time when the climate shifted from hotter and drier to cooler and wetter. Mobile bands of people started settling down and forming small villages. It is also a period marked by the earliest use of containers made of stone and ceramic. People made other ceramic objects, too, like cooking balls, figurines and pipes.

**Middle Woodland Period:** (A.D. 1 to A.D. 400) This period saw a rise in population and influences from Hopewell culture sites in the Midwest. At this time, some people could be born into, or gain, more social or political power than others. Some people, who may have been leaders, had special burials.

**Midden:** A midden is an area of trash and debris that accumulated where people lived. A shell midden contains a very large amount of shell from bivalves like clams or mussels. This usually suggests a place that was used repeatedly for meals.

**Mississippi Period:** (A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1700) During the Mississippi period in Louisiana, some sites show the influence of the Cahokia site near St. Louis. People sometimes built flat-topped mounds, they made fine quality pottery and, generally, they hunted with bows and arrows. In some parts of the state, people grew maize in gardens, but they also continued to hunt, fish and gather wild plants.

**Posthole:** A posthole shows where a wooden pole or post once stood. When archaeologists find them, postholes usually look like dark circular or semi-circular stains in the soil because the hole was filled with different dirt. Sometimes, there are stains remaining from the wooden posts, and they are called postmolds.

**Subsidence:** Gradual sinking of land because of natural or human activities.