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# Caddo Ceramic Assemblage from a Site Across the Road from the Millsey Williamson Site in Rusk County, Texas

*Timothy K. Perttula*

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## INTRODUCTION

In archaeological investigations by Jones (1968:62–84 and Figure 5) at the Nadaco Caddo Millsey Williamson site (41RK3), he identified a burial area on the western tip of an alluvial terrace landform on the east side of Martin Creek, as well as a village area to the east (Figure 1). The burial area and the village area were separated by a road, a paved segment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Trammel's Trace (see Snowden 2015). Trammel's Trace was an Anglo–American version of the aboriginal Caddo Trace “that led from the Hasinai Caddo settlements in East Texas to the Kadohadacho settlements on the Red River in the general area of Texarkana, Texas, and its route is fairly well known because the historic 19<sup>th</sup>–century Trammel's Trace followed its route through northeastern Texas” (Perttula et al. 2010:5). The collection of ceramic sherds discussed in this article are from the village, namely the site area across [and to the east] from the Millsey Williamson historic Caddo cemetery; they are in the collections of the Gregg County Historical Museum. A number of the sherds were collected from this area before 1945 by a Mr. C. W. Bailey, who donated them to Buddy Jones for study.

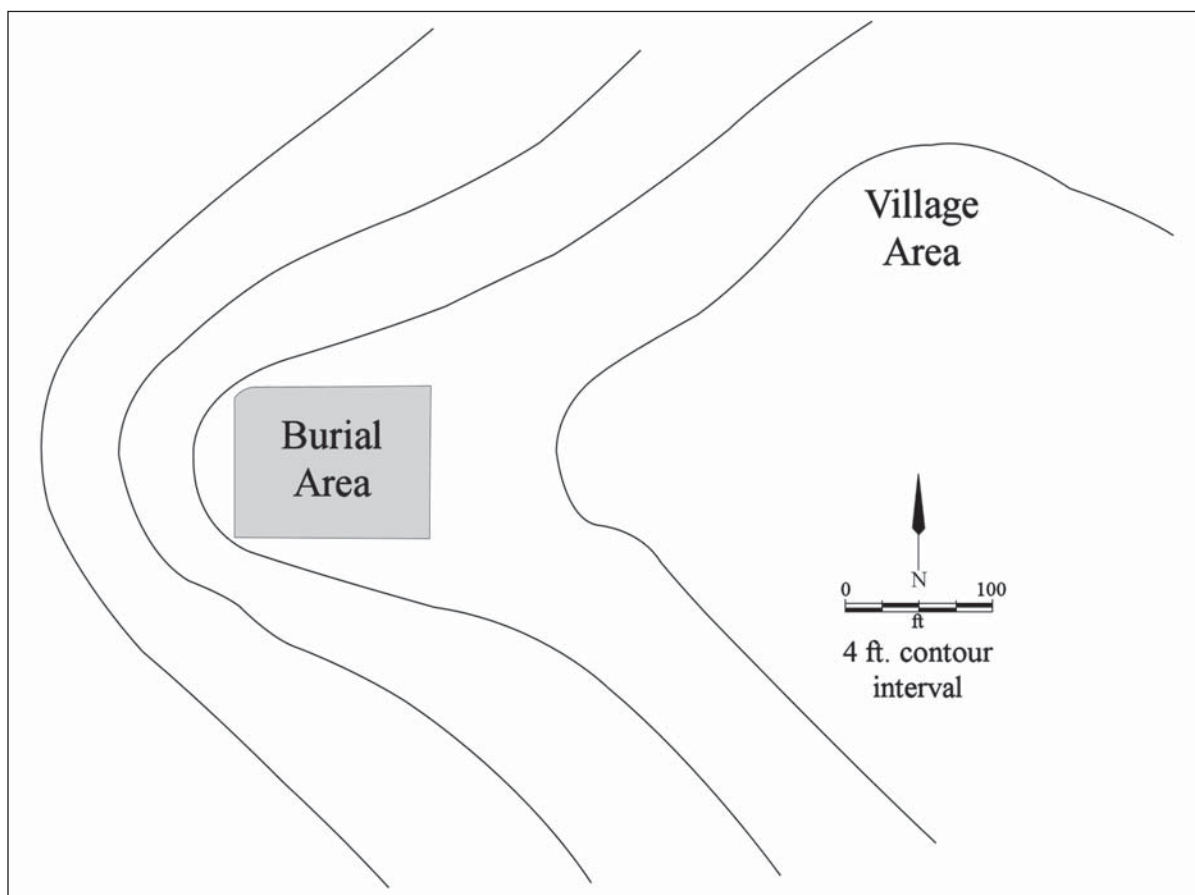


Figure 1. Map of the Millsey Williamson site (41RK3), showing the burial area to the west and the village area to the east.

### Ceramic Sherd Assemblage

The ceramic assemblage from the Millsey Williamson village area has sherds from plain ware, utility ware, and fine ware vessels. More than 90 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels (Table 1). The plain to decorated sherd ratio of this assemblage is 1.62, and utility ware rim and body sherds represent about 88 percent of the decorated sherd total.

**Table 1. Ceramic sherd assemblage from the village area east of the burial area at the Millsey Williamson site.**

Ware	Grog-tempered	Bone-tempered	N
Plain	203	31	234
Utility	123	2	125
Fine	15	3	18
Totals	341	36	377

The utility wares from the Millsey Williamson village are stylistically diverse, with jars being decorated on the rim and/or vessel body with applied, applied-incised, applied-punctated, brushed, brushed-applied-incised, incised, incised-punctated, pinched, and punctated decorative elements (Table 2). Sherds from vessels decorated with incised lines are by far the most commonly represented in the assemblage, including 64 percent of the rims and 58 percent of all the sherds. Other significant decorative methods represented in the utility wares are brushing (10.5 percent), and incised-punctated (11.2 percent). Sherds with applied elements—either as the sole decorative element or in combination with incised, punctated, and brushed-incised elements—comprise 5.6 percent of all the decorated sherds from this part of the site.

**Table 2. Decorative methods and elements in the utility ware sherds from the village area east of the burial area at the Millsey Williamson site.**

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b><i>Applied</i></b>			
straight applied fillet	—	3	3
<b><i>Applied-Incised</i></b>			
straight applied fillet and diagonal incised lines	—	2	2
straight applied ridge and parallel incised lines	—	1	1
<b><i>Applied-Punctated</i></b>			
straight applied fillet and adjacent tool punctated row	—	1	1
<b><i>Brushed</i></b>			
parallel brushing marks	—	15	15
<b><i>Brushed-Applied-Incised</i></b>			
straight applied fillet, curvilinear brushing marks, and diagonal incised lines	—	1	1
<b><i>Incised</i></b>			
broad, straight line	—	5	5

**Table 2. Decorative methods and elements in the utility ware sherds from the village area east of the burial area at the Millsey Williamson site.**

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
cross-hatched lines	—	2	2
curvilinear lines	—	1	1
diagonal lines	5	3	8
diagonal opposed lines	—	4	4
horizontal lines	3*	—	3
horizontal, diagonal, and cross-hatched lines	1	—	1
parallel lines	—	48	48
straight line	—	6	6
vertical and diagonal opposed lines	—	5	5
<b><i>Incised-Punctated</i></b>			
curvilinear incised row filled with tool punctations	—	1	1
diagonal opposed triangles filled with tool punctations	3	1	4
diagonal opposed lines and tool punctated row	—	1	1
horizontal lines, tool punctated row, and vertical panel filled with diagonal lines	—	1	1
horizontal incised panels filled with tool punctations	1	1	2
straight line and adjacent tool punctated zone	—	5	5
vertical and diagonal lines and diagonal-filled tool punctated zone	—	2	2
<b><i>Pinched</i></b>			
straight pinched ridge	—	1	1
<b><i>Punctated</i></b>			
finger nail punctated rows	—	1	1
tool punctated rows	—	1	1
Totals	13	112	125

\*one rim is lip notched

The applied sherds have decorative elements that suggest the applied element was used to divide the vessel body of Pease Brushed-Incised or Reavely Brushed-Incised jars into vertical panels filled with other decorative elements, including diagonal incised lines (Figure 2a) and diagonal incised lines and curvilinear brushing marks (Figure 2b). The brushed sherds in the assemblage are from the body of Bullard Brushed vessels, and the brushing was likely oriented vertically on the vessel.

The incised rim sherds have diagonal, horizontal, and horizontal-diagonal-and cross-hatched zones (see Figure 2c and Table 2). These sherds are likely from both Maydelle Incised and Pease Brushed-Incised jars; one of the horizontal incised rims has lip notching. A number of the incised body sherds are also from Pease Brushed-Incised vessels: they have vertical lines defining panels filled with diagonal opposed incised lines (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 60k).

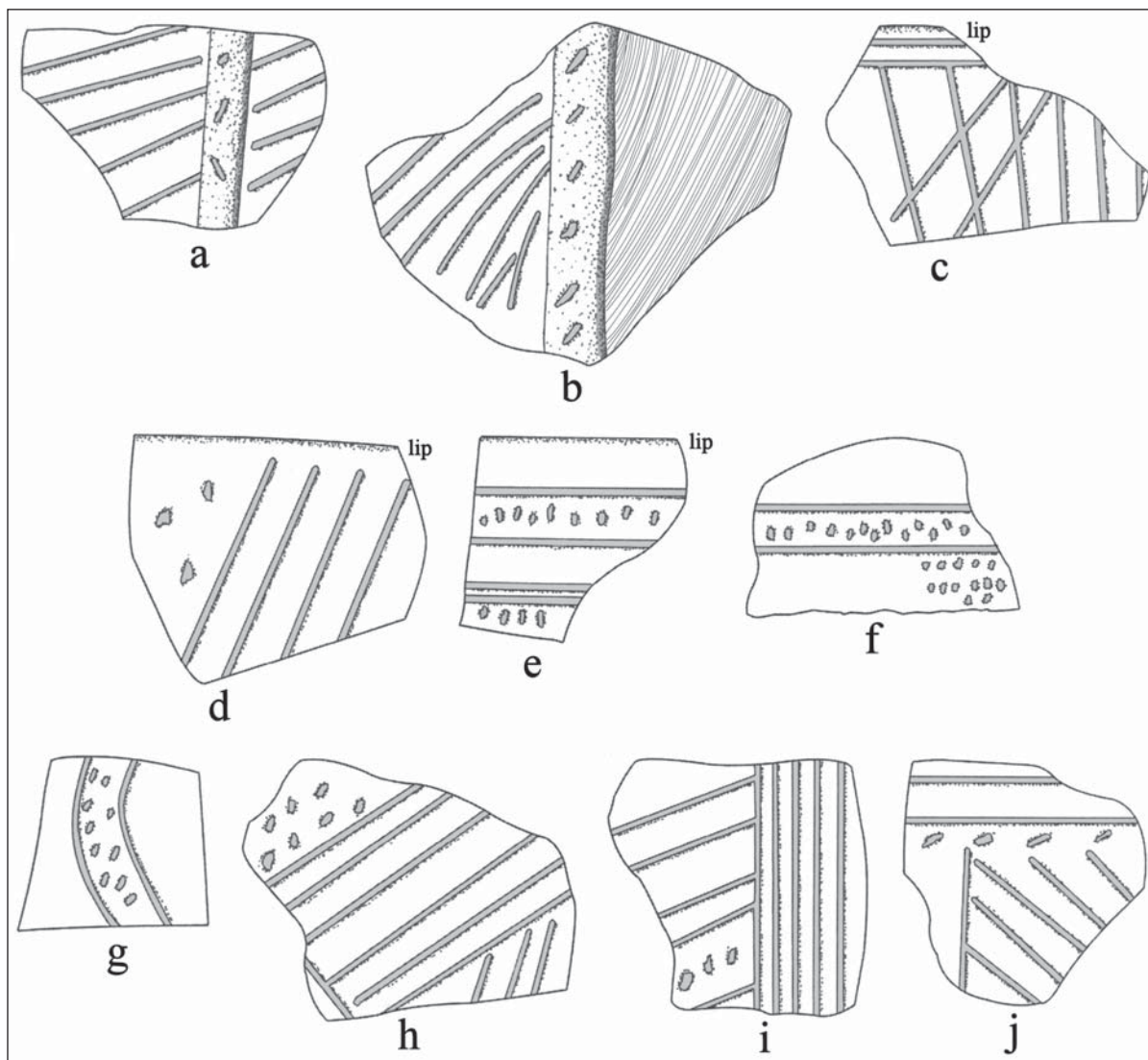


Figure 2. Selected decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the village area at the Millsey Williamson site: a, applied-incised body sherd; b, applied-brushed-incised body sherd; c, incised rim sherd; d-i, incised-punctated rim and body sherds.

Three of the incised-punctated rim sherds and one body sherd are from Maydelle Incised jars that have diagonal opposed incised triangles that are filled with tool punctations (see Figure 2d). Other incised-punctated rim and body sherds have narrow horizontal incised panels filled with tool punctations (see Figure 2e-f), and one other body sherd has a narrow curvilinear incised panels filled with tool punctations (see Figure 2g). Other body sherds have more complex incised-punctated elements featuring diagonal opposed incised lines and tool punctated-filled triangular zones (see Figure 2h), vertical and diagonal incised lines and a diagonal incised panel filled with punctations (see Figure 2i), and a horizontal incised lower rim, a row of tool punctations at the rim-body juncture, and a vertical incised panel filled with diagonal incised lines (see Figure 2j). Such incised-punctated decorative elements are present in the Oak Hill Village (41RK214) utility ware sherd assemblage (Rogers and Perttula 2004:226-232) as well as the ca. A.D. 1340-1450 ceramic assemblage at the Musgano site (41RK19) on Martin Creek (Perttula 2014:16-20).

The one body sherd with a straight pinched ridge may be from a Killough Pinched vessel (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 46). The punctated body sherds have rows of either fingernail or tool punctations (see Table 2).

The fine ware sherds are from engraved or red-slipped vessels (Table 3); the one red-slipped sherd represents 0.7 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage from the village area ceramic sherd sample from the Millsey Williamson site. The engraved and red-slipped sherds are from bowls and carinated bowls, except for one engraved bottle body sherd. The one engraved rim sherd has vertical engraved lines.

**Table 3. Decorative methods and elements in the fine ware sherds from the village area east of the burial area at the Millsey Williamson site.**

Decorative method/ Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b><i>Engraved</i></b>			
cross-hatched triangular zone	—	2	2
horizontal lines	—	2	2
horizontal and curvilinear lines	—	1	1
horizontal-diagonal lines	—	1	1
parallel lines	—	3	3
scroll element	—	1	1
engraved snake element*	—	1	1
straight line	—	2	2
straight and curvilinear lines	—	1	1
straight line and small excised tick marks	—	2	2
vertical lines	1	—	1
<b><i>Red-Slipped</i></b>			
ext. red-slipped	—	1	1
Totals	1	17	18

\*bottle

The most distinctive of the engraved sherds is the one bottle sherd in this assemblage that has part of an cross-hatched engraved rattlesnake motif (Figure 3a). Engraved canebrake rattlesnake motifs on bottles have been found in ceramic assemblages in at least 17 Middle Caddo and Late Caddo period sites in the Big and Little Cypress Creek, mid-Sabine, Red River, and Angelina River basins in East Texas (Walters 2006; Gadus 2013:221). The motif consists of “representational images of snakes with entwined or interlocking tails” (Gadus 2013:221). At the Millsey Williamson site, the bottle sherd has a cross-hatched zone that may represent part of the body of the snake.

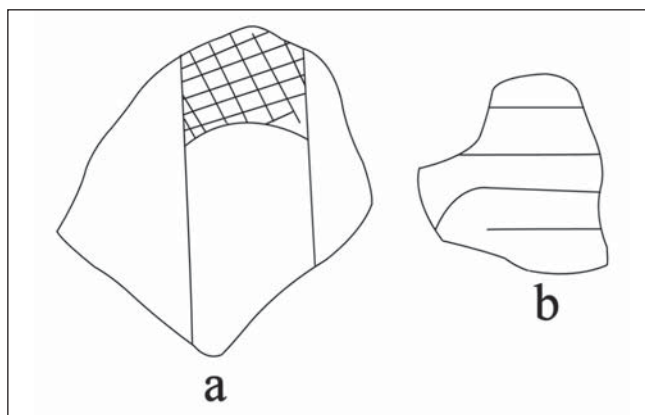


Figure 3. Selected engraved decorative elements on body sherds in the village area at the Millsey Williamson site: a, engraved bottle sherd; b, engraved carinated bowl sherd.



Other engraved body sherds have cross-hatched triangular engraved zones, which are common decorative elements in the Musgano site ceramic assemblage (Perttula 2014:Table 11), as well as one sherd with horizontal and curvilinear lines that are likely part of a horizontal scroll element (see Figure 3b), and a second body sherd with part of a horizontal-slanting scroll element. Two body sherds have a straight line that ends in a small excised tick mark.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Buddy Calvin Jones, and Mr. C. W. Bailey before him, collected a sample of plain and decorated Caddo ceramic vessel sherds from a village area east of the cemetery at the Millsey Williamson site (41RK3) on Martin Creek. This collection of 377 ceramic vessel sherds, now in the holdings of the Gregg County Historical Museum, is primarily from grog-tempered vessels, including plain ware, many utility ware sherds, and fine ware sherds.

The utility ware sherds are dominated by sherds from incised vessels, including Maydelle Incised jars, and Bullard Brushed and Pease Brushed-Incised vessel sherds are also present in the assemblage. Engraved and red-slipped sherds are not common in this ceramic assemblage (12.6 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage). The most distinctive of the engraved sherds from this part of the Millsey Williamson site is a bottle sherd with an engraved rattlesnake motif. In the local area, sherds with this motif have been found at the Oak Hill Village (41RK214) (Rogers and Perttula 2004:Figures 91p and 92), 41RK242 (Perttula 2001), Musgano (41RK19, Perttula 2014), and 41HS74 (Heartfield, Price, and Greene, Inc. 1988:Figure 6–16). These sites have ancestral Caddo components that range from ca. A.D. 1150–1450 in age (Perttula 2014:Table 13). The occurrence of the engraved rattlesnake sherd and the relatively low proportions of brushed sherds in the assemblage (11.2 percent) suggests that this assemblage of sherds from the Millsey Williamson site is contemporaneous with Group II ceramic assemblages in the middle Sabine River basin (see Rogers and Perttula 2004:Table 68), namely from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> to the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century A.D., during the Middle Caddo period. No decorated ceramic sherds from the Historic Nadaco Caddo occupation of the Millsey Williamson site (see Jones 1968; Perttula and Nelson 2007, 2014) are represented in this collection from the village area east of the burial area at the site.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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