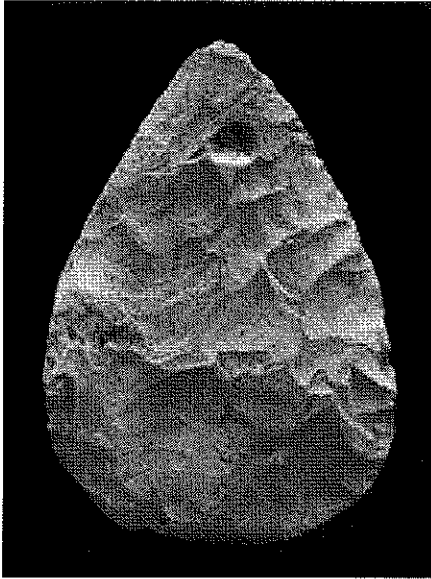


Artifacts of the Paleolithic Age

1.



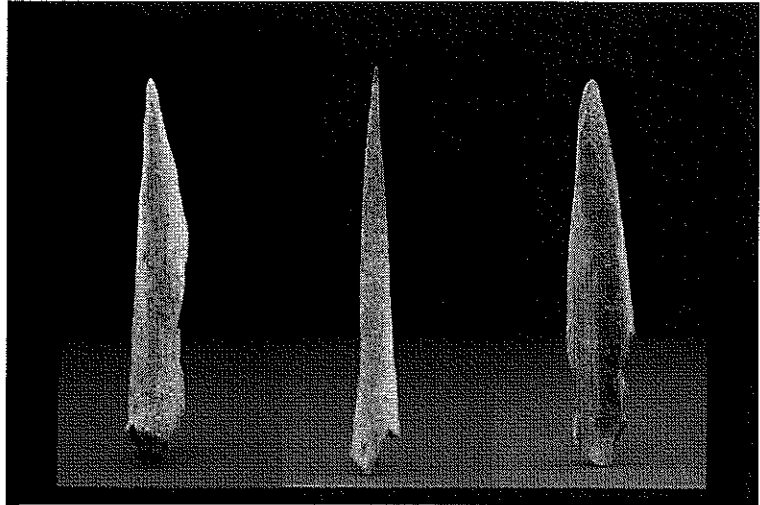
Site: Meyral, France

Age: About 250,000 years old

<http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/behavior/handaxe-europe>

Possible Uses:

2.



Site: Blombos Cave, Republic of South Africa

Age: About 77,000 years old

<http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/behavior/bone-awls>

Possible Uses:

1. Based on these artifacts, what sorts of activities were Paleolithic humans involved in? Were they more likely to be hunters or farmers? Explain your evidence.
2. What challenges do archeologists and anthropologists have when trying to interpret these artifacts?

Foraging Lifeways Preview Questions:

1. How do we know what we know about life in the past?
2. How certain can we be about what we know about life in the past? Is what we know “fact” or “theory”?
3. How was life in the Paleolithic era different from life today?
4. How did people organize their lives and communities during the Paleolithic period? They did not have governments like we have to create and enforce rules; how did these people maintain order?

Potentially challenging terms:

- Forager
- Lifeways
- Mode of production
- Corroborate
- Generalization
- Scarcity
- Remains
- Ecology
- Productivity
- Modern standards
- Kilocalories
- Kilometer
- Exploit
- Kinship
- Analogous
- Hierarchies
- Affluent

Foraging Lifeways

Important ideas in my own words:		Questions I have or things I did not understand:
	<p>Archeological evidence is so scarce for the era of foragers that our understanding of early human lifeways has been shaped largely by the study of modern foraging communities. The notion of a foraging mode of production was first proposed by the anthropologist Richard Lee during the 1970s on the basis of his studies of foraging communities in southern Africa. However, the scarce archeological evidence can be used to corroborate the generalizations suggested by modern anthropological research.</p>	
	<p>The scarcity of remains from this era, combined with what we know of the ecology of modern foragers, makes us certain that levels of productivity were extraordinarily low by modern standards. Humans probably did not extract from their environment much more than 3,000 kilocalories per day that adult members of our species need to maintain a basic, healthy existence. Low productivity ensured that population densities were low by the standards of later eras, averaging perhaps as little as one person per square kilometer. This fact meant that small numbers of humans were scattered over large areas.</p>	
	<p>Because each group needed a large area to support itself, ancient foragers probably lived most of the time in small groups consisting of no more than a few closely related people. Most of these groups must have been nomadic in order to exploit their large home territories. However, we can also be sure that many links existed between neighboring groups. Almost all human communities encourage marriage away from one's immediate family. Thus, foraging communities met periodically with their neighbors to swap gifts, stories, and rituals, to dance together, and to resolve disputes. At such meetings females and males may have moved from group to group for marriage or adoption.</p>	

Important ideas in my own words:	Foraging Lifeways continued	Questions I have or things I did not understand:
	<p>Studies of modern foraging societies suggest that notions of family and kinship provided the primary way of thinking about and organizing social relations. Family was society in a way that is difficult for the inhabitants of modern societies to appreciate. Notions of kinship provided all the rules of behavior that were needed to live in a world in which most communities included just a few persons and in which few people met more than a few hundred other people in their lifetime.</p>	
	<p>The idea of society as family also suggests much about the economics of foraging societies. Relations of exchange were probably analogous to those in modern families. Exchanges were conceived of as gifts. This fact meant that the act of exchanging was usually more important than the qualities of the goods exchanged; exchanging was a way of cementing existing relationships. Power relations were the power relations of families or extended families. Justice and discipline could be imposed only by the family. Hierarchies were based on gender, age, experience, and respect within the family.</p>	
	<p>Burials and art objects of many kinds have left us tantalizing hints about the spiritual world of our foraging ancestors but few answers. Modern analogies suggest that foragers thought of the spiritual world and the natural world as parts of a large extended family. The boundaries that foragers drew between human beings and all others were less concrete than those we draw today. Such thinking may help to make sense of some ideas that may seem bizarre to modern humans; such as the idea that animals, plants, mountains and lakes can be thought of as family. The belief that all or most things are animated by spirits helped foragers make sense of an unpredictable world.</p>	

Important ideas in my own words:	Foraging Lifeways continued	Questions I have or things I did not understand:
	In 1972, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins questioned the assumption that living standards were low in foraging societies. He argued, on evidence from modern foragers, that from some points of view foragers were affluent. In a world where people had no need to accumulate material possessions foragers probably experienced their lives as affluent because the things they needed could be found all around them. In temperate regions the diets of foragers can be varied and nutritious.	
	Studies have confirmed that the health of foragers was often better than that of people in early farming communities. Perhaps they lived a life of considerable leisure, rarely spending more than a few hours a day in pursuing basic needs (far less than people in modern times). This should not be exaggerated. In other ways life was harsh with low life expectancies (perhaps less than thirty years).	

Redacted From: Christian, David. *This Fleeting World: An Overview of Human History*. Pages 9-12. Berkshire Publishing Group 2005.