

# To the Point Williams

Jack H. Ray, illustrations by Del Thompson

The Williams point was named by Suhm and Krieger (1954:490).

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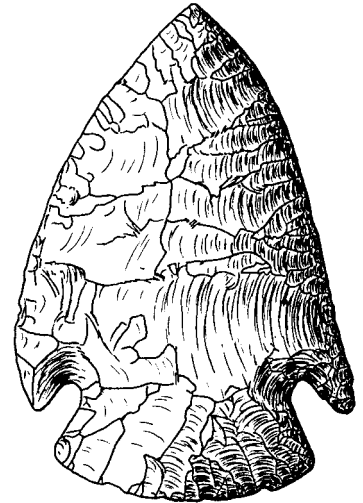
## Description

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Williams is a medium-sized corner-notched point that ranges in length from 44 to 77 mm with an average of 62.1 mm. The notches on Williams points are moderately deep and are generally U-shaped, although V-shaped notches also occur. The stem is moderately long (range: 13–18 mm; mean: 15.4 mm), always expanding, and relatively broad. Maximum stem width at the base ranges from approximately 22 to 37 mm with an average of 30 mm. This average basal width is greater than that of all other Late Archaic point types in Missouri. The base is generally convex, although some Williams points have straight bases. The corners of the stem are generally rounded. The stem is not ground smooth.

The blades of unresharpened Williams points are relatively wide and blade edges are excurvate. Repeated resharpening narrows the blade and the blade edges become straight to recurved. Recurved blades are produced when the distal end is sharpened into a needle-like tip. Recurved blades and needle-like tips (Bell 1960:96; Dickson 2002:114; Ray 1998:134) are a relatively common attribute, especially on extensively resharpened specimens. Barbs are prominent on unresharpened specimens, extending halfway from the top of the notch to the base. Barbs are short or missing entirely from extensively resharpened points. Maximum blade width (range: 32–48 mm; mean: 40.1 mm) is always at the barbs or shoulders if barbs are missing. Although the center of the blade of unresharpened, broad-bladed specimens may retain some broad percussion

scars from middle-stage thinning, most resharpened specimens exhibit fine pressure flaking that generally terminates at the midline, producing a typical bi-convex cross section. Maximum thickness (range: 6.7–10.4 mm; mean: 8.7 mm) is generally located near the juncture of the stem and blade. Blade edges are not serrated or beveled.

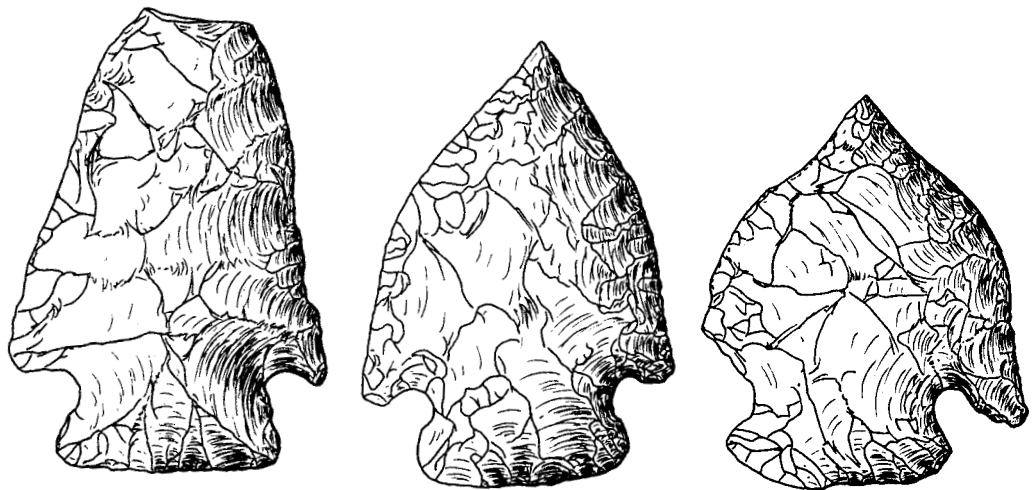


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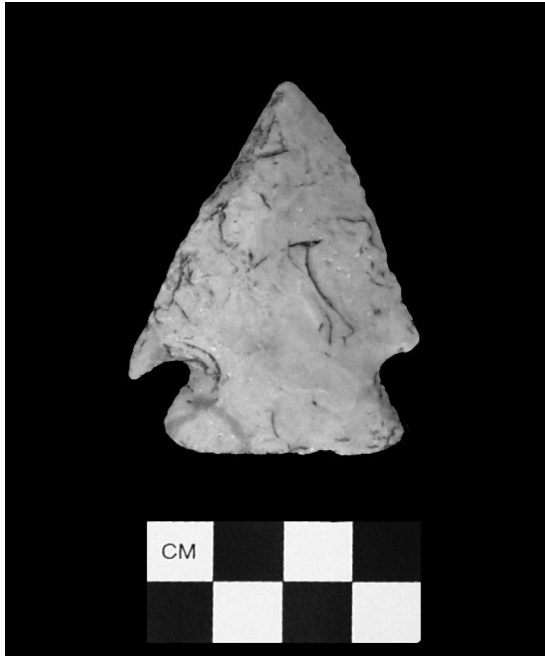
## Heat Treatment

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Heat treatment was an integral part of the manufacture of Williams points, especially if they were made from mediocre medium-grained chert such as Burlington. Relatively high percentages of debitage (40–50%) and practically all finished bifacial tools made from Burlington chert in the Williams component at the Big Eddy site and the lower Sac River valley in general had been heat treated (Ray 1998:Table 9.12, 2005:310). However, Williams points made from higher quality, fine-grained cherts such as Reeds Spring and Jefferson City were not heat treated as frequently.



Williams points from (l-r) 23CE426, 23CE412, and 23CE426.



Williams point from 23CE426.

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## Distribution

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In Missouri, Williams points are common throughout the southern half (i.e., the Ozarks region). They are less common north of the Missouri River. Williams points also occur as far west as central Texas, across central and eastern Oklahoma, northern Arkansas, and the Ouachita Mountains of westcentral Arkansas.

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## Age

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There are few radiocarbon ages directly associated with Williams points. An exception is the Big Eddy site where multiple radiocarbon ages were obtained from discrete midden deposits that contained Williams points. Three radiocarbon ages of  $4040 \pm 100$  rcybp,  $4020 \pm 80$  rcybp, and  $3905 \pm 40$  rcybp indicate a relatively short-term occupation of perhaps one hundred years (ca. 4000–3900 rcybp) (Ray and Lopinot 2005:208). However, it is probable that Williams points were also made and used at least 100–200 years either side of that narrow time span. A radiocarbon age of  $3620 \pm 70$  rcybp associated with a probable Williams point (identified as Rice Corner Notched) at a rockshelter (23BY629) in Barry County, Missouri, indicates that Williams points may occur as late as 3500 rcybp (Ray and Benn 1992:41–45). We suggest an age range of approximately 4200–3500 rcybp (2200–1500 B.C.) for the Williams point type. The discrete unmixed Williams component at Big Eddy was defined as part of a Sac phase for southwest Missouri (Ray et al. 2009:186–187).

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## Comments

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Several other names appear to be correlates of Williams. These include the Rice Corner Notched, Stone Corner Notched, and White River Corner Notched in the upper White River valley (Marshall 1958:115–124, Figures 22 and 25) and Big Creek in northeast Arkansas (Morse 1970:21) and southeast Missouri.

Corner-notched Afton and resharpened Etley points share morphological attributes with Williams, but they differ in cross section and thickness (Afton) and flaking technique and heat treatment (Etley).

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