



INDEX OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY

Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State

Volume 2016

Article 39

2016

41CE291: An Historic Caddo Settlement in the Neches River Valley in East 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.

41CE291: An Historic Caddo Settlement in the Neches River Valley in East 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/)

41CE291: An Historic Caddo Settlement in the Neches River Valley in East Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

Introduction

Site 41CE291 was visited by H. Perry Newell and A. T. Jackson in March 1940, and they made a small surface collection of artifacts at that time; the surface-collected artifacts are in the collections of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin (TARL). The site is on a large terrace of the Neches River, about 0.4 km east of the George C. Davis site (41CE19); the two sites are divided by a small valley of a southward-flowing spring-fed tributary of the Neches River (Figure 1); Forman Branch flows along the east side of this terrace.



Figure 1. Location of 41CE291 in East Texas.

Newell (in Newell and Krieger [1949:12, fn 26]) noted about the site that “A. T. Jackson and I found some fragments of what may possibly be Spanish bricks in a heavily wooded area near a spring, about a mile east of the mound,” the mound namely being Mound A at the George C. Davis site. Notes by Newell in the site file for 41CE291 provide more detail about the finds there, which he suggests are from a Spanish mission, namely Mission Nuestra Padre San Francisco de Tejas or San Francisco de los Nechas, occupied by Spanish missionaries from 1716-1719 and then again from 1721-1730 (Perttula 1992:Figure 22):

Mission site on hill adjacent to spring (N) and prehistoric village to S of Branch. Mission site contains Spanish sherds and fragments of Spanish brick with a few flint artifacts. Old village some 200 yds. [S] shows no evidence of white contacts but has Indian potsherds and artifacts.

Newell further indicated that there was a shack standing on the mission site, and he provided a more detailed inventory of what he and Jackson noted or collected from the site. This included a few animal bones on the old Indian village site, as well as one end scraper, one side scraper, four projectile points, two plain rim sherds, two gouges, one punctated sherd, 28 combed [brushed] sherds, two Spanish sherds, nine incised sherds, four Spanish bricks, and 30 plain sherds.

In July 1969, George Kegley and Dan Witter surveyed the site while looking for other Caddo settlements that may be associated with the ca. A.D. 900-1300 occupation at the George C. Davis mound center. They noted that there was a stone marker on the terrace marking the site as the location of Mission San Francisco de Tejas or de los Nechas, but the collection of artifacts they gathered from the terrace (which was recorded at the time as 41CE54) did not contain any European artifacts, only Caddo sherds, Late Archaic to Woodland period dart points, lithic flakes, and ground stone tools.

Given that the location of Mission San Francisco de Tejas or de los Nechas has not been definitively located by archaeologists, I wanted to examine the collections gathered by Newell and Jackson in 1940 to determine what evidence they had found of Spanish use of 41CE291. If there were Spanish artifacts from 41CE291, their discovery may be the first real indication that the mission was on this Neches River terrace. At the same time, early 18th century Spanish ceramics (ca. 20 sherds from Puebla Blue on white majolica sherds from several vessels) (Figure 2) and lead balls and lead shot have recently been rediscovered in the collections from the George C. Davis site (see Newell and Krieger 1949:12 and fn 26) from a place several hundred meters south of Mound A at the site, and this area may also be considered a possible location of Mission San Francisco de Tejas.



Figure 2. Puebla Blue on white majolica sherds from the George C. Davis site (41CE19). Image provided by Marybeth Tomka of TARL.

Artifact Collection from 41CE291

The March 1940 artifact collection obtained by Newell and Jackson from 41CE291 does not contain any 18th century Spanish artifacts. There are only mid-19th century sherds in the collection: two body sherds of flow blue whiteware, a rim sherd of Alkaline glaze stone ware, and a rim and body sherd of a brown-slipped stoneware jar. I identified no fragments of brick, Spanish or otherwise, in the small collection.

The collection of ancestral Caddo sherds in the collection from 41CE291 is notable, however, because of the common occurrence of Patton Engraved sherds in the assemblage, a fine ware type found on post-A.D. 1680 Historic Caddo Allen phase sites in the Neches River basin in East Texas (Gilmore 1983; Marceaux 2011; Perttula 1992; Story 1982, 1995; Story and Creel 1982). The Caddo ceramic assemblage is comprised of 77 sherds from plain ware, fine ware, and utility ware vessels (Table 1). About 97 percent of the sherds are from grog-tempered vessels, which is characteristic of Historic Caddo Neche cluster sites (Perttula et al. 2016:Table 17).

Table 1. Ceramic wares in the collection from 41CE291.

| Ware | Grog-tempered | Bone-tempered | N |
|---------|---------------|---------------|----|
| Plain | 18 | - | 18 |
| Fine | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Utility | 49 | 1 | 50 |
| Totals | 75 | 2 | 77 |

The 59 decorated sherds in the 41CE291 assemblage include sherds from fine ware (15.3 percent) and utility ware (84.7 percent) vessels. Eight of the nine fine ware sherds are from Patton Engraved vessels with horizontal and/or vertical engraved lines on rim panels that have small excised and pendant triangular tick marks (Figure 3a-d; see Suhm and Jelks 1962:117). The other engraved sherd is a rim with diagonal engraved lines pitched from right to left on the vessel.

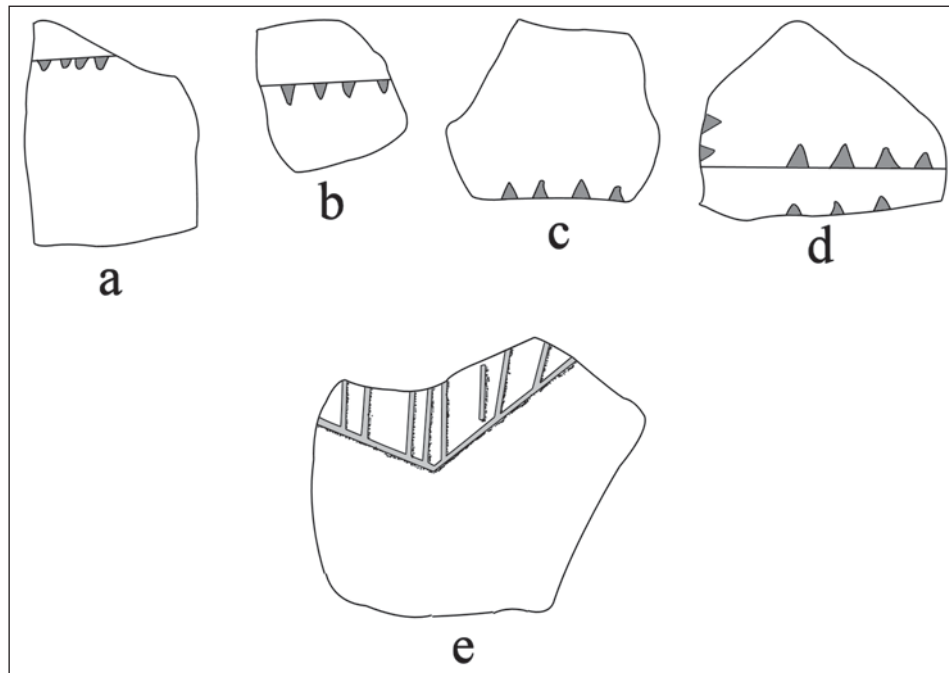


Figure 3. Selected decorated sherds from 41CE291: a-d, Patton Engraved body sherds; e, incised body sherd.

Seventy percent of the utility ware sherds have brushing marks, either as the sole decorative element (n=31, 29 with parallel brushing marks and two with overlapping brushing marks), or in combination with parallel incised lines (n=3), or as a lower rim-body sherd with horizontal brushing on the rim and a row of tool punctations at the rim-body juncture. These sherds are from Bullard Brushed jars.

Three body sherds from 41CE291 have incised decorative elements, one with horizontal and diagonal opposed incised lines, another with opposed incised lines, and a third with a triangular-shaped incised zone filled with vertical incised lines (see Figure 3e). One body sherd has a straight applied fillet decorative element, and the remaining 11 utility ware sherds (22 percent of the utility ware sherd assemblage) have punctated decorative elements. These include a rim sherd and two body sherds with horizontal rows of tool punctations, a large body sherd with separate areas with fingernail and tool punctated rows, and seven body sherds with rows of fingernail punctations.

Lastly, there are four body sherds of Goose Creek Plain, *var. unspecified* in the 41CE291 collection. These sherds are from a Mossy Grove Woodland period (ca. 500 B.C.-A.D. 800) occupation at the site (cf. Story 1990).

Comparisons with other Neche cluster ceramic assemblages along Bowles Creek (see Marceaux 2011; Perttula et al. 2016) with the sherd assemblage at 41CE291 suggests that the latter site comfortably can be included in Group II (Table 2), except for the low B/OWP ratio; 41CE291 has many punctated sherds relative to brushed sherds in the assemblage. The Caddo occupation in the northern part of the George C. Davis site (41CE19) stands out as its own distinct Neche cluster site (see Fields and Thurmond 1980).

Table 2. Ceramic sherd assemblage comparisons of Neche cluster sites, including 41CE291.

| Site | % Grog | % Bone | P/DR | B/PI | B/OWP** |
|------------------|--------|--------|------|------|---------|
| Group I | | | | | |
| 41CE293 | 98.1 | 5.6 | 0.12 | 7.50 | 5.70 |
| 41CE477 | 95.8 | 4.2 | 0.18 | 4.73 | 13.0 |
| 41CE474 | 97.1 | 2.9 | 0.30 | 3.08 | 9.25 |
| Group II | | | | | |
| 41CE48 | 84.2 | 27.7 | 0.31 | 2.43 | 5.48 |
| 41CE475 | 91.2 | 9.2 | 0.34 | 2.55 | 11.3 |
| 41CE20 | 98.4* | 14.3* | 0.40 | 2.07 | 5.0 |
| 41CE476 | 91.2 | 9.2 | 0.45 | 1.77 | 7.0 |
| 41CE291 | 97.4 | 2.6 | 0.30 | 1.94 | 1.84 |
| Group III | | | | | |
| 41CE19, N | N/A | N/A | 0.82 | 0.78 | 1.90 |

P/DR=plain to decorated sherd ratio; B/PI=brushed/plain sherd ratio; B/OWP=brushed/other wet paste sherd ratio

*percentages will total to more than 100 percent because some sherds have more than one kind of temper

**sherds with multiple decorative elements (i.e., brushed-incised or brushed-punctated, etc.) are counted as both brushed and as other wet paste sherds

There are several clear trends in these assemblages (see Table 2), which allows the nine assemblages to be sorted into three groups: (1) as the P/DR decreases from 0.45 (in Group II) to 0.12 (in Group I) from one assemblage to another, the proportion of sherds with bone temper decreases to only between 2.9-5.6 percent in the Group I sites. The one Group III assemblage does not have information available on the use of grog or bone-tempered vessels (see Fields and Thurmond 1980). In the Group II sites, the proportion of bone temper

ranges from 9.2-27.7 percent of the sherds in individual assemblages. Second, as the P/DR ratio decreases, the B/PI ratio increases, such that the Group II sites—with P/DR ratios between 0.31-0.45—have B/PI ratios between 1.77-2.55. Group I sherds have B/PI ratios between 3.08-7.50, with the highest B/PI ratio (7.50) in the assemblage with the lowest P/DR, namely the Brooks Lindsey site (41CE293). The one Group III assemblage has the highest P/DR (0.82) and the lowest B/PI ratio. These differences in the Neche cluster sites likely have temporal differences, given the overall reduction in P/DR in ceramic sherd assemblages in Neches River basin Caddo sites after ca. A.D. 1200, with the Group III site being the oldest, and probably dating from ca. A.D. 1560-1650, given the common occurrence of Poynor Engraved sherds in that assemblage, and the Group I and II sites both dating after ca. A.D. 1650. The Group II sites are slightly older than the Group I sites. These differences may also represent social-ethnic differences in ceramic practices and traditions that existed between Caddo peoples that were living in Neche cluster sites after ca. A.D. 1650.

The identified ceramic types in the different Neche cluster sites form a consistent Allen phase set in both Group I and Group II assemblages, as they are dominated by sherds from Bullard Brushed and Patton Engraved vessels (Table 3). The one Group III assemblage represents a late Frankston phase component with Poynor Engraved sherds and other characteristic Frankston phase ceramic types. Also ubiquitous in the Group I and II assemblages are sherds from Lindsey Grooved vessels; possible Lindsey Grooved sherds in the Group III assemblage from the northern part of the George C. Davis site account for 0.4 percent of the decorated sherds (Fields and Thurmond 1980). Poynor Engraved sherds are present in Group I, II, and III assemblages, as are La Rue Neck Banded sherds, while King Engraved sherds are present in only the Group I and II assemblages. Maydelle Incised and Killough Pinched types are identified in Group II and III assemblages, while Spradley Brushed-Incised sherds have been identified in only one Group II sherd assemblage (Table 3).

Table 3. Identified ceramic types in the Neche cluster sites.

| Site | PA | KE | PO | LG | LNB | MI | BB | KP | SBI |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----|
| Group I | | | | | | | | | |
| 41CE293 | | + | + | + | + | | + | | |
| 41CE477 | + | | | + | | | + | | |
| 41CE474 | + | | + | + | | | + | | |
| Group II | | | | | | | | | |
| 41CE48 | + | | | | + | | + | | |
| 41CE475 | + | | + | + | | + | + | + | + |
| 41CE20 | + | | + | | + | + | + | | |
| 41CE476 | + | + | | + | | | + | | |
| 41CE291 | + | | | | | + | + | | |
| Group III | | | | | | | | | |
| 41CE19, N | | | + | + | + | + | + | + | |

+ = presence; PA = Patton Engraved; KE = King Engraved; PO = Poynor Engraved; LNB = La Rue Neck Banded; MI = Maydelle Incised; BB = Bullard Brushed; KP = Killough Pinched; SBI = Spradley Brushed-Incised

Summary and Conclusions

A surface collection of artifacts from 41CE291, not far east of the George C. Davis site on a terrace of the Neches River, obtained in March 1940 by H. Perry Newell and A. T. Jackson suggested to Newell that the site may be the location of a Spanish mission because he identified two Spanish sherds and four possible pieces of Spanish brick on the terrace north of what he described as an “old Indian village.” My August 2015 re-examination of the TARL artifact collection from the site identified no Spanish brick fragments, and the historic sherds in the collection date to the mid-19th century. The absence of early 18th century Spanish

artifacts in the collections from 41CE291 lessens the likelihood that the site is the location of the 1716-1719, 1721-1730 Mission San Francisco de Tejas or de los Nechas, but the site should not be discounted out of hand as the mission location until it can be re-examined with intensive shovel testing, metal detecting, and remote sensing investigations; hopefully that work can be completed in the near future.

What the re-examination of the 41CE291 Caddo sherd collection indicates is that it was the location of a post-A.D. 1680 Historic Caddo settlement, probably a settlement by the Neche or Nechas; Patton Engraved sherds, the principal Allen phase fine ware ceramic type in the Neches River basin, are common in the 41CE291 collection, and other aspects of the ceramic assemblage are consistent with Neche cluster sites. Perhaps 41CE291 is one of the settlements occupied by a Neches or Nechas Caddo group at the time of the late 17th-early 18th century Spanish colonization of the middle reaches of the Neches River, when several missions were established in this locale: Mission San Francisco de los Tejas (1690-1693), Mission El Santisimo de Nombre Maria (1690-1692), and Mission Nuestra Padre de San Francisco de Tejas or los Nechas (1716-1719, 1721-1730).

Acknowledgments

Thanks, as always, to Marybeth Tomka of TARL for facilitating access to the collections from 41CE291. Lance Trask prepared the figures in this article.

References Cited

- Fields, R. and J. P. Thurmond
1980 *The George C. Davis Site, Cherokee County, Texas: Spring 1980 Archeological Investigations*. Reports of Investigations No. 8. Prewitt and Associates, Inc., Austin.
- Gilmore, K.
1983 *Caddoan Interaction in the Neches Valley, Texas*. Reprints in Anthropology No. 27. J&L Reprint Company, Lincoln.
- Marceaux, P. S.
2011 *The Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Hasinai Caddo: Material Culture and the Course of European Contact*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Newell, H. P and A. D. Krieger
1949 *The George C. Davis Site, Cherokee County, Texas*. Memoir No. 5. Society for American Archaeology, Menasha, Wisconsin.
- Perttula, T. K.
1992 *"The Caddo Nation": Archaeological and Ethnohistoric Perspectives*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Perttula, T. K., K. Stingley, and M. Walters
2016 Historic Caddo Archaeological Sites in Cherokee County, Texas. *Journal of Northeast Texas Archaeology* 65, in press.
- Story, D. A.
1990 Cultural History of the Native Americans. In *The Archeology and Bioarcheology of the Gulf Coastal Plain*, by D. A. Story, J. A. Guy, B. A. Burnett, M. D. Freeman, J. C. Rose, D. G. Steele, B. W. Olive, and K. J. Reinhard, pp. 163-366. Research Series No. 38. 2 Vols. Arkansas Archeological Survey, Fayetteville.
- Story, D. A. (editor)
1982 *The Deshazo Site, Nacogdoches County, Texas, Vol. 1: The Site, Its Setting, Investigations, Cultural Features, Artifacts of Non-Native Manufacture, and Subsistence Remains*. Texas Antiquities Permit Series No. 7. Texas Antiquities Committee, Austin.

1995 *The Deshazo Site, Nacogdoches County, Texas, Vol. 2: Artifacts of Native Manufacture*. Studies in Archaeology 21. Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin.

Story, D. A. and D. G. Creel

1982 The Cultural Setting. In *The Deshazo Site, Nacogdoches County, Texas, Vol. 1*, edited by D. A. Story, pp. 20-34. Texas Antiquities Permit Series No. 7. Texas Antiquities Committee, Austin.

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. Reprinted in 2009, Gustav's Library, Davenport, Iowa.