




2017

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Perttula, Timothy K. (2017) "The Beckham (41SB35) and Print Bell (41SB36) Woodland Period and Caddo Ceramic Assemblages Collected by G. E. Arnold in 1939, Sabine County, Texas," *Index of Texas Archaeology: Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State*: Vol. 2017 , Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.21112/ita.2017.1.11>

ISSN: 2475-9333

Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ita/vol2017/iss1/11>

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The Beckham (41SB35) and Print Bell (41SB36) Woodland Period and Caddo Ceramic Assemblages Collected by G. E. Arnold in 1939, Sabine County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

Introduction

The Beckham (41SB35) and Print Bell (41SB36) sites were recorded by Gus E. Arnold of The University of Texas in December 1939 during his WPA-sponsored archaeological survey of East Texas. Both sites have substantial ancestral Caddo deposits. The Beckham site is in the Housen Bayou basin of the larger Sabine River drainage system, while the Print Bell site is on a tributary of the Angelina River (Figure 1). Excavations were conducted at the Print Bell site in the early 1950s by Jelks (1965:88-93) prior to the construction of Lake Sam Rayburn, but there have been no further investigations at the Beckham site after Arnold's 1939 survey.



Figure 1. The locations of the Beckham (41SB35) and Print Bell (41SB36) sites in East Texas.

Beckham Site (41SB35)

The Beckham site (ET-629) was categorized as a burial and village site by Arnold, and it was estimated to cover ca. 3 acres of a sandy upland landform on the west side of Cane Creek, a tributary of Housen Bayou. The presence of animal bone and mussel shell indicated that the site had preserved midden deposits. Earlier explorations by a local resident, a Mr. Beasley, at the site had exposed three ancestral Caddo burials that had been accompanied by whole ceramic vessels (Figure 2)—a bottle and a rim peaked bowl—and one ceramic pipe.



Figure 2. Arnold photograph of two ceramic vessels recovered in the excavations of burials by a Mr. Beasley at the Beckham site. Image courtesy of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin (TARL).

Ceramic Sherd Assemblage

The ceramic sherd assemblage from the Beckham site has both Woodland and ancestral Caddo vessel sherds. The Woodland period ceramics include one sandy paste Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* rim sherd and 10 body sherds. These sherds are from a Mossy Grove culture occupation at the site (see Story 1990; Ellis 2013).

The ancestral Caddo ceramic sherd assemblage from the Beckham site includes 238 sherds from plain, utility, and fine ware vessels (Table 1). About 73.5 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels (including 83 percent of the fine ware sherds), and the remainder are from bone-tempered vessels. About 30 percent of the utility wares are from bone-tempered vessels, and 25.2 percent of the plain ware sherds are from vessels tempered with crushed and burned bone.

Table 1. Ancestral Caddo sherds from the Beckham site.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	110	37	147
Utility	60	25	85
Fine	5	1	6
Totals	175	63	238

The 91 decorated sherds are overwhelmingly from utility ware vessels (93.4 percent). The plain to decorated sherd ratio in the Beckham site ceramic assemblage is 1.62. the brushed to plain sherd ratio is 0.14, and the brushed to other wet paste sherds ratio in the assemblage is 0.29.

The principal decorative method represented in the sherds is incised (50.6 percent) (Table 2). Another 23.5 percent have brushed, brushed-appliqued, and brushed-incised decorative elements, 13.2 percent are from punctated vessels, and 5.5 percent have incised-punctated decorative elements. The only fine ware sherds in the assemblage have engraved decorative elements.

Table 2. Decorative methods and decorative elements in the Beckham site Caddo sherd assemblage.

Decorative methods/ decorative elements	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware</u>			
<i>Appliqued-Incised</i>			
circular appliqued node between parallel incised lines	-	1	1
<i>Brushed</i>			
parallel brushed	-	16	16
<i>Brushed-Appliqued</i>			
parallel appliqued ridges and diagonal brushed	-	1	1

Table 2. Decorative methods and decorative elements in the Beckham site Caddo sherd assemblage, cont.

Decorative methods/ decorative elements	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility Ware, cont.</u>			
<i>Brushed-Incised</i>			
horizontal brushed and diagonal incised lines	1	-	1
horizontal incised lines and diagonal brushed	-	1	1
horizontal incised lines and vertical brushed	-	1	1
<i>Incised</i>			
cross-hatched incised lines	-	2	2
curvilinear incised lines	-	1	1
curvilinear and parallel incised lines	-	1	1
diagonal incised lines	1	-	1
diagonal and cross-hatched incised lines	1	-	1
diagonal opposed incised lines	-	4	4
horizontal incised lines	1	1	2
opposed incised lines	-	3	3
parallel incised lines	-	26	26
straight incised line	-	3	3
vertical incised lines	-	1	1
vertical and diagonal opposed incised lines	-	1	1
<i>Incised-Punctated</i>			
horizontal incised lines and crescent-shaped fingernail punctations	1	-	1
straight incised line and adjacent rows of circular punctations	-	1	1
straight incised line and adjacent tool punctated row	-	2	2
triangular incised zone filled with tool punctated rows	1	-	1
<i>Punctated</i>			
small circular punctated rows	1	-	1
fingernail punctated rows	-	5	5
linear tool punctated row	-	1	1
tool punctated rows	-	5	5
<i>Ridged</i>			
parallel ridged	-	1	1
<u>Fine Ware</u>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
horizontal engraved lines	1	-	1
parallel engraved lines	-	2	2
slanting scroll with tick marks and hatched scroll fill zones	1	-	1
straight engraved line	-	2	2
Totals	9	82	91

One of the brushed sherds in the assemblage has parallel applied ridges in proximity to a zone of diagonal brushing (Figure 3a). Other sherds have simply parallel brushing marks or a combination of brushing marks and incised elements (see Table 2). Other than simple geometric elements on many of the incised sherds, or diagonal and cross-hatched incised lines (Figure 3b) on one rim, one body sherd has curvilinear and parallel incised lines (Figure 3c), while another body sherd has diagonal opposed incised lines divided by a vertical incised line (Figure 3d); the sherd is from a Pease Brushed-Incised jar (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 60k).

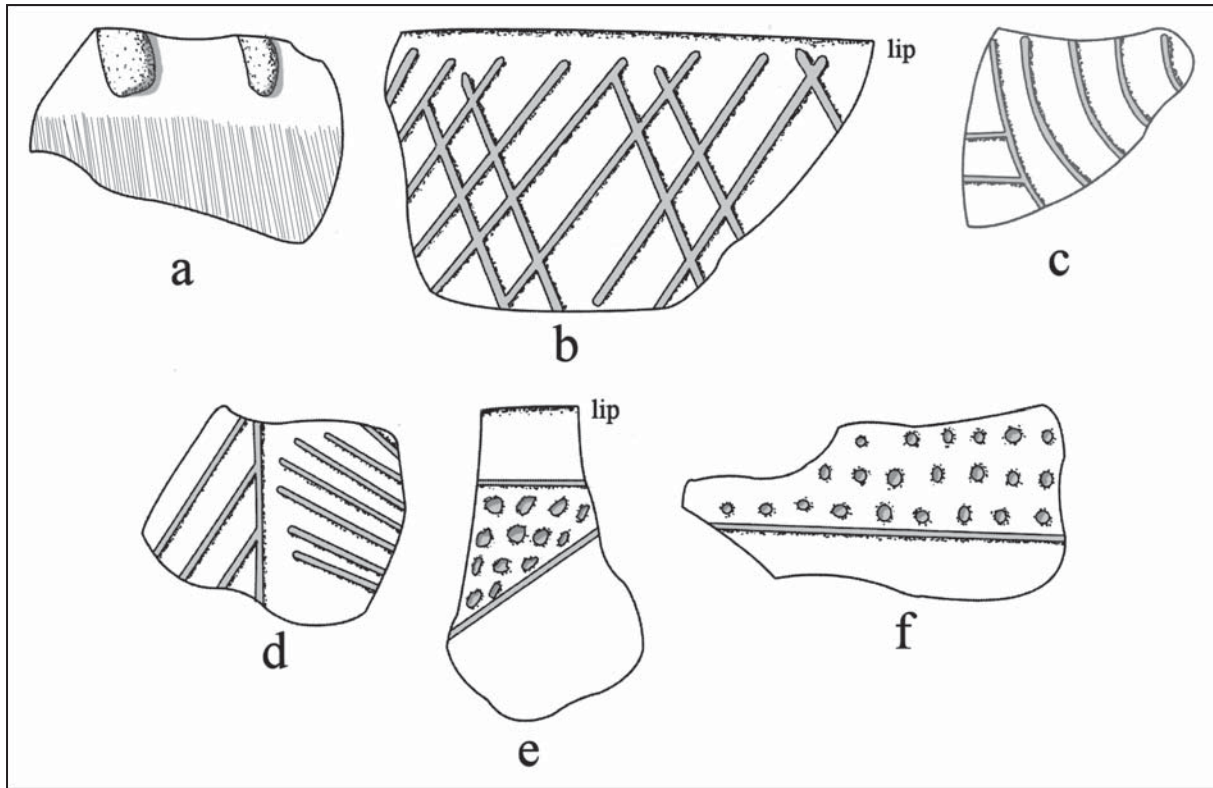


Figure 3. Selected decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the Beckham site.

One rim sherd in the assemblage has an incised triangle filled with closely-spaced rows of tool punctates (see Figure 3e). A body sherd may have a horizontal incised zone filled with rows of circular punctations (see Figure 3f). These particular sherds may be from Pineland Punctated-Incised vessels, either *var. Powell* or *var. Print* (see Pertulla and Walters 2016). The punctated sherds include rim and body sherds with either circular, fingernail, or tool punctated elements (see Table 2). One grog-tempered body sherd with parallel ridges is from a Belcher Ridged vessel, likely an import from a Caddo group in the Red River basin of Northwestern Louisiana.

Five of the six engraved fine ware sherds have either horizontal, parallel, or straight lines (see Table 2). One distinctive rim sherd has a slanting engraved scroll with tick marks and upper and lower hatched scroll fill zones (Figure 4).

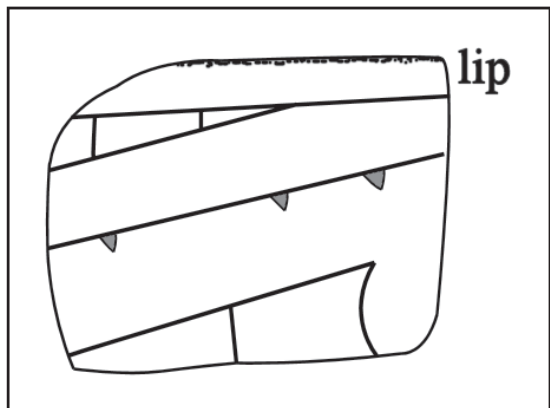


Figure 4. Decorative elements on the engraved rim sherd from the Beckham site.

Lithic Tool Assemblage

In addition to two bifaces (red chert and petrified wood), other lithic tools collected by Arnold include five dart points or dart point preforms and one arrow point. The dart point preform is made from a local dark red chert and the four dart points include one Gary and three Godley points; these are indicative of a Woodland period occupation, as are the Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* ceramic sherds in the artifact assemblage (see above). The Gary point is made from a local brown chert, and the Godley points are made from brown chert (n=2) and petrified wood.

The one arrow point, of unidentified type, is made from brown chert. It has an expanding stem and a flat base, with small barbs.

Print Bell Site (41SB36)

The Print Bell site (ET-640) covered ca. 2 acres of a sandy ridge landform on the north side of Rush Creek; Rush Creek is a tributary to Bear Creek, a larger and southward-flowing tributary of the Angelina River. Arnold considered it to be a village site.

Ceramic Sherd Assemblage

The ceramic sherd assemblage from the Print Bell site also has both Woodland and ancestral Caddo vessel sherds. The Woodland period ceramics include one sandy paste Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* rim sherd and 10 body sherds. These sherds are from a Mossy Grove culture occupation at the site (see Story 1990; Ellis 2013).

Approximately 70 percent of the ancestral Caddo sherds from the site are from grog-tempered vessels (Table 3), 29 percent are from bone-tempered vessels, and one fine ware sherd, from a vessel likely made along the Red River in northwestern Louisiana (Perttula et al. 2012:Figure 2; Selden et al. 2014:Figure 4), is from a shell-tempered vessel. The highest proportions of bone-tempered vessel sherds are in the fine wares (46 percent) and the utility wares (33 percent).

Table 3. Ancestral Caddo sherds collected by Gus Arnold from the Print Bell site.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	Shell-tempered	N
Plain	77	25	-	102
Utility	34	17	-	51
Fine	6	6	1	13
Totals	117	48	1	166

The plain to decorated sherd ratio in the Print Bell ceramic assemblage is 1.59. About 80 percent of the decorated sherds are from utility ware vessels (Table 4). The brushed to plain sherd ratio is a low 0.05, and the ratio of brushed to other wet paste sherds in the assemblage is 0.11. Brushed sherds account

for 7.8 percent of the decorated sherds in the assemblage, while sherds with incised decorative elements comprise 64.1 percent. There are few other utility ware sherds (incised-punctated, punctated, and ridged), and they account for another 7.8 percent of the decorated sherds. Finally, the engraved fine wares represent 10.9 percent of the decorated sherds in the assemblage, and trailed sherds another 9.4 percent.

Table 4. Decorative methods and decorative elements in the Print Bell site Caddo sherd assemblage.

Decorative methods/ decorative elements	Rim	Body	N
Utility Ware			
<i>Brushed</i>			
parallel brushed	-	5	5
<i>Incised</i>			
curvilinear incised lines	-	1	1
diagonal incised lines	1	-	1
diagonal opposed incised lines	-	3	3
horizontal incised lines	3	-	3
horizontal and diagonal incised lines	2	-	2
horizontal and vertical incised lines	1	-	1
opposed incised lines	-	2	2
parallel incised lines	-	18	18
straight incised line	-	9	9
vertical and opposed diagonal incised lines	-	1	1
<i>Incised-Punctated</i>			
straight line and curvilinear incised el. with tool punctates	-	1	1
straight incised line and adjacent tool punctated row	-	2	2
<i>Punctated</i>			
fingernail punctated rows	-	1	1
<i>Ridged</i>			
parallel ridged	-	1	1
Fine Ware			
<i>Engraved</i>			
curvilinear engraved lines	-	3	3
curvilinear engraved and ticked lines, hatched triangle el., and horizontal engraved line	-	1	1
curvilinear and parallel engraved lines and hatched zone	-	1	1
horizontal and vertical engraved lines and ticked horizontal engraved line	-	1	1
parallel engraved lines	-	1	1

Table 4. Decorative methods and decorative elements in the Print Bell site Caddo sherd assemblage, cont.

Decorative methods/ decorative elements	Rim	Body	N
Fine Ware, cont.			
<i>Trailed</i>			
curvilinear trailed lines	-	2	2
parallel trailed lines	-	3	3
straight trailed line*	-	1	1
Totals	7	57	64

*shell-tempered

Brushed sherds represent only 9.8 percent of the utility ware sherds in the Print Bell assemblage collected by Arnold. In the larger sample obtained by Jelks (1965), brushed sherds (Broadus Brushed) represented only 10.9 percent of the utility wares.

The majority of the incised sherds have simple geometric elements, including rim sherds with horizontal, diagonal, and horizontal-diagonal incised lines (see Table 4). One rim has panels defined by vertical incised lines, and the panels are filled with a series of horizontal incised lines (Figure 5a). A body sherd with diagonal opposed incised lines divided by a vertical incised line (Figure 5b) is from a Pease Brushed-Incised jar (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 60k).

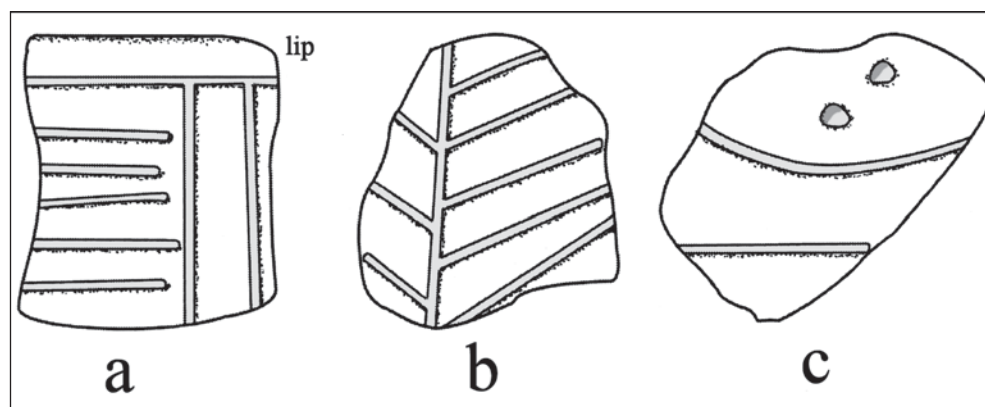


Figure 5. Selected decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the Print Bell site.

One of the incised-punctated sherds has a circular or semi-circular incised zone with tool punctations (see Figure 5c). This may be from a Pineland Punctated-Incised, *var. Bell* vessel (Perttula and Walters 2016). One grog-tempered body sherd has parallel ridges and is from a post-A.D. 1500 Belcher Ridged vessel.

The proportion of trailed body sherds in the fine ware assemblage at the Print Bell site is distinctive (see Table 4); these may be from Keno Trailed vessels. Among the engraved fine ware sherds, one bone-tempered sherd has curvilinear and parallel engraved lines and a nested hatched zone (Figure 6a); similar elements occur on Tyson Engraved vessels from the Tyson site in the Attoyac Bayou basin (Middlebrook 1994:Figure 3). Two other engraved sherds from the site are distinctive: one (from a carinated bowl) has

curvilinear engraved and ticked lines, a hatched triangle element and a horizontal engraved line (Figure 6b), and the other (probably also from a carinated bowl) has horizontal and vertical engraved lines and a single ticked horizontal engraved line (Figure 6c).

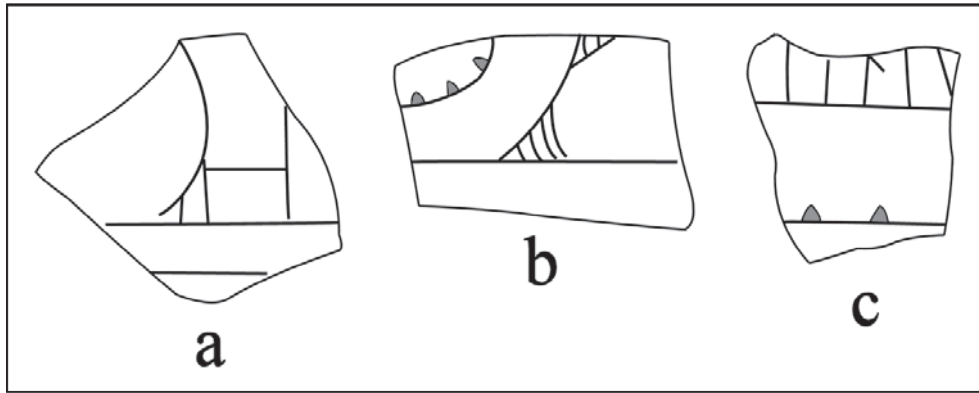


Figure 6. Selected decorative elements on fine ware sherds from the Print Bell site.

Lithic Tools

Arnold collected two chipped stone tools from the Print Bell site. One is a red chert biface fragment and the other is a brownish-red chert arrow point preform (perhaps for a Perdiz arrow point) with a contracting stem; the preform is 5.7 mm thick.

Summary and Conclusions

The Beckham (41SB35) and Print Bell (41SB36) sites were recorded in 1939 and 1940 by Gus E. Arnold during his WPA-sponsored archaeological survey of East Texas; the Beckham site is in the Housen Bayou basin of the Sabine River drainage, while the Print Bell site is in the Angelina River basin. Arnold collected substantial ceramic sherd assemblages from both sites, and the analysis of these collections is the primary focus of this article. In both sites, there are a few Woodland period ceramic sherds from Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* vessels; a much more substantial Woodland period ceramic sherd assemblage (n=797) was recovered from the Print Bell site in excavations conducted by Jelks (1965). That assemblage included Goose Creek Plain, four decorated sandy paste sherds, and two grog-tempered Marksville or Troyville Stamped sherds.

The ancestral Caddo occupation at the Beckham site is marked by sherds from grog- and bone-tempered vessels. The proportion of bone-tempered vessel sherds at the Beckham site is higher (26.5 percent) than other documented Caddo sherd assemblages from the Housen Bayou drainage (Table 5). The decorated sherd assemblage from the site is dominated by utility wares, especially utility wares with incised, brushed, and punctated decorative elements. The few engraved sherds are not distinctive, except for one rim with a slanting scroll decorative element (see Figure 4). The proportion of brushed sherds in the assemblage, the identification of a Pease Brushed-Incised sherd, as well as a plain to decorated sherd ratio of 1.62, suggests that the ancestral Caddo occupation at the Beckham site predates ca. A.D. 1400, but dates after ca. A.D. 1200 (Table 5). One Belcher Ridged body sherd in the assemblage does also suggest that there was limited use of the site by Caddo peoples after ca. A.D. 1500.

Table 5. Proposed temporal ordering of ceramic assemblages in the Housen Bayou basin in Sabine County, Texas.

Ceramic Attributes	Youngest Site (ca. A.D. 1400-1500). SB43+	SB35	Oldest Site (ca. A.D. 1200) SB38+
	Brushing	37.0*	23.5
Incised	50.0	50.5	62.7
Incised-Punctated	10.9	5.5	15.3
Punctated	-	13.2	17.8
Engraved	2.2	6.6	-
Ridged	-	1.1	-
Incised-Appliqued	-	1.1	-
% Grog temper	82.2	73.5	97.6
% Bone temper	17.8	26.5	2.4
% Shell temper	-	-	-
No. of decorated sherds	46	91	118

*percentage
+ (Pertulla 2015:Table 9)

At the Print Bell site, the sherd collections obtained by Arnold are from both grog- and bone-tempered vessels; 29 percent of the sherds are from bone-tempered vessels. Both the Arnold sherd assemblage, as well as the larger assemblage recovered by Jelks (1965), have plain to decorated sherd ratios that range from 1.59-1.74, and almost identical brushed/plain and brushed/other wet paste sherd ratios (Table 6). These close similarities suggest both assemblages are the product of the same Caddo occupation sampled by surface collections and later excavations.

Table 6. Print Bell site (41SB36) ceramic sherd assemblages.

Decorative method	Arnold (1939)	Jelks (1965)
<i>Utility Ware</i>		
Brushed	7.8*	9.7
Incised	63.4	61.7
Incised-Punctated	4.7	7.3
Incised-Punctated-Brushed	-	1.6
Punctated	1.6	8.4
Ridged	1.6	-
<i>Fine Ware</i>		
Engraved	10.9	11.2
Trailed	9.4	-
P/DR	1.59	1.74
Brushed/Plain	0.05	0.07
Brushed/OWP	0.11	0.12
Totals	64	546

*percentage

The decorated sherd assemblage in both collections from the Print Bell site are dominated by incised sherds (61.7-63.4 percent), with low proportions of brushed, punctated, and incised-punctated (Pineland Punctated-Incised) sherds. One engraved sherd from the Print Bell site has curvilinear and parallel lines and a nested hatched zone, and may be from a Tyson Engraved vessel; similar vessels have been found in late 14th-early 15th century contexts at the Tyson site (Middlebrook 1994). These characteristics of the assemblage suggest that the majority of the Print Bell Caddo occupation took place prior to A.D. 1400.

However, the Print Bell site appears to have also been settled by Caddo peoples after A.D. 1500. Evidence of this occupation in the Arnold sherd collection includes a single post-A.D. 1500 Belcher Ridged sherd (see Table 6), and the trailed fine ware sherds (probably from Keno Trailed vessels) also identified in the Arnold collection. Other engraved sherds from the site have curvilinear engraved and ticked lines, a hatched triangle element and a horizontal engraved line, and horizontal and vertical engraved lines and a single ticked horizontal engraved line; the ticked lines suggest these engraved sherds may also be from the post-A.D. 1500 component associated with Belcher Ridged and probable Keno Trailed sherds.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Marybeth Tomka of TARL for access to the collections from the Beckham and Print Bell sites, and to Jean Hughes, also at TARL, for the Figure 2 scanned image from the Gus Arnold files. Lance Trask prepared the other figures in this article.

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