

August 22, 1977



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Department of Prehistory, RSPacS
Box 4, P.O., Canberra, A.C.T. 2600 Telephone: 49-5111

Telegrams and Cables: "Natuniv" Canberra

Mr. Don E. Crabtree
Route 1, Box 210
Kimberly, Idaho 83341

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

Dear Don,

How was your summer at the WSU lithic field school? I hope you had a chance to meet Paul Cleghorn there (he's the UH student I wrote to you about last year, and I have high hopes for his work in lithics).

Betsy and I are traveling now on my sabbatical leave. I left UH on June 1 and spent two delightful weeks in New Zealand before coming on to Canberra to do archival research for 3 months. New Zealand was a gas, but the high point of the trip (quite literally) came at Mt. Cook, where I spent $4\frac{1}{2}$ days exploring the Tasman Glacier. It was like stepping back into the Pleistocene! Perhaps the best part was the skiplane flight to the top of the glacier, where we landed and I had a chance to explore the upper end of it -- it's more like a true ice sheet than your usual mountain glacier. Australia has been fine, too. I have been reading unpublished dissertations and manuscripts on Australian prehistory in final preparation for writing a book on ethno-archaeology for Cambridge University Press. I really needed to get out of Hawaii for a while and find out what's going on. Altogether, I have 15 months off, while Betsy has a year's leave-of-absence from her job at the East-West Center. Next month we go off to Tasmania and Perth, then on to Hong Kong and Tokyo for short visits. Then we take a ship to Russia and cross Russia on the Trans-Siberian Railway, stopping in Khabarovsk, and spending several days each in Moscow and Leningrad; then I will give a series of lectures at the University of Helsinki, and finally we will arrive in England on or around Oct. 16. If you should want to reach us there, our address in Cambridge will be: c/o Dept. of Archaeology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ, England. We will be there until June 1, 1978, and from there we will go back to Finland for the entire summer of 1978. I'll be back at UH in September, 1978. As you can see, we really decided to "bust out" of Hawaii for a while!

During my stay here in Canberra I have met a very interesting colleague from India, Dr. V.N. Misra, of Deccan College, Poona. I already know Misra by reputation as one of the best archaeologists working in India today, and he and I share an interest in stone tool technology (especially in relation to backed blades and similar "small tools" in S.E. Asia and Australia). I am enclosing a copy of a recent paper by Misra on a small tool assemblage he recently discovered in Central India together with a Xerox-copy of illustrations of these materials. Misra has shown me some of this material, and I found it fascinating and thought you might be interested, too. Misra gave me three of the small blade cores -- unprovenienced examples, of three different sizes and raw materials -- from this site, and I thought you might want to have a look at them and include them in your collection. So I am sending these to you in a separate package which should reach you soon. Although these are much smaller than the prismatic cores from Mexico, they look quite similar, and it seems as if some kind of pressure-blade technique was used. Whether a chest-crutch and heavy clamp were needed is uncertain. Perhaps a shoulder-crutch might have been sufficient. The illustrations in Misra's paper give you some idea of the small, parallel sided blades and tiny backed blades that were produced off these cores, and this is certainly different from anything that has been found in Australia (where pressure blade-making is, so far, unknown). Would you be at all interested to trying some experiments to replicate these little blades and cores? I know Misra would be very eager to hear from you about this if there is anything you can tell him about the technology of these implements. You can reach him directly at the address shown on the front page of his paper, anytime after Dec. 1. He is a very pleasant and competent individual and is very enthusiastic about your experimental approach to lithics. In any case, please keep these cores for reference, as I am sure you will want to discuss them with your other "rock busting" colleagues.

Cheers,

Dick

Richard A. Gould
Visiting Fellow

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CC:44.61