



University of Idaho

Laboratory of Anthropology
Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Moscow, Idaho 83843

30 December 1977

Mrs. Barbara Metzger
2669 Nido Way
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

RE: Johnson, Lucy Lewis
FLINT KNAPPING EXPERIMENTATION:
1938-1976

Dear Mrs. Metzger:

A copy of Johnson's paper was sent to Don Crabtree, a Research Associate of our Laboratory of Anthropology, for CA* Comment. Don has been quite ill this fall and is unable to write well at the moment, and consequently asked me if I would assist him in providing comment on the paper. I am aware that we have missed your deadline by a couple of days, but hope that Don's comments might still be included with the paper publication or else in the subsequent issue. These comments were dictated to me over the telephone and I have taken some liberty in putting them down on paper--since time is short I am sending them on to you without Don's re-reading of them (but am sending them to him at the same time). I think it is very important that the "father" of experimental flintknapping in North America comment on Johnson's paper, hence the last-minute rush.

If there are any questions about this, I would appreciate it if you would telephone Don (208/733-3275) or me (208/885-6751). I hope we can be squeezed into the deadline, but we will understand if our tardiness has made that impossible.

Sincerely,

Ruthann Knudson
Resource Management Archaeologist

cc: Don E. Crabtree

RK:ml

Naya Research 1930
pp 310 318
Thompson Excavation Flint

CE, 6, 3, 50, 1

CURRENT ANTHROPOLOGY

CA* COMMENT

Reference: Lucy Lewis Johnson - FLINT KNAPPING EXPERIMENTATION: 1838-1976

From (name): Don E. Crabtree [Rt. 1, Box 210, Kimberly, Idaho 83341 U.S.A.;
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Date: 30 December 1977

Johnson's paper is a most important contribution to the archaeological profession. It is well documented, an excellent successor to Hester and Heizer's (1973) lithic bibliography, and brings out a lot of inaccessible things that many of us in the profession for years had missed. My only wish is that the author had discussed more the relationship of flintknapping experiments to understanding the world-wide distribution of technological traditions and their culturally diagnostic value. For example, in both the Colima-Manzanillo area of the western Mexican coast and in Belize there is evidence of a specialized tradition of perforating obsidian blades. In both areas, apparently, a small depression was drilled into one face of the blade, then a punch percussion tool was seated in the drill hole and a small cone was knocked out of the opposite (usually bulbar) face. The resulting biconical hole may have a minimum diameter at its waist of only 1/2 ~~inch~~ MM. The artifacts in the two separated geographic areas look alike--we need to do some knapping experiments now to determine the whole system of their production. Once we have an idea of the methods and techniques by which they could have been made, we can look to the rest of the archaeological data (debitage; wood, shell, or bone tools; natural plant, animal, or mineral resources [e.g., strong spines] available in the prehistoric environment) to resolve whether or not the same technology obtains in both areas. By providing us with the basic information of possible or even probable production methods and techniques, experimental flintknapping becomes an integral part of any study that ultimately looks to the definition and explanation of cultural variation among stone tool users in time and space.

Hester and Heizer (1973) reference in Johnson's bibliography.