A Projectile Point Guide for the Upper Mississippi River Valley

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and divided by intratribal factionalism. The War of 1812 largely ended the eastern Indians’ ability to resist the federal government and led to their removal to the Trans-Mississippi West in the 1830s and 1840s.

In Chapter 5, “The Struggle for the West, 1840–1890,” Nichols narrates the many encounters between western Indians and the white military, the creation of reservations, and post–Civil War reformers’ sincere but usually misguided attempts to assimilate Indians into general American society. In the following chapter, Nichols looks at life on reservations in the late nineteenth century and the many adjustments and hardships that Indians confronted.

In a subsequent essay, Nichols takes up the Indian New Deal and the militancy of the early 1970s. Like many previous writers, he views the reforms of the 1930s as generally helpful, but he considers Bureau of Indian Affairs Commissioner John Collier to have been as authoritarian as his predecessors. He also outlines the Red Power phase, including Indians’ occupation of Alcatraz and seizure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices on the eve of President Richard Nixon’s reelection. In his final chapter, “Tradition, Change, and Challenge since 1970,” Nichols provides a concise but able discussion of such issues as the anti-Indian backlash, reservation gaming, tribal sovereignty, hunting and fishing rights, energy resources, and repatriation of sacred artifacts.

How well does the author succeed in providing general readers with a basic understanding of the role of Indians in U.S. history? Some may question why some topics were ignored or received little emphasis, but Nichols generally touches on those issues and events that were pivotal. He also avoids the danger of turning his book into a policy study. He sometimes mentions government laws, policies, and treaties, but he is more interested in how they affected Indians. He is careful and objective in his assessments. The writing is clear, concise, and focused. In short, readers who want to know more about Indians and their role in national development will find this book an excellent starting point.


Reviewer James M. Collins is an archaeologist at the Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa.

Robert Boszhardt, a productive scholar based at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, has provided a guide to the various styles of spear points and arrowheads often found in the areas bordering the Mississippi River between the Quad Cities and Minneapolis–St. Paul. It
includes a conservation-oriented opening essay, a sample form that users may adapt for recording information about their artifact finds, and a glossary/diagram illustrating common terminology used in projectile point analysis. Clear illustrations and individual discussions for the most common prehistoric point types found along the upper Mississippi valley are then presented. Each type is discussed in terms of its age, distribution, and identifying physical characteristics. Point types are grouped chronologically, with the oldest specimens (Clovis) dating to about 11,300 years ago.

From an Iowa perspective, the orientation of the guide seems unduly weighted toward the author’s home territory of southwestern Wisconsin. Only 6 of 108 references cited in the bibliography are related to Iowa archaeological sites, and only one of those could be considered recent. This is unfortunate. Many well-dated projectile point assemblages have been excavated from Iowa sites during the past 20 to 30 years, but none of those are referenced in this work. Nonetheless, this is an easily understood and convenient guide that would be appropriate for regional libraries, perhaps particularly elementary and secondary school libraries. The guide will find an audience with hobbyists, students, and archaeologists. Suitably priced, it would be an appropriate gift for the arrowhead hunter in your family.


Reviewer Joseph Key is assistant professor of history at Arkansas State University. His publications include “Indians and Ecological Conflict in Territorial Arkansas” (Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 2000).

Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains is a well-illustrated survey of the flora and fauna of the Missouri River from 1804 to 1806—the time of the expedition of the Corps of Discovery led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. The book begins with an introductory chapter on the natural history of the region and concludes with a review of the important sites visited by the expedition. The three middle chapters of the book follow the expedition as it passes through the territory that later became the states of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Montana. Each chapter is divided into sections on the various plants and wildlife encountered by the Corps of Discovery. Excellent maps of the Corps’ campsites on the Missouri accompany the middle chapters. Additionally, Paul Johnsgard has provided his own fine illustrations of the region’s wildlife.