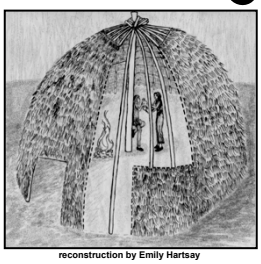
BENT-POLE STRUCTURES

WHAT are bent-pole structures?

a traditional form of Native American shelter • most served as houses, where domestic activities like cooking, sleeping, storage, and family interactions occurred • others had special uses like sweat lodges



reconstruction by Emily Hartsay

WHAT are they made of?

natives drove saplings into the ground and bent them toward the center • they used twine or leather strips to bind the poles • some structures had interior posts • the walls were sheets of tree bark or mats woven from cattails or grass

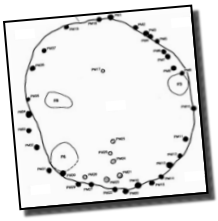
WHEN did people build them?

earliest evidence is from the Late Archaic period, about 4000 years ago • many date to the Woodland period, about 3000-1000 years ago • natives built them into the Historic period, just several hundred years ago

reconstruction by Emily Hartsay

WHAT do archaeologists find?

structures are marked by circular patterns of post holes, or cylinder-shaped columns of darkened soil • storage pits and hearth features often occur inside the circular patterns • the patterns range from 15-30 ft across



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