

Cap 36-84887
Route 1, Box 39
Kimberly, Idaho
83341

Nov. 10, 1969

Miss Karen Tobias, Editor
Books for Boys and Girls
Random House, Inc.,
201 East 50th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Miss Tobias:

Thank you for your letter of Oct. 27th and please pardon the tardy reply. Have been on location making educational films for Idaho State University and have just caught up with my mail.

I would, indeed, be honored to have you use any of Craig Fisher's stills for your book "Who Discovered America". Flint knapping is the accepted word for making stone tools and I believe it originated from the family in Brandon, England who became famous for making gun flints for rifles. In due time they became known as the Brandon flintknappers and now that the profession is interested in the technology of making stone tools, the term is applied to toolmaking. Personally I think the term "artificer" or "artificing" is more appropriate and have included this in my soon to be published glossary of artifact terminology, but "flintknapping" is the accepted term.

When I was seven years old I became interested in hunting artifacts on the deserts of Idaho and eventually became intrigued about their manufacture. I asked the local Indians for information, but they knew nothing of their fabrication. So I experimented with various percussion and pressure techniques until I was able to preform the lithic material by percussion and complete the artifact with the pressure technique. By the time I was twelve, I was able to make a good imitation but realized it was not a duplication. One thing bothered me and that was that my artifacts derived from the same raw material as that of the aborigine never quite looked like those found in a campsite. I finally decided that the Indian must be treating his raw material in some way to make it easier to work and give a sharper edge. So I experimented with the thermal treatment - that is heating the rock slowly and cooling it slowly - and after this process I was able to replicate exactly the flaking technology and my artifacts were now duplications with the same luster and sharp edge as those found in campsites. I introduced this theory at the lithic technology conference in Les Eyzies, France in 1964. Dr. Francois Bordes, University of Bordeaux and Dr. Jacques Tixier, National Museum of Paris - both flintknappers - have since experimented with thermal alteration of their flints and, as a result of these experiments and much research, we now find that ancient man has been annealing raw lithic materials since Solutrean times which accounts for the beautifully controlled pressure flaking of the solutrean and, of course, the extraordinary pressure flaking of the New World.

Am enclosing a brochure from ISU and do hope that I have given you the information you need.

Yours very truly,

Don E. Crabtree

Cell. 1.75