

DEBITAGE

Bits & Pieces ... Remnants Left Behind ... By & For Flint Knappers

Volume I

Number 11



“Percussion Fluting” For Big Game.

"Percussion Fluting" To Hunt Mammoths.

Since they were first found back in the early 1930's, near Clovis, New Mexico, the uniquely made "*Clovis*" spear point has fascinated the archaeological community and the general public with its specialized channel flakes or "*flutes*".

These flutes are removed from the base of the point, to facilitate its binding into a spear shaft or foreshaft or into a knife handle.

In addition to the unique technology, the fact that so many of these specialized weapons have been found in fossilized remains of mammoths from the end of the Ice Age has given them a special fascination and importance as apparent and easily recognizable evidence of the technical skills of the earliest wide ranging North American cultural group.

This pioneering status is now under review as potentially earlier technologies and artifacts are coming into scientific discovery and study.

Base Thinning "*Flutes*" Or "*Channel Flakes*" Employed "*Isolated Platforms*" And "*Direct Percussion*"

In the examples of "*Clovis*" points from across North America we see two clearly visible different approaches to the base thinning flakes which we call "*flutes*".

In many "*Clovis*" points from the eastern region, all along the Mississippi River and to the east, we observe that many of the projectile points are essentially completely finished in form and shape before the actual final fluting process is imple-



Above: Flint "Isolated Platform" & guide flakes. Below: "Isolated Platform" prepared.



Below: Successful removal of a base-thinning "flute" for a "Clovis" style spear point.





Above: Obsidian "Isolated Platform". Below: "Isolated Platform" prepared for strike.



Below: Removal of large base-thinning flute for a "Clovis" style spear point.



mented. With these "*Clovis*" points the final steps in the process are the removal of the base thinning channel flakes on each face of the blade and a little trimming of the deltas remaining at the base so that the blade fits comfortably into the split shaft of a spear.

Compared To Western Style "*Clovis*" Points

While not all western "*Clovis*" points were made differently from the late stage fluting process of the eastern variety, enough have been found for another pattern to be recognized: base thinning could take place at any time in the knapping process, and could occur multiple times during the manufacturing steps, as needed to achieve the desired blade form and shape.

After the base thinning was performed, the western "*Clovis*" culture knappers often continued their thinning and shaping of the blade until they completed the weapon's design template which they had in mind.

Examples Shown Here

These examples of the base thinning process would fall more readily into the eastern pattern of "*Clovis*" manufacturing, since most of the blade shaping work had been completed. Then the "*isolated platform*" and "*guide flakes*" for the channel flake removal were set up at the base of the blade.

The direct percussion blow impacts the isolated platform and drives off the channel flake. Then the platform was reset for the other face of the blade and the process repeated. Sometimes more successfully than others.

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From the flint knapping workshop of

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