

Archaeological Investigations at the Salmon Beds

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Flakes

Stone tool production is a reductive process where a stone is shaped through the removal of smaller pieces called flakes from a larger stone called a core. The desired result of the process can be either flakes or cores which can be made into desired tools. Flakes typically possess identifiable features: a platform-the point at which force is applied; A bulb of percussion- a characteristic curve on the underside of the flake near the platform end; and an arris- a centre line ridge along the backside of the flake. Not all flakes display all of these characteristics. Shatter are fragments of the stone material which result from a striking blow but which do not exhibit a platform or bulb of percussion. Often the basic starting piece has weathered surfaces called cortex. Flakes with one surface that is primarily covered in cortex are called primary flakes. Flakes with some cortex are secondary flakes. Flakes that result from shaping tools are called reduction flakes. Resharpener or final shaping of tools results in retouch flakes. Several different techniques can be used in stone tool manufacturing. A hard hammer technique utilizes a stone to strike the core and often results in large flakes. A soft hammer technique utilizes a stone, antler or bone striker to strike the core and results in smaller flakes. A pressure flaking technique utilizes a bone, antler or wood object to remove small flakes through concentrated pressure.

From the Salmon Beds, a total of 477 flakes were recovered (Table 1). Most of these were retouch flakes less than 1 cm long (n=408, 85.5%). Forty-seven (n=47, 9.8%) were reduction flakes between 1.0 and 2.0 cm. This indicates that the major stone manufacturing activities involved finishing or resharpener of stone tools. Most of the tools were like produce elsewhere and brought to the site. This is supported by small number of cores recovered (n=2). Both cores recovered were very small and had likely been full utilized for their potential to produce additional flakes.

Table 1: Flakes by stage of production and level

Level	Primary	Secondary	Reduction	Retouch	Shatter	Totals
1			4	26	1	31
2			9	141	1	151
3	1		11	51		63
4			6	117	4	127
5		2	6	51	3	62
6			4			4
7			2	15	7	24
8	1	2	2	2		7
9						
10						
11			1	4		5
12			1	1		2
13			1			1
Totals	2	4	47	408	16	477

Most of the flakes were recovered from Levels 2 (n=151, 31.6%), Level 4 (n=127, 26.6%); Level 3 (n=63, 13.2%); and Level 5 (n=62, 13.0%). This suggests that the site was more heavily utilized towards more recent times.