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## 1935 Folsom & Yuma Artifact Booklet

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Folsom and Yuma Artifacts

PART II

*By*

J. D. FIGGINS

VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 2

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# Folsom and Yuma Artifacts

## PART II\*

*By*

J. D. FIGGINS

Since Yuma artifacts were first brought to the attention of archaeologists, so many "types" have been introduced, as a means of supporting the proposal of a direct relationship with those described as Folsom, that the originally attributed characters of the former are in danger of being obscured. The proposal referred to also includes the theory that Yuma artifacts antedate the Folsom types and that the latter are the final stage in the development of the former.

The maintenance of such a proposal is dependent upon clear evidence of transition from crude Yuma artifacts to the better types, and a blending of the characters of the latter with those of the Folsom. The theory is not supported by material evidence, however, and it is unfortunate that outline drawings have been employed for illustration. They do not express the variations in flaking. Photographic reproductions are more enlightening, if less convincing.

The proposal of a relationship between Folsom and Yuma artifacts, without adequate demonstration by specimens, tends to invite undue liberties. On the one hand, so wide a range of variation might be attributed to the Yuma types that it would be quite impossible to apply a reasonable set of characters through which all could be identified. On the other hand, the characteristics of Folsom artifacts could be circumscribed to a degree that would prohibit allowance for the normal factors which entered into their production: the uses for which they were designed; individual preference and skill of the worker, and the nature of the materials at hand. Such possibilities have, in fact, attained the proportions of realities and hence the following pages.

In four instances, proposed "types" of Yuma artifacts are based upon single examples. Others are too far removed from identifiable Yuma characters to entitle them to such recognition. Numerous of the better and more abundant types of Yuma artifacts have been overlooked. It is true, of course, that these latter examples bear no resemblance to Folsom artifacts. There is need for more clearly defined distinctions between Folsom and Yuma artifacts: for more liberal interpretations of Folsom characters, and, in the total absence of evidence to show that Yuma artifacts are culturally related to Folsom types, that variations in the former be confined within reasonable limitations.

The absence of one of the characters which distinguish Folsom artifacts, such as the side fluting, when in all other respects they are typical, neither justifies their exclusion from that group nor warrants their inclusion as Yuma. The degree of side fluting is highly variable. It may progress to the tip of the artifact or consist

\*FOLSOM AND YUMA ARTIFACTS, by J. D. Figgins: PROCEEDINGS, Vol. XIII, No. 2.

of nothing more than a thinning of the base. The spalls taken from the sides may flake out or break off at any point in their advance from the base. That pure chance enters largely into the character and extent of the side fluting cannot be questioned. The difference in the materials employed in these artifacts would, in itself, produce wide variations. Therefore, we are no more justified in restricting Folsom artifacts to the types with fluted sides, and circumscribing their limits of distribution, provided other characteristics are in evidence, than we are in demanding diagonal side chipping for the identity of all Yuma types. Diagonal side flaking is of frequent occurrence in Yuma artifacts but not more so than widely different types of the art. The variation in the side flaking of Yuma types is equivalent to, or greater than, that of the fluting in Folsom artifacts, but it will be observed that the former, like the latter, retain their identifiable form characters, unless reworking is in evidence.

As the specimen evidence does not support the proposal that Folsom artifacts are the ultimate result of Yuma development, their variations must be considered from a more equitable standpoint. The proposal of transitional relationship has not advanced beyond an horizon of theory. It is quite devoid of material support and must be dismissed.

In a late paper I illustrated numerous Folsom artifacts as a means of demonstrating the necessity of recognizing certain variations as referable to that culture, in spite of crude workmanship, and to show that it was neither obligatory, nor proper, to discard examples merely because they are not representative of all the four characteristics which distinguish the better types. I also attempted to demonstrate the evolution of Folsom artifacts, from crude examples to the best available ones. The object of the following pages is a somewhat similar treatment of Yuma artifacts. Not the least of the intended purposes is to fix within reasonable limits of variation, the characters which distinguish Yuma artifacts.

Reference has been made to proposed types which appear to occupy insecure positions. New discoveries indicate that others must be excluded from the Yuma category. The growing list of finds proves that what may have been mistaken for transitional stages are merely examples of reworking. A study of Yuma artifacts cannot fail to arouse a serious doubt as to the majority having been employed as hunting points. It is hardly conceivable that workers of sufficient intelligence to produce the finer types were so impractical in the matter of dart and spear points. The proportions of most Yuma artifacts are highly suggestive of their having been employed as knives, and implements for purposes other than hunting.

As has been stated elsewhere, there have been no discoveries of Yuma artifacts in association with articulated remains of extinct mammals, nor are there means through which to approximate their age, other than from a comparative standpoint. Over-enthusiasm relative to certain alleged associations has resulted in confusing the entire subject. The mere finding of artifacts in association with the disarticulated remains of mammals, whether the latter belong to extinct or modern races, does not warrant their being referred to as of equivalent age. The

fact that such skeletal remains are disarticulated necessitates the recognition of secondary agencies and unless there is contributory evidence, such as that described by Dr. F. H. H. Roberts, in connection with his work north of Fort Collins, Colorado,<sup>1</sup> finds of this nature must be viewed in a minor light. The discovery, near Scottsbluff, Nebraska, of a Yuma artifact in association with extinct and modern bison remains, in addition to a modern arrowhead, illustrates an example of secondary deposition. The recently published account of discoveries in the vicinity of Clovis, New Mexico,<sup>2</sup> is, perhaps, an unique example of the association of types of artifacts and skeletal remains, due to long accumulation: largely inseparable and undatable. The abundant evidence of charcoal and the presence of extinct mammal remains are but minor, and not major, contributory factors. This association appears to differ from that of the Scottsbluff site only in the matter of actuating agencies. And, as I have stated elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> the alleged finding of a Yuma artifact and mammal remains in Yuma County, Colorado, does not constitute an acceptable record of association; for in addition to their being widely separated horizontally, and occupying different strata, the erosional influence—the wind—had reduced all weighty objects to a more or less common level.

I would be remiss did I not here acknowledge the commission of a similar error, in recording the discovery of artifacts in association with the remains of extinct mammals near Frederick City, Oklahoma. And, since authors continue to refer to the Frederick City finds and cite publications in which they are referred to, I express a disavowal of longer attaching importance to them. This without the slightest reflection upon Mr. A. H. Holloman, who, I now believe, was the victim of a hoax, as he was in another matter. There is need for more careful and conservative interpretations of evidence, just as there is for a more specific application of characters through which to extricate Yuma artifacts from a plethora of types that, in some instances, bear scant, or no, relation to each other.

The artifacts found in association with bison remains on Lone Wolf Creek, near Colorado City, Texas, have been identified as "Yuma," but when they are carefully studied, it will be observed that there are few resemblances to that type. The flaking is of an ordinary nature, with secondary chipping on the edges, and while the latter is a Folsom character, it also occurs in other types, including modern artifacts. Its importance is, doubtless, restricted to a means of refining and sharpening the cutting edges. I have not seen examples of Yuma artifacts in which secondary chipping has been resorted to, except as a means of improving crude edges. The edges of the better types of Yuma artifacts *never* show evidence of rechipping—a strange omission in types that are alleged to merge directly with Folsom, in which retouching of the edges is a reasonably stable character. The Lone

<sup>1</sup>A FOLSOM COMPLEX, by Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr.: SMITHSONIAN MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS, Vol. 94, No. 4.

<sup>2</sup>EVIDENCE OF EARLY MAN IN NORTH AMERICA, by Edgar B. Howard: THE MUSEUM JOURNAL, Vol. XXIV, No. 2-3, 1935.

<sup>3</sup>FOLSOM AND YUMA ARTIFACTS, by J. D. Figgins: PROCEEDINGS, Vol. XIII, No. 2.

Wolf Creek artifacts lack the slightest evidence of basal off-sets for hafting and in one case, the base is slightly concave; in the other it is somewhat convex. In the first there is a marked widening forward from the base and in the last it is but little wider forward of the mid-section than at the base. Therefore, while these artifacts more nearly approach some of the characteristics that are referable to the Folsom types, than to Yuma, I should personally hesitate in designating them as either. The complete fossilization of the Lone Wolf Creek bison remains points to a greater age than that attributed to the Folsom bison, the Mammoth remains of Angus, Nebraska, and of Dent, Colorado. I am of the opinion that these artifacts might best be regarded as a subject for wholly independent studies. They should be dismissed in connection with either Folsom or Yuma artifacts.

Late reference has been made to certain types of artifacts as being "Folsom-like."\* In the light of the fact that there are no other recognized types of artifacts to which such examples might be assigned, the introduction of an hyphenated designation appears to be the result of ultra-conservatism, rather than to a visible and material need for such a course. But one other writer is inclined to recognizing such minute distinctions and while I am in fullest accord with Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts' contentions that Folsom artifacts do not, in themselves, constitute evidence of a culture, I can discover no plausible ground for the minority attempt to so sharply define the characters of the latter types. Dr. Roberts follows no such course, for in his latest, and exceedingly lucid, contribution to the subject, he recognizes such artifacts as "Folsom," regardless of their geographical origin. I personally entertain like views. The avoidance of complicated terminology is always advantageous. Plate V illustrates the types of artifacts to which I refer.

Reference has been made to basal concavity in Yuma artifacts. Such examples are proportionately short and while their remaining form and technique of flaking may be typical of the better Yuma examples, the crudity of the basal portion cannot fail to convey the impression of reworking. This is so obvious that one is inclined to wonder because of its having been otherwise interpreted. Such examples represent reworked, distal sections of broken Yuma blades. Other examples with typical Yuma bases are of similarly reduced lengths and have been repointed. In numerous Yuma artifacts there is slight concavity of the bases but this does not resemble that of Folsom types. To include the above reworked examples as types of Yuma artifacts would be highly misleading. The plausibility of such a contention is made possible only through the use of illustrations which omit the character of the side flaking.

So persistent are certain characters in both Folsom and Yuma artifacts that they may be said to be quite indispensable, as a means of identification. The squared and paralleling edges, or tapering from a maximum basal width, are no less necessary for the recognition of Yuma artifacts than are the deeply concave bases and broadened mid-sections for the identity of Folsom types. The better examples of

\*EVIDENCE OF EARLY MAN IN NORTH AMERICA, by Edgar B. Howard: THE MUSEUM JOURNAL, Vol. XXIV, No. 2-3, 1935.

Yuma artifacts are very rarely, and then scantily, widest across the mid-section. Folsom artifacts do not have squared bases, rarely paralleling edges, and never taper forward from a maximum basal width. The side chipping of most Yuma artifacts is remarkable for its delicacy and uniformity, frequently extending continuously across the blade. So far as I am aware, the side chipping of Yuma artifacts, often at an angle, is without rival. In addition to secondary chipping on the edges and the presence of basal projections, the better types of Folsom artifacts are remarkable merely because of the wide and irregularly extended side fluting. It would be difficult to visualize techniques at wider variance than those displayed in Folsom and Yuma artifacts, particularly the better types, and it is not believable that either was of spontaneous origin. Back of each type there must have been a long line of evolutionary progression from cruder types. There is an abundance of evidence at hand with which to maintain such a conclusion. I can discover nothing in support of the theory that Folsom artifacts are traceable to Yuma origin. There is no slightest evidence of intergradation of their characters.

As stated above, the bases of Yuma artifacts are squared, often to a remarkable degree of accuracy, and variably reduced in width at that point. The edges of the basal reductions are smoothed by grinding. This grinding appears in some Folsom artifacts but its constant presence in the former is suggestive of a means of reducing the excessive chafing imposed upon sinew of hafted tools that are in frequent use. The majority of the better Yuma artifacts are thin.

A second type of Yuma artifact is distinguished through markedly dissimilar side flaking. The bases are squared and basal off-sets are present. So prominent are central ridges, the reverse of the first mentioned types, that a cross-section is in the form of a "diamond." The flaking of the edges, however, is altogether unlike that of the previously described types, for instead of the removal of thin, and continuously paralleling flakes, short, deep and alternate flaking has given the edges of these tools a wavy or corrugated appearance. The central ridges are sufficiently smooth and even to produce the appearance of having been ground. Such ridges are present in Yuma artifacts that lack the type of flaking just described, but like the foregoing, no question can attach to their identity.

We may now turn to the less refined types of Yuma artifacts, which I venture to illustrate, not with the assurance that they are primitive Yuma examples, but to demonstrate the persistence of the squared basal character. They may be representative of the origin of the best types of Yuma artifacts or they may be imitative. They may be wholly unrelated, but unbroken transition can be illustrated from crude examples to the best types shown in Plate IV. There are examples before me in which typical basal characters and outlines are present, but in which the flaking is crude: crude to a degree that bears no resemblance to the better Yuma artifacts.

As previously stated, Yuma artifacts have not been found in association with largely articulated remains of extinct mammals, nor until lately was there evidence through which to establish their age. The vast majority have come from

the surface of cultivated fields and "blowouts." It is true that there was some slight articulation of the bison remains with which a Yuma artifact was found near Scottsbluff, Nebraska,<sup>1</sup> but the modern species, *Bison bison septentrionalis*, was inextricably associated with the extinct race, *Bison oliverhayi* and it has not been shown that this scant evidence of articulation is not referable to the modern race. A modern artifact was also found in the Scottsbluff deposit and associations of such a character would appear to establish nothing of more importance than an example of secondary deposition; and, perhaps, suggest that Yuma artifacts are of post-Folsom age and not pre-Folsom origin. A discovery of Yuma artifacts associated with modern bison remains in southeastern Colorado supports such a conclusion. Finally, however, Yuma artifacts have lately been found in circumstances which cannot be interpreted as other than representative of a period following that of dated Folsom artifacts.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, on the basis of our present knowledge and in the light of the more recent discoveries, it may be definitely inferred that Yuma artifacts are quite unrelated to those designated as Folsom and that the former post-date the latter.

<sup>1</sup>AN EVALUATION OF RECENT NEBRASKA FINDS SOMETIMES ATTRIBUTED TO THE PLEISTOCENE, by E. H. Bell and Wm. Van Royen: THE WISCONSIN ACHAEOLOGIST, April, 1934, Vol. 13, No. 3, New Series, pp. 49-70.

<sup>2</sup>As these discoveries were not made by the Colorado Museum of Natural History, I am not at liberty to go into further details.

PLATE I.

- 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7. From Ontario, Canada.
2. From Wyoming.
- 6 and 7. From Yuma County, Colorado.

PLATE II.

1. From Oklahoma.
- 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. From Arkansas Valley, Colorado.

PLATE III.

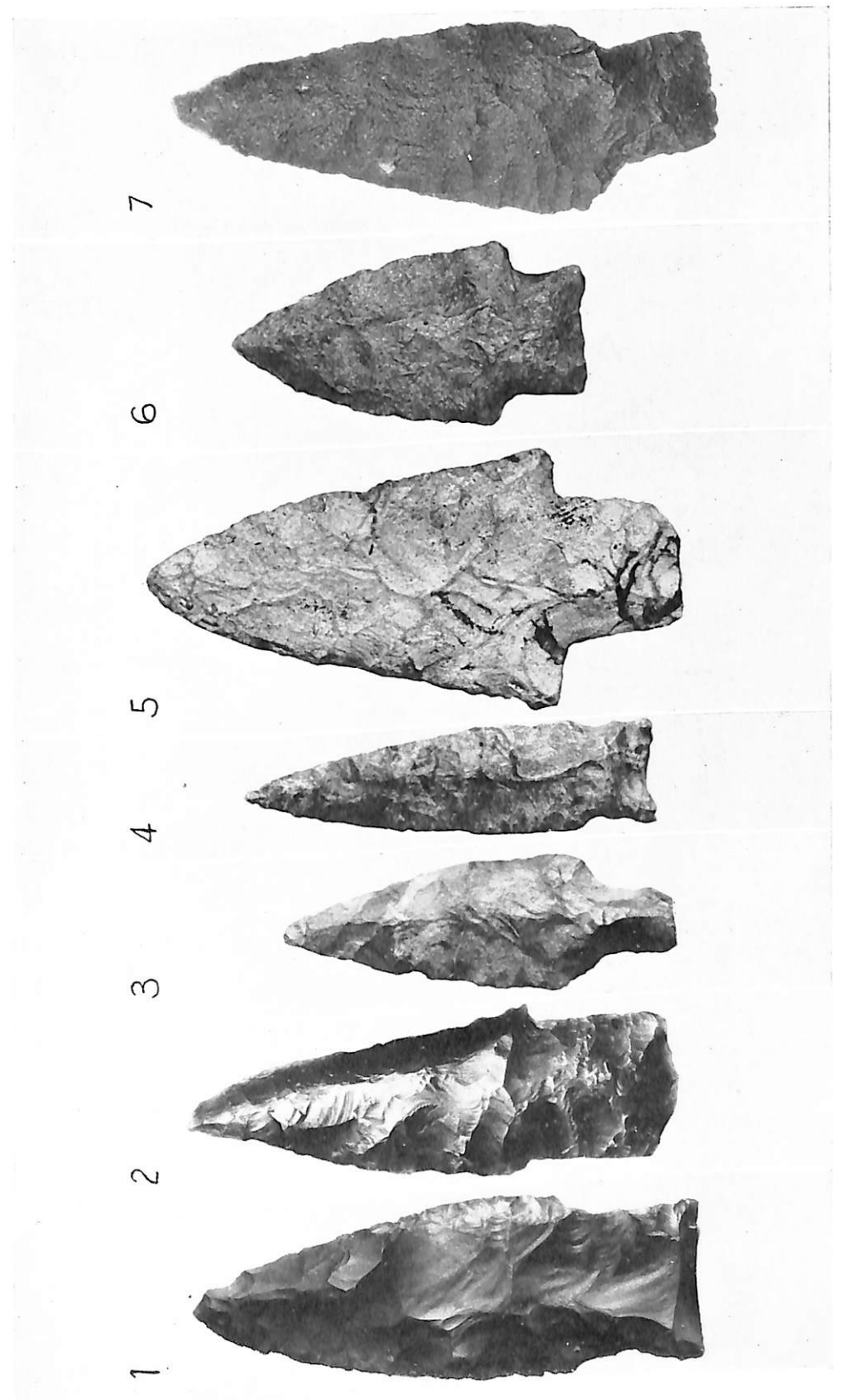
- 1, 2, 6 and 7. From northeastern Colorado.
3. From southern Colorado.
4. From Cheyenne County, Colorado.
5. From Douglas County, Colorado.
8. From Yuma County, Colorado.

PLATE IV.

1. From northeastern Colorado.
- 2, 4 and 5. From Yuma County, Colorado.
3. From Douglas County, Colorado.
6. From northeastern Colorado.
7. From Wyoming.
8. From Yuma County, Colorado.

PLATE V.

- 1, 3 and 4. From Ohio.
- 2, 5, 6 and 7. From North Carolina.



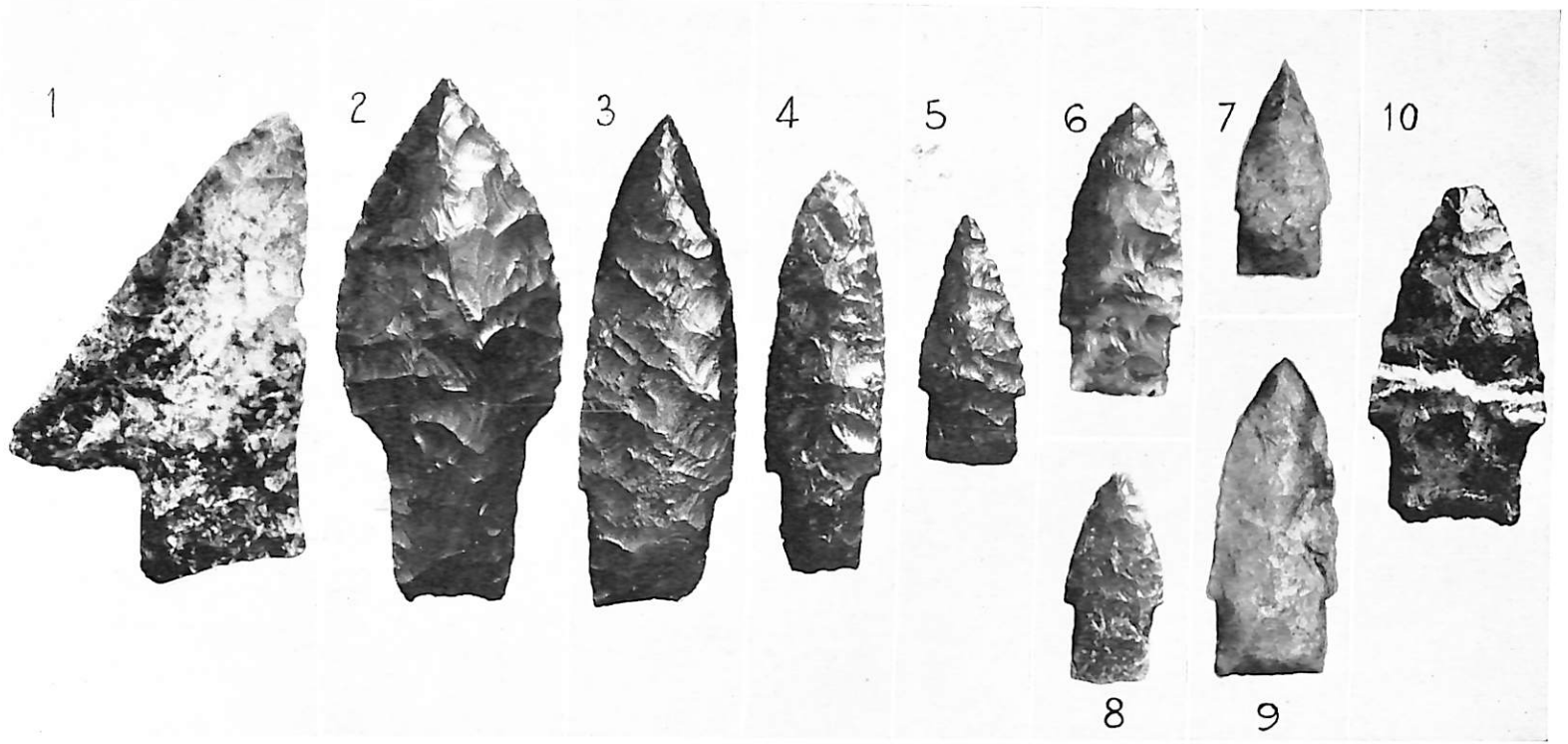


PLATE II

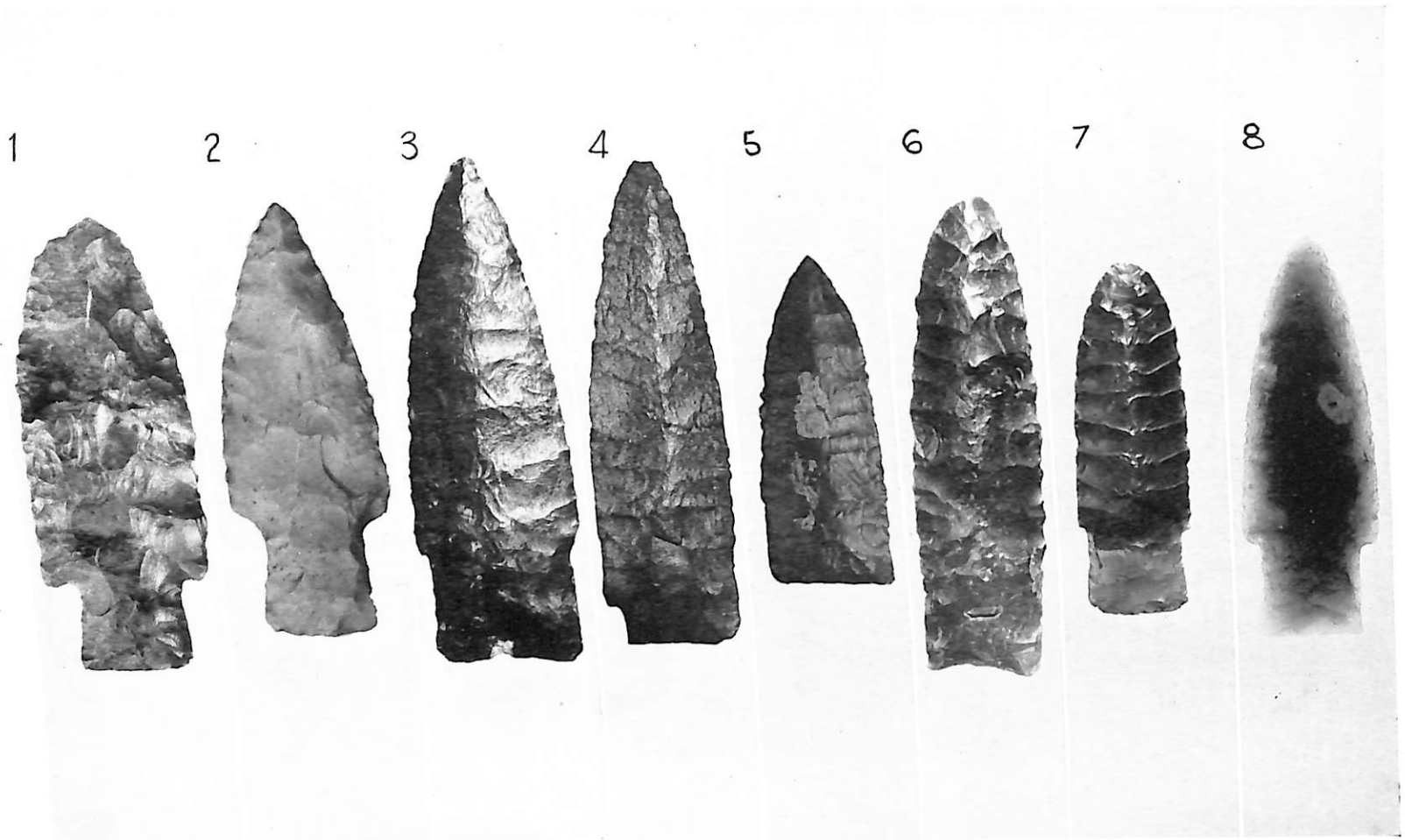


PLATE III



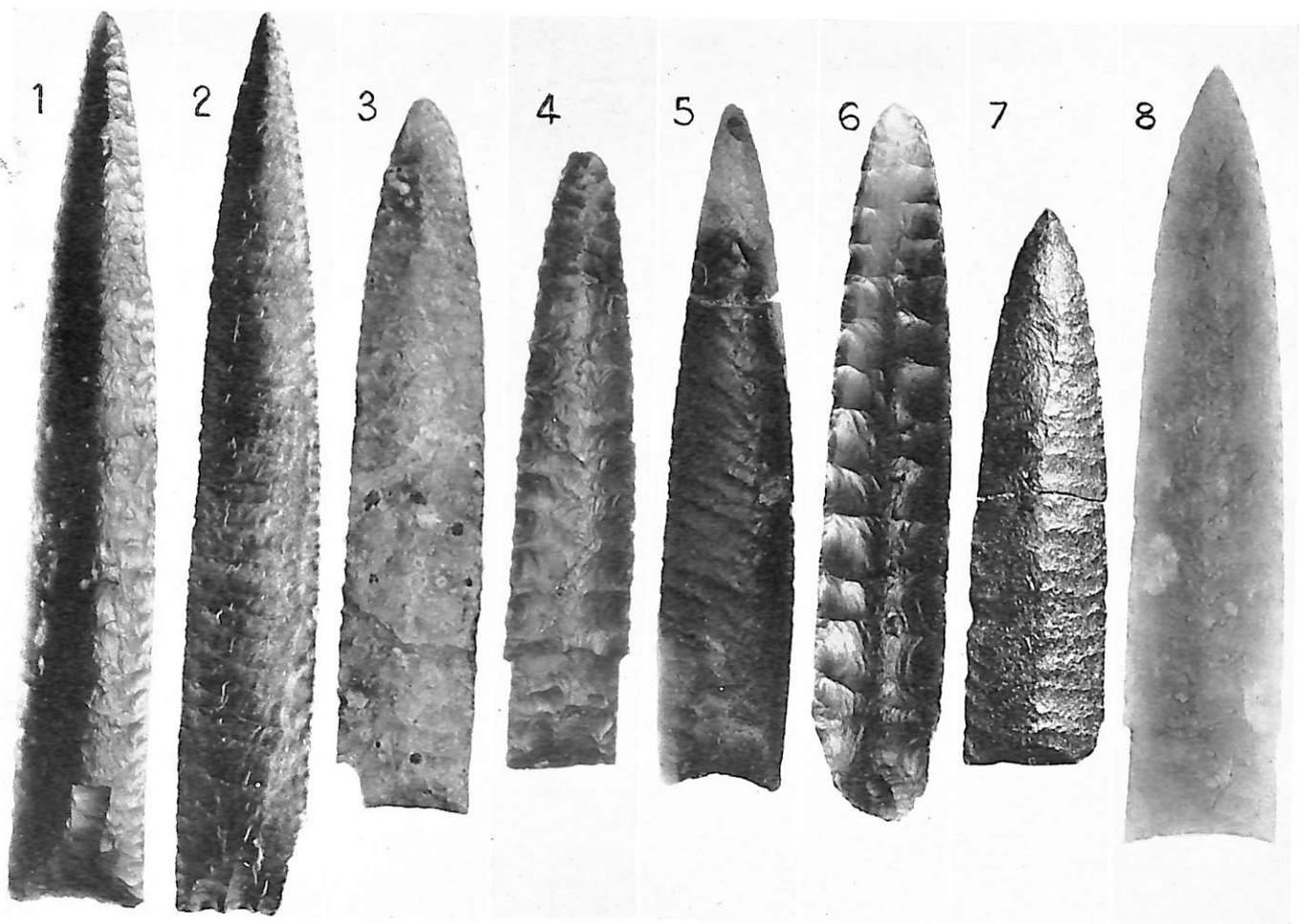


PLATE IV

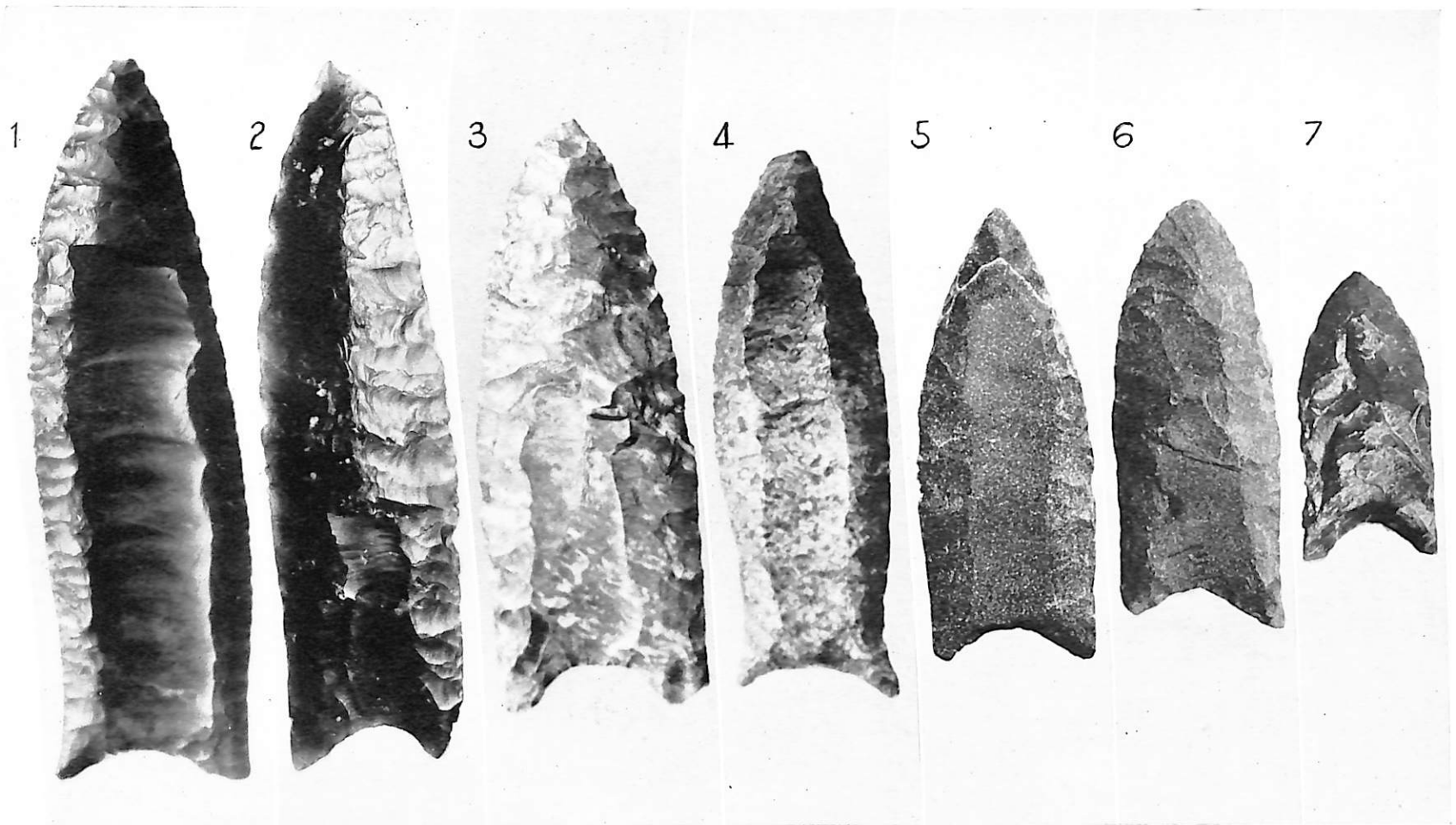


PLATE V



