

# Turin: Archaic Period

The remains unearthed at Turin are among the oldest ever uncovered in Iowa. Believed to be 3,000 years old, they date to what archaeologists define as the Archaic time period. Between 8500 BC and 800 BC, Archaic peoples settled in the Loess Hills to hunt and gather food. The steep and narrow valleys of the rugged Loess Hills provided shelter from the elements and protection from invaders.

Archaic peoples did not live in large communities. Rather, they lived in small, highly mobile groups comprised mostly of extended family members. Over time, as these small groups improved their hunting and gathering techniques, Archaic people became less mobile and increasingly made use of semi-permanent base camps. They would often come together to bury their dead as they did here in Turin.



Excavation of the Turin Archaeological Site in 1955. Photo Courtesy of Harold Johnston.

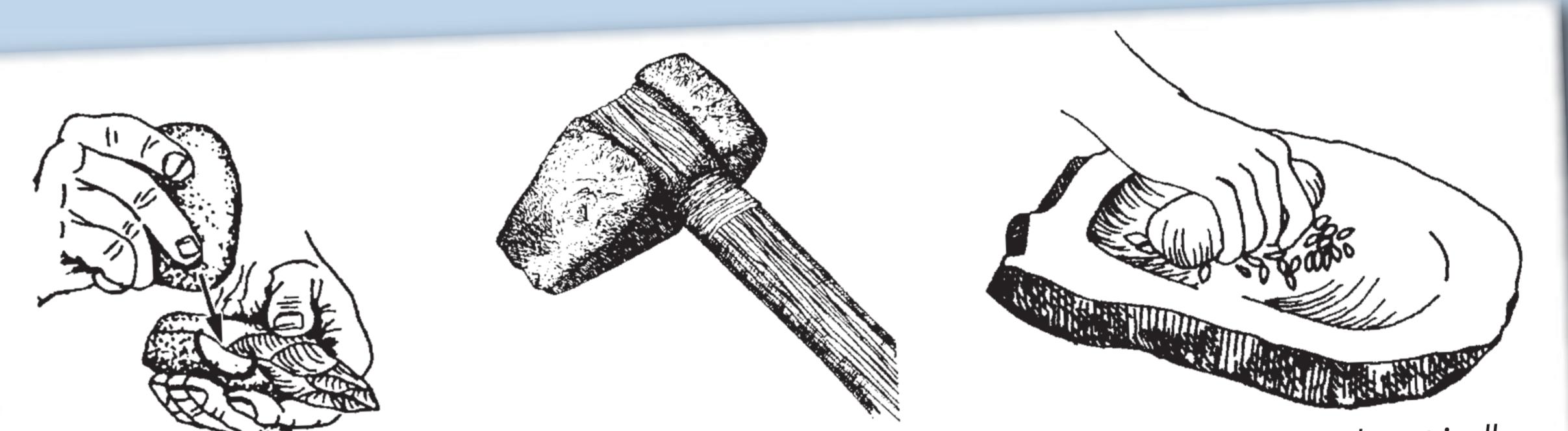


Loess Hills in Monona County. Photo Courtesy of Golden Hills RC&D.

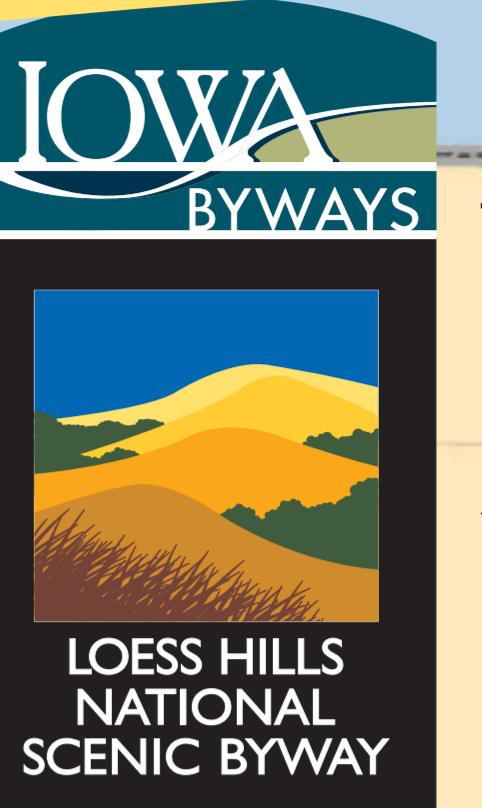


## Early Tools

Archaeologists are able to identify Archaic sites by the presence of notched and stemmed projectile points or arrowheads (illustration above). Archaic-age sites are often deeply buried and less well-known than those of later times. Because of this, changes in family structure, societal organization, and burial customs are difficult to track. The remains found at Turin played an important role in increasing our understanding of the Archaic people who once called the Loess Hills home.



During the Archaic time period, flint and chert would be shaped into a variety of different tools, typically abraders, axes, manos, and metates. Stone axes, grooved for hafting a wooden handle, first appeared at Archaic sites. Nuts and seeds were also being incorporated into the diet of Archaic cultures. The illustration above depicts how early gatherers would grind the nuts and seeds using stone tools (metate shown here). Evidence has been found to support the fact that the Archaic people hunted both Bison and smaller game. Illustrations used with permission from the University of Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist.



The Loess Hills National Scenic Byway™ is a 220 mile paved route through the Loess Hills. The 16 excursion loops make up an additional 185 miles (some gravel) for the more adventuresome!

