ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH

August 2025

Have you ever been out in nature and seen a rock that didn't seem natural? Well, it's possible that it wasn't. Looks can be deceiving. Sometimes, a simple stone could be turned into a tool with little effort. Like this abrader.

People have used abraders like these for grinding, shaping, polishing, smoothing, and sharpening a variety of materials. Abraders can be divided into two broad categories: surface and grooved (Bakken, n.d.). This one is grooved, and the grooves can clearly be seen in Figure 2. Imagine smoothing out a stick for an arrow in this groove, and you will have a pretty good idea of what this kind of abrader was used for. One of the earliest abraders ever found in the United States was dated to be around 9872 years old(peachstatearchaeologicalsociety.org).

Along with being found across the United States, this technology can also be found in the Eastern hemisphere (Hamon, n.d.). They can be made from any coarse stone. A common material is sandstone, like the example in Figure 3. The one in our THPO's Collections is made of limestone, which makes sense considering Florida is rich with it. Limestone is perfect for abrading due to its coarse nature. So next time you see a chunk of limestone, or any other coarse rock, look closely for grooves. It might be something more.

Figure 1

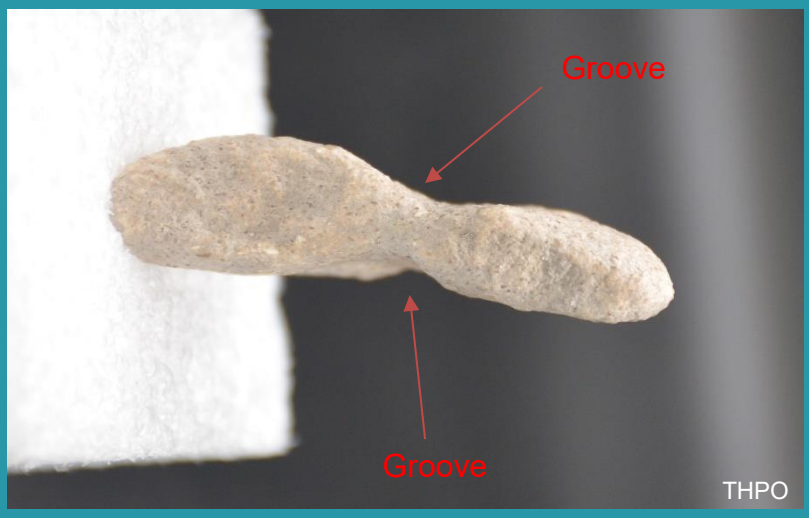

Figure 2

Figure 3

Bakken, K. E. (n.d.). *Chipped stone raw materials*. minnesota.gov. https://mn.gov/admin/assets/stone-tools-of-minnesota-part2_tcm36-247479.pdf

Hamon, C. (n.d.). *View of technology and function of grooved abraders in he early neolithic of Northwestern Europe: Journal of Lithic Studiest.* Journals of Lithic Studies. https://journals.ed.ac.uk/lithicstudies/article/view/1649/2304#:~:text=The%20use%20of%20grooved%20abraders,a%20wide%20range%20of%20tasks.

Peach State Archaeological Society. (n.d.). *Abrader*. Peach State Archaeological Society. https://peachstatearchaeologicalsociety.org/artifact-identification/ground-stone-tools/abrader/

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