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Caddo Ceramic Vessels from the Sipes Hill Site (41RK602) along Martin Creek in the Sabine River Basin in East Texas

Timothy K. Perttula, Robert Z. Selden, Jr., and Bo Nelson

INTRODUCTION

The Sipes Hill site (41RK602) is an ancestral Caddo site on Martin Creek, near Trammel's Trace, about 20 km from its confluence with the Sabine River (Figure 1). It is ca. 2 km downstream from the Martin Lake dam. The Sipes' Home site (41RK603) is about 100 m to the northeast.

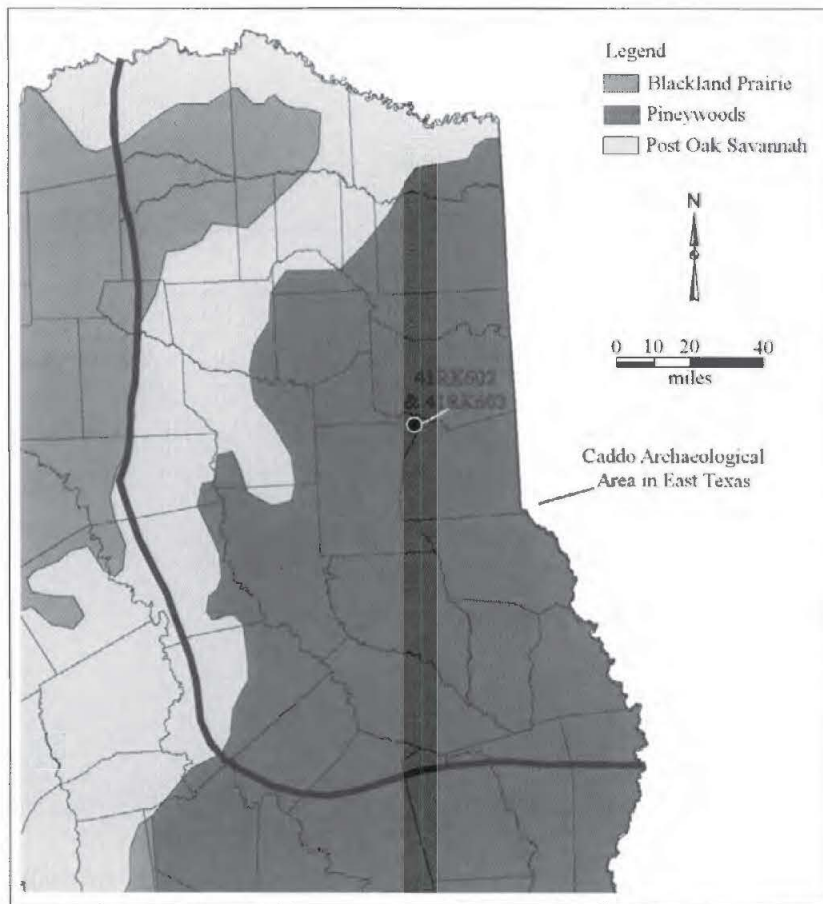


Figure 1. Locations of the Sipes Hill (41RK602) and Sipes' Home (41RK603) sites in East Texas. Figure prepared by Lance Trask.

This site was found and investigated by Buddy C. Jones in the 1950s or early 1960s. He did an unknown amount of excavations at the site, and ended up excavating at least one Caddo burial at the site; there are no available notes concerning these excavations or the burial feature, however. Whole vessels from the Sipes Hill site in the Jones collection are at the Gregg County Historical Museum.

VESSELS

A total of 10 whole or almost whole ceramic vessels have been documented from the Sipes Hill site. The engraved fine ware vessels are typologically identified as Ripley Engraved, a post-A.D. 1450 fine ware in Titus phase communities in both the Big Cypress and Sabine River basins (Fields and Gadus 2012; Pertulla 2012), or at least have stylistic elements commonly seen on Ripley Engraved in the mid-Sabine River basin. This suggests that the Sipes Hill site has a Late Caddo period component (ca. A.D. 1450-1680) that is part of the Pine Tree Mound community (Fields and Gadus 2012:Figure 9.10).

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1715

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Jar

RIM AND LIP FORM: Everted rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: F (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light reddish-brown; fire clouds on the rim

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire clouds on the body and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM):
rim, 4.2 mm; body, 6.3 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: none

HEIGHT (IN CM): 14.4

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 18.8

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM):
18.2

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE:
6.1; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 1.6

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The rim is decorated with horizontal brushing marks as well as two rows of linear tool punctates pushed through the brushing; the punctated rows are under the lip and at the rim-body juncture. The vessel body is divided into seven vertical panels by vertical rows of tool punctates that extend to the base. The panels are filled with vertical brushing marks that also extend to the vessel base (Figure 2).

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Pease Brushed-Incised



Figure 2. Pease Brushed-Incised jar from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1716

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Jar

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: B (fired and cooled in a reducing environment)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 6.9 mm; body, 10.2 mm; base, 11.0 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed on the rim

HEIGHT (IN CM): 4.4

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 8.4

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 8.8

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: N/A; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 0.22

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The vessel rim is plain, but the body has horizontal brushing marks.

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Unidentified utility ware

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1717

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Carinated bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and a rounded lip

CORE COLOR: F (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 6.1 mm; body, 4.9 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed on the rim

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

HEIGHT (IN CM): N/A; rim height is 2.2 cm

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 10.0

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): N/A

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: N/A

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): N/A

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): Plain

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Unidentified plain ware

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1718

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Carinated bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and a rounded, exterior folded lip

CORE COLOR: G (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: grayish-brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 4.2 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed on the body

HEIGHT (IN CM): 6.7

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 16.1

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 14.4

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: 6.7; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 0.65

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The rim has a series of eight horizontal rows of circular tool punctates. The rows are divided into four rim panels by four sets of vertical punctated rows. One set has 10 vertical punctated rows, another has six sets of punctated rows, a third has four punctated rows, and the fourth divider has three vertical punctated rows (Figure 3).

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Unidentified utility ware

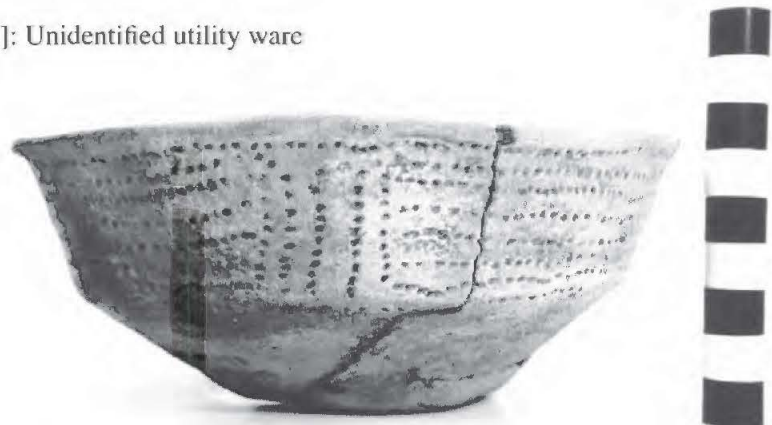


Figure 3. Punctated carinated bowl from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1719

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Compound bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Everted rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: F (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire cloud on the base

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 4.2 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

HEIGHT (IN CM): 7.9

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 18.1

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 16.6

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: 6.7; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 1.1

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The upper rim panel is plain, but the lower rim panel has a number of nested negative S or SZ engraved elements—executed both sideways and vertically—outlined by excised triangle elements (Figure 4). There are also oval-shaped engraved elements and a hooked arm element with a single excised pendant triangle on the outer part of the hooked arm.

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: red in engraved lines

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: cf. Ripley Engraved, *var. unspecified*

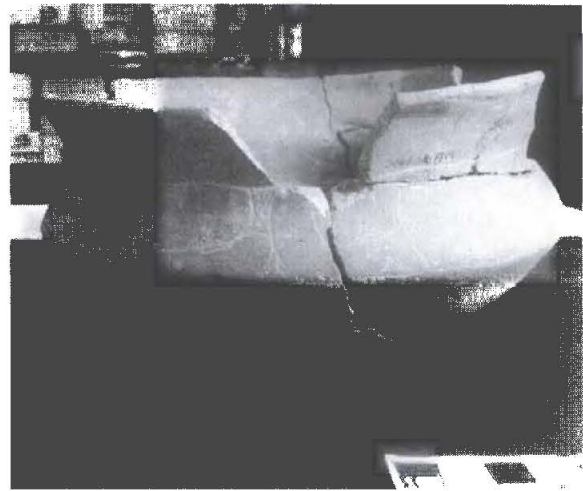


Figure 4. cf. Ripley Engraved, *var. unspecified* compound bowl from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1720

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog and hematite

VESSEL FORM: Carinated bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: F (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark yellowish-brown

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark yellowish-brown

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 5.9 mm; body, 6.4 mm; base, 7.4 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: none

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

HEIGHT (IN CM): 8.9

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 14.0

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 14.0

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: 8.0; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 0.75

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): Plain (Figure 5)

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Unidentified plain ware



Figure 5. Plain carinated bowl from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1721

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Compound bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Everted rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: H (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark yellowish-brown

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark grayish-brown

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 4.6 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: burnished

HEIGHT (IN CM): 9.0

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 21.2

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 20.4

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: 8.9; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 1.5



Figure 6. cf. Ripley Engraved, *var. unspecified* compound bowl from the Sipes Hill site.

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The upper rim panel has three horizontal engraved lines. The lower rim panel has an engraved slanted scroll and circle/rectangular panel motif each alternately repeated two times around the vessel. The central circles or rectangular panel have smaller swastika in circle elements. The circles and panels are surrounded by closely-spaced vertical engraved lines, as do the upper and lower scroll fill zones. The scroll fill zones also have small sideways engraved brackets and single vertical engraved lines dividing open space between the closely-spaced vertical engraved lines (Figures 6 and 7a).

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: cf. Ripley Engraved, *var. unspecified*

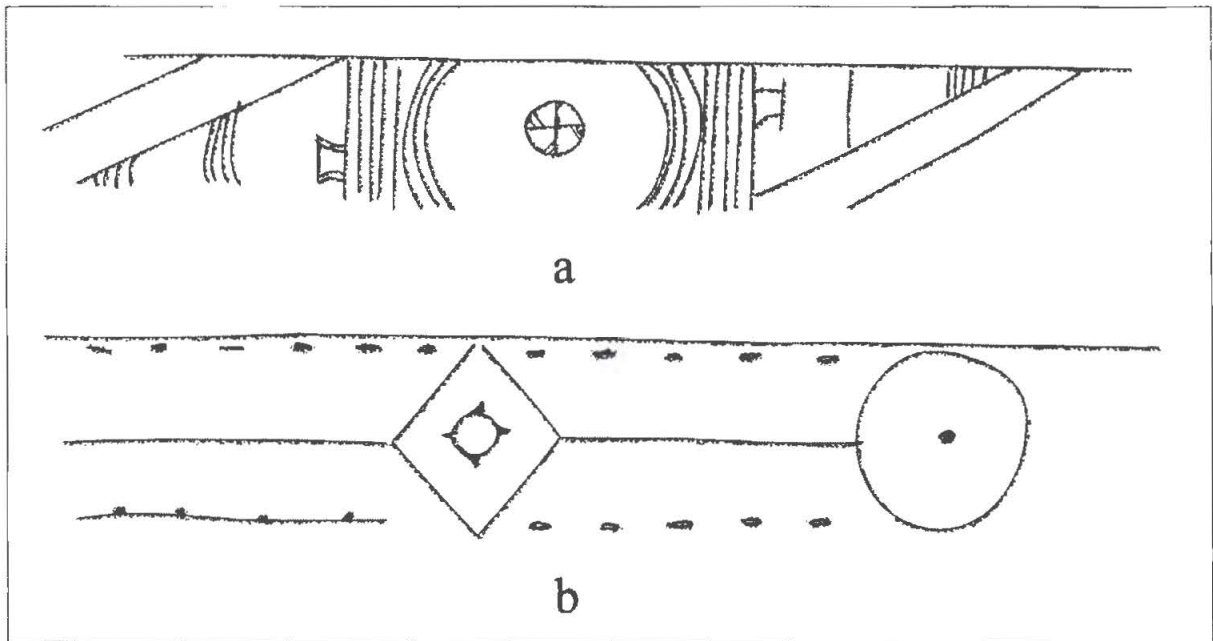


Figure 7. Drawings of engraved motifs of selected Sipes Hill vessels: a, 2003.08.1721; b, 2003.08.1722.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1722

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog and bone

VESSEL FORM: Carinated bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and rounded, exterior folded lip

CORE COLOR: G (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark grayish-brown

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark yellowish-brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 4.9 mm; body, 5.1 mm; base, 5.1 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: burnished

HEIGHT (IN CM): 6.4

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 16.0

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK
(IN CM): 15.8

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF
BASE: N/A

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 0.59

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The rim panel has a horizontal scroll line with central diamond and circle elements; these elements alternately repeat two times around the vessel. The central diamond element has a smaller and centrally-placed negative oval with excised rays, while the central circle element has a central excised dot. Above and below the scroll lines are excised dashes or small excised pendant triangles (Figures 7b and 8). There is also an interior horizontal engraved line at the vessel carination.

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Ripley Engraved, *var. McKinney*



Figure 8. Ripley Engraved, *var. McKinney* carinated bowl rim sherds from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1723

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Jar

RIM AND LIP FORM: Direct rim and rounded lip

CORE COLOR: H (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark yellowish-brown

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: dark grayish-brown; organic residue on the rim

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 6.7 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: none

HEIGHT (IN CM): N/A

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 18.0

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK
(IN CM): 17.9

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF
BASE: N/A

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): N/A

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The rim is decorated with horizontal brushing marks, and there are two rows of tool punctations on the rim. One row of punctates is under the lip and the other is at the rim-body juncture (Figure 9).

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: none

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: Unidentified utility ware



Figure 9. Brushed-punctated jar rim from the Sipes Hill site.

SITE NAME OR SITE NUMBER: Sipes Hill

VESSEL NO.: 2003.08.1724

NON-PLASTICS AND PASTE: grog

VESSEL FORM: Compound bowl

RIM AND LIP FORM: Everted rim and a rounded lip

CORE COLOR: F (fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air)

INTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire cloud on the base

EXTERIOR SURFACE COLOR: light brown; fire clouds on the rim, body, and base

WALL THICKNESS (RIM, BODY, AND BASE IN MM): rim, 5.8 mm; body, 6.3 mm; base, 8.9 mm

INTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

EXTERIOR SURFACE TREATMENT: smoothed

HEIGHT (IN CM): 13.5

ORIFICE DIAMETER (IN CM): 25.7

DIAMETER AT BOTTOM OF RIM OR NECK (IN CM): 23.0

BASE DIAMETER (IN CM) AND SHAPE OF BASE: 5.1; circular and flat

ESTIMATED VOLUME (IN LITERS): 2.8

DECORATION (INCLUDING MOTIF AND ELEMENTS WHEN APPARENT): The upper rim panel of this vessel is plain, but the lower rim panel has a slanted scroll and semi-circle engraved motif repeated four times around the vessel. The slanted scrolls meet with upper and lower concentric semi-circles (each with four semi-circles), and there are large excised triangle elements at the juncture of the scrolls and semi-circles. There are short vertical and diagonal hatched lines on either side of the slanted scrolls, as well as a central scroll line.

PIGMENT USE AND LOCATION ON VESSEL: white in the engraved lines

TYPE AND VARIETY [IF KNOWN]: cf. Ripley Engraved, *var. unspecified*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The 10 documented ceramic vessels from the Sipes Hill site include two plain vessels, four utility ware vessels, and four fine ware vessels. All of the vessels are tempered with grog, but two of them (20%) also have either burned bone or crushed hematite added to the paste. The vessels have been uniformly fired in a low oxygen or reducing environment, but 90% of them were subsequently cooled in the open air, leaving a thin oxidized surface on one or both vessel cores.

The plain vessels from the Sipes Hill site are small carinated bowls. The utility ware vessels are small to medium-sized jars (n=3) and a carinated bowl. They are decorated with brushed and/or punctated elements, and the jars include one Pease Brushed-Incised vessel. The fine wares are small to medium-sized Ripley Engraved carinated and compound bowls. One is a Ripley Engraved, *var. McKinney* vessel with excised pendant triangles and dashes: the pendant triangle motif (Turner 1978; Thurmond 1990:Figure 6; Perttula et al. 2012:Figure 5). The design elements and motifs on the Sipes Hill vessels are consistent with other Titus phase funerary wares from the mid-Sabine River basin (see Fields and Gadus 2012).

This pendant triangle Ripley Engraved motif is thought to be common only in later post-A.D. 1550 Titus phase sites where it is part of the ceramic repertoire of local communities. However, no bowls with the traditional pendant triangle motif are present at the Pine Tree Mound site itself (Fields and Gadus 2012:674), calling into question the community affiliation of the Sipes Hill site, even though it falls within the defined boundaries of the Pine Tree Mound community (Fields and Gadus 2012:Figure 9.10).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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