To the Point

Searcy

Neal Lopinot

This is a modified version of the discussion in Sandstrom and Ray (2004:45).

This point type was originally designated Rice Lanceolate based on specimens found in the Table Rock Reservoir area (Marshall 1958:103). The name Searcy was applied by Dickson (1968) a decade later for similar points found in the lower levels of Calf Creek Cave in Searcy County, Arkansas. The names Rice Lanceolate and Searcy continue to be used for the same point, generally depending on whether one works or collects in Missouri or Arkansas. However, because several point types bear the Rice name, leading to confusion at times, Sandstrom and Ray (2004:45) suggested that the type name Searcy be used. Such usage is adopted here.

Description

This point is lanceolate in form with a contracting stem. The base is usually concave, but may be straight. The stem is usually ground. Unresharpened specimens may exhibit slight shoulders. The blades of resharpened specimens are usually serrated and beveled. The blades range from “thin and lenticular in cross section to a shape resembling a thin parallelogram” (Perino 1968:84).

Age

This point type is Early Archaic, but its true age is somewhat controversial. They were found with Dalton points at both Rice Shelter in Stone County and Standlee Shelter in Barry County, and were later combined with Agate Basin, Rice Lobed, and Graham Cave points as part of the so-called Tick Creek Complex defined by McMillan (1965:54–56, 69–72). Many other sites also have produced Searcy points, but these have invariably been from mixed deposits containing an assortment of other Early Archaic and even later points (e.g., Ahler and Koldefhoff 2009:209–210; Chapman 1975:132–139; O’Brien and Wood 1998:117–120).

Some have considered it early Early Archaic in part because of its lanceolate form. Based on findings at the Pigeon Roost Creek and Rodgers Shelter sites, O’Brien and Wood (1998:119) suggested that Searcy points date to “sometime between 7500 B.C. and 7000 B.C.,” or ca. 9500–9000 B.P. However, evidence from other sites indicates a greater likelihood that it dates to late Early Archaic times. At Albertson Shelter in Benton County, Arkansas, a hearth associated with Searcy points yielded an uncorrected radiocarbon age of 7,800 ± 80 B.P. (Dickson 2002:87). At John Paul Cave in Christian County, Missouri, two radiocarbon ages associated with Searcy points were 7160 ± 180 B.P. and 7540 ± 90 B.P. (5210 ± 180 B.C. and 5590 ±90 B.C.) (Ray 1995:39).

Finally, a Searcy point was recovered at the same depth as Hidden Valley points in deposits dating to ca. 7800–7100 B.P. at the Big Eddy site (Ray and Lopinot 2005:247–251). All of these dates represent radiocarbon years before present (B.P.). In calendar years, these radiocarbon ages calibrate to about 8600–8000 B.P., or about 6600–6000 B.C. It is suggested that Searcy points date to this time span.

Distribution

Although generally assigned to specimens found in the Ozarks, the distribution of this point form is probably much more widespread, extending throughout Missouri and into portions of adjoining states. For example, Morrow...
(1984:28–29) described a very similar lanceolate form (Fayette type) from Iowa that is typically beveled and serrated.

**Comments**

Searcy points are often confused with much earlier Packard and/or Agate Basin points (e.g., Higgins 1990:59–62), and sometimes with much later Sedalia and Nebo Hill points. Some Searcy points exhibit a fairly high degree of craftsmanship, even including collateral flaking, but the flaking on the blade is less systematic than on either Packard or Agate Basin points. They can often be distinguished from these earlier and later forms by blade beveling, serration, and the comparatively high incidence of heat treatment. Searcy points may be a knife form associated with Hidden Valley points, and some shouldered forms identified as Searcy may in fact be resharpened Hidden Valley points.

**References Cited**


Dickson, Don 1968 Two Provisional Projectile Point Types. The Arkansas Amateur 7(6):5–7.


Morrow, Toby 1984 Iowa Projectile Points. Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, Iowa City.


**MAS to Launch New Website**

In honor of our 75th Anniversary, the MAS has revamped the website. The web address will remain the same, but the content will be updated. The new site will be simpler, and hopefully, user friendly. Be sure to visit the new website in mid January, 2010: http://associations.missouristate.edu/mas/.