

KATZ

Museum of Anthropology
502 Dyche Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66044
August 23, 1971

Mr. Don Crabtree
Box 39, Route 1
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

Dear Don:

Our return trip went smoothly, but much slower than when outward bound; we had to practically haul ourselves over the Continental Divide due to the additional weight of the cobbles, all our manufactured material, and increased body mass resulting from the good food and muscular development. Immediately upon our return we gathered some local material and are rock-knocking every day. Heat experiments will begin when an adequate and constant source of the stuff has been located.

Enough small talk, although it sums up fairly well our evaluation of the School. The one thing we would like to emphasize most strongly is that we intend to continue flintknapping (or chertchipping, in our case). Besides being a hell of a lot of fun, it is both physically and intellectually stimulating. Starting from a lump of rock wrested from Mother Earth, progressing through various stages employing different tools and techniques to a recognizable end product, develop a self-confidence and professional acumen that nothing in our long years of study has yet done. The replication of aboriginal artifacts, the necessary experimentation with materials and tools, and the close observation of every variable at every stage cannot help to improve the eye, the hand, and mind. In short, four weeks of working with you has resulted in a quantum jump in our ideas, attitudes and abilities as professional archaeologists. For this we thank you.

Concerning the less philosophical aspects of the School, we feel that it ran exceptionally well, considering the relatively large number of highly trained, professional strangers that were dumped into a 24-hour-a-day field situation. Most of the calm atmosphere and subtle organization, and all of the after hours instruction, were due to Guy Muto, as you are undoubtedly aware. We are equally certain that even farther in the background, always ready with aid and comfort, was Dr. Swanson. We, at least, as students, were free to work and learn without a second thought about administration and organization.

We would like to take this opportunity to mention a few things, more by way of observation than as suggestions:

1) We think the reading list sent out prior to the School was somewhat irrelevant. Assuming no previous knowledge of flintworking

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(applicable in our case, at least), most of the papers can neither be evaluated nor do they aid in preparing the student for actual working. We realize that several pertinent works will be available in the near future, such as Guy Muto's thesis and the illustrated glossary of lithic terms which you and Guy are preparing. Supplemental to, or in conjunction with, these two written guides, it might be instructive to have the prospective student bash away at some of his local material with a rock before coming to the School; the result would be brought along to form the basis of the initial lectures. Every student might be urged to bring some local raw material as well. In this way, its specific properties and problems could be considered in the presence of experts and other students; it would also be helpful to work with one's local material in conjunction with obsidian, as the latter tends to mislead and generally spoil the nascent flintworker with its wonderfulness.

2) Having started working with no previous experience, and having had some difficulty getting the hang of things, we only began to make rapid progress at the end of the fourth week. Thus, as far as we were concerned, a fifth week would have been quite advantageous. We realize you were available for an unofficial one; but previous commitments necessitated our leaving at about the predetermined end. Someone, perhaps yourself, spoke of how nice it would be for former students and other experienced workers to put in a week or so of 'post-graduate' time with you. A fifth week for this excellent opportunity would allow the four-week novices to gain the maximum amount of value from the interaction.

3) This brings up the matter of size, the optimum number of students and staff for instruction and peripheral existence. We noticed that you were somewhat dismayed at times with the size of the group (8 students), in that you could not devote as much time as you wished to all of us. Of course, Guy was working with us, both while you were there and at other times. For our part, the 4:1 student:instructor ratio was fine for learning flintknapping; 8 was bothersomely large for other things. We did not mind shopping, cooking and washing for that many people as our turn came around; but all these things took time which we reluctantly lost from working. Four, or even five, weeks is such a short time, and it was annoying to have to go shopping or even to have to quit at sundown.

One idea that was tossed around was to hold future Schools in a building. It would be regrettable to lose the comfortable and idyllic setting which we enjoyed, but some of the possible benefits might be the following:

--Classroom and blackboard facilities for applicable lectures, especially litho-mechanics.

--Layout space for the display and study of collections both brought to the School and made at the School.

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--Electricity, enabling working after dark, the rereading of the bibliography in its meaningful context, and possibly evening lectures based on the reading or by the students in their particular specialties. The movies could also be shown easily and as many times as thought beneficial.

--Kitchen facilities, which would facilitate the storage and preparation of meals. We would also be in favor of a permanent individual engaged to purchase food and to cook. We found that the democratic purchasing practiced last summer was financially unsound. It would have been perfectly acceptable to us to have been simply reimbursed for travel, with the rest of the \$500 stipend going toward the cook's salary and food budget; we were not interested in making money, only flintknapping.

--A hired cook and a building would remove some of the problems prohibiting more students and staff being involved in the School. The number is, of course, up to you, the availability of qualified assistants, finances, and many other factors which we certainly are not aware of. We enjoyed the rather intimate size and surroundings; and we would not want the School turned into the circus that so many other field schools seem to be. However, we have been privileged to participate in a memorable experience, one we would like to see made available to as many other students of lithic technology as possible.

Thank you for your patience in reading this.

We will be in touch, probably quite soon!

As ever,

Paul R. Katz

Paul R. Katz
Susanna R. Katz

Susanna R. Katz

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