

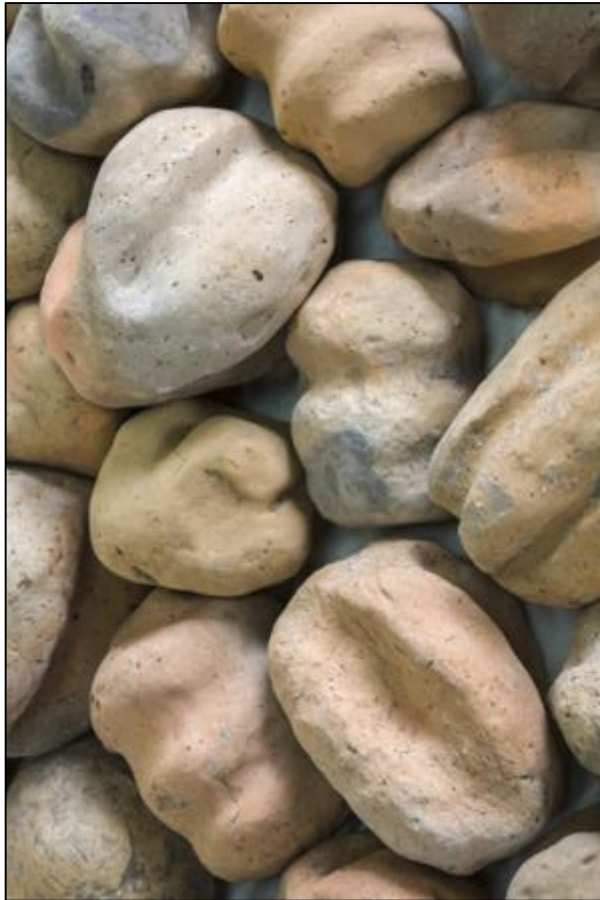
Poverty Point World Heritage Site Artifact Description Cards



Painting by Martin Pate

Cooking Balls

During Poverty Point times, these were used for cooking in earth ovens. They are so common that they are sometimes called Poverty Point Objects. Poverty Point Objects were made of local soil mixed with water and hardened in a fire.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Figurine

Poverty Point Indians made figurines of women. They were usually sitting down, and had rounded off arms and legs. These figurines are often found without heads. Archaeologists believe that breaking the heads off may have been part of some unknown Poverty Point ritual.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Quartz Crystal, Stone, and Beads

Poverty Point people used imported crystal and stone to make decorative objects. Quartz crystal could be polished or carved. Small beads were made from highly polished chert stone, fired earth, steatite, galena, quartz, copper, and greenstone.



Steatite

Bowls and platters made of a soft stone called steatite or soapstone were common during Poverty Point times. These bowls were made in Georgia and Alabama then brought to the Poverty Point site. Containers made from steatite are 10 to 20 times more common than pottery at the Poverty Point site.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Spear and/or Dart Points

The points from the Poverty Point site were used on short spears called darts. The darts were thrown using a spear thrower called an atlatl. Most of the points were made from stone found within 25 miles of the site. However, almost one-third were made of stone from as far away as Illinois or Indiana.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Microliths

At the Poverty Point site alone, approximately 30,000 small stone tools have been found. These tiny tools, called microliths, were used to scrape, cut, saw, engrave, drill, and punch holes. Microliths were made by chipping long, slender blades off of the rock core.



Plummets

Indians shaped these weights from iron ore brought to Louisiana from Arkansas. Plummets were used as weights for the nets used by hunters and fishermen. They were attached to the nets by a hole or groove drilled into one end.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Atlatl Weight

Prehistoric Indians tied weights to spear throwers, or atlatls. The weights may have been to balance the atlatl, or for decoration or good luck. Poverty Point Indians made flat, roughly oval weights with one hole in each end.



Photograph by Diana Greenlee

Celt

Stone was chipped, ground, and polished to form this smooth tool. Celts were made in many sizes ranging from one inch long to eight inches or more in length. This tool was probably used to chop wood.



Hematite

The iron ore hematite was imported from Arkansas and used at Poverty Point sites. Since hematite is very heavy, it was mainly used for making plummets. Some other objects, such as small celts, atlatl weights, and polished objects were also made of hematite.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Sandstone

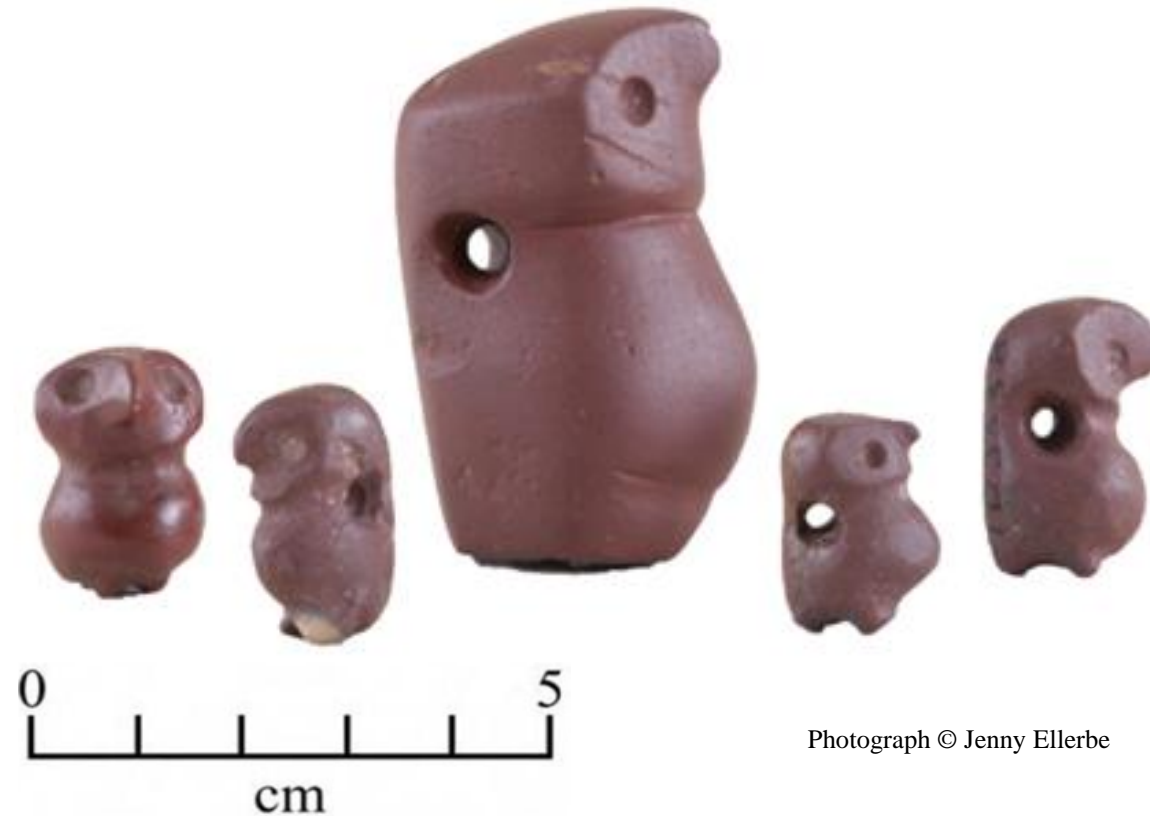
Since sandstone is found in parts of Louisiana, a large quantity of this stone was found at the Poverty Point site. Hard sandstone was made into bowls or other containers and grinding stones. Softer sandstone was used to polish rocks in the same way we use sandpaper today.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe

Owl Pendants

The pot-bellied, owls, are considered a classic artifact of the Poverty Point culture. Nearly thirty owls have been recovered. However, most were found at sites spanning from eastern Florida to western Louisiana. All recovered pendants are surface finds. None of the pendants were found during an excavation. Each piece has a hole in the back. It could have been worn as a necklace or decoration. The largest owl is 1.1 inches tall.



Photograph © Jenny Ellerbe