

# PORT AU CHOIX

## A Maritime Archaic Indian Burial Ground

**5000** Years Ago  
ans dans le passé

The Maritime Archaic Indians buried their dead at Port au Choix between 4400 and 3300 years ago. Excavations uncovered four concentrations of burials, totalling 117 skeletons in 56 graves. One or more individuals were buried in a pit; grave goods were added and red ochre was sprinkled throughout. The pit was filled in and a few small boulders or slabs were placed on top to mark the spot. Adults were usually buried in the flexed position and children were buried extended on their back. There were also burials of bone bundles, the remains of individuals who had died one or more seasons previously. Analysis of skeletal material shows that the Maritime Archaic Indians were very healthy and lived relatively long lives.

**4000** Years Ago  
ans dans le passé



The location of the largest burial concentration, Locus II, just before excavation in 1968.

**3000** Years Ago  
ans dans le passé

**Locus II.** Eighty-eight individuals were found in 53 burials. Each of three burial clusters was associated with a particular kind of grave gift: great auk bones, combs or pins; bones of gulls; or carved bone pins of abstract design. It is possible that the three burial clusters represent distinct family groups.

The drawing below shows the three separate burial clusters at Locus II. The mounds have been enhanced to make the individual burials more visible. Each mound consisted of three or more boulders

**2000** Years Ago  
ans dans le passé



Small boulders that marked burial pit in Locus II.

**1000** Years Ago  
ans dans le passé

Il y a 4400 à 3300 ans, des Indiens de tradition archaïque maritime ont enseveli leurs morts à Port au Choix. Les fouilles ont permis de reconnaître quatre concentrations de sépultures, pour un total de 117 squelettes dans 56 tombes. Ces Indiens pouvaient ensevelir une ou plusieurs personnes dans une fosse; ils y plaçaient des présents funéraires et les saupoudraient d'ocre. Ils comblaient ensuite la fosse, qu'ils surmontaient de petits blocs ou de dalles de pierre. Les adultes étaient généralement enfouis en position accroupie et les jeunes, étendus sur le dos. On a aussi trouvé des fosses où les os étaient en tas, sans doute les restes de personnes mortes une ou plusieurs saisons avant d'être inhumées. L'analyse des squelettes a révélé que les membres de ce peuple jouissaient d'une excellente santé et vivaient jusqu'à un âge relativement avancé.

### The People of Port au Choix Maritime Archaic Indians

#### Who were they?

These are the earliest aboriginal inhabitants of Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### When were they here?

The Maritime Archaic Indians lived on the island of Newfoundland from 5000 to 3200 years ago. They lived in Labrador from 9000 to 3500 years ago.

#### Where did they come from?

The Maritime Archaic Indians came from Atlantic Canada and the Gulf of Maine via Labrador.

#### What happened to them?

The Maritime Archaic Indians disappeared from the archaeological record during a period of cold climate. On the island of Newfoundland they may either have died out or left. In Labrador the Maritime Archaic Indians may



These ground slate spear points were buried with the dead. They are characteristic of the Maritime Archaic Indians and reflect their sea and land mammal hunting.

Ces pointes de lance en ardoise polie, enfouies avec les morts, sont caractéristiques de la tradition archaïque maritime et de sa pratique de la chasse aux mammifères marins et terrestres.



These stone axes and gouges were buried as grave goods. They reflect the importance of woodworking to the Maritime Archaic Indians.

Ces haches et ces gouges de pierre étaient enfouies comme offrandes funéraires. Elles témoignent de l'importance du travail du bois pour les Indiens de tradition archaïque maritime.

# PORT AU CHOIX

## Cimetière des Indiens de tradition archaïque maritime