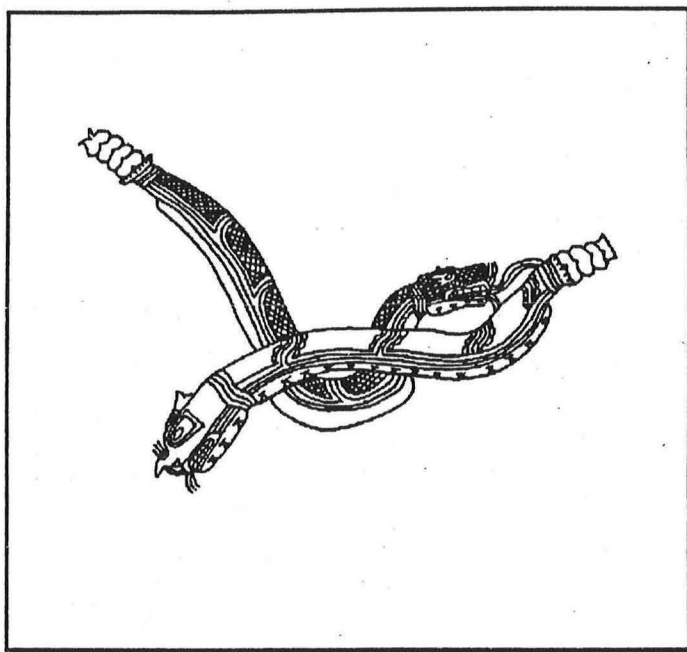


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1. STRATIFIED FLUTED POINT DEPOSITS IN THE WESTERN VALLEY OF TENNESSEE

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Recent test excavations at the Carson-Conn-Short site (40BN190) have yielded an intact stratified fluted point horizon (Eastern Clovis) on the Tennessee River in Benton County, Tennessee. Some 300 tools, cores, and hammerstones have been point provenienced on the surface, with an additional 582 artifacts recovered from excavated contexts. Two features have been mapped and excavated, one of them producing charcoal associated with two Clovis projectile points and several uniface tools. This project has been jointly undertaken by individuals from the Tennessee Division of Archaeology, the Smithsonian Institution, and the University of Arizona.

As part of a continuing Paleoindian site and projectile point survey, an extensive study of the Western Valley of Tennessee has been undertaken. The Western Valley forms the boundary between west and middle Tennessee. A total of 26 Paleoindian sites have been recorded for this area, with over 250 fluted projectile points having been measured and described. Almost all the sites recorded in the survey are light to moderate scatters of lithic debris, uniface tools, and, more rarely, fluted projectile points and preforms. These sites are generally located at the mouths of tributary streams on well-drained terrace remnants adjacent to the old Tennessee River channel. These probable maintenance/rearmament camps may have been associated with kill or butchering sites located at lower elevations along the river. Unfortunately, such sites, if they exist, are permanently below the waters of Kentucky Lake.

Four sites are an exception to the generally small fluted point sites in the valley. These four have produced several hundred uniface tools and fluted points per site (Broster and Norton 1992). However, three of them are completely deflated, with later materials mixed with the fluted lithics (Sites 40HS60, 40HS200, and 40BN18). The fourth site is quite different. Unlike the rest of the sites on the lake, this one (40BN190) is a combination of a quarry/workshop locality and a series of fluted point base camps. The site, called Carson-Conn-Short, is situated on a number of partially flooded terrace ridges located south of the Pleistocene river channel. Some seven distinct areas of the site have been identified. Area A was selected for testing primarily because it was initially believed that only fluted materials (Eastern Clovis and Cumberland) were present at this location

(Broster and Norton 1993).

The site was first shown to the senior author in February of 1992 by three local amateur archaeologists. They had made a rather small collection from the site over several years. These individuals, Harlan "Kit" Carson, Gary Conn, and Hal Short, very generously made their collections available for study, eventually donating these materials to the Tennessee Division of Archaeology for permanent curation and study. In our conversations with the men, they explained that one area of the site (Area A) had produced only Clovis and Cumberland fluted points and related uniface tools. The Cumberland projectile points (only two in number) had been found in an area of only about 15 sq m. The rest of the exposed area, some 300 by 50 m, had produced artifacts associated only with a Clovis occupation. Therefore, we decided that initial testing of the site should be concentrated in this area. In accordance with this objective, an ARPA permit (No. 03-Tn-1-92) was obtained from the landowner, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife service.

Two strategies were first proposed for the investigation of Area A. It was decided that surface mapping of exposed tools and fluted points would be of great value in assessing spatial relationships of artifacts to each other and to what appeared to be numerous fire-cracked chert features on the beach. Unfortunately, rising lake levels at this time (March through April 1992) made this impractical. To adjust for the problem, a very limited collection was made from clearly disturbed and eroded areas of the site. Materials in flat areas of the exposed beach and lithics around the possible features were left in place for future investigations.

The second strategy employed was consid-

erably more successful. Two 1-m-sq test units were excavated in Area A. Test Unit 1 revealed three strata of deposit. Stratum 1 contained modern organic materials mixed at the bottom (9.5 to 13.5 cm below surface) with fire-cracked chert, flakes, and 11 prismatic blade segments. The second stratum was comprised of reddish brown silty clay loam of the Wolftever soil type (Odom et al. 1953:112-113). Fire-cracked chert debris, flakes, a probable Clovis projectile point distal, and nine prismatic blade sections were recorded at this level. The third stratum was split into two arbitrary sublevels in the field, collapsed here for analytical purposes (Figure 1.1). The soil was a hard-packed, reddish gray silty clay, also of the Wolftever soil horizon. Artifacts included flakes, 8 uniface side scrapers, 38 prismatic blade fragments, and 2 channel flakes. Small bits of charcoal and one burned bone fragment were also present in this level.

The initial testing proved rewarding, and it was felt that a more extensive excavation was definitely needed. To this end a joint project was undertaken in late 1992 and early 1993 to further define possible intact Paleoindian strata and to test the relationship between fluted artifacts and the exposed fire-cracked chert concentrations. This was made possible through the issuance of a new ARPA permit (No. 04-Tn-2-92). Archaeologists from the Tennessee Division of Archaeology, the Smithsonian Institution, and the University of Arizona contributed to the completion of this stage of the project.

Seven 1-m-sq test units were excavated, and some 350 tools, cores, and hammerstones were mapped in place on the deflated beach section of Area A. Four of the test pits were placed in Area A, and the remaining three were excavated in the adjoining Area F. One of the units in Area A (Test Unit 8) was purposely placed with part of one of the fire-cracked chert features located in the NW corner of the test square. Additionally, core samples were obtained from the more undisturbed parts of Area A by one of the authors (CVH). Two of the test units in Area A and one test in Area F revealed distinct strata of intact Paleoindian deposits.

The units in Area A were placed next to Test Unit 1 from the previous field season. Both units displayed the same stratigraphic sequence as the initial test pit. The bottom two strata contained fluted artifacts ranging from 30 to 55 cm below the present ground surface. A combined count of Stratum 2 from both units consisted of 40

prismatic blade segments and 13 uniface tools. The third stratum contained 1 fluted preform, 88 prismatic blade fragments, 27 uniface tools, 1 hammerstone fragment, and one possible channel flake. It appears that there is evidence of at least two distinct occupations by Clovis peoples in this area. The production of blade tools and fluted projectile points would seem to be the main function within the specific area of the site recorded. This portion of the occupation is located within 100 m of an exposed alluvial fan containing chert cobbles and tabular pieces of locally derived chert. All Paleoindian artifacts, with few exceptions, are manufactured from this very high-quality chert, and no area of this site is more than 250 m from an outcrop of this material.

Excavation of Test Unit 8 revealed a concentration of uniface tools and two Clovis projectile points in close proximity to one of the fire-cracked chert features. These features were first recorded as possible deflated hearths, but are more likely the remains of heat-treating facilities for nodules of the local chert. This was somewhat disturbing, as this kind of feature is usually associated with a Middle to Late Archaic temporal span. Fortunately, this question could be addressed, as the feature in Test Unit 8 produced ample amounts of charcoal for dating. Samples were sent to two laboratories for best results. These features proved to be partially intact Late Archaic task areas, giving dates of $3,445 \pm 135$ B.P. (AA11013) and $3,820 \pm 200$ B.P. (Beta-62970). Such overlap of dates is very hard to question. It now appears that most, if not all, of the fire-cracked chert features, some 60 in number, are probably of a Late Archaic date and are not associated with the large scatter of Paleoindian tools and flakes. However, upon extensive analysis of all the test pits from this area and a careful examination of all the point-provenienced surface artifacts, no Archaic tools were identified. It seems very strange that the only notable activity taking place during the Archaic occupation was the heat treating of rough chert cobbles and nodules, and that the heated material seems to have been removed from the area for processing at another location. Based on this information, one is led to believe that the Archaic occupation was very limited, that a more extensive Paleoindian use of the immediate area is likely, and that the vast majority of artifacts come from the fluted-point-period use of the quarry site.

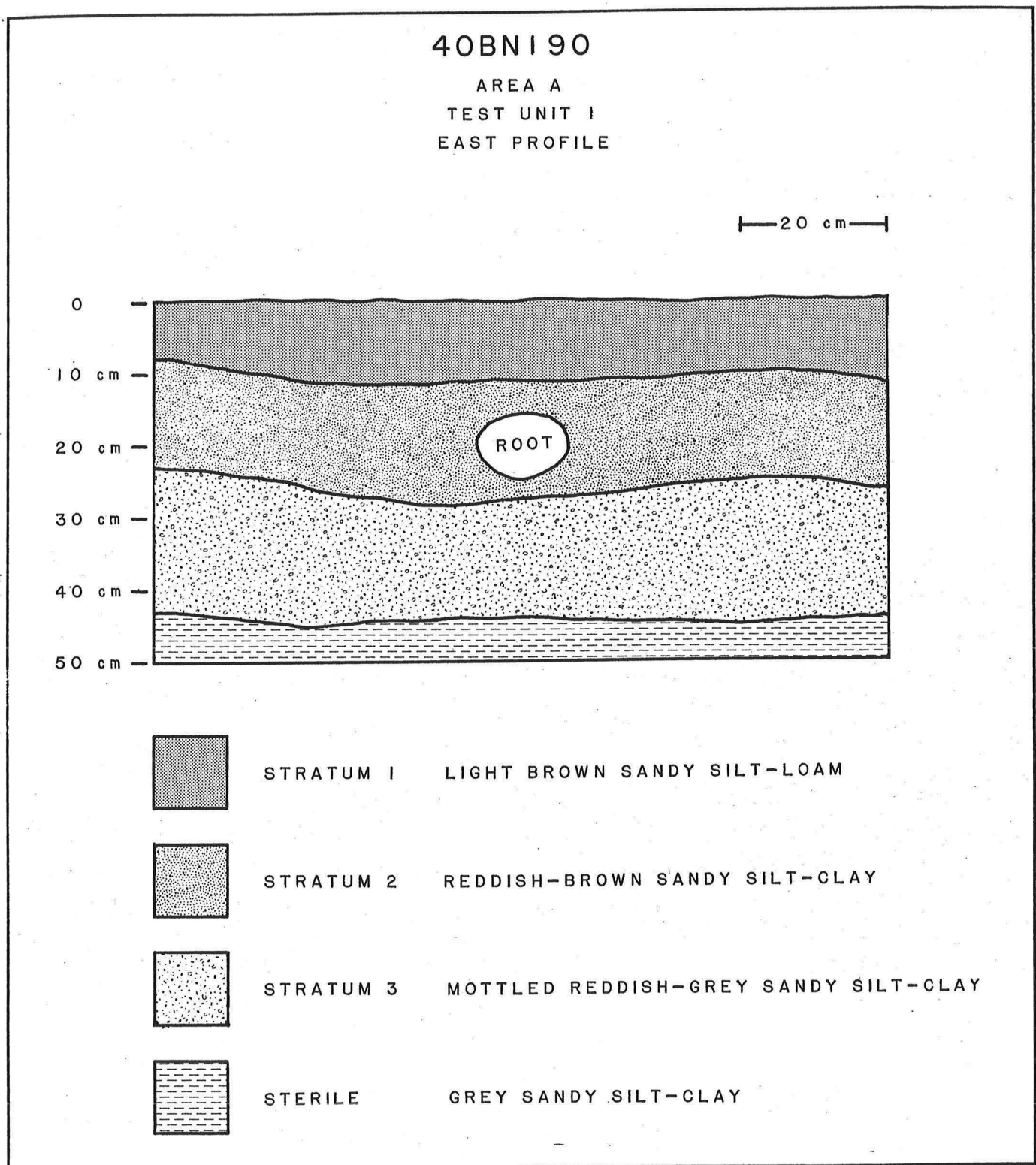


Figure 1.1. East profile of Test Unit 1, Site 40BN190.

It is interesting to note that fire-cracked chert debris almost completely disappears from the lower strata in all the test units in Area A. Prismatic blade production and the shaping of large fluted bifaces are the predominant activities represented in these test units. This lends some weight to the idea that only Paleoindian activities were associated with these lower strata. The Archaic pits appear to have been dug into only the upper level of the Paleoindian occupation, thus causing limited disturbance and displacement to the earlier deposits.

Test excavations in adjacent Area F produced a small feature, 30 cm by 26 cm, which is most likely Paleoindian in age. The pit contained two prismatic blades and one uniface side scraper. No charcoal was present in the pit fill, but it is probable that the feature does date to sometime in the Paleoindian period. Additional work is projected for next season, if time permits.

Some 1,300 tools have been mapped, excavated, or donated during the investigation of the site; all but five artifacts are classified as Paleoindian. This is quite unusual for any site in the Western Valley, or for that matter the Southeast in general. The Carson-Conn-Short site (40BN190) has great potential to help define and understand the full range of Paleoindian occupation in the Mid-South. A clearer understanding of lithic reduction sequences is possible using the data from this very important site. We have observed that all the fluted preforms from Area A (32 in number) were fluted using a beveled base, with no evidence of striking nipples. In contrast, the Cumberland and some other fluted preforms from other areas of the site were fluted with the use of a very pronounced striking nipple. It would be informative to determine if this represents temporal differences or possible social distinctions between different areas of the site. Blade production and the use of prismatic blade cores is another interesting aspect of site function. The entire sequence of blade production is represented on the site.

Auger tests in Area A have demonstrated a buried level of cultural debris at a depth of 1 to 1.25 m below the present surface. This matches the elevation of the deflated beach, which has produced hundreds of fluted points, preforms, and uniface tools in Area A. A small blade tool was recovered at a depth of one meter in one of the auger holes. This may mean that a rather large section of the site is still intact and could

be relatively free of disturbances from later occupations. Our future efforts will be directed toward a full investigation of this area. Buried Clovis-age features may well be located in this section. As much as 200 sq m of the site could still be undisturbed, and may provide a very interesting view of Paleoindian adaptations to the riverine environment.

The limited excavations at the Carson-Conn-Short site (40BN190) have shown the potential for in situ eastern Clovis deposits in the Western Valley of Tennessee. In parts of the site, occupation had been recorded at depths of 45 to 68 cm below present ground surface. The prospect of performing spatial analysis of features and associated tools is extremely important for understanding Clovis technology and cultural adaptations in the Southeast.

Although there are some very discrete differences between western Clovis artifacts and those from 40BN190, there are also some striking similarities in the production sequence for both projectile points and uniface tools (Collins 1990; Sanders 1990; Stanford 1991; Young and Collins 1989). The Carson-Conn-Short site is quite different from recorded Clovis sites in the western United States. In general, sites in the Plains and the Southwest are overly representative of hunting and butchering events associated mostly with mammoth procurement. Complete projectile points and butchering tools are commonly the predominant tool types recovered in excavation. In the West, sources of good-quality lithic material are widely dispersed, and there tends to be a utilization of available tools past the point at which they would have been discarded at the Carson-Conn-Short site. Lithics of high quality are readily available in the Western Valley of Tennessee. Quarry areas are located on both sides of the river, and several of them have been in use since Clovis times. Sites in the area conform to either maintenance/rearmament camps, or in the case of 40BN190, to a more extensive quarry/workshop situation. The Carson-Conn-Short site may also represent the culmination of generational use of the area for seasonal base camps during the Paleoindian period. Manufacturing debris is much more abundant, and what finished projectile points are found are usually expended bases brought back to the camp attached to foreshafts. In some cases these fragments were reused for other tasks before final disposal within the camp. Resharpener over the course of several hunting expeditions has

introduced a range of variation in so-called style that is not always apparent with Clovis materials from western kill sites.

Exotic raw materials constitute a very small percentage of the total Clovis lithic assemblage at the site. In all, only seven items were manufactured from nonlocal cherts. These consist of one fluted preform base (Ft. Payne chert), one expended spurred end scraper (St. Genevieve chert), three side scrapers (one each of St. Genevieve chert, Horse Mountain agate, and reddish chalcedony), and two biface reduction flakes (brownish chalcedony). This from a total collection of 882 tools and over 4,500 flakes does not rank very highly in terms of importance of exotic material in the lithic assemblage. Other sites on the Tennessee River display a similar percentages of exotic materials (Figures 1.2 through 1.9). Additionally, artifacts of locally available Waverly chert are not found much beyond the drainage of the Western Val-

ley. This information supports the belief that the home range of the local Clovis population was rather restricted when compared to western Clovis and later Folsom groups of the American West. Band movement of the occupants of 40BN190 seems to have been confined to the main river system. Further work is needed to establish the extent of the local lithic materials as they are found along the Tennessee River from Alabama to the southern border of Kentucky. Movement along the river, north and south, may have been more important than any east/west migration. Other distinct groups may have been located along the Cumberland and Mississippi River drainages. This type of settlement pattern does not fit well with established models of Paleoindian behavior for the Southeast as defined by Meltzer (1984 and 1988). Meltzer's model argues for a generalized forager strategy adapted to a highly mobile band of part-time game hunters.

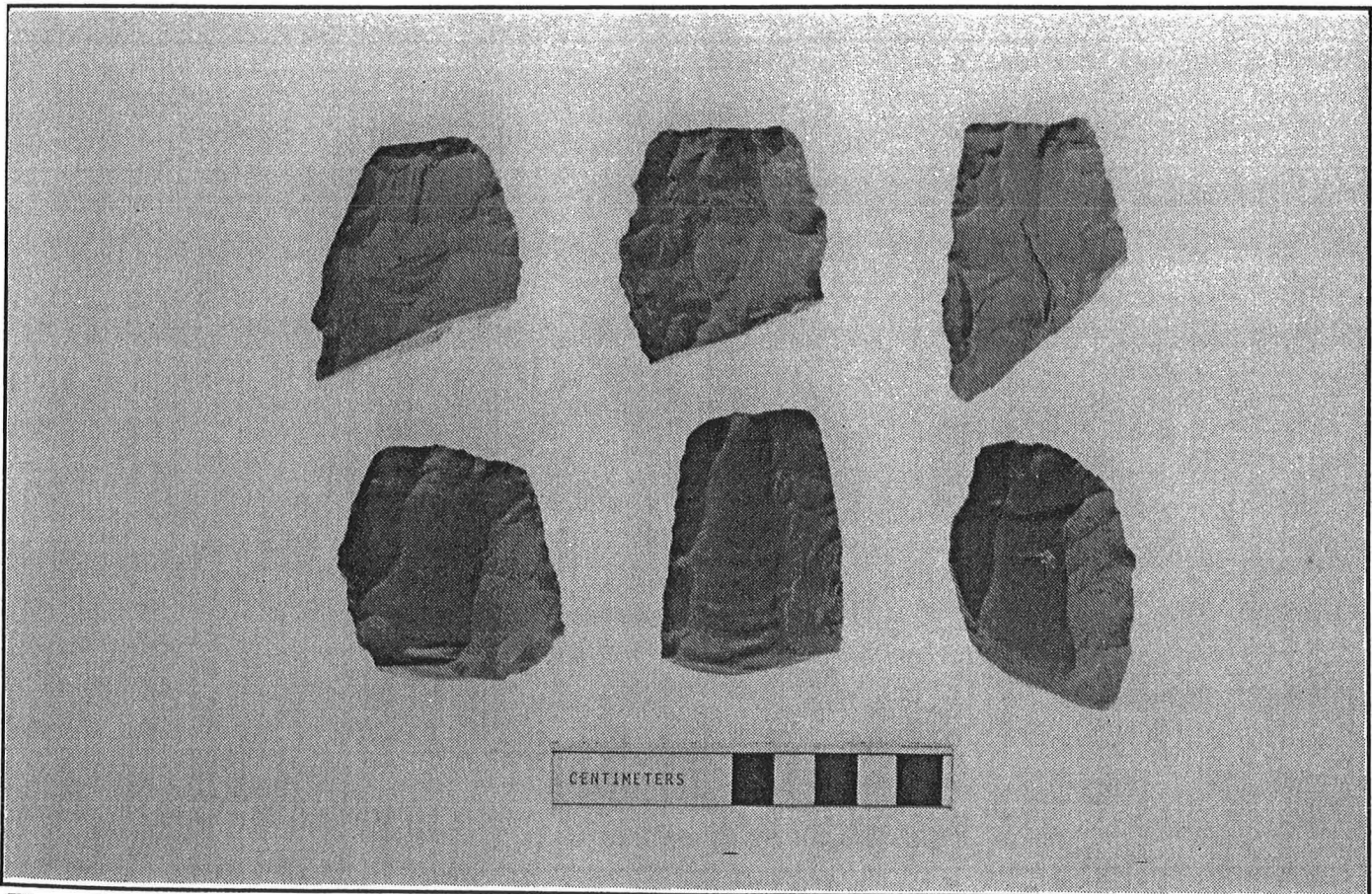


Figure 1.2. Clovis preform bases from Areas A, B, and D, Site 40BN190.

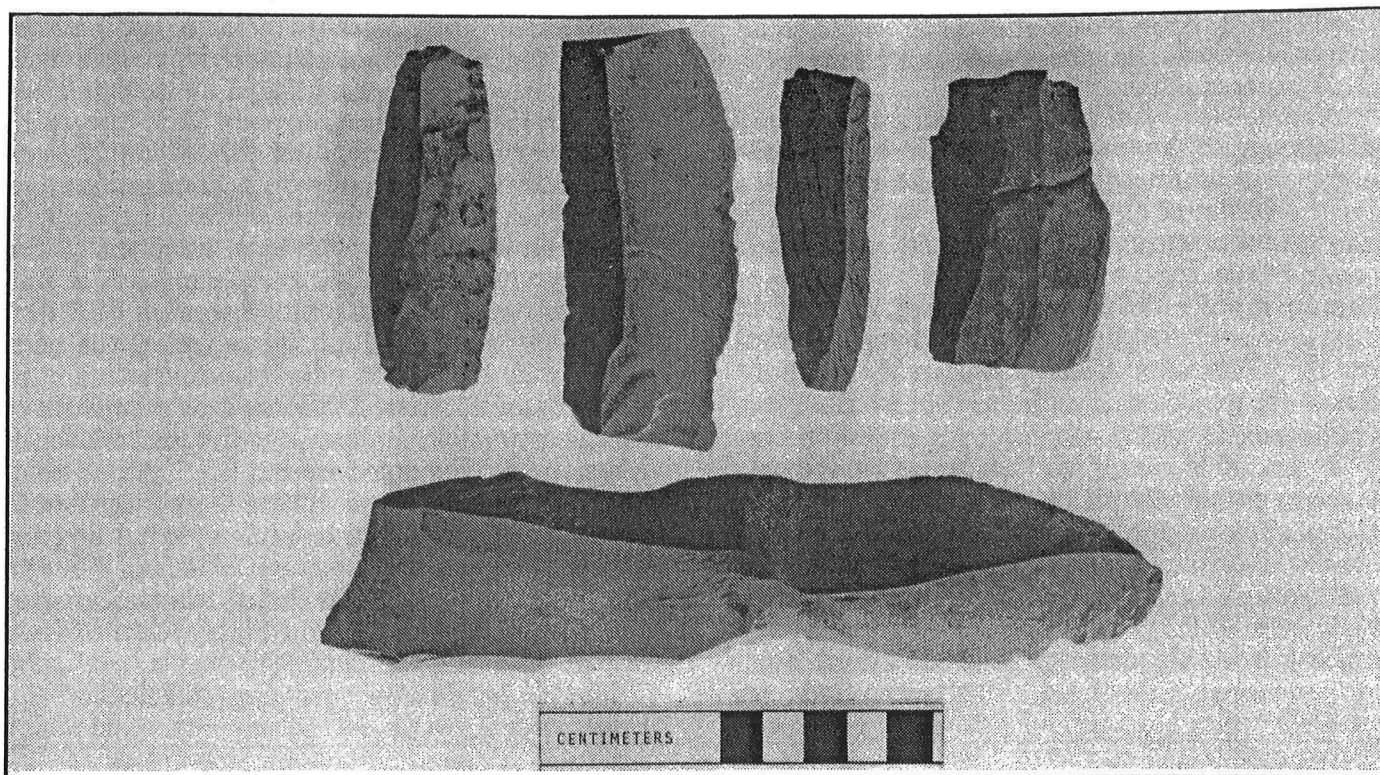


Figure 1.3. Blade tools from Areas A and B, Site 40BN190.



Figure 1.4. Uniface endscrapers from Area A, Site 40BN190.

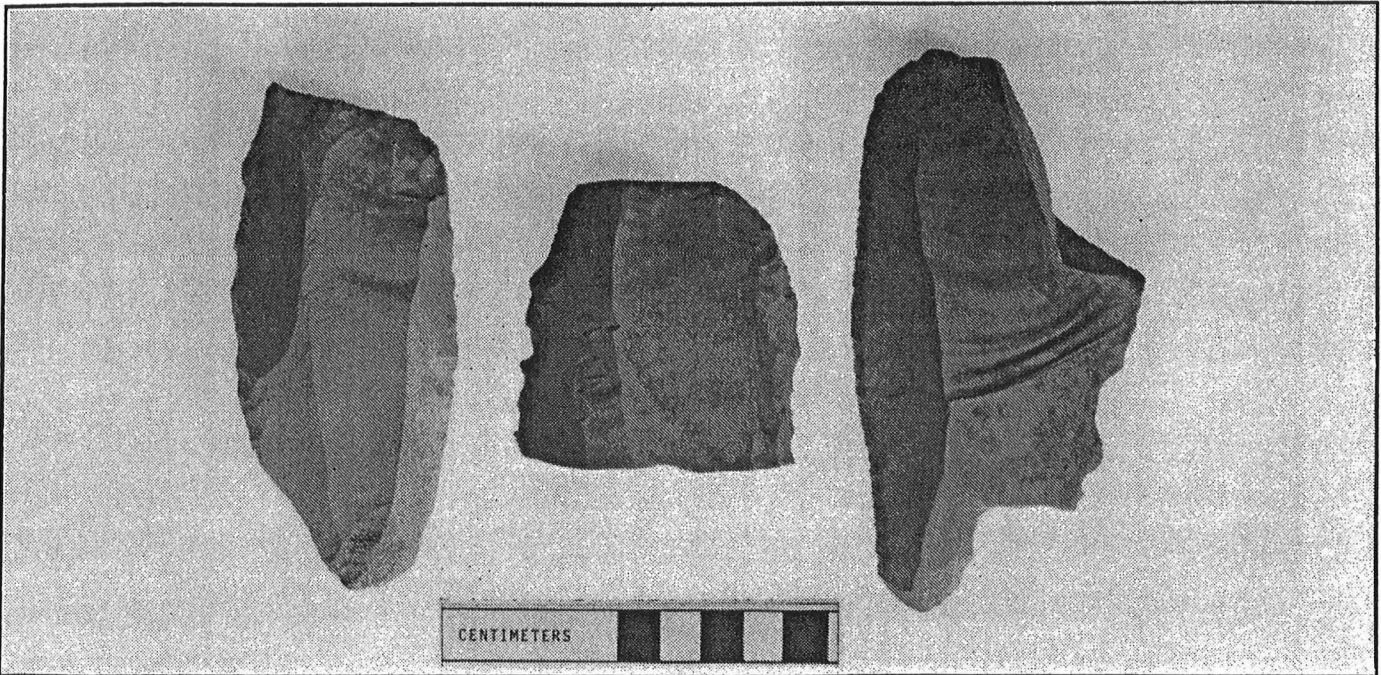


Figure 1.5. Uniface knives/sidescrapers from Area A, Site 40BN190.

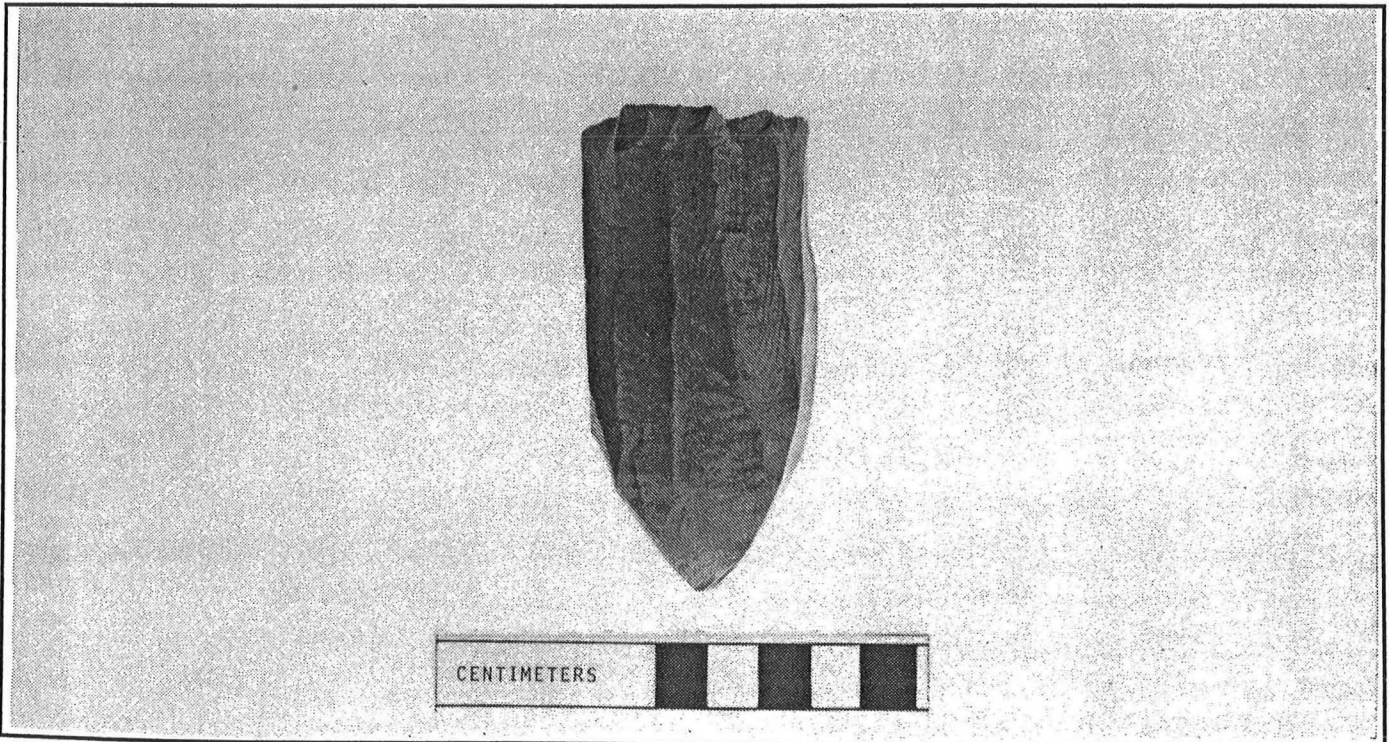


Figure 1.6. Blade core from Area A, Site 40BN190.

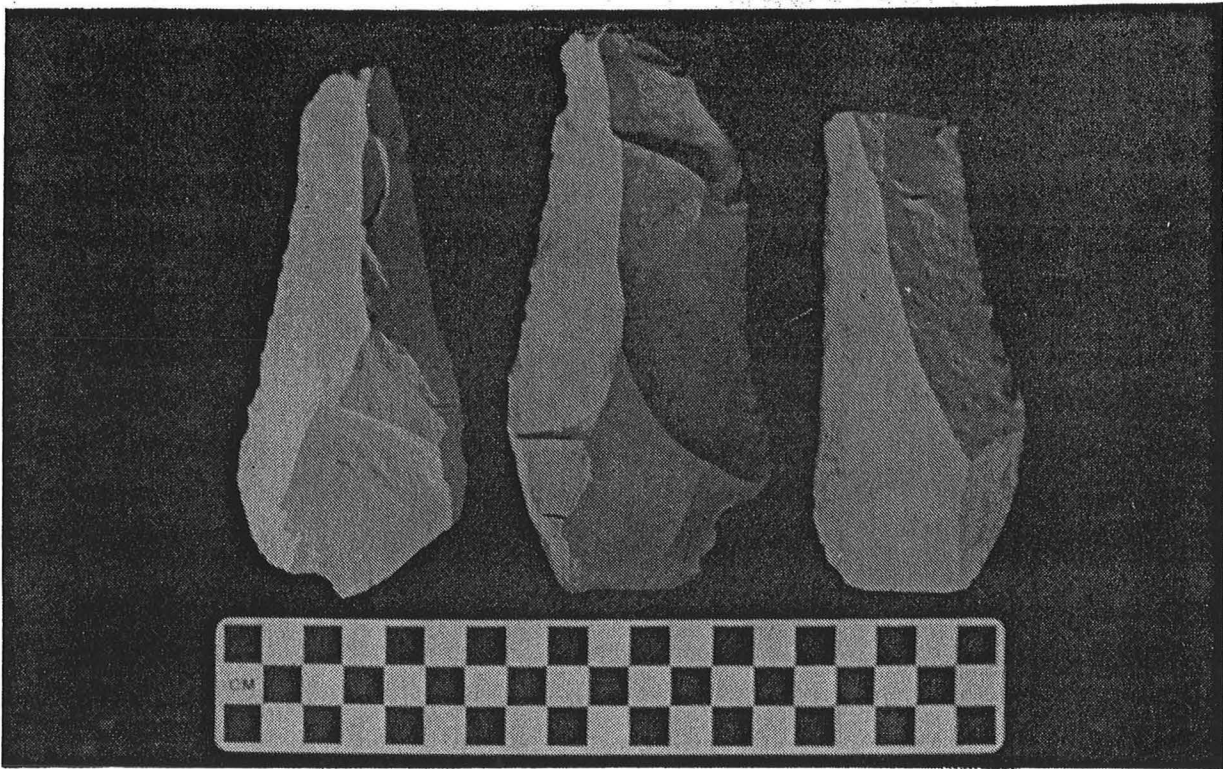


Figure 1.7. Uniface knives/sidescrapers from Area A, Site 40BN190.

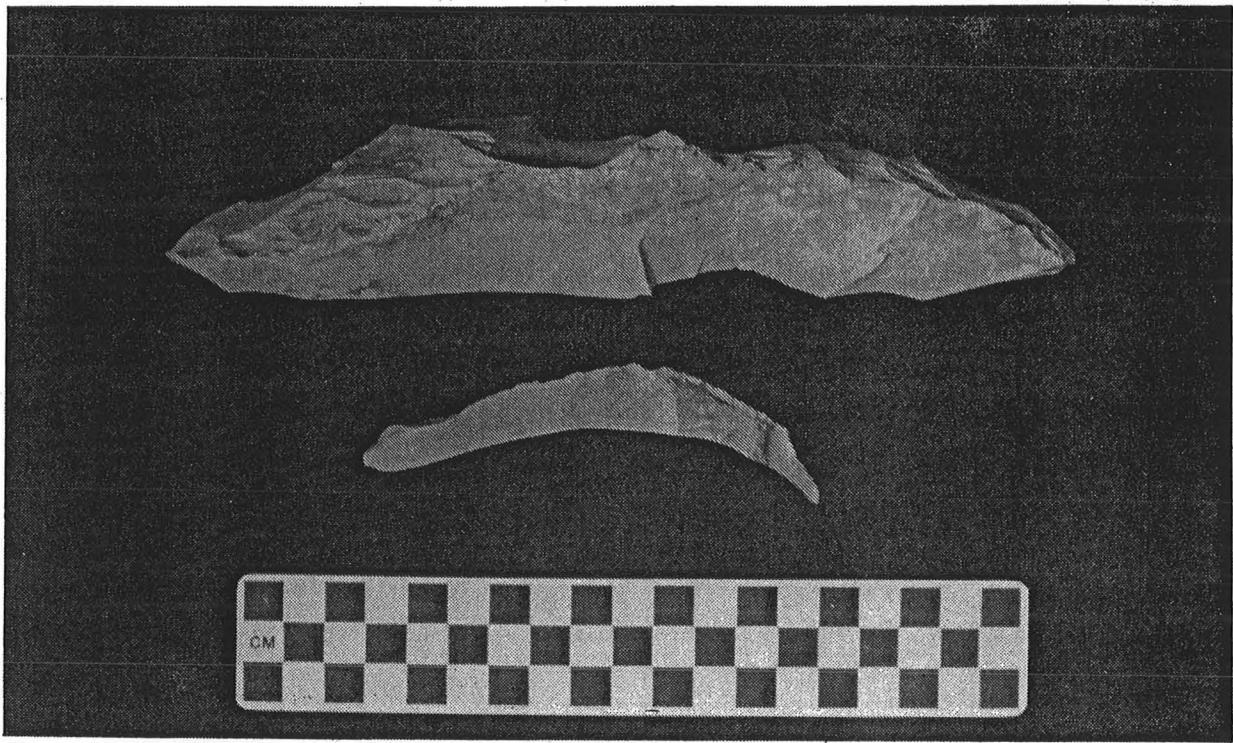


Figure 1.8. Keel flakes (blades) from Areas A and B, Site 40BN190.



Figure 1.9. Blade knives from Areas A and B, Site 40BN190.

The concept of small groups of nomadic hunters is based on numerous finds of isolated fluted points and the low density of artifacts throughout the landscape. We have found, based upon work at 40BN190 and the information on other large Paleoindian sites in the survey area, that this form of behavior does not appear to fit the data recorded to date. There is always a problem with models based upon insufficient data. The information recorded and what is actually present in the field does not always coincide. Collectors are often very hesitant to divulge specific locations of their fluted point finds. Thus, their artifacts have generally been recorded with regard to county or drainage at best. Unfortunately, in the literature these find spots have almost always been considered isolated occurrences. Upon examining several collections, we have found that when exact locations are obtained from several collectors, many of these isolated finds are from the same locality. Field checks of these locations usually produce uniface tools and numerous waste flakes, which are ordinarily not collected by amateur archaeologists. Many so-called isolated finds have proven to be substantial Clovis and Cumberland sites. Care should be taken to generate

models of human occupation based upon solid field research. We state this fact not to find fault with those who create these models, but to suggest that those conducting initial fieldwork make sure that their information is as accurate as possible. Once something is in the printed record it is often difficult to change, as it becomes embedded in the minds of most researchers.

The senior author believes that the numerous fluted points and sites in the Western Valley, and in Tennessee in general, are possible indicators that the Southeast may have been a major locus for initial colonization by Clovis-type peoples, and the area may represent one of the first staging areas for the peopling of the New World as defined by Anderson (1992). At present this is only speculation, as there is not full agreement even among the authors of this paper upon the subject, let alone in the full professional community. However, as interesting as the argument may be, the important point may not be where fluted point technology originated, but how these peoples organized and how the differences in settlement between regions can best be explained and understood. The question of where fluted point (Clovis) culture began is a

fascinating one, but it may never be fully resolved, given the lack of conclusive dates from the Southeast. It is hoped that datable materials will be recovered from the buried section of the Carson-Conn-Short site, hopefully shedding light on its placement in the temporal framework of the development of early Paleoindian cultures. The quest for answers is the important consideration, regardless of which proves to be older. We look forward to the continuation of research on this and many other questions concerning time and social aspects of human adaptations during this very interesting period. The Paleoindian experience in the Southeast deserves nothing less than a full effort toward these goals.

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Harlan "Kit" Carson, Gary Conn, and Hal Short are responsible for this site being recorded and tested by professional archaeologists. Their donation of artifacts and time is greatly appreciated, and their contribution to the understanding of Eastern Clovis culture cannot be minimized. People like these bring about better relationships between professional and amateur archaeologists.

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