

# DEBITAGE

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

Volume I

Number 10



**“Notching For Attaching” To Shafts.**

### ***“Notching For Attaching” To Shafts.***

The format of the notches made for a particular arrow or dart point changes depending on the intended binding method and the shape of the shaft where the point will be secured.

Notches vary from slight indentations along the sides to provide a recessed area for the binding cords to a pair or more of deep slots cut in from the sides, to a pair of slots cut into the corners or barbs, to a pair of fairly wide but deep indentations cut in from the base edge.

Any of these basic style have many variations and adjustments for different styles of shaft. Some tangs or base attachments from the point were made flat and wide between the notches to fit into split shafts, bound with cords or threads and glue; some were formed to fit tightly into sockets bored into solid shafts or into hollow reed or cane shafts, then bound with glue or cement.

So a key step in deciding what notches you might want to make is to consider how the point might need to be bound to a shaft or handle.

#### **Notching Is A Challenge When You Make Small Arrowheads**

Learning to make notches will teach you to master the amount of force needed to produce a specialized kind of pressure flakes while you protect the rest of the projectile point.

So, here’s the thing: you will inevitably snap off barbs or base tangs while you are learning to make notches ...



*Above: Obsidian “Elko Eared”. Below: “Sawvie’s Island Shoulder Notched”.*





Above: An Obsidian "Northern Side Notched". Below: Flint "Castroville" points.



that goes with the territory and is an important part of the learning process.

Is this frustrating? Yes.

Will you let it stop you from notching? No.

You are becoming the master of your craft, the stone is subject to your intent and effort, so take the time and invest the practice to learn the ins and outs of notching.

As they say, when you want to make stone arrowheads, you have to break some rock!

Now, most times you may find it advantageous to wait until most of the work on a specific arrow point is complete before you make your notches.

Yet, with some styles of arrow, dart and knife points it will make sense to perform the notches in the middle of the work, then finish the rest of the projectile point shaping and sharpening. These decisions come with practice. And more practice.

A specific example of that choice of work sequence could be the "Elko Eared" dart point shown on the opposite page. In making this point the notches were made when the preform was basically a triangle or tear drop shape, with some mass still at the base. There was more stone in the base below the position of the planned deep corner slots. Once the notches were made as deeply as desired, then the base was trimmed to its refined form, leaving narrow corner ears and a concave base.

This helped prevent snapping the corner barbs as the notching flakes were pushed off the blade. Then the outer edges of the blade could be trimmed closer to the notch.

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From the flint knapping workshop of

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