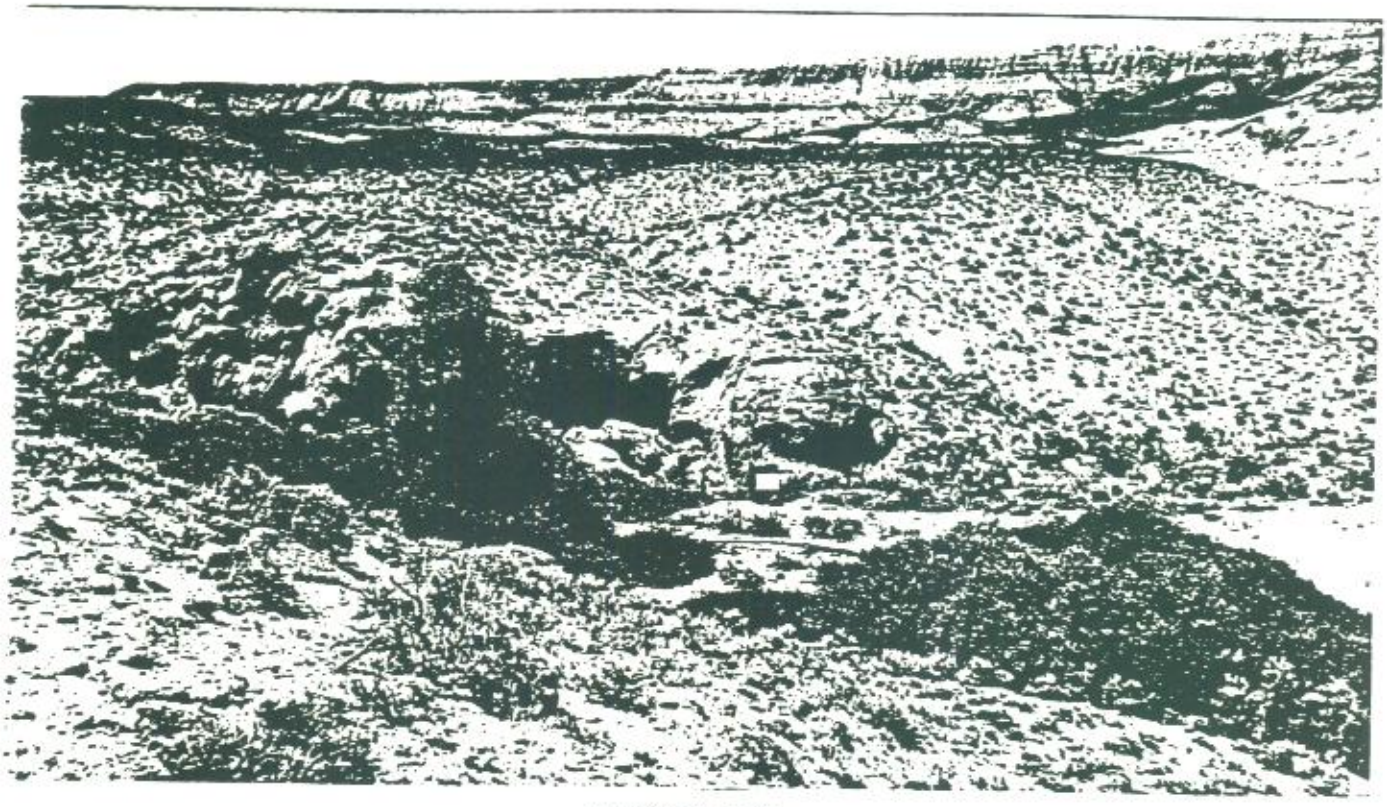
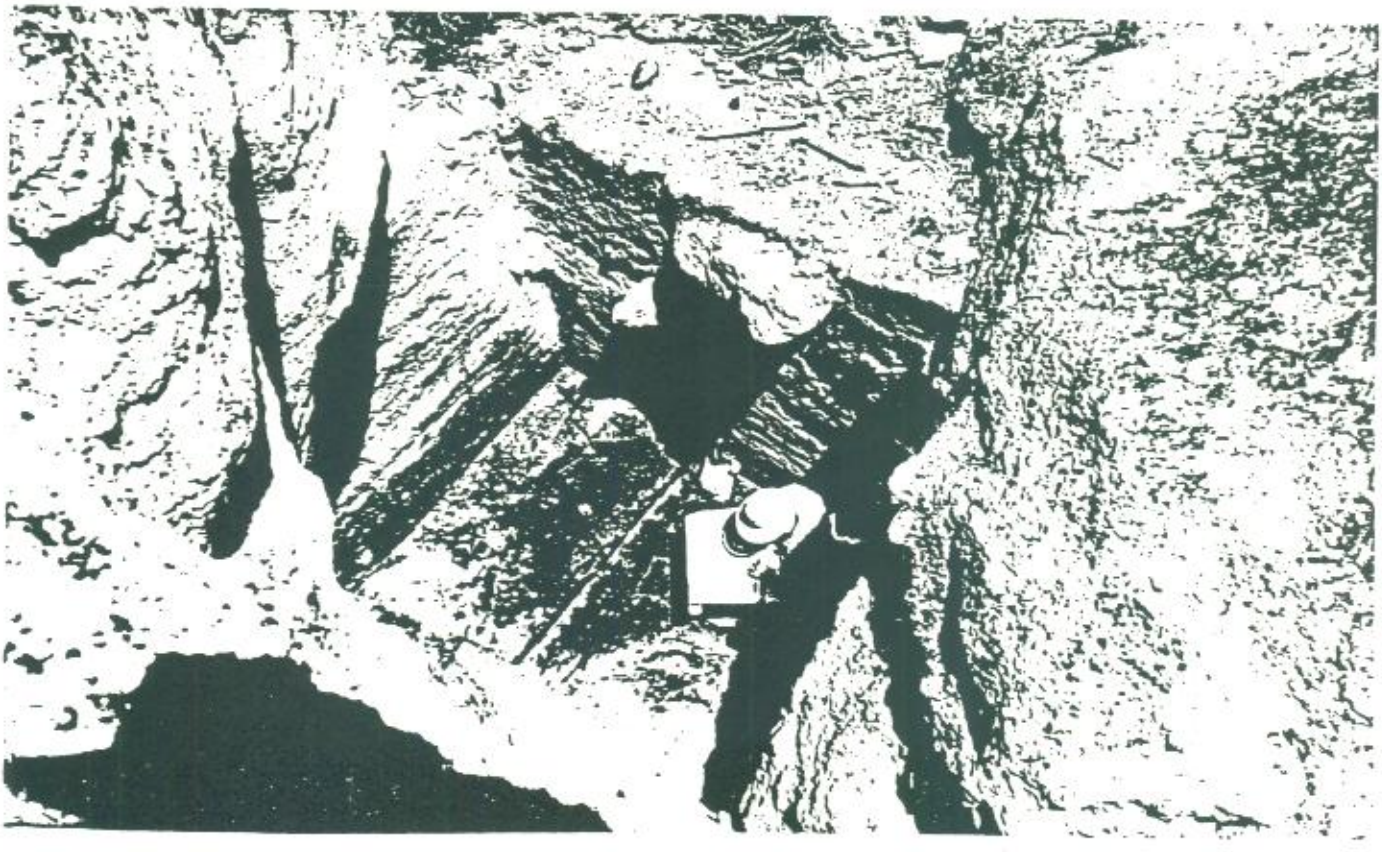
IDAHO ARCHAEOLOGIST



BACHMAN CAVE



Vol I No 2

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The Idaho Archaeologist is published by the Great Basin Chapter, Caldwell, Idaho, with the sponsorship of the Idaho Archaeological Society, a non-profit association of amature and professional archaeologists.

FROM THE EDITORS

Since publication of our first issue of the Idaho Archaeologist in May we have received several requests from individuals, book stores and public and school libraries wanting to subscribe to our publication.

We regret that, for a variety of reasons, we can't at this time, offer subscriptions. However, after discussions between our Editors and the IAS Executive Board, we have decided that the first four issues will be mailed to all who have inquired without prepayment. All we ask is that you who can't or don't care to become members send fifty cents to cover our mailing costs - stamps will be OK.

We hope we will be able to publish our paper on a quarterly basis but we don't yet know if we can bring it off. We must have articles of interest to our readers if we are to continue to publish. You will see in this issue several samples of the sort of article we would like. We want and expect to receive articles from professionals and from students (approved by Dep't Head) at our Universities as well. Also, since this is a publication by and for non-professionals as well as the growing group of archaeologists in Idaho, we encourage submission of articles by knowledgeable amateurs.

We hope that those of you who read No. 1 will agree with our humble opinion -- we think No. 2 shows real improvement. (We do listen to your suggestions.)

T. Moore
Bill Norquist
Editors

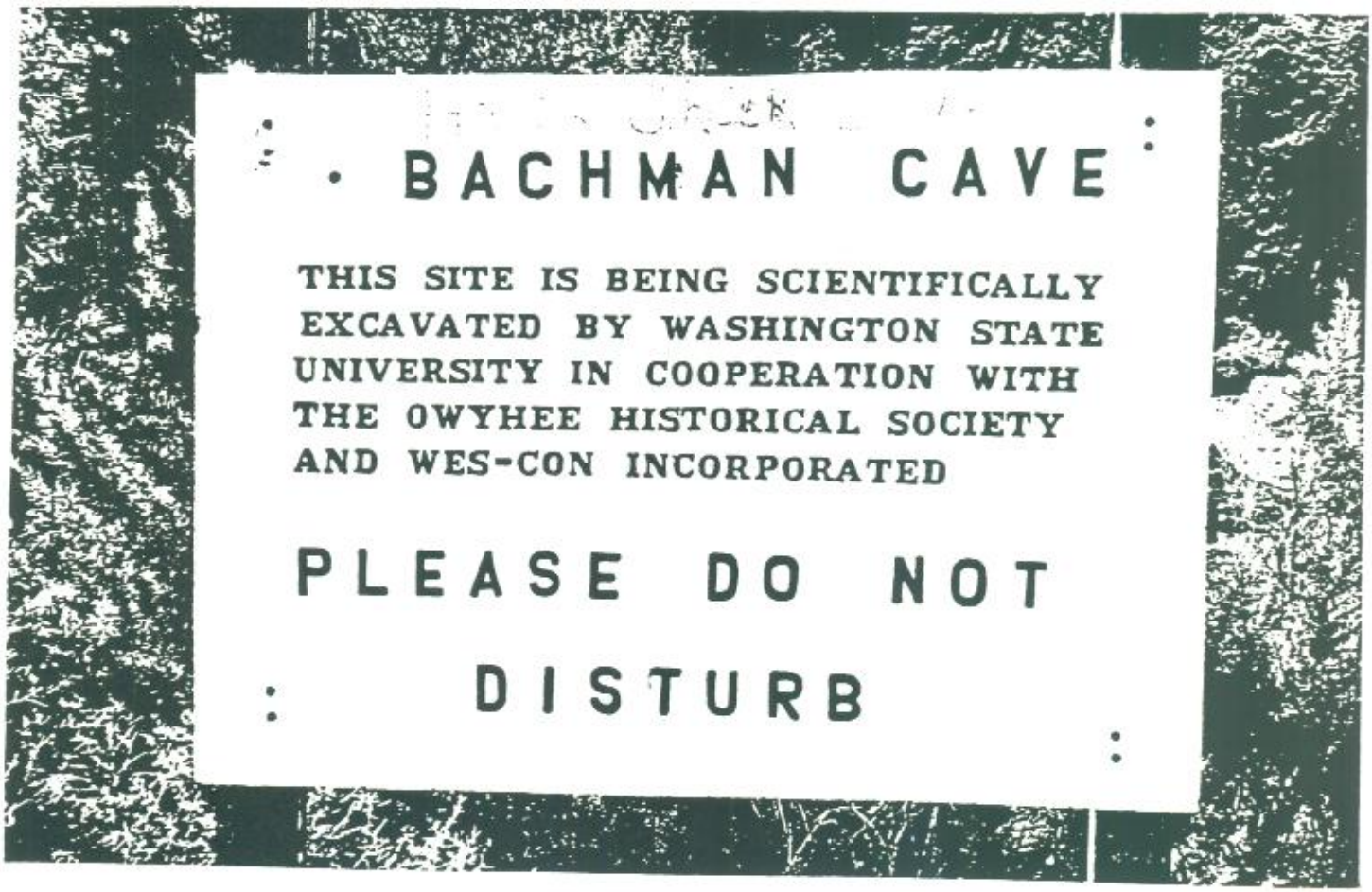
MAILING ADDRESS: Idaho Archaeologist, c/o T. Moore, 1101 Cleveland Boulevard, Caldwell, Idaho 83605

Cover: Views of Bachman Cave, Owyhee County under excavation by Sharon Metzler.
Photo: Bill Norquist/Everett Clark

Bachman Cave and its setting, named for a pioneer Owyhee family is pictured on the cover and is the subject of the lead article of this issue. Photo by Bill Norquist.

The excavation of Bachman Cave has extended from 1971 to the present time amid considerable controversy, changes in ownership and discussions as to whether it would ever be worthwhile due to having been "potted". Throughout this period several members of the IAS, particularly John and Florence Schaertl, have never lost faith in the project. Finally, in 1975, a fortunate combination of forward looking and public spirited ownership met with "Sherry" Metzler, an ISU graduate in Anthropology, who understands and gets along with ranch people, and a comprehensive project was finally underway.

Many of our readers have worked at Bachman, others have visited the site and still others have read Idaho Statesman articles published in 1972 and 1973. As Ms. Metzler completes various phases of her work or receives laboratory reports, she has assured us, we will get the word to pass on to our readers.



CURRENT STATUS OF EXCAVATION AT BACHMAN CAVE, OWYHEE COUNTY, IDAHO

by

Sharon Metzler

Bachman Cave, Site 10-OE-565, is a large rockshelter located on Hart Creek a few miles from the community of Oreana. It is located in an East facing ryolite cliff a few meters above the current elevation of the creek.

During 1972 and 1973, the Idaho Archaeological Society and students from BSU, under the direction of Jason Smith of BSU excavated a portion of the shelter. These excavations demonstrated the extent of the deposit and established an outline of its cultural history.

Unfortunately, these excavations were not the first to take place in the shelter. Frank Carrothers, an Oreana pioneer, used the shelter as a stable and living quarters around 1900. Apparently, the rear of the shelter was filled with debris to such an extent that there was insufficient headroom for his horse. His solution was to drag fill out and pile it just beyond the present drip line.

"Pothunters" have also contributed to the excavation history of the shelter - substantial portions of the deposits were destroyed during the 1930s and again in the fifties. Local folklore indicated that a substantial collection of perishables, such as basketry, mats, and moccasins or sandals were removed from the cave in the 1930s. Another story indicates that a human skeleton was recovered in the 1950s. The 1977 excavations recovered a few fragments of human skull.

During the 1976 field season, a Washington State University field school initiated the current series of excavations. Progress was slow and very little was learned and most of the earth moved had previously been disturbed. However, a good collection of recent micro-fauna was made.

Spring of 1977 has brought to light several interesting things concerning the occupation of the shelter. Preliminary analysis shows that the shelter was occupied almost continuously for the last 6000 to 7000 years. There is, however, no evidence of the late prehistoric, i.e. Desert side notch or Cottonwood triangular points. Apparently, if these were present, they are not in "pot hunter" collections. At the lower end of the sequence Humbolt concave base and Northern Side-notched points are present.

The deposit proved to be much deeper than anticipated. They extend down 5 and one-half meters (16½ feet) at the time this is being written and we have not yet reached the bottom. Excavations at this depth have been halted for fear of collapse of the sidewalls.

The excavations so far completed show a number of activities taking place at the shelter. It was apparently a primary butchering camp. Head and foot portions of d-er, mountain sheep and possibly elk have been recovered. However, the large choppers used to dismember a carcass have not been located. Scrapers for processing hides have not been found in significant numbers, either.

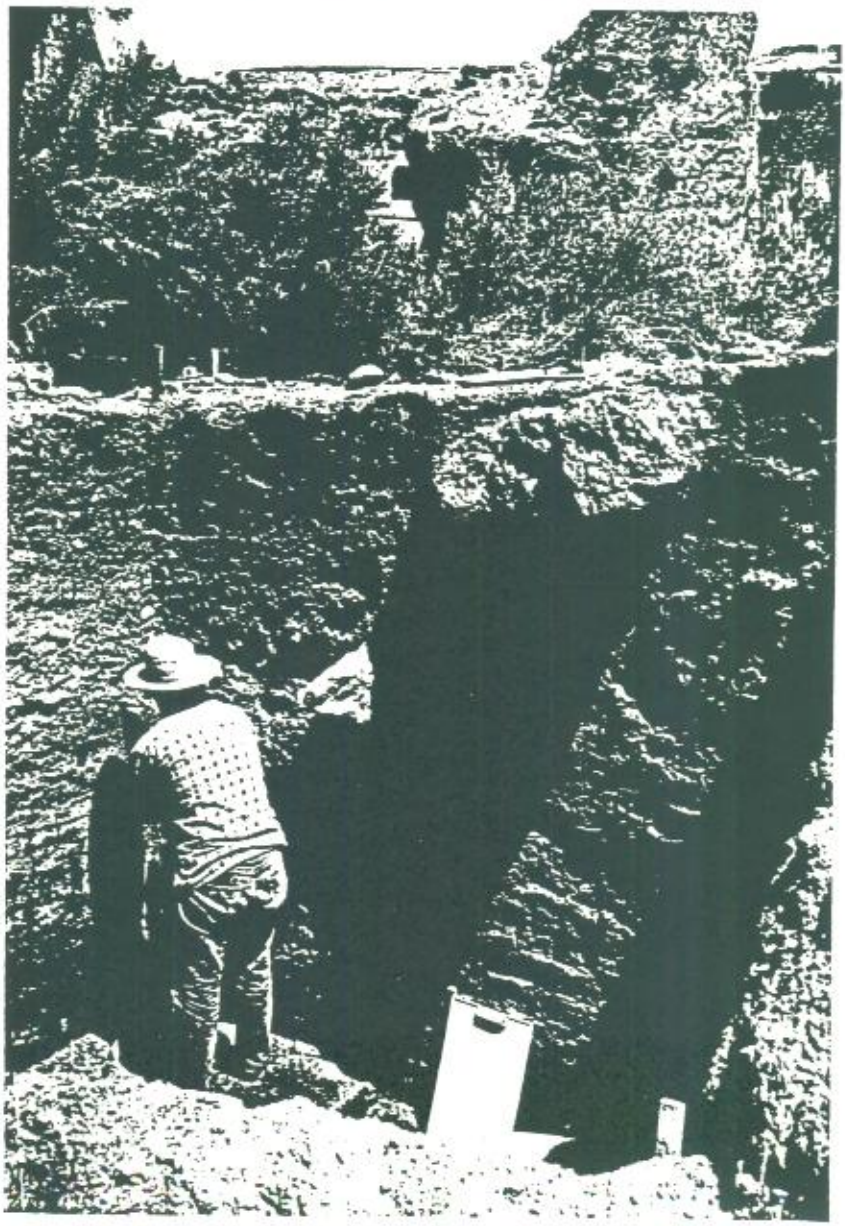
The cave was used for the processing of raw materials prior to the production of stone tools. A siltstone deposit is located about a mile away and this material was being brought in and heat treated and worked into blanks. No finished items have been recovered.

There are a number of bone awls in the collection. This may indicate that basketry manufacturing was taking place at the shelter. Very few examples of ground stone tools have been recovered. Apparently the preparation of seeds or roots was not done extensively at this location.

At this point in the excavations and analysis it appears that the shelter was occupied for the last 600 to 7000 years by small groups of people. Probably by hunting parties, or by people moving between the larger, more permanent camps on the Snake River and the high meadows in the Owyhee Mountains. It is doubtful that the shelter was used for more than a few days at any given time.

The 1977 excavations could not have been accomplished without the willing assistance of members of the Idaho Archaeological Society. Their labors are greatly appreciated. Once again their financial assistance has kept us in the "black", for which I am very grateful.

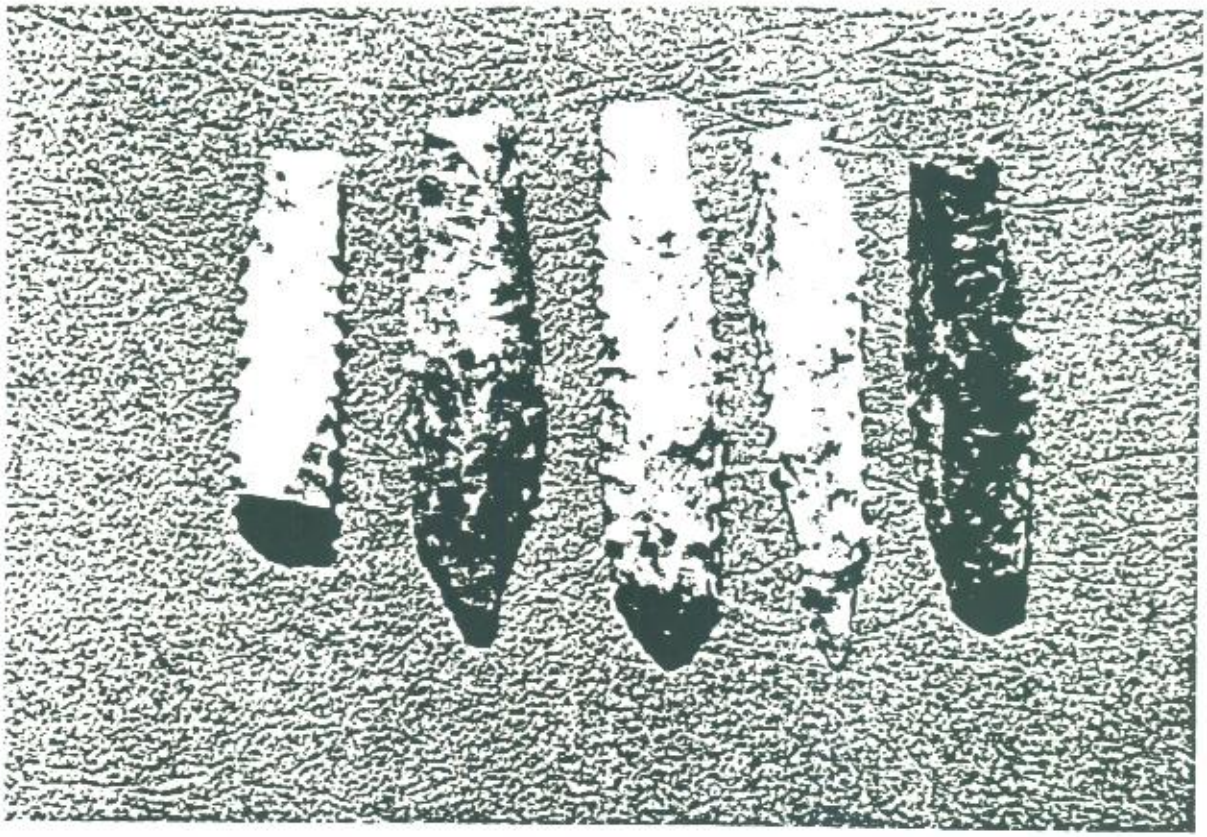
And finally, none of this could have been done without the permission of the landowners, Gene Rhinebolt and Warren Shillington of Wes-Con Incorporated. They are also to be thanked for their generous monetary contributions to the project.



Unique and Unusual Finds.

By Everett Clark

Pictured here are five of the seven or eight known projectile points, of this particular type, found in Owyhee County, Idaho, by collectors, sheepherders, and others.



The point in the center came from site 10-OE-129, (Tebiwa, Vol. 7, No. 2, Gruhn, 1964). All others came from various other sites (not yet numbered), in Northern Owyhee County, Idaho. About actual size.

All the points of this type, that have been observed, have the general lanceolate shape, a relatively straight base, thick and heavy in the mid-section, thinning toward either end, are serrated, and made of chalcedony.

Much more needs to be known about these projectile points. Someone, someplace, may have a comparable type. We are asking our readers about them.

RECENT FINDS OF ATLATL WEIGHTS FROM EASTERN OREGON & WESTERN IDAHO

by

Everett Clark & Jim Huntley

As a weapon, the atlatl was used in the New World for many thousands of years. The current consensus is that the bow is a fairly recent weapon, perhaps brought into the Americas from Asia some 2800-3000 years ago. Even after the more accurate bow and arrows were introduced here the atlatl was still employed by some peoples until historic times.

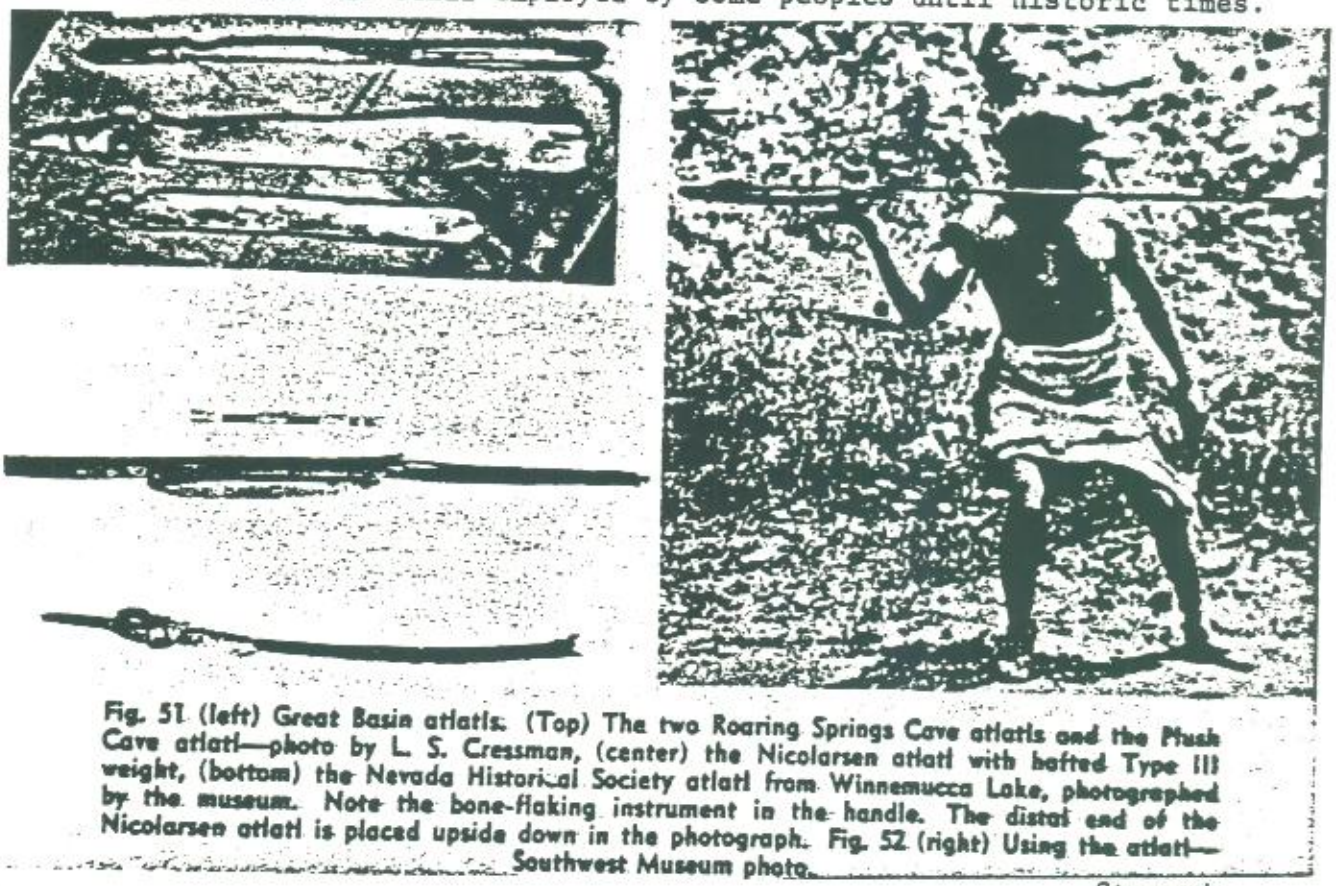


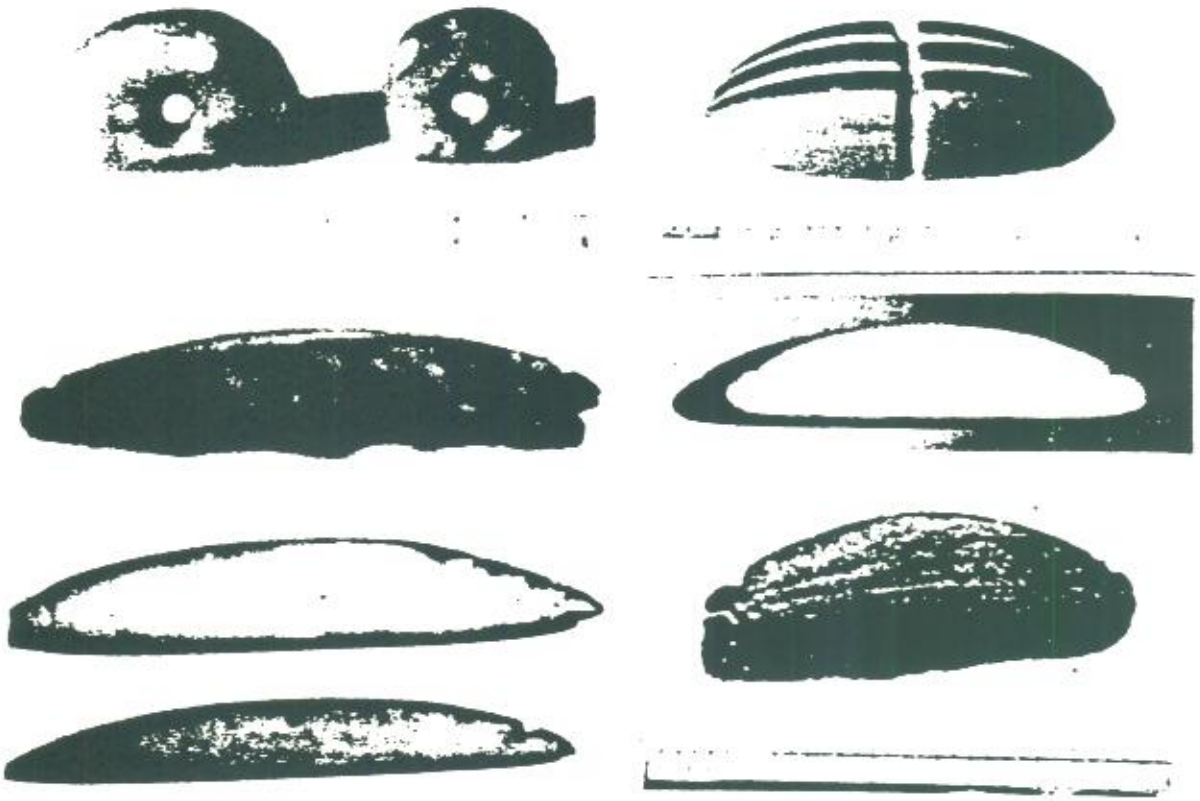
Fig. 51 (left) Great Basin atlatls. (Top) The two Roaring Springs Cave atlatls and the Plush Cave atlatl—photo by L. S. Cressman, (center) the Nicolarsen atlatl with hafted Type III weight, (bottom) the Nevada Historical Society atlatl from Winnemucca Lake, photographed by the museum. Note the bone-flaking instrument in the handle. The distal end of the Nicolarsen atlatl is placed upside down in the photograph. Fig. 52 (right) Using the atlatl—Southwest Museum photo.

Strong*

Since atlatls were, in large part, made of wood, a perishable material, most have long since decayed away. The weight used on the weapon was made of stone so more of them have survived. Still, not many weights have been found. For some years they were not recognized as atlatl weights until an atlatl was found with the weight still attached.

* Stone Age in the Great Basin--Strong 1969.

The weight was fastened to the atlatl with pitch and light cord or sinew lashed in small notches at each end of the stone. There were three, so called, types of weights.

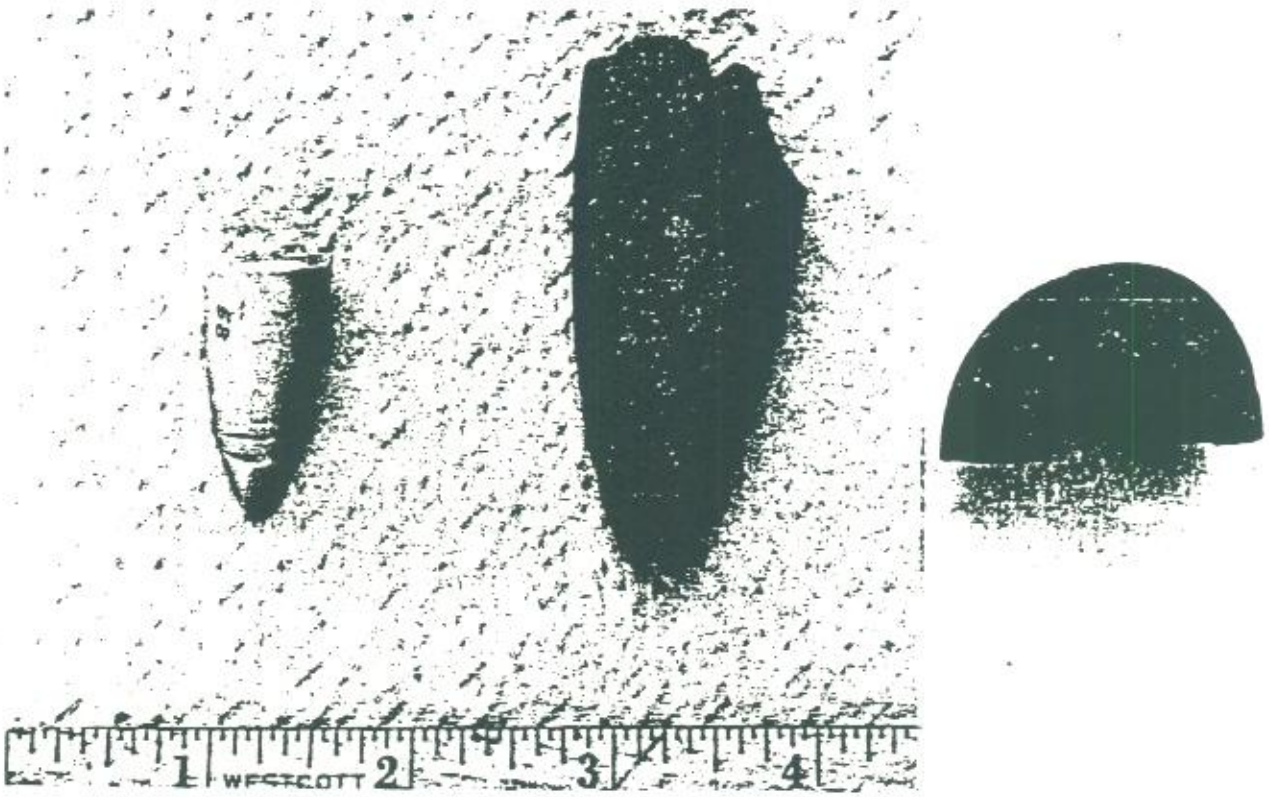


Strong*

Atlatl weights from the West fall into three classes called Type I, II, and III by Butler (1959). The Type I is loaf shaped with a transverse perforation to hold the binding. Type II is an elongated semi-spherical stone tapering toward each end, where there is usually a notch to hold the lashing. Type III is also loaf shaped and has a transverse groove for the cord. This type is generally made from colorful stone, beautifully shaped, and polished. Type II weight is the most common found in the Great Basin. Many collectors have one but do not always recognize its use -- that it may have helped its prehistoric owner to dine on a camel, horse or even an elephant. (Type I, upper left. Type III, upper right. Type II bottom). *

*Stone Age in the Great Basin-- Strong 1969.

Some atlatl weights have been found in the dry caves and rock shelters in western Idaho and eastern Oregon. Also a few, some broken, have turned up as surface finds around the shallow and dry lakes in the area.

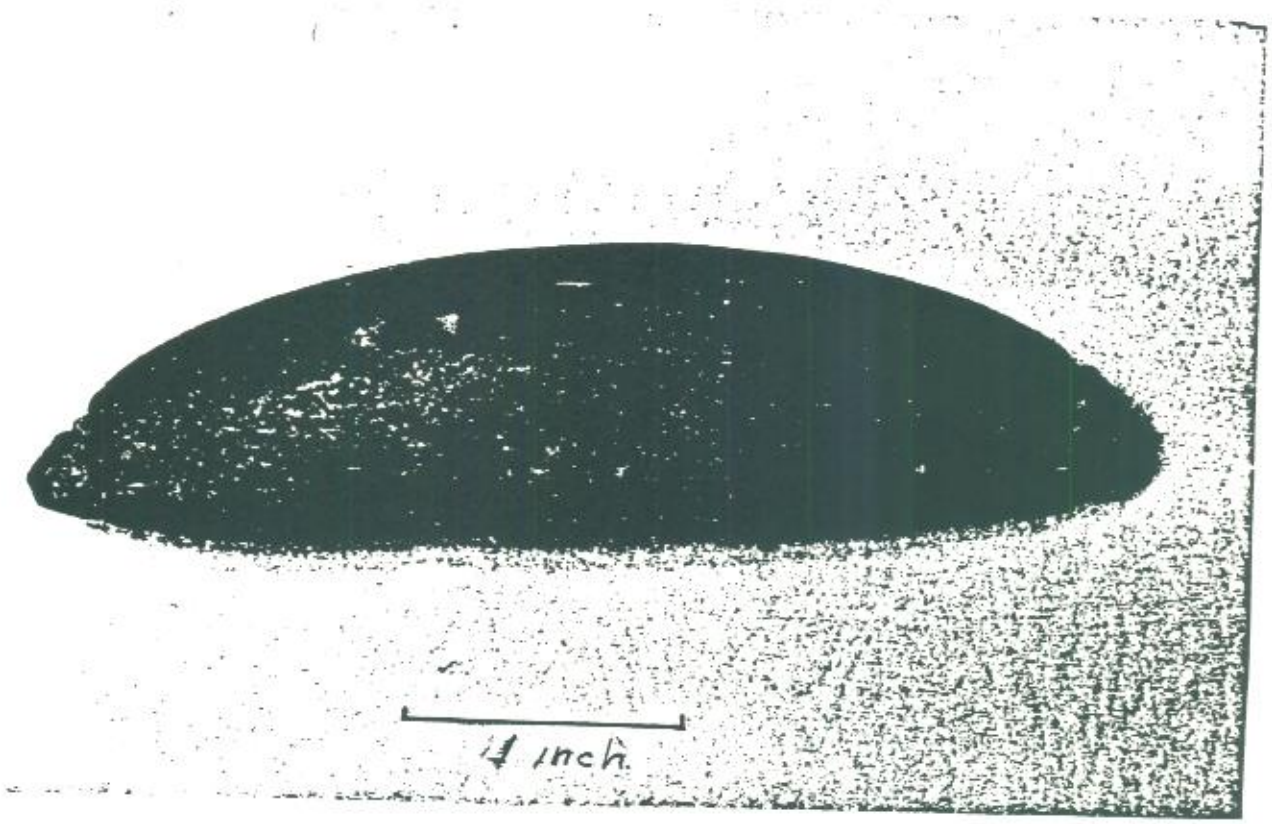


Everett Clark has
One Type I at Harney Lake two broken atlatl weights as surface finds. (middle). Recently a Typper, right), and a Type II at Coyote Flat surface campsite (10 OE 8. weight was picked up by Jim Huntley at a was broken. (left). ear the head of Succor Creek. It too,

Not long ago two amateur collectors found a complete Type II weight in a previously potted rock shelter (10 OE 903) near the confluence of Big and Little Squaw Creeks.

This beatifully shaped weight is made of a dark red basaltic stone, and highly polished.

The two points shown above were found in the same level (three foot) as the weight. One, a side notch of obsidian, and the other a corner removed point of a greenish siltstone resembling the Wendover Point. (same scale).



Another atlatl weight, from just across the Idaho boundary in Oregon, has been picked up as a surface find by the Wes Bevan family, Homedale, on a rock hunting trip. This area, near Haystack rock in Malheur County, is a favorite hunting spot for local rockhounds who find a good quality red and yellow jasper here. The Indians, before white contact, used this jasper bed as a quarry site, as witness the numerous cores and chips found in the adjacent area.

This atlatl weight is made from a fine grained quartzite. It is 110 mm in length and 26 mm thick. Like the other complete weight shown here, the end notches are cut clear around the circumference of the stone. Most weights are notched only on the one side, just enough to hold the binding.

It would be interesting to know if other weights, complete or broken, may be found in amateur collections and unrecognized as such. To the author's knowledge, these are the first atlatl weights found in the local region.

A NOTCHED STONE COBBLE FROM SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

Analysis of the archaeological assemblage of the Camas Creek drainage of south-central Owyhee County, Idaho, indicated the recovery of a notched stone cobble, (Plew 1976:33)

The function of this object is unknown, although speculation might suggest it was used in playing a game (perhaps some form of gambling). The distribution of this particular artifact is equally unknown. A survey of the regional literature would seem to indicate that such notched cobbles have simply not been found. A somewhat similar object of sandstone-like material having eight intentionally ground notches was earlier collected by Mr. and Mrs. John Schaertl. The extent of my present knowledge suggests that these are the only such examples from south-western Idaho. Although somewhat esoteric, similarly notched cobbles have been described from locations along the Perdenales River in Texas (Greer and Treat, 1975).

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Plew, Mark G.
1976 An Archaeological Inventory Survey of the Camas Creek Drainage Basin, Owyhee County, Idaho. Archaeological Reports No. 1 Boise State University. Boise.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dan Meatte for the stone cobble drawing.

A NOTCHED STONE COBBLE FROM SOUTHWESTERN IDAHO

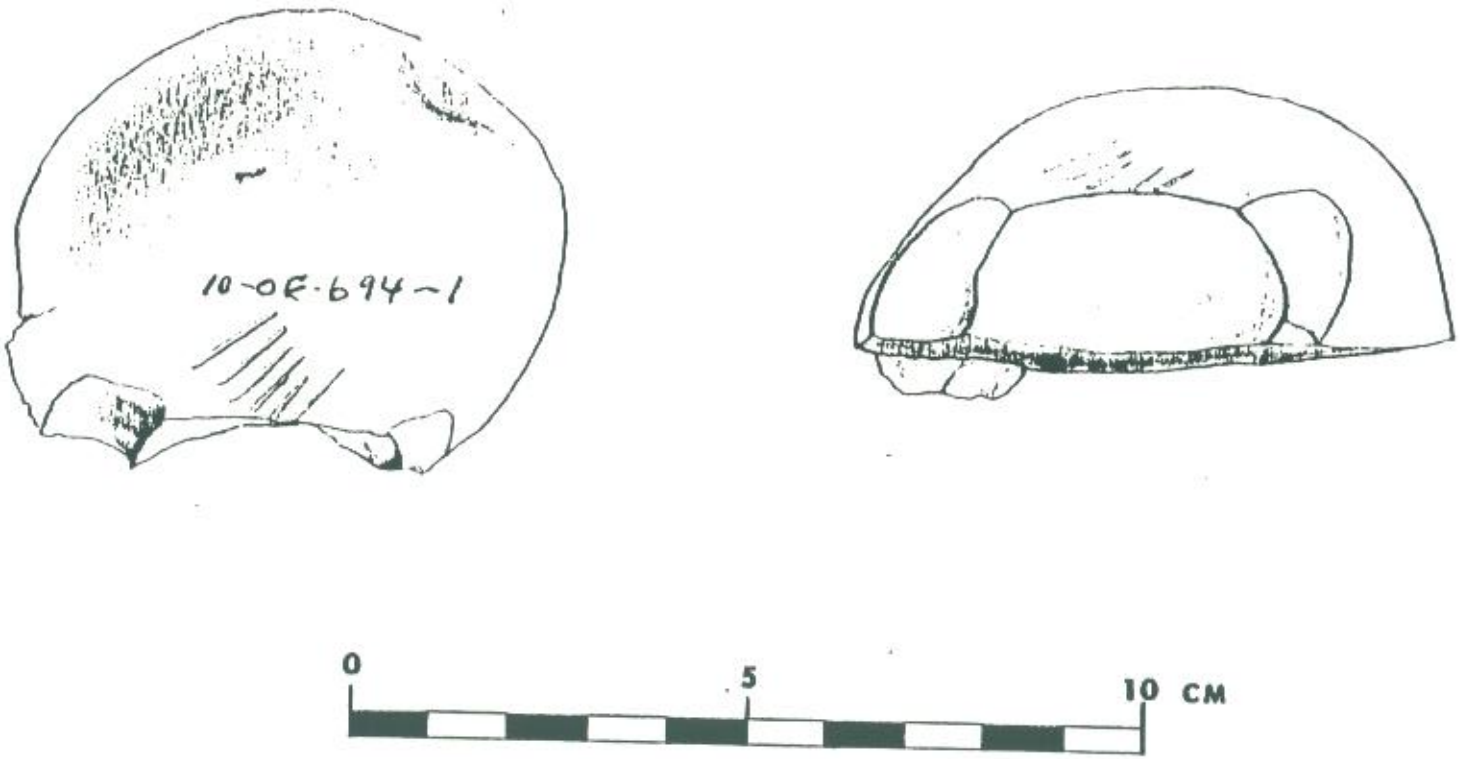

FIG. 1 TOP AND SIDE VIEW OF NOTCHED COBBLE

Description: Number of Specimens: 1

Form: The specimen is a water worn quartzite cobble which is split in half. Three large flakes have been removed from one end. On the exterior of the cobble, 6 parallel notches approximately 1/16 of an inch in depth and 1.5 cm long, have been intentionally ground into the surface. (See figure 1)

ARCHAEOLOGY AT LARGE

Anthropology Club Lecture Series

The "ANTHROPOLOGY CLUB", an organization of Instructors, students and interested individuals of Boise State University was organized in the fall of 1976 under the aegis of Dr. Max Pavesic to participate in "gab fests" and occasional "get togethers", often over a beer, on anthropological subjects. Another purpose of the Club is the sponsoring of a lecture series for members of the Club and for the public also. The Club managed to obtain a grant from the Boise State University Associated Student Body to pay for the lectures this past year.

The first such speaker, Dr. Omer Stewart, Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of Colorado, an internationally recognized authority on the "Peyote Religion in North America" came to Boise State University on February 15th of this year. Your reporter attended what turned out to be an informative and entertaining show rather than the usual "dry lecture".

Dr. Stewart first came into direct contact with the Peyote Religion in 1936 at the Ute Indian Reservation near Duschene, Utah while doing research for his Doctoral Thesis. He described the Peyote as a small button, not unlike a garlic bulb (and apparently about as difficult to chew and swallow) which is produced by a species of cactus native to the Southwest Texas-Northern Mexico area. A thriving business has existed since early in this century in harvesting and shipping the Peyote to Indians throughout the area West of the Mississippi River.

He led the audience of over 200 through a Peyote ceremony complete with drums, rattles and chanting. The ceremony is observed by perhaps thirty individuals of a tribe under the direction of the leader, known as the "Roadman", at intervals of, usually, a month. The ceremony lasts from dusk to dawn and is a very formal ritual as compared to the "orgiastic" concept existing in the minds of the public. It has become a part of the established "Native Religion", along with sun worship and Christianity among tribes from the West Coast to Chicago and the Oklahoma Reservations.

Dr. Stewart has become an authority, not only on "Peyote Religion" but on Indian land and treaty matters as well. He has appeared on numerous occasions before various State and Federal Courts and Legislative Committees testifying for the Indian position on these matters. His testimony has nearly always won the day for the Indian rights.

The next lecture of the series was that of Dr. Richard Daugherty of the University of Idaho on his work at the "Ozette Site" on the upper coast of Washington. The Ozette site, you may recall,was a village which was covered by a sudden mudslide about 300 years ago (1700) which resulted in an exceptionally valuable and intriguing project. Due to the sudden onslaught of the mud, marine "hunting kits" were found intact in storage as were many other artifacts and even a dog and her litter of pups. At the end of the last excavation season they had yet to find extensive human remains, but all other remains including buildings and tools and boats were in place and, unlike most sites, were "in use" items rather than the junk or midden pile that we must usually work with.

Dr. Daugherty indicated that his most vexing problem is not excavation or analysis of artifactual material but how to shut the current work off without leaving the site subject to destruction by both the elements and the public.

In order to preserve the site for future study, Dr. Dougherty is working with the National Park Service to establish some sort of tourist attraction involving a means of transportation to and from the site. This would insure ongoing caretaker service, with a charge to tourists to help cover the costs.

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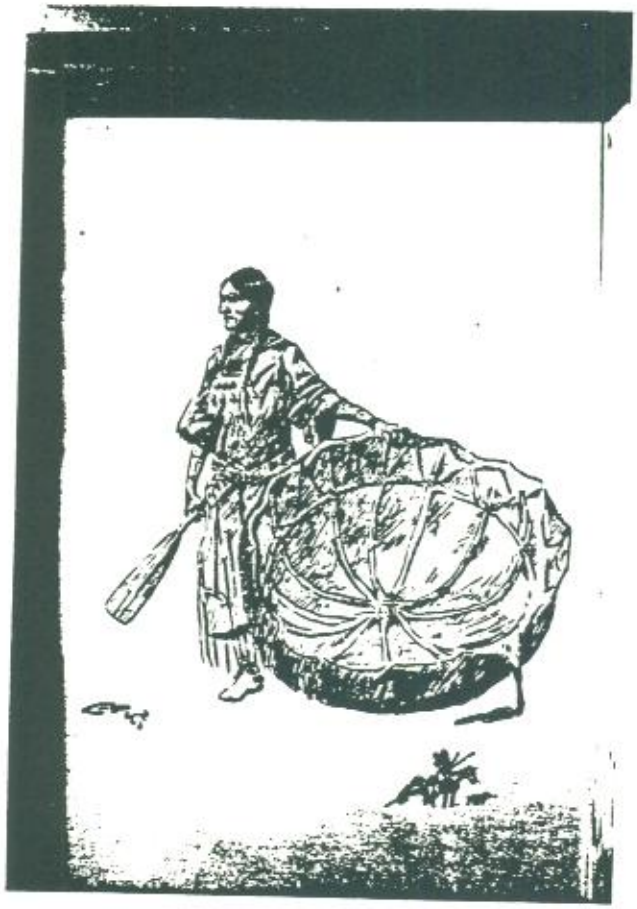
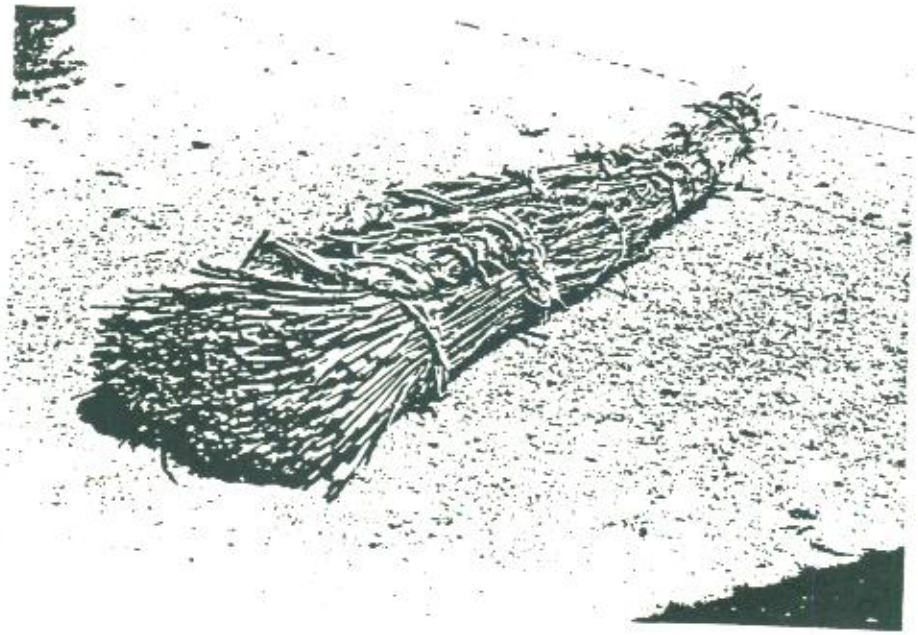


Bull Boat used by plains Indians



Reed Boat used in Great Basin

COMING EVENTS

The 5th Annual Fall Meeting and Conference of the IAS will be held at the Boise State University Student Union Building on October 22, 1977. It is anticipated that this will be the best meeting yet. Max Pavesic, who is again working with the IAS, assures us we will hear (and see) 12 to 16 presentations from both professional and amateurs.

IAS members are reminded that election of members of the Board of Directors will be conducted at this meeting as it is every two years. Plan to attend!

HAPPENINGS

The Annual Meeting of the IAS Board of Directors was held at the Elks Rehabilitation Center, Boise, on June 6, 1977.

Activities of the Intermountain and Great Basin Chapters were reported upon by their respective presidents, Darlene Burke and Bill Norquist.

The Board noted with great satisfaction the publication of Volume I, No. 1, May 1977 of the Idaho Archaeologist. It was also noted that the publication had met one of the long term objectives of the Society.

The financial report for the year ended 6 June 1977 was presented by Treasurer Max Burke as follows:

Balance in Bank June 1976		$338.75	
Net Income:			
Memberships (Dues)		167.50	
Annual Conference Receipts		210.00	
	Total	$377.50	
Total Cash			$716.25
Accounts Paid:			
Annual Conference (Printing, etc.)		$111.71	
Membership Refunds		10.00	
Publications & Supplies		12.54	
Miscellaneous (Including professional support)		131.18	
	Total Expense	$265.43	
Bank Balance at 6/6/77			$450.82

The Board authorized payment of $47.96 to Great Basin Chapter to defray cost of publishing "Idaho Archaeologist".

STEEL MAKING IN AFRICA

By Bill Norquist

Dr. Peter Schmidt, former Idaho State Archaeologist, recently returned from a year in Tanzania, Africa on the Western shore of Lake Victoria and gave a slide presentation at the State Museum Auditorium on August 11th.

He had returned to Tanzania to resume research and studies begun in 1969 and 1970 into the validity of Oral Tradition as a means of passing cultural information down through many generations of the Haya people who live in villages which have been continuously occupied for 2,000 years of more. His research, involving excavation around "Shrine Trees" and other shrine sites did, indeed, validate the accuracy of conveying historical, cultural and technological information orally over a period of probably 2,500 years.

Before this research had gone very far clay blowpipe remnants from the remains of old iron forge sites were found. These clay blowpipe remains were covered with molten, glass like slag which, upon analysis proved to have been heated to temperatures of 1350 to 1400 degrees C. Temperatures in that range indicated to Dr. Schmidt and the specialists on his crew that here was a strong possibility that the early Haya peoples had refined not only iron from raw ore but a high carbon steel as well. And apparently, nearly 2,000 years before development of the Seimans steel making process in Europe in 1832!

However, an indication or hypothesis is not a verified fact. At first, according to Dr. Schmidt, it seemed almost hopeless that a way of testing the idea would be found. Finally, a group of older men, some in their 90s, admitted that they "might" be able to smelt some iron. Once they were convinced that the Gods were agreeable and all other signs were right and that Peter and his crew were not pressuring them a group embarked on the process.

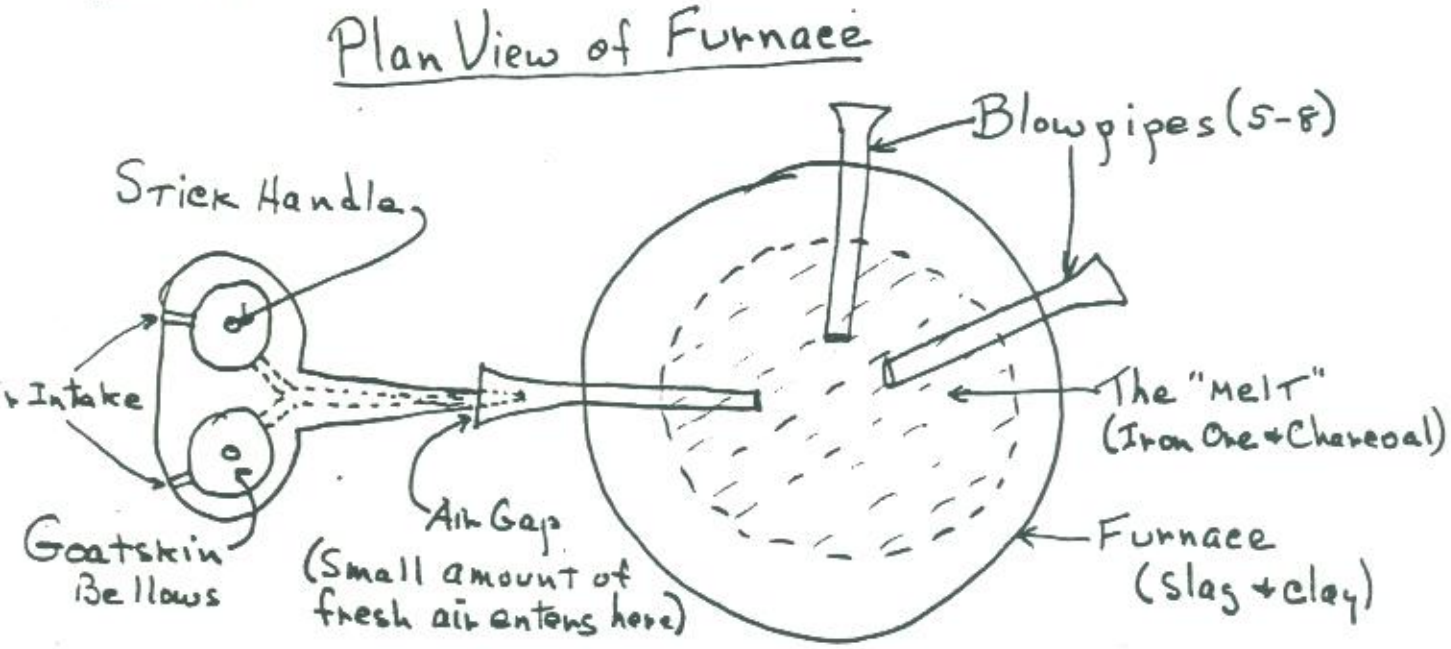
Several steps were involved - procuring and refining iron ore, converting wood into charcoal, manufacture of clay blow pipes, construction of the furnace from chunks of old slag and anthill clay (which is mostly sand and thus explained the glass on the old blowpipes). They also had to carve bellows from large chunks of wood - using buttered goatskin for the diaphrams.

We can't go into all the details here, but after several failures and the intervention of a little psychology shifting of blame to violation of several taboos, a successful run was completed and steel bloom was indeed produced. Carbon steel with up to 1.25% carbon (tool steel) content resulted.

Through instruments installed in the pile, it was found that a temperature of 1600 degrees C. was produced in the center of the melt! Analysis of the physical set-up revealed that such temperatures were undoubtedly achieved by generation of pre-heated air at 700-800 degrees C. within the blowpipes installed at the base of the furnace pile. (See drawing below). The bellows were constructed in such a manner that no valving was used and the bellows were operated at about 250 small strokes per minute. Without valving this resulted in drawing hot air from the furnace partly into the bellows while simultaneously drawing some fresh outside air through the hole in the side of the bellow. This warm mixture was then expelled into the blowpipe through an airgap which aspirated a slight bit of additional fresh air.

This basically simple but ingenuous forced air arrangement assured an oxygen supply sufficient to maintain combustion while also maintaining a high carbon dioxide level. At the same time, the process of feeding the melt with preheated air

rather than cool outside air permitted the temperatures to reach that required to produce steel.



Dr. Schmidt emphasized that each melt producing 16 to 18 kilos of steel required 500 kilos of charcoal which in turn required 5,000 kilos of wood. This resulted in almost complete destruction of the forest environment in the area and forced the Haya peoples to abandon steel making as a major economy and revert to an agricultural economy on poor soil to the present time. Evidently, they continued making just enough iron and steel to keep the technology alive until they could buy or trade for European iron and steel.

Dr. Schmidt has yet to determine if these people developed the process themselves, or if they knowledge was perhaps obtained from the Sudan or some other area to the North. Perhaps another year of travel and research in Africa will be needed to complete the story.
