

Spade and Screen

By FRED ROBINSON, Regina



The above photograph was sent to me by George Dunmire of Gull Lake, Saskatchewan. At first glance it appears to be a giant pestle, but it is really a natural formation eroded in grey granite by the action of wind and water. These natural formations are very interesting and a pleasure to collect. This one is 13 inches high and the stone weighs 40 pounds. Both ends of the rock being naturally harder than the centre, they have withstood the erosion forces. This rock was dug out of a creek bank seven miles east of Gull Lake. Creek banks and beds or lake shores afford us a large quantity of these odd formations. No end of "images" can be found, but they must not be confused with Stone Age artifacts. They probably belong in an exhibit of interesting geological specimens.

ONE PROJECTILE POINTS

By BOYD WETTLAUFER,
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One projectile points seem to be widely distributed over the North American Continent, as they have been found in excavations in Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Maine, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and many other places, as well as among Eskimo artifacts in the far north. They belong to the polished Stone Age as they are seldom found below the six foot level, and are found in greatest profusion within one and a half feet of the surface. One projectile points vary in length from one and a half inches to six inches, with an average length of three to three and one half inches.

They are usually made of solid strips of the walls of large bones. The bone is split and a section having a sharp corner is taken. This section is so worked into form that its cross section at mid-point is nearly triangular. The interior surface of the bone remains as a longitudinal groove. However, in isolated cases, this groove may be worked out thus giving an oval cross section. It is to be noted that these points all have one heavy end sloping steeply to a well-sharpened point. The other end tapers to a crude, unfinished point or wedge. The sharpening of the point in some specimens appears to be a distinct operation following the process of shaping, and it is quite possible that many points may have been resharpened. A few are hardened on the point by fire but whether intentionally or unintentionally is not known.

Although many of these points may have been used in the conventional arrow, Dr. E. E. Tyzzer, of Harvard University Medical School, in a paper on bone projectile points from Shell Mounds along the North Atlantic Seaboard, suggests that these points were set in the end of a hollow cane shaft, to be thrown with an Atlatl (throwing stick used at one time from Panama to the Arctic). Thus set in a socket of proper size, it would need no other attachment and when the shaft struck its target, would be driven in, large end first. It would thus tend to remain in the wound, even after the shaft of the projectile fell off, or was withdrawn.

As many of these bone artifacts have been found in mounds and among the middens left by Mandan Indians of the Missouri River basin, it is very likely that they may be found generally in prairie excavations, or even on fields where much bone is in evidence.

CORRECTION

In the last paragraph of our story on Mr. A. J. Hudson we said that "the best method of studying archaeology is by use of the spade and screen." This should have read, "the most interesting method."