

Prehistoric Arrowheads...Stories from the Past

story and photography by: Lance C. Bell

I'm sure you've heard someone say "if these walls could talk." I can't help thinking the same thing every time I pick up an arrowhead or artifact. Finding an arrowhead can be rewarding and thought provoking. Garrett and Allegany Counties and the entire eastern part of the United States are rich in ancient tools/artifacts. Projectile points found in this region are made from a variety of stones — flint, chert, quartz, and jasper. They vary in age from just a couple of hundred years to nine thousand years. Holding that nine thousand year old arrowhead, you might wonder *was this used to kill an enemy or the evening's meal.*

If you are going to hunt for arrowheads and stone tools, here are a few suggestions that may help:

Where can I hunt?

Hunt mainly along river bottoms and near streams and plowed fields after a rain.

Do I need permission?

Always get the landowner's permission. Close gates going to and from. Leave things the way you found them. Be careful not to trample seedlings or crops. State and Federal lands are restricted from hunting artifacts.

Can I keep what I find?

Yes, but if you think you have something unusual or unique, you should contact the State Archaeology Historic Preservation Office to be sure about your discovery. The site you found your artifacts may not have been recorded.

What about bones and graves?

Never dig bones or grave sites. If you stumble onto an unmarked grave, you should report it to the authorities. Generally speaking, hunting arrowheads does not require any digging but rather a lot of walking.

What are stone tools?

There are many types of stone tools in fields that you could easily overlook. Before you go hunting you should get a basic field guide and familiarize

yourself with what to look for. Bring back everything you think may be an arrowhead, artifact, or stone tool. Wash it and try to identify the type you've found by shape and configuration.

There are many good fields in this entire area of Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Virginia. If you are going out hunting arrowheads for the first time, try to go with someone knowledgeable on the subject. There are local clubs you may want to contact. On page 7 is a list of clubs, organizations and reference books that may help in your search. Enjoy this wonderful pastime, respect the ancients, and when you do find something, try to imagine the story it may have to tell...listen closely. ✨



1



2



3



4



5



8



7



6



9

All of these artifacts (actual size) were found in this area, but the origin of the stone types indicate long distance trade by the prehistoric people within this region.

1 – West Virginia Banded Slate Pendant (Hopewell 500 B.C.)

2 – Missouri or Tennessee Jasper (Late Woodland 1200-1400 A.D.)

3 – West Virginia Chert (Archaic 4000-6000 B.C.)

4 – Maryland Flint (Late Prehistoric 1000 A.D.)

5 – Ohio Flint (Archaic 3000-4000 B.C.)

6 – Maryland Flint Drill Point (Late Prehistoric 1000 A.D.)

7 – Maryland Flint (Late Prehistoric 1,000 B.C.-900 A.D.)

8 – Maryland Flint (Late Prehistoric 1000 A.D.)

9 – Missouri Flint (Late Paleo 8000-10000 B.C.)

Archaeological Societies, Clubs, Universities, and Other Sources of Information

Western Maryland Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Maryland — Cumberland, MD 21502 (*4th Friday each month at LaVale Library, 7:30 pm*)

West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, P.O. Box 879, Morgantown, WV 26507

The Archaeological Society of Virginia, 562 Rossmore Road, Richmond, VA 23225

Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Carnegie Institute, 4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560

Archaeological Archives, Inc., 1964-B Negley Ave., Morgantown, WV 26505

Reference Books

All That Remains, 2nd Edition by Robert L. Pyle — 1964-B Negley Ave., Morgantown, WV 26505

The Overstreet Indian Arrowheads Identification and Price Guide by Robert M. Overstreet with Howard Peake — Avon Books, New York, NY 10019

Introduction to West Virginia Archaeology, 2nd Edition by Edward V. McMichael, Educational Series, WV Geological and Economic Survey.

The Amateur Archaeologist's Handbook by Maurice Robbins and Mary B. Irving — New York

Paleo Points: An Illustrated Chronology of Projectile Points by George Bradford (order from American Indian Books, 533 Summit, Webster Groves, MO 63119)

Three Archaeological Sites in Somerset County, Pennsylvania by Mary Butler. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg. Reprinted in Kent, Barry C., et al., *Foundations of Pennsylvania Prehistory*. ❖



Garrettland Inc.

- Property Management
- Appraisal Services
- Development • Apartment Rentals

301-334-9915
1000 Thayer Center • Oakland

Kathy's Furniture & Gifts

Specializing in Quality Furniture & Accessories

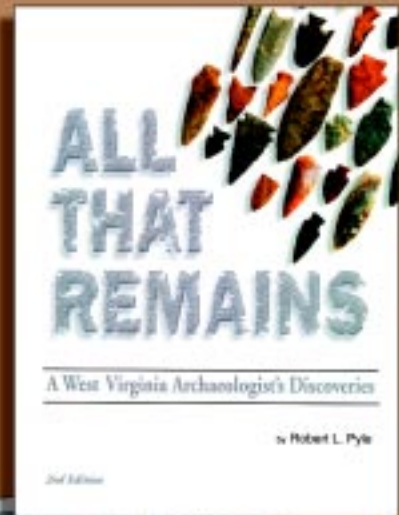
- Discount Prices
- Furniture Packages
- Expanded Bedding Dept.
- Layaway & Credit Cards
- Local & Long Distance Delivery

301-387-9555
Rt. 219 & Glendale Road
Dry Dock Plaza

A West Virginia Archaeologist's Discoveries

There is something about archaeology that seems to fascinate people of all ages.

Perhaps it is because we humans like to know who we are and where we are going, and antiquity excites our imaginations. This 92-page publication illustrates and discusses prehistoric artifacts found in West Virginia, from projectile points and pottery to petroglyph sites.



All That Remains 2nd Edition can be ordered from Robert L. Pyle, 1964-B Negley Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505 for \$20 plus \$3 shipping. www.ancientremains for more information, or call 304-296-7221