

Route 1, Box 39
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

March 22, 1968

Dear Francois:

Thanks for your letter of March 14th, giving your observations of the striations on the blades. After I read your comments, I went down to the shop and examined a hundred or more blades to see if there was a difference in striations on blades done by direct percussion, pressure and indirect percussion. I guess I just did not examine enough blades before I wrote the paper, for your conclusions are right.

This is a personal interpretation, but I concluded that when the blade is thin and the margins are in perfect balance, the striations will appear on the ventral side on both margins. Many have striations on only one margin and this seems to occur on the thinnest side of the blade. If the blade is thick and triangular in transverse section then one must use strong magnification for the inspection, as the striations are not pronounced. In the past I have found striations are helpful in denoting the direction of force when one only has parts of broken flakes and blades. Go ahead and make the change and feel free to correct any more of my blunders.

Have I told you that I tried heating some ignimbrite, obsidian and quartz crystal and feel that it does alter to some degree. Not so much in the texture, but in the workability of the stone. I am sure it will make quite a difference in detaching pressure blades. The next time you use the oven put in some preforms of these materials and give it a try. Would love to know what you think of the alteration. Gene Titmus has tried it and thinks the material improves. This is something else I had overlooked, for I did not think glassy materials could be changed, but it seems to relieve molecular strains and tensions within the material.

Have another thing I would like to have you try - a new method of making blades by direct percussion. This technique seems to have some promise. I was trying to remove the overhang on a core and was dragging a broken sandstone Indian pestle over the top of the core and simultaneously pushing down on the pestle. This pressed the core on the ground and, to my surprise, some nice long microblades were detached. So I then tried striking in this same pattern - with the dragging motion but, just as the hammerstone touched the edge of the core, I pressed down. I got some very fine flat blades terminating with a feathered edge and with very small platforms. So far, I have tried only three cores but they are, by far, the best I have ever done by direct percussion. I prepared the platforms much the same as we did the Corbiac core, but did it with the sandstone cylinder. This technique needs a lot more work, but it seems to show promise. (See sketch)

Thanks so much for spending the time on the paper and we both send our best to you and Denise.

Your very good friends,

Don and Evelyn

Idaho Jim still checks the trailer each time he comes looking for his Francois.

ce.2.1.55