

Alibates Flint Quarries

National Monument
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tours

During the summer months, from Memorial Day to Labor Day, there are regular guided tours at 10 a.m. and at 2 p.m., seven days a week. During the off-season, tours are given by reservations only.

Reservations may be made by writing the Superintendent, Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, P.O. Box 1460, Fritch, Texas 79036, or by calling park headquarters at 806/857-3151.

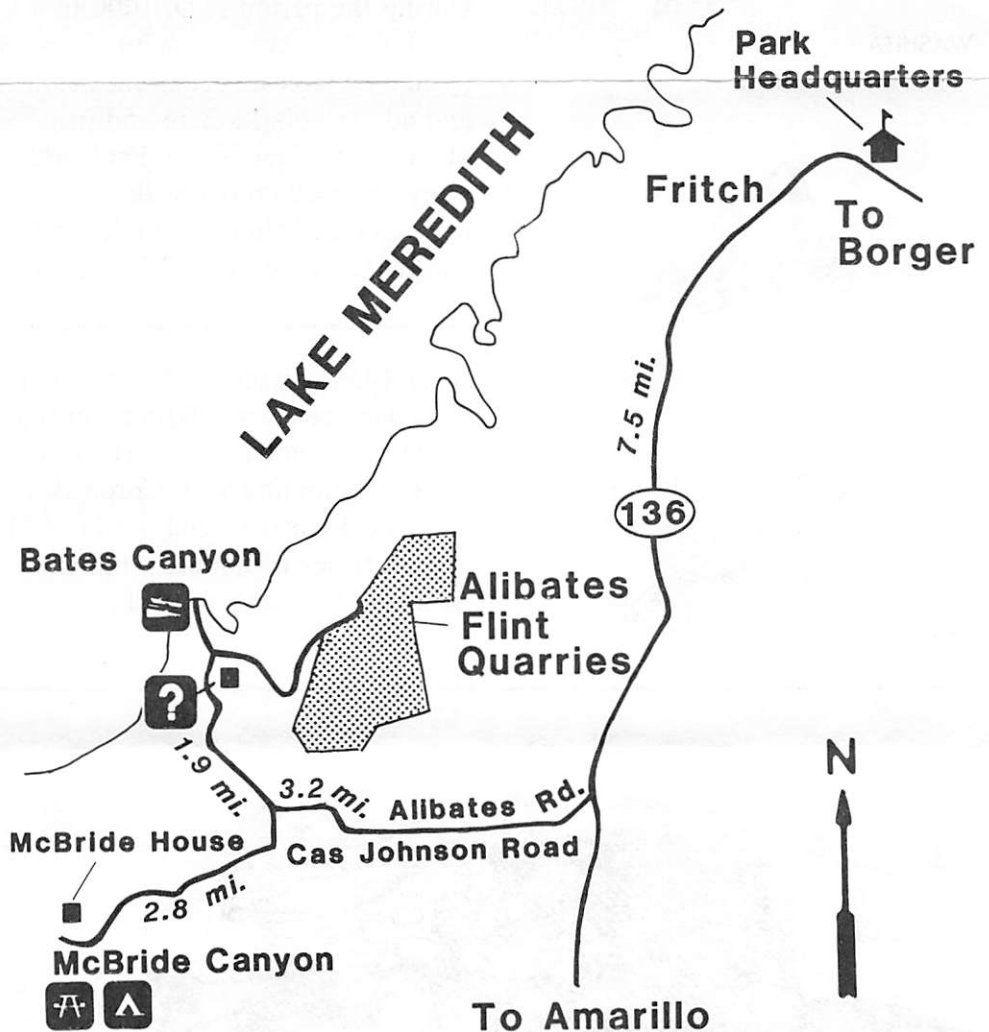
The tour involves a leisurely walk up a moderately steep trail that is covered with loose gravel in places. Comfortable, sturdy walking shoes are recommended. During the tour, the ranger will tell the group about the Indians who used the quarries and dug many of them during the years A.D. 1000 - 1500. The quarries themselves consist of a large number of small pits scattered along the edge of the bluffs above the Canadian River. These pits

vary from five to twenty-five feet across and are now only about two feet deep, having been filled with dust and sand over the years.

Any size group is welcome to take the tour, but groups of less than twenty-five are recommended. Much of the trail is single file, and individuals in the rear of larger groups may have difficulty hearing the ranger at the front of the group

Safety

Safety along the trail involves watching where you place your feet, and walking at a slow, even pace to avoid tripping. Though rattlesnakes are found in the area, they are not commonly seen along the trail and seldom give any trouble unless disturbed. For your comfort, you may wish to bring along a canteen of water. Water is not available during the walk. Weather is seldom a problem. However, during the summer months, the heat may cause some discomfort. It is often windy, and during the winter months, low temperatures necessitate the use of protective clothing.

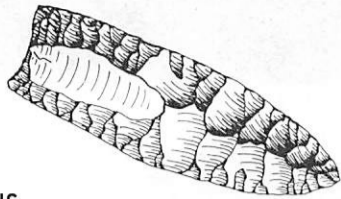


Regulations

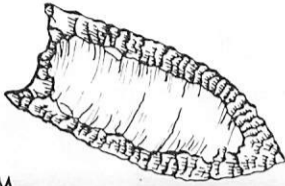
All resources within the national monument are protected and must be left in place and undisturbed. Flint collecting is prohibited.

We hope you enjoy your visit to the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument and we welcome your comments.

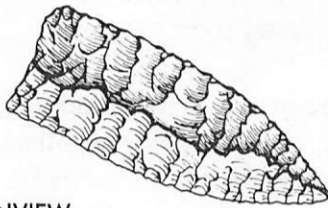
A History Sketch



CLOVIS



FOLSOM



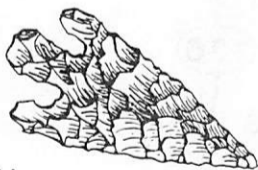
PLAINVIEW



WASHITA



HARRELL



DEADMAN

For thousands of years, people came to the red bluffs above the Canadian River. They came for flint so vital to their existence. Prehistoric people needed good raw material for tools and weapons and Alibates Flint was some of the finest. Demand for the high-quality, rainbow-hued flint is reflected in the distribution of Alibates Flint through the Great Plains. Paleo-indians first discovered the colorful flint and used it for spear points. Nomadic groups of Paleo-indians roamed the

Plains from 10,000 to 6000 B.C. hunting large game animals such as a mammoth, camel, bison, and horses. Points and tools of Alibates Flint found with the skeletal remains of these extinct animals represent several Paleo-indian types.* Perhaps these people sought the variegated flint as much for its beauty as its utilitarian properties. Painstaking care went into many of their weapon tips; much more care than was necessary to produce a functional point.

The extinction of some of the large game animals signaled the beginning of the Archaic Period, a time when people hunted animal species existing today and gathered wild plant foods as a supplement. Hunting and gathering in this area from about 6000 B.C. to A.D. 1, they continued to use the colorful flint, and many of their chipping workshops are located on the hilltops overlooking the Canadian

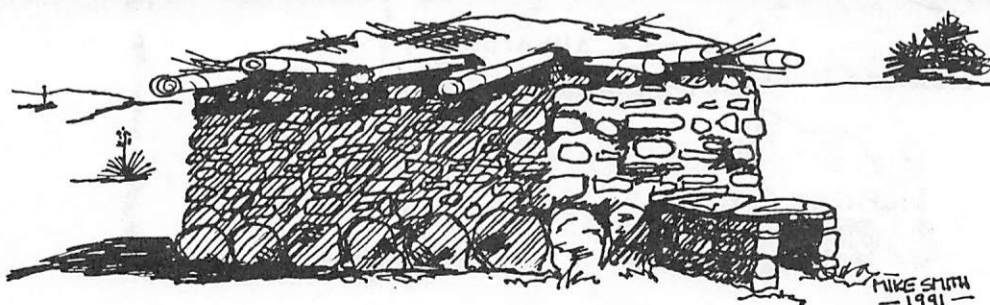
River. The use of Alibates Flint continued throughout the Woodland Period, A.D. 1 to 1000, as this tradition spread from the east, up the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers, bringing such ideas as farming and pottery making into this region. The Plains Village tradition, which followed, was a blend of Mississippian influences from the east with indigenous Woodland traditions.

During the period A.D. 1000 to 1500, a sedentary agricultural group (Antelope Creek Focus) built stone and adobe villages here and in other parts of the Texas Panhandle. They too made tools of the rainbow-hued flint and traded it for Pacific Coast seashell, Minnesota

pipestone, painted pottery from the Southwest Pueblos, and other items. Ideas were exchanged as well, and the villagers began to build multi-roomed houses, an idea adopted from the Puebloan Indians of New Mexico.

After 1450, Apache Indians began to replace sedentary farmers in the Texas Panhandle. In the Historic Period, beginning with Coronado's trek into Kansas to Quivira in 1541, several tribes of nomadic Indians** dominated the area until the

U.S. Army opened the door to settlers in 1874. One of these pioneers, a man named Allie Bates, worked near the flint quarries on a cottonwood-shaded creek, later named for him.



*Represented are Clovis, Folsom, Midland, Plainview, Meserve, Milnesand, Scottsbluff, Eden, Angostura, Agate Basin.

**Tribes of the area included Apache, Kiowa, and Southern Cheyenne. Comanches dominated the area after 1700.