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1939-1940 WPA Archaeological Collections from Ancestral Caddo Sites in Nacogdoches County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

Introduction

Gus Arnold identified and recorded a number of ancestral Caddo sites during his 1939-1940 WPA-sponsored archaeological survey of East Texas (Im 1975). The artifact collections at the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin (TARL), especially the ceramic sherd assemblages since Arnold typically collected substantial sherd samples from plowed fields, have been recently documented from 10 sites in the Attoyac, Ayish, and Palo Gaucho bayou basins in San Augustine County (Perttula 2015a, 2016), sherds from the Jonas Short mound site (41SA101) in San Augustine County (Perttula and Walters 2016), and 13 Caddo sites in the Patroon, Palo Gaucho, and Housen bayous in Sabine County (Perttula 2015b). In this article, I continue with the ceramic sherd documentation effort, but I am concerned with the analysis of sherd collections from three Caddo sites in the Bayou La Nana, King Creek, and Bayou Loco drainages in Nacogdoches County, namely Hill Place (41NA5), J. B. Dorsey (41NA6), and Deshazo (41NA13) (Figure 1).

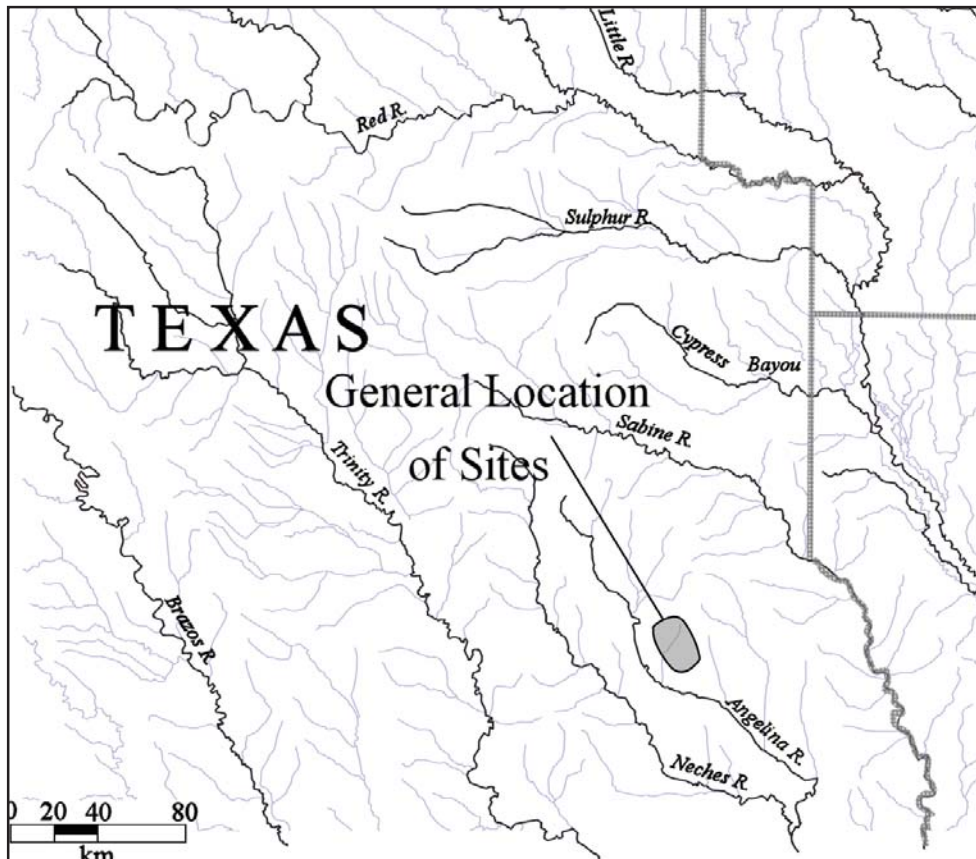


Figure 1. General location of 1939-1940 WPA archaeological sites in Nacogdoches County in East Texas.

Hill Place (41NA5)

Arnold recorded the Hill Place site (ET-628) on Bayou La Nana in December 1939. He described it as a large (5 acres) settlement on an upland ridge. Dr. Tom Middlebrook has suggested that the Hill Place site may spatially overlap with the Buddy Still Farm site (41NA4) and another possible locality called the Appleby Bead site/Rudisell Farm site identified by Robert L. Turner, Jr.; Turner recovered approximately 120 glass beads from this locality.

Arnold collected 196 aboriginal ceramic vessel sherds and several dart points from the surface of the site at that time, but only 95 ancestral Caddo vessel sherds were available for analysis. The TARL inventory on file included 122 plain sherds and 74 decorated sherds; the differences are a result of the fact that (1) almost all the plain sherds from the Hill Place site remain in bulk storage and were not accessible for study, and (2) there are more decorated sherds present in the assemblage compared to earlier inventories.

The 95 sherds available for study are from both grog-tempered (67 percent) and bone-tempered (33 percent) ceramic vessels (Table 1), with roughly comparable proportions among the utility ware and fine ware sherds. Of the 89 decorated sherds, 91 percent are from utility wares. Presuming that there are 122 plain sherds from the site, as based on a TARL inventory, the plain to decorated sherd ratio for the assemblage is 1.37.

Table 1. Ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the Hill Place site.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	5	1	6
Utility	54	27	81
Fine	5	3	8
Totals	64	31	95

Approximately 35 percent of the decorated sherds in the Hill Place assemblage have brushing marks, and another 4.5 percent have brushed decorative elements in combination with either applied or incised elements (Table 2). The brushed-applied sherd may be from either a Pease Brushed-Incised or Reavely Brushed-Incised vessel (see Hart 1982, 2014; Suhm and Jelks 1962). The brushed to other wet paste sherd ratio for the assemblage is a low 0.71.

Table 2. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the Hill Place site.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
Utility Ware			
<i>Appliqued</i>			
diagonal opposed appliqued ridges	-	1	1
<i>Brushed</i>			
horizontal brushed	2	-	2
overlapping brushed	-	1	1
parallel brushed	-	28	28

Table 2. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the Hill Place site, cont.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware, cont.</u>			
<i>Brushed-Appliqued</i>			
opposed brushed and straight appliqued fillet	-	1	1
<i>Brushed-Incised</i>			
parallel brushed-incised lines and marks	-	3	3
<i>Incised</i>			
diagonal incised lines	1	-	1
horizontal incised lines	5	-	5
parallel incised lines	-	10	10
parallel and diagonal hatched incised lines	-	1	1
<i>Incised-Punctated</i>			
horizontal incised lines with crescent-shaped fingernail punctations between the lines	1	-	1
horizontal incised panels with tool punctated row in each panel	-	1	1
incised triangle filled with tool punctated rows	-	1	1
<i>Punctated</i>			
fingernail punctated rows	-	16	16
tool punctated rows	4	2	6
<i>Trailed</i>			
parallel trailed lines	-	2	2
<u>Fine Ware</u>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
curvilinear engraved lines	-	1	1
curvilinear and opposed engraved lines, one line with excised tick marks	-	1	1
diagonal engraved lines	1	-	1
horizontal engraved lines	1	-	1
horizontal and diagonal engraved lines	1	-	1
parallel engraved lines	-	1	1
parallel lines, one with excised tick marks and a cross-hatched curvilinear zone	-	1	1
straight engraved line	-	1	1
Totals	16	73	89

Sherds with simple geometric incised decorative elements comprise 19 percent of the decorated sherds (see Table 2). One has parallel and diagonal incised lines (Figure 2a). Among the few incised-punctated sherds (3.4 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage) is one body sherd with horizontal incised panels with a single row of tool punctations running down the center of the panels (Figure 2b). Another incised-punctated sherd with crescent-shaped punctations between horizontal incised lines is from a Weches Fingernail Impressed, *var. Weches* vessel (see Stokes and Woodring 1981). Other utility wares include rim and body sherds with either fingernail or tool punctated rows (25 percent of the decorated sherds), and two body sherds (2.2 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage) with broad and shallow trailed lines.

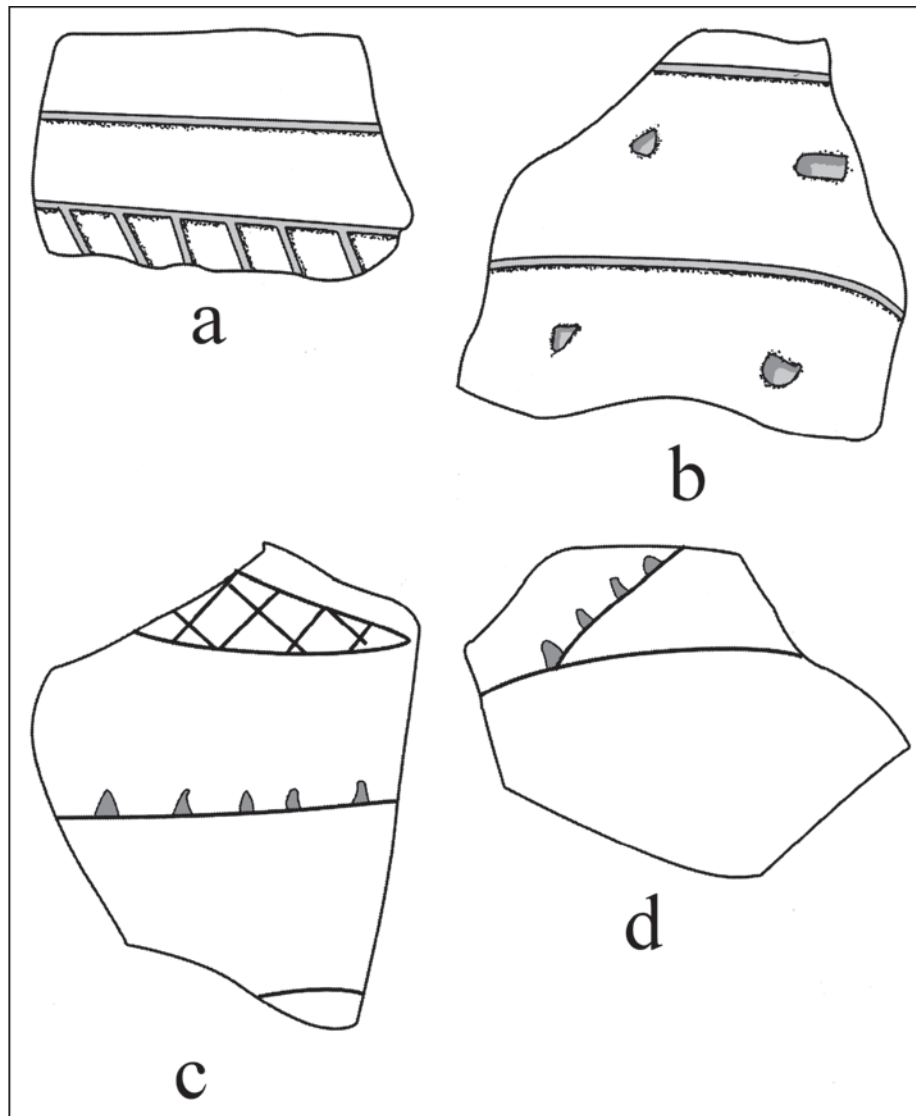


Figure 2. Decorative elements on selected body sherds from the Hill Place: a, incised; b, incised-punctated; c-d, engraved.

The engraved rim sherds in the Hill Place site assemblage have horizontal, horizontal-diagonal, or diagonal engraved lines (see Table 2), and compare to certain pre-A.D. 1300 fine wares in Angelina River basin sites. Two other sherds (see Figure 2c-d) are not readily categorized, although both have at least one engraved line with small excised tick marks. One sherd may be from a Patton Engraved, *var. Fair* vessel (see Perttula 2011:Figure 6-66d), but a sherd with more of the motif would be needed to confirm the provisional identification. The other distinctive fine ware sherd has parallel lines, one with excised tick marks and a cross-hatched curvilinear zone (see Figure 2c).

There are also five body sherds and a rim sherd of Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified*, a sandy paste ceramic ware made during the Woodland period in this part of East Texas. These sherds are part of a Woodland period occupation at the site, along with single petrified wood examples of Gary and Godley dart points.

J. B. Dorsey (41NA6)

The Dorsey site was recorded by Arnold in February 1940, and the small site (0.5 acres) was on a floodplain rise of a small tributary stream; King Creek lies about 1.2 km to the south. Arnold noted two concentrations of sherds on the surface, which he suggested likely represented two different but related habitation areas.

Arnold collected more than 880 ceramic vessel sherds from the site, while Marceaux (2011:221-228 and Table 6.45) tabulated 995 sherds in the J. B. Dorsey site collection during his detailed analysis of the collection, including a few sherds collected from the site in 2007. This includes 565 brushed sherds and 167 plain sherds in TARL's bulk artifact storage facility; the sample analyzed in detail for this study includes 120 sherds (Table 3). Consequently, the ceramic sherd sample from the J. B. Dorsey site is comprised of 178 plain sherds and 674 decorated sherds, for a total TARL sample of 852 sherds; the plain to decorated sherd ratio is a low 0.26. Only 7.1 percent of the decorated sherds (but 44 percent of the decorated rim sherds) are from engraved fine ware vessels.

Table 3. Ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the J. B. Dorsey site.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	9	2	11
Utility	57	4	61
Fine	44	4	48
Totals	110	10	120

In the analyzed sample, 91.7 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels, and only 8.3 percent of the sherds are from bone-tempered vessels (see Table 3). Including the brushed sherds in TARL's bulk storage facility, 87 percent of the decorated sherds have brushed, brushed-applied (n=7), and brushed-punctated (n=9) decorative elements (Table 4). The brushed to plain sherd ratio for the assemblage is 3.30, and the brushed to other wet paste sherds ratio is 10.1.

Table 4. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the J. B. Dorsey site.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware</u>			
<i>Brushed</i>			
parallel brushed	-	2	2
<i>Brushed-Appliqued</i>			
parallel brushed and large appliqued node	-	1	1
parallel brushed and opposed appliqued ridge	-	1	1
parallel brushed and straight appliqued fillet	-	4	4
parallel brushed and straight appliqued ridge	-	1	1
<i>Brushed-Punctated</i>			
horizontal brushed, with tool punctated row under the lip	1	-	1
horizontal brushed and tool punctated row through the brushing	1	-	1
parallel brushed with tool punctated row through the brushing	-	7	7
<i>Incised</i>			
cross-hatched incised lines	1	1	2
diagonal incised lines	1	-	1
horizontal incised lines	2	-	2
opposed incised lines	-	1	1
opposed curvilinear incised lines	-	2	2
parallel incised lines	-	13	13
straight incised line	-	6	6
vertical incised lines	1	-	1
<i>Incised-Punctated</i>			
incised triangle filled with tool punctated rows	-	1	1
horizontal and vertical incised lines above row of tool punctations	-	1	1
<i>Punctated</i>			
tool punctated row beneath the lip	1	-	1
tool punctated rows	1	10	11
<u>Fine Ware</u>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
curvilinear engraved lines	-	5	5
curvilinear engraved line with excised tick marks	1	-	1
diagonal engraved lines	2	-	2
diagonal hatched zone	-	1	1
diagonal opposed engraved lines	-	1	1
hooked arm el.	-	1	1

Table 4. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the J. B. Dorsey site, cont.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
Fine Ware, cont.			
<i>Engraved</i>			
horizontal engraved lines	1	-	1
horizontal engraved line with excised tick marks	2	-	2
opposed engraved lines	-	5	5
opposed diagonal engraved lines	-	2	2
opposed diagonal and horizontal engraved lines	-	2	2
panels with diagonal lines and open pendant triangles	-	1	1
parallel engraved lines	-	4	4
parallel engraved lines with excised tick marks	-	1	1
straight engraved line	-	8	8
straight engraved line with excised tick marks	-	6	6
straight engraved line and hatched zone	-	1	1
<i>Engraved-Brushed</i>			
diagonal opposed engraved lines and diagonal brushed body	-	1	1
diagonal opposed engraved lines and horizontal brushed body	-	1	1
horizontal line and curvilinear hatched triangle el. and diagonal brushing on body	-	1	1
<i>Engraved-Punctated</i>			
hatched vertical zone below row of tool punctates	1	-	1
Totals	16	93	109

The incised sherds in the J. B. Dorsey assemblage comprise 4.1 percent of the decorated sherds. With the exception of two body sherds with opposed curvilinear lines (Figure 3a-b), the remainder of the rim and body sherds have simple geometric elements, including cross-hatched, diagonal, horizontal, and vertical incised lines on the rim of jars. The incised-punctated body sherds (0.3 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage) have either an incised triangle zone filled with tool punctations or a lower rim/body sherd with horizontal and vertical incised lines on the rim and a row of tool punctations at the rim-body juncture (Figure 3c).

About 1.8 percent of the decorated sherds have punctated decorative elements (see Table 4). These have rows of tool punctations on the rim and vessel body.

Among the fine ware sherds from the J. B. Dorsey site are Patton Engraved rim and body sherds (n=10) (Figure 4a-c), including *var. Allen* (Perttula 2011:Figure 6-66a), and Poynor Engraved rim and body sherds (n=6) (Figure 4d-h) with engraved, brushed, or punctated elements, from primarily unspecified varieties of the type. These fine wares at the site likely suggest that the J. B. Dorsey site was occupied during the Historic Caddo Allen phase when Patton Engraved vessels were being made and used, as well as sometime during the Late Caddo Frankston phase when Poynor Engraved vessels were primarily made and used. One body sherd with a hooked arm element (see Figure 4d) may be from a Poynor Engraved, *Var. P* vessel; this variety is known from ca. A.D. 1560-1680 contexts (Perttula 2011:Table 6-37).

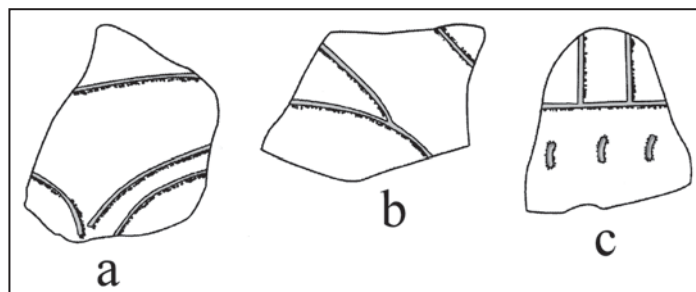


Figure 3. Decorative elements on selected utility ware body sherds from the J. B. Dorsey site: a-b, incised; c, incised-punctated.

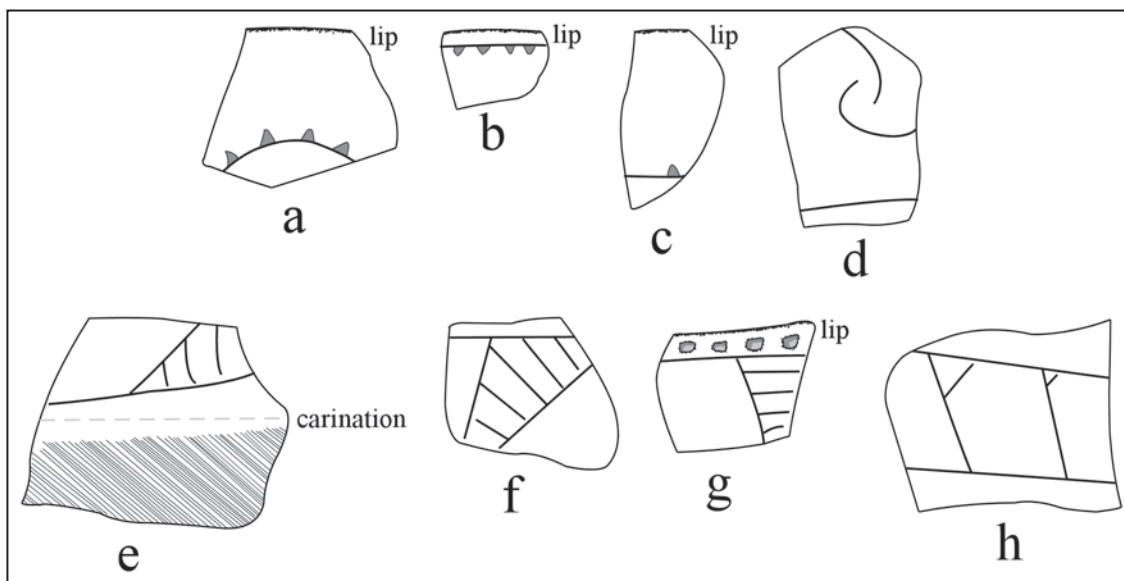


Figure 4. Decorative elements on selected fine ware rim and body sherds from the J. B. Dorsey site: a-c, Patton Engraved rim; d, hooked arm element, Poynor Engraved; e-g, Poynor Engraved; h, engraved panel on Poynor Engraved body sherd.

At least one Poynor Engraved carinated bowl sherd has diagonal brushing marks on the vessel body (see Figure 4e). Two other fine ware carinated bowl sherds of uncertain type from the J. B. Dorsey site have either diagonal or horizontal brushing marks on the vessel body, and diagonal opposed engraved lines on the rim itself.

There are also two sherds from grog-tempered elbow pipes in the J. B. Dorsey site WPA collection, along with a large (72 x 46 mm) piece of daub from the remnants of a burned Caddo structure. The pipes are from Neches River elbow pipe forms, either *Var. B* or *Var. C* (cf. Pertulla 2011:Figure 6-23). A pipe bowl sherd has closely-spaced horizontal incised lines on the lip, while a bowl/stem sherd has two horizontal incised lines along the distal knob of the stem. Such pipes have been documented from Late Caddo period, Frankston phase contexts in upper Neches River basin sites (Pertulla 2011:215).

Deshazo (41NA13)

What is now known as the Deshazo site (see Story 1982, 1995) was first recorded in November 1939 by Gus Arnold on an alluvial landform at the mouth of Mill Branch in the Bayou Loco drainage. Arnold estimated the site covered a ca. 4 acre area, including a ca. 75 x 50 ft. Historic Caddo cemetery excavated by Dr. Robert L. Turner Sr. and his son Robert L. Turner, Jr. Burial features here included ceramic vessels as funerary offerings as well as glass beads, metal knives, and other grave goods (Story 1995:2 and Table 1).

The ancestral Caddo vessel sherd assemblage collected by Arnold includes 84 plain, utility, and fine ware sherds (Table 5). About 82 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels, and there are bone-tempered vessels represented in both the plain wares and utility wares. The plain to decorated sherd ratio in this small assemblage is 1.10; utility wares comprise 95 percent of the decorated sherds.

Table 5. Ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA survey investigations at the Deshazo site.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	36	8	44
Utility	31	7	38
Fine	2	-	2
Totals	69	15	84

Brushed and brushed-incised sherds account for 30 percent of the decorated sherds in the WPA ceramic sherd assemblage (Table 6). Two are from an Historic Caddo type—Spradley Brushed-Incised—that have parallel brushed marks with overlying opposed parallel incised lines. This utility ware is found on Historic Caddo Allen phase sites in the Neches-Angelina river basins in East Texas. It consists of parallel brushing elements with overlapping straight incised lines that are opposed or perpendicular to the brushing (Marceaux 2011:140 and Figure 5.2).

Table 6. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the Deshazo site.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware</u>			
<i>Brushed</i>			
horizontal brushed	1	-	1
opposed brushed	-	1	1
parallel brushed	-	7	7
vertical brushed	-	1	1
<i>Brushed-Incised</i>			
parallel brushed with overlying opposed parallel incised lines	-	2	2
<i>Incised</i>			
diagonal incised lines	2	-	2
parallel incised lines	-	4	4

Table 6. Decorative methods and elements in the ancestral Caddo ceramic wares from the WPA archaeological survey investigations at the Deshazo site, cont.

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware, cont.</u>			
<i>Incised</i>			
panel with parallel incised lines	-	1	1
straight incised line	-	1	1
<i>Incised-Punctated</i>			
straight incised line and adjacent rows of tool punctates	-	2	2
<i>Pinched</i>			
vertical pinched ridge	-	1	1
<i>Punctated</i>			
single fingernail punctation	-	1	1
single tool punctation	-	3	3
fingernail punctated rows	-	1	1
vertical fingernail punctated row	-	1	1
tool punctated rows	-	8	8
<i>Trailed</i>			
parallel trailed lines	-	1	1
<u>Fine Ware</u>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
horizontal engraved lines	-	1	1
horizontal engraved lines, one with excised pendant triangle el.	-	1	1
Totals	3	37	40

Twenty percent of the decorated sherds have incised decorative elements. The two incised rim sherds have diagonal incised lines (see Table 6), and one of the body sherds has an incised panel filled with closely-spaced parallel incised lines (Figure 5a). Only 5 percent of the decorated sherds have incised-punctated elements, and both include rows of tool punctations adjacent to a straight incised line (Figure 5b). There is one Killough Pinched sherd in the WPA collection, and 14 fingernail and tool punctated sherds (35 percent of the decorated sherds). One body sherd has broad and shallow trailed lines (see Table 6).

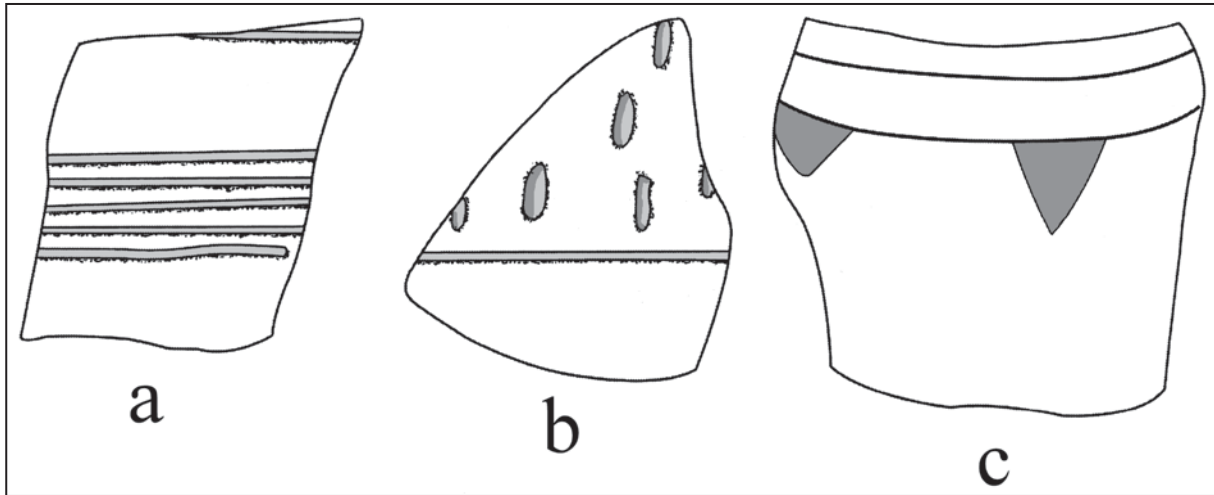


Figure 5. Decorative elements on selected body sherds from the Deshazo site: a, incised; b, incised-punctated; c, engraved.

Both fine ware sherds are from bottles. The most distinctive is a Hume Engraved, *var. Allen* body sherd with two horizontal engraved lines on the upper part of the body, the lower one of which has excised pendant triangles (see Figure 5c).

Woodland period Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* sherds are also in the WPA collection from the Deshazo site. This includes two plain body sherds. Finally, a single brown chert Alba arrow point is in the collections gathered by Arnold in 1939 from the site.

Summary and Conclusions

The 1939-1940 WPA archaeological survey by Gus Arnold of a number of East Texas counties led to the recording of several hundred ancestral Caddo sites, as well as the collection of substantial amounts of ceramic vessel sherds, as most of the sites were in plowed fields with excellent surface visibility. Despite this, the Arnold collections have been understudied over the years, and only Im (1975) has been a comprehensive, if outdated, consideration of the character of the Caddo ceramic vessel sherd assemblages and their cultural and temporal affiliations. In addition to the recent examination of Arnold vessel sherd assemblages from sites in San Augustine and Sabine counties (Perttula 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Perttula and Walters 2016), I have continued to reanalyze and study other East Texas Caddo ceramic sherd assemblages from other East Texas counties, beginning with the study of sherds from three sites in Nacogdoches County: Hill Place (41NA5), J. B. Dorsey (41NA6), and Deshazo (41NA13).

The Hill Place and Deshazo sites were occupied first in Woodland period times (ca. 500 B.C.-A.D. 800), as denoted by Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* sandy paste vessel sherds and/or certain Woodland period style dart points. The assemblages of Woodland period material culture remains from these two sites are not large, suggesting that the two sites may have been temporary encampments of hunting-gathering peoples. The WPA collections from the Hill Place, J. B. Dorsey, and Deshazo sites have much more substantial ancestral Caddo ceramic vessel sherd assemblages (Table 7), and they are the product of multi-year sedentary occupations by farming families.

Table 7. Summary comparison of ancestral Caddo WPA ceramic vessel sherd assemblages from the Hill Place, J. B. Dorsey, and Deshazo sites.

Attributes	Hill Place	J. B. Dorsey	Deshazo
% Bone temper	33.0	8.3	17.9
% Grog temper	67.0	91.7	82.1
No. of Decorated sherds	89	674	40
P/DR	1.37	0.26	1.10
Decorative Method*			
Applied	1.1	-	-
Brushed	35.0	83.9	25.0
Brushed-appliqued	1.1	1.0	-
Brushed-incised	3.4	-	5.0
Brushed-punctated	-	1.3	-
Incised	19.1	4.1	10.0
Incised-punctated	3.4	0.3	5.0
Pinched	-	-	2.5
Punctated	24.7	1.8	35.0
Trailed	2.2	-	2.5
Engraved	9.0	6.5	5.0
Engraved-brushed	-	0.4	-

*in percentage

The relatively high Plain to Decorated sherd ratio (P/DR values of 1.10 and 1.37) and the relatively modest proportion of brushed vessel sherds (30.-39.5 percent) in the WPA ceramic vessel sherd assemblages from the Hill Place and Deshazo sites indicates that they are the product primarily of pre-A.D. 1300 Caddo occupations. Both Fields (1995:229) and Story (1995:237 and Figure 81c) have noted that there are prehistoric—not Historic Allen phase—Caddo components at the Deshazo site, primarily at the southern end of the site. The presence of a Killough Pinched sherd at the Deshazo site also suggests some use of the site during the Late Caddo period Frankston phase. However, at the Hill Place site, an Early Caddo Weches Fingernail Impressed, *var. Weches* sherd is in the WPA collection, and other sherds there resemble both Reavely Brushed-Incised or Pease Brushed-Incised types.

In the case of the J. B. Dorsey site, the occurrence of some Poynor Engraved sherds, including a *Var. P* sherd, points to a ca. A.D. 1560-1680 Frankston phase occupation there, but the principal occupation was during the post-A.D. 1680 Allen phase. This latter occupation is marked by the considerable use of grog as a temper for vessel manufacture, a low P/DR (0.26), very high proportions of brushed vessel sherds (87 percent), Patton Engraved fine ware sherds, and the use of ceramic elbow pipes. Marceaux (2011) places the J. B. Dorsey site in a Middle Angelina cluster, and King Creek subcluster, of Hasinai sites in East Texas, and thus a site affiliated with Hainai and Nacogdoche Caddo communities in the region.

By contrast, only a few sherds in the WPA collections at either the Hill Place (Patton Engraved) or the Deshazo sites (Spradley Brushed-Incised and Hume Engraved, *var. Allen*) are indicative of ancestral Caddo use after ca. A.D. 1680. Both sites have much higher proportions of bone-tempered ceramic vessels (17.9-33.0 percent) than the Allen phase component at the J. B. Dorsey site, as well as higher proportions of non-brushed utility wares, including sherds from vessels decorated with punctated (24.7-35.0 percent), incised (10.0-19.1 percent), and incised-punctated (3.4-5.0 percent) elements.

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