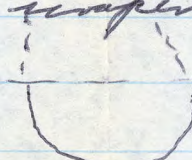


2735 Palisade Ave  
Bronx NY 10463

August 28 76

Dear Don -

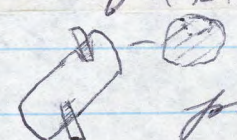
Ca 2166

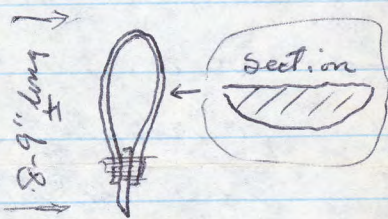
In Argentine Patagonia I have seen various small hammerstones like the one enclosed, flat, evenly oval pebbles, generally thinner than this one but quite similar in size. All are scarred in restricted areas at four places just in from the ends. I have tried to match such scarring on this one - doing it only enough to indicate the areas. What I assume to have been their function was the retouching or sharpening of skin scraper blades while these were hafted or in their handles. If used on the average wood working scraper edge which range from slightly curved through straight to convex the scar areas would be more elongated across the surface of the pebble. Against the curved edge of a ~~scraper~~ skin scraper the edges of which are well rounded:  the point of contact would be restricted and should produce the scars found on the hammer.

When down there last year with Rex Gonzalez I searched over a lot of gravel deposit surface - (That is all there is on many places) without finding a single good pebble matching the ones used anciently: a couple of weeks ago

while up on the sand spit at Broad Point on  
 Nantuxet I found several approaching  
 the old ones in size <sup>so</sup> and thus along, even though  
 it may be slightly heavier and thicker than the  
 preferred size. I doubt that they were used in  
 the initial preparation <sup>and sharpening</sup> of the skin scraper  
 blades which were chafed in various ways.  
 The longer, variable sized ones were bound  
 between bent split wood strips:

Others were fitted into cuts in wood  
 handles set in pitch or lashed into one  
 end ~~the~~ notch as with the ones of  
 Tierra del Fuego:

Those in northern Patagonia =  project about 3/4"  
 beyond the wood, and here after repeated sharpening  
 the sharpening ultimately reduces the size of the  
 blade and it must be replaced just as the stones  
 set in the butts of Australian spear throwers  
 are renewed. Whether or not some of the Patagonians  
 used their teeth as Dick Gould observed we  
 don't know.



Will phone you soon to hear your voice & to  
 find out how you two wonderful people are doing  
 Meanwhile all the best  
 Always  
 James