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The art of flint knapping started when one of the hominids cracked one rock against another and created a sharp edge and realized “hey I can cut something with this”. This happened some where in Africa over one million years ago and the guy or gal that discovered this did not look a lot like us modern humans. From Africa the art of flint knapping, the fashioning stone into tools by flaking or chipping it, spread to every continent except Antarctica.

The technology reached its pinnacle in Denmark, in the old world. The stone aged peoples of Denmark crafted some amazing daggers with stone handles and pummels. In the Americas and the rest of the world many beautiful fine crafted weapons and tools were also produced. The

first stone aged people to visit the Americas arrived somewhere around 13000 BC, although this date is definitely debatable. These people were big game hunters, hunting the mega fauna of the Ice Age. They used very fine high quality materials to produce their weapons and tools.

They had not yet developed the technology of heat treating. The Clovis Point is from this time period. This is a very fine made point with a flute up each side to accommodate the spear. Around 6000 to 7000 years ago heat treating was discovered. People had learned that if you take lower quality cherts or coral and cover it with sand at the bottom of your fire pit slowly heating it up that it would change the flaking characteristics of the stone. This more often than not changes the color of the stone as well as making it much easier to flake. This marks the beginning of the Archaic period in Florida.



Some very beautiful Newnan and Hillsborough points were made in Florida out of agatized coral during this time period. By the time the first Europeans arrived in the Americas the technology had somewhat degraded. The use of the bow and arrow started in the western hemisphere around 1200 BC. It was much easier to edge a flake into a small arrowhead than to flake a bifacial spearhead. The bow for the most part replaced the Atlatl (spear thrower) as the main weapon in the Americas.

Metal quickly replaced stone around the world and the art form died in most areas. The term Flint Knapping is a modern term from the 18<sup>th</sup> century gun flint industry in Europe.

In the past 50 years some people have rediscovered this art form and have taught themselves and others to reproduce the different knapping techniques from the past. This has been a very useful tool in the fields of Anthropology and Archeology.