

# INTRODUCTION

## WHO WERE THE TIMUCUA?

**STUDENTS TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT THE PEOPLE  
WHOSE TECHNOLOGY THEY'LL BE STUDYING.**



### HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THE NAME “TIMUCUA”?

First of all, there is no correct Timucua way to pronounce this name. It probably came from the Timucua word, “*thimogona*,” which meant “enemy,” but we’re not even sure how they pronounced that word. Many historians and archaeologists give the word a Spanish pronunciation: tee-moo-kwa. Regardless of pronunciation, if you say the name with respect, you are saying it correctly.

### WHAT DID THE TIMUCUA LOOK LIKE?

We can’t be sure what they looked like, but a modern artist named Theodore Morris has given us some good ideas. Morris has studied Florida’s early people and produced portraits that represent several of these cultures. The painting on the left portrays a Timucua man and his child. The painting on the right portrays a woman harvesting shellfish at the beach.



*Courtesy of Theodore Morris*



*Courtesy of Theodore Morris*

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### WHEN DID THE TIMUCUA LIVE IN FLORIDA?

Native peoples have lived in Florida for the past 12,000 years. Around 2,500 years ago, these migratory peoples began to settle down. Groups in different parts of Florida developed their own regional cultures. As time passed, these cultures changed and adapted to meet new challenges. The “Timucua culture” (or lifestyle) was in place about 200 years before the Europeans arrived. However, archaeologists don’t refer to these groups as “Timucua” until the Europeans arrive and begin recording histories. The Timucua, and other native groups met by the Europeans, are called historic peoples. In Florida, the historic period begins in the early 1500s. For the Timucua, it ended in 1763, when the few remaining Timucua people left Florida and moved to Cuba with the Spanish. The last known Timucua person died in Cuba in 1767. The Timucua have no known descendants today.

### WHERE DID THE TIMUCUA LIVE?

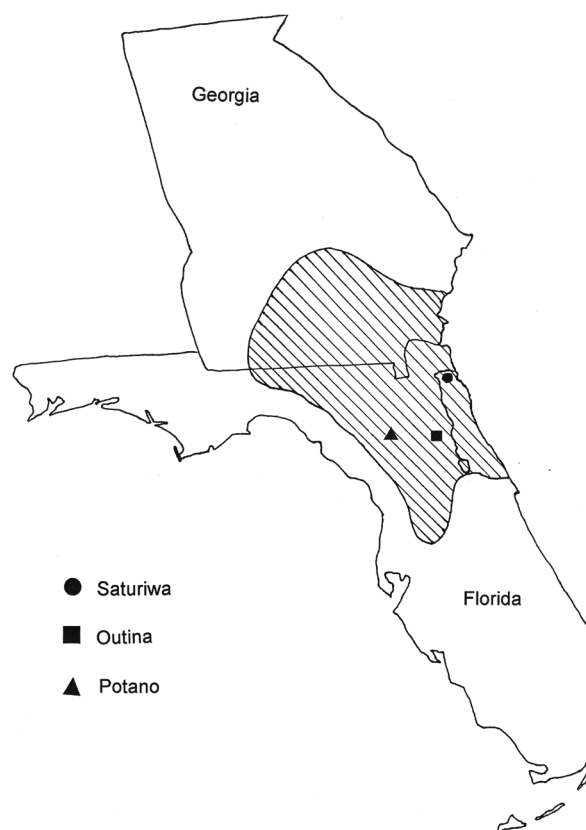
The Timucua lived in north Florida and southeast Georgia. This map shows their territory and the villages of three major headchiefs.

### SO, WHO WERE THE TIMUCUA?

These native peoples were never united into a single group. Instead, groups of allied villages were ruled by the leader of the most powerful village in the area. This ruler was called a headchief.

Eastern (coastal) Timucua peoples depended far more on water resources, while the Western (inland) Timucua grew more crops. Their cultures were sometimes very different.

So why were they all called by the same name? All of these groups spoke dialects (variations) of the same language. As a result, European explorers classed them all as a single people. How many dialects were spoken? Historical research suggests that as many as eleven distinct dialects were spoken across the region. The dialect spoken by the coastal Timucua (find “Saturiwa” on the map) was called, “*Mocama*,” which means “saltwater” in the Timucua language. In Outina’s territory down along the St. Johns River, the Timucua spoke a dialect called, “*Agua Dulce*,” which means “fresh water” in Spanish. In Potano’s territory (interior of Florida), the Timucua spoke a dialect called (mysteriously) “Potano.”



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Historians and archaeologists prefer to call all of these people “Timucua speakers.” This name shows that they shared a language without suggesting that they were actually a political unit.

### A NOTE ON DATES

Archaeologists do not use BC and AD when referring to dates. Instead they use BCE (before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era). The new acronyms mean exactly the same thing as BC and AD, but the newer terms do not refer to religion. So, when you read a date in these lessons, BCE = BC and CE = AD.

### THESE LESSONS ARE TITLED “TIMUCUAN TECHNOLOGY.” SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS “TECHNOLOGY”?

It is the designing of tools and techniques to solve problems. What kinds of problems did the Timucua need to solve?

- How can we help a child with a terrible cough? (Solved with Wild Plant Technologies)
- How can we take down a meter-wide tree? (Solved with Pyrotechnology – use of fire)
- How can we catch enough fish to feed the village? (Solved with Animal Technologies)

These units are divided into 6 different native technologies. In addition to the three listed above, you’ll find Tool technologies, Agricultural technologies, and Building technologies. You’ll also see four units that discuss the modern technologies that archaeologists and historians use to learn about the Timucua. These include “Excavation,” “Archaeology Beyond Excavation,” “Historical Documents,” and a section about Theodore de Bry – the man who created the engravings (pictures) of the Timucua that all Florida kids see in their textbooks.

Each unit has hands-on activities, like:

- Building sections of palm-thatched walls (Building Technology)
- Coiling Timucua-style clay pots (Tool Technology)
- Weaving and dying rope with natural materials (Wild Plant Technology)
- Mastering the physics of spear-fishing (Animal Technology)
- Carving models of three Florida canoes and testing them for speed (Archaeology - Beyond Excavation)
- Creating and excavating model archaeological sites (Archaeology)

Get ready to get dirty, get wet, and learn a crazy amount of information about the Timucua.