1000 YEARS AGO:
THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US
The GOAL of this Class:

• To Introduce us to the history of our region before the Europeans
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- To Introduce us to the history of our region before the Europeans
- To learn more about the actual history and culture of those who came before us.
The focus in this lecture is that moment in time as the regional cultures changed, and stepped forward into a society where farming began. The Siouxland region is an important part of that story, as we will see.
Prehistoric time
-- the time before history was recorded with words.

Petroglyphs – found in 1841, photo from 1891, in the region of Homer, Nebraska to the Blackbird Hill site. – Photo courtesy of the Sioux City Public Museum
Much of this era is discounted because of that. But history still exists, we just have to work harder to piece together the story.
Why does it matter ‘who came first?’

We have to remember when archaeologists examine sites, they are attempting to ‘place’ that site, and its people, in their proper location in time. And they are trying to judge if they are a ‘cause’ or an ‘effect’ in the events and changes that happen all the other groups. Remember as they dig into (literally) this culture, they don’t KNOW the answers. They are part of a jigsaw puzzle of clues at each site. And that is usually complicated by the fact that many times, multiple occupations of the same site occurs over time, mixing their clues into the mix! The questions they hope to answer are dependent upon same things – and they also are trying to derive just WHICH culture IS THIS group? They do that by deciding how they live, the foods they eat, the type of society they have created. And it takes years.
By examining the groups, they have decided the times in this region look like this:
The Paleoindian Period refers to the time period when people migrated to the North American continent.

People during this period were nomadic hunter-gatherers who subsisted on foods obtained from the wilds, from foraging and hunting species that are not domesticated. (Not farmers.)

Hunting-and-gathering peoples tend to live in smaller social groups, no formal leadership.

The “Clovis” groups are examples, noted by their use of chipped stone projectile points.

And about the ‘BCE’ – it is the new way to refer to what we used to call BC. BCE means ‘Before the Common Era’ or the numbering of years ‘common’ today.

CE then is the era we live in, what we used to call AD.
As long as we are talking about how we refer to things – I will try to use ‘native’ – since... they are natives here. This is BEFORE the tribal cultures evolved.
This period is noted by a change in climate, there were also some cultural developments. These include the use of notched and stemmed projectile points, containers of stone and pottery, and stone artifacts. During this period, long-distance trade was established.
The Woodland period see more use of plants, but not yet farming. They were changing into the societies, with more hierarchy. Use of ceramics is seen (processing the products in more complex ways.) Thus, complex pottery, and triangular points. Mound building flourished and the first coastal shell middens and rings were constructed.

OK – so you ask – what the heck is a shell midden? They are the massive discard heaps of shellfish fragments that line the areas where people lived. Why does it matter? People were still hunter-gatherers, but were reducing their territories, moving toward figuring out how to get more food, but not needing to chase the food. Remember it is before farming – but they are trying to stay in one place. If they were near a waterway – and almost ALL early cultures were on some sort of waterway – they came to depend on shellfish as an easy to obtain food. And the shells? Toss’em. They either pile up in heaps – or in many cases, they are dropped and crushed into the ground. The TYPES of shells found in these layers help archaeologists date other items that are found on the same layer (strata).
TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

Prehistoric time -- *the time before history was recorded with words* --
- Paleoindian – 10,000 years ago
- Archaic -- in Iowa this was between 10,000 and 3,000 years ago
- Woodland – started about 500 BCE
- Late Prehistoric period— about 900 CE (AD)

The coming of the Mississippian period, and of the groups we will discuss here today, because the Mill Creek people in our area define the change FROM the Woodland era to the Late Prehistoric. So we will be spending a lot of time on the EDGE of their time, deciding when the people – and the eras, changed.
A more graphical view of what we just outlined. Each change is essentially a change in the CULTURE of the people who lived in it. We think of it as an advance, because it usually involved changes in the tools they used, and how they interacted as a society.
WOODLAND ERA

500 BCE – 900 CE (AD)
Major social, technological, and economic developments:

• bow and arrow hunting,
• pottery production,
• plant domestication and cultivation,
• and burial mound construction.

Let’s dig a little deeper (see what I did there?) into the later part of the Woodland era.
WOODLAND ERA

500 BC – 100 BC
But in the beginning, before the bow:

Settlements were seasonally occupied.
Hunter-gatherer civilization:
  Fish, clams, deer, and bison.
  Gourds, sump weed, goosefoot, sunflower, knotweed,
  A little barley and NO CORN.

Gourds, sumpweed, goosefoot, sunflower, knotweed, little barley.
How do you hunt bison without a bow? Without horses?? Bison hunting at the time is mostly herd hunting, where you cause a stampede to run off a bluff cliff.
Eastern Iowa would have interaction with Mississippi waterway people, and the Hopewell (from Ohio-Illinois region).

Mound building flourished in the Middle Mississippi region, and the first coastal shell middens and rings were constructed in this time period.
It was a hierachal society, practiced maize agriculture, lived in chiefdoms, had populous villages and zones of dispersed housing,
and constructed earthen mounds in some of their villages.
The Middle Woodland period (100 B.C.-A.D. 300) is noted for its refined artworks, complex mortuary program, and extensive trade networks. Middle Woodland communities throughout the Midwest were linked by a network archaeologists refer to as the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. The Hopewell Interaction Sphere involved the dissemination of ideas about social organization and relationships, technology, and economic activities from centers of Hopewellian culture in Illinois and Ohio. Hopewell network participants exchanged exotic raw materials such as Knife River flint from North Dakota and obsidian from the Yellowstone Park area. Also traded were artifacts of Gulf coast marine shell, Great Lakes copper, mica from Appalachia, galena from the Dubuque and Galena localities, and several pipestones derived from Minnesota, Illinois, and Ohio. High quality ceramic vessels with elaborate decoration were produced for trade, utilitarian, and mortuary purposes. Perishable materials which have not survived archaeologically also may have been traded. Hopewell-related populations spread into Iowa from settlements along the Mississippi River, establishing small outposts at points along the major rivers in eastern Iowa. (Above by Michael Perry from the Iowa Office of State Archaeologist website.)
(Michael Perry continues, from the Iowa Office of State Archaeologist website.) The continent-wide exchange of exotic goods declined but interaction between communities and regions continued. Population levels apparently increased rapidly. In some parts of Iowa, Late Woodland peoples aggregated into large, planned villages, but in most of the state settlements continued to be small and generally became more dispersed across the landscape. Uplands and small interior valleys became settled or more heavily utilized. Late Woodland peoples introduced the bow and arrow into the Midwest. Continued native crop horticulture and diversified hunting and gathering provided the subsistence base through most of the period. Corn was introduced to many groups around A.D. 800 but did not form a staple crop until the Late Prehistoric period.

Pottery technology changed greatly during the Late Woodland period, resulting in the production of much thinner-walled cooking vessels. Between A.D. 300 and 600, pottery decoration was simple, using a fingertip or stamping with a plain or cord wrapped stick. By about A.D.600 the use of stamping in pottery decoration was replaced by cord impressing, in which a twisted cord was pressed into the moist clay of the completed but unfired pot. A similar technique involved the use of a woven fabric of twisted cords to produce a complex design around the rim of a pot.

Mound construction was generally simpler than in the Middle Woodland period, but regular aggregations for ritual and other purposes are reflected in hundreds of Late Woodland mound groups found throughout the state.
Groups of linear, effigy, and conical mounds in northeastern Iowa form a distinctive element of the Effigy Mound Culture (A.D. 650-1000). Effigy Mounds National Monument, near Marquette, Iowa, contains mounds in the shapes of birds, bears, and other forms. Effigy Mound populations may have lived in dispersed groups in the interior of northeast Iowa during much of the year, coalescing regularly in the Mississippi valley to exploit the vast array of seasonally available resources. The dwelling sites of Effigy Mound peoples show such a seasonal settlement pattern involving fish and shellfish collection during warm seasons in the main river valleys, nut harvesting in uplands in the fall, and winter use of rockshelters. The effigy mound groups along the Mississippi bluff line may have signified the territories of loosely related nuclear or extended family units which met seasonally and merged into larger social units.
LATE WOODLAND ERA

300 CE – 900 CE

- The bow and arrow came to Iowa, improving hunting
- Corn was introduced around 800 CE
- More food meant Populations grew – and villages grew and diversified.

Major point – the availability of food makes major changes in a society. Not only in their health and their choices, but in their habits, and their decisions.
SO WE ARRIVE AT...

Prehistoric time -- the time before history was recorded with words --
• Paleoindian – before 10,000 BCE
• Archaic -- in Iowa was between 10,000 and 3,000 years ago
• Woodland – started about 500 BCE
• Late Prehistoric period— about 900 CE (AD)
The three main prehistoric groups that inhabited this region:

- The Great Oasis (900-1100 CE [or AD])
- Mill Creek (1100-1300 CE)
- Oneota (1200-1700 CE)

This is a list of who was here in those times. It does NOT mean the Great Oasis people ‘became’ the Mill Creek people, and they ‘became’ the Oneota culture. That is NOT the case.
Realize much of this is always in flux. Original thought had it that the Great Oasis people were the forerunners of the Mill Creek people, but the past 50 years of research challenges that thinking.
The Great Oasis culture extended from southwestern Minnesota to northwest Iowa. From Mark L Anderson, Iowa Office of State Archaeologist website: The Great Oasis culture extended across a broad region of the eastern Plains periphery including southwestern Minnesota, northeastern Nebraska, southeast and central South Dakota and northwest and central Iowa. Many Great Oasis sites in central Iowa are located in the valleys of the Des Moines and the Raccoon rivers, suggesting that an extensive population of Great Oasis people once inhabited that region. Based on recent excavations, the "Maxwell phase" was defined to include the Great Oasis of Central Iowa. Extensions into central South Dakota appear to be primarily restricted to the valley of the Missouri River. Several Great Oasis sites have been recorded along the Missouri and its tributaries in northeast Nebraska with one site being discovered on the Loup River in the east-central part of the state. A sizable amount of information regarding the Great Oasis culture in northwest Iowa was produced as a result of studies conducted for a proposed reservoir in the Perry Creek drainage basin, located approximately 5 miles (8.1 km) northwest of Sioux City.
Mark L. Anderson, continued: The Great Oasis settlement system may represent a seasonal pattern characterized by concentrated winter occupations of semi-subterranean earth lodges and dispersed summer occupations of both flood plain farming stations and mobile hunting camps. Great Oasis cemeteries appear to be located on hill or bluff tops away from the living areas, although human skeletal remains are sometimes recovered within settlement sites.
900 AD – 1100 AD

First people in the region to develop based *primarily* on agriculture, **though they were STILL** hunter-gatherers.

*Photo and Drawing courtesy of Iowa Office of State Archaeologist*
The Mill Creek culture instead began creating fields to grow crops. While still hunter gatherers, they were the early farmers.

Photo courtesy of Iowa Office of State Archaeologist – a field used by Mill Creek farmers.
Rich Fishel, from Iowa Office of State Archaeologist website:
The Mill Creek culture is part of a larger group of horticultural villages that start to appear around A.D. 1000 near the Missouri River from northwest Iowa to central South Dakota. These groups have been labeled by archaeologists as the Initial Variant of the Middle Missouri tradition. The 35 known Mill Creek villages cluster in two distinct areas in northwest Iowa: along the Little Sioux River and its three tributaries (Brooke Creek, Mill Creek, and Waterman Creek) and along the Big Sioux River and its tributaries in Plymouth County. The origins of Mill Creek are still being debated. Some argue that these beginnings lie within the Great Oasis culture, while other researchers favor a more generalized Late Woodland origin. While most Mill Creek sites are small, occupying 1 acre or less, several are marked by extensive midden deposits which sometimes accumulate to depths of six feet (2 m) or more. These middens, which can be correctly described as trash heaps, are laden with prolific amounts of broken pottery, animal bone, charcoal, and lithic material. Three of the Mill Creek sites are known to be fortified and show evidence of a large ditch encircling each site.
A large number of bone tools, pottery and burned plant remains have been found at Mill Creek sites. These suggest that these people were successful farmers who tended gardens of corn, beans, squash, pumpkin and sunflower. Since the prairie grasses of the Midwest had a tough, thick root system, the sod was almost impossible to cut through. So the natives generally farmed the loose, rich, river bottomland.

They used bone hoes and bone or wooden digging sticks. Hoes are a common item in Mill Creek sites. Most were made from bison shoulder blades (scapula). The scapula was also used to make a blunt-ended knife. The knife had a straight edge on one side and a convex-concave edge on the other. This knife was probably used in cutting items such as squash.
Two Sioux City excavations have great impact on his thinking –

The Broken Kettle site, and the Kimball site.

Sites are normally named for the land owner, or the place.
As in, personal individual scavenging in the time since the original investigation / excavation. The Sioux City Academy was an amateur association dedicated to the advancement of science. While certainly admirable, the emphasis here is ‘amateur.’ The group had lofty aims and ideals, and predated the concept of public museums to hold the results of such discoveries. While the members were mostly men of knowledge and well educated for their time, their normal activities were group meetings with papers of interest read to the membership. Some detailed the discoveries or light investigations, such as a ‘journey’ in 1891 to the location of the petroglyphs I mentioned at the start. Which was valuable – it placed into the public record what we know about the time, and the pictures are a record. But when it came to excavations, they were not experts. Which stands to reason – there were no advanced techniques in archaeology at the time! Thus the excavation of the Broken Kettle site was well intentions, but problematic. While the items recovered were painstakingly recorded, they had disappeared over the years, most never to be seen again. (Some would come back when grandchildren realized these were artifacts their parents and grandparents had been holding, since there was no public library to assign them to at the time.) But most were never found. The same is true of the all-important drawings of the footings and placement of buildings that had been found. While referenced in the notes of the excavation, they had become separated from the notes. And again, they have never been found.
W. C. French, a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp officer who was fascinated by archaeology. French reported to Keyes, head of the WPA efforts in Archaeology, in a letter that artifacts were present at ground surface on the terrace of the Kimball family property:

“Did you know there was a mound similar to the Broken Kettle Mound, about 3 ½ or 4 miles southwest of that mound, near the Big Sioux River, & near the Sioux River Road. This mound is I believe bigger in circumference, & as high. The pottery fragments run more to greys or dirty white, while, there are some reds & yellows. My most interesting find was a small handle of a bowl shaped as a human head. Also found a broken piece with a perforated tip. Showing that either woven grass or a rawhide thong was used as a bale.”

Two weeks later, French wrote again about Kimball:

“You were right, the mound is south & not south west of the Broken Kettle Mound. In walking, I knew I went east to #12 & then east off #12 to Mr. Mosher’s Farm, but forgot that the highway ran to the northwest. From the map of Plymouth Co. I gather that the mound is in I was given permission to look over the mound on weekends by a Mr. Kimball ... I tried to pick specimens from the mound- as large as possible, & those of color, grey, yellow, & red, & thin & thick pieces, I’ll try & secure some better rim pieces after plowing & a good rain. Mussel shells, bone & rock in large quantities cover the mound, have found some flint pieces, & chips of obsidian, also a small polishing stone. Have a handle of pot representing a leaf. It is of yellowish color ... Also found what is probably a bead made of shell. I am quite enthused over this mound as it is within easy walking distance of the camp. I hope those specimens will be of interest to you ...”

The next letter from French was written four months later, in September 1936. He included a box of sherds from the site. In June, 1937, French reported on his recent findings at the location he now referred to as "Kimball Mound:"

“Because of our wet Spring & early Summer; I have made several trips to the mound usually finding a few arrowheads, some perfect, others more or less broken, a few beads, many scrapers, & awls of flint or chert. Last Saturday, I found 3 perfect arrowheads, many scrapers, a piece of broken highly polished stone disc (?), & the most interesting thing of all, a small replica of shell of the thunder bird. (This I consider my most important find.) It was heavily incrusted, as are many of the shells found there.”
In 1936, Iowa archaeologist Dr. Charles R. Keyes first heard that artifact collectors were finding materials at a site that later became known as Kimball Village. He could not have foreseen the spectacular finds that would await his assistant, Ellison Orr, when Orr and 14 WPA workers shoveled trenches into the 8-foot-thick cultural deposits three years later, exposing entire prehistoric houses, hearths, storage pits, and burial features. The range of artifacts, more than 9,000 in all, was astonishing: fishhooks carved from bone; over 100 other tools made from bone, including awls, squash knives, chisels, scoops, and matting needles; complete pottery vessels; ceramic pottery handles fashioned into the shapes of animals; tools made from stone, like hide scrapers, drills, knives, arrow points, whetstones, and abraders; smoking pipes, carved from pipestone; and many articles of personal adornment, like bone, stone, and shell beads, bone pins, perforated animal teeth, also used as beads, an earspool, and mussel shells, delicately carved into fish shapes or into pendants.
Rich Fishel, for writing on the University of Iowa website for the State Archaeology office, says:

“These people, now known as the Mill Creek culture, followed a way of life completely different from those before them. The uniqueness of this culture has created an interest unparalleled among many Iowa archaeologists.

“The Mill Creek culture is part of a larger group of horticultural villages that start to appear around A.D. 1000 near the Missouri River from northwest Iowa to central South Dakota. These groups have been labeled by archaeologists as the Initial Variant of the Middle Missouri tradition. The 35 known Mill Creek villages cluster in two distinct areas in northwest Iowa: along the Little Sioux River and its three tributaries (Brooke Creek, Mill Creek, and Waterman Creek) and along the Big Sioux River and its tributaries in Plymouth County.

“The origins of Mill Creek are still being debated. Some argue that these beginnings lie within the Great Oasis culture, while other researchers favor a more generalized Late Woodland origin. While most Mill Creek sites are small, occupying 1 acre or less, several are marked by extensive midden deposits which sometimes accumulate to depths of six feet (2 m) or more. These middens, which can be correctly described as trash heaps, are laden with prolific amounts of broken pottery, animal bone, charcoal, and lithic material. Three of the Mill Creek sites are known to be fortified and show evidence of a large ditch encircling each site.”
Mill Creek potters made a wide variety of containers including bowls, flat-bottom rectangular pans, seed jars, wide-necked bottles, hooded water bottles, jars, and ollas (wide-mouthed water jars). Most of the pottery was made from crushed granite or sand temper. Temper was used to keep the clay from cracking when it was heated. Ground clamshell has been found in a few pieces. The surface of the pot almost always was smooth.

The pots were decorated on the lip, rim or shoulder area. Patterns like triangles and diamonds were cut into the clay. Running deer and weeping eye are the names given to two types of patterns. Some pots were colored by black paint or red slipping (where a liquid mixture of water and colored clay is applied to the pot before firing). Some of the pots have loop handles or handles looking like small animals or birds.
This reconstruction of a Mill Creek building, from the Chan-Ya-Ta site.

From the Storm Lake Historical Society website: “The settlements fall under what was considered Little Sioux territory, mostly in Northwestern Iowa. Only a few of the sites have ever been excavated, including the Chan-ya-ta site in Buena Vista County. The Chan-ya-ta site is located ½ mile from Brooke Creek, near where it meets the Little Sioux River.

“The Chan-ya-ta appear to have lived in semi-subterranean homes, often described as a cross between wattle and dub construction homes and earth lodges. The site for a home appears to be excavated, then a light frame of posts constructed and covered in a woven frame of twigs and branches. Bundles of thatch were then attached and a mud plaster was applied over this. It is not clear whether loose dirt or sod was then put over this.”

From *Chan-Ya-Ta: A Mill Creek Village* by Joseph A. Tiffany.
MILL CREEK ERA

Pot Sherds reveal links and locations to other groups.

Photo courtesy of O'Brien County Museum, Iowa Museum Association
As do their tools – like this axe head.

Photo courtesy of O'Brien County Museum, Iowa Museum Association
MILL CREEK ERA

There are at least 14 village sites along the Big Sioux.

Location of Mill Creek sites in northwest Iowa. The Loess Hills study identified 14 villages and burial sites in the Big Sioux locality.

Photo courtesy of Iowa Office of State Archaeologist
There are at least 14 village sites along the Big Sioux, and the Little Sioux has more.

35 sites have been identified.

MILL CREEK ERA

Map courtesy of Iowa Office of State Archaeologist
The expansion of the Mill Creek and Plains villages is concurrent with the expansion and growth of other groups.

Cahokia, located near modern day St. Louis, was a metropolis – nearly 20,000 people at its peak – and was the trade center for the central eastern chiefdoms.
Cahokia appears to have begun about 400 AD – but the ‘city’ started around 1000 AD. It covered an area of 6 sq. miles.
MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI CULTURES

This included nearly 200 earthen mounds, vast open plazas, thousands of pole and thatch houses, temples, and public buildings.
Hub of a broad trading network - from the gulf coast and southeast to the trans-Mississippi south, the eastern plains, the upper Mississippi valley, and the Great Lakes.
MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI CULTURES

Their trade included marine shell, shark teeth, pipestone, mica, Hixton quartzite, exotic stones, copper, and galena.
And their trades include the Mill Creek groups in our area.

But the Mill Creek people are NOT thought to have come FROM that culture, as their society structure and burial methods are far different.

The following items were found at Mill Creek sites and in and around Cahokia, Illinois:
Earspools (pulley-shaped stone or bone earrings)
Chunky stones (disc-shaped stones probably used in athletic games)
Shell pendants
Scalloped-edge shell gorgets (armor for the throat area)
Certain snail shell beads from the southern U.S.
Marine (conch) shell traded from the Gulf of Mexico

The Hartley Fort site in the northeast corner of Iowa contained both Mill Creek and Mississippian pottery. Archaeologists believe this site was a point of contact between the Mill Creek of northwest Iowa and the natives of Cahokia, Illinois.
By the way - At 10,000 people, it was larger than London.

This pyramid is larger than the ones in Egypt. Why don’t we know that?

Think about the implied values: dirt mound vs Pyramid, builders vs architects
In the 19th century, there was a concept that the Indians had displaced the more advanced cultures that had build anything of value. That made it easier to dismiss the Indians as inferior. Some still practice that completely debunked idea today when they compare the cultures.
NATIVE AMERICANS

Why? Because none of the groups we are speaking of had:

- Metal working
- Horses
- Coined money
- Alphabetic written languages
Important items they did have:

- Freedom from food needs

With pots study enough to boil and cook their food.
MILL CREEK ERA

- And the MILL CREEK culture is the FIRST of the true farmers in this region.
- While they did hunt, they were planting and growing and storing crops.
MILL CREEK ERA

Tools and pot handles from Big Sioux sites:

Complementary large and small bone tools from Mill Creek (above) and Elmwood (below) sites. Top to bottom: scapula bow, rod, fish hook, and fish hook blade.

More faunal items also suggest some affinity. Clay and Mudstone Mill Creek, and Childs Creek. (6/23/1941)
MILL CREEK ERA

• Similarities with southern Iowa Glenwood site tools and pot handles!
MILL CREEK ERA

Tools and pot handles from Big Sioux and Glenwood.
While similar, the sites had different housing styles and somewhat different cultures. So it is assumed they learned from each other, but did not necessarily spring from the same group. Though both share much with the Nebraska cultures.
In the same timeframe as the Woodlands period, Nebraska Plains farmers once encompassed most of present-day Kansas and Nebraska and portions of Iowa, Colorado and Wyoming.

Village Farmers, whose territory once encompassed most of present-day Kansas and Nebraska and portions of Iowa, Colorado and Wyoming, were confined to the Missouri River and its tributaries in extreme northeastern Nebraska and a handful of large villages along the Missouri in South Dakota.
But likely due to climate change, they were soon confined to the north and the east, along the waterways.

This picture is of an excavation at Lynch, site of a major village.

The last major bastion of prehistoric Village Farmer culture in Nebraska was at this the Lynch site in Boyd County, where the University of Nebraska completed excavations in 1936 and 1959. The Lynch site was a large village scattered over about 300 acres on a high bluff overlooking the Ponca Creek valley about 12 miles from the confluence with the Missouri. University teams worked at four hut sites as well as deep trash middens and storage or refuse pits. The sheer size of the village and the amount of debris indicate that, unlike the dispersed hamlets elsewhere in the state, Lynch was a major community and home to hundreds of people. The material remains are essentially of the Central Plains tradition but with truly some notable variations. The most important include poorly constructed oval houses rather than the more common well-built square structures, more focus on specialized bison hunting and new pottery surface treatment and decoration. Some changes almost certainly arose from increased contact with Middle Missouri tradition people of South Dakota and the Oneota people from Iowa and Minnesota. Archaeologists search for clues to the mystery of what happened to the prehistoric Village Farmers. Nebraska was not the only region to experience major cultural change in the century or two prior to European contact. Complex societies, such as the Anasazi of the Southwest and the Mississippians of as the Midwest and Southeast, all began to crumble after A.D. 1300. Causes of such continentwide change at that time might include climate change, overpopulation, warfare and disease. (These notes are from an article in the Nebraska Historical society papers.)
But the Mill Creek people would abandon the Iowa area, moving north within the next century.

We are not certain why.
Climate changes, depletion of natural resources?
Currently, it is believed the new arrivals of Oneota severed the trade routes with the Middle Mississippi cultures.
But their time here bridged the gap from the individual hunter to the farmers who join together to hunt and know security, both in their person and their food.
Many researchers now believe that the Mandan and Hidatsa eventually developed from these Mill Creek roots.
Ponca and Omaha tribes in Northeast Nebraska are believed to be descendants of the Oneota.
MILL CREEK AND BEYOND

• We have learned much from a few sites. There are thousands in Iowa.
• And Nebraska
• And South Dakota
And only a handful have been examined closely.
“As the earliest, best preserved eastern Great Plains fortified village known in the United States, Kimball Village is nationally significant for the detailed scientific data it has provided and the in-ground data it still contains.” – from the application to the National Register of Historic Places
MILL CREEK ERA

The Broken Kettle site, and the Kimball site.

Two Sioux City excavations that have had great impact.

Photo courtesy of Iowa Office of State Archaeologist
My questions to you:

• Did you hear anything new?

• Can you tell me one thing you learned today?

Thank you for your time, and your interest.
SIOUXLAND 1000 YEARS AGO

For further reading:

• Ancient North America, Brian M. Fagan, 2000
• Plains Village Archaeology, Alher & Kay, 2007
• Immense Journey: Loess Hills Cultural Resources Study, Alex, 2011
• The Office of the State Archaeologist (website):
  https://archaeology.uiowa.edu/

Thank you for your time, and your interest.
Pictures provided by the Sioux City Public Museum, the Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist, and other regional historical groups.