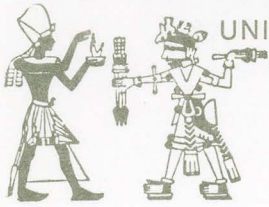


THE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM



UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
THIRTY-THIRD AND SPRUCE STREETS
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19104

CABLE ADDRESS "ANTIQUE"
TELEPHONE: EVERGREEN 6-7400
(AREA CODE 215)

242 Brooks
Claremont, CA 91711

5 August 1971

Mr. Don E. Crabtree
Rt. 1 Box 39
Kimberely, Idaho

Dear Don,

I wish to sincerely express my gratitude for your accepting me for the 1971 Summer Flintworking School. In this letter I shall try to convey why I found it to be so important, and mention a couple of suggestions for minor improvements.

Although my proficiency in replicating aboriginal artifacts is not as good as I might have hoped, this is not the real value of the sessions. Rather, the significance of the school for me lies in the realm of lithic analysis, where precisely this kind of specialized training is crucial to be able to avoid the typical subjective, formal taxonomies of Mesoamerican stone tools. It is clear that more information was being hidden or muddled than elucidated by such methods. It is becoming increasingly clear that the way out of this quandry is through a technological analysis of chipped stone materials. The recognition, understanding, and description of both the stages and techniques involved in stone tool manufacture are the most important facets of lithic technology which I learned. It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the sessions -- they have given me the skills and experience to go beyond merely assuming things in classification, but to test hypotheses concerning manufacture and use by replication and experimentation.

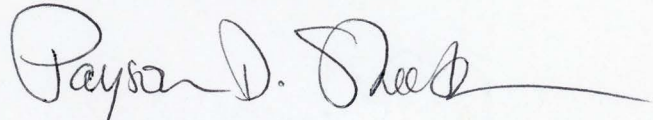
I would like to make a few suggestions which might make the 1972 sessions even more valuable. A small "library" consisting largely of the books and articles on the reading list, and whatever else any of the participants would contribute for the month, should be kept at the camp. Then, during the sessions and evenings it would be good experience to critically evaluate the individual analyses and conclusions reached by the various authors. Then, when disagreement crops up, attempts could be made by experimentation to solve those problems. In other words, a slightly more structured program, particularly during the final two weeks, of more critical reading, testing hypotheses, and specific projects, might be worth trying. Given the diversity of participants and interests, of course, this structuring would have to be largely on an individual basis. The first two weeks are necessarily concerned with the funda-

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mentals of the cone principle, fracture phenomena, and general percussion and pressure thinning and shaping.

In summary, I found the sessions to be extraordinarily important to my concerns in Mesoamerican lithic analysis. The school must continue; it is the best means I can imagine to remove lithic analysis from the subjective cul de sac it often finds itself in, to standardize descriptive categories, and to test hypotheses regarding manufacture and use. Thank you very much for such a unique opportunity and experience.

sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Payson D. Sheets". The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Payson D. Sheets

Ce.29.4.11.2