Arts and Culture of the Prehistoric Hohokam Indians

Rock of Ages: A Brief Summary of Hohokam Stone Tools

by Todd W. Bostwick
Pueblo Grande Museum

The eminent southwestern archaeologist Emil Haury once noted that the stone tool industry of the ancient Hohokam Indians was a paradox: on one hand they displayed a mastery over stone with exquisitely shaped objects and finely flaked arrow points, yet on the other hand many of their stone tools used to cut, chop, crush and scrape appear “randomly made.” These latter tools were commonly used throughout the long Hohokam occupation of the Sonoran Desert, and consequently provide limited information concerning changes in material culture through time. In contrast, some of the finely made tools such as axes, palettes, stone bowls, and arrow points display stylistic variations over time reflecting changes in Hohokam culture.

Nonetheless, all Hohokam stone tools reveal something about this people’s intimate relationship with the environment in which they lived, providing information about raw material selection and tool manufacture, design, technology, use, repair, and discard.

Hohokam stone tools are generally divided into two main categories: flaked stone and ground stone. Although this is a useful dichotomy, some stone tools have multiple manufacture techniques (e.g., a single tool may exhibit flaking, pecking, and grinding) or functions. Stone tools often are found together, as tool kits or as archaeological assemblages, which helps the archaeologist reconstruct the possible activities that were associated with those tools. Close inspection of the tools often reveals interesting details about their use-life history, such as custom manufacture designed to fit the tool to a certain hand size, or use wear patterns created by a right- or left-handed craftsperson 750 to 1000 years ago.

These carved stone bowls are from Snaketown, a large Hohokam archaeological site south of Phoenix. Heiga Tetwes photo courtesy of the Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona.

HOHOKAM FLAKED STONE

Flaked stone tools are typically made by removing selected portions of a rock through controlled knapping, or percussion force directed by hitting the edge of the stone at an angle with another harder rock called a hammerstone, or with a hard antler hammer called a billet. Shaping of the desired stone tool and the creation of sharp edges is  Continued on page 2.
vers, notched flakes and other simple tool forms. Haury argued that for most of the tasks performed with flaked tools, the Hohokam simply grabbed the nearest rock at hand and modified it as needed. But there are two exceptions to this pattern: primary flake tools and arrow points, both of which required considerable skill to manufacture.

Primary flake tools were usually made from hard quartzite or andesite river cobbles by skillfully removing the edge of the cobble. The resulting flake is relatively flat on one side and retains the cobble’s exterior surface, or cortex, on the other side. Primary flake tools provided a sturdy edge used for a variety of cutting and chopping tasks, and are found at habitation sites, among agricultural fields, and in wild resource collection areas.

**Arrow Points and Other Tools.** The Hohokam made several different kinds of bifacially flaked tools, including arrow points, bifacial knives, and drills. With the exception of arrow points, however, they did not emphasize a bifacial tool industry like the earlier Archaic hunter-gatherers of the Sonoran Desert. Nonetheless, Hohokam arrow points are considered some of the finest made by prehistoric pottery-making people of the Southwest. A wide range of forms and shapes were flaked, some of which are made of high quality materials and show such skill that they were most likely made by specialists. Other, simpler forms were probably made by almost anyone.

The elaborate arrow points have deep barbs or serrations, and were typically made of chert or chalcedony, with other cryptocrystalline materials such as clear quartz, obsidian, and jasper also used. A renowned flintknapper, Don Crabtree, replicated some of the Hohokam arrow points and he argued that the chert was given a special heat treatment before it was flaked.

**Stone Sources.** It is not known where the Hohokam obtained chert but some of it appears to have come from the Mogollon Rim Country. Sophisticated chemical analyses of the obsidian has revealed that they obtained this glassy volcanic stone from at least a dozen different sources, either as finished tools or as raw material to be made into
tools. These obsidian sources are scattered throughout the Southwest and northern Mexico including Government Mountain, Partridge Creek, Vulture, Superior, Sauceda Mountains, Tank Mountains, Sitgreaves Peak, Los Vidrios, and others. Most Hohokam villages contain obsidian from at least two or three different sources. The village of Pueblo Grande in Phoenix contains obsidian from nine different sources.

Sundry Styles. A confusing variety of arrow point forms are found at Hohokam sites. Haury identified 15 different unnamed types at Snaketown, most of them dated to the Colonial and Sedentary periods (ca. A.D. 750-1100). Some of these forms may have been in use at the same time. For example, five different arrow point types found in a single cremation burial at Snaketown are illustrated in Figure 14.40 of Emil Haury’s book *The Hohokam, Desert Farmers & Craftsmen*. Archaeologists often assume that arrow point shapes reflect distinct styles intended by their makers, but the reasons for the different forms is unknown. Might these different point types in the Snaketown cremation burial represent membership of that person in different social, political, religious, or other groups?

Recently two archaeologists have independently attempted to more formally define Hohokam arrow points. In his Department of Anthropology doctoral dissertation at Arizona State University, Charles Hoffman analyzed a large collection of arrow points from the Salt River and Gila River regions, resulting in the definition of a number of different named arrow point types. And Tucson’s Jane Sliva in her book *Introduction to the Study and Analysis of Flaked Stone Artifacts and Lithic Technology* identified eight Preclassic (pre-1100) arrow point types and 10 types that date to the Classic period (1100-1450). Preclassic period points have the greatest variability in form and size, with Classic period types most often being smaller and triangular. Additional work is needed to better define and categorize the full range of Hohokam arrow point types, especially for different geographic areas and time periods.

GROUND STONE TOOLS

The Hohokam crafted a diverse range of ground stone tools and containers, including manos and metates, axes, palettes, bowls/censers, “plum-mets,” polishing stones, and other implements.

Grinding Tools. Manos and metates, two implements used together to grind corn and other plant seeds, took some effort to manufacture though flaking, pecking and shaping of dense stone materials. Hand-held grinding tools ranged from crude handstones made of river cobbles to well shaped manos pecked and ground from vesicular basalt that is found in rock outcrops throughout the southern deserts. Over time, the Hohokam appear to have favored thinner, longer manos.

The complementary grinding implement to the mano, the metate, also took different forms, from shallow slab and
basin metates to deep trough metates. In his book *The Hohokam*, Haury noted that the Hohokam open-ended trough metate, manufactured throughout their entire chronological sequence, was one of the finest grinding implements made in the Southwest. Large quarries in the northern Phoenix Basin have been found where the Hohokam systematically manufactured manos and metates. Chemical characterization of those basalts has allowed archaeologists to trace the distribution of the manos and metates from their original sources.

**The Hard Wood Problem.** The hardness of the wood in most Sonoran Desert trees encouraged the use of specialized tools to make use of wood products in architecture and burial rites. In response to this challenge, the Hohokam made not only functional, but attractive stone axes. Their axes were composite tools consisting of a grooved stone head with a wedge-shaped blade that is attached to a J-shaped wooden haft. Many of them are symmetrical in shape, and often are highly polished. The Hohokam axe is distinguished by its wide, three-quarters groove in contrast to the full-grooved axe of the Anasazi and Mogollon cultures. Axe size varies considerably, from a few centimeters in length to a massive one from the Pueblo Grande platform mound that is more than 27 cm long.

It is estimated that the manufacture of an axe may have taken months, making them very valuable tools. This is supported by the fact that they typically were used until they became dull. They were often resharpened, and ultimately were reused as hammerstones when they became too short to be effective as axes. Miniature axes, too small to be functional, also attest to this tool type’s possible symbolic importance.

Early Hohokam axes have a pronounced ridge along both sides of the groove, but this ridge is absent from Classic period axes. However, axes with ridge grooves have been found in certain Classic period contexts that suggest they were heirlooms or salvaged implements. Caches of axes and evidence of their manufacture have been found at several platform mound sites in the Phoenix Basin, suggesting a relationship with platform mound activities. This apparent association lends support to Haury’s suggestion that the Hohokam axe originated in Mexico, as Hohokam platform mounds are thought to have developed as a result of Mexican influence.

Tabular knives and hoes are common Hohokam tools which, similar to primary flake tools, are found at habitation sites and in wild resource collection areas. These tools are thin sheets of spalled rock, some naturally shaped and others pecked and ground into rectangular, semioval, or triangular form as desired. Use wear studies indicate they served as cutting and digging implements held in the hand or hafted in a short handle. Tabular knives appear to have been used primarily for cutting the leaves and hearts of the agave plant, which was cultivated extensively by the Hohokam. Some of these tools have extensive polish along their edges from frequent use.

Stone palettes have been called by Haury one of the hallmarks of the Hohokam, but they remain one of the more enigmatic Hohokam stone tools. Primarily made of schist or slate, palettes are thin, rectangular in shape, and often have decorative elements carved or incised into their borders and edges. The earliest examples do not have designs, but decorations became most elaborate during the Colonial period (A.D. 750-900). Palettes do not appear to have been manufactured during the Classic period, although occasional specimens are found in Classic period contexts such as one from the top of the Pueblo Grande platform mound. Palette size can vary from very small to relatively large (about 3 cm to 40 cm in length).

Similar to the carved stone bowls described below, most palettes likely played an important role in Hohokam ceremonies. Most have an interior area that is concave or flat, sometimes with abrasions indicating grinding, sometimes with concretions that apparently are the result of the melting of lead ore and other minerals on the palette. Some palettes are shaped in the form of effigies such as birds, lizards, humans, toads, tortoises, and snakes. Though some are found on house floors and in trash deposits, they are often found in cremations and appear to have been burned in the cremation fire.

The Hohokam also made beautiful stone bowls and censers, many with incised and carved geometric designs or relief figures of rattlesnakes, humans, lizards, birds, mountain sheep, and
These four Hohokam carved stone palettes are from archaeological sites AZ BB:13:16 and AZ BB:13:50 in Tucson. Helga Telwes photo courtesy of the Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona.

Another facet of "Arts and Culture of the Prehistoric Hohokam Indians" will appear in the next issue of Old Pueblo Archaeology.

Other animals. Although they vary in shape, these stone vessels are generally small — most are less than 10 cm in diameter. They may have served as mortars, or as containers for burning incense or holding special liquids, perhaps even human blood, but since few use wear studies have been done on them their functions remain unclear.

Similar to the stone bowls/censers, Hohokam stone rings and so-called plummet stones were made by pecking and grinding vesicular basalts and other materials into a preconceived form. The stone rings have been called doughnut stones because of their shape and size, but the function of these objects is unknown. Digging stick weights, weights for fishing nets, and gaming equipment have all been suggested. Some of them have grooves around their edges making them look like pulleys.

The function of plummet stones, also called medicine stones, is ambiguous too. Most look like stubby cigars, but a few examples have been shaped into phallics, suggesting symbolic meanings of some kind.

Some suggested readings on Hohokam stone artifacts


Two views of a Hohokam stone ring from Pueblo Grande shown at 50% of actual size. Does it remind you of a doughnut or a bagel?

Hohokam "plummet" stones are fairly variable in shape, as indicated by these three specimens from Pueblo Grande, shown at 50% of actual size.
Rock of Ages: A Brief Summary of Hohokam Stone Tools (concluded)

Another important ground stone item is the so-called arrowshaft straightener, a square or rectangular, flat piece of stone with one or two narrow grooves with polished interiors. It is assumed these tools served to straighten arrow shafts by generating friction from rubbing the shaft through the groove(s). An increase in the number of these tools has been noted for the Classic period suggesting a possible increase in warfare or the threat of warfare at that time.

The marine shell ornaments that the Hohokam so admired (and that will be the focus of a future Old Pueblo Archaeology bulletin) had to be shaped with stone tools and one of these was a specialized tool called a reamer. This tool was used to grind away and smooth the insides of shell bracelets and arm bands. Some reamers have several notches with different diameters for different sized openings.

The manufacture of pottery also requires stone tools in its production. Small pebbles were used to polish the ceramic vessel’s surface. Highly valued among Native American potters historically, through many years of use these pebbles developed distinctive, beveled-edged, worn facets. Some polishing stones from the Pueblo Grande platform mound in Phoenix and from the West Branch site in Tucson had thick layers of red pigment over much of their surfaces indicating they were used to polish redware vessels.

In conclusion, for more than a thousand years the Hohokam made use of the stone resources available to them in the Sonoran Desert, to manufacture tools used to procure and process food, and to make other tools. A variety of materials were flaked, pecked, ground, carved, and otherwise shaped to make a range of desired tools. Those stone tools were very efficient and functional, and oftentimes even esthetically beautiful. Some may have had important symbolic or ceremonial meanings as well.

The drafted illustrations on pages 2 through 6 all depict Hohokam artifacts from the Pueblo Grande archaeological site. The drawings, by Jonathan Johna, were provided courtesy of the Pueblo Grande Museum in Phoenix.

The Old Pueblo Archaeology Center Honor Roll: Recent Supporters

Donors & Granteors: Feb. 21-May 24: Mike Chumley, Carolyn Davis, Allen Denoyer, Kay Mallick, Barbara O’Bry, Velma Shoemaker, Nathalie & Richard Woodbury, and Allen Dart recently donated art items for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center to use for fundraising in our January 2000 fundraising events. Beny Marshall donated a Hoover upright vacuum cleaner in response to last issue’s Wish List. Charles & Veronica Baker, Allen Dart, Carolyn Davis, Faith Fuller, Mattie Knobol, Paul Parker, Quirvia Research Associates, Forrest & Doris Rickard, Elizabeth Zall, and a foundation that wished to remain anonymous recently provided cash donations, as did several persons who attended Old Pueblo’s public presentations and tours.

Volunteers: Our thanks again to Carol Richardson, Bess Puyear, and Celil McPherson for the uncounted hours they spent in miling of the March bulletin. Other volunteers who logged 205.75 hours from Feb. 21-May 24 in activities other than the Bojorquez Ranch excavations: Evelyn Bird, Peggy & Rebecca Dommermuth, Karen Bright, Isabel Broome, Cynthia Cobb, Carole Collins, Donna Connich, JoAnn Cowgill, Delia & Ivan Curnute, Carolyn Davis, Jane Delaney, Sheila Ellerson, Helen Frost, Emily & Sam Greenleaf, Susan Harwood, Carol Hubbard, Doug Lindsay, Barbara O’Bry, Scott Palazzo, Pat Fiche, Karen Porter, Gail & Daniel Koper, Seth Rosenberg, Robin Rutherford, Elizabeth Ryan, Carole Sanford, Steve Stacey, Mary Anne Strauss, Tom Todd, Jim Trimbly, Andrew Tuody, and Werner Zimmn. Our apologies to anyone we may have overlooked.

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center’s Excavation at the Historic Bojórquez Ranch

In April, Old Pueblo Archaeology Center employees Jeff Jones, Cara Mia Williams, Sarah Taylor, and Mike Cook conducted scientific excavations at the historic Bojórquez Ranch archaeological site, AZ AA:12:122 (ASM), with help from Archaeology Opportunities volunteers Joan Clark, Della and Ivan Curnutte, Jane Delaney, Doug Lindsay, Mary Lu Moore, Tom Sickels, Barbara Snyder, Andrew Tuohy, and Werner Zimm.

The Bojórquez Ranch site is located near Silverbell and Cortaro roads in Marana, along the west bank of the Santa Cruz River, about a dozen miles northwest of downtown Tucson.

Old Pueblo’s excavations and follow-up studies on this site are recovering and interpreting cultural information it contains in order to offset damage that new home construction might cause to the site. The study is being funded by the property developer, Fairfax Management Company of Tucson.

The Bojórquez Ranch is one of the last Mexican ranchos remaining in the Tucson Basin. Now in an area undergoing rapid urbanization and real estate development, it was once part of a loose community of ranches and homesteads focused on the confluence of the Santa Cruz River and its major tributary, the Rillito.

Historical records indicate the first house built at AZ AA:12:122 was constructed around 1878 by Juan and Maria Bojórquez. They sold the ranch to Leandro Ruiz and Feliberto Aguirre in 1895. Some time after that the property passed into government hands and was sold in 1900 to Felipe Aguilar, who later homesteaded an adjacent parcel and apparently abandoned the original Bojórquez buildings.

Reflecting this history, the Bojórquez Ranch site includes two discrete groups of ruins and trash mounds from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Architectural features studied by Old Pueblo include the original house, an outdoor brick-lined pit, a trash disposal area evidently used by the Bojórquez family, and a concrete foundation for a water pump that probably dates to the 1930s or 1940s. At a more northerly part of the site that is slated to be protected in a public park are additional concrete and rock foundations dating to ca. 1910. They may have been built by Felipe Aguilar.

Old Pueblo excavated two test pits into the 1870s ranch house in March and concluded that the ruin had potential to provide information important in history. This led to the data recovery excavation project in April, which began with the tops of this house’s walls being stripped of topsoil by hand. Stripping exposed two adobe brick structures separated by a “dog run” type breezeway (see illustration).

Brown, sun-dried adobe bricks were clearly visible at the tops of the remaining walls once topsoil was cleaned off. Mud mortar of a slightly grayer hue than the bricks was used to cement the bricks together and plaster some of the indoor walls. Plate glass fragments found when the top of Room 4’s east wall was stripped off suggest that at least one room had a glazed window.

After the wall tops were defined, test pits were excavated into each room to look for were any interior features or artifacts. A raised adobe brick fireplace that included some broken, commercially made bricks was discovered in the test pit inside Room 1, suggesting this room was the kitchen. Test pits in Rooms 4, 5, and 6 revealed earthen floors and interior walls coated with a lime-like whitewash. Fragments of corrugated iron found in Room 4 suggest the house had a metal roof.

After the test pits in rooms were done, the Arc-Opps members volunteered their services, and under supervision of Old Pueblo’s archaeologists they removed all the dirt left in Rooms 1 and 2 and from large areas of Rooms 4 and 5.

Archaeology for All!

Public Can Participate in Archaeology Tours & Field Programs

Archaeology Opportunities Members Go on Digs & Tours Free!

The Sabino Canyon Ruin was a vibrant village of the ancient Hohokam Indians between A.D. 1000 and 1350. Old Pueblo’s excavations there have recovered pottery, stone, bone, and seashell artifacts and have revealed prehistoric “pit houses,” apartment-like housing compounds with adobe and rock walls, ancient canals, and a dog burial.

Old Pueblo offers guided tours and archaeological field school digs open to the public at the Sabino Canyon Ruin on selected Saturdays. During the tours and field schools, models of reconstructed Hohokam houses and samples of artifacts that have been recovered are shown and described, and interpretations of ancient Hohokam life in the Sabino Canyon area are offered.

The 2-hour Saturday public tours are fundraisers for Old Pueblo Archaeology Center’s nonprofit research and education programs. Each tour starts at 9 a.m. and costs $10 per adult or $2 for kids 12 and under. The next public tours will be offered beginning in the fall.

The Saturday archaeological field school sessions, which are each eight hours long, cost $50 for a two day program or $35 for one day. Lunches are provided for dig session participants. The next two-day field school sessions are scheduled for January 12 & 26.

The Sabino Canyon Ruin is on private land a mile away from the Coronado National Forest’s Sabino Canyon Visitor Center. Call 798-1201 for reservations and directions to the ruin.

The OPENI mock archaeological dig is a realistic full-size model of a prehistoric Indian pit-house village ruin. Family members age 7 and up (including adults) can dig to discover and learn about pottery and other artifacts buried in OPENI during our archaeological excavation, and also participate in Native American craft activities. Fee per participant is $6.00 ($4.80 for Archaeology Opportunities members). OPENI sessions for individual sign-ups will be at Old Pueblo Archaeology Center on Tuesday June 15-18 and on Saturdays starting this fall.

Advance reservations are required for all scheduled sessions — call (520) 798-1201. Group dates and rates are available for all programs.
Excavations at Bojórquez Ranch (continued from page 7)

5. Their work revealed that Room 1 contained an additional waist-high adobe wall that was added after the house walls had been completed.

This interior wall paralleled the western wall of the structure and the area between those two walls had been filled in, creating a raised work area similar to a counter top. The fireplace had been built into this work area, and the top of the work surface north of the fireplace had been paved with adobe blocks.

The area south of the fireplace was eroded so much that it was impossible to tell whether it also had been covered with adobe bricks, but the dirt filling the space between the two walls appeared to have been intentionally placed there, and the interior of the walls had not been finished or plastered as were the rest of the walls, so this portion likely was covered also.

The test pit excavated in Room 2 revealed burned earth and alcoholic beverage bottles in the fill, suggesting the ranch house was used by transients or perhaps underage drinkers after it had partially collapsed. Subsequent excavation in the rest of Room 2 revealed that fires had been built inside that room at least three separate times. The ash and charcoal concentration from the earliest fire was on the floor in the southeast corner of the room, and later fires were built on top of collapsed adobe wall fall.

Except for the interior “countertop” wall in Room 1, all of the interior and exterior house walls had bonded corners showing all of the rooms were constructed at the same time. The insides and outsides of the walls were subsequently plastered, creating a smooth finish, and the interior walls were whitewashed. The only wall section not finished in these rooms was the area hidden behind the “countertop” wall in Room 1, suggesting that the raised work area in that room was built at the same time as the house.

When the archaeologists excavated a test square into a historical trash concentration just south of the ranch house they exposed a single layer of adobe bricks resting on a thin lens of oxidized dirt, forming a small rectangular struc-

When Mike Ahumada, grandfather of archaeologist Carrie Williams, came out to look at the site he commented that Feature 4 looked just like the base of a raised barbecue that he uses at his home in Mexico for cooking large chunks of meat to preserve it. He may have identified the brick foundation correctly, as archaeologists found lots of animal bones in the trash near it.

Feature 5 was a concrete base of a stationary engine associated with a concrete-lined pit. The archaeologists cleaned it off and excavated a test trench along one edge of it, confirming that it was triangular, over 5 ft wide at the bottom and extending 3 ft below the ground surface. Its shape and massive size is typical of concrete features built to withstand the irregular torque and excessive vibration of one-cylinder “hit-and-miss”-type well-pump engines used in the 1930s and 1940s.

Excavation of the concrete-lined pit beside the engine base revealed a rectangular pump base with a keyhole-shaped hole surrounding a steel-cased well. It was probably associated with a turbine pump dating to the 1930s or 1940s.

Excavations in a large trash disposal area just across Silverbell Road from the Bojórquez Ranch adobe house recovered sun-colored-amethyst glass and solder-top cans in use from the 1870s-1920s, but also a 1950s steel beverage can with an aluminum pull-tab opener. John Sisson, who has lived in the Silverbell/Cortaro area since 1947, visited the Bojórquez Ranch site excavations and later reported to one of us that the ranch house’s adobe walls were in ruins by the late 1940s or the early
Bojórquez Ranch Dig (concluded)

1950s, with none of the walls more than 18 inches high at one of the corners, probably the southeast one in those years. His information suggests the aluminum can was tossed onto the site by someone driving along Silverbell Road after the house was abandoned.

The information recovered during the Bojórquez Ranch excavations will be used to define the site's periods of occupation more accurately, to document architectural design and construction methods, and to provide information on historical cattle ranching in the Cortaro area in accordance with a research plan that was submitted to the Arizona State Museum to guide the archaeological investigations.

Two well known historical archaeologists are collaborating with Old Pueblo on the Bojórquez Ranch project research. James Ayres of Tucson is assisting in identification of the artifacts. Dr. Lyle Stone of Archaeological Research Services, Inc., of Tempe, is doing documentary research on the site and helping Old Pueblo develop the research questions to be addressed in the post-excavation studies of the recovered materials and data, and will review and comment on a draft version of Old Pueblo's final report before it is published.

We wish to thank Doug Kennedy of Fairfax Management Company for arranging funding of the Bojórquez Ranch mitigation project and for being so supportive of our archaeological research in Marana.

- Jeffrey T. Jones and Allen Dart

Arrowhead & Flintknapping Classes

Old Pueblo Archaeology Center's most popular program is Allen Denoyer's Arrowhead & Flintknapping Workshop for ages 9 to adult. The next session is set for Saturday June 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. If it fills completely another 9-12 session will be offered on Father's Day, Sunday June 20. The course, at Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, 1000 E. Fort Lowell Rd., costs $25 per person per session ($20 for Archaeology Opportunities members). Call 798-1201 before 5 p.m. on the Friday before the class to register.

Passport in Time Program

The U.S. Forest Service offers volunteer opportunities nationwide through its Passport in Time (PIT) program. For information on current activities call Carol Ellick in Tucson at (520) 798-1201 or go to at www.swanet.org on the internet and click “Opportunities.”

Texas Excavations June 16-August 15

Volunteers can participate in an ongoing research project and public dig at Lubbock Lake Landmark State Historical Park in Texas, a prehistoric site that attracted bears, bison, camels, mammoths, and people for thousands of years. The public is invited to see archaeological excavations in progress, go on guided tours, and attend public events and hands-on activities there from June 16 - August 15. For those with the time and inclination, park managers have brushes and digging implements available. For more info call Sue Shore at (806) 742-1116.

Do You Collect Artifacts?

When you find an arrowhead, a nicely decorated piece of pottery, or another ancient artifact do you pick it up for your personal relic collection? Or do you bring it to an archaeologist to find out more about it and let the professionals know where you found it? Either way, you are damaging an archaeological site!

Rather than occurring alone, most ancient artifacts are associated with other artifacts strewn over the ground, even if there is no architecture visible. However, because many kinds of prehistoric artifacts and cultural features are often not recognized by untrained eyes, most people don't even realize that the piece of painted pottery or the stone projectile point they've discovered is part of a cultural context -- an association of items dating to about the same period. These scatters of artifacts represent places where people conducted activities long ago, and so are considered to be archaeological sites.

Even though you might not see ancient structures or other cultural features in their vicinity, surface artifacts often indicate locations where prehistoric people built houses, or conducted activities centered around outdoor fireplaces, storage pits, or agricultural works, or where they killed game or collected wild natural resources.

Taking artifacts away from one of these sites not only removes clues to what was going on there, it also removes the best information available for identifying the site's age, because many ancient artifact styles were only used during particular eras. Therefore, that collected artifact could have been used to help determine the approximate age of archaeological features still buried in its immediate vicinity if it had been left in place for archaeologists to plot on an accurate map.

The next time you find an artifact, please leave it where it is, take a picture of it, and show the picture to an archaeologist!
This Hohokam carved argillite bowl showing human figures is from excavations at the Snaketown archaeological site (see inside). L. F. H. Lowe photo courtesy of the Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona.

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If you received this issue in one of our mass-mailings, the 8-digit number on the top line of your address label indicates the year, month, and day your Old Pueblo Archaeology subscription will expire. If your label month is the same as or earlier than the month of this bulletin issue you need to renew your subscription or membership in order to receive more issues.

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**Bulletin of Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, Tucson, Arizona**

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