

DEBITAGE

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

Volume I

Number 9



“Serrating An Edge” For Impact.

"Serrating An Edge" For Cutting Impact.

Take another look at the obsidian arrowhead on the cover of this edition of "DEBITAGE".

I found this wickedly sharp, ancient arrowhead on the world wide web, although it was originally found in Siskiyou County in northern California, in 2008, by Jennifer Peterson.

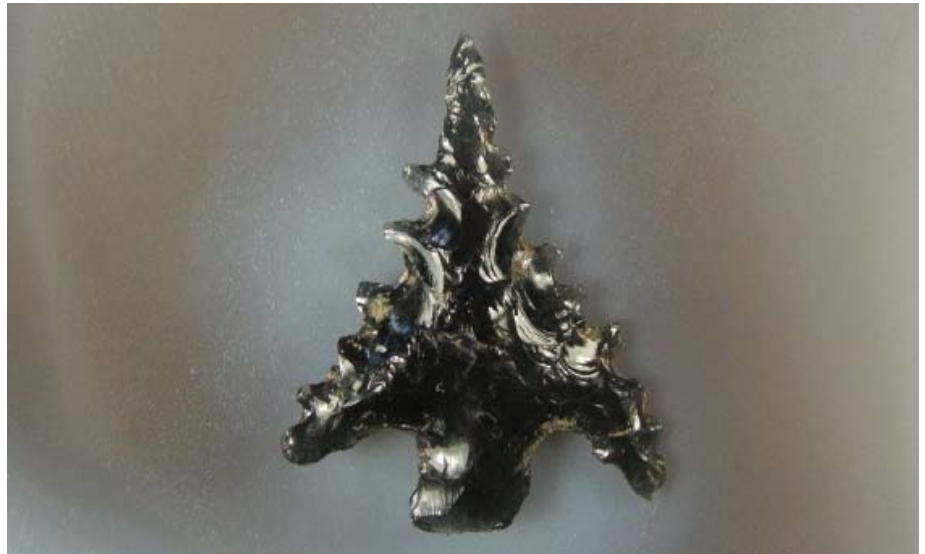
I purchased it from Jennifer, in an auction on eBay in November 2009, along with several other arrowheads which she found in the Mt. Shasta region.

When Jennifer found this expertly made, finely serrated gray obsidian "*Shasta*" regional variety of "*Gunther*" style arrowhead it was in the place it was last used, or stored away and forgotten.

However, what I want you to notice about this point is the fine serrations along each edge. This arrowhead measures just 1-1/4" long by 13/16" wide. If you count the serrations on each edge, you will note that there are 16 or more tiny serrations in the space of about 1-3/8" along each side.

That means that each serration is spaced about 1/16" apart, and actually measures about 1/32" in width and depth of the tiny notches.

Aside from wondering about why ancient craftsmen would go to the trouble of making such tiny notches to serve as serrations along the cutting edge of a small arrowhead which already has a needle sharp tip, as a maker of stone arrow points, I have to consider the design of the tiny tool which was used to make these notches!



Above: Obsidian "*Calapooya*". Below: Obsidian "*Molalla/Gunther*", 1-1/4" x 1/2".





Above: A 2-1/2" Flint "Frio" or "Ensor Split Base". Below: A 7/8" Obsidian "Yana".



Did You Ever See The Tooth Of A Shark? Serrations Are A Natural Way To Increase Cutting Edge & Effect.

While many types of arrow points and dart points are smooth edged, a significant portion of projectile points made use of edge serrations.

Perhaps the tradition began when ancient hunters and/or fishermen noticed the serrations along the edges of some predator's teeth, like sharks, for instance.

Here are several different arrow and dart points which exhibit intentional tiny notches all along the cutting edge of the projectile point ... called serrations.

The 3-1/4" long "Frio" or "Ensor" dart point from Texas provides an extraordinary exhibition of serrations on a point style which is generally not given such an edge treatment. There are 28 to 30 tiny notches along each edge, in about 2-1/4". Some are remarkably deep and the tips of the serrations are very well preserved in this chert or flint point. This is in the L.M. Abbott Central Texas artifact collection, now housed at the "Doss Heritage And Cultural Center" in Weatherford, Texas.

Serrations Can Identify

Some styles of arrow point are almost always identified by their serrations ... take the "Calapooya" arrow point as an example. These points are often shaped like several other regional varieties and forms, but the "Calapooya" points are almost always made with what can only be termed "wild" serrations ... deep, sharp, deadly, undisciplined serrations which went well beyond any point style their arrowheads resembled.

