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## A Titus Phase Midden Mound at the Earl Jones Farm (41WD3) in the Lake Fork Creek Basin, Wood County, Texas

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# A Titus Phase Midden Mound at the Earl Jones Farm (41WD3) in the Lake Fork Creek Basin, Wood County, Texas

*Timothy K. Perttula*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Earl Jones Farm site is one of a number of Late Caddo period, Titus phase (ca. A.D 1430-1680), sites along tributaries of Lake Fork Creek in the upper Sabine River basin in East Texas (Figure 1), nor far from Quitman, the county seat for Wood County. This includes sites such as J. H. Reese (41WD2), L. L. Winterbauer (41WD6), 41WD19, 41WD44, Pine Tree (41WD51), Burks (41WD52), and Steck (41WD529) with habitation features, midden deposits, and family cemeteries (Perttula et al. 1993:Figure 4; Perttula 2005; Perttula and Skiles 2014a, 2014b).

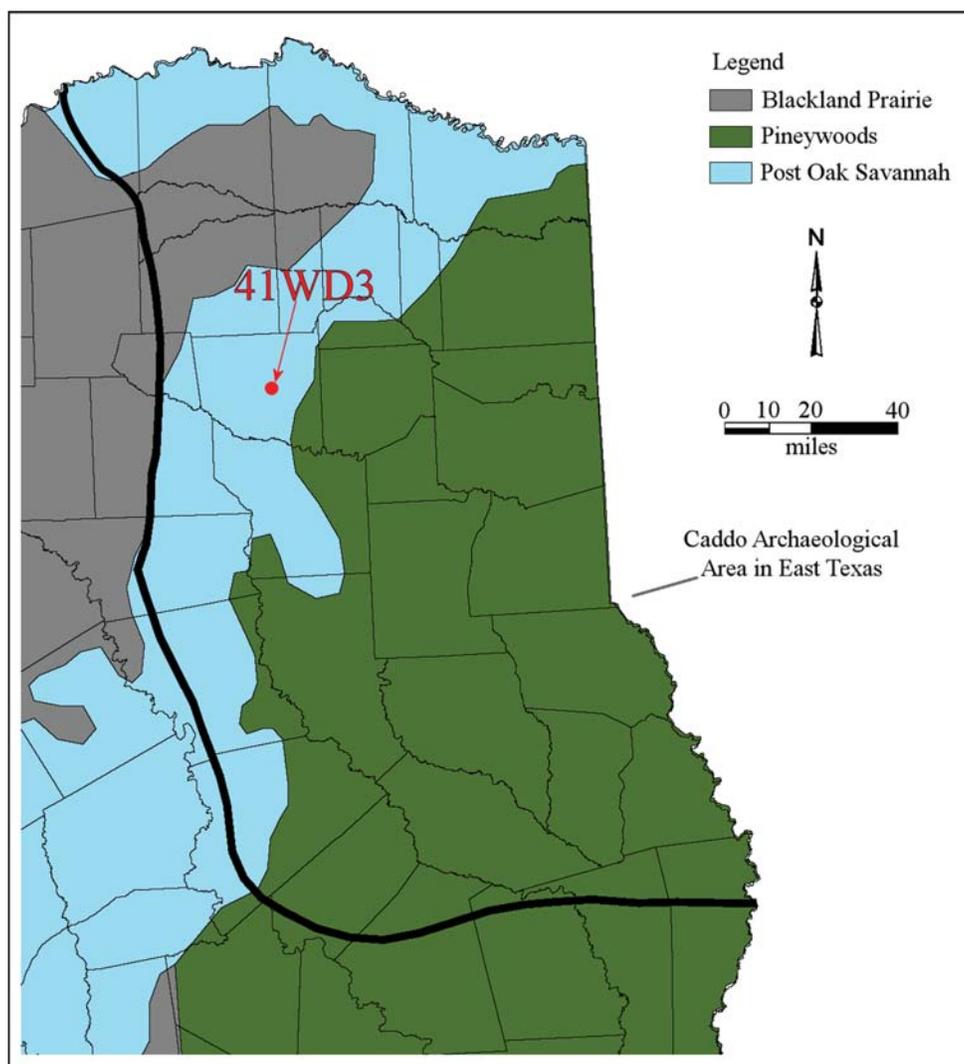


Figure 1. The location of the Earl Jones Farm site in the Post Oak Savannah of East Texas.

### SITE SETTING AND PAST ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Earl Jones Farm site was located and investigated by Wilson and Jackson (1930; see also Reese 1931) in August 1930. The work was done by digging trenches across the mound as “per suggestions of J. E. Pearce” (Wilson and Jackson 1930). It is a midden mound in the uplands on the east side of Muddy Creek, a southern- and westward-flowing tributary to Dry Creek in the Lake Fork Creek basin (Figure 2a); Little Dry Creek is well to the south of the site, and flows west into the Dry Creek basin.

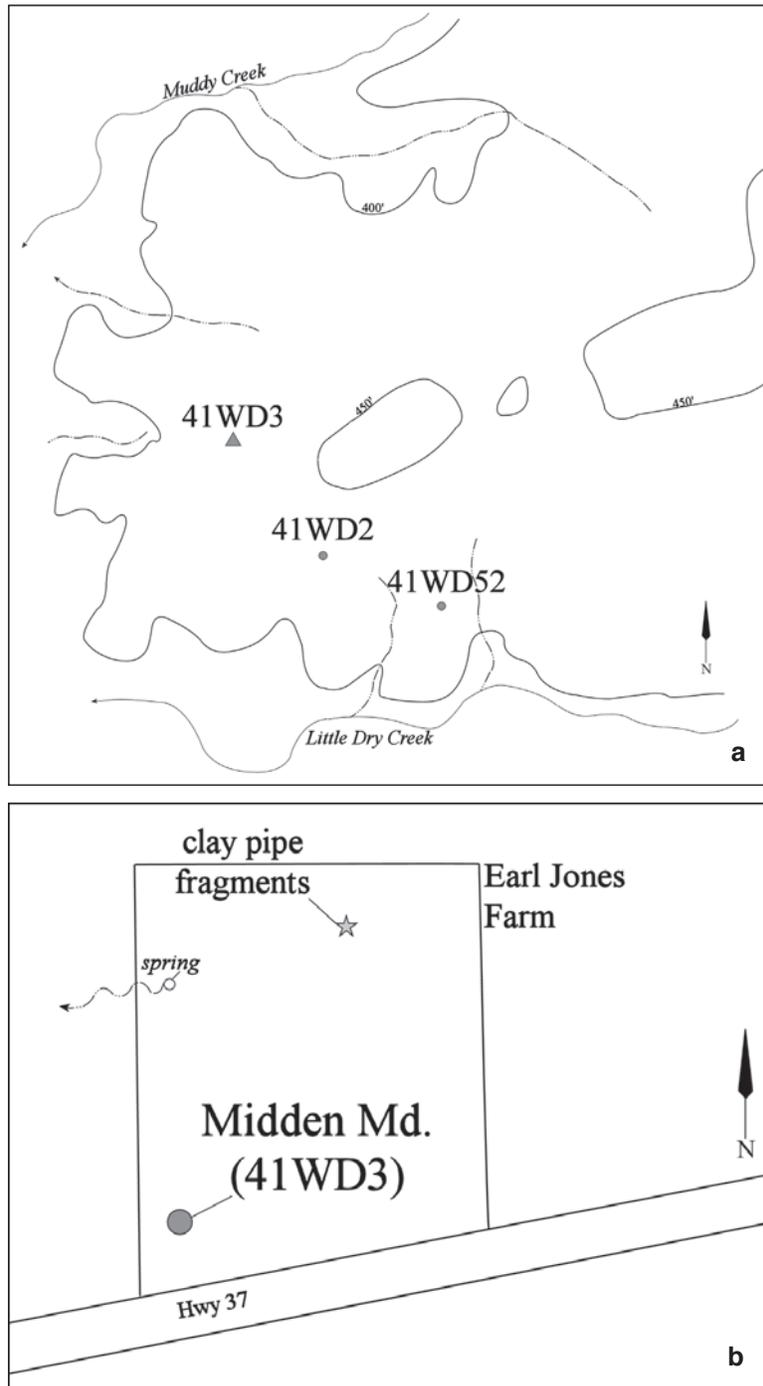


Figure 2. The setting of the Earl Jones Farm site: a, in the Muddy Creek valley; b, on the Earl Jones Farm (after Reese 1931:4).

The site was on farm land owned by Earl Jones (Figure 2b). A small spring-fed tributary to Muddy Creek lay not far to the north of the site, and the J. H. Reese cemetery was about 180 m to the southeast. Ceramic pipe fragments reported by M. M. Reese (1931) to the northeast of the midden mound may mark the location of another ancestral Caddo site, or it may be part of the Earl Jones Farm Caddo settlement.

The midden mound was estimated to be ca. 9.2 m in diameter by Wilson and Jackson (1930) and ca. 0.6 m in height. As a concentrated trash deposit, it contained many ceramic sherds, animal bones, mussel shells, ashes, and charcoal, with most of these remains coming from ca. 15-30 cm bs; a portion of a dog skull—probably the remnants of a dog burial—was found on the southern side of the mound during the excavations. It is likely that there are or were preserved structural features and other evidence of permanent habitation by Caddo peoples around the midden mound, but Wilson and Jackson (1930) did not look for them during their investigations.

### ARTIFACT ASSEMBLAGE

The Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin (TARL) artifact assemblage recovered from the excavations in the midden mound at the Earl Jones Farm site includes ceramic sherds (n=437), one ceramic pipe, one clay plug/labret, six clay coils, two bone ornaments, and animal bones (n=107). The latter included canid, deer, turtle, and one possible bison toe bone (1986 TARL inventory sheets).

#### Ceramic Sherds

The assemblage of ceramic sherds includes 266 plain rim (n=3), body (n=254), and base (n=9) sherds and 171 decorated sherds from both utility ware and fine ware vessels. The sherds are from vessels tempered almost exclusively with grog or crushed sherds: only 0.6 percent of the decorated sherds are from a vessel tempered with burned bone.

The decorated sherds include 110 from utility ware vessels (64 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage), primarily if not exclusively from jars with wet paste decorative elements, and 61 sherds (36 percent of the decorated sherd assemblage) from fine ware bottles and carinated bowls (Table 1). Fine ware vessels have engraved decorative elements as well as a red slip on either one or both vessel surfaces. More than 61 percent of the rims from decorated vessels are from fine ware vessels.

**Table 1. Decorated sherds from the Earl Jones Farm site.**

Decorative Method	Rim	Body	N
<b>Utility Ware</b>			
Appliqued	—	20	20
Brushed	—	36	36
Brushed-Appliqued	—	7	7
Brushed-Incised	—	15	15
Incised	3	3	6
Neck Banded	2	18	20
Punctated, fingernail	2	3	5
Punctated, tool	—	1	1
Subtotal	7	103	110

**Table 1. Decorated sherds from the Earl Jones Farm site, cont.**

Decorative Method	Rim	Body	N
<b>Fine Ware</b>			
Engraved	11	38	49
Engraved-red-slipped	–	3	3
Red-slipped	–	9	9
Subtotal	11	50	61
Totals	18	152	171

The utility ware sherds are primarily from vessels with brushed, neck banded, applied, and brushed-incised decorative methods (Table 2; see also Table 1). The brushed and brushed-incised sherds may be from the body of Bullard Brushed jars (Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 11), and the brushed-applied body sherds (Figure 3e) may be an unrecognized variety of the type or a variety of McKinney Plain (Suhm and Jelks 1962:97). On these sherds, the brushing on the vessel body is divided by sets (probably four around the body) of broad vertical applied ridges.

**Table 2. Decorative elements on sherds from utility ware vessels.**

Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b>Applied</b>			
closely-spaced parallel ridges	–	1	1
diagonal opposed ridges	–	1	1
horizontal and vertical ridges	–	1	1
straight ridge	–	17	17
<b>Brushed</b>			
parallel brushed	–	35	35
vertical-diagonal brushed	–	1	1
<b>Brushed-Applied</b>			
parallel brushed-straight applied ridge	–	7	7
<b>Brushed-Incised</b>			
parallel brushed-incised	–	14	14
parallel brushed zone and parallel lines	–	1	1
<b>Incised</b>			
cross-hatched lines	2	1	3
hatched zone and concentric circles	1	–	1
parallel lines	–	2	2
<b>Neck Banded</b>			
horizontal neck bands	2	18	20

**Table 2. Decorative elements on sherds from utility ware vessels, cont.**

Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b>Punctated</b>			
fingernail punctated rows	2	3	5
tool punctated rows	–	1	1
Totals	7	103	110

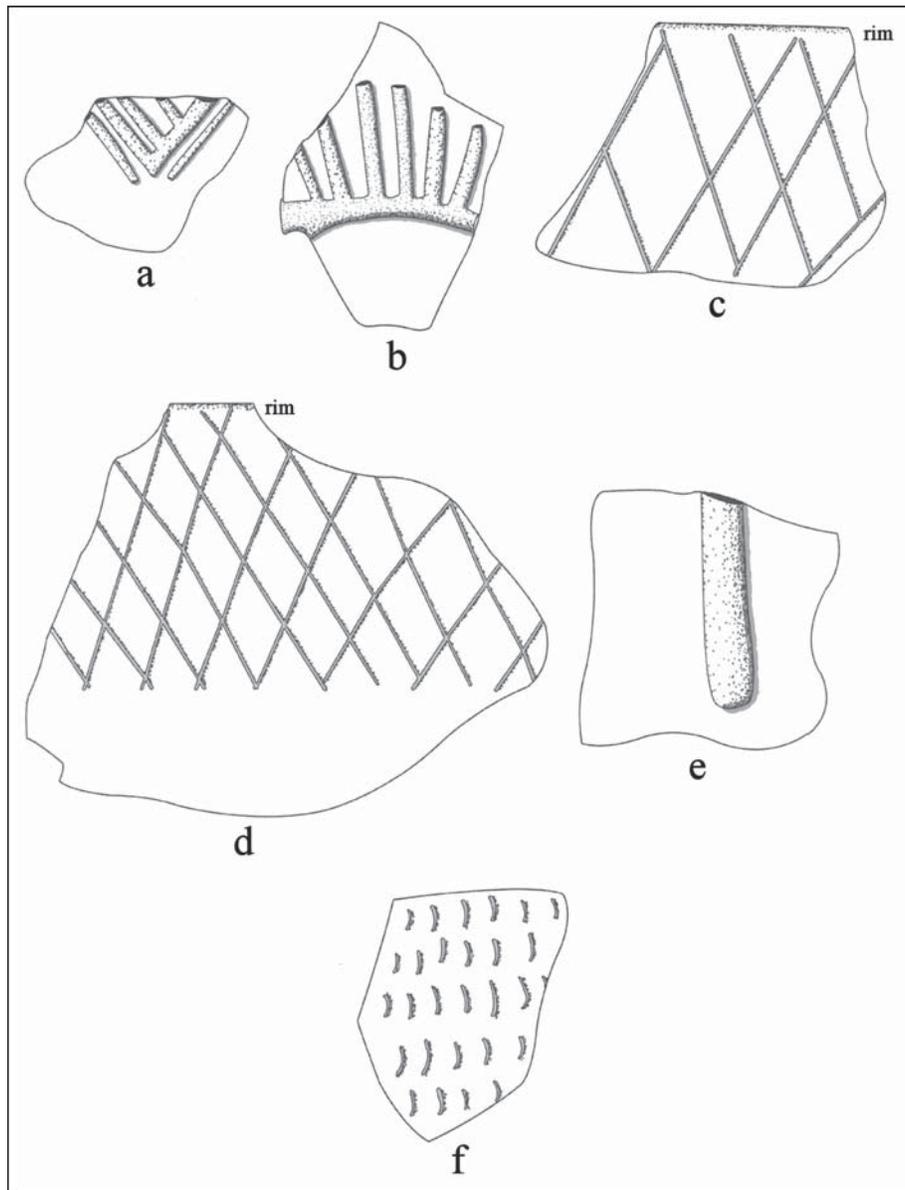


Figure 3. Decorative elements on utility ware sherds from the Earl Jones Farm site: a-b, Harleton Applied body sherds; c-d, cross-hatched incised rim sherds; e, applied body sherd; f, fingernail punctated rim sherd.

Two of the applied body sherds are from Harleton Applied vessels (see Figure 3a-b). These have diagonal opposed and horizontal-vertical applied ridges. Another body sherd has closely-spaced parallel applied ridges, and the remainder of the applied body sherds (with a single straight ridge, likely oriented vertically on the vessel body) are probably from McKinney Plain jars (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 49a-b, f, h-i). All of the neck banded rim and body sherds are from La Rue Neck Banded vessels (Suhm and Jelks 1962:93 and Plate 47). The high frequency of neck banded sherds in the utility wares (18.2 percent) is comparable to other Titus phase ceramic assemblages in the Dry Creek and Little Dry Creek localities (Perttula et al. 1993:165).

Five of the incised rim and body sherds are from Maydelle Incised jars: these sherds have either parallel incised lines or cross-hatched incised lines (see Figure 3c-d). The sherds with punctated decorative elements comprise 5.5 percent of the utility wares (see Table 2). They have rows of either fingernail (see Figure 3f) or tool punctations on the rim and/or the vessel body.

About 15 percent of the fine ware sherds are decorated only with a red slip, including one sherd from a bottle (Table 3). Other Late Caddo period sites where red-slipped sherds are common in assemblages include Titus phase sites in the Big Cypress and upper Sabine River basins and 41HP175 in the upper Sulphur River basin (see Perttula 2015:Table 1).

**Table 3. Decorative elements on sherds from fine ware vessels.**

Decorative element	Rim	Body	N
<b>Engraved</b>			
bracket element (el.)	–	1	1
bracket el. (cross-hatched) and straight line	–	6	6
circle with excised pendant triangles	–	2	2
concentric circles with excised triangles and cross-hatched zone	–	1	1
cross-hatched zones and straight line	–	5	5
curvilinear lines	–	5	5
hatched zones and hatched triangle el.	–	1*	1
horizontal lines	1	2	3
horizontal-diagonal lines	3	1	4
parallel lines	–	6**	6
parallel lines and hatched zone	–	1	1
Ripley Engraved	6	–	6
slanted scroll	1	2	3
straight line	–	8	8
<b>Slipped</b>			
int./ext. red-slipped	–	6	6
int. red-slipped	–	2	2
ext. red-slipped	–	1***	1
Totals	11	50	61

\*includes one sherd with int./ext. red-slipped surfaces

\*\*includes two sherd with red-slipped surface

\*\*\*from a bottle

The remainder of the sherds from fine ware vessels at the Earl Jones Farm site have engraved decorative elements (see Table 3). Most of the decorative elements are from several varieties of Ripley Engraved carinated bowls (Figures 4b-g and 5b-e) and there is also at least one possible Wilder Engraved bottle sherd (Figure 5a). Other engraved sherds have cross-hatched zones and hatched triangles (Figure 4a), hatched zones, horizontal and diagonal engraved lines, and slanting scroll lines (see Table 3).

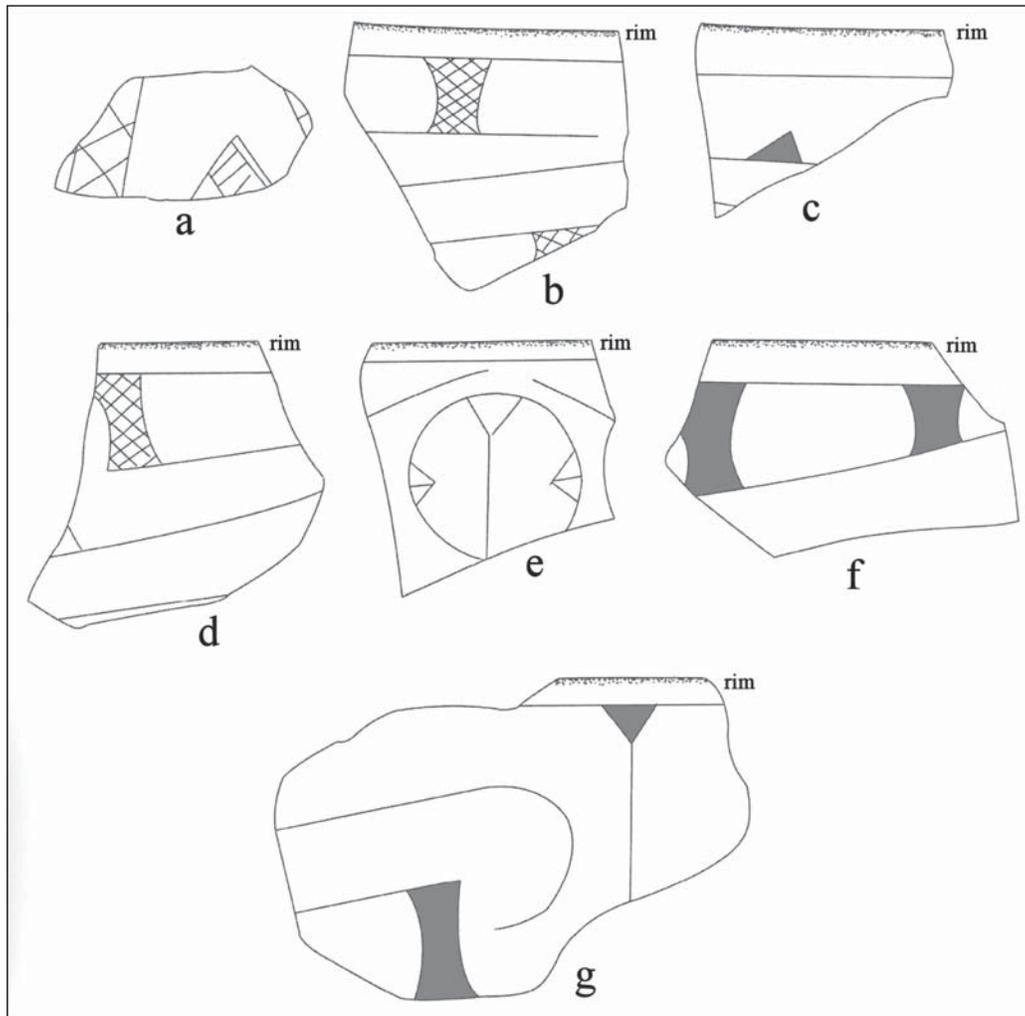


Figure 4. Decorative elements on fine ware sherds from the Earl Jones Farm site: a, engraved and red-slipped body sherd; b-g, rim sherds from Ripley Engraved carinated bowls.

Identified varieties of Ripley Engraved in the Earl Jones Farm ceramic assemblage include *var. Galt* (central circle element) (see Figures 4e and 5b) and *var. Pilgrims* (interlocking horizontal scroll) (see Figure 4g). Other rim sherds have slanted scrolls and either cross-hatched or excised upper and lower bracket elements, and these are probably from either *var. Galt* or *var. Carpenter* carinated bowls (see Figures 4b, d, f and 5e). The absence of the pendant triangle motif (Ripley Engraved, *var. McKinney*), as well as fine ware types such as Keno Trailed or Taylor Engraved, suggests that the Titus phase occupation at the Earl Jones Farm site likely pre-dates ca. A.D. 1550.

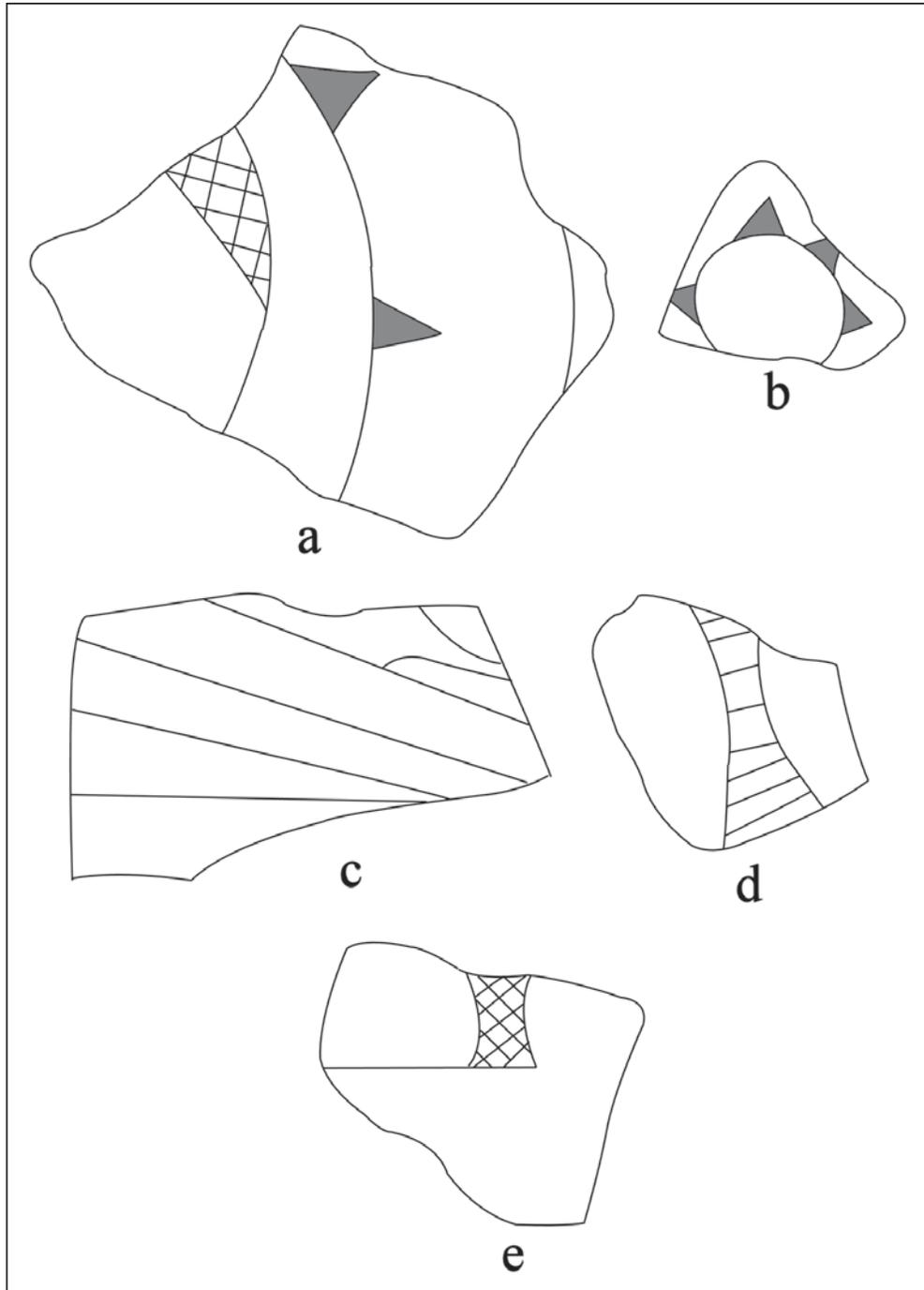


Figure 5. Decorative elements on fine ware body sherds from the Earl Jones Farm site: a, possible Wilder Engraved bottle sherd; b-e, Ripley Engraved body sherds.

### Ceramic Pipe

A plain short-stemmed and short-bowled elbow pipe was found on the surface of the midden mound (Figure 6a). Jackson (1933:71 and Plate 16) has reported on similar plain and decorated elbow pipes in the Quitman area from Late Caddo period Titus phase occupations.

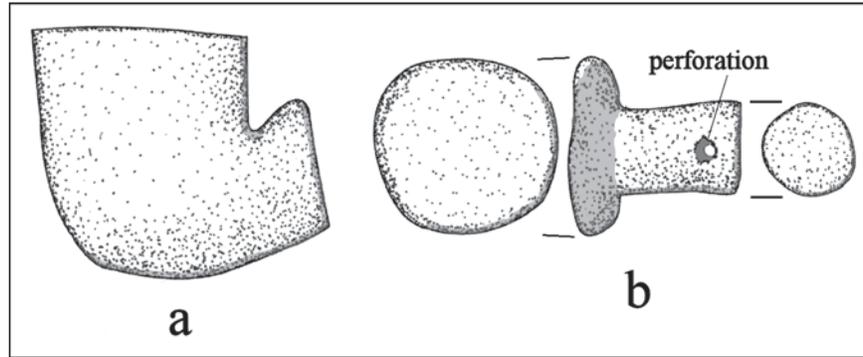


Figure 6. Other ceramic artifacts from the Earl Jones Farm site: a, elbow pipe; b, clay labret.

The pipe is tempered with grog and smoothed on its exterior surface. The pipe is 41.5 mm in height and 39.0 mm in width, with a 22.0 mm diameter at the stem. The short bowl has a 33.0 mm diameter, and the walls of the bowl are 6.2 mm thick.

#### Other Ceramic Artifacts

A clay plug or labret was found in the northern part of the midden mound excavations (see Figure 6b). The clay plug or labret is flat at either end, with 14.5 and 26.0 mm diameter ends. It is 23.0 mm in length and 15.2 mm in width. There is a 2.5 mm perforation near the smaller flat end, so this clay plug or labret would have been suspended by attachment through the perforation.

There are also six elongated clay coil lumps in the assemblage; they were recovered from 0-25 cm bs in the midden excavations. These clay coil lumps range from 28-82 mm in length and 21-34 mm in width.

#### Bone Artifacts

There are two polished bone ornaments in the midden collection; both are made from bird bones and were found on the midden surface. The first is a 83 x 5.6 mm polished bone tube (Figure 7a), while the second is a polished bone bead that is 40.0 mm in length and 10.3 mm in diameter (Figure 7b).

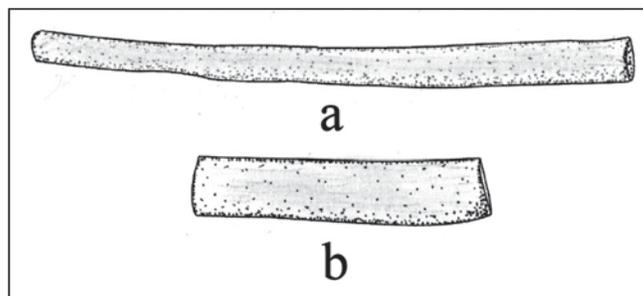


Figure 7. Bone ornaments from the Earl Jones Farm site.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Earl Jones Farm site is a Late Caddo period Titus phase (ca. A.D. 1430-1680) habitation site along a tributary stream in the Lake Fork Creek basin of the East Texas Post Oak Savannah. Titus phase habitation sites with midden mounds and family cemeteries are quite abundant in this part of the Lake Fork Creek basin as well as in adjoining drainages not far to the west (Bruseh and Perttula 1981; Perttula et al. 1993), suggesting a sizeable population of ancestral Caddo farming groups lived in this part of East Texas.

A. M. Wilson and A. T. Jackson investigated the midden mound at the Earl Jones Farm site in 1930. Other than a portion of a canid (dog) burial, the midden mound contained concentrations of ceramic sherds, animal bones, charcoal, and ashes in 0.6 m thick deposits, but no other features. The artifact assemblage recovered from the excavations in the midden mound at the Earl Jones Farm site includes ceramic sherds (n=437), one ceramic elbow pipe, one clay plug/labret, six clay coils, two bone ornaments, and animal bones (n=107) from canid, deer, turtle, and one possible bison toe bone. The ceramic sherds are from grog-tempered plain ware, utility ware, and fine ware, including sherds from Bullard Brushed, Harleton Applied, La Rue Neck Banded, McKinney Plain, and Maydelle Incised utility ware jars, as well as Ripley Engraved and Wilder Engraved fine ware carinated bowls and red-slipped carinated bowls and bottles.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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