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A KENO TRAILED VESSEL FROM THE SPOONBILL SITE IN WOOD COUNTY, TEXAS

Mark Walters

A Keno Trailed vessel was discovered by J. A. Walters in 1967 at the Spoonbill Caddo site (41WD109) on the east side of Caney Creek in Wood County, Texas. The site is on a terrace 0.75 miles from Caney Creek, and 0.5 miles east of Crane Lake, a natural lake in the Caney Creek floodplain. The Spoonbill site was later investigated by Southern Methodist University archaeologists in 1979, prior to the creation of Lake Fork Reservoir (Bruseth and Perttula 1981). During construction of the reservoir, the portion of the site excavated by Mr. Walters was destroyed by new road construction.

Mr. Walters excavated a cemetery containing 15 burials (covering a 16-21 m diameter area), laid out in an east-west direction. The Keno Trailed vessel was from grave lot #8. Other grave goods included Harleton Applied, Simms Engraved (hub-cap variety), Nash Neck Banded, and Taylor Engraved, along with a clay elbow pipe.

Vessel Description

Temper: Finely crushed shell, with leaching evident on the base of the vessel.

Finish: Polished on exterior and interior vessel surfaces. It is tan to reddish-brown in color on the exterior, and dark brown to black on the interior.

Design: Four interlocking scrolls of incised lines (Figure 1). There are nine lines in each half-scroll, except two half-scrolls with 10 incised lines. There are horizontal incised lines at the top and bottom of the design, and the lip of the vessel is notched; the notches are 4.5 mm apart.

Shape: The vessel is vase-shaped, with an orifice opening of 15.17 cm; the basal diameter is 9.0 cm. The lip of the vessel is thinned, and the top 5 mm is everted. The height of the vessel is 9.3 cm. The vessel wall thickness is 4.8 mm.

Discussion

Schambach and Miller (1984) state that Keno Trailed, along with Natchitoches Engraved, is a prime diagnostic of the Caddo V or historic Caddo period. From the Cedar Grove site, they illustrate a vessel similar to the one found at the Spoonbill site, and identify it as Keno Trailed *var. Phillips* (Schambach and Miller 1984:Figure 11-17). The *var. Phillips* vessels usually have notched lips, as the vessel from Spoonbill does; lip notching is uncommon in Caddo pottery, particularly in the finewares. This variety of Keno Trailed commonly occurs on sites that have a few European trade goods, and Schambach and Miller (1984) consider it a horizon marker for the first few decades of the Caddo V period (ca. 1700-1730).



Figure 1. Keno Trailed vessel from the Spoonbill Site (41WD109).

Clarence Webb (1959:135) suggests that Keno Trailed pottery developed late in Caddoan ceramic history from the mid-Ouachita region in southwestern Arkansas, and reached its climax at the Glendora and Keno sites in the immediate pre-contact or contact period. Perino (1983:58 and Figure 14e) identifies a similar bowl from the Bob Williams site (41RR16) as "Foster Trailed-Engraved," although in other correspondence he refers to it as Keno Trailed *var. Phillips*.

Perttula (1992:249) states that after ca. A.D. 1600 was a period when non-local Red River ceramic wares became more common than before in East Texas. Locally manufactured ceramics no longer dominated the ceramic assemblages of East Texas Caddoan groups.

No European trade goods were found in any of the 15 burials excavated by Mr. Walters at the Spoonbill site, and thus it is presumed that this Keno Trailed vessel dates prior to sustained European contact. If this is correct, then the lack of Natchitoches Engraved and the presence of Keno Trailed *var. Phillips* is evidence that the Spoonbill site was occupied only to ca. 1730 (see Schambach and Miller 1984:123).

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