

# To the Point Table Rock

Jack H. Ray, illustrations by Del Thompson

The Table Rock point type was named Table Rock Stemmed by Bray (1956:127–128) from stemmed specimens recovered from the Rice site (Rice Shelter) in Stone County, Missouri. The name was shortened to Table Rock by Sandstrom and Ray (2004:11, 61).

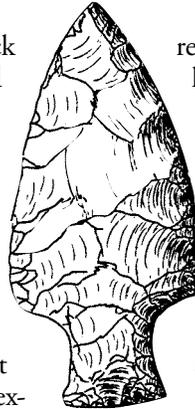
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## Description

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Table Rock is an unnotched stemmed point that ranges in size from large (unresharpened) to small (extensively resharpened). Most Table Rock points range between 65 mm and 50 mm in length (mean: 56.2 mm), although some may be considerably longer (Chapman 1975:258). The stem expands slightly to the base and ranges between 13 and 17 mm in length. The base is generally convex but may be straight. Basal width ranges between 11 and 16 mm with a mean of 14.3 mm. The corners of the stem (at the stem-base juncture) are typically rounded; some may be pointed, but they are never sharp. The stem edges and base are generally moderately ground, although the stem edges on some specimens may be ground and the base is not and vice versa. The haft elements of the majority of Table Rock points are ground, but a minority are not. Approximately 60% of a small sample of Table Rock points from the lower Sac River valley had ground hafts (Ray and Lopinot 2005:212). Although not consistently ground, moderate grinding along the stem and basal margins is unique among Late Archaic point types.

The blade edges of Table Rock points are nearly always excurvate, although the blade edges of some extensively resharpened specimens may be straight or asymmetrical. Shoulders are slight and never barbed or very prominent. Weak shoulders are typically rounded, but the shoulders of extensively



resharpened specimens may slope upward toward the lower portion of the blade. Maximum blade width (range: 25–30 mm; mean: 26.6 mm) is always at the shoulders or slightly above the shoulders. The cross section of Table Rock points is biconvex. Maximum thickness (range: 6.3–8.8; mean: 7.2 mm) is generally located just above the stem-blade juncture. The midline portions of specimens with wide blades exhibit broad percussion flake scars, but the edges exhibit small finishing pressure flake scars. Percussion flake scars on extensively resharpened points may have been obliterated by resharpening pressure flake scars. Blade edges are never serrated or beveled.

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## Heat Treatment

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Table Rock points were frequently, but not always heat treated. Half of a small sample (N=10) from the lower Sac River valley had been heat treated. The incidence of heat treatment was greater among Table Rock points made from Burlington chert than those made from other chert types.



Table Rock points from left to right: 23CN7I, 23WB294, and 23GR643B.

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## Distribution

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Table Rock points occur throughout Missouri, although generally in relatively small quantities. They appear to be most common in the southwest portion of Missouri and adjacent portions of northwest Arkansas and northeast Oklahoma. The range of Table Rock points is purportedly much wider than the Ozarks and adjacent areas (Benn and Thompson 2009:505–508; Chapman 1975:258; Justice 1987:124–126; Perino 1968:96), but stemmed points that resemble Table Rock in states east of the Mississippi River probably are similar in form only. Justice (1987:124–126) describes a similar Bottleneck Stemmed type for that area.

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## Age

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Direct dating of Table Rock points has been elusive. No radiocarbon ages have been directly associated with the Table Rock type in Missouri. Chapman (1975:258) estimated a broad range of 5000–3000 rcybp. O'Brien and Wood (1998:132) tentatively proposed a range of 4000–3000 rcybp for Table Rock points. In northeastern Oklahoma, Table Rock points were reportedly found “in or slightly below early Afton levels having an approximate date of about 1500 B.C.” (3500 rcybp) at Pohly Rockshelter (Perino 1968:96), and with the earliest assemblage of the Lawrence site dated ca. 3400–3000 rcybp (Wyckoff 1984:147).

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## Comments

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Grinding along the edges and base of an expanding stem and an absence of barbs at the shoulders of the blade are attributes that distinguish Table Rock from other Late Archaic points. Saratoga points resemble Table Rock except that the base of Saratoga points is often intentionally snapped or it is the unflaked flat striking platform.

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