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## Perspectives on East Texas Archaeology

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## Perspectives on East Texas Archaeology

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## Perspectives on East Texas Archaeology

*Timothy K. Perttula*

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A key to my career as an archaeologist working in East Texas has been a very successful professional-avocational collaboration on a wide range of projects with individuals and avocational organizations working in East Texas, such as the Northeast Texas Archeological Society, the East Texas Archeological Society, the Valley of the Caddo Archeological Society, the East Texas Caddo Research Group, as well as the Gregg County Historical Museum, among other museums in the region that hold ancestral Caddo archaeological collections. It has been my good fortune to work with a number of very knowledgeable and hard-working East Texas avocational archaeologists and Texas Archeological Stewardship Network members over the years, including Bo Nelson (who has gone on to establish a professional career as an archaeologist and also start his own CRM firm, Tejas Archaeology, in 1997), Mark Walters, Tom Middlebrook, Patti Haskins, Robert L. Turner, Jr., Kevin Stingley, Bryan Boyd, Mike Turner, Mark Thatcher, Gary W. Cheatwood, Clyde Amick, Lee Green, and Bill Young, among others.

A very important and crucial development since the early 1990s in the conduct of archaeological research in East Texas has been the development of working relationships and collaborative efforts between professional archaeologists and aboriginal tribes that settled and lived in the region, most specifically the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma and the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. These tribes are now able to successfully be part of the Federal and State consultative process guiding archaeological work on development projects that may affect ancestral sites, provide monitors and archaeological technicians on specific projects, and provide their views on the archaeological findings and the meanings inferred from the study of the archaeological and historical record. This collaborative relationship has been a boon to the study of ancestral archaeological sites in East Texas and other parts of the state. The years I served as the Tribal Archeological Consultant for the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, and was able to contribute my expertise to funded Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and Historic Preservation Fund grants obtained by the Historic Preservation Program of the Caddo Nation (see Gonzalez et al. 2005), are highlights of my professional archaeological career.

Publishing the research findings from archaeological investigations on Texas sites should be a major effort for both professional and avocational archaeologists in Texas. Along with a myriad of reports by CRM firms and wide-ranging journal articles, the *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* (BTAS) has played since 1929, and will continue to play in the future, a large role in disseminating the results of archaeological work on both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites across the state. It was my unique pleasure to serve as either Editor or Assistant Editor for BTAS volumes No. 62-88, including the "Big Red" volume in 1995 (Vol. 66). Through my service as editor during those years, as well as while editing the 2004 and 2013 editions of *The Prehistory of Texas* (Texas A&M University Press), I was able to see and appreciate the breadth of research on the archeology of the state of Texas, and also meet the many productive archaeologists working in the state. I have continued the editing and publication of several archaeological journals that have focused on the Caddo area of East Texas and surrounding states, namely the *Caddo Archeology Journal* and the *Journal of Northeast Texas Archaeology* (80 volumes between 1993-present).

Working with existing archaeological collections from East Texas Caddo sites over the years has provided the opportunity to study and research some of the most important Caddo sites ever investigated

in East Texas, and reanalyze collections that had remained unpublished and under-studied since they were obtained in the 1930s. Over the last several years, I have made a concerted effort to analyze the identified features and recovered artifact assemblages from University of Texas 1930s investigations at Caddo sites with burial features and associated funerary offerings, in particular ceramic vessels (Figure 1) (Perttula 2018a, 2018b), as well as 1938-1939 Works Progress Administration investigations at the Hatchel site (41BW3) platform mound (Figure 2) and associated village areas (Perttula 2014, 2015).



Figure 1. The archeological crew working in 1931 at the H. R. Taylor (41HS3) cemetery site in Harrison County, Texas. UT photo 41HS3-34, scan courtesy of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin.

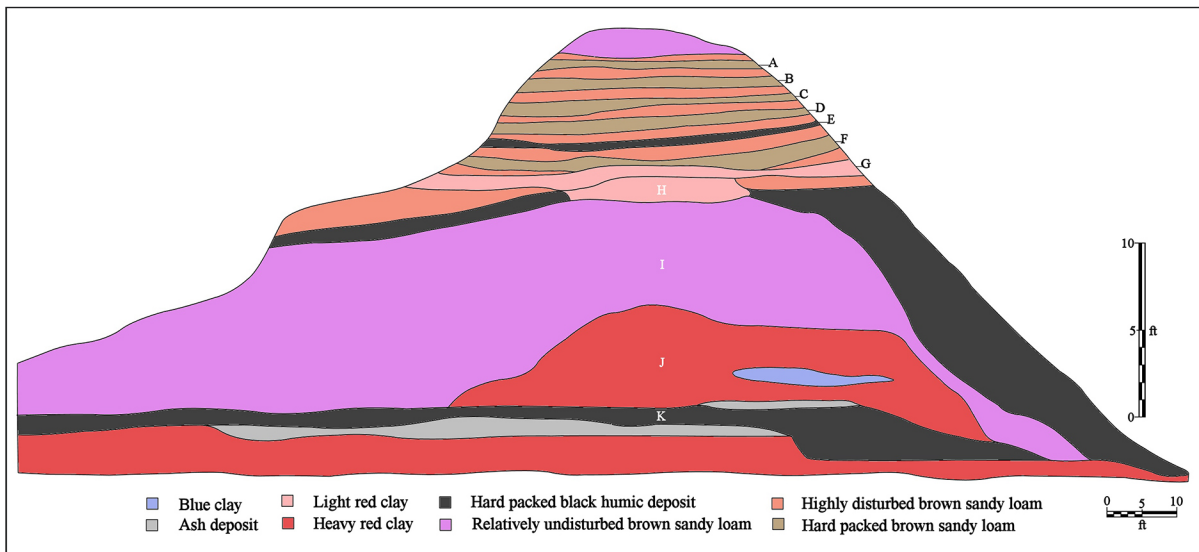


Figure 2. Cross-section of Zones A-K in the platform mound excavations at the Hatchel site, redrawn from original WPA profiles to more clearly depict the different zones in the platform mound. Figure prepared by Lance Trask.

This work is ongoing. The collections and records from these investigations are curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin.

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