

PREHISTORY VERSES HISTORY

Program Summary

This program will compare the differences between prehistoric tools and jewelry with their historic counterparts, and how this drastic change affected the lives of the Native Americans forever. In contrast students will learn about the first Europeans who contacted the “Prehistoric People” and how the people became “Historic”. Students will learn about the first European contact and the profound effect due to the transition from prehistoric to historic, and how Native Americans adapted to change.

Prior to European contact, Native Americans who lived in what is now in Ohio had no written record; they could not read or write. Children learned through their oral traditions, and adults actively taught children how to thrive using the abundance of mother nature’s resources. Students will be introduced to specific tools made from wood, bone, and stone. Axes, knives, spears, darts and stone arrowheads. Jewelry is made from bone, shell, wood, and stone. Gourds, turtle shells, clay, bark, plant fiber and wood were made into woven baskets, clay pottery, and bowls. A variety of animal furs will be presented to describe subsistence strategies.

During the program, children use their imagination as they hear, “Last night when you went to bed, you were called prehistoric people. Today you wake up and see people who look differently, dress differently and they are writing words that depict what the Europeans were seeing.” When the Europeans put their first words on paper, the prehistoric population suddenly became historic Native Americans overnight. The Europeans brought with them items to trade, objects the native people had never seen metal axes, hammers, knives, arrowheads, glass and metal jewelry and eating utensils. Glass objects are made into beads, bottles and mirrors. In exchange for these new items, Europeans received beaver and other pelts from the Native Americans to bring back to Europe. This changed the lives of the Native Americans forever. Within a generation of European Contact, the Native Americans became dependent upon the trade goods, forgetting how to make traditional stone tools.