

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA

HUMAN HISTORY BRANCH



MUSÉE NATIONAL DU CANADA

DIRECTION DU MUSÉE DE L'HOMME

OUR FILE NO.
NOTRE DOSSIER N°

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
SECRÉTARIAT D'ÉTAT

YOUR FILE NO.
VOTRE DOSSIER N°

OTTAWA 4, October 3, 1967.

Mr. Donald E. Crabtree,
Route 1,
Kimberly, Idaho 83341,
U. S. A.

Dear Don:

I am sending you today under separate cover three Eskimo flint flakers from northern Alaska. I hope that these will be of interest to you even though you have already put out a paper on flint working tools. The three specimens are fairly representative but they may be just a little larger than average. You might bear in mind that most, although by no means all, Eskimos have relatively small hands. The proportions of thumbs to fingers is thought to be a little different from what it commonly is among us; Eskimo thumbs are rather short but just which bone or bones are short, I don't know. I believe the flaker tips are ordinarily made of ivory. We have one or two specimens of the tips which I can have sent to you if you think that they will be interesting enough to warrant it.

Thanks very much for the copy of MacCurdy's paper on the Obsidian Razor of the Aztecs. It would seem that he went about as far as one could without recourse to experimentation.

This summer in the northern Yukon we turned up a lot of new bone specimens but no definite implements of early date and indeed no clear indications of chronological position. As things stand, the broken elephant and other bones may come from almost any period in the upper Pleistocene. I still am inclined to think that the elephants are more than 20,000 years old on the basis of the dates that have been gotten on these beasts from Alaska and Eastern Siberia. This winter I shall try to do some experimental fracturing of bone to find out what happens. Do you have any thoughts on the subject or do you know of anyone doing work of this kind? A fellow named Bonnicksen who has been working with Alan Bryan in Edmonton mentioned last year that he had hopes of conferring with you on this sort of problem, that is the technique of making implements out of bone by fracturing it.


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John Cook and some of the other graduate students at Wisconsin seem to be making progress in the classification of microblade cores and burins and things that integrate between them. I think that in a year or so some distinctive patterns of manufacture and use will begin to merge from their work.

I hope I'll get to see you at meetings during the course of the winter.

Best regards,



W.N. Irving, Head,
Western Canada Section,
Archaeology Division.

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P.S. I had the loan forms included with the flint flakers made out for six months. If you need them for a longer time, please write to Miss Whipps and she will attend to this.