



INDEX OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY

Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State

Volume 2017

Article 63

2017

A Caddo Ceramic Vessel Sherd Collection from a Site in the Upper Neches River Basin, Anderson County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

Heritage Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ita>



Part of the [American Material Culture Commons](#), [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#), [Environmental Studies Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), [Other Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Other History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

[Tell us](#) how this article helped you.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Regional Heritage Research at SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Index of Texas Archaeology: Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State by an authorized editor of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

A Caddo Ceramic Vessel Sherd Collection from a Site in the Upper Neches River Basin, Anderson County, Texas

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

A Caddo Ceramic Vessel Sherd Collection from a Site in the Upper Neches River Basin, Anderson County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

Introduction

Frank H. Watt (1889-1981) was a well-known and well-respected avocational archaeologist that lived in the Waco, Texas, area and studied the archaeology of the central Brazos River valley (Lawrence and Redder 1985; Redder 1985; Stephenson 1985; Bischof 2011). He made forays into other parts of the state, however, including the Caddo archaeological area of East Texas. At an unknown date, probably in the 1950s or 1960s, Watt investigated an ancestral Caddo site on the Dennis Farm six miles northwest of the community of Neches, in the upper Neches River basin (probably in the Walnut Creek valley), in Anderson County. He collected 42 sherds from Caddo ceramic vessels from the site, and these collections are in the holdings of the Mayborn Museum Complex at Baylor University.

Sherd Sample

The sherd sample from this upper Neches River basin site includes sherds from plain ware, utility ware, and fine ware vessels (Table 1). About 74 percent of the sherds are from utility wares (i.e., jars decorated with brushed, incised, punctated decorative elements, etc., before the vessel was fired). Only 4.8 percent of the sherds are from fine wares (i.e., bowls and carinated bowls decorated with engraved decorative elements after the vessel was leather-hard or had been fired).

Table 1. Caddo sherds from the Dennis Farm site six miles northwest of Neches, Texas.

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	9	-	9
Utility	29	2	31
Fine	2	-	2
Totals	40	2	42

Almost five percent of the sherds are from vessels (with overlapping brushing marks) tempered with burned bone (see Table 1); the infrequent use of bone as a temper is comparable to most upper Neches River basin ancestral Caddo assemblages (see Perttula and Walters 2016:Table 22). Upper Neches Caddo ceramic vessel sherd assemblages are dominated by sherds from grog-tempered vessels: more than 95 percent of the sherds from the Dennis Farm site are from grog-tempered vessels.

The 33 decorated sherds in the Dennis Farm assemblage have a diverse range of decorative elements (Table 2). Among the utility wares, there are sherds with applied (n=1, 3.0 percent of the decorated sherds), brushed (n=18, 54.5 percent), brushed-incised (n=7, 21.2 percent), incised (n=3, 9.1 percent), and punctated (n=2, 6.1 percent) elements. Both fine ware sherds (6.1 percent) are from engraved vessels.

Table 2. Decorated sherds from the Dennis Farm site in Anderson County, Texas.

Decorative method/decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<u>Utility ware</u>			
<i>Appliqued</i>			
straight appliqued ridge	-	1	1
<i>Brushed</i>			
overlapping brushed marks	-	5	5
parallel brushed marks	-	13	13
<i>Brushed-Incised</i>			
curvilinear brushed-incised marks and lines	-	1	1
opposed brushed-incised marks and lines	-	1	1
parallel brushed-incised	-	3	3
parallel brushed-overlying parallel incised lines	-	1	1
parallel brushed-straight incised line	-	1	1
<i>Incised</i>			
diagonal opposed incised lines	-	1	1
opposed incised lines	-	1	1
parallel incised lines	-	1	1
<i>Punctated</i>			
fingernail punctated rows	-	1	1
tool punctated row	-	1	1
<u>Fine ware</u>			
<i>Engraved</i>			
3+ curvilinear engraved lines (Poynor Engraved)	-	1	1
horizontal engraved line, carinated bowl	-	1	1
Totals	-	33	33

The appliqued body sherd is probably from the body of a La Rue Neck Banded jar (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 47b). The brushed and brushed-incised sherds are from Bullard Brushed jars; the punctated sherds are likely also from Bullard Brushed vessels (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 11b, e). The remainder of the utility wares—with incised decorative elements—are from Maydelle Incised jars. Both fine ware sherds are likely from globular Poynor Engraved carinated bowls, although the variety cannot be specified.

The array of identified ceramic types—La Rue Neck Banded, Bullard Brushed, Maydelle Incised, and Poynor Engraved—from the Dennis Farm site are consistent with a Late Caddo Frankston phase occupation (ca. A.D. 1400-1680) in the upper Neches River basin in East Texas (see Perttula 2011). The high proportion of brushed sherds among all the decorated sherds (75.8 percent) in the assemblage further suggests that the occupation took place during the late Frankston phase, from ca. A.D. 1560-1680 (Perttula and Walters 2016:Table 22).

Summary and Conclusions

Ancestral Caddo ceramic vessel sherds (n=42) were collected by Frank H. Watt at some unknown time in the 20th century from the Dennis Farm site, an unrecorded ancestral Caddo site in the upper Neches River basin in Anderson County, Texas. These collections are held by the Mayborn Museum Complex at Baylor University.

The assemblage is comparable to the ceramic vessel sherds from other ancestral Caddo sites in the upper Neches River basin with respect to the dominant use of grog temper in vessel manufacture, and in terms of the high proportion of utility ware sherds with brushing marks. The ceramic types identified from the Dennis Farm site—La Rue Neck Banded, Bullard Brushed, Maydelle Incised, and Poynor Engraved—are consistent with a Late Caddo Frankston phase occupation in the upper Neches River basin in East Texas, and the high proportion of brushed sherds among all the decorated sherds (75.8 percent) in the assemblage further suggests that the occupation took place during the late Frankston phase, from ca. A.D. 1560-1680 (Perttula and Walters 2016:Table 22).

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the staff of the Mayborn Museum Complex, in particular Anita Benedict and Sabrina Thomas, for their help with accessing the Frank H. Watt collection for research purposes. I also thank Daniel J. Prikryl for his help in examining the collections.

References Cited

- Bischof, R. E.
2011 Boxes and Boxes, Missing Context and an Avocational Archaeologist: Making Sense of the Frank Watt Collection at the Mayborn Museum Complex. Master's thesis, Master of Arts, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.
- Lawrence, T. G. and A. J. Redder
1985 Frank H. Watt, The Central Texas Archeologist. *Central Texas Archeologist* 10:7-11.
- Perttula, T. K.
2011 The Ceramic Artifacts from the Lang Pasture Site (41AN38) and the Place of the Site within an Upper Neches River Basin Caddo Ceramic Tradition. In *Archeological Investigations at the Lang Pasture Site (41AN38) in the Upper Neches River Basin of East Texas*, assembled and edited by T. K. Perttula, D. B. Kelley, and R. A. Ricklis, pp. 145-320. Archeological Studies Program Report No. 129, Texas Department of Transportation, Environmental Affairs Division, Austin.
- Perttula, T. K. and M. Walters
2016 *Caddo Archaeology in the Caddo Creek Valley of the Upper Neches River Basin, Anderson and Henderson Counties, Texas*. Special Publication No. 43. Friends of Northeast Texas Archaeology, Austin and Pittsburg.
- Redder, A. J.
1985 Bibliography of Frank H. Watt. *Central Texas Archeologist* 10:12-20.
- Stephenson, R. L.
1985 Frank H. Watt: A Tribute. *Central Texas Archeologist* 10:1-6.
- Suhm, D. A. and E. B. Jelks (editors)
1962 *Handbook of Texas Archeology: Type Descriptions*. Special Publication No. 1, Texas Archeological Society and Bulletin No. 4, Texas Memorial Museum, Austin.