

History of the Yuma Type Artifacts and the Andersen Collection

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The arrowheads collected from the sand hills of northeastern Colorado and adjacent portions of Nebraska, with few exceptions, were recovered from acreage placed in cultivation, as required by law, when the land was homesteaded. Once the grasses that blanketed the hills and valleys for eons were destroyed by the plow, wind, a very powerful agent of soil erosion, began transporting the sand, grain by grain, from the fields to dunes on the adjacent grassland. The hole in the ground produced by deflation is called a "blowout".

Various soil sequences are revealed in blowouts in the vicinity of Yuma, Colorado. Some consisted of a medium to fine grained, buff to tan colored sand from the top to the bottom of the deflated area. Other blowouts revealed that beneath the buff to tan colored sand lay a black, sandy humus zone of varying thicknesses, which in turn overlay a thicker blue-grey marl containing the remains of gastropod shells, freshwater ostracod carapaces and occasionally fragments of mammoth and/or bison remains. This marl zone, present in many blowouts in Yuma and Washington counties in Colorado, obviously represents clay deposited in freshwater lakes coincident with the presence of Paleoindians on the Great Plains.

The Andersen artifact collection started by accident on a Sunday morning in 1919. My father, Perry L. Andersen, and I were riding across a blowout on our ranch located approximately 16 miles south of Yuma, Colorado. My father stopped his horse, dismounted and picked up a beautiful mottled, red and white arrowhead about two inches in length. This arrowhead started a family hobby. My mother, Pauline, joined my father and me in collecting artifacts from the blowouts on the home ranch. Eventually we expanded our *modus operandi* to include all blowouts in Yuma and Washington counties in the vicinity of Yuma.

By 1925, when I entered the University of Denver at Denver, Colorado, the Andersens had amassed a sizable number of artifacts. Pride in the collection, especially those with unique shapes and flaking, was instrumental in seeking an audience with Dr. E. B. Renaud, Chairman of the Anthropology Department at the University of Denver, and Frank Howland, Curator of Minerals and Geology at the Colorado Museum of Natural History (CMNH), also located in Denver. Dr. Renaud was not interested in what he considered to be Plains Indian artifacts; Mr. Howland, however, spent considerable time looking at the collection.

Among the points was a complete leaf-shaped blade, 1-3/4 inches (44mm) long, with a longitudinal groove or channel extending at least two-thirds the length of each face. Mr. Howland was very interested in this particular artifact, and at that time proclaimed that it was "most unusual in type and workmanship to have been produced by Plains Indians".

The importance of the above specimen became apparent two years later. On October 1, 1927, I received a letter from Mr. Howland, an excerpt from which I quote: "When you were up here at college in 1925 I became acquainted with you and you showed me your collection of arrow points. You have some that are hollowed out on the sides something like the following drawing....Mr. Figgins our director asked me to write. There have been some found associated with fossilized remains still in the matrix of the bones".

Mr. Howland's letter had reference to Fred J. Howarth's and Carl Schwachheim's discovery of a fossil bison deposit near the town of Folsom, New Mexico, where in 1926-27 the CMNH found stone artifacts associated with these bison remains. From this deposit came the type artifact now known as "Folsom," originally described as "a thin leaf-shaped blade with a longitudinal groove or channel extending along each face about two-thirds of the length".

The complete and fragmentary Folsom points existing in our collection in 1927 were considered to be of the same culture as the type points from Folsom, New Mexico. Consequently, numerous prominent scientists, excited at the prospect of a new field for research and exploration, came to Yuma in 1928-29-30. Noteworthy were: Dr. A.E. Jenks (University of Minnesota); Dr. Paul MacClintock (Princeton University); Dr. Barnum Brown (American Museum of Natural History); Dr. E.B. Renaud (University of Denver); Dr. Edgar B. Howard (Bryn Mawr College); Dr. C. Bertrand Schultz, his bride Marion and Dr. Loran B. Eisley (University of Nebraska); Richard M. Snodgrass (University of Chicago); and Marie Wormington (CMNH). Most of the visiting scientists were amused at our method of collecting artifacts: some even ridiculed the possibility that anything prehistoric could be found on the surface of a wind-eroded sandhill blowout of several acres in extent. Sites that produced complete or fragmentary Folsom points also produced Plains Indian arrowheads, potsherds, cattle bones, nails, wire, and the like, which Marie Wormington was loath to mention in her CMNH Popular Series of articles.

Following the established fact that Folsom artifacts were used to kill fossil (Pleistocene) bison, and that Folsom-type artifacts were in

the Andersen collection, it became suspected that other types of Paleoindian artifacts might also be present. This idea, espoused solely by Messrs. Harold J. Cook, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology with CMNH, and Jesse D. Figgins, in the late 1920s, led to their own personal input. Cook visited Yuma to study the stratigraphy of the blowout that produced the Folsom point Mr. Howland had seen; Figgins asked for our permission to send an artifact to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, to be evaluated for workmanship and possibly cultural affiliations. The actions taken by these two men proved to enhance the scientific importance of the collection. Cook discovered a shouldered projectile *in situ* with its point embedded in blue-grey marl, the oldest stratigraphic unit in the blowout; the American Museum's evaluation of the artifact sent by Figgins was that the workmanship excelled anything seen previously in North America, and the cultural affiliations probably to be Middle Neolithic.

Pioneers in the study of the Folsom culture may have been overly zealous to proclaim that Folsom was the end product in the evolution of Paleoindian artifacts. The originator of this concept was Dr. E.B. Renaud, who in 1931 invited me to assist him in postulating an evolutionary sequence for the Paleoindian artifacts in our collection. The two reference artifacts I had upon which to base this hypothetical evolutionary course were Harold J. Cook's shouldered projectile imbedded in freshwater marl, and the Folsom point found in the same blowout after the sandy humus zone overlying the blue-grey marl had been exposed by wind erosion. Subsequent Paleoindian discoveries proved that this evolutionary concept was not tenable.

As a result of continued research in typology, Dr. Renaud published a paper in 1932 titled, "Yuma and Folsom Artifacts, New Material," wherein he states, "The number and variety of artifacts of this remarkable and extensive collection from the Yuma district (belong to Mr. Perry Andersen and his son Harold) contributed greatly to our better knowledge of the points, which in recognition, we named 'Yuma Points' to distinguish them from the true Folsom type". Two articles by Jesse D. Figgins in 1933 and 1939 titled "Folsom and Yuma Artifacts," continued the use of the two-fold division of Paleoindian artifacts.

Creeping into the literature in the late 1930s and early 1940s were the names Dent, Eden, Clovis, Gypsum Cave, Scottsbluff, and many more artifact types, many that had been described as "Yuma" type artifacts. Obviously a purge of names was needed; Dr. Marie Wormington assumed the responsibility. Sometime between 1939 and 1949 she restricted the Yuma type artifact to a blade that had a length-breadth ratio of about 4 or 5 to 1 and had fine diagonal flaking that appeared to cross the convex face of the blade uninterrupted. These specimens, recovered from Andersen's Valley No. 4 locality, were unique to Valley No. 4. It was also the only site in which the artifacts were directly associated with bison bones that were never specciated.

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The years of WWII put a damper on collecting, but the searching was quickly resumed after moving to the Pacific Northwest. Never had I experienced the quantity and quality as I found on the Columbia River of central Washington.

After the Spring floods the receding waters left step-like benches along the banks of the river and these were always productive. While searching the shore after the water dropped, a notched net sinker was found lying among the rocks. Studying the washed out debris, four more net sinkers were recovered. This prompted me to rake a clawed hand weeded through the mud, whereupon the sound and feel of it was not unlike a pocketfull of chips. Taking a handful, I pivoted around to the water's edge to wash the mud from the flakes and was astonished to see a handful of projectile points! Two more handfuls of mud yielded a total of eleven. They were of one type and of two different materials and appeared to have been made by the same person. It is unknown if this had been a cache or a quiver for a washed out bural. Two stone pestle lying side by side with only the bottoms protruding from the mud bank also were recovered.

During the 1950s, my wife and I hunted part of the Great Basin in southeast Oregon. The historic Double O Ranch near Hamey Lake was our headquarters. Long walks through sand dunes, around the shores of dry lakes and along the rimrocks of volcanic plateaus led us to some unusual finds.

Nancy was the lucky one when it came to large blades and points. We had driven into the desert on an old chuck wagon trail when we noticed an area that looked like a campsite. Obsidian chips were strewn about in the wind blown sand. A half dozen points were found with about twice as many damaged pieces. It was when Nancy let out a yell that could be heard all over Hamey County that I knew she had found something to yell about. The tip of a point protruded from under the roots of a sagebrush which she was unable to dislodge with her walking stick. She dug at it with her toe, but it refused to move. A good lug on it with her hand brought to light an eleven inch long double pointed obsidian blade!

Before leaving this lucky place, I searched along the ruts of the trail and found a beautiful obsidian corner notched point just a few feet in line of the front wheel of the car.

Visiting this place alone several years later, I found two broken points when it became apparent that the place had been invaded by rattlesnakes. Having never cultivated any emotional attachments for them, a hasty retreat was in order.

Accidental finds on the desert seemed to be common. While pausing for lunch one afternoon, a small half-inch long obsidian Desert Side-Notched point was found lying where we sat down to eat our sandwich.

Another time, discovering a small shelter in a rimrock, I approached the entrance cautiously on hands and knees. Observing no sign of life, I scratched through the floor to examine it for human occupation. Nothing of

importance was noted, so before leaving I scanned the surface once more. Another tiny Desert Side-Notched point of clear, smoky obsidian lay right next to my left hand!

At a small spring fed lake, I observed Nancy walking out on a long sand spit. She was too far away to call back. It was a waste of time as I had hunted that the year before without finding one chip ... she came back with an oval knife of banded obsidian five inches long!!

Our big find was one day after crossing some dunes. We came to a chipping area swept clean by the wind right down to the hardpan. A black obsidian arrow point was lying on a mound of earth dug out by a badger. In the hole was a band of obsidian flakes several inches thick. This was in addition to the upper layer exposed by the wind. The chips on the surface looked as though they had been set down by hand in a mosaic and covered about a half acre. We got down on our hands and knees and sighted against the sun to see the ripple of chipped pieces with their notching. Broken arrow points were picked up by the handful. Most were corner and side notched. Very few tips were found. We stayed all day and recovered 256 broken points and 40 good ones.

Several years went by before I brought a screen and shovel to sift through the layer of chips, but as it was in May the ground was wet. As diligent as we combed the area the first time, we nevertheless found more broken ones the second time.

High up in the rugged and jagged peaks of the Cascades in the Mt. Baker National Forest of Whatcom County, Washington, we found

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Valley No. 4 was also the first site in Yuma County to be selected for detailed study. In the early 1930s, Richard M. Snodgrass from the University of Chicago photographed the artifacts from Valley No. 4. His enthusiasm to learn more about the site led him to seek permission from the landowner to excavate, which would have been a first in the history of archeological investigative work in Yuma County. Permission was granted; however, it was short lived with no explanation given. The entire excavation consisted of a hole approximately 5 X 10 feet by one foot deep. My cousin, Bert Mountain, who became a full-fledged partner with the Andersen's in their search for Paleopolitan artifacts in the 1930s, reminded me to mention that the Snodgrass excavation terminated six inches from a complete Yuma type point.

By the late 1930s, the Andersen artifact collection had attained international exposure. Perry Andersen received an invitation from Dr. Edgar B. Howard, Professor of Anthropology at Bryn Mawr College, to attend the International Symposium on Early Man to be held March 17-20, 1937, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My father could not afford to make the trip; however, Marie Wormington, associated with CMNH, selected fifty artifacts from the Andersen collection (personal communication with my father) to be exhibited at

the road blocked by snow. Parking the car, we walked out onto a knoll of the Heather Meadow Ski Area to enjoy a breathtaking view. At the approximate elevation of 5000 feet, two miles beyond Mt. Baker Lodge, the finding of a small projectile point of native black basalt made my day. "There couldn't possibly be another one within 50 square miles, and if there was I'd never find it within a lifetime," I exclaimed in surprise! To which my wife calmly replied, "You don't find them, you smell them!"

How long ago this arrow was shot, perhaps in a snow bank and never recovered, is a matter of conjecture. Primitive man has lived in the Pacific Northwest for 8000-10,000 years, the Lummitribe being native to the area today.

No one knows how many years this arrow point had been pelted by freezing rains, whipped by fierce blizzards, and covered by tons of snow before it was found on that pleasant Sunday afternoon in the autumn of 1965.

The last unusual find was a year ago back in my home town of Racine, Wisconsin. Around the turn of the century a Woodland type arrow point of glacial flint became part of the sidewalk near the northwest corner of Main and Hamilton Streets. Dashing with head down through a blustery rain, I recognized it as it flashed by. In the 1930s I walked to and from school on it, roller skated on it, rode my bike over it, and it took 50 years to find it. It's still there, mixed in with gravel, sand and cement. I will leave it as a silent monument to a race of people who have forever enriched my life.

the symposium. There were numerous scientists from foreign countries present.

The question in my mind is — were the fifty artifacts exhibited as the Andersen Artifact collection or as CMNH material? I ask this question because casts of recognizable Andersen artifacts are exhibited in Peabody Museum at Harvard University bearing the label CMNH.

The Andersen artifact collection has a permanent home with the University of Nebraska's Archeological Research Collection located in Lincoln, Nebraska. I believe the collection's contribution to the study of Early Man in North America during the 1920s and 1930s was inestimable; and I greatly appreciate the contributions made by the scientists who pioneered the study of the Folsom and Yuma cultures. Special post-mortem thanks are due: Frank Howland whose acumen extended the Folsom artifact from New Mexico to Yuma, Colorado, before many scientists knew the Folsom artifact existed; Harold J. Cook who found an artifact stratigraphically older than the Folsom; Jesse D. Figgins whose appreciation for master craftsmanship sent an artifact from Andersen's Valley No. 4 locality to be evaluated by the American Museum of Natural History; and Dr. E.B. Renaud who was open minded enough to reverse his 1925 opinion of the Andersen artifact collection.

(Bibliography of publications mentioning the Andersen artifact collection on file with IAM)