



# INDEX OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY

*Open Access Gray Literature from the Lone Star State*

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Volume 2014

Article 51

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2014

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# The Ceramic Sherd Assemblage from the Boatstone Site in Gregg County, Texas

*Timothy K. Perttula*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Boatstone site (GC-50 in Buddy Jones' site numbering system) is one of many Caddo sites that Buddy Jones investigated along the Sabine River and its tributaries in the Longview, Texas, area. In most cases, his investigations at the sites consisted of the surface collection of ceramic and lithic artifacts, and only in rare cases did Jones complete analyses or publications on his investigations (see Jones 1957, 1968). This article discusses the ancestral Caddo ceramic assemblage from the Boatstone site, which is situated near the confluence of Iron Bridge Creek and the Sabine River in southeastern Gregg County in the East Texas Pineywoods (Figure 1). This collection is curated at the Gregg County Historical Museum.

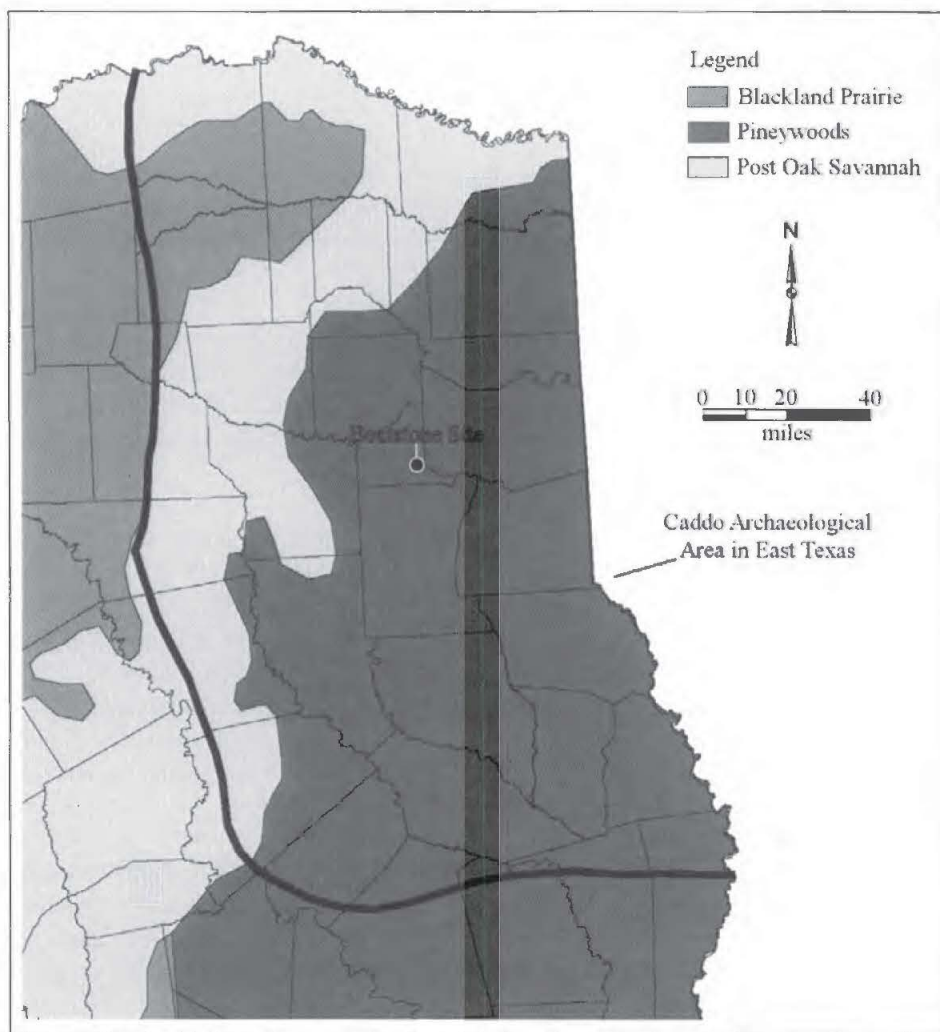


Figure 1. The location of the Boatstone site in Gregg County, in the East Texas Pineywoods. Figure prepared by Lance Trask.

**SHERD ASSEMBLAGE**

The ceramic sherd assemblage from the Boatstone site consists of 203 plain and decorated sherds (Table 1). The plain to decorated sherd ratio for this assemblage is 2.03; the proportion of plain vessels is considerable, as shown by the fact that 36% of the rims are from plain vessels.

**Table 1. Sherd assemblage from the Boatstone site.**

Category	Rim	Body	Base	N
<b>Plain ware</b>	4	118	14*	136
<b>Utility ware</b>				
Brushed	2	33	–	35
Brushed-incised	–	2	–	2
Brushed-incised-punctated	–	1	–	1
Incised	–	5	–	5
Incised-punctated	–	1	–	1
Tool punctated	–	7	–	7
<b>Fine ware</b>				
Engraved	5	11	–	16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>203</b>

\*one of the base sherds is a spindle whorl with a drilled hole

The Boatstone site ceramic assemblage is comprised primarily of sherds from grog-tempered vessels (ca. 72%), but a significant proportion (27.6%) are bone-tempered.. The significant use of bone as a temper is broadly consistent with other Caddo ceramic assemblages in this part of the Sabine River basin (Heartfield, Price, and Greene 1988; Gadus et al. 2006; Dockall et al. 2008; Dockall and Fields 2011; Perttula and Nelson 2013).

The 67 decorated sherds in the Boatstone site ceramic assemblage include both utility wares (76%) and fine wares (24%); 18% of the rims are from utility wares while 45% are from fine wares (see Table 1). Sherds with brushing marks are particularly common in the assemblage, comprising 57% of all the decorated sherds and 75% of the utility wares (see Table 1). The brushed sherds are from utility ware jars with horizontal brushing on the rim and vertical or opposed brushing, or brushed-incised marks, on the vessel body. One body sherd from a Pease Brushed-Incised jar has parallel brushed-incised marks with a row of tool punctates pushed through the brushing. The very high proportion of brushed sherds in the Boatstone ceramic assemblage suggests that the Caddo occupation likely dates primarily after ca. A.D. 1450 (Perttula and Nelson 2013:70).

Other utility wares include body sherds with parallel incised lines (n=5), body sherds with rows of tool and linear tool punctations (n=7), and one incised-punctated sherd from a Pease Brushed-Incised vessel. This sherd has a row of punctations (likely running vertically on the body, creating panels) with diagonal incised lines on either side of the punctated row that are pitched in opposite directions (see Suhm and Jelks 1962:119). These incised line elements would have filled the panels.

Among the fine wares are two rims with horizontal engraved lines, another with vertical engraved lines, and a fourth rim with part of a horizontal and curvilinear scroll divided by a hatched bracket. This



decorative element may be part of the scroll motif seen on certain post-A.D. 1450 Ripley Engraved vessels (cf. Thurmond 1990:Figure 6; Perttula et al. 2012:Figure 5b), although engraved scroll motifs on vessels are not confined to that period in mid-Sabine River Caddo sites.

Engraved body sherds have parallel lines ( $n=3$ ), opposed lines ( $n=2$ ), a straight line ( $n=1$ ), as well as one sherd with sets of closely-spaced vertical lines in panels. One other body sherd has portions of a slanted scroll, and there is another with horizontal and diagonal bands of cross-hatched lines. Finally, one body sherd has portions of an engraved scroll with a scroll fill zone with at least one hatched bracket and closely-spaced parallel engraved lines (Figure 2a-e).

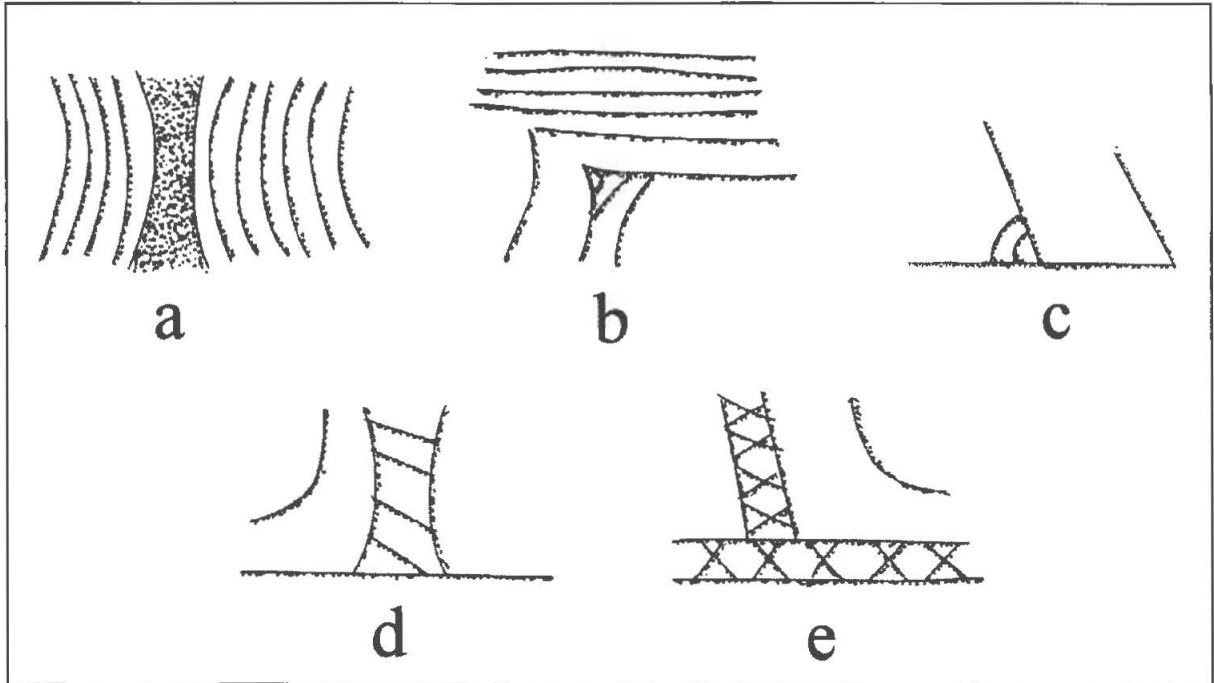


Figure 2. Engraved decorative elements on Boatstone site sherds.

The one remaining engraved sherd from the Boatstone site is from a Holly Fine Engraved vessel. The sherd has sets of concentric circles or spirals with an excised bracket dividing the circles or spirals (see Figure 2a; see also Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 40f). This one sherd suggests some use of the site by Caddo peoples prior to ca. A.D. 1300 (see Story 2000).

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Boatstone site on the Sabine River has a grog- and bone-tempered ceramic assemblage of sherds from plain, utility, and fine ware vessels that were collected from the surface by Buddy Jones in the 1950s. The high proportion of sherds from jars with brushing marks (or brushed-incised and brushed-incised-punctated elements) among the decorated sherds, and several distinctive engraved sherds, suggest that the principal Caddo occupation at the Boatstone site took place after ca. A.D. 1450; one Holly Fine Engraved rim sherd is evidence of the use of the site by Caddo peoples before A.D. 1300. The occupation of the site at this time may mean it was part of the Pine Tree Mound community centered at the Pine Tree Mound site (41HS15) on Potters Creek, ca. 32 km to the east in the Sabine River basin (see Fields and Gadus 2012:Figure 9.10).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Patti Haskins greatly facilitated the study of the ceramic sherds from the Boatstone site in the collections of the Gregg County Historical Museum.

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