

Recommendation for the Photographing of Bannerstones 1.7

by Anna Blume November 20th, 2019

Photographing bannerstones can reveal their shapes, surfaces, and conditions and can also engage both photographer and viewer in a meaningful relationship to these complex carved stones. In the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, I selected and photographed 61 of 472 bannerstones in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) collection. I chose these 61 stones based on how well they represented the range of materials that Archaic sculptors chose, the twenty-four types of bannerstones, and the various conditions of bannerstones within the collection. 580 photographs from that study are available for review and download on this ABP website. Based on my experience looking at these stones and thinking of ways to represent their materials, morphology, and current conditions, I have devised a set of recommendations for future scholars and museum photographers to consider when photographing bannerstones.

Note: For all images taken in the AMNH, I used a Canon 7D with a Canon Macro EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro lens (with the cropped sensor of the 7D this was the equivalent of a 160mm lens). Given the varying angles that I took of each bannerstone, I chose to hand hold the camera instead of placing it on a tripod. With high voltage strobe lighting, I could choose f-stop and aperture settings that were optimum without a tripod.¹

Materials

When photographing bannerstones it is important to recognize that each one is uniquely carved, as well as a unique kind of rock. To begin with, the sculptors chose rocks either from their immediate surroundings or rocks that were traded from across Eastern

¹ At the AMNH I thank Barry Landua for setting up a photography station for me in the corner of the museum and for his suggestions and guidance regarding lighting and image format. John Hansen also guided me in deciphering and discussing 19th century archival material. I also thank Paul Beeltiz, Director of Collections and Archives, for his infinite patience bringing me into the collection and encouraging my engagement with colleagues at the AMNH. His support made possible my initial immersion into the study of bannerstones.

North America. They chose their rocks carefully and worked their surfaces into intentional and specific aesthetic compositions. Unlike points or axes, bannerstones were not used to pierce or pound. Their purpose, in great part, was for visual experimentation and expression, making it possible for sculptors to choose from the full spectrum of hard igneous to soft sedimentary rock, a range that would not be possible for making tools that needed to be razor sharp or resistant to breakage for forceful percussive use. This extensive range of lithics that could be chosen for bannerstone construction makes it especially important to represent the raw material as a way to reveal the conscious choices of the sculptor in shaping these materials. The geological identity of the rocks chosen can provide information to determine where the rocks originally came from. Provenience of where the bannerstone was found when combined with information of where the raw material originated could reveal trade routes or the actual movement of people within the Archaic period. Photographs that reveal the natural contours and geologic composition will contribute information meaningful to our visual record and understanding of bannerstones.

Identifying rocks by sight is a complicated practice that can lead to multiple conclusions. As the result of minerals and various elements transforming into a hardened form, rocks are igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary or somewhere on the transformational spectrum between these states, such as meta-igneous or meta-sedimentary. In addition to the class of the rock, there are common and anomalous trace elements and inclusions that further define the identity or visual appearance of a rock and distinguish them from one another. Some rocks are rich in inorganic trace materials like iron or mica, while others have trace fossils that inflect and alter their appearance. These distinctive qualities of rock were extremely important to Archaic sculptors who then meticulously carved them into various bannerstone shapes. **Recommendation: take at least one detail image that reveals and**

records information about the raw material of the bannerstone. Images should provide visual information about the class of rock as well as distinctive elements of the rock such as inclusions or unique banding or mica flecks that would have drawn the Archaic sculptor to them.

Examples



AMNH 2/1919 Rectangular bannerstone; Alabama, gabbro, h. 6.8, w. 11.6 cm



1] Many kinds of igneous rocks from granite to gabbro were chosen for bannerstone construction. Especially in Georgia, and other regions of the Southeast, rocks were chosen and carved into preforms that could be traded and completed at another time or cached or buried in this partially completed state. AMNH 2/1919 is a Rectangular preform found in the Chattahoochee River valley in Alabama. It is made of a dark greenish-gray gabbro and is

partially perforated on one side with a solid wooden rather than the more common hollow cane drill. Details of the surface of the bannerstone reveal both the unfinished, preform state as well as the natural array of minerals common to intrusive igneous rock like gabbro.



AMNH 2/2205 Southern Ovate bannerstone; Georgia, medium to coarse-grained alkaline igneous, h. 11.5, w. 10.3 cm.



2] AMNH 2/2205, also a preform from the Southeast, found in Habershan County Georgia, is a Southern Ovate, partially perforated at the spine from one side with a visible nipple evidence of cane drilling. The medium to coarsed-grained igneous rock is left unpolished just as the Ovate form and the perforation is left unfinished. Many igneous rock preforms in

similar condition have been found along the upper Savannah River pointing to a possible trade route for these specific bannerstones.



AMNH DN/305 Double Notched Butterfly bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 7.5, w. 11.5 cm



3] Metamorphic, banded slate is the most common rock used for the making of bannerstones. It is commonly found in glacial deposits around the Great Lakes or along the Ohio River Valley. Its relative softness is one reason for its common use. With slate, the sculptor could more precisely carve the thin wings of the Butterfly or Crescent forms as well as drill the central perforation. Another reason why slate was so often chosen for bannerstone construction is the natural banding that often occurs with slate, which is the result of shale and other materials metamorphosized together during glaciation. The bannerstone makers often chose eccentric examples of these graphic rocks that have added

trace fossils or mineral inclusions that play an active role in the final composition. AMNH DN/305, a Double Notched Butterfly, is an excellent example of a carefully chosen banded slate rock for bannerstone carving. A photographed detail of these rust and white inclusions as well as the trace fossil tracks highlight natural elements of the rock that attracted the Archaic sculptor. Looking at the overall composition of the completed bannerstone, it is clear that the sculptor carefully centered his composition on the three included rust and white elements that move diagonally across the Butterfly shape of the sculpted stone.



AMNH D/144 Southern Ovate bannerstone; Florida, oolitic limestone, h. 10.1 w. 13.3 cm.



4] Bannerstones carved in sedimentary rock are less commonly found in current collections. The fragility of the rock may have made it less desirable to the Archaic sculptors or less likely to remain intact over thousands of years. AMNH D/144 is a Southern Ovate carved from oolitic limestone that was one of eight bannerstones excavated from a burial mound in Tomoka Creek Florida by A.E. Douglass in the spring of 1881.² This was one of two bannerstones in the burial made of limestone. The others were carved from fine or medium-grained metamorphic rock. The detail of the stone reveals its porous nature and the subsequent accumulation of soil and other materials easily imbedded into its soft surface.



AMNH 1/1821 Bottle bannerstone; Mississippi, ferruginous quartz, h. 7.5, w. 5.9 cm.

² A.E. Douglass, "A Find of Ceremonial Axes in a Florida Mound," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 4 (1882): 104.



5] When Archaic sculptors chose to make their bannerstones using ferruginous quartz, they carved them into what are known as Quartz Butterfly, Hourglass, or Bottle variants such as AMNH 1/1821. This particular quartz, due to the presence of iron, ranges in color from brown, to red, to yellow, and orange with luminous, translucent milky white areas. Quartz is significantly more difficult to peck, grind, and perforate than most any other kinds of rock chosen for bannerstones. Their shapes, therefore, tend to be more compact with less exceedingly thin wings or dramatic cut away negative spaces more common with the slate stone compositions. It is the mottled luminosity of the quartz and the restraint in overall composition that distinguishes them.

Morphology

There are currently over 10,000 bannerstones in public and private collections. During the Archaic period, thousands more would have been made that still remain in caches, burials, and middens under industrial farms, golf courses, asphalt highways, homes, or forest floors throughout the Eastern United States. For the bannerstones currently known, I have categorized them into twenty-four distinct types [see Typology Section on ABP site]. These types are consolidated from those originally proposed by Byron Knoblock

in 1939 and refined by David Lutz in 2000³. These kinds of typologies assist us in the study and understanding of bannerstones. However, as Knoblock noted in his analysis of 3,600 stones, 47% of them were what he calls “blended forms” that share traits of more than one type. This range of variation further attests to the desire for uniqueness and self-expression amongst the Archaic sculptors.⁴

When photographing bannerstones, it is important to take images that represent and reveal these specific morphological elements that include perforations, spines, notches, wings, and carved anomalous elements. Archaic Native Americans often sculpted bannerstones in relationship to the natural contours or elements of the lithics they had chosen. Photographs that can reveal the unique sculptural interplay between materials and morphology will further add to our understanding of the choices sculptors made.

Recommendation: photograph the front and back of the stone standing up when possible. Use a metric indicator with at least one of these images to represent scale. Also, photograph the edge of the stone lying down; this will reveal important aspects of the composition that the front or back view cannot provide. Finally, choose angles that can then accentuate and express the unique contours of each sculpted form. Looking at your photographs decide whether additional details, varied angles, or shifts in lighting will bring out the chosen actualized interplay of materials and morphology of the bannerstone.

Examples

³ Byron Knoblock, *Bannerstones of the North American Indian* (Quincy IL 1939), 126ff. Knoblock’s entire text is available on this website for review or download. David Lutz, *The Archaic Bannerstone its Chronological History and Purpose from 6000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.* (Newburgh IN. 2000).

⁴ Knoblock, 140-141.



AMNH DK/664 Shield bannerstone; Massachusetts, phyllite, h. 15, w. 11 cm.



1] With the Shield bannerstone AMNH DK/664 from Essex County, Massachusetts, the standard front and back view with metric marker represents the scale and familiar Shield bannerstone type commonly found along the northern Atlantic coast. Photographing the top and or bottom of the stone lying down reveals the very thin wings in contrast to the center spine of the stone where the sculptor drilled a 2.0cm perforation. Photographing the stone at a diagonal angle further reveals the overall composition of the stone and the extraordinary skill needed to sculpt this shape out of phyllite similar in hardness to slate, but with noticeable flecks of mica clearly visible on the polished surface of the stone.



AMNH DM/1714 Crescent bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 4.1, w. 10.1 cm.



2] Archaic sculptors often made bannerstones of recognizable types within the bannerstone canon. With some stones, however, the final shape of the stone varies in noticeably

idiosyncratic ways. Only when laid on its side and turned into the raking light can the photograph reveal the complex varied angles and planes the sculptor worked into the stone surface of this banded slate Crescent (AMNH DM/1714). The stone is sculpted into a symmetrical Crescent shape, but the sculptor took care to accentuate and engage with the naturally formed concentric markings of the slate that radiate out from the right side of the stone. Moving down halfway from the spine, the sculptor creates an additional arched ridge that runs exactly through the center of the concentric bands. If only photographed from the front and back this extraordinary sculpted element could easily be overlooked.



AMNH DN/128 Curved Pick bannerstone; New York, banded slate, h. 2.7 w. 13.6 cm.



3] Though many bannerstones are carefully, beautifully carved and composed, a few stand out as master works such as this Curved Pick from Glenn Falls, New York (AMNH DN/128). Everything about this bannerstone is exquisite. The sculptor chose a slate rock with the white streak of a trace fossil running through the undulating concentric darker lines of its bands. The back of the rock has distinctly different, evenly-spaced concentric circle markings. Photographing the top of the stone reveals how precisely the sculptor composed this bannerstone, creating a raised narrow edge perfectly centered between the distinctly different geologic features of each side. A few millimeters out from the perforation, the sculptor flattened out the top of the bannerstone adding yet another unique dimension to the finished surface. Looking at the stone through the lens of the camera helped me to see

details such as these that I otherwise might have missed. Further highlighting the symmetry of the composition, the sculptor carved a 2mm ridge that runs through the white trace fossil on the front side.

Ontological Concerns

Lastly, since bannerstones are lithics, they have lasted and will continue to last for centuries. Millions of years ago the raw rock were formed through various lithification processes. Their relative hardness, color, composition, and visual appearance are what initially attracted Archaic communities and individuals to choose them for bannerstone construction. Seen from this deep time perspective, bannerstones, ontologically speaking, began millions of years ago as the material for each stone was initially formed by natural processes.

Over the course of time, from the Archaic period when these bannerstones were first made to the present, they have been intentionally and unintentionally altered. Within the Archaic period, some bannerstones were left unfinished as preforms, while others were intentionally broken before burial. Some have been drilled with small holes and repurposed as weights, ornaments, or for other possible unknown purposes. A specific subset of stones was marked with grooves or notches along their edges (often called tally marks). And, some bannerstones were incised with lines over their surface. These grooves and lines appear to be Archaic in origin and may have been added to the surface of the stone when they were first made or added after still within the Archaic period.

In the post-Archaic period, when bannerstones where no longer made, there is a noticeable absence of evidence of their use or reuse by subsequent Native North Americans. This sharp demarcation in time, around 1000 BCE when bannerstones were no longer made, raises further questions about their use and meaning within the Archaic period.

In the early 19th century, three factors lead to a heightened awareness of and interest in bannerstones. The first of these, and by far the most widespread, was the rapid increase in large-scale agriculture by colonial settlers in Eastern North America. The tilling of the land led to hundreds of bannerstones inadvertently turned up in the soil. This inadvertent bringing to the surface of bannerstones led to a great interest in collecting, trading, and selling of them. This in turn led to greater interest in random digging through middens and other Archaic sites in hopes of finding these unique lithics. Also, in the late 19th century, North American archaeological study of bannerstones led to important, but sadly few controlled excavations. Museums' collections of bannerstones, including the American Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Institute, were often the result of purchases from private collectors who had limited provenience information. However, a growing number of bannerstones have been found in controlled, published excavations.

The physical status of bannerstones is often impacted by the conditions under which they were found or preserved. Once bannerstones were found or dug out of the ground, they were often written on or inscribed into with numerical or alphabetic notations. At times, random images were also carved into their surface. 19th century collectors established specific norms of labeling stones with micro script to identify location of the find and or collector. Standard practice in museum collections has been to write onto the surface of the bannerstone the ascension or catalog number as well as location where the stone was found. These markings, some of which are removable, have become part of the composition and life of each bannerstone. **Recommendations: Carefully observe each stone and photograph evidence of the way each bannerstone has been intentionally altered or repurposed within the Archaic period. Also, take images that record post-Archaic inadvertent or intentional gashes, markings, or labeling.**

Examples



AMNH DM/1290 Single Notched Butterfly bannerstone, Ohio, banded slate, h. 9.6, w. 15 cm.

1] In most every account, bannerstones found in situ were discovered in a vast and meaningful array of states of being, from preforms to fragments. And, in most cases, when broken, they were intentionally broken before being cached or buried with the dead. With this Crescent type (AMNH DM/1290), the bannerstone was broken along the spine where the stone was drilled and therefore most fragile. In many cases, only one side or the other has been found and preserved. Both sides of this Crescent were found in Wyandot County, Ohio and purchased for the Museum by A.E. Douglass from W.E. Woodward on August 28th, 1883.

AMNH 9/34, a banded slate Geniculate bannerstone, was purposefully broken at the perforation similar to the way this Double Crescent (AMNH DM/333) was broken. In both cases, the museum acquired only one half of the stone. Whether the other half was buried or found in the same location is unknown. That so many bannerstones were intentionally broken before being cached or buried is an essential aspect of their purpose and meaning within Archaic society. In conserving and photographing bannerstones it is therefore

important to document and highlight these breaks or broken status rather than seek to seamlessly reassemble them.



AMNH 9/34 Geniculate bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 13.8, w. 6.7 cm.



AMNH DM/333 Double Crescent bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 12.2, w. 10.1 cm.

With AMNH 2/148, a triangular blueschist bannerstone that was found in Richmond County, Georgia, several horizontal lines have been incised on the front and crisscrossed

diagonal lines have been incised across its back. These markings appear to be Archaic in origin and may have been incised when the stone was carved or added later.

2]



AMNH 2/148 Triangular bannerstone; Georgia, blueschist, h. 5.2 w. 5.1 cm.



With DM/522, a Geniculate bannerstone, there are incised marks in groupings over the surface of the stone. These marks are carved in groups of 7, 8, and 9 lines. Like the lines on AMNH 2/148, these markings appear to be Archaic in origin. Rather than forming an incised design over the entire surface of the stone, these lines and their numerical values appear to be about counting and thus they are often referred to as tally marks. Also unique

to Geniculate bannerstones is their larger oval perforations instead of the more standard circular perforations.



AMNH DM/522 Geniculate bannerstone; unknown provenience, banded slate, h. 8.4, w. 4.5 cm.

3] AMNH DM/1101 is a Double Notched Butterfly bannerstone found in Wayne County, Ohio. This is a delicately carved banded slate with a long white trace fossil on its left wing running against the grain of the slate banding. Whether the left wing was chipped intentionally or unintentionally is difficult to ascertain. In its broken state during the Archaic period, the right wing was drilled with a small hole and repurposed as a weight or ornament.



AMNH DM/1101 Double Notched Butterfly bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 8.4, w. 9.4 cm.

4] Examples 1-3 are all of bannerstones that have been modified for various reasons by the Archaic period people who invented and developed bannerstones as lithics unique to their place and time. Photographs that record the various ways bannerstones were handled and reused by people during the Archaic period will further help to reveal their meaning.

The following examples are of bannerstones that have been written on or carved into since the 19th century by private collectors or museum staff. AMNH 20.0/8285 is a monochromatic, finely-polished Shield bannerstone carved out of slate with several trace fossil elements. On the front of the stone to the left of the spine someone incised an iconic a horizontal image of a person with a hat facing down to what appears to be a bird with a prominent beak and a long curling tail. Below the figure and bird a capital “D” with a small “s” inside are carved on the stone. To the right of the spine they incised an image of a fish. All of these markings on the front of the stone were made with a fine sharp tool and appear to have been made by the same person. On the back of the stone, using a more broad and dull tool, someone has carved a roughly rendered anchor. This anchor appears to be carved by a different hand and tool.

This Shield bannerstone was found in Henrico County, Virginia and given to the AMNH by Charles M. Wallace in 1915. That most bannerstones were first collected in the

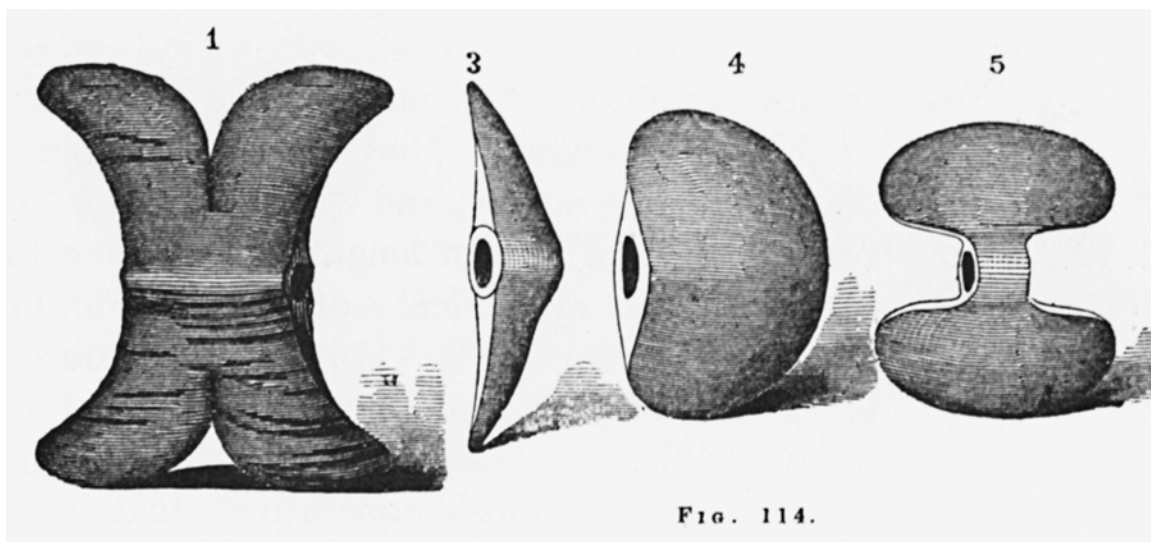
mid-19th century, this stone was most likely found and incised and carved onto sometime between 1850 and 1915 when it came into the AMNH collection. Why any one would carve these elements onto the surface of a bannerstone is a mystery. Initials of collectors such as the “D” and “s” are not uncommon marks of ownership. Iconic drawings of a person, a bird, a fish, and or an anchor are uncommon. Did the late-19th collector/carver think bannerstones were fishing devices, or was the smooth gray surface of the stone evocative of the cool reflective surface of water in a lake or pond? Was this 19th century Virginian looking for a way to connect via stone to the ancient Native American past nearly obliterated from daily life except in the form of randomly found lithics in the landscape? Whatever the explanation or motivation, this carving was intentionally done onto the surface of what would have been recognized as an ancient Native American artifact by a descendant of European colonial settlers. What the bannerstone meant to the Archaic sculptor who chose the monochromatic soft slate for this Shield type has now shifted and been added to by the enigmatic incisions of a 19th century collector five or six thousand years later. It is important to note and photograph these kinds of markings as the meaning and purpose of bannerstones shift from Archaic period aesthetic carvings to collector’s items or museum inventory. One purpose does not negate the other; both are important to record and reflect upon.



AMNH 20.0/8285 Shield bannerstone; Virginia, slate, h. 9.6, w. 7.5 cm.

5] Naming, marking, and numbering bannerstones.

As early as 1848, in their *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, Squier and Davis published an illustration of five bannerstones which at that time were often called “hatchets.”⁵ They go on to comment, “It is clear, nevertheless, both from their form and material, that they were not designed for use. They may be regarded as having been intended simply for ornament or display.” Subsequent written accounts identified them as “winged,” “problematical,” or “ceremonial” forms.



Artifacts in the Cabinets of B.L.C. Wailes, Esq., Washington, Mississippi; and Reverend R. Morris, Mount Sylvan, Mississippi. Reproduced from Ephraim Squier and Edwin Davis *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, 1848, Fig. 114 pg. 218.

It was not until 1877, in his *Stone Age in New Jersey*, that C.C. Abbott first used the term *bannerstone*.⁶ To Abbott, bannerstones were unique amongst ancient Native American lithics because of the vast array of stones used for their construction and because of their elaborately carved shapes. They were also unique because each was carefully perforated with a hole down the center, indicating that they were meant to be placed on a staff and presumably, according to Abbott, held aloft as a banner, thus the name *bannerstone*. Over a

⁵ Ephraim Squier and Edwin Davis *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, 1848, Fig. 114 pg. 218.

⁶ C. C. Abbot, *Stone Age in New Jersey* (Washington, DC, 1877), 332.

hundred years after bannerstones were first identified, collected, and written about as a distinct category of Native American carving, there are many unanswered questions about why they were made and especially why they were only made in Eastern North America between 6,000 BCE and 1,000 BCE.

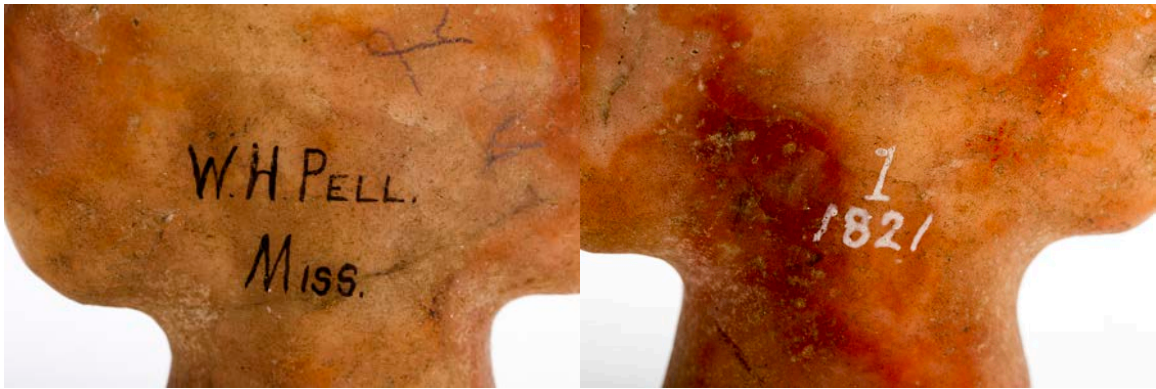
Once bannerstones began to be collected, certain labeling customs used to identify other lithic artifacts were also used on bannerstones. Collectors sometimes glued a piece of paper directly onto the stone with their names, location of find, and date, as can be seen on this Doubled Edged bannerstone fragment AMNH 20.1/9172. Centered on the fine-grained stone of this fragment *G.G. Nuttle. 1879 Milan Id. Allen Co.* in cursive writing appears on paper glued to the stone surface. Once the stone was given to the American Museum of Natural History in the 1920s, a catalog number was written in black ink directly onto the stone to the left of the paper label.



AMNH 20.1/9172 Double Edged bannerstone; Indiana, fine grained metamorphic, h. 4.2, w. 8.7 cm.

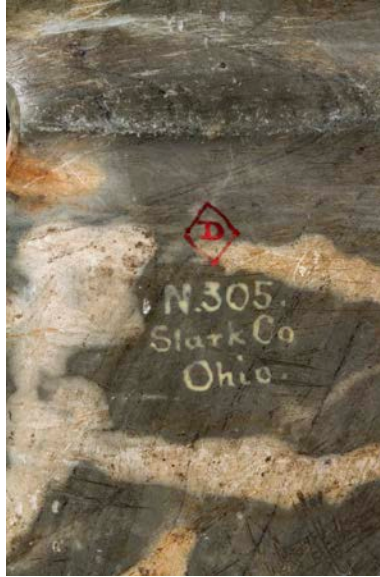
With this quartz Bottle bannerstone (AMNH 1/1821) the original collector, *W.H. Pell*, wrote their name and Miss. (Mississippi) onto the stone in black. The museum then

added the catalog number in white onto the other side of the stone after it came into the collection in 1869.



AMNH 1/1821 Bottle bannerstone; Mississippi, ferruginous quartz, h. 7.5, w. 5.9 cm.

As with the Double Edged slate and the Bottle quartz bannerstones, handwritten markings were signs of inclusion into private collections. Once they came into a museum collection like the AMNH, they were given over to an institution that represents the broader ethos of the early 20th museum as a place of study, learning, and national identity. As bannerstones moved from private collectors to national public collections, each change of hand left a trace of itself like the echo of an invertebrate in the form of a trace fossil so appealing to the original bannerstone makers. Another example is the Double Notched Ovate AMNH DN/305. Here a luminous red “D” enclosed in a diamond is written just over the edge of a trace fossil track within the olive green of the banded slate. The letters and numbers *N305 Stark Co. Ohio.* are written in white similar in color to the milky white of the trace fossil.



AMNH DN/305 Double Notched Butterfly bannerstone; Ohio, banded slate, h. 7.5, w. 11.5 cm; detail

In the AMNH Native North American Archeological Collection, the letter “D” written onto lithics enclosed in a red diamond, as in DN/305 or D/142, refers to the last name of Andrew Ellicott Douglass⁷, one of the most important donors to the collection. After Douglass retired as the President of the Hazard Powder Company in 1876, he spent the remaining twenty-five years amassing a collection of 23,000 Native American artifacts, mostly lithics, that he donated to the AMNH in 1880.⁸ For over a decade, he focused his search for lithics along the East Coast of Florida. It was at Tomoka Creek in Volusia County, Florida in 1881 that he excavated eight intact bannerstones and one miniature bannerstone fragment out of an Archaic conical mound 3 m high and 32 m in diameter constructed between 2,600-2,000 B.C.⁹ AMNH D/142 is one of the bannerstones Douglass

⁷ Andrew Ellicott Douglass (1819-1901) is often confused with Andrew Ellicott Douglass (1867-1962) who was an astronomer who invented dendrochronology (dating archaeological remains in regards to tree rings) and was funded by the AMNH from 1919 to 1920 on an expedition in the Southwest.

⁸ Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The American Museum of Natural History its Origin, its History the Growth of its Departments*, (New York, 1911), 87.

⁹ Douglass, 105; for a more recent discussion of this archaeological site see: Bruce John Piatek, “The Tomoka Mound Complex in Northeast Florida,” *Southeastern Archaeology* 13, no. 2 (1994), 109-118.

excavated from what is now known as Mound Six from the site. It is a Southern Ovate carved out of fine-grained metamorphic rock with a naturally occurring dark brown band 1.6cm from the right wing edge visible on both sides of the stone. Just below the front rounded spine of the stone and above the dark brown included line the AMNH has carefully drawn the distinctive red “D” for Douglass enclosed in a diamond with the number 142, the unique object indicator within the Douglass collection. Below in white is written

BannerMound Tomoka, Creek Volusia Co. Florida.



AMNH D/142 Southern Ovate bannerstone; Florida, fine-grained metamorphic, h. 10.4, w. 13 cm.



Of the 472 bannerstones in the AMNH collection, only two are displayed in the museum, on the third floor in a glass case labeled “Archaic Indian Tools.” The remaining 470 bannerstones and bannerstone fragments are arrayed on shelves locked in metal storage units in the museum basement. And though these bannerstones were made and buried in hundreds of constructed earthen mounds and caches or layered into middens across Eastern North America they reside here, marked with names of those who collected and carefully numbered them, waiting, the way stone in particular can wait, to be seen or understood.