

To the Point

Sedgwick

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Sedgwick is a name that has been used for small, thin, Folsom-like points found in northeast Arkansas (Gillam 1996:406; Morse 1997:132-136; Morse and Morse 1983:63, Figures 3.7e, g-h). The name is also used here to refer to similar small, thin, Folsom-like points found in Missouri.

Description

Sedgwick is a small fluted point that appears to be an eastern version of the Folsom type found across the Great Plains. Sedgwick shares multiple morphological and technological attributes with Folsom. However, enough variation (e.g., size, shape, and flute scar width) is apparent to warrant a separate type to reduce potential confusion with the classic Folsom type adapted to a specialized bison subsistence strategy on the Great Plains. Sedgwick appears to be equivalent to Folsom-like variants (e.g., "Illinois Folsom") found in the Prairie Peninsula area of northern Missouri, Illinois, and adjacent states (Munson 1990:260).

The stem and blade edges of the lanceolate-shaped Sedgwick point are straight to slightly excurvate. The stem is differentiated from the blade only by light-to-moderate grinding along the haft element. The base is always concave, although some may exhibit a remnant of a fluting platform near the center of the base (O'Brien and Wood 1998:Figure 2.29). Sedgwick points typically exhibit systematic minute bifacial retouch in the basal concavity after it was successfully fluted on both faces. This attribute is also typically found on Folsom points, but it is uncommon on Gainey points and rare to nonexistent on Clovis points.

The length of Sedgwick points is difficult to determine since most Missouri specimens are broken, but it appears to be slightly longer than the average Folsom point. However, the length (approximately 35–65 mm) is relatively short compared to other fluted Paleoindian points in Missouri (e.g., Clovis and Gainey). Gillam (1996:406) reported a range of 36–63 mm for Sedgwick points in northeast Arkansas. Sedgwick points are very thin in cross section. Average maximum thickness of three specimens from the lower Sac River valley (3.9 mm) is very close to the mean maximum thickness of a large sample of classic Folsom points (3.7 mm) from the southern Plains (Amick 1995:Table 7). A single long channel flake was driven from each face of Sedgwick points from a well-prepared nipple platform in the center of the base. Although generally extending nearly the full length of the blade, flute scars on Sedgwick points typically are not as wide as or as well controlled as those on Folsom points.

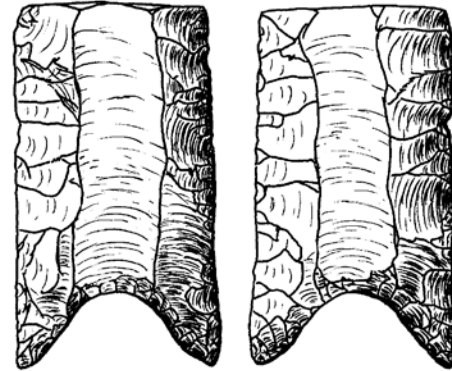


Figure 1. Obverse and reverse views, Sedgwick from 23CE426. Illustration by Del Thompson. Artifact is actual size.

Systematic, controlled, short (6–7.5 mm) pressure flakes were removed from the lateral margins of Sedgwick points. Some Sedgwick points were laterally trimmed before fluting, whereas others appear to have been laterally trimmed after fluting or a combination of the two. Lateral trimming after fluting reduced the width of the flute scar. Resharpening of Sedgwick points is along the distal end only.

Heat Treatment

Intentional heat treatment was not a technology that was used by Sedgwick knappers.

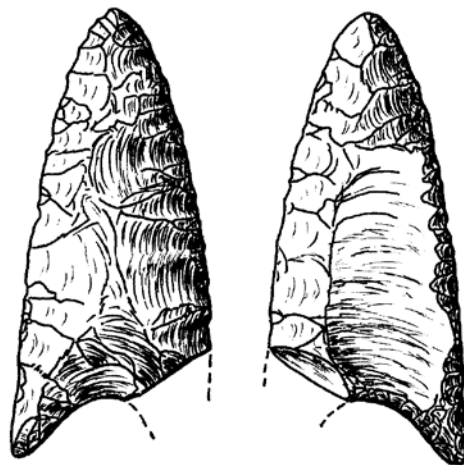


Figure 2. Obverse and reverse views, recycled Sedgwick from 23CE426. Illustration by Del Thompson. Artifact is actual size.

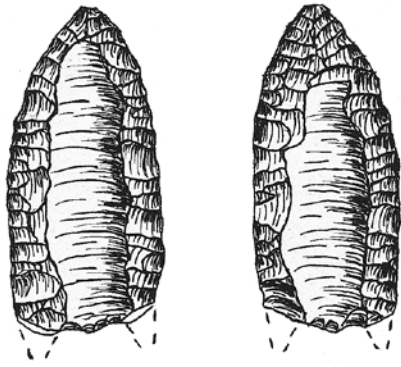


Figure 3. Obverse and reverse views, Sedgwick from 23BY379. Illustration by Don Dickson (1999). Artifact is actual size.

Distribution

Sedgwick points can be found throughout Missouri, although they are not common anywhere. O'Brien and Wood (1998:68) credit only four Folsom or Folsom-like specimens from the prairie areas of northern and western Missouri. We would add the fluted point from the Shriver site as a fifth (Reagan et al. 1978:Figure 2a). Several Sedgwick points have been found in southwest Missouri, including the Sac River valley (Ray 2000) and the upper White River valley (Dickson 1999:13, Figure 1b). At least one Sedgwick point made from exotic Pitkin chert was recovered from the vicinity of the confluence of the Current and Jacks Fork rivers in southeast Missouri (Klinger et al. 1989:Figure 10u; Ray 2007:278).

Age

Unfortunately, none of the Sedgwick specimens from Missouri have been recovered from deep stratified Paleoindian contexts that would help clarify the stratigraphic placement of Sedgwick relative to other fluted points. Using the classic Folsom type as a proxy, it appears that Sedgwick dates primarily to Middle Paleoindian times. Radiocarbon ages associated with Folsom points range between 10,900 and 10,200 rcybp on the Great Plains (Haynes 1993; Haynes et al. 1992; Hofman 1995); however, a slightly narrower range of ca. 10,700–10,400 is suggested for Sedgwick.

Comments

The name Sedgwick has been used for small, thin, fluted bifaces in Missouri that were produced by a technology very similar to that of Folsom on the Great Plains; however, slight differences in length, shape, and flute-scar width, as well as apparent differences in environmental adaptations, appear to justify a related, but regionally separate type. Nevertheless, at least two points found in Missouri appear to be true Folsom points, including one specimen from Boone County

(O'Brien and Wood 1998:Figure 2.29) and one specimen from Stone County (Dickson 1999:Figure 1a).

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