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Timothy K. Perttula

INTRODUCTION

The Tom Hanks site (41CP239) is one of a number of Late Caddo, Titus phase (ca. A.D. 1430-1680) mound sites in the Big Cypress Creek basin "heartland." It is situated along an unnamed eastern-flowing tributary to Big Cypress Creek, between Walkers Creek to the north and Dry Creek to the south (Figure 1). Robert L. Turner, Jr. found and reported the site in 1990, and obtained a small surface collection. The artifacts from this surface collection are the subject of this article.

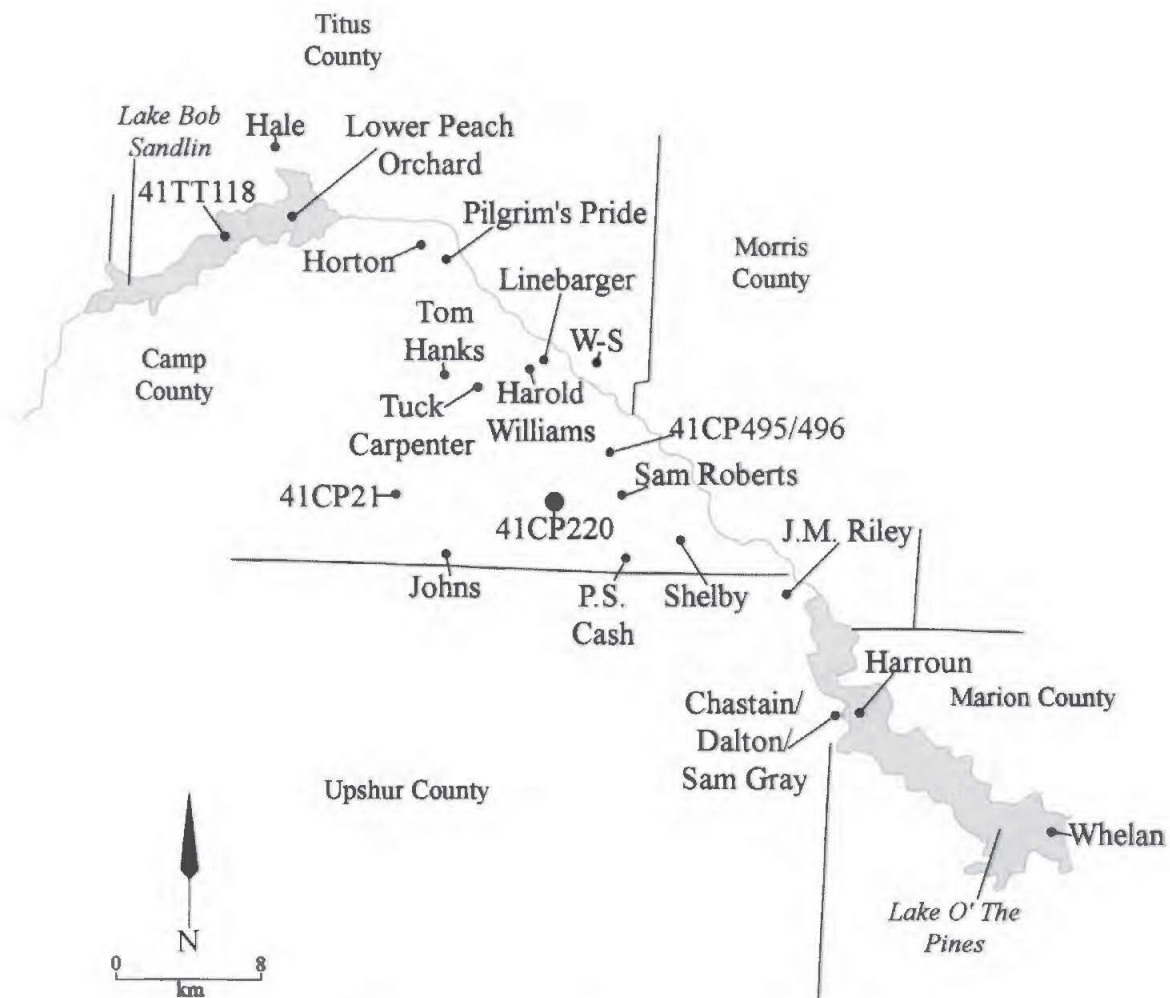


Figure 1. Location of the Tom Hanks mound site in the Big Cypress Creek basin in Camp County, Texas.

According to Perttula (2012:381-388 and Figure 13-2), there are 12 known Titus phase mound sites in the Big Cypress Creek basin. Most of these mound sites have only one constructed mound, although the Tom Hanks site has two mounds, and the Harroun (41UR10) and Whelan (41MR2) sites have four small earthen mounds. These mounds were generally built over the burned remains of important structures used by the social and political elite in different Titus phase political communities in the basin.

SITE SETTING

The Tom Hanks site is on the crest of an upland landform (370 feet amsl) south of an unnamed and intermittent tributary that flows generally eastward to Big Cypress Creek. Big Cypress Creek lies about 2 km to the east. The site is in a cleared pasture with several constructed chicken houses (Figure 2).

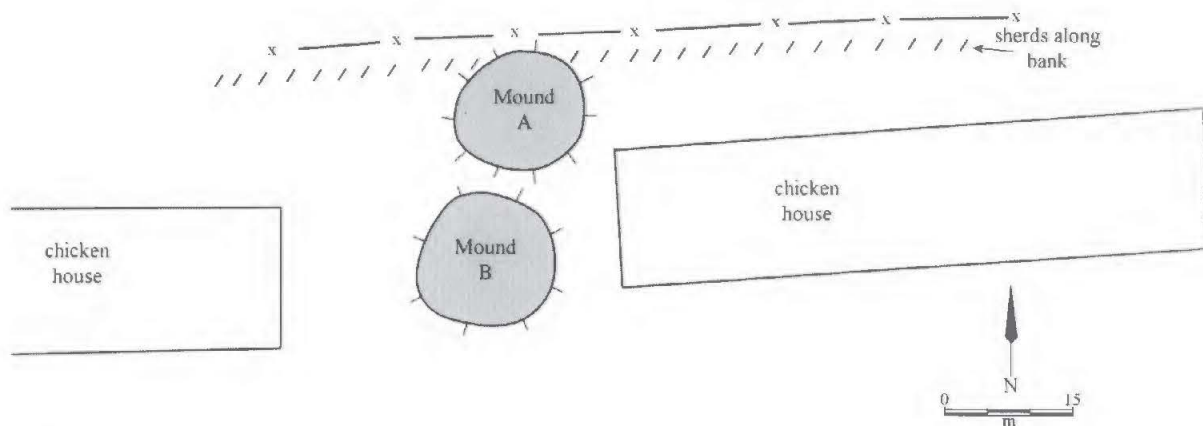


Figure 2. Map of the Tom Hanks site.

The two constructed mounds (Mounds A and B) are side-by-side on the landform, and are 12.2-13.7 m in diameter and 1.2 m in height (see Figure 2). When Turner located the site, the mounds were visible, and there were also numerous Caddo artifacts observed along a cut bank created by bulldozing just north of Mound A (see Figure 2). No archaeological investigations were conducted in the two mounds before they were scraped away during chicken house construction.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts collected from the Tom Hanks site include animal bone, daub, lithic debris, and a variety of plain and decorated Caddo ceramic sherds (n=304). There are also two late 19th century artifacts in the collection.

Animal Bone

There is a single piece of burned animal bone in the Tom Hanks site collection.

Daub

The collection contains small to large pieces of daub (n=9). This suggests that there is a burned ancestral Caddo house structure on the site, perhaps under one or both of the two mounds.

Lithic Debris

Both pieces of local quartzite lithic debris are non-cortical and non-heat-treated flakes.

Plain Ceramic Sherds

The plain sherds (n=140) include three rims, 130 body sherds, and seven base sherds. The plain to decorated sherd ratio for the assemblage from the site is 0.85, consistent with a Late Caddo ceramic assemblage in the Big Cypress Creek basin. The plain sherds are primarily from grog-tempered vessels (87%), but 13% of the sherds have burned bone temper.

Decorated Ceramic Sherds

The 164 decorated sherds are from utility ware (n=126, 77%) and fine ware (n=38, 23%) vessels (Table 1). Approximately 62% of the rims in the assemblage are from utility ware vessels (jars, primarily), followed by plain wares (23%), and fine wares (15%); the plain ware and fine ware sherds are bowls, carinated bowls, compound bowls, and bottles. These values provide some idea of the relative proportion of the different wares in the overall assemblage.

Table 1. Decorated sherds in the Tom Hanks site ceramic assemblage.

| Decorative Method | No. | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----|------------|
| Fine wares | | |
| Engraved | 37 | 22.6 |
| Red-slipped | 1 | 0.6 |
| Utility wares | | |
| Appliqued | 1 | 0.6 |
| Appliqued-incised-brushed | 1 | 0.6 |
| Brushed | 79 | 48.2 |
| Brushed-appliqued | 3 | 1.8 |
| Brushed-incised | 12 | 7.3 |
| Brushed-punctated | 2 | 1.2 |
| Incised | 16 | 9.8 |
| Incised-appliqued | 1 | 0.6 |
| Incised-appliqued-punctated | 1 | 0.6 |
| Incised-punctated | 2 | 1.2 |
| Neck Banded | 3 | 1.8 |
| Punctated | 5 | 3.0 |
| Totals | 164 | 100.0 |

FINE WARES

The fine wares at the Tom Hanks site include sherds from engraved carinated bowls, compound bowls, and bottles (Figure 3b-i) as well as one bowl or carinated bowl sherd with a red ochre-rich slip on both interior and exterior vessel surfaces (Figure 3a). As previously mentioned, these comprise 23% of the decorated sherds in the site's ceramic assemblage.

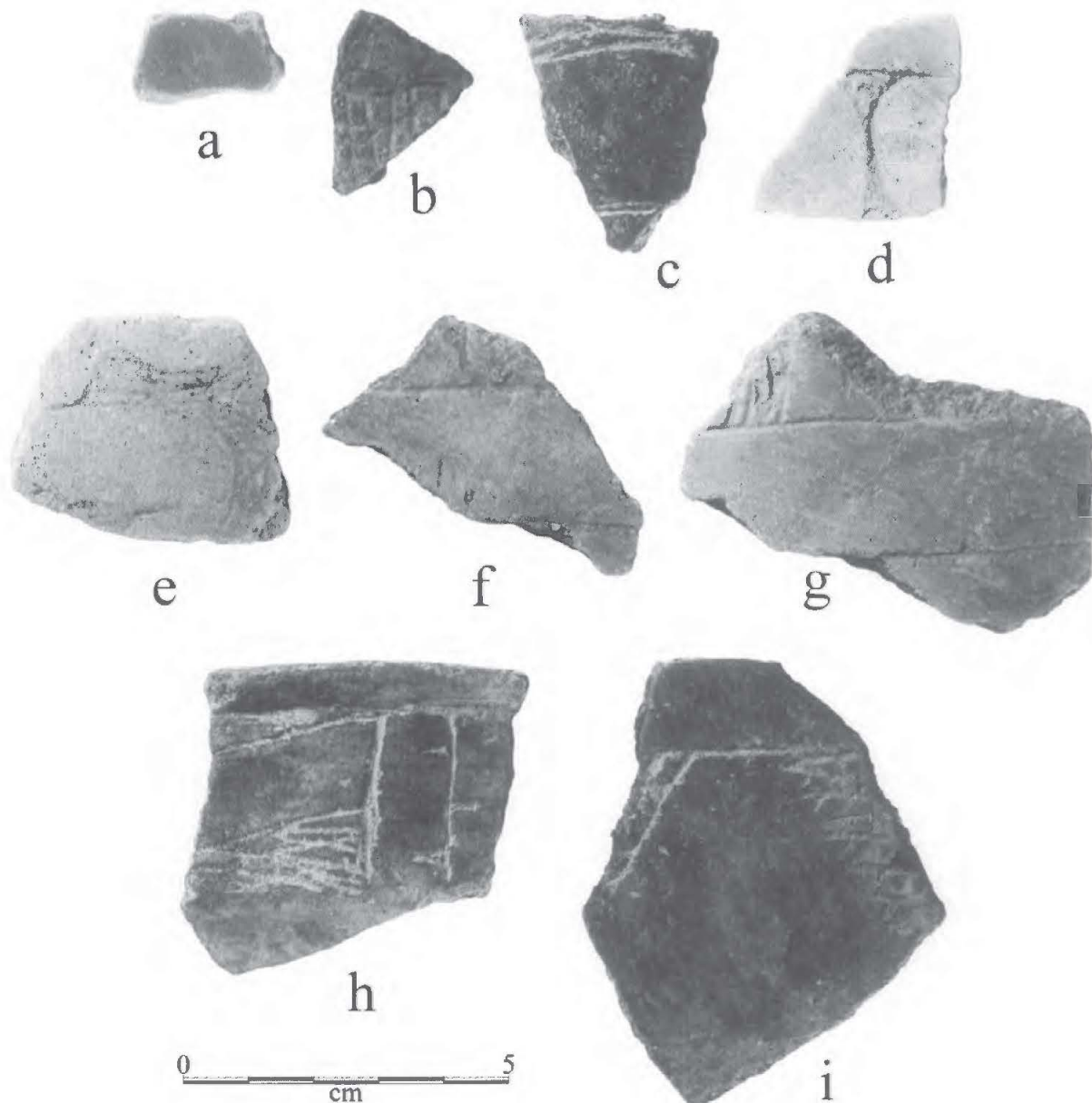


Figure 3. Engraved and red-slipped fine ware sherds from the Tom Hanks site: a, red-slipped body sherd; b, cross-hatched engraved zone; c, curvilinear lines, Bottle; d, bracket/scroll divider; e, scroll and circle element; f-g, compound bowl sherds with horizontal engraved lines and hatched zone; h, Ripley Engraved rim; i, cross-hatched and hatched elements.

The engraved bottle sherds (n=6) from the site have curvilinear engraved lines (see Figure 3c), straight lines (n=2), a straight line with excised rays (n=1, probably from a Ripley Engraved bottle, see Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 65f, h), a V-shaped element (n=1), and a circular element with an internal straight engraved line. This latter sherd is also from a Ripley Engraved bottle.

One engraved sherd from a short-rimmed carinated bowl has horizontal lines and a circular element. This sherd is likely from a Simms Engraved vessel, based on the distinctive short rim (cf. Suhm and Jelks 1962:Plate 71a-d, f). The other identifiable fine ware type in the Tom Hanks ceramic assemblage is Ripley Engraved. Ripley Engraved sherds include a rim with a continuous scroll (i.e., lacks a central element, see Figure 3h), and body sherds with scroll (see Figure 3d), scroll and circle (see Figure 3e), and circle (n=3) elements. Another Ripley Engraved sherd is from the rim of a vessel with parallel engraved lines and excised pendant triangles, while another sherd from the rim panel of a Ripley Engraved carinated bowl has portions of a cross-hatched bracket and a horizontal scroll.

There are a number of carinated bowl sherds that have stylistically undiagnostic geometric engraved elements. These include diagonal engraved lines on a rim (n=1), parallel lines (n=2), opposed engraved lines (n=2), and a single straight line on body sherds (n=5). One body sherd has a curvilinear engraved line, three others have cross-hatched engraved zones (see Figure 3b), and one has both hatched and cross-hatched zones (see Figure 3i).

Compound bowl sherds are represented by seven sherds from upper and/or lower panels of these large vessels. Two have widely-spaced horizontal engraved lines and an associated hatched zone (see Figure 3f-g), while the five other compound bowl sherds simply have one or two widely-spaced horizontal engraved lines (likely on the upper panel of vessels).

UTILITY WARES

The utility ware sherds in the Tom Hanks ceramic assemblage are dominated by sherds from vessels with brushed decorative elements, either as the only means of decoration (62.7% of the utility wares, see Table 1), or in combination with applied (1.8%), applied-incised (0.6%), incised (7.3%), or punctated (1.2%) elements. Taken together, 77% of the utility wares from the site have brushed decorative elements, and 59% of all the decorated sherds in the site collection have brushed decorative elements.

Incised body sherds from Maydelle Incised jars comprise 12.7% of the utility wares in the Tom Hanks ceramic assemblage. These sherds have cross-hatched (n=1, Figure 4b), parallel (n=11, Figure 4a, c), opposed (n=2), and straight (n=2) lines.

Only two sherds have incised-punctated decorative elements. The first is a lower rim-body sherd with horizontal incised lines on the rim and a row of tool punctates at the rim-body juncture (see Figure 4d), while the second is a Maydelle Incised rim with a diagonal incised line (likely forming a triangular element) and a tool punctated-filled zone (Figure 5c).

The few punctated sherds have rows of tool punctates under the vessel lip (see Figure 5b, n=1) and on the body (see Figure 5a, n=1), and one rim sherd has a row of circular punctations under the lip. Two body sherds have only a single tool punctate.

There are three body sherds from La Rue Neck Banded jars in the Tom Hanks site ceramic assemblage. They have parallel neck bands on the rim and upper part of the vessel (Figure 6a-c).

The one applied sherd is a body sherd with a straight applied fillet (Figure 7f). Another body sherd has a straight applied ridge with diagonal incised lines on the applied element (Figure 7a). Three applied body sherds also have brushing marks: one with a straight applied ridge and parallel brushing, a

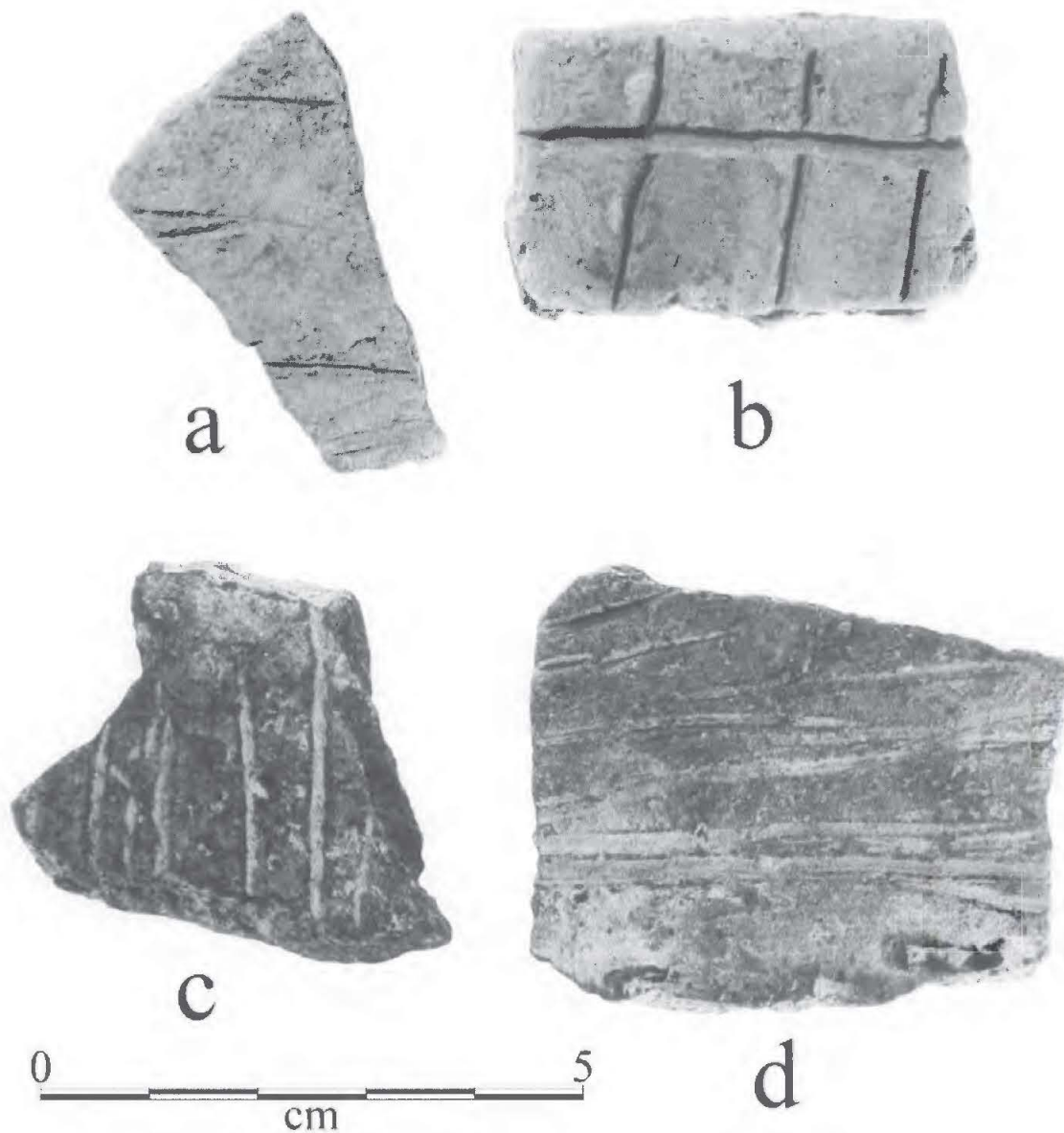


Figure 4. Incised and incised-punctated sherds: a, c, parallel incised lines; b, cross-hatched lines; d, horizontal incised lines on lower rim above row of tool punctates.

Harleton Applied sherd with a V-shaped applied ridge and vertical brushing marks, and a third with a straight applied fillet and parallel brushing (Figure 7e).

One distinctive rim has vertical incised lines on either side of a vertical applied fillet; there is also a tool punctated row under the vessel lip (see Figure 7c). Another body sherd has parallel applied ridges with parallel incised lines between the ridges, and there is an opposing area with parallel brushing marks (see Figure 7d).

Sherds from the site with only brushing include both rim and body sherds from jars. These jars, probably from Bullard Brushed vessels, have horizontal brushing on the rim (n=3, Figure 8a) and diagonal brushing on the rim (n=1, Figure 8f), and horizontal (n=1), parallel (n=73, likely the brushing is oriented vertically, Figure 8b-e), opposed (n=1), and overlapping (n=1) brushed marks on the vessel body.

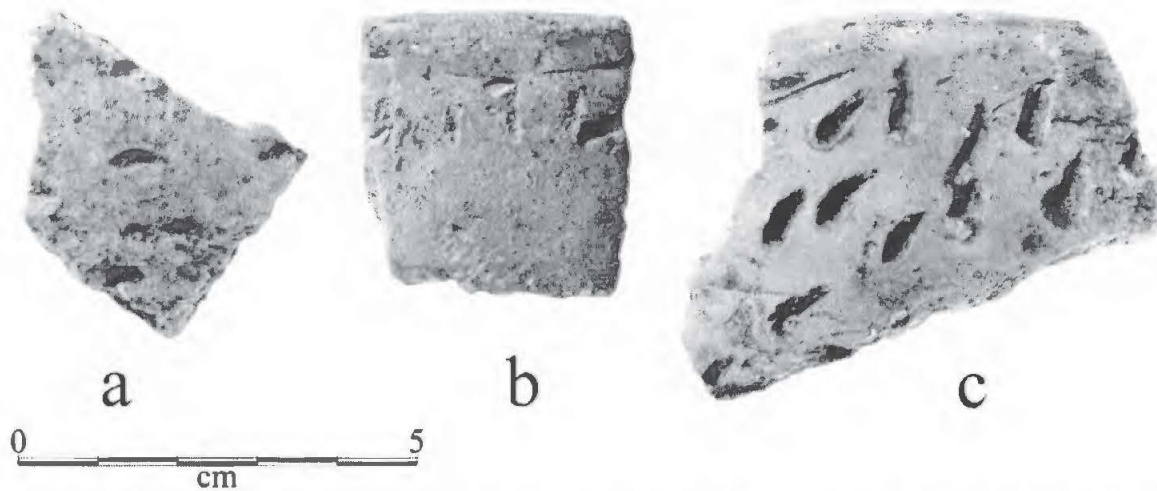


Figure 5. Punctated and incised-punctated sherds: a, tool punctated rows; b, tool punctated row under lip; c, diagonal incised and tool punctated-filled zone.

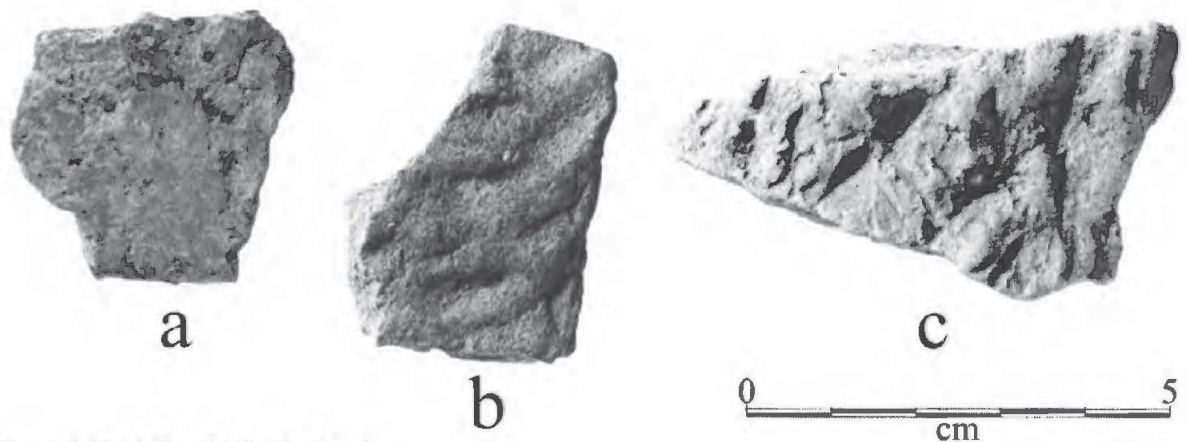


Figure 6. Neck Banded body sherds.

There are 12 brushed-incised body sherds in the utility wares. Nine have parallel brushing marks and incised lines, one has parallel incised lines and opposed brushing marks, another has diagonal and horizontal incised lines and diagonal brushing marks, and the last sherd has overlapping brushed marks and incised lines. The two brushed-punctated sherds comprise 1.6% of the utility wares at the site. One rim has horizontal brushing marks with a tool punctated row pushed through the brushing, while a body sherd has parallel and opposed brushing marks with a tool punctated row pushed through the brushing (see Figure 7b).

Late 19th Century Artifacts in the Collection

The late 19th century artifacts from the Tom Hanks site include one brown lead-glazed stoneware sherd that was popular in East Texas between ca. 1870-1900 (see Lebo 1987), along with an iron button. The button, likely from a set of overalls, is stamped with "ATLANTA M.L. & CO." along one side of its outer perimeter.

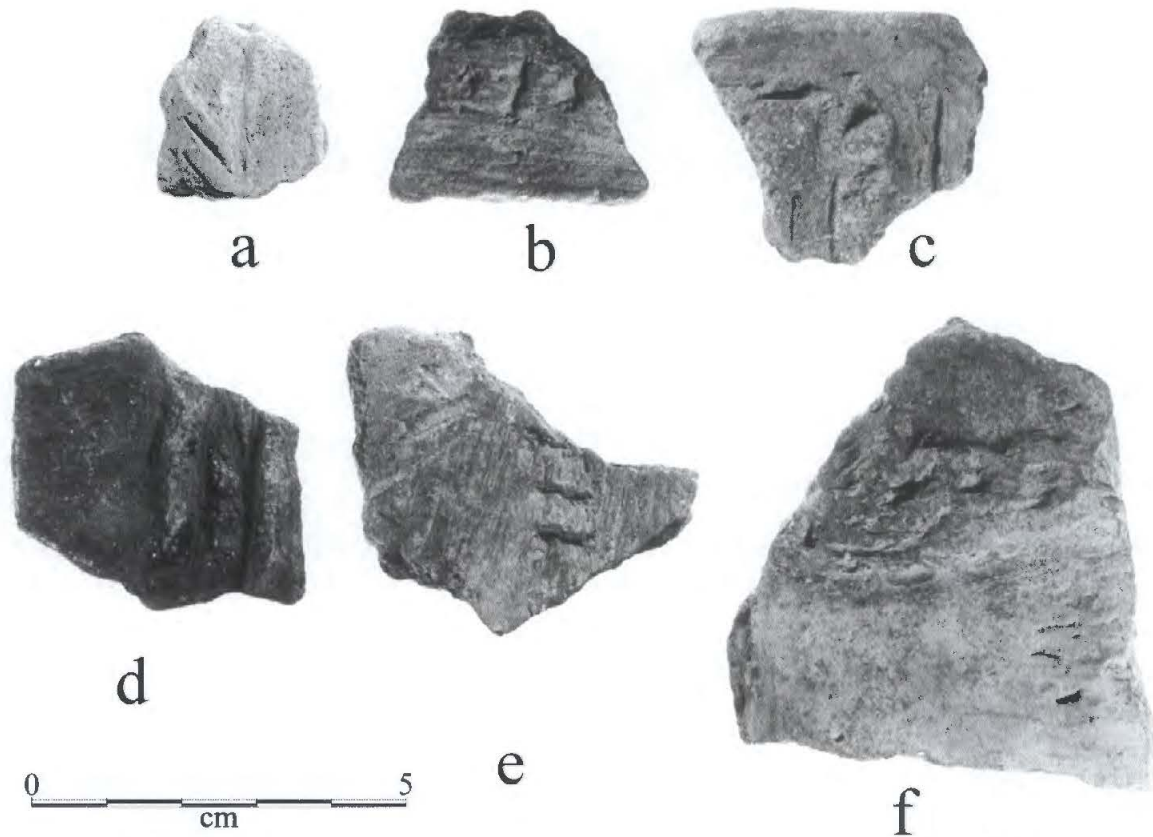


Figure 7. Various utility wares in the Tom Hanks site ceramic assemblage: a, straight applied ridge with diagonal incised lines on the applied element; b, parallel and opposed brushed and tool punctated row through the brushing; c, vertical incised lines-vertical applied fillet-tool punctated row under lip; d, parallel applied ridges-parallel incised lines between ridges-opposed brushed; e, straight applied fillet and parallel brushed; f, straight applied fillet.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Tom Hanks site (41CP239) is a Late Caddo, Titus phase (ca. A.D. 1430-1680) mound center in the mid-reaches of the Big Cypress Creek basin. This site has two small earthen mounds that probably capped important structures of the political elite that had been burned before they were buried with several feet of sediments that marked their place in the community. There are several other Titus phase mound sites and large community cemeteries in this part of the Big Cypress Creek basin, including mounds at the Pilgrim's Pride (41CP304) and Tiddle Lake (41CP246) sites and community cemeteries at the Harold Williams (41CP10), Tuck Carpenter (41CP5), and W-S (41TT741) sites (Perttula 2012:369 and Figure 13-2).

Robert L. Turner, Jr. obtained a small surface collection of Titus phase artifacts from a disturbed area not far to the north of the mounds. The assemblage is comprised of ceramic sherds from plain ware, utility ware, and fine ware vessels. The sherds are primarily from vessels tempered with grog, but bone-tempered vessels are also present. The greatest part of the ceramic assemblage is from utility wares, particularly utility wares with brushing marks on the rim and/or body of cooking and storage jars. But there are a wide range of decorative methods and elements in the utility wares besides brushing, including applied, brushed-incised, brushed-punctated, incised, neck banded, and punctated decorations in various rim and body combinations. Identified utility wares at the Tom Hanks site include Bullard Brushed, Harleton Applied, La Rue Neck Banded, and Maydelle Incised. The fine ware sherds (engraved and red-slipped) are from carinated bowls, compound bowls, and bottles, primarily from Ripley Engraved vessels, the most common fine ware in Titus

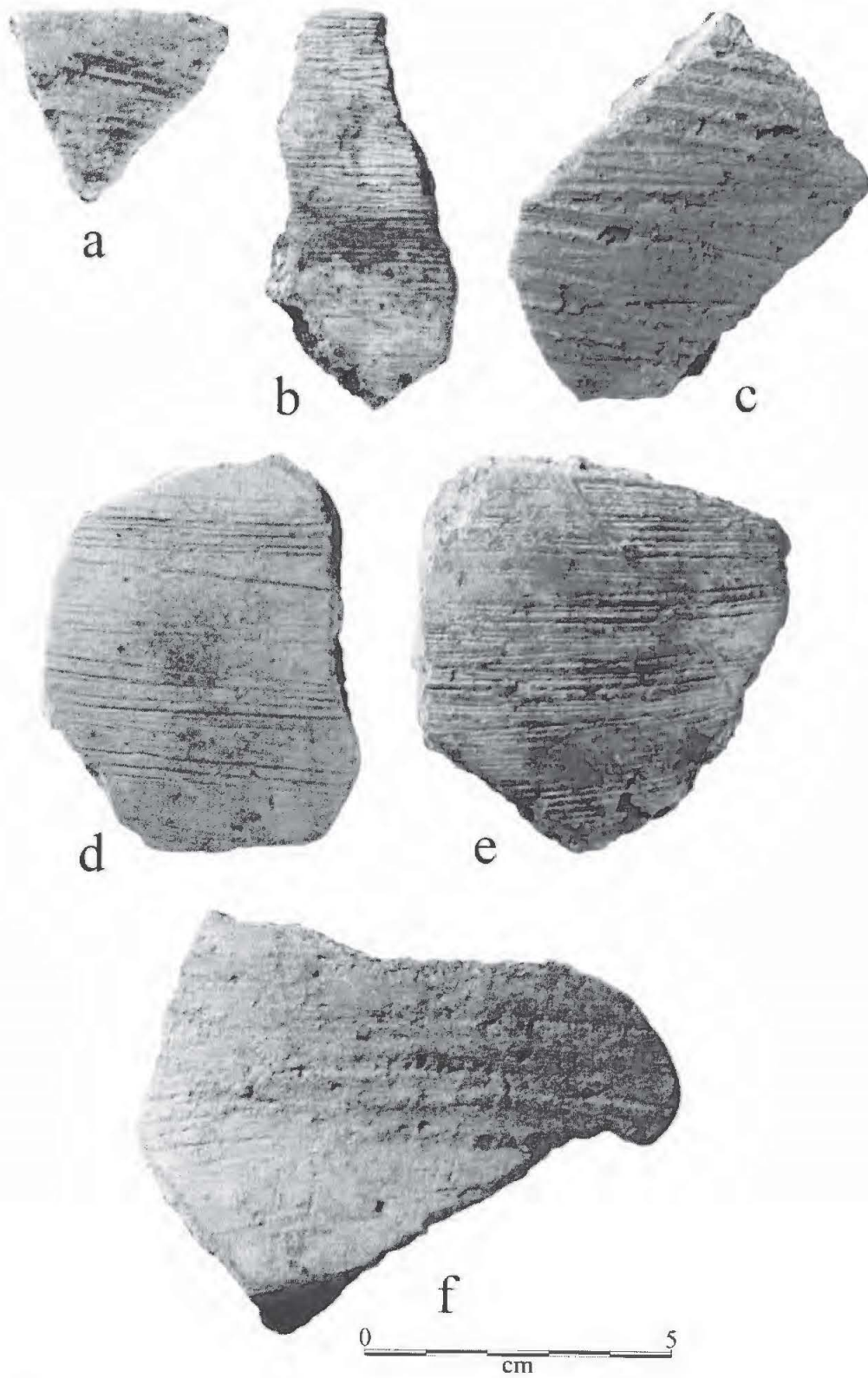


Figure 8. Brushed sherds: a, horizontal brushed; b-c, parallel brushed; f, horizontal and diagonal brushed.

phase sites in the Big Cypress Creek basin. There is one engraved sherd that may be from a short-rimmed Simms Engraved vessel. The engraved motifs feature scrolls, scroll and circle, and circle elements, and their predominance suggests that the Tom Hanks site occupation likely pre-dates ca. A.D. 1600, but the probable age of the occupation is far from well established. Finally, several substantial pieces of daub in the collection indicate that there is at least one burned Caddo structure at the Tom Hanks site.

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