

ARIZONA STATE
UNIVERSITY

TEMPE, ARIZONA 85281

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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Don Crabtree
Route 1, Box 39
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

Dear Don:

Sorry to have waited so long in writing you and catching up on the news but I'm in the final throes of finishing up the ol' Phud and I've been busy!

The first thing I wanted to ask or say is.... wasn't Jeff Flenniken quite a guy? I hope you had a chance to read my letter of recommendation for Jeff, it was originally sent to Earl, but in my letter I really laid it on thick since I sincerely believe Jeff is what you might call a natural flint knapper. We worked together with Jim Spears up in Arkansas and sort of help foster each others' interests. Anyway, I just knew that Jeff was the kind of student you really like to get in the Flintworking school so I did what little I could to help send him.

I've been doing dissertation research down in the mountains of southern Arizona about 10 mi. from Haury's Ventana Cave. What I have are Hohokam groups who live down on the river washes but come up in the summer to gather cactus and mesquite beans. It is quite interesting from the stand point of lithic analysis since the main andesite quarries for this gathering zone is right on the mountain itself. Also, I counted the exact number of certain cacti, seed-producing trees etc., so I can correlate kinds of tools, tool kits, into certain species of economically useful plants. Of course no carbonized seeds or pods are preserved up on these slopes so what I have here is a chance to find out what the functions are of these andesite tools by looking at the natural vegetation they occur with. Since it is a harsh desert with little means to change climatically, hence, vegetationally, we can presume the distributions of Sonoran Desert species are essentially the same as those of prehistoric times. Pollen evidence indicates this too. I would like to eventually put out a paper on this technique, you might call it "lithic ecology" (!) because archeologists are sooner or later going to have to take a closer look at the natural environment tools occur in if they want to get closer to function. I like to correlate polishing and battering on back heavy choppers with the ironwood trees since the only stone tool suitable for knocking down a full sized tree up there would be a 5 l.b. backed core-chopper. They had no polished axes in my area. I've been dragging away big cobbles of andesite from the quarry and chipping it myself, trying to replicate the core types I get at the quarries. It works terrible!! Believe it or not, out of about 20,000 flakes and tools only 30 pieces would qualify as bifaces..... its a strange core-chopper kind of industry. There is a tiny bit of chalcedony and jasper which comes in golf-ball size pebbles and as you can guess I have evidence for a bipolar technique. I can't figure how the hell else to work such small pieces except put them on an anvil and smash them into usable, thin flakes for knives and points. Some of the Hohokam chert arrowpoints are smaller than a dime.

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Enough on the dissertation research. Ruthan Knudson sent me a copy of her dissertation and what a fine job that was. Her work was so meticulous and polished and I liked her approach. She also sent me a copy of Guy Muto's masters thesis which I had never seen before but of course had heard all about. The reason I'm interested in collecting these work is that this spring I'm teaching a class in lithic technology for the department here at Arizona State. There is tremendous interest on the part of faculty and students alike. This weekend we are going up to Flagstaff to get obsidian from an aboriginal quarry in order to do replicative work in the class. I intend for it to be half experimental work (i.e., replication for technology studies, tool functions) and the other analytical using statistics and computers wherever possible. The text for the course is your Idaho State Museum glossary and essays. While I'm on the subject, if you have any papers you've presented or published since I was up there last could you send me copies? I would greatly appreciate it as I would like to make the course content as up-to-date as possible, especially on the replicative end. Let me know any costs incurred to you and I will gladly reimburse.

The Dalton site work I did in Arkansas with Dan Morse is soon to come out as Book No.5 by the Arkansas Survey. It would give me a great deal of pleasure to send you a copy of this upon its printing. As I tried to convey to you in my letter after the Flintworking school what a tremendous impression you had on me and my perspective on what lithic technology studies can be. The purpose of the school seems well-fulfilled at least for me as I see much of that summer reflected in my approach to stone tool analysis.

Before closing out this rambling account of the past year, could I ask you for a letter of recommendation over my experiences with you in the 1972 Summer Flintworking School? I realized students must badger you constantly for letters but in this case you can get away with just one, if you would be so generous. Send the letter to our department chairman here at A.S.U. and he will place it in my job application file. Whenever institutions would like a letter from you they simply Xerox it here and mail it to them. Again, I would greatly appreciate a letter of reference since lithic technology is one of the more promising subjects that many schools are interested in hiring people to teach.

I hope this letter finds you and Evelyen in good health, Marie Wormington wrote that she saw you both recently and that you were all doing fine. The next time you want to grab an obsidian core don't reach for it yourself and wrench your back out of shape---- just ask one those students to put down his can of beer for a moment and hand it to you!

Take care and I'll write you again soon when I'm finished here about a book or lab manual I think would be helpful in training people to analyze lithics.

Sincerely yours,

