

SANDIA POINTS in Western Missouri: Collecting by  
Fletcher Jolly III at the Perry Site (23RY36), Ray County

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Having returned from a tour of duty in Viet Nam, Arthur Fletcher Jolly III (1941-2010) -- known to his family and associates simply as “Fletcher” -- took up residence for awhile in Kansas City, Missouri. Being an avid amateur archaeologist and formerly a matriculating anthropology student in Tennessee, Fletcher made visits during 1972-1974 to the Fishing River at its confluence with the Missouri River (due east of Kansas City) in order to collect artifacts from the surface of cultivated fields. He designated his area of collecting as the Perry site.\* This investigating followed on the heels of fieldwork at the same geographical locality that had been performed by Terrell L. Martin – when he was a student at the University of Kansas (Martin 1976).

By the time of his marriage to Kerry Ellis Honey (Jolly) in 1976 (**Figure 1**), Fletcher’s interest in archaeology at the mouth of the Fishing River had waned. However, he continued to curate an assemblage of more than 800 stone artifacts from the Perry site (23RY36), which he later (1996) cleaned, catalogued and described for a lifetime register of personal finds.

Several years after his death, a large portion of this assemblage was gifted to R. M. Gramly\*\* with the proviso that it be described and published. Fletcher’s artifact group was intriguing because of two single-shouldered flaked stone points, resembling Sandia points from New Mexico, that were a part of it (**Figures 2A, 2B and 3**).

The Perry site is primarily a manifestation of the Nebo Hill Complex, which belongs to a long-lived “Contracting Stem Lanceolate” tradition. Long, narrow lanceolate points, most of which likely date to the Middle Archaic period, dominate the Missouri land-mass (O’Brien and Wood 1998: 148-149). By themselves, Middle Archaic point varieties are easily confounded with older lanceolate points (for example, Rice Lanceolates) that rightfully belong to a terminal phase of the Palaeo-American Agate Basin tradition (10,600 – 9,900 radiocarbon years before present).

Over 82% (N = 616) of the flaked stone artifacts from the Perry site that were given to me for study are fragmentary and complete lanceolate points or abandoned preforms for the same (**Table 1**). A selection of nearly intact examples are shown in **Figure 4**. Many of these points are classifiable as the Sedalia and Nebo Hill types (Perino 1985). Claims have been made by some researchers that the Nebo Hill type persisted into the Late Archaic and Woodland eras, when ceramics and grooved axes were also made. In this light perhaps, we take note of the two fragments of nicely-polished, three-quarter groove axes that were recovered by Fletcher Jolly from the surface of the Perry site.

The Perry site also yielded a variety of indubitable Early Archaic and Middle Archaic point types, drills, and flaked stone adzes (or celts) (**Table 1**) – an observation that is congruent with Terrell Martin’s findings. Although Fletcher’s assemblage that was given to me for study had no Dalton and Clovis points, as described by Martin (1976: 11), there were the following: Two Vee-base late Dalton drills (see Gramly 2002: 192-193 for examples); five Archaic side-notched

points; four Hardin-like points; and three Benton (?) notched points (see **Figure 5** for representative specimens). Most of the 40 neatly-made flaked stone adzes/celts within the assemblage (**Figure 6**) may be associable with the Early Archaic. The same cannot be said for the 22 ovate bifaces, likely knives, that were also present. Such a generalized form of cutting implement was employed from the Palaeo-American era until the eve of European contact.

Ground hematite pieces, some of them weighing 200-300 grams, are well represented in the Perry site assemblage. Most appear to be crayons used to obtain powder for cosmetic or decorative purposes. The age and cultural affiliation(s) of these artifacts are difficult to judge given the wide temporal range of the site's flaked stone artifacts. Ochre crayons were numerous within the Dalton zones at the Olive Branch site, Illinois (Gramly 2008: 139). At Olive Branch ochre appeared within domestic and mortuary contexts.

Stored separately from the main mass of flaked stone artifacts collected from the Perry site, and therefore not analyzed by me, were additional fragments of polished three-quarter grooved stone axes and 40-50 well-shaped manos (handstones) made of sedimentary rocks. Grinding stones, perhaps used to process seeds and other plant materials, are expected elements at Nebo Hill Complex sites.

#### *The Sandia points from the Perry site*

The aforementioned lead us to ask the question: Can the pair of Sandia points shown in Figures 2 and 3 from the Perry site be dated or culturally assigned?

The answer, lamentably, is negative. No aspect of their form and size or the raw material used in their manufacture provide a clue. Since they were collected from the cultivated surface of an archaeological site, there are no cues from stratigraphy to help us.

Absolute or even relative dating of Sandia points at their "type locality" (Sandia Cave, NM) and nearby archaeological sites (*e.g.*, the Lucy site, NM) has proved difficult or equivocal. Their identity as ancient artifacts, however, is accepted by most workers (McNutt, in press). For the moment, the claim that Sandia points are a New World manifestation of Upper Palaeolithic "shouldered pieces," on record within some Eurasian flaked stone industries, cannot be substantiated.

Whatever their age, the two Sandia points from the Perry site conform to Sandia Type 1, as illustrated in Wormington (1949: Figure 16) for Sandia Cave itself and Wormington 1957: Figure 30) for the Lucy site. The form of Type I points from both sites is "...rounded in outline and lenticular in cross-section..." with a length of 80-100 mm, but sometimes shorter. The larger illustrated point from the Perry site, which appears to be little-used and not re-sharpened, lies at the upper end of the size range for Sandia Type 1; while, the smaller (L = 68 mm) was obviously exhausted and may have been abandoned. Both points from the Perry site exhibit patches of controlled parallel-flaking upon their hafts. Discontinuous, parallel-flaking, to judge by available illustrations, may also characterize the entire class of Sandia points from New Mexico.

### *In conclusion*

Whether Sandia points belong to their own phase of the North American cultural record – one that has eluded full characterization -- or are they rare elements of an already well-understood industrial complex are interesting questions; however, Fletcher Jolly's 1972-1974 finds at the Perry site cannot by themselves answer them.

There are many 'fine points' in North American archaeology, such as the problem of Sandia, that need addressing. Another is the cultural placement of so-called "square knives," which are thought to belong to a phase of the Clovis Tradition. Square knives are on record for several surficial sites in the American Mid-West (Gramly 2000: 35-36), but to my knowledge no specimen ever has been reported from a buried context or directly dated.

Provided the discipline of archaeology continues to be receptive to new facts and insights, ultimately we will solve these and other problems.

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\* Location is given by Fletcher Jolly as: "SW ¼ of NE ¼ of Section 32 (the main site), running into the NW ¼ of SE ¼ of that same section, T.52N., R.29W. on USGS Excelsior Springs quadrangle map-sheet (7.5 minute series)."

\*\* The entire assemblage has since been transferred to ASAA Member, Bob Trotta, who resides in Pembroke, Massachusetts.

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Table 1. Inventory of the Fletcher Jolly Assemblage of Artifacts from the Perry Site, Ray County, Western Missouri.

1. Flaked stone lanceolate points
  - A. Complete or nearly complete = 42
  - B. Fragmentary (tips and bases) = 371
  - C. Preforms, likely for lanceolate points = 167
  - D. Preforms, possibly for lanceolate points = 32
2. Drills, awls, etc. made from lanceolate points = 44
3. "Sandia points" (single-shouldered points, perhaps knives) = 4
4. Sundry Archaic artifacts, mostly points
  - A. Side-notched points (one appears to be the Cache River type) = 5
  - B. Benton-like corner-notched points = 3
  - C. Hardin-like points = 4
  - D. Wide-stemmed points (Late Archaic?) = 2
  - E. Vee-base Dalton drills = 2
5. Flaked adzes/celts, likely Early Archaic in age = 40
6. Unifacial tools, age unknown = 9
7. Bifaces, ovate-rounded in shape, some may be knives = 22
8. Fragment of a fully ground, former biface or uniface flaked artifact = 1
9. Fragments of polished, grooved axes = 2
10. Hematite crayons & ground chunks of hematite = 36

TOTAL = 786 artifacts.

Captions/Figures.



Figure 1. Arthur Fletcher Jolly III on his wedding day, September, 1976.

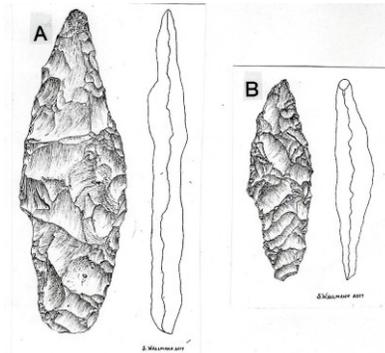


Figure 2. Single-shouldered points (Sandia points) from Site 23RY36, collected by Fletcher Jolly, 1972-1974. *A*, length = 112 mm, wt. = 40.4 grams, no grinding on stem, made of tan-colored, grainy chert; *B*, length = 68 mm, wt. = 15.5 grams, no grinding on stem, made of pale-gray to tan-colored chert.



Figure 3. Photograph of single-shouldered points (Sandia points) from Site 23RY36.



Figure 4. Six nearly intact lanceolate points from the Perry site. Likely all belong to the Nebo Hill Phase, Middle Archaic period. Length of longest = 117 mm.



Figure 5. Selection of flaked stone points from the Perry site -- none are lanceolate Nebo Hill and Sedalia types. *A* and *B*, Archaic Side-notched (Note fine notching of *A*, which is reminiscent of the Very Early Archaic Cache River type); *C*, Hardin-like point; *D*, late Dalton Vee-base drill); *E*, Benton-style point; *F*, untyped, stem point – likely belonging to the Late Archaic period.

Length of *A* = 50 mm.



Figure 6. Two Early Archaic flaked stone adzes with lightly ground edges and polish from wood-working – from the Perry site. Length of the longer = 115 mm.