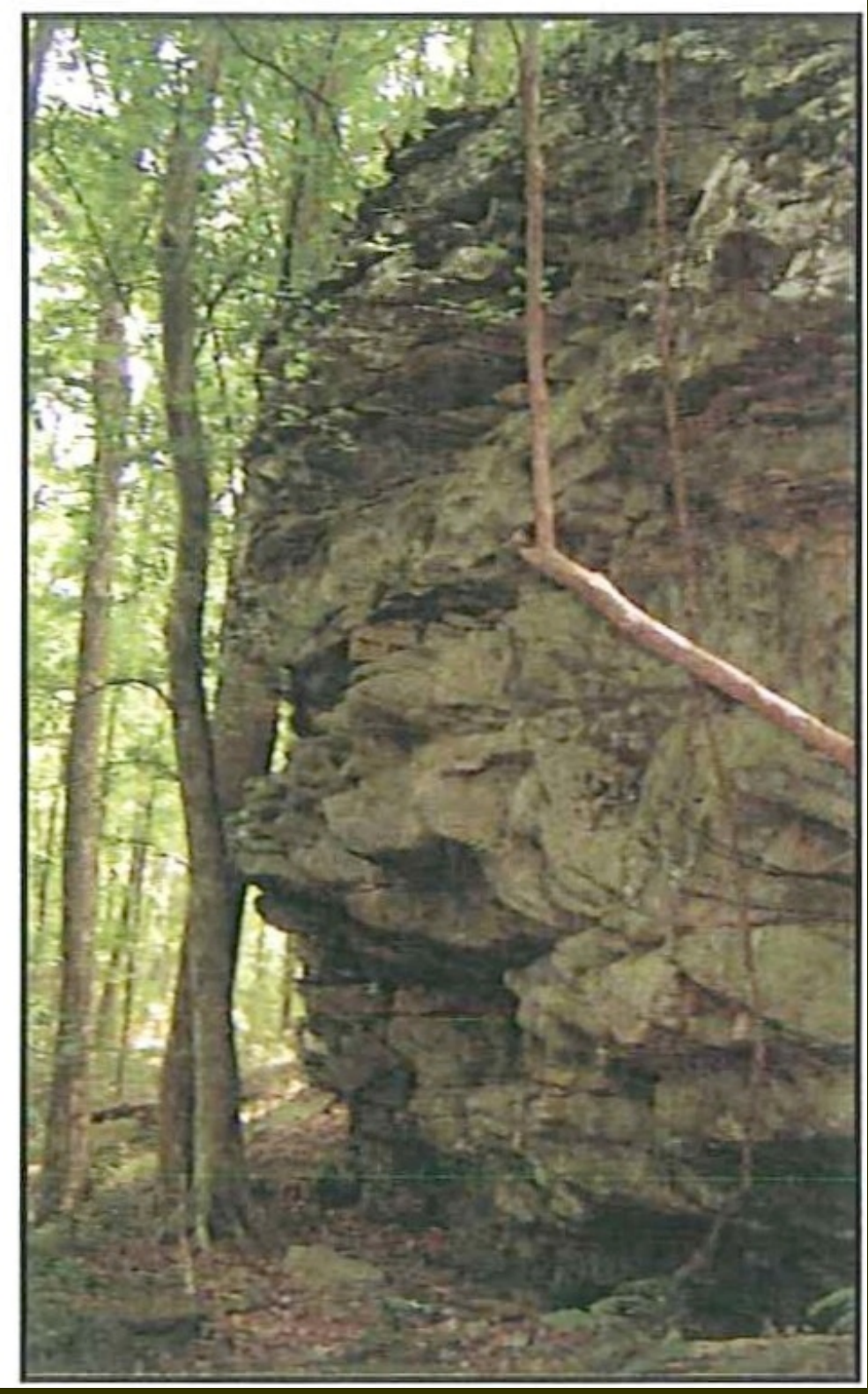


Woodland Period

1000 B.C-1000 A.D..

Caves and Rock Shelters



Rock Shelter in Red River Gorge

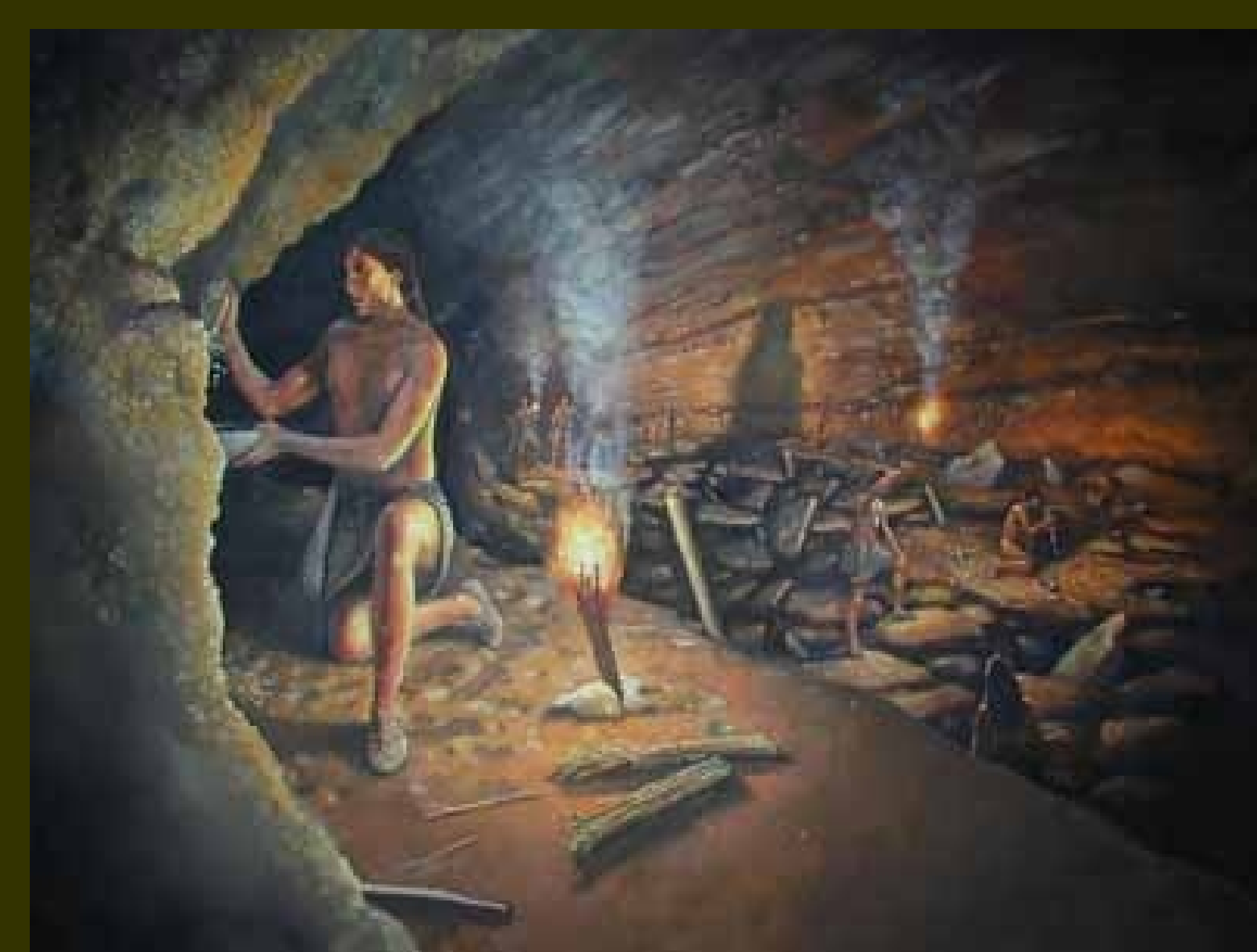
Woodland Period hunter-gatherer-gardeners used Kentucky's caves and rock shelters. These places ranged in size from those large enough to shelter a single person to ones as large as Mammoth Cave. In the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, rock shelters were used intensively, particularly ones with easy access to hillside garden plots. People used some of these sites nearly year-round. In western Kentucky, Woodland people explored caves, carried out ceremonies inside them, and mined mineral deposits from the cave walls.

Cave and rock shelters provided information about the stone tools and pottery Woodland peoples made and used. But these types of sites are especially important because the dry conditions inside them preserve artifacts that decay in open, wet and humid places. These sites provide us with great detail on Woodland Period culture, lifeways, and food production, and enable us to gain a more complete understanding of these people.

At Newt Kash Shelter in Menifee County, archaeologists found textiles, rope, grass beds, and a cradle board. In Salts Cave in Hart County, they found textiles and slippers. Human feces from this site provide information about the diet of the Woodland people who visited the cave.

From these sites, we know that Woodland gardeners planted sunflower, goosefoot, march elder, and maygrass in their garden plots. They foraged for hickory and walnuts. We know that they made clothing from skin and textiles.

Petroglyphs and pictographs pecked or drawn on stone or walls inside rock shelters and caves attest to Woodland people's artistic talents and rich spiritual beliefs.



Artist drawing of Native Americans working in Mammoth Cave.