

The Native American Artifact Collection of H. Warner Riddle II, by his grandson, Tom Riddle, 2024, Ravenna, Ohio.

These arrowheads, called "points," were collected by my grandfather, H. Warner Riddle II. Warner was born in Ravenna in 1880, and in 1905, a year after he married my grandmother, he bought a farm about a mile west of Ravenna that straddled the banks of the Mahoning River. This would, it turned out, be an ideal place to find native American artifacts as the ancient American Indian Mahoning trail passed through his land.

He would live beside the Mahoning River for the rest of his life. He was a successful businessman, politician, and farmer, raising cows, fruit, grain, chickens, and pigs. He died in 1962.

As a young man, he began to lose his hearing, and would eventually become totally deaf. Perhaps his hearing loss helped him develop an unusually good visual sense. A story told to me by my father illustrates this, "On the morning my sister Janet got married (July 4, 1938), she came down for breakfast and said her one regret was never finding an arrowhead. Dad told her not to worry and went outside. A few minutes later, he came back and told her, 'If you go out to the field, just behind the barn, you'll see where my footprints have traced a circle in the newly plowed field. In that circle, you will find an arrowhead.'"



Warner and his daughter, Janet, about 1920 on a bridge he built over the Mahoning River as it passed through on his land.

Warner put all his arrowheads in a cigar box and never identified any of them, but fortunately, locally, there is a talented amateur archaeologist named Gary Kapusta. Gary has been kind enough to identify the arrowheads in my grandfather's collection, and I'm very grateful for his help in this project. Thank you, Gary.

All the items my grandfather found were prehistoric, that is, they were made before Europeans arrived in this area. For this reason, we know very little about the people who made these points, including what they called themselves. The names associated with these artifacts mostly come from where they were found. For example, the term "Hopewell" comes from the fact that a farm where several large native American mounds are located was owned by Mordecai Hopewell in Ross County, Ohio.

This Area's Prehistoric Past

Archaeologists have tried to understand when people have lived here over the centuries, and who those people were. Most archaeologists believe humans reached North America between 25,000 and 16,000 years ago. Artifacts in this area date from as early as 14,000 years ago. The dates I've used come from the National Park Service:

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/ohio-s-prehistoric-past.htm>

Paleo-Indian (12,000 – 8,000 BCE, Before Common Era) These, the first humans to reach this area, were nomadic groups of hunters and gatherers.

Archaic (9,000 - 1,000 BCE), These people started staying in one place longer, but large communities were still not formed.

Woodland (1,000 BCE - CE 1000) This is the most interesting period, and it was at this time people began settling into the communities that left us the massive mounds and earthworks that can still be seen around Ohio.

The Woodland period can be subdivided into three categories.

1. **Adena Culture** (Early Woodland, 800 BCE – 1,000 CE) These people hunted and gathered like their Paleo-Indian and Archaic ancestors. However, Adena habitation sites were larger than Archaic sites and were semi-permanent, meaning the Adena stayed in one place for longer periods of time than the earlier peoples. Their shelters were constructed from wood covered with mud, clay, and grass. The Adena people were the first gardeners in this region.

2. **Hopewell Culture** (Middle Woodland 1 - 400 CE) This culture continued the mound-building tradition of the Adena and expanded it to include sacred circles and huge geometric earthworks. Their largest earthworks are in Ross County, Ohio, but there is a Hopewell Mound in Towner's Woods between Kent and Ravenna. By CE 400, people began moving away from Hopewell centers for reasons that remain unclear.

3. **Intrusive Mound Culture** (Late Woodland, 500-1,000 CE) These people did not build new mounds, but rather intruded onto Hopewell mounds to bury their dead. The artifacts they left behind were different than Hopewell artifacts. At this time, the use of the bow and arrow became widespread.

Late Prehistoric Period, also known as the **Fort Ancient Culture** (1000 -1650 CE) This was the last period before the arrival of the Europeans, and these were the last of the mound-building cultures. They had a more sedentary lifestyle, and lived in larger villages. They built, among other things, Fort Ancient, the largest hilltop enclosure in North America. It is located between Dayton and Cincinnati, on the Little Miami River. Why this culture disappeared, about 1650 CE, is still unknown. The cause might have been by European disease or conflict with other native groups.

This collection contains samples from the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Adena, and Hopewell cultures, arranged in that order.



Lance points like these were used to hunt large animals by the first peoples to come to this area, the Paleo-Indians, who came here between 13,000 and 7,000 BCE. These points may have been used to hunt large animals such as elk, bison, caribou, and possibly mastodons and mammoths.



Perhaps because they relied so much on hunting, early people in this area took great care in producing their points.



These two are unfinished lance points. It is likely that a piece of flint was crudely blocked out into lance points and then cached with the idea that the maker would come back later and finish them.



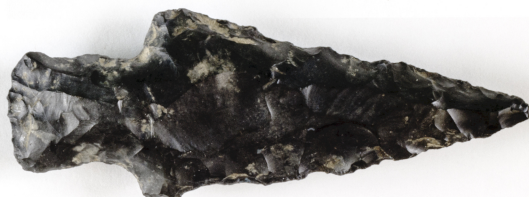
As you see them here, they are too thick and heavy to be effective lance points.

A lance differs from a spear in that a lance was meant to be held with both hands whereas a spear was usually held in one hand and could be thrown.



Spear points like these were made in the Early Archaic period, which followed the Paleo-Indian period, about 9,000 years ago.

The process of intentional fracturing to create a fractured base involved techniques such as chipping the edges of a cobble or rock to produce axes, knives, choppers, spear points, drills, and hammer stones.



This Stiletto Point comes from a bit later in the Archaic Period, 8,000 to 1000, BCE. It was used as a knife.



Archaic Side Notch Points are among the oldest points found in this area and were made between 9,000 and 1,000 BCE by nomadic groups who depended on hunting.

The deep side notches were designed to facilitate hafting onto a spear shaft or dart, which was either thrown by hand or propelled using an atlatl (spear-thrower), a common hunting tool during the Archaic period.

The design of these points, with their medium triangular shape and excurvate blades, would have made them suitable for penetrating the hides of medium to large game animals. Additionally, some examples of these points may have been serrated or beveled, indicating that they were also used as cutting tools for butchering.

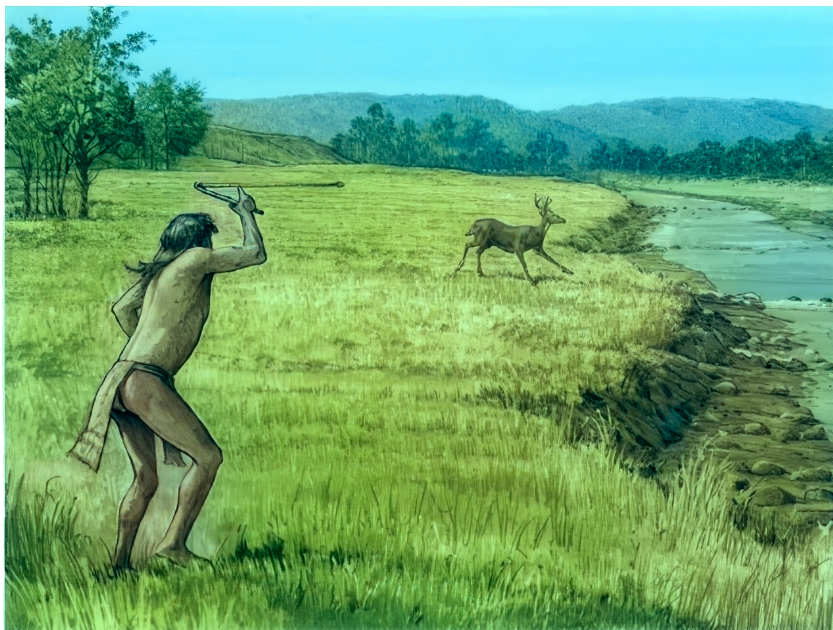


These Archaic points were designed for an atlatl. The sharp, irregular edges of these bifurcated points were designed to tear into an animal and not come out.

Widespread use of the bow and arrow would come much later.



An Archaic period spear point.

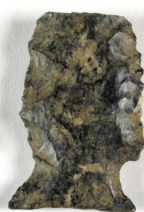


A hunter uses an atlatl to throw a spear at a running white-tailed deer.

National Park Service



These four Middle Archaic period spear points probably hit a bone and broke.



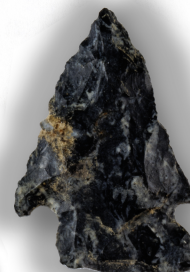
The Adena people, the first of the Woodland peoples, relied on spears, lances, and the atlatl (spear-thrower) for hunting, and perhaps, for defense.



The atlatl can propel a dart up to 50 meters, making it effective for hunting, and it provides a safe distance between the thrower and the animal or enemy.



It is particularly effective against large and medium-sized prey, such as bison and deer, due to its high kinetic energy and momentum at impact.



Additionally, the atlatl can be used with one hand and is not affected by moisture as much as the bow and arrow.





The Adena lived in well-organized societies in parts of present-day Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New York. They were known for their common burial and ceremonial system, which included mound building.

The culture was named after a mound found near the 1807 Adena Mansion of Thomas Worthington, the 6th governor of Ohio. The mound is located near Chillicothe, Ohio.

The Adena were the first group of "mound builders" in the region, and their mounds served as burial structures, ceremonial sites, historical markers, and possibly gathering places.

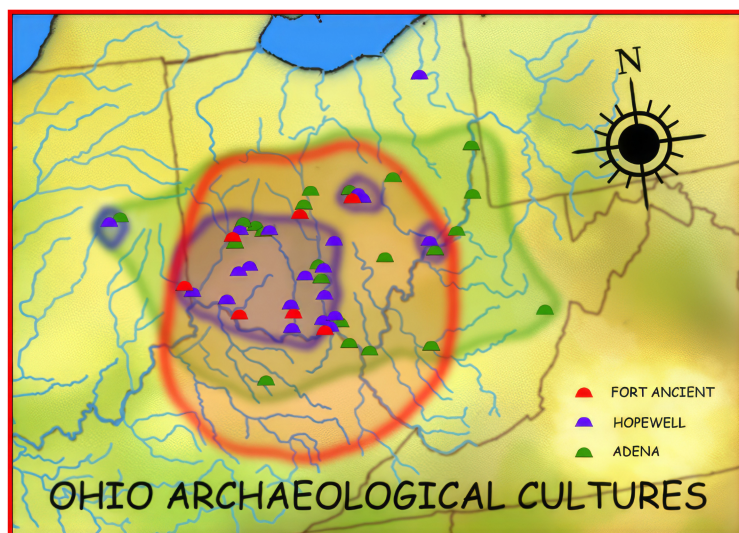
Like their Paleo-Indian and Archaic ancestors, they were hunter-gatherers but they also practiced domestic farming, grew various crops, and maintained a wide trading network that provided them with materials such as copper from the Great Lakes and shells from the Gulf Coast. The culture is also known for its unique artifacts, including clay pottery, tools made from

The flint of this point, broke during production.

The maker of this point quit working on it when he or she realized that the flint would not hold up.

Below are two fine examples of spear points used for fishing. They are designed to go clear through the fish, thereby making it easy to remove the fish from the water.

Above are two rare Ashtabula Spear Points. Such points were used for hunting and possibly warfare. They are found primarily in northeastern Ohio, and are from the Adena culture.



File: Ohio Arch Cultures map HRoe 2008.jpg

Photo: Tom Riddle

The Adena culture was centered in what is now southern Ohio.

The Adena people may have made Ohio's most famous mound, "The Serpent Mound," which is 1348 feet (411 m) long in the shape of a serpent, making it the largest effigy mound of a serpent in the world.





Both sides of these
two points are shown.



If H. Warner Riddle II found these two Hopewell points on his farm, they are a rare surface find. They are usually found only in Hopewell mound sites, often as burial accompaniments. These were decorative only. The larger point was probably burnt along with the body wearing it.

The Hopewell tradition, also known as the Hopewell culture, was a network of precontact Native American cultures in North America's east-central area from about 200 BCE to 500 CE. Historically they can be placed in the Middle Woodland Period, which preceded the Adena and Archaic cultures.

The Hopewell people were known for their elaborate burial practices, large earthen mounds, and extensive trade networks. They lived in small villages, practiced hunting, gathering, and horticulture, and created fine art and artifacts using copper, mica, and obsidian materials.

The Hopewell culture gradually declined after 400 CE, and their elaborate burial and artistic practices became less common.



Relatively recent points, Triangle points, which were used with the bow and arrow, are just 1,100 to 400 years old. They were used for hunting game like deer, elk, and buffalo.



Bird points, also known as bird arrowheads, are small arrowheads that were not actually used for hunting birds, but for larger game like deer, elk, and buffalo. These tiny arrowheads were capable of killing deer-sized game at close range when launched from a bow.

One advantage that a bow and arrow has over an atlatl is that it can be shot in thick undergrowth.

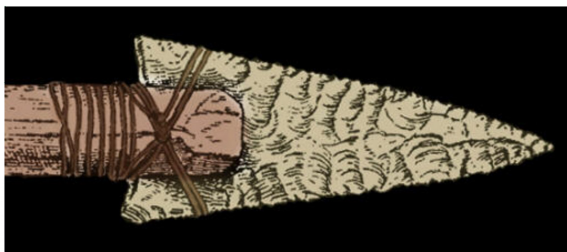


Image from 1997 "Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution."
"Arrowpoints, Spearheads, and Knives of Prehistoric Times."

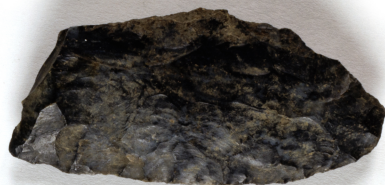
DRAWING OF HAFTING TECHNIQUE OF A TRIANGULAR ARROW POINT



Lavanna points like this one are true arrowheads made from 700 to 1350 CE in the late Woodland Period. The name comes from where they were originally found, in Cayuga County, New York.



This was once probably a knife between 6 and 8 inches (15 and 20 CM) long, but it was repeatedly sharpened until it became much smaller, as you see here.



A scraper like this could easily fit in someone's hand.



Again, many thanks to my grandfather for collecting these points and to Gary Kapusta for bringing the points to life. -- T.R., 2024