

Crabtree
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When Idaho's world-famous archaeologist receives an honorary Doctor of Science degree at the University of Idaho next Saturday, sometime during the weekend he will probably unbutton his shirt to show somebody where the almost scar-free chest surgery was done with his own incredibly sharp obsidian blade.

This is something new in the field of modern medicine, although it evidently was an ancient art long before the pyramids were born.

This is ~~one~~ of the things that makes Don Crabtree of Kimberly a true modern Renaissance man of many talents.

Crabtree stands unique, a self-taught expert whose study of stone-age tools has immeasurably aided archaeologists in interpreting the history of early man in America as well as in Europe.

As one of his international colleagues, Dr. Francois Bordes of France, is quoted as saying:

"In American archaeology there is a pre-Crabtree period and a post-Crabtree period."

The boy in Salmon, Idaho, who was fascinated with ^{the} Indian arrowheads that abound in that area, became the man who unlocked one of the great secrets of the past: How pre-historic man made his ~~almost~~ ^{incredibly} ~~magical~~ ^{efficient} weapons ^{and tools} out of stone or glassy volcanic rock.

"If we try to examine the history of man beyond 10,000 years," he says, "we must turn to stone because that's the only unperishable thing left. It outlasts pottery or legends."

There were evidences of many different techniques found around the world, he says, but nobody had done anything with research in that direction. Crabtree had no guidebooks. He had only the examples of the aborigines for models. By trial and error, and

his own ingenuity and elbow grease, he learned to duplicate the work and thus to understand a great deal about how stone age man lived.

"It is true," he says, "that one is able to identify a certain people in different areas of the world, and different times of the past, just by these tools."

His listener~~s~~ learns that the artifacts ~~found~~ found in Idaho hills, and around the world, are far more than Indian arrowheads and spear points. They are the history of primitive peoples and are a great deal often ~~far~~ more ~~complicated~~ sophisticated than the average person's Flintstones image.

The ~~use~~ *ancient art of using* of an obsidian or ~~cervit~~ cervit blade in surgery is now being seriously studied, he said, since his experience in 1976.

A Twin Falls surgeon used one of Crabtree's cervit blades for the first incision ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to remove a rib and lung section.

~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

Crabtree unbuttoned his shirt and showed us it left no scar.

"With an edge that fragile, you can handle it very delicately," he explained. "It has lots of advantages. Quick healing. Speed. Some doctors are interested in using these blades for cosmetic surgery because no cells would be destroyed. The ordinary scalpel is pretty rough by comparison."

He showed a photo, magnified 10,000 times, in which the scalpel's "platinum plus" blade looks like a craggy rockpile beside the keenly sharp cervit blade.

The cervit blade^s can be thrown away after each use. They are not expensive.

"You can drag your finger across one and it will cut to the bone," he ~~xxx~~ said. "I have cut myself often like this, but I don't have

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any scars. It took me 20 years to perfect these. I had aborigine models. All I had to do was copy."

He said primitive people made blades from stone by using a hammer and pressure to flake off the size and shape they needed. Some people specialized in leaf shapes, some in long adze shapes. *making core tools with others based their industries on bloodstone*

"All are different and can be traced back to the different place and time they originated," he said. "We don't have many of their blades. We only have what they threw away, the basic piece from which the blades were flaked."

He showed a piece of black vitreous glass about the size ~~xxxxxxx~~ of a zucchini squash but ~~xxxx~~ ~~ixxx~~ faceted lengthwise: "This is the core. "

Mesoamerican or Central American
In Mexico ~~xxxx~~ cores have been found to indicate primitive man was flaking blades 20 inches long. "They must have had some sort of lever or mechanization," Crabtree mused. "A man couldn't use that much pressure to break that much material."

How far back this goes is hard to judge, he said. One place in Mexico indicates a history of 20,000 years. Similar blades were ~~f~~ being made in Russia, France, Spain. *Japan Greece*

? "Now science has followed man back three ~~millions~~ million years by researching his rough stone instruments," ~~i~~ Crabtree said. "So our evidence of using metals is only about one quarter of one per cent of our history."

Crabtree has just returned from Belize (formerly British Honduras) where he was invited as a consultant on an architectural excavation. The ~~xxxxxxx~~ five university teams there had found what amounted to literally a pre-historic factory. Cut stone artifacts in piles dozens of feet high and covering acres of grounds.

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He considers this a major find of anything in the world, and estimated it will take crews hundreds of years just to catalogue it.

"We can only conclude that these people had a great factory going here with thousands of people employed," ~~They~~ he said. "They were doing things with this rock or ~~xxx~~ volcanic glass that nobody knows how to do today. They must have been carrying on an international ~~xxx~~ trade for one country couldnt have consumed all that is left here."

by the variety of techniques used and
He said he is fascinated/how each worker seemed to have had a specific craft.

Crabtree's forte, his great strength, is his comprehensive study of the ancients through their work with rocks. For that he is known worldwide. He has a massive understanding of what is going on in the world of archaeology today and is constantly being consulted.

But for all this, he is a singularly humble man.

In the Denver Museum of Natural History, one of the largest in the world, a whole room is devoted to him and his work. When one mentions to him the Denver pictures showing him at work and the many credits given him, he says shyly, "Oh, that's nice of them".

Crabtree
Michener sent ~~WZ~~ a copy of the manuscript for his book CENTENNIAL asking ~~xxxxxxx~~ him to correct the chapters on early man and gave him credit in the book for helping write it. He calls Crabtree the foremost authority in the world on early man.

Crabtree says, "It was only an autographed copy. And he didn't take my advice anyway."

It is possible that some of his noted international colleagues are surprised at the kind of man Don Crabtree is at home. So far his name is not widely known in Idaho outside ~~h~~ his native Magic Valley.

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college in California. He took a job as supervisor at the museum of ~~prehistoric~~ paleontology at the University of California in Berkeley and worked with Dr. ^{LATER} ~~Earl Swanson~~ ^{Ruben Sturton & Charles Camp} ~~Swanson~~, founder of the Idaho State University museum in Pocatello. For many years he held summer classes around the state to show the making of Indian tools which archaeology students were excavating. He was given grants by the Universities of Idaho and Washington and is currently working with the College of Southern Idaho on the search for geothermal water for use in heating their Twin Falls ~~at~~ campus.

Crabtree's self-taught education sometimes took unique paths, one nearly of which ~~that~~ landed him in jail.

"About 1926 an old placer mine operation was uncovered near Twin Falls," he recalled, "in which much fossil bone material was found. Saber-tooth tigers. Hairy elephants. Musk-ox. I helped identify them. I had always hoped to find fossil man but I didn't know if I would recognize ~~the~~ human bones, never having actually seen them.

"One day I got my chance. I was working as a rod man with a crew of engineers when ^{we} found ~~the~~ the remains of an old cemetery below the long-gone pioneer mining town of Rock Creek. I found a skeleton there and took it home to study so I could recognize human bones.

"The ~~skiff~~ sheriff came to call and said, 'I have had every crime in the book, but this.....well, if you will re-bury it I will ~~it~~ forget it."

Crabtree said pieces of flint tools have often been found in sluice boxes by Idaho miners who didn't know what they were.

He usually gets a kind of natural glass from Butte, Ore., on which to work: "But I have obsidian from many different places. I use a

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hammer with a punch on the end. When you feel it crack you start
to press it off the basic stone.
using pressure/ Some ~~xxxx~~ aborigine~~xx~~ tools are really pieces
of beauty. They had a lot of Michelangelos in those days, in places
like Guatemala and Mexico."

Crabtree ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ calls his methods pressure flaking and
percussion, systems he ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ devised himself to approximate
those used by pre-historic man. He was the ~~x~~ first to be able to
duplicate Folsom points, which to archaeologists and historians are
the laurel leaf-shaped flint projectiles made by pre-historic North
Americans and which were the first artifacts of their kind to
be discovered. This was in 1926 near Folsom, New Mexico, and the
name has been given to an entire pre-historic culture on this continent.

The Folsom points were chipped flint points, found with a variety
of other stone implements including spear heads, and were acclaimed
as the first evidence that man lived on our continent more than 25,000
years ago.

~~xxxxxxx~~ Crabtree points out that these stone tools were first
discovered by a black cowboy.

Humble Crabtree says he can never duplicate the work of the
ancients whose techniques evolved through daily practice over thousands
of years. His French colleague, Dr. Bordes, says that if Crabtree
had lived thousands of years ago he "could have taught ancient man
a thing or two about toolmaking."

Dr. ~~Rt~~ Ruth Ann Knudson of the University of Idaho, who has been
instrumental in arranging for his upcoming honorary degree, is des-
cribed by Crabtree as "one of my people". ~~He~~ ^{This is her} refers to the many

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students in his classes "under the trees". He said they are ~~all~~ ^{now,} "scattered all over the world, many of them professors and professional archaeologists". Dr. Knudson said that at the university this weekend he will be presented with a bound volume of the laudatory letters from his noted international colleagues. He also will be given a serigraph of an Altamira Cave R painting in Spain

"This will be something of an international celebration," she said.

Retired now from active participation and in ill health from having 11 surgeries in the last 18 months, Crabtree says he has given up hope of finding fossil man in North America.

"But there is evidence of early man across the Snake River from Twin Falls in the Wilson Butte Cave which has been set aside as an historical monument. It was discovered in 1961, shows evidence of 13,000 years."

He still works at his numerous avocations. His visitors find fascinating evidences of his work all over his yard and workshop, duplicates of Mayan and Indian artifacts.

"He is a ^{fine artist,} ~~fine artist,~~" said one of his friends. "And he ~~has~~ has carved a great many things. He can out-art the natives. They could hire him to make phony dupliates, because he does better work. He is a first class sculptor, but he doesnt take it very seriously, because whether ~~ix~~ it's on avocado pits or rock he says it's just something he does in an afternoon or in a few minutes."

One of his hobbies is making rifle stocks, an art which he perfected in order to make rifles for the U. S. team in the international long range rifle championships.

One rifle stock he made for an Idaho friend is inlaid with Pacific

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jade and ruby in great detail. This work of a master on gunstock is what he calls "just something I knocked out in a day or two".

He ~~xxxx~~ frequently has requests to lecture in many parts of the world, and has recently been in France and has done work in the Yucatan. Most recently he participated in meetings in Canada and Wyoming under the auspices of the American Society for Archaeology.

What caused the cessation of pre-historic man's great skill in flintknapping? Was it just because man discovered the use of metals?

Crabtree's answer: "Here on this continent, the arrival of the Spanish brought about dissemination of metal. But the deterrent had begun long before.

"Early man ^{hunted} sought big game, bison, mammoths, musk ox. And those big game hunters wanted the best possible ~~xxxxxx~~ weapons, so they made the finest, the strongest and the most beautiful tools.

"Then there came the great climactic shift which changed the west ^{to} in great areas of arid country. The big game disappeared. The Indians had only small game.

"It doesn't take much more than a sharp stick to kill a rabbit."

The hunters forgot ~~xxxxxxxx~~ almost everything about the magical properties of the rocks with the black vitreous luster, which ~~x~~ are actually volcanic lava which has cooled too quickly for its mineral contents to crystallize.

The Pyramids and Sphinx of Egypt are supposed to be the world's greatest stone work. But they don't tell ~~xxx~~ nearly as much of the history of mankind as do the multi-shaped little fragments of obsidian ~~x~~ found all around the planet. Thanks to Don Crabtree of Idaho.