To the Point

Hidden Valley

Neal Lopinot

This point type is named after Hidden Valley Rock Shelter, a site that was located along a tributary of Joachim Creek in Jefferson County, Missouri. Excavations were undertaken there in 1939–1941 by the Academy of Science of St. Louis, with support from the Work Projects Administration (Adams 1941, 1949). The lowest deposits, which Chapman (1948:140) referred to as Hidden Valley Shelter One, yielded several examples of the contracting stemmed point that became known as the Hidden Valley point. Unfortunately, Hidden Valley Rock Shelter was destroyed in 1941 by the Aubuchon Sand Quarry Company, shortly after three weeks of intensive archaeological investigations.

Description

Adams (1941:191) originally described the Hidden Valley Stemmed type as consisting of “very long projectile points with [contracting] stems, elongated S shaped edges and concave bases, [and] a long curved blade.” It is now known that Hidden Valley points are much more variable in length, and that the stem and base are usually ground. Resharpened specimens may exhibit left beveling and fine serrations. Unresharpened specimens generally exhibit short barbs, but repeated resharpenings ultimately resulted in removal of the barbs (Sandstrom and Ray 2004:51).

Age

Hidden Valley points date to the Early Archaic period. Unfortunately, most radiocarbon ages for Hidden Valley points derive from mixed deposits in rockshelters and caves. Based on dates from several rockshelters and caves, O’Brien and Wood (1998:129) suggest that Hidden Valley points date to 7500–6800 B.C., or to early Early Archaic times. More recent radiocarbon and stratigraphic evidence from the Big Eddy site (23CE426) indicate that Hidden Valley points date later, appearing after Rice Lobed points. At Big Eddy, bracketing radiocarbon ages indicate that the Hidden Valley occupation dates to about 5900–5200 B.C., or toward the end of the Early Archaic sequence (Ray and Lopinot 2005:246–247).

Distribution

As defined here, this point is distributed throughout the Ozarks of Missouri, but mainly north of the Ozarks Divide. It is uncommon to rare elsewhere in Missouri. They

Figure 1. Hidden Valley point from 23WB304. Illustration by Del Thompson.

Figure 2. Hidden Valley point preforms from the Big Eddy site, 23CE426. Photo courtesy of Center for Archaeological Research.

Figure 3. Basally ground Hidden Valley point from 23SL591 near Creve Coeur Lake. Note the fossil at the corner break. From the collection of Richard Martens; photo courtesy of Richard Martens.
have also been found at Modoc Rock Shelter (Fowler 1959) and the Nochta site in the American Bottom of Illinois (Higgins 1990:71–72), for example, so its range does extend slightly eastward across the Mississippi River. At least at Big Eddy, Hidden Valley points were found in stratigraphic association with Searcy points/knives.

Comments

The identification of contracting stemmed points can be a difficult undertaking, particularly if one is dealing with broken specimens or those that had been repeatedly resharpened. Attributes such as short barbs, stem grinding, beveling, and serrations help differentiate Hidden Valley points from younger contracting stemmed points. O’Brien and Wood (1998:129) contend that Rice Contracting Stemmed points (Chapman 1975:252–253) appear to be the same as Hidden Valley. A slightly different perspective is presented by Ray and Lopinot (2005:235), who suggest that there are some subtle technological differences distinguishing the two cognate forms.

References Cited

Adams, Robert McC.

Chapman, Carl H.

Fowler, Melvin L.

Higgins, Michael J.

Ray, Jack H., and Neal H. Lopinot

O’Brien, Michael J., and W. Raymond Wood

Sandstrom, Carl B., and Jack H. Ray

Editor’s note: The MAS invites contributions of photos from members for future To the Point editions. The next featured point will be Searcy, also referred to as Rice Lanceolate. To be considered, points must be from an ASM- or DNR-registered site, and not acquired through purchase. Full credit will be given to the member to whom the point belongs. Please send point information and photos via e-mail or U.S. Mail to the MAS office.