

III. PROJECTILE POINTS FROM LOVELOCK CAVE, NEVADA

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In June, 1965, a field party from the University of California, Berkeley, under the direction of Professor Robert F. Heizer, spent several days working in Lovelock Cave. The main task at that time was the collection of human coprolites. Several preliminary reports have since appeared on the analysis of these and other specimens (Heizer 1967; Ambro 1967; Cowan 1967; Roust 1967; Tubbs and Berger 1967; Follett 1967). At the same time, a collection of 73 projectile points was made by the party, and an additional 4 points were given to the author by Clark Hesterlee of Lovelock, who found them in the same manner. This collection is of unusual interest for several reasons.

The method of collection of the projectile points bears mention. It consisted of screening the talus dump immediately below the old guano miners' entrance to the cave. This talus dump had been formed as a result of the screening of some of the cave deposit in 1911-12 by commercial guano miners (Loud and Harrington 1929:2-3, pl. 5). Since most of the guano had been removed from the upper levels of the cave, the rescreening of this refuse actually constituted a latter-day recovery by archaeologists of artifacts from the previously displaced upper levels of deposit.

The number of specimens recovered is also of interest in view of the fact that only 21 classifiable points had been previously reported to have definitely come from the cave. Additional stone projectile points which may have come from Lovelock Cave are discussed by Grosscup (1960:16-18).

The presence in the 1965 collection of types which are chronologically late in the Great Basin sequence, especially the Cottonwood Triangular and Desert Side-notched types, may be seen as an argument against an earlier conclusion that the cave was not in use in late prehistoric or protohistoric times (Grosscup 1960:6). This recent collection would seem to imply a somewhat longer and more continuous use of the cave than is generally thought to be the case. The relatively large numbers of Rose Spring Corner-notched types argue, perhaps, for a more intensive Transitional period occupation than has been previously proposed (*ibid.*, 63).

Of the 77 projectile points recovered at Lovelock Cave in 1965, 7 are not typable. The remaining 70 are grouped into 14 types, most of which have been previously noted from other Great Basin sites (cf. Heizer and Baumhoff 1961; Lanning 1963; Heizer and Clewlow, this volume).

Classification

Desert Side-notched (fig. 1a-d). Four of these points were recovered in 1965. All are made of obsidian. This small, thin, triangular point with distinct side-notches has been known for some years as a late time marker in California and the Great Basin (Baumhoff and Byrne 1959).

Cottonwood Triangular (fig. 1e-h). Four of these nondescript, lightweight, triangular points were recovered. One is made of chert, and the remaining three are of obsidian.

Humboldt Concave Base A (fig. 1i-l). These thin, longish points with tapering concave bases are generally thought to be relatively early in the Great Basin point sequence (Clewlow 1967; Roust and Grosscup n.d.). They are distinguished from the Humboldt Concave Base B points on the basis of weight and length: Humboldt Concave Base A points are usually over 3 g. in weight and over 3 cm. in length. Four of these points were recovered from the talus dump. Three are made of obsidian and one of basalt.

Humboldt Concave Base B (fig. 1m-v). Ten of these points were recovered. All are made of obsidian. They are shorter, thinner, and of lighter weight than the preceding category of Humboldt point. The Humboldt Concave Base B point bears a resemblance to the Cottonwood Triangular, but it is larger and more tapered toward the base.

Humboldt Basal-notched (fig. 1w). This point type was first defined in a manuscript on file in the Archaeological Research Facility, Berkeley, dealing with site NV-Ch-15, the Humboldt Lakebed site from which the point derives its name (see Heizer and Clewlow, this volume). Only one point of this type, and that a broken portion, was recovered. These points are generally wide and flat, with very fine ripple flaking. This specimen is made of obsidian.

Pinto Shoulderless (fig. 1x, y). These obsidian points are large, crude, and somewhat leaf-shaped, with a concave or notched base. In many respects they are similar to the Humboldt Concave Base A points.

Pinto Square Shoulder (fig. 1z). One chert specimen of this type was recovered from the talus slope. It is a large point with rounded, upsloping shoulders, large, straight-sided stem, and concave or notched base. It combines Harrington's Square-shouldered and Barbed types.

Rose Spring Corner-notched (fig. 2a-z). Twenty-six of these small, well made pieces were recovered; 19 were made of obsidian and 7 of chert. This type has been described before (Lanning 1963; Clewlow 1967) and is common at several well known Great Basin sites.

Rose Spring Contracting Stem (fig. 2a', b'). Two chert points of this type were recovered. They are similar to Rose Spring Corner-notched points, but have narrower, contracting stems. The two types are separated here for descriptive clarity; it is unlikely that they are temporally distinct from other Rose Spring types.

Eastgate Expanding Stem (fig. 3a-g). Seven of these points were recovered; 5 are made of obsidian and 2 of chert. They are markedly similar to Rose Spring Corner-notched points in many ways and are probably "variations of a simple basic form" (Heizer and Baumhoff 1961:128).

Eastgate Split Stem (fig. 3h, i). Similar to the Eastgate Expanding Stem type, but with a bifurcation or notch at the base of the stem. They may bear some relationship to Elko Eared points (Heizer and Baumhoff 1961:128). Two specimens, both of obsidian, were recovered.

Elko Eared (fig. 3j-l). These large, eared points have been described elsewhere (Heizer and Baumhoff 1961), and are thought to be horizon markers for the period of roughly 1300 B.C. to 600 A.D. (O'Connell 1967:129-140). Three chert specimens of this type were recovered from the talus slope.

Elko Corner-notched (fig. 3m, n). This point corresponds in many ways to the Elko Eared point, but lacks the large, bifurcate or eared stem (O'Connell 1967:129-140). Two of these specimens were recovered in the recent collection, one made of obsidian and the other of chert.

Type J (fig. 3o, p). This is a large, roughly pentagonal point which was first noted at site NV-Ch-15 on the Humboldt Lakeshore. Two chert specimens are present in the collection.

The dimensions of the recently recovered points from Lovelock Cave are given in Table 1.

For comparative purposes the points in the Lowie Museum collection, which were recovered during earlier work at Lovelock Cave, were examined. Those that were definitely determined to have come from the cave were re-typed, and the results, compared with the types recovered in 1965 from the talus dump below the cave, are given in Table 2. As may be seen in the table, the majority of previously recovered points are of the Elko category, and are assumed to be considerably older than many of the 1965 points. The latter, when combined with the previously recovered points, present a rather tidy sequence (cf. Clewlow 1967:141-149). The Desert Side-notched and Cottonwood Triangular pieces are particularly significant because they imply that Lovelock Cave could have been used in late prehistoric and protohistoric times.

TABLE 1

Dimensions of Points Recovered from Lovelock Cave in 1965

	Length (cm.)			Width (cm.)			Thickness (cm.)			Weight (g.)		
	min.	max.	av.	min.	max.	av.	min.	max.	av.	min.	max.	av.
Desert Side-notched	1.5	2.3	1.85	0.9	1.4	1.18	0.2	0.4	0.30	0.3	0.9	0.58
Cottonwood Triangular	2.1	2.5	2.25	1.0	1.3	1.18	0.4	0.5	0.43	1.0	1.1	1.05
Humboldt Concave Base A	3.4	5.2	4.05	1.2	1.6	1.48	0.4	0.7	0.53	1.8	4.9	3.35
Humboldt Concave Base B	1.4	3.8	2.56	0.9	2.4	1.20	0.2	0.7	0.37	0.2	2.1	1.07
Humboldt Basal-notched	-	-	1.70	-	-	2.30	-	-	0.40	-	-	1.70
Pinto Shoulderless	3.8	4.0	3.90	1.3	1.7	1.50	-	-	0.50	2.4	2.6	2.50
Pinto Square Shoulder	-	-	4.90	-	-	1.80	-	-	0.50	-	-	3.10
Rose Spring Corner-notched	1.9	4.2	2.92	1.0	2.2	1.68	0.2	0.6	0.41	0.7	3.0	1.65
Rose Spring Contracting Stem	2.4	4.6	3.50	1.2	1.6	1.40	-	-	0.30	1.0	2.4	1.70
Eastgate Expanding Stem	2.4	4.3	3.50	1.8	2.4	2.05	0.3	0.5	0.35	1.2	2.4	2.08
Eastgate Split Stem	2.7	3.4	3.05	1.4	2.6	2.00	0.4	0.5	0.45	1.1	3.1	2.10
Elko Eared	4.7	6.0	5.35	2.0	2.9	2.45	-	-	0.70	5.1	9.8	7.45
Elko Corner-notched	3.0	5.0	4.00	2.2	2.5	2.35	0.5	0.6	0.55	3.0	4.8	3.90
Type J	6.3	6.5	6.40	2.2	2.7	2.45	0.4	0.7	0.55	8.0	10.0	9.00

It must be emphasized, however, that while the points indicate that the cave was occupied in late times, they do not reveal evidence as to the origin of the occupants. Although Desert Side-notched points are at the upper end of the sequence, it is not implied that they developed out of the earlier types. The occupants of the cave in late times may not have been the physical descendants of the earlier occupants. The late occupants may have been the ancestors of the historic Northern Paiute (cf. Heizer and Krieger 1956:88), but we know of no way to prove this suggestion. The whole question of when Numic-speakers entered the western portion of the Great Basin is certainly not to be answered by point typologies, but will probably be resolved on the basis of other evidence (cf. Heizer 1966:245-246).

TABLE 2
Projectile Points Recovered from Lovelock Cave

	1965	Previous*	Total
Desert Side-notched	4	-	4
Cottonwood Triangular	4	-	4
Humboldt Concave Base A	4	1	5
Humboldt Concave Base B	10	2	12
Humboldt Basal-notched	1	1	2
Pinto Shoulderless	2	-	2
Pinto Square Shoulder	1	2	3
Rose Spring Corner-notched	26	3	29
Rose Spring Contracting Stem	2	-	2
Eastgate Split Stem	2	-	2
Eastgate Expanding Stem	7	-	7
Elko Eared	3	10	13
Elko Corner-notched	2	2	4
Type J	2	-	2
Totals	70	21	91

* Data for this column based on Lowie Museum collections formed 1911-12.

Explanation of Illustrations
 [Accession numbers are those of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology]

- Figure 1 a-d Desert Side-notched projectile points
 a. 2-39316
 b. 2-39363
 c. 2-39358
 d. 2-39317
- e-h Cottonwood Triangular projectile points
 e. 2-39366
 f. 2-39356
 g. 2-39359
 h. 2-39307
- i-l Humboldt Concave Base A projectile points
 i. 2-39353
 j. 2-39340
 k. 2-39384
 l. 2-39357
- m-v Humboldt Concave Base B projectile points
 m. 2-39383
 n. 2-39346
 o. 2-39349
 p. 2-39347
 q. 2-39463
 r. 2-39361
 s. 2-39315
 t. 2-39355
 u. 2-39368
 v. 2-39372
- w Humboldt Basal-notched projectile point
 w. 2-39373
- x,y Pinto Shoulderless projectile points
 x. 2-39342
 y. 2-39352
- z Pinto Square Shoulder projectile point
 z. 2-39379

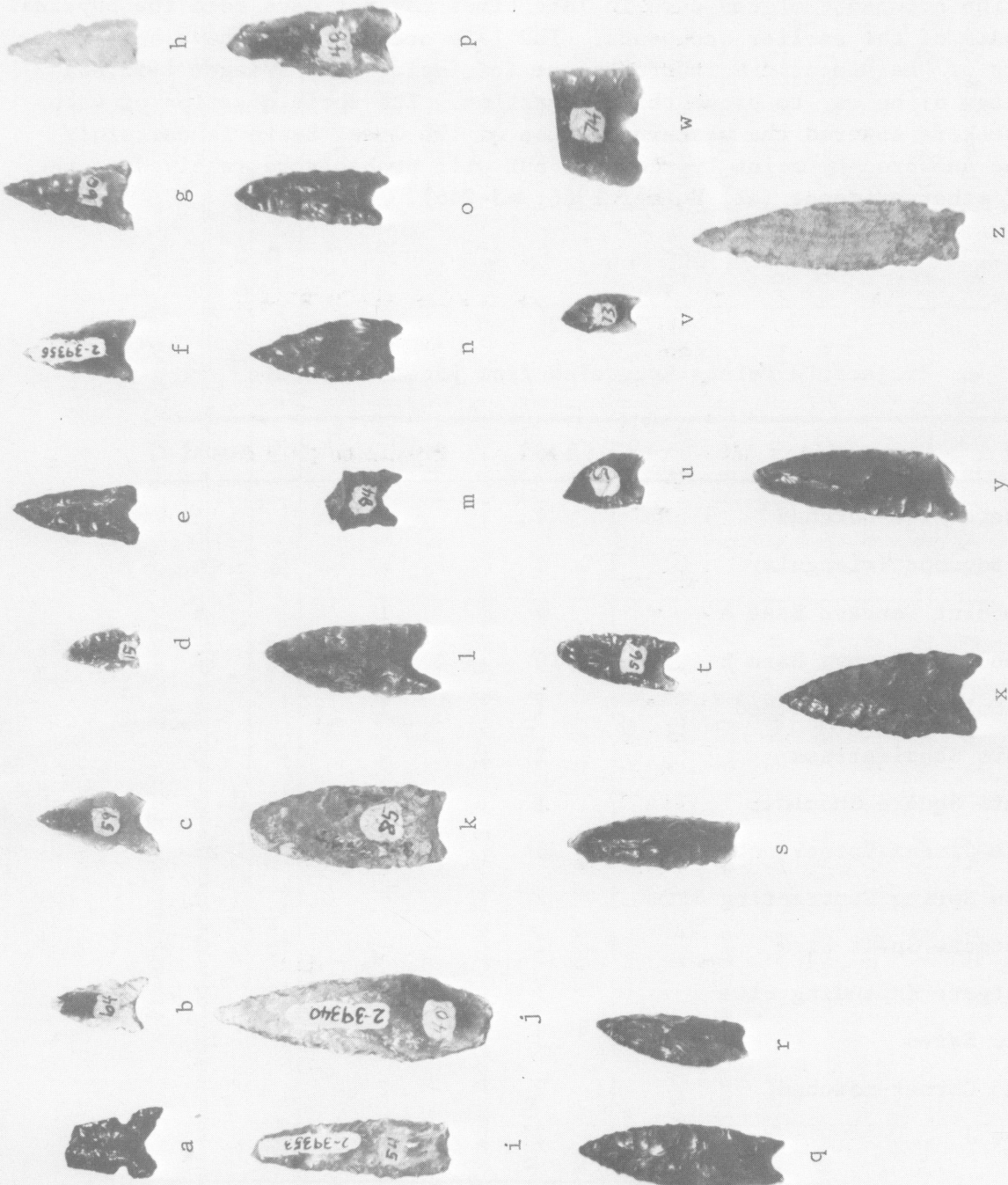


Figure 1

Figure 2 a-z Rose Spring Corner-notched projectile points

- a. 2-39362
- b. 2-39380
- c. 2-39336
- d. 2-39308
- e. 2-39334
- f. 2-39306
- g. 2-39313
- h. 2-39344
- i. 2-39374
- j. 2-39311
- k. 2-39442
- l. 2-39365
- m. 2-39337
- n. 2-39314
- o. not accessioned
- p. 2-39345
- q. 2-39350
- r. 2-39348
- s. 2-39370
- t. 2-39381
- u. 2-39304
- v. 2-39310
- w. 2-39371
- x. 2-38377
- y. 2-39378
- z. 2-39369

a',b' Rose Spring Contracting Stem projectile points

- a' 2-39382
- b' 2-39376

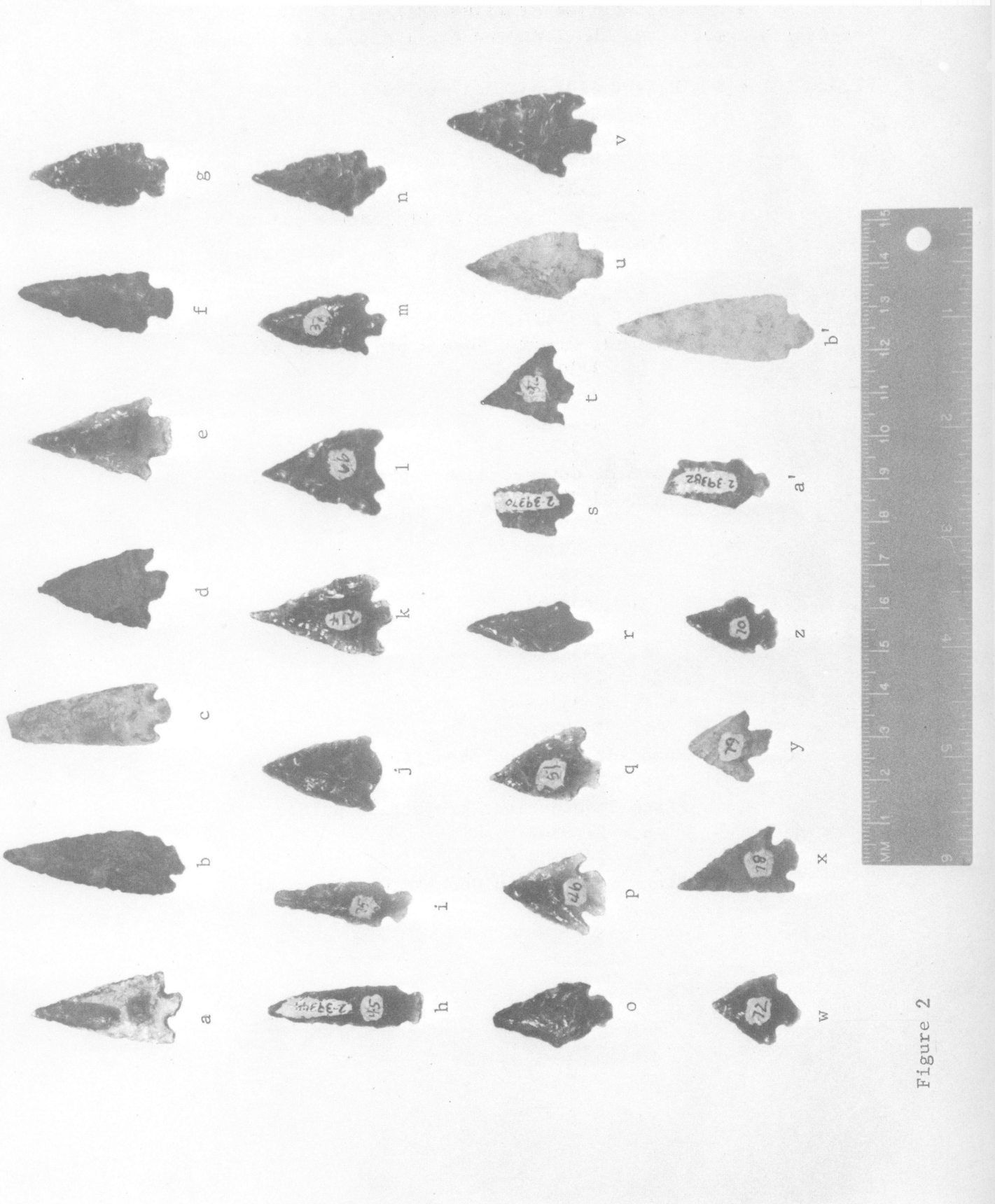


Figure 2

Figure 3 a-g Eastgate Expanding Stem projectile points
 a. 2-39375
 b. 2-39335
 c. not accessioned
 d. 2-39309
 e. 2-39351
 f. 2-39333
 g. 2-39312
 h,i Eastgate Split Stem projectile points
 h. 2-39399
 i. 2-39343
 j-l Elko Eared projectile points
 j. not accessioned
 k. 2-39334
 l. 2-39303
 m,n Elko Corner-notched projectile points
 m. 2-39354
 n. 2-39305
 o,p Type J projectile points
 o. 2-39385
 p. 2-39338

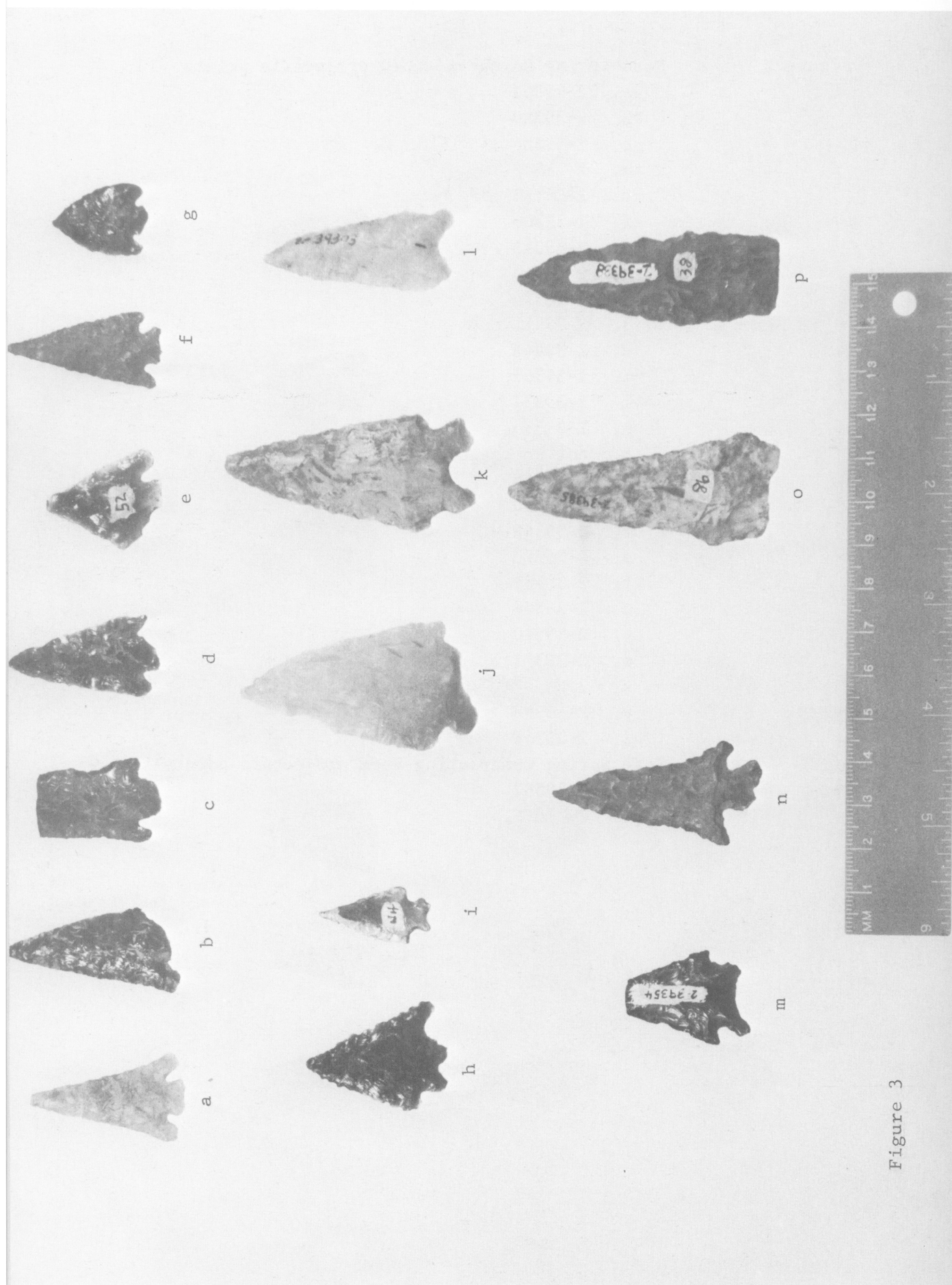


Figure 3

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