PARTIAL STUDY OF PRESSURE FLAKING AND ANALYSIS OF FLAKE CHARACTER

For purposes of a better study of the flake character of flintknapping in pressure work, I have used slices of tabular, diamond-sawed slabs of stone in the following experiments. Chiefly I used obsidian, because this stone permits better and closer study of the flake character and also shows more detail in photography. Sawed blanks were used because they have a certain uniformity and will not divert the attention from the study of the flake character. Had bis experiment been done on a properly formed artifact, I felt the attention would be on the shape of the point rather than a careful analysis of the flake character.

The following experiments are done to show that the surface of an artifact may prove to be as diagnostic as the form or hafting methods.

There are multiple ways of applying pressure to flint-like materials. Pressure is used to establish platforms, to produce uniform edges and to ultimately remove additional flakes in a uniform manner. The manner in which pressure is applied will produce a distinctive type of flake or flake scars on the artifact.

When pressure is applied to flint-like materials, the flintworker should produce a series of uniform flakes, as the material used in making the tool has certain mechanical and physical properties that remain the same,

Ce.30.9.1.1

only the flintworker is variable. Uniform flakes can be produced if pressure if applied to the flint-like materials on ex actly the same platform, applying the same downward pressure, the same outward pressure, the same pre-established ridge is followed to guide the flake, the same follow-thru, the same muscular reaction to guide the flake, the same spacing, the same angle in relation to the point and base, the same angle in relation to the edge and the median line and if the surface is uniform.

The following experiments are to show that there is a method of holding and applying pressure to create a series of flakes and flake scars that have identifyable characteristics similar to those made by prehistoric stoneworkers.

I have found in my many years of flintworking that I have developed a certain muscular development and involuntary muscular reactions that respond from habits and rhythm. These habits and rhythm produce an artifact that will identify the maker. For me to change these involuntary reactions would require much self control, effort and time. My only reason for attempting to change, would be to try to replicate the various inherent methods of the past stone-worker.

I have been self-trained and have developed a certain identifyable technique, but as I attempt to duplicate the defined skills of groups of ancient people, taught by the father-to-son or mother-to-daughter method, I find that many of

their techniques are even more sharply defined than my own. In Idaho, we are fortunate to have had a variety of past flintworkers using many different methods to study as models. Some of the examples of experimentation may or may not have been their methods, but the character of the flakes and the flake scars appear to be the same. The flaked surface of an artifact may be compared to an analysis of handwriting, such as the slant, spacing, touch and methods of tool holding.