

# Shell Knives

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Figure 1 compares lithic thumb knives (A) which are fairly common to two small shell triangular thumb knives. One (B) is made from Quahog clam shell and (C) is made from Sunray Venus clam shell. The shell examples are from Maximo Point area and Pinellas County, Florida.

Figure 2 shows a variety of heavy duty knives mounted in a wood or bone handles. These have lithic blades and are called "ulu" or women knives from Alaska. Figure 3A is a lithic blade similar in shape to ulu (women's knife) blades which is made from agatized coral and may have been mounted. Figures 3B and 3C are shell blades. Example 3B is made from the lip region of a Queen Conch. This example is from Tick Island, Florida. The crescent shaped knife blades (Figure 3C) are commonly made from Quahog clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) in the central Florida area. All have a sharpened edge and would easily fit into a hand, These examples do not appear to have been mounted. All examples are from Florida and from Hoff (2007).

Figure 4 shows a light-weight thin, unmounted knife blade (A), made from the valve of a Sunray Venus clam (*Macrocallista nimbosa*) which are thin shelled and easily sharpened. Example B is a typical lithic blade.

## References:

**Hoff, Frank & Nancy 2007**, Shell Artifacts, Emphasis on Southeastern Collections. Pasttime Artifacts, Dade City, Florida, ISBN 0-9662960-5-2

**Miles, Charles. 1972**. Indian and Eskimo Artifacts of North America. Published by Bonanza Books division of Crown Publishers. Library of Congress Card No. 62-19386.

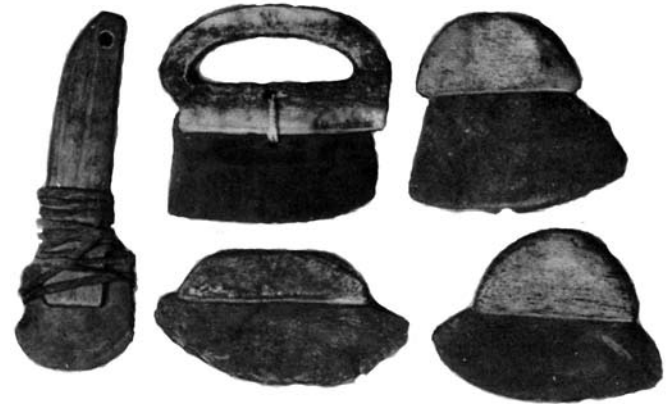


Figure 2 - Eskimo mounted lithic blades. Miles 1972.



Figure 3A - Agatized coral ulu blade.



Figure 3B - Conch shell ulu blade.



Figure 3C - Ouahog clam shell knife blades.

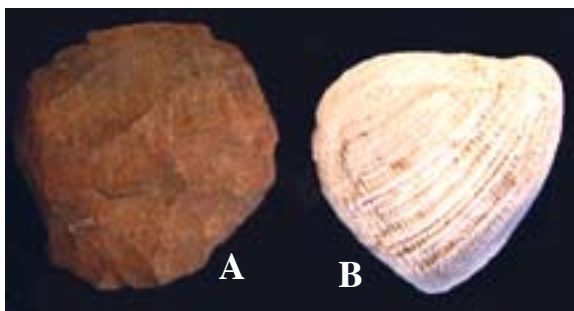


Figure 1 - Lithic thumb knife compared to two examples. Above example made from Quahog clam shell. Below example is made from Sunray Clam shell.

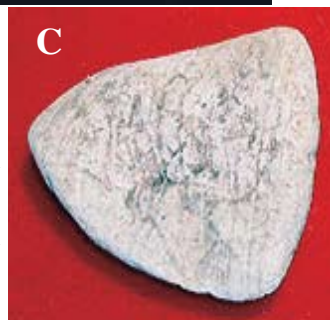


Figure 4 - Left - Typical lithic knife blade compared to a Sunray Venus clam shell knife blade