**SNOMNH ARCHAEOLOGY**
ARTIFACT CLASSIFICATION

This manual only describes prehistoric archaeological material in detail, as per SNOMNH policy of only accepting this type of material. The amount of historic objects in prehistoric collections should be minimal. Consult the Collection Manager when identifying historic material.

    *For all objects, please indicate if the object is complete (inferred) or a fragment.
   *<u>ALWAYS </u>include the number of artifacts represented.

Chipped Stone

All chipped stone artifacts are created by reducing a larger cobble or stone into a finished product (see figure below). Chipped stone objects are defined depending on the stage in which they are recovered. The four major categories include: core (the nodule from which flakes are struck), waste (debris/debitage – the bi product from the core), unfinished tools (bifaces/ unifaces), and tools (which can be further classified, depending on general shape and/or function).
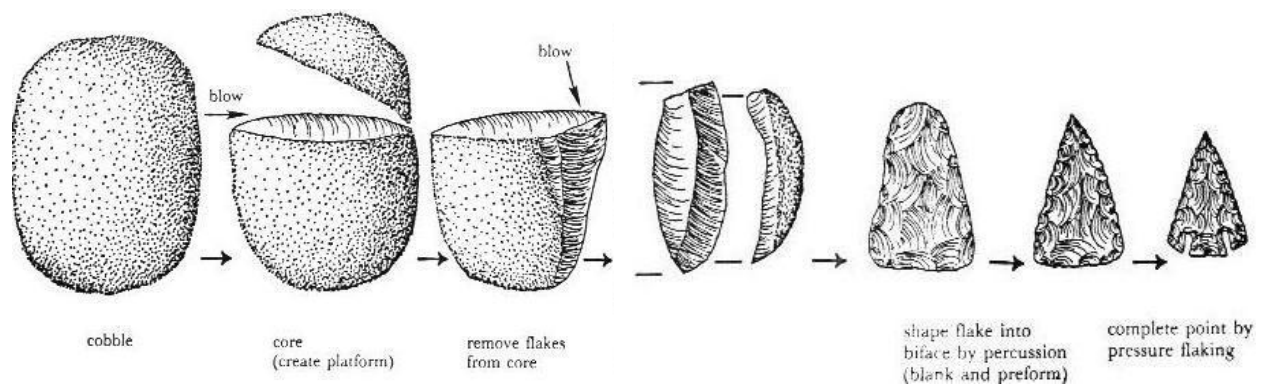
Core

The nodule or massive fragment from which flakes are struck. Example: "1 core"
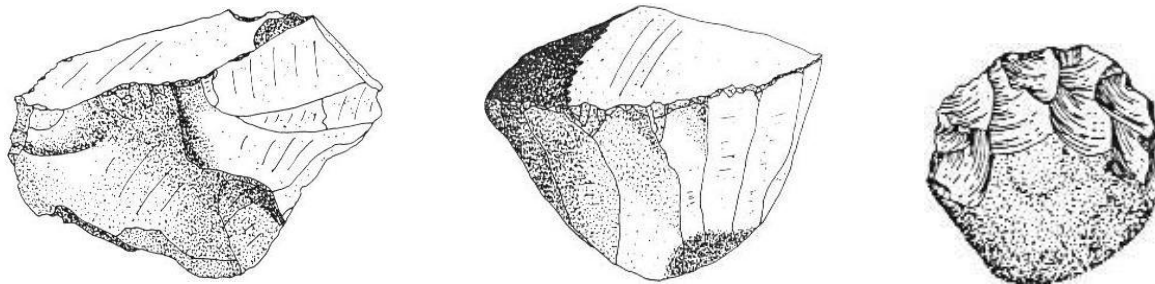
Debris/Debitage

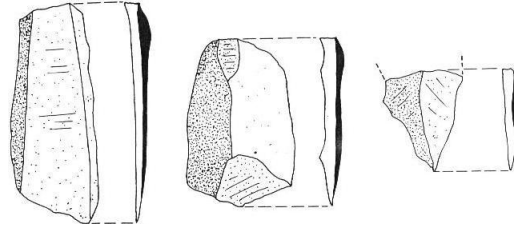The bi-products or waste (flakes and shatter) created from striking a core.

Primary flake
Secondary flake
Tertiary flake
Chunk/shatter or blocky debris

Use these categories when possible. Otherwise, use "debitage" as a general label. Example: "5 flakes (1 primary, 2 secondary, 2 tertiary), 1 blocky debris"

Utilized Flake/Flake Tool

A flake which has been used as a tool without modification/retouching.

Flake Knife
A knife consisting of a flake with secondary chipping on the edges only. **The simple flake knife is typically affiliated to the Hopewell**, and therefore this category should only be used for objects from Hopewellian sites. This is a slender flake having a single scar on one face and two to four longitudinal primary scars on the other. Retouched flake knives usually have one or more edges secondarily chipped on one, more rarely on two, sides. Example: "1 flake knife"

Uniface

Any chipped stone object which has been knapped on only one face/side. Example: "1 uniface"

Scraper
The term scraper has no definite meaning and can include types also classified under knife. The term scraper will only be used for those specialized implements already described in archaeological literature. These tools are generally large flakes which have been reworked on one face/edge (see below). Example: "1 scraper (side)," "1 scraper (end)"
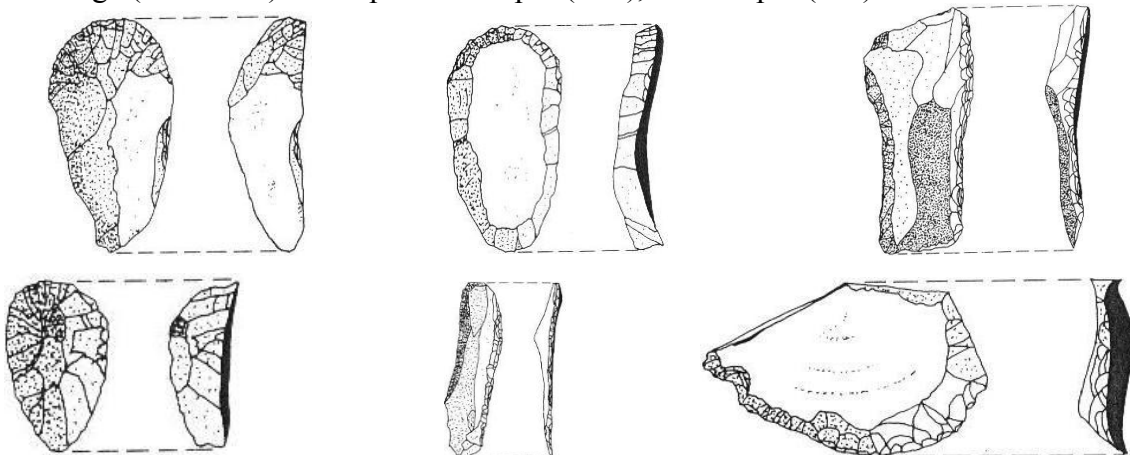
Biface

Any chipped stone object which has been knapped on two faces/sides. These can include crude bifaces or finished bifaces. Example: "1 biface"
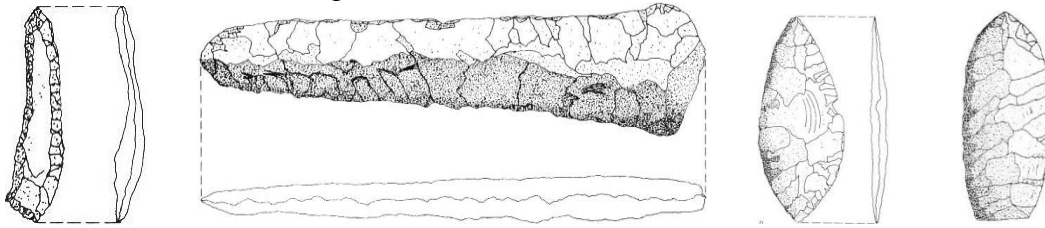
Core Knife

Any core that has also been used as a knife (multi-function tool). Example: "1 core knife"

Knife

All chipped stone artifacts having a cutting edge and not included as projectile point. They are described by geometric outline. Knife types include corner tang (see below, left) and diamond beveled (see below, right). All other biface knives will be identified by researchers during their analysis. Example: "1 biface fragment (knife-corner-tang)"
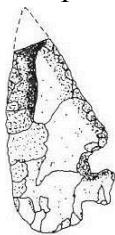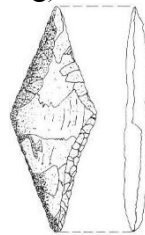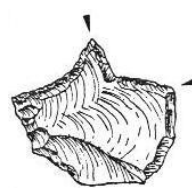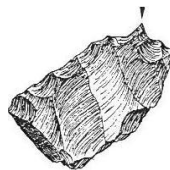
("corner-tanged")   ("diamond beveled")

Graver

A chipped stone implement with a small, fine tip whose functional purpose supposedly is for engraving or cutting, rather than perforating. The types are: reworked point, flake, and finished graver. Example: "1 graver"

Chipped stone Axe/Adze/Celt/Spade/Hoe

A rather heavy, chipped stone form, ranging from having a constricted mid-section ("double-bit") to being slightly tear dropped-shaped ("stemmed"). Many specimens show polish along the edges from use. Example: "1 axe/hoe fragment (chipped stone, double-bit)"

Projectile Point
This category includes all hefted, stemmed, or notched end single unit types. For the purposes of consistent cataloging and to efficiently budget time, all points will be defined based on the shape/style of the base and the notching style (if present). Point tips and midsections will be labeled and cataloged as "tips" and "midsections," as the point style is unknown. If the popular point name is known, it can be added in parentheses after the point style has been recorded. For example, "1 point (arrow: triangular (Fresno))." Usually, it is inferred that a point is a dart/spear point. Please indicate whether the point is arrow or dart/spear.

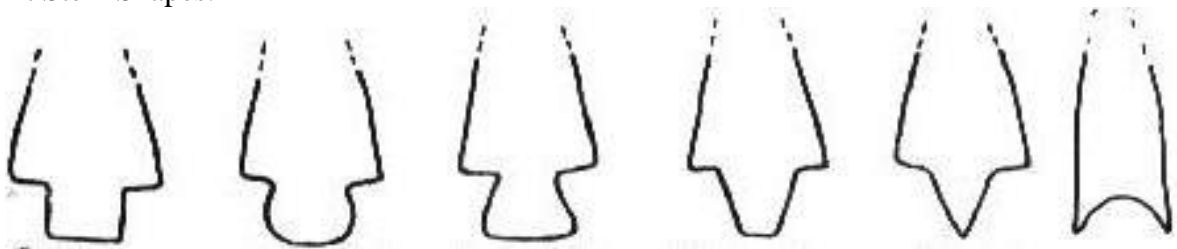Points may be described based on one or more of the following categories:

Point Shapes:
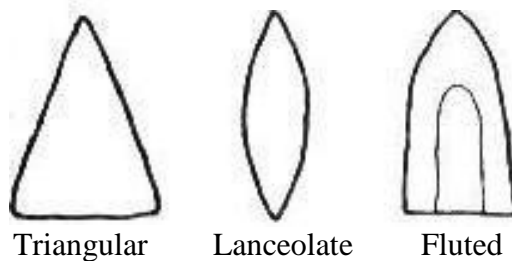
Triangular   Lanceolate   Fluted

Point Stem Shapes:

Straight   Rounded   Expanding   Contracting   Pointed   Concave
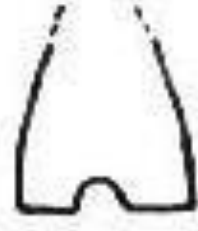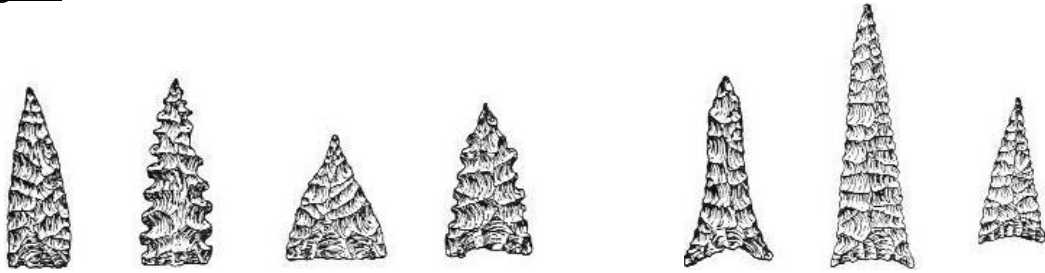
Point Notching Styles:

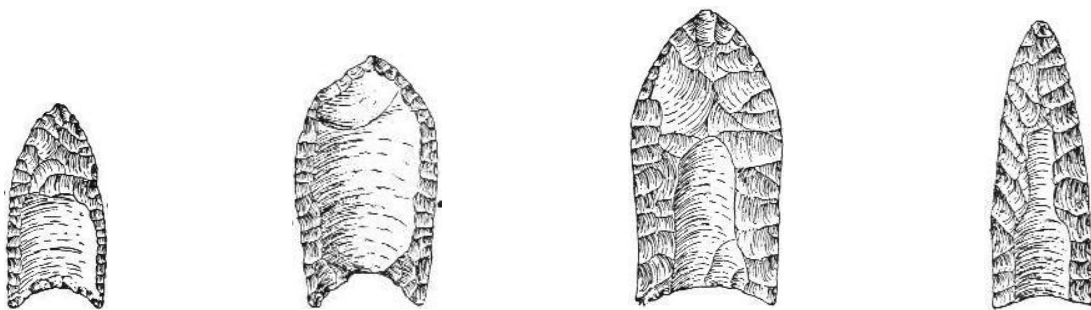Side-Notched   Corner-Notched   Basal-Notched
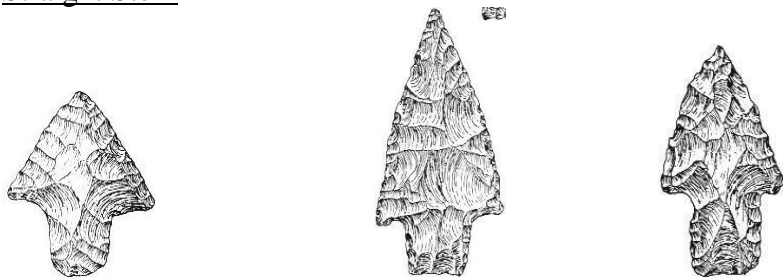
Triangular

"triangular, concave base"
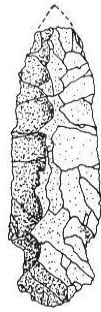
Lanceolate
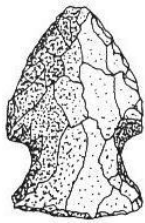
"lanceolate, concave base"
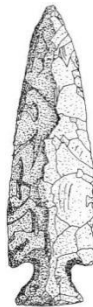
Fluted

"fluted, concave base"

Straight Stem

Expanding Stem
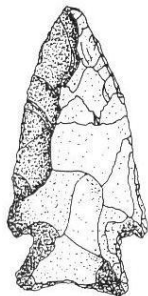
Contracting Stem

Concave Base

Corner-Notched

Side-Notched
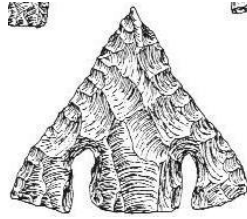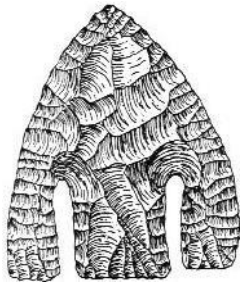
"side/basal-notched"

Basal-Notched
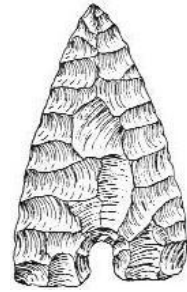
Serrated

Point/Drill

Any drill which was created from an expended point. These are identified based on the basal shape of the drill (which is described in the same manner as a point). If no distinctive basal shape can be identified, the object is cataloged simply as a "drill." Example: "1 point/drill (expanding stem)"
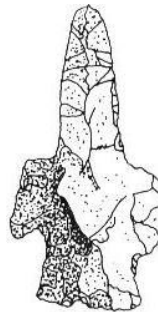
Drill

A chipped stone implement with long, narrow tip whose functional purpose supposedly is for perforating and/or drilling. Example: "1 drill fragment"
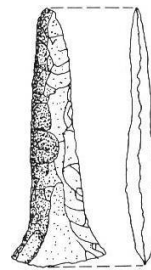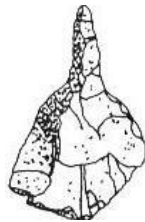
Other Tool
Any chipped stone object which has been shaped into a tool which has not been mentioned here.

Pitted Stone

Hammerstone

An otherwise unmodified pebble showing marks of use as a hammer. A pitted hammerstone is a
flattened pebble with rounded outline, pitted or roughened in the center of either face. Example:
"1 hammerstone"
Many times hammerstones were also used as manos (see groundstone, below). These are labeled
as "hammerstone/mano."
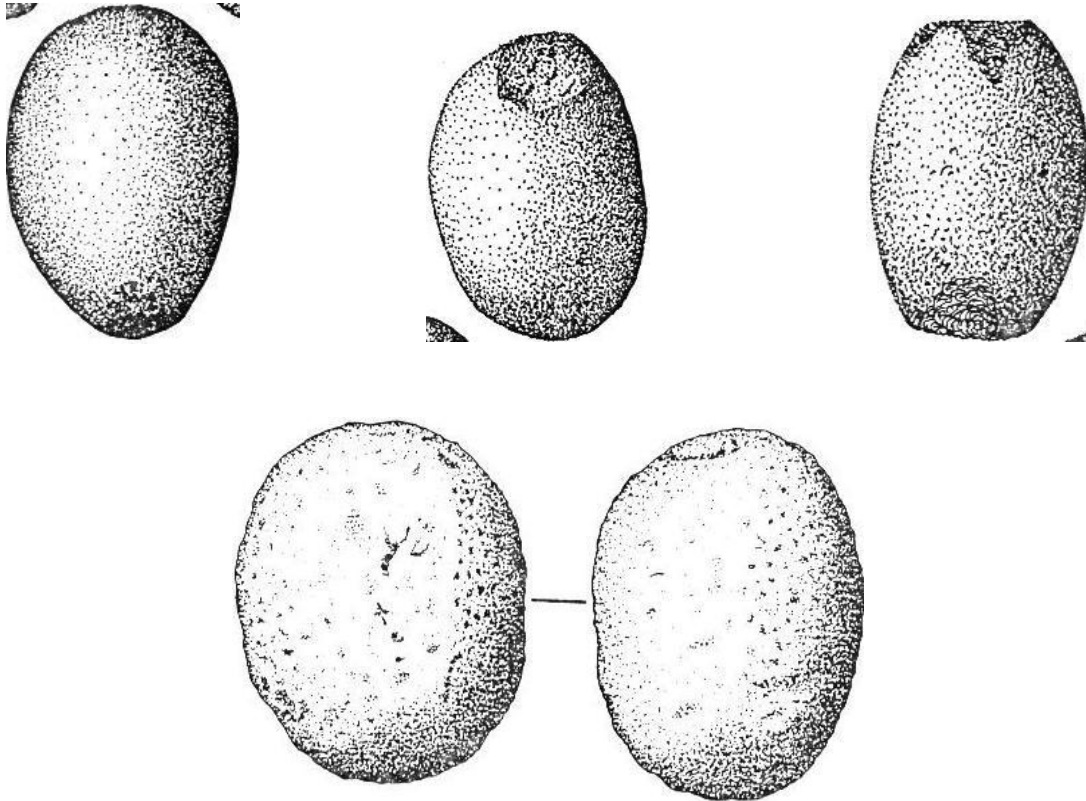
Groundstone

Axe/Maul

A characteristic form of polished stone cutting tool with a groove for hafting, of three general types—three-quarter grooved, full-grooved, and grooved on two faces, according to the number of sides along which the groove continues. Unlike an axe, which is generally wedge-shaped, a maul is more rounded in shape and was likely used for hammering rather than chopping. Example: "1 axe (groundstone-3/4 grooved)"

Axes
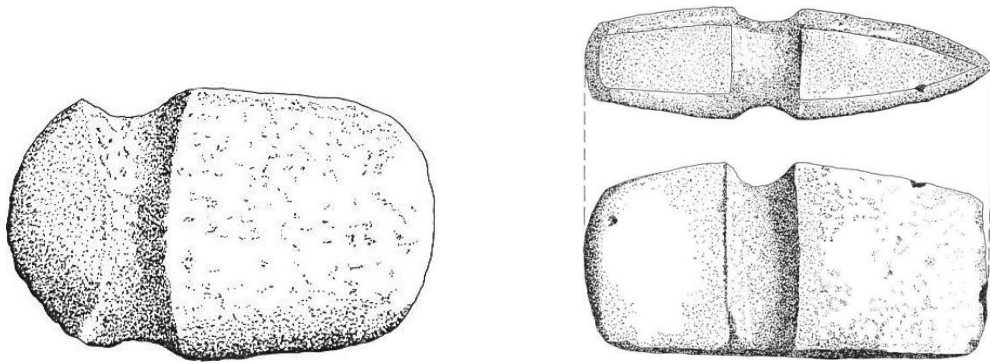
Maul
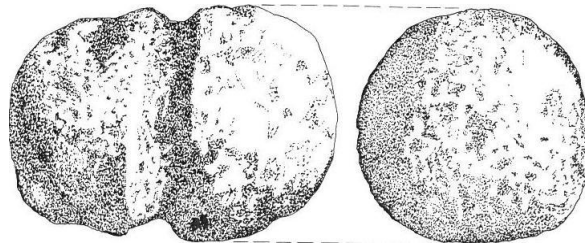
Celt/Adze

An ungrooved hatchet-like implement of stone, copper or hematite (or shell). The shape of cross-section and outline of such tools usually differs from that of the grooved axe; celts are bifacially beveled, while adzes are unifacially beveled. Example: "1 celt fragment (groundstone)"

Celt: *Azde:*
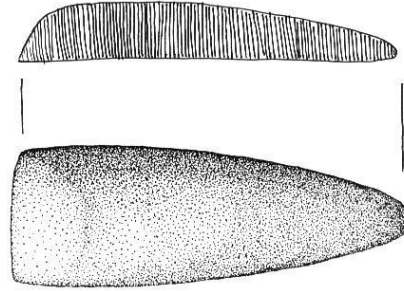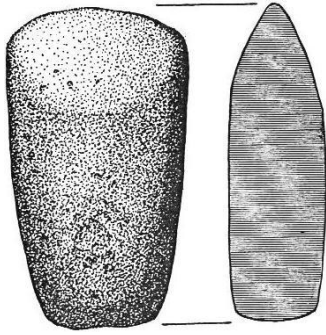
Mano

A small, oval handstone of sandstone, quartzite, or other stone shaped to match the style of the grinding stone on which they were to be used. Manos are described as irregular or by geometric outline where carefully finished. Example: "1 mano"
Note: Sometimes manos were also used as multipurpose tools (for example, "hammerstone/mano" or "nutting stone/mano").
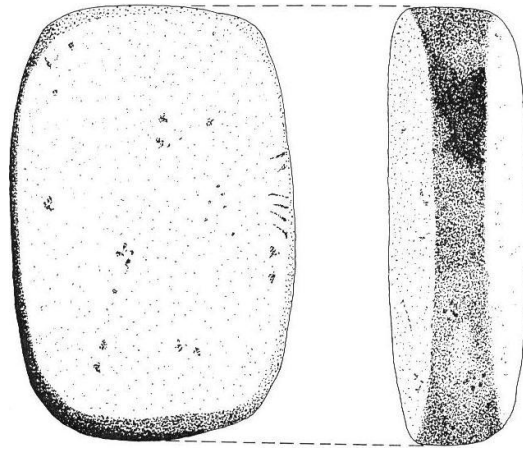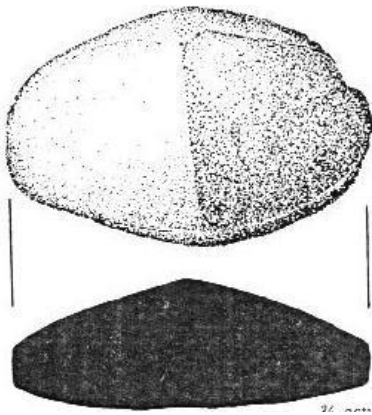
Grinding Basin (Metate)

A large stone artifact upon which grinding has been done. Metates have an elliptical or rectangular outline to the grinding surface. Mortars (see Mortar/Pestle below) and metates which are worn into a large slab or bedrock are described as bed rock mortars or metates. Example: "1 metate fragment"
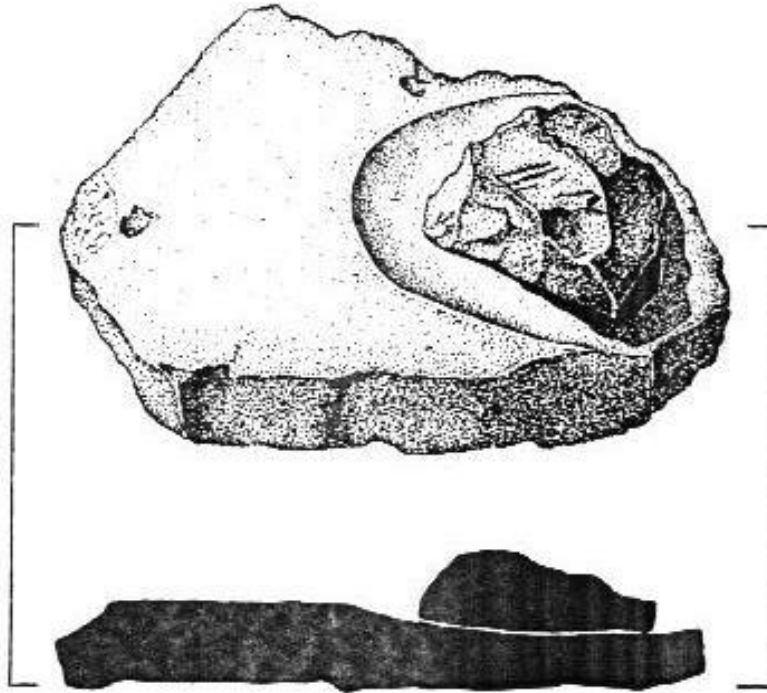
Nutting stone

Generally smaller than a metate (usually small enough to carry in the hand), nutting stones contain one or more small circular pits ground into the grinding face, created from the grinding of small nuts instead of one large groove on the surface. Example: "1 nutting stone"

Mortar/Pestle

A mortar is a large stone artifact upon which grinding has been done. Mortars have a circular outline to the grinding surface. Pestles are long, cylindrical pounding tools, rounded at one or both ends, which were used in association with a stone or wooden mortar for plant-processing. Example: "1 mortar" or "1 pestle fragment"

Mortars
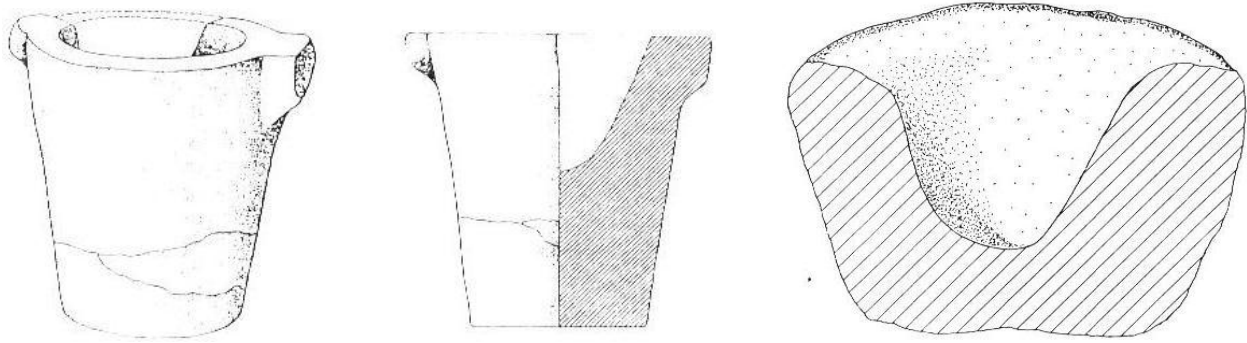
Pestles
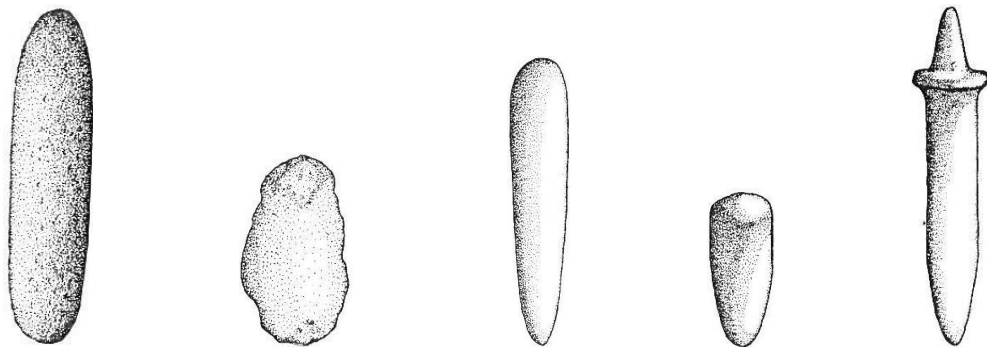
Abrader

A fragment of sandstone, either grooved or ungrooved, originally employed to fashion, sharpen, or polish other objects or implements in the process of making or during use. Example: "1 abrader (sandstone)"
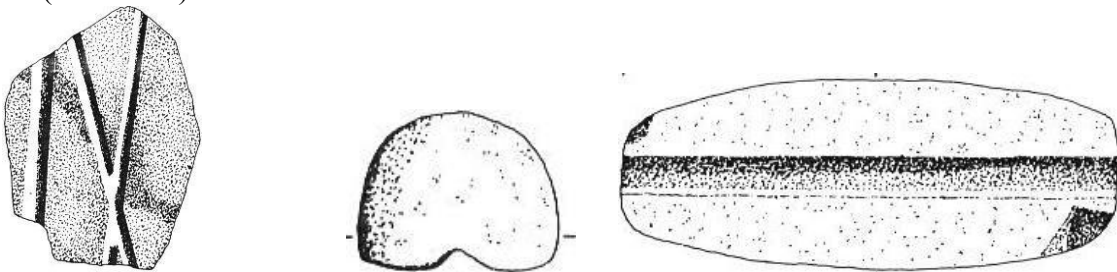
Other Groundstone Tools

Any groundstone object which has been worked into a tool not mentioned elsewhere in this manual.

Anvil

    A roughly hemispherical stone with a single shallow central pit in the flat surface and the edge battered by use. Some specimens were also employed as hammers.

Pipe

Effigy stone pipes are most commonly associated with burials and will most likely not be present in the collections. However, it is possible to identify a simple stone elbow, straight (tubular), or T-shaped (Calumet) stone pipe. Example: "1 pipe fragment (groundstone-T-shaped)"
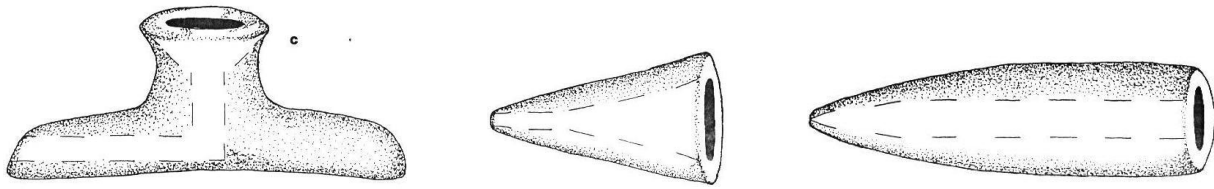
Ornaments

Gorget/Pendant

A polished or groundstone artifact having one or more perforations and/or grooves for suspension as an ornament. Although commonly groundstone, these were also created out of bone or shell. Example: "1 gorget (groundstone)"

Gorget: Pendant:
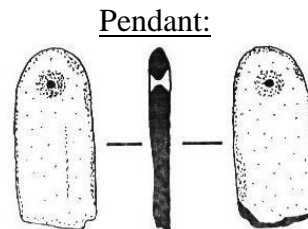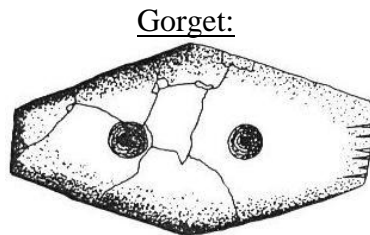
Earspool

Circular disks, used as ear ornaments. Earspools can be decorated or undecorated and can vary widely in style and material, including wood and pottery. Many earspools from Spiro (34Lf40) were also overlaid with copper plating and shell. Example: "1 earspool fragment (groundstone)"
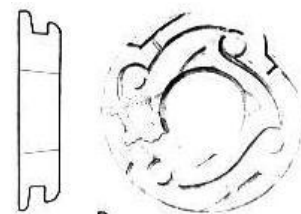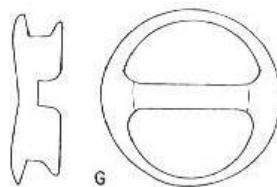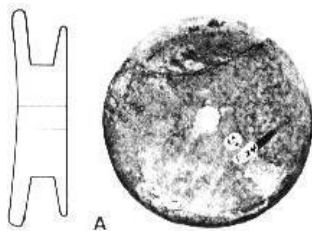
Other groundstone

Atlatl Weight/Bannerstone

A small, long piece of groundstone in which grooves have been worn due to suspension as an atlatl weight or ornament. Example: "1 atlatl weight (groundstone)"
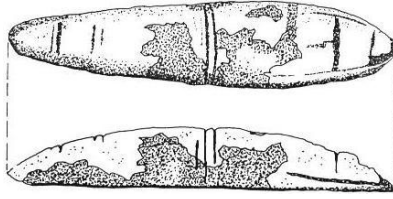
Bead

A small groundstone object through which a small hole has been drilled for the use of the object as a bead ornament. Beads were also created out of pottery, bone and shell. Example: "1 bead (groundstone)"
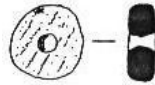
Boatstone

A roughly "boat shaped" artifact which occurs in a wide variety of forms usually characterized by possessing a plane or concave surface and a convex surface, the artifact itself being generally elongated. Example: 1 boatstone (groundstone)"
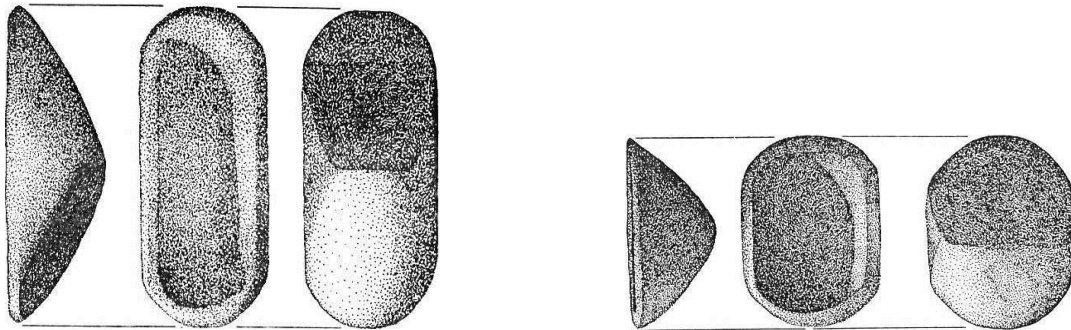
Figurine/Effigy

A groundstone object which has been modified into a small figure or effigy shape. Figurines were also created out of pottery. Example: "1 figurine fragment (groundstone)"
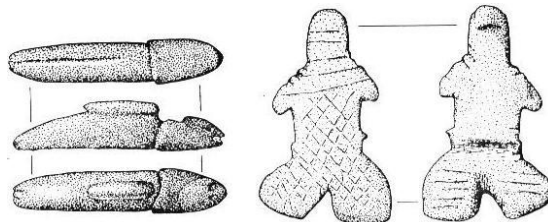
Chunky stone/Discoidal

A polished or groundstone artifact roughly "disc" shaped. The artifact is circular in outline and may have either plane, concave, or convex surfaces. Example: "1 chunky stone fragment"
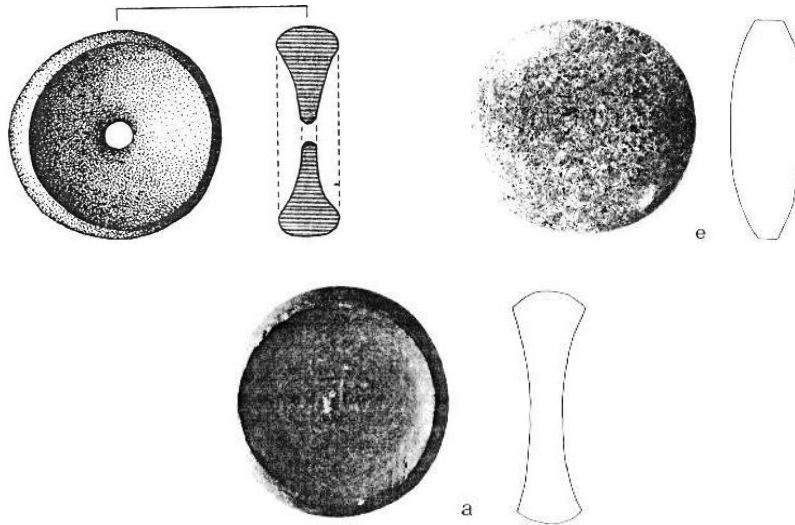
Net Weight

Similar to an atlatl weight, net weights are rocks (generally round, but sometimes flat) or pieces of rocks that have either a circular groove all of the way around the center (round rocks), or 2 notches grooved into two edges (flat rocks). This is where the net was secured to the rock. Example: "1 net weight"

Pigment

A chunk of Ochre/Hematite, Limonite, Kaolin, or Galena. These pigments were used for the manufacture of paints. Example: "5 hematite," or "1 kaolin sample"

Unmodified Rock

Fire-Cracked Rock (FCR)

The designation of fire-cracked rock (FCR) is assigned to any otherwise unmodified rock which has been heat altered. Heating may have caused spalling. In this case, inspect the area(s) of spalling to make sure they were not man-made (look for flake scars) before cataloging the object as FCR. Generally, stone can assume many different colors due to heat alteration (pink being a tell-tale sign), while limestone becomes very chalky in texture.

Pottery

The pottery category consists of any fired clay materials. This can be in the form of vessels, daub, ornaments, figurines, and more, or it can be simply in the form of burned clay. Pottery vessels, ornaments, and figurines are many times tempered with grit, grog, bone, or shell. The temper should be recorded if possible in the catalog. Also make sure to examine each sherd for evidence of cooking residue (black charred accretions on the surface). These sherds should be treated in the same manner as diagnostic elements.

Vessels

Whole vessels should be recorded based on the general style (bottle, bowl, etc.). Partial vessels or vessel fragments should be recorded based on the presence or absence of decoration and location on the vessel (rim, neck/shoulder, handle, body, or base). For specific descriptions, see below.

Rim

Neck/Shoulder

Body

Base
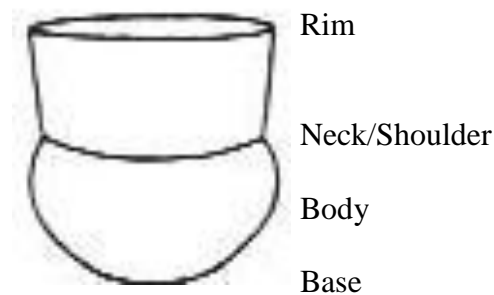
Rim
Rim sherds are considered a diagnostic element of a vessel. They can be decorated or undecorated. Example: "1 pottery rim sherd (punctate)"
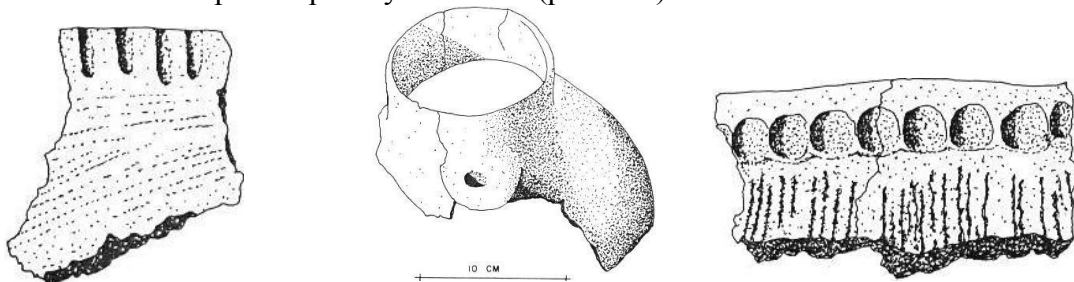
Handle
Vessel handles are considered to be a diagnostic element of a vessel. They can be decorated or undecorated. Example: "1 pottery handle (fingernail impressed)"
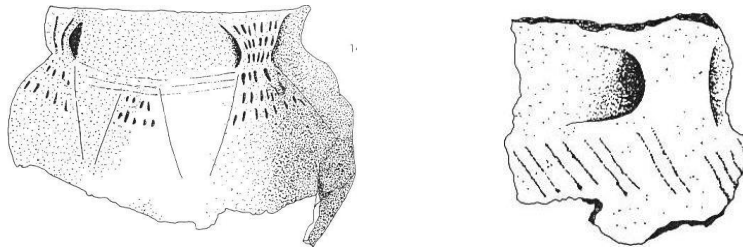
Neck/Shoulder

Vessel necks/shoulders are considered to be a diagnostic element of a vessel. They can be decorated or undecorated. Example: "1 pottery shoulder sherd"
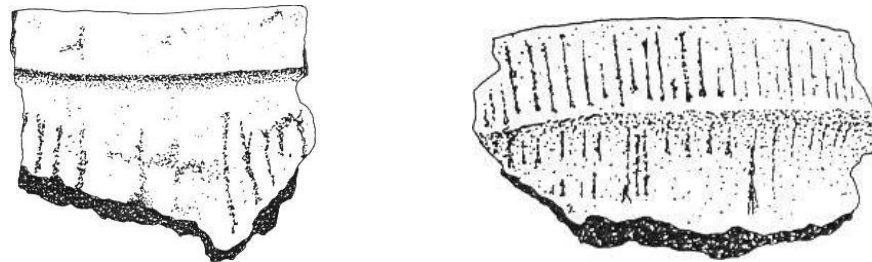
Undecorated Body

Undecorated body sherds are not considered to be a diagnostic element of a vessel. Example: "1 pottery body sherd" (no decoration is inferred).

Decorated Body

Body sherds are sometimes decorated (please indicate decoration type, including: cord-marked, incised, punctuate, fingernail-impressed, engraved, or pinched). If the decoration has been typed (Neosho Punctate, etc), please include this in the catalog. Example: "1 pottery body sherd (incised)"
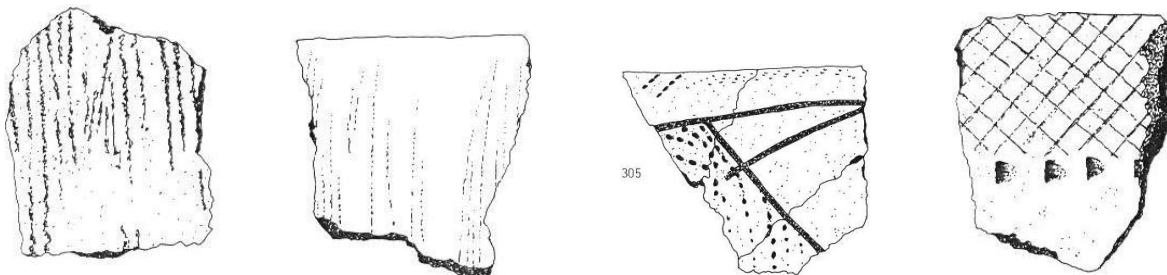
Base

Base sherds are considered to be a diagnostic element of a vessel. They are most commonly undecorated. Example: "1 pottery base sherd"

Pipe

Pottery/clay pipes can be tubular, T-shapes, or elbow-shaped in form and can be decorated or undecorated. Example: "1 pipe fragment (pottery-tubular)"
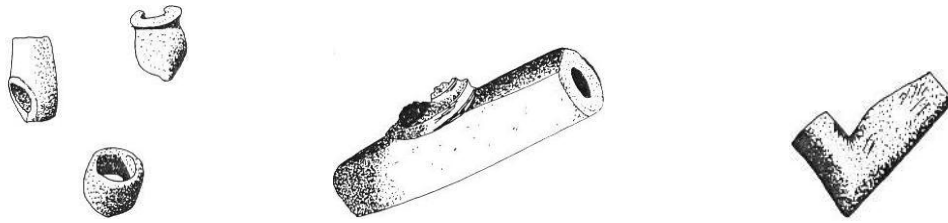
Ornaments

Earspool
> See Earspool in Grounstone section for a description. Example: "1 earspool (pottery)"

Figurine/Effigy
> A clay object which has been shaped into a small figure or effigy shape and fired. Example: "1 figurine fragment (pottery)"
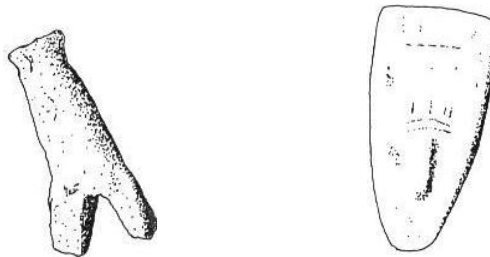
Clay ball
> Clay balls can range from toys (like marbles) to pieces of figurines. Raw potter's clay is usually found in the form of bricks.

Beads
> See Beads in the Groundstone section for a description. Example: "1 bead (pottery)"

Daub

Daub is the clay/mud remains of a wattle & daub house, in which clay or mud ("daub") has been affixed to the wooden structure ("wattle") of a house. Heat from the sun "bakes" the clay, causing it to keep its shape archaeologically. Thus, many daub fragments have wooden impressions on them which can help in the research of prehistoric house construction methods. If a piece of daub shows a wooden impression(s), treat it in a similar fashion to diagnostic pottery. Example: "5 daub, 1 daub (with wattle impression)"

Shell

Unmodified shell

Unmodified shell is not identified to species during the cataloging process. However, if both mussel and snail shells are present, they should be cataloged and bagged separately.

Mussel
>   Mussel shell is what most people refer to as "clam shell." It consists of larger shells and shell fragments and is many times very friable. Example: "1 shell fragment (mussel)"
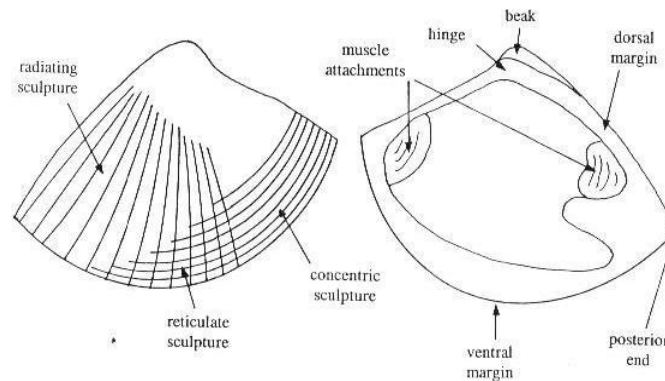
Snail
>   Snail shells are very small (many are microscopic) and can be used for environmental research. These shells are also usually very friable. Example: "1 shell (snail)"
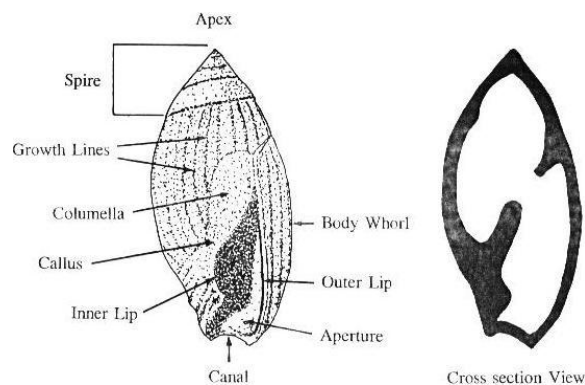
Modified shell

Bead
>   A small shell object through which a small hole (or holes) has been drilled for the use of the object as a bead ornament. Example: "1 bead (shell-tubular)"
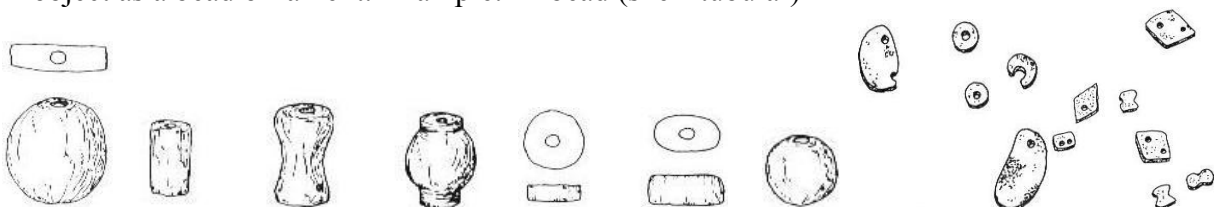
Pendant/Gorget

Any piece of shell through which a hole has been drilled for use as an ornament. See Pendant/Gorget in the Groundstone section for drawings. Example: "1 gorget (shell)"

Incised shell

Any shell or shell fragment which has been engraved or incised. Many well-known engraved shell pieces in Oklahoma are from the Spiro site (34Lf-40). Example: "1 shell fragment (incised)"

Bone

Bone is generally cataloged as "unmodified/unworked" or "modified/worked." Refer to the diagram below to familiarize yourself with a few different signs to look for in determining whether or not a piece of bone has been modified.

PLEASE SPECIFY "animal bone" in this category (as opposed to "bone"), as if the catalog does not specify, flags will raise with respect to NAGPRA.
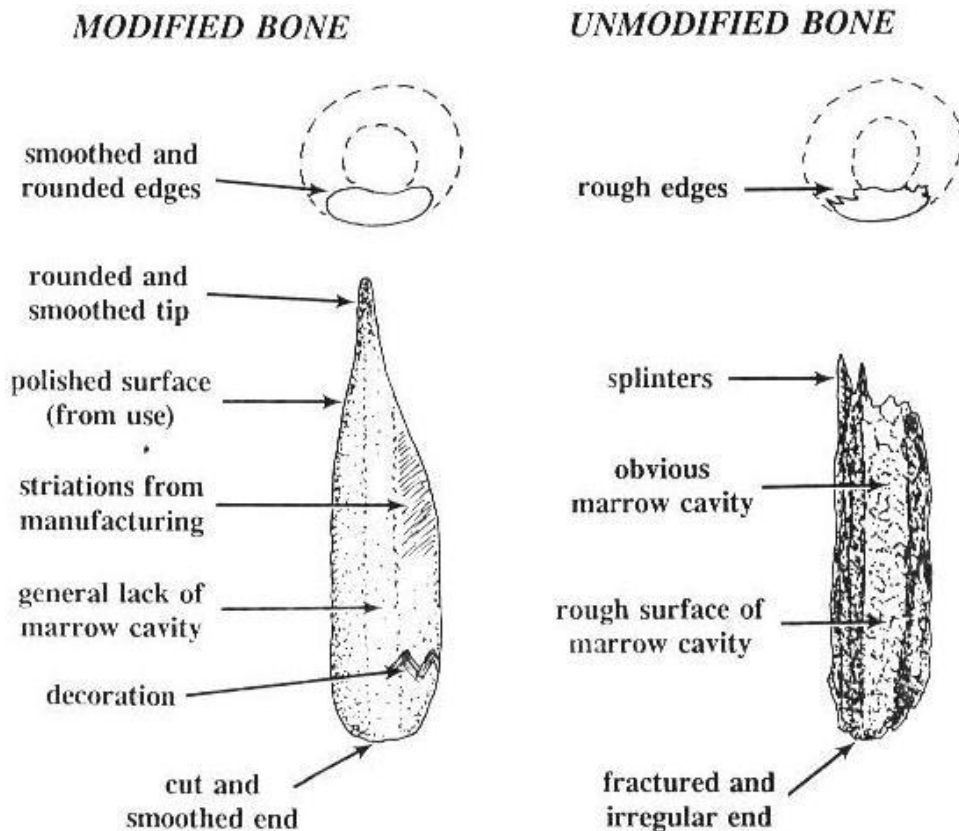
Unmodified bone

Bone
Unmodified bone is generally not identified to species or element, unless it was identified as such in the field. Obvious species elements may be separated, time permitting (example, bagging turtle shell separately from mammal bones). No modification is inferred in the catalog. Example: "5 animal bone fragments"

Antler
Antler bone is denser than other bone and many times looks very porous when in a deteriorated state. Antler was commonly used as a flint knapping tool, so examine the ends of the antler for signs of pecking/use. Example: "1 animal bone (antler)"

Teeth
Teeth are considered diagnostic elements (for the identification of species and possibly to determine the age and health of specimens). Example: "1 animal bone (tooth)"

Modified/Worked bone

Modified or worked bone represents any bone that has been altered from its original state (see diagram above). This may include cut marks, worn edges, polishing, intentional warping (see below right), or modified shapes (shapes cut or ground out of the original bone specimen). Example: "1 animal bone fragment (worked)"
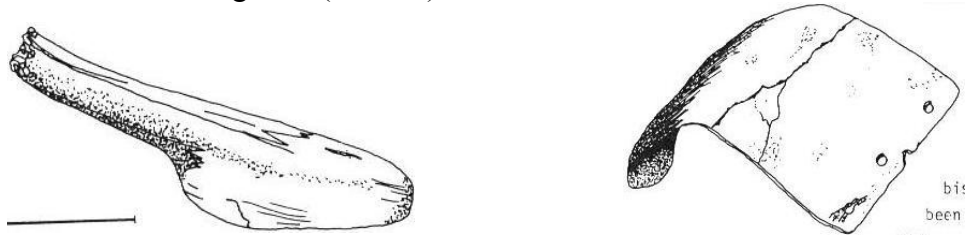
Awl/Needle
Also referred to as a perforator, bone awls/needles were manufactured from split long bones. Shaft and points may exhibit wear and polish. These tools were probably used in hide working, clothing manufacture, etc. Example: "1 animal bone fragment (awl)"
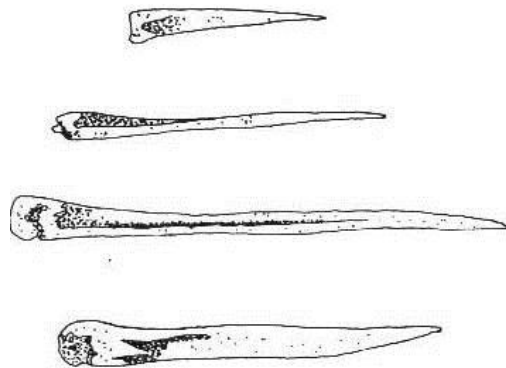
Scapula hoe
These tools were manufactured by removal of spines from the exterior surfaces of buson scapulae. Specimens often have polished working ends and occasionally have crack lace holes (where holes have been drilled on either side of a crack, through which string was tied to prevent the crack from increasing-see right picture). Example: "1 hoe (animal bone-scapula)"
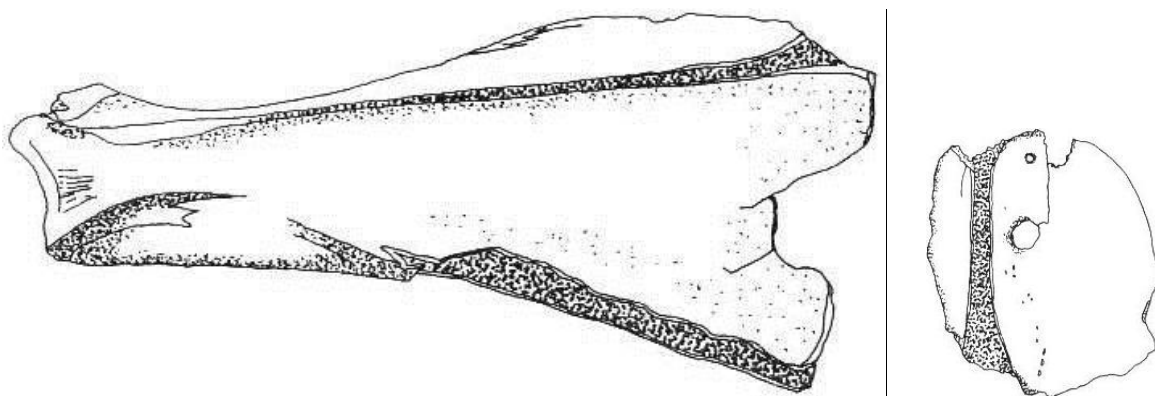
Tibia digging stick
These tools were created by splitting the tibia (usually from a bison) to form a wedge-shaped cutting edge. This edge usually shows polish due to use. The distal end of the bone was also hollowed out many times to accommodate a wooden handle. Example: "1 digging stick (animal bone-tibia)"
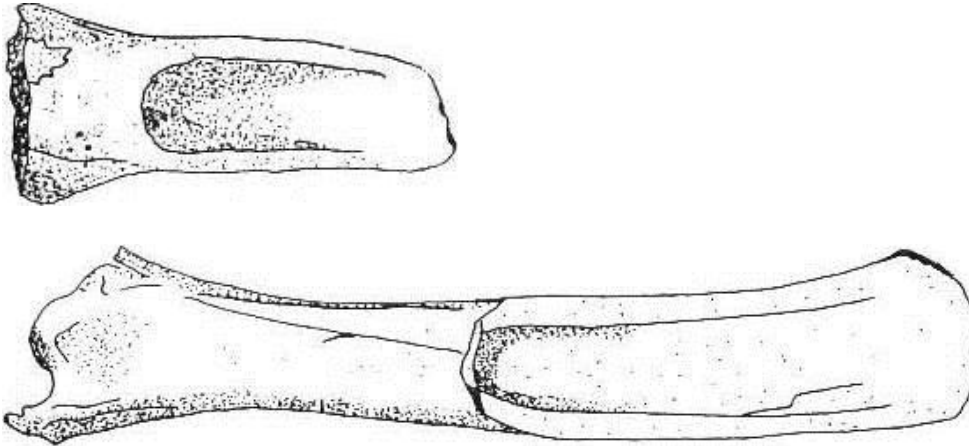
Deer mandible sickle
These tools were used as sickles (cutting grass/harvesting crops) and are difficult to identify. Sections of bone are usually removed from the bottom of the mandible as well as from the posterior edge of the ascending ramus. In addition, polishing is usually present along the bottom edge of the mandible from use. Example: "1 sickle (deer mandible)"
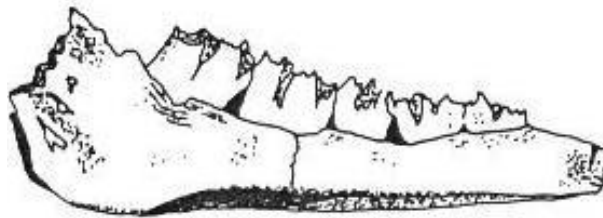
Ornaments
    Pendant
    Any small piece of bone through which a hole has been drilled. Pendants are usually manufactured from sections of rib bone. Example: "1 pendant (animal bone)"

Bead

Any small section of long bone through which a hole has been drilled. Many times bone beads were created out of bird bones, which are naturally hollow. In this case, look for evidence of cut marks on the exterior (possible designs) or the edges of the bone, where the distal ends have been removed. Example: "1 bead (animal bone)"

Misc./Other Worked Bone

Antler Scraper

These scraper hafts are manufactured from a section of antler. The notch at the top facilitated hafting a chipped stone or metal scraper blade. Example: "1 scraper (animal bone-antler)"
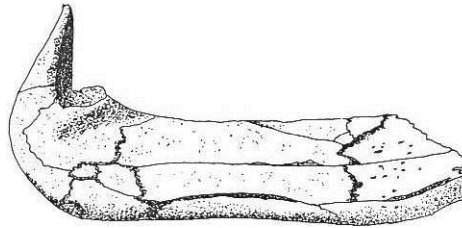
Beamer

These tools were manufactured by removal of a section from the shaft of a long bone, producing a pair of cutting edges. Elements used in manufacture are small, including deer metapodials (top) and bison thoracic vertebral spines (bottom). Example: "1 beamer (animal bone)"
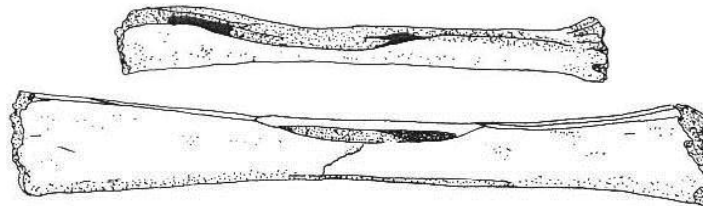
Shaft Wrench

These tools may be made of deer metapodials or bison ribs. Wooden shafts were probably inserted into the boles and shaped by exerting leverage on the bone. Both illustrated specimens also have incised decorations. Example: "1 wrench (animal bone shaft)"
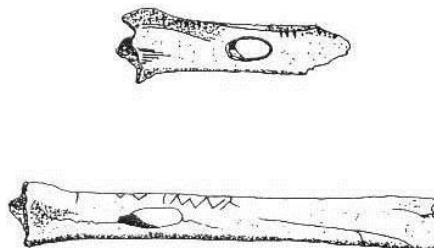
Other Prehistoric

Copper

Archaeological copper can come in the form of prehistoric copper (which was usually cold-hammered into shapes/tools) or historic copper, which is not dealt with here. Archaeological copper objects are many times fragile and/or corroding (taking on a greenish color), due to chemical imbalances in the soil. If identified, consult the SNOMNH conservator, as the object may need to be stabilized prior to storage. Example: "1 copper fragment"

Silica (burned grass)

Evidence of burned grass is particularly important during the prehistoric and historic periods at sites where the occupants built grass houses or contained grass components in their structures. Burned grass looks similar to a mass of froth or froth-like material, dark grey in color and very light and fragile. Example: "1 silica"

Perishables

The SNOMNH collection does not hold many perishable materials, as they did not survive their archaeological context or are housed with ethnology (more modern samples). There are a few exceptions:

Leather

Archaeological leather is usually extremely fragile and requires a tailored box for storage. If identified, consult the SNOMNH conservator prior to storing the object, as the object may need to be stabilized prior to storage. Example: "1 leather fragment"

Woven material

Archaeological textiles and basketry are usually extremely fragile and require tailor boxes for storage. If identified, consult the SNOMNH conservator prior to storing the object, as the object may need to be stabilized prior to storage. Example: "1 basket fragment"

Wood

Wood can take the form of charcoal (see Charcoal/Radiocarbon (C-14) in Other Samples section for a description) or it can be preserved in its original, unburned form, although this is rare. In these cases, the fragile charred or dried wood/wooden objects will each require their own tailored archival box for storage. Example: "1 wood fragment (burned)" or "1 figurine fragment (wood)"

Other Samples

In addition to the above-mentioned objects, many collections may also include soil and/or floral samples.

Soil

It is SNOMNH's policy to NOT ACCEPT any bulk soil samples for storage, although small soil samples (for example, phytolith samples) are acceptable. Any bulk soil samples taken in the field should be processed prior to entry into the museum. However, many of the collections already in the museum contain soil samples, which should be boxed and labeled separately from the rest of the collection. Example: "1 soil sample"

All soil samples which have been professionally processed should contain a light and a heavy fraction. The light fraction contains seeds/charcoal/botanical remains and should be placed in an archival vial. The heavy fraction is the processed soil which did not float to the surface. It will contain larger soil particles (like sand/gravel), and possibly very small cultural materials (like chipped stone). The heavy fraction should be placed in a zip-lock polyethylene bag. Example: "1 heavy fraction sample" or "1 light fraction sample"

Botanical Remains
Some collections have been analyzed by botanical experts, and thus the light fraction has been identified and separated based on the researcher's categories. These categories should be maintained (each botanical category – like *Chenopodium* or "Modern seeds" – should be placed in a separate archival vial). Example: "5 seeds (3 Chenopodium, 2 modern)"

Charcoal/Radiocarbon (C-14)

Charcoal samples should NOT be handled, to minimize the chances of contamination. Many times these samples are sent to labs for a radiocarbon test to determine the age of a site. Hence, it is particularly important to maintain the context/provenience of each sample. Example: "1 charcoal sample"

Historic Artifacts

Below is a list of some common historic artifacts identified in the collection. For more information, consult the Collection Manager.

Historic Ceramics
    Pipe
    Dinnerware
    Other

Glass
    Vessel
    Window
    Other

Metal
    Nail (square vs. round)
    Weaponry
    Dinnerware
    Container
    Button
    Misc iron
    Misc copper
    Misc lead

Chipped Stone
    Gunflint
    Other

Shell
    Button

Slag (lava-like; refuse from smelting metal)