

DEBITAGE

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

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“Chips To Points” For Pressure Work.

“Chips To Points” For Pressure Flaking.

Once I had a new arrowhead making student complain that the materials which I provided to him were just discarded pieces of stone.

He obviously did not realize that all small stone arrowheads begin their manufacturing process as smaller pieces of stone which have been removed from larger pieces or chunks of stone.

That all arrowheads or other small stone tools begin as either *“Chips”* or *“Flakes”* or *“Blades”*.

All of these related terms are the descriptive names for similar small pieces of stone which were first removed from larger ones.

That’s where all stone arrowheads and other projectile points begin.

Stone Weapons And Tools Begin As *“Percussion Cores”*

Many times flint knapping students are interested in making a large knife or spear point from a chunk of stone, using different percussion tools to break away the parts which don’t look like a knife or spear point.

Sometimes while they are doing this with a particular piece of stone, striking it with a hammer stone or a soft hammer, they unknowingly find themselves doing the same thing our ancestors did so long ago.

They are making many useful sized *“chips”* of stone, getting the necessary feel for breaking pieces away from the central chunk ... exactly where they decide and intend to break them.

However, these modern stone breakers may think



From the top: black obsidian, mahogany obsidian, dacite, black flint, gray flint, novaculite.



Above, front face, 3 blades of black flint, from the Texas Hill Country. Obverse side, below.



that they are just making a lot of waste "*chips*" in an on-going process which seems to have no set purpose, all ready to be tossed away.

A Source For Unlimited Useful Stone Chips

Yet, when we think about it, what you as a new knapper are doing is using a "*percussion core*" as a source for numerous potentially useful chips of stone.

You are breaking chips off the old block, in a process which can be mastered and used repeatedly in the future, with purpose and planning, to create a whole inventory of useful chips and blades ready for immediate work as informal cutting tools, which require no additional shaping or modification to be of use, or for reshaping as needed into desired tools and projectile points with all their many uses.

The benefit to you is the realization that this central chunk of stone in and of itself is a valuable resource which can be harnessed and put to great work.

All of the pieces shown here are "*chips*" and "*blades*" which were removed by percussion from larger pieces of stone. Each one can be shaped and formed into projectile points, like arrow heads or dart points, or cutting implements for use as a knife, by a few minutes of pressure flaking effort.

So, don't just trim material from your stone spalls and nodules as waste to be discarded, instead, break off "*chips*" and "*blades*" which will themselves be a continuing resource from which you can make many small tools and hunting weapons.

