Route 1, Box 39
Kimberly, Idaho 83341
Nov. 17,1971

Miss Regina J. Kinsaul
University of Alabama
Department of Anthropology
University, Alabama 35486

Dear Miss Kinsaul:

Thank you for your letter of Nov. 12th regarding the technique of notching. It would be impossible to explain to you in a letter the many problems and steps of preparation for notching. Indirectly, you have introduced a number of questions concerning analysis of some of the technological problems of stone working techniques.

Until you have had more experience in the basic problems of the controlled fracture of isotropic materials, I would suggest that you defer writing your masters thesis or seek a new subject. Lithic technology is a demanding science and unless one can prove his theory by experiment, he will be subject to criticism by the typeologists of this and other countries.

If you have a definite interest in lithic technology, I would suggest that you apply to Dr. Earl Swanson, Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho 83201 to attend the summer lithic technology field school held in Idaho.

There are no short cuts to learning the control of the fracture of flint-like materials. Primarily, notching is done by pressure. The tool used would depend on the size of the notch desired - i.e. antler, bone, shell, rodent teeth, fingernail, etc. Should you like to try your hand at notching, I would suggest that you start with a copper tipped pressure tool and work on window glass and then progress to flint and an antler or bone pressure tool.

I feel it would be impossible to use an oviate as a notching tool and certainly not by percussion. It would be, indeed, rare to develop sufficient skill to detach notching flakes within a deep notch by the percussion technique. However, when making hafting notches on implements such as large hoes, indirect percussion and the punch technique can be employed.

The term "ovoids indicates nothing and just denotes morphological typeology. It does not denote size, thickness, edge character, etc. An ovoid could be a blank, a preform, or a finished tool intended for diverse functions depending on the aboriginal design and intent. An ovoid may be unifacial, bifacial, have different degrees of thickness and varied styles of margins and technological patterns which would make it impossible to separate all of the flaking characteristics in time and space.

Should you wish to pursue this subject for your thesis, I would suggest that you have your professor contact Dr. Earl Swanson and ask to rent or purchase the five films we have on lithic technology which cover about everything from the quarry to pressure work.

It is good to know of your interest in lithic technology and I would like to encourage you in this vein but be very cautious and do much research.

Yours very truly,
Don E. Crabtree

cc-Earl Swanson

Ce. 6.1.52