

Aboriginal Ceramic Vessel Sherds from the Lindner (HCAA-KR 51) and Marvin Bee Cave Creek (HCAA-KR-45) Sites, Kerr County, Texas

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Introduction

Recent archeological investigations by the Hill Country Archeological Association have recovered a small sample of aboriginal ceramic vessel sherds (n=14) from the Lindner and Marvin Bee Cave Creek sites in Kerr County, Texas, and sherdlets (n=3, less than 1.5 cm in diameter; tabulated but not further discussed) from the latter site. A number of attributes have been employed in the study of these aboriginal ceramic vessel sherds, attributes commonly employed in the analysis of aboriginal ceramics of prehistoric age in Texas (see Ellis and Perttula 2010): temper inclusions; paste; core colors (see Teltser 1993:Figure 2a-h) and firing conditions; wall thickness; interior and exterior surface treatment; and decoration.

Distinctions between red washes and red-slipped sherds follow the distinctions made by Linda W. Ellis (August 26, 2018 personal communication). A red wash is applied to a dry vessel surface after the initial surface finish has dried. The wash may be spotty and does not adhere very well to the vessel surface, and may be easily flaked or worn off during vessel use. Black (1986) refers to such decorated sherds as red filmed. Red slips are distinguished by their color, textural differences, and thickness on a leather-hard vessel surface compared to a red wash, and the slip adheres well to vessel surfaces; slipped vessels are commonly burnished on vessel surfaces. Slips are likely to be a different color from the body of the vessel, and are commonly burnished; decorations can be cut into the slip when it is dry (i.e., incised lines) or after the vessel is fired (i.e., engraved lines).

Lindner Site (HCAA-KR-51)

A single ceramic body sherd (5.1 mm in thickness) was collected from the surface of this site. It is bone-tempered, burnished on exterior and interior surfaces, and is from a vessel that was fired in a reducing environment and cooled in the open air (see Teltser 1993:Figure 2f). It is a Doss Red sherd with an exterior red wash (Kelley 1947; Kenmotsu and Boyd 2012). Doss Red is a ceramic type made by ca. post- A.D. 1300 Toyah phase potters, along with Leon Plain.

Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring (HCAA-KR-45)

All 13 of the sherds from this site (in Units 5 and 7, levels 1, 2, and 4; most are from level 1) are from bone-tempered vessels, either with bone as the sole temper (n=8) or with bone temper and a sandy paste (n=5). Eleven of the sherds are from Leon Plain vessels (Figure 1), another is a red-washed and bone-tempered Doss Red sherd (Figure 2) in Unit 7 (level 1), and there is one unique burnished bone-tempered body sherd in Unit 7, level 1, with a row of small fingernail punctations (Figure 3). This sherd is different in temper and surface treatment from ancestral Caddo fingernail punctated sherds at 41KR754, which have grog-temper in the paste and thicker body walls. The ceramic sherds from the Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring site are also from a post-A.D. 1300 Toyah phase occupation.

Four (or 30.8 percent) of the sherds have well-burnished interior and exterior surfaces, two (15.4 percent) have been burnished on the exterior surface, and the Doss Red sherd has an exterior burnished surface and a scraped interior surface. The remaining six (46.2 percent) bone-tempered body sherds have only an exterior smoothed surface. These bone-tempered sherds are from vessels fired in several different ways, and the range in firing conditions suggest that the sherds from the Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring site are from at least 6 vessels. Almost half of the sherds (46.2 percent) are from vessels fired and cooled in a low oxygen fire (Teltser 1993:Figure 2b), 38.5 percent are from vessels fired in a reducing environment but cooled in the open air (Teltser 1993:Figure 2f-h), and the remainder (15.4 percent) are from vessels incompletely oxidized during firing (Teltser 1993:Figure c-d). The bone-tempered Leon Plain, Doss Red, and one punctated sherd from the site are from thin-walled vessels that range from 4.3-6.3 mm. The mean body wall thickness of these sherds is 5.14 ± 0.45 mm.

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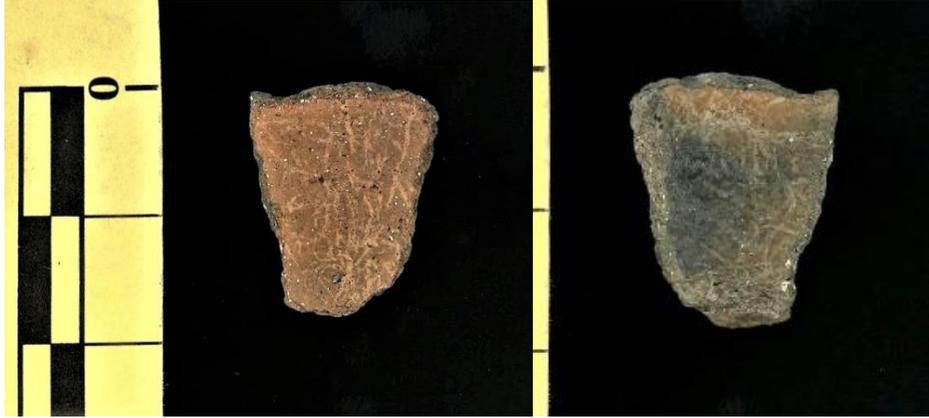


Figure 1. Example of the Leon Plain Ware pottery sherds found at the Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring site, exterior surface (L) and interior surface (R).



Figure 2. Example of the Doss Red Ware pottery sherds found at the Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring site, exterior surface (L) and interior surface (R).



Figure 3. Example of the punctated pottery sherds found at the Marvin Bee Cave Creek Spring site, exterior surface (L) and interior surface (R).