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The M. W. Burks Site (41WD52): A Late Caddo Hamlet in Wood County, Texas

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THE M. W. BURKS SITE (41WD52): A LATE CADDO HAMLET IN WOOD COUNTY, TEXAS

Timothy K. Perttula, with contributions by Bob D. Skiles and Bonnie C. Yates

Introduction

While attempting to locate and evaluate prehistoric Caddo archaeological sites in the Dry Creek watershed, Wood County, Texas, that had been originally recorded by A. T. Jackson and M. M. Reese in 1930, the M. W. Burks site (41WD52) was discovered by James E. Bruseth and Bob D. Skiles in June 1977. The site is in the Forest Hill community, about 5 km north of Quitman, Texas, in the East Texas Pineywoods and Gulf Coastal Plain (Figures 1 and 2). It is on a small rise in the uplands overlooking a small intermittent drainage that is an unnamed tributary of Little Dry Creek.

The landowner, Mr. M. W. Burks, had resided in this part of Wood County since the 1920s, and recalled where A. T. Jackson and crew had spent time excavating the J. H. Reese (41WD2) site. He mentioned that while putting in a fence on his property in the early 1960s, adjacent to the property where the Reese site is located, he had found some pottery sherds in one of the post holes. Bruseth and Skiles placed a small shovel test next to this fence post hole, and a large articulated red-slipped Ripley Engraved carinated bowl was encountered at 65 cm below the surface (bs) in tan sand E-horizon deposits. This find demonstrated that the Burks site contained both intact archaeological deposits as well as an apparently undisturbed Late Caddo Titus phase burial or cemetery.

Bruseth, Skiles, and Perttula followed up this work with more intensive investigations in the spring and fall of 1978. This research was carried on as an adjunct to the ongoing (and final season of) archaeological work being conducted by Bruseth and Perttula (1981) at Lake Fork Reservoir on Lake Fork Creek, a few miles to the west of the Burks site. Our purpose in carrying out archaeological research at the Burks site was to examine in more detail the spatial character of a Late Caddo Titus phase settlement, and also obtain information on the material culture remains (especially the ceramics) made and used by the Caddo peoples that lived at the Burks site some 400-500 years ago..

1978 Investigations

During the spring of 1978, the M. W. Burks site was disc-plowed, and then a grid of 2 x 2 meter units was set up on the site (Figure 3) for the purpose of completing a controlled and systematic surface collection of exposed prehistoric artifacts in habitation areas. After several rains permitted better surface exposure, a total of 855 2 x 2 meter units were surface collected, a total of 3420 square meters (0.8 acres). Procedures employed in the surface collection were identical to those used during the Lake Fork Creek archeological project, which was ongoing at the time of the Burks site investigations (Bruseth and Perttula 1981:55-56).

A large assortment of Caddo artifacts were retrieved during the systematic surface collection, including a few pieces of lithic debris, flake and bifacial tools, fire-cracked rock, plain and decorated ceramics, daub/burned clay, and bone/mussel shell. Over 85 percent of the 3000+ surface artifacts from Burks were ceramic sherds. The surface collection showed that the prehistoric Caddo habitation area was at least 3000 square meters in size, but probably larger since the distribution of the plain sherds (the most plentiful class of

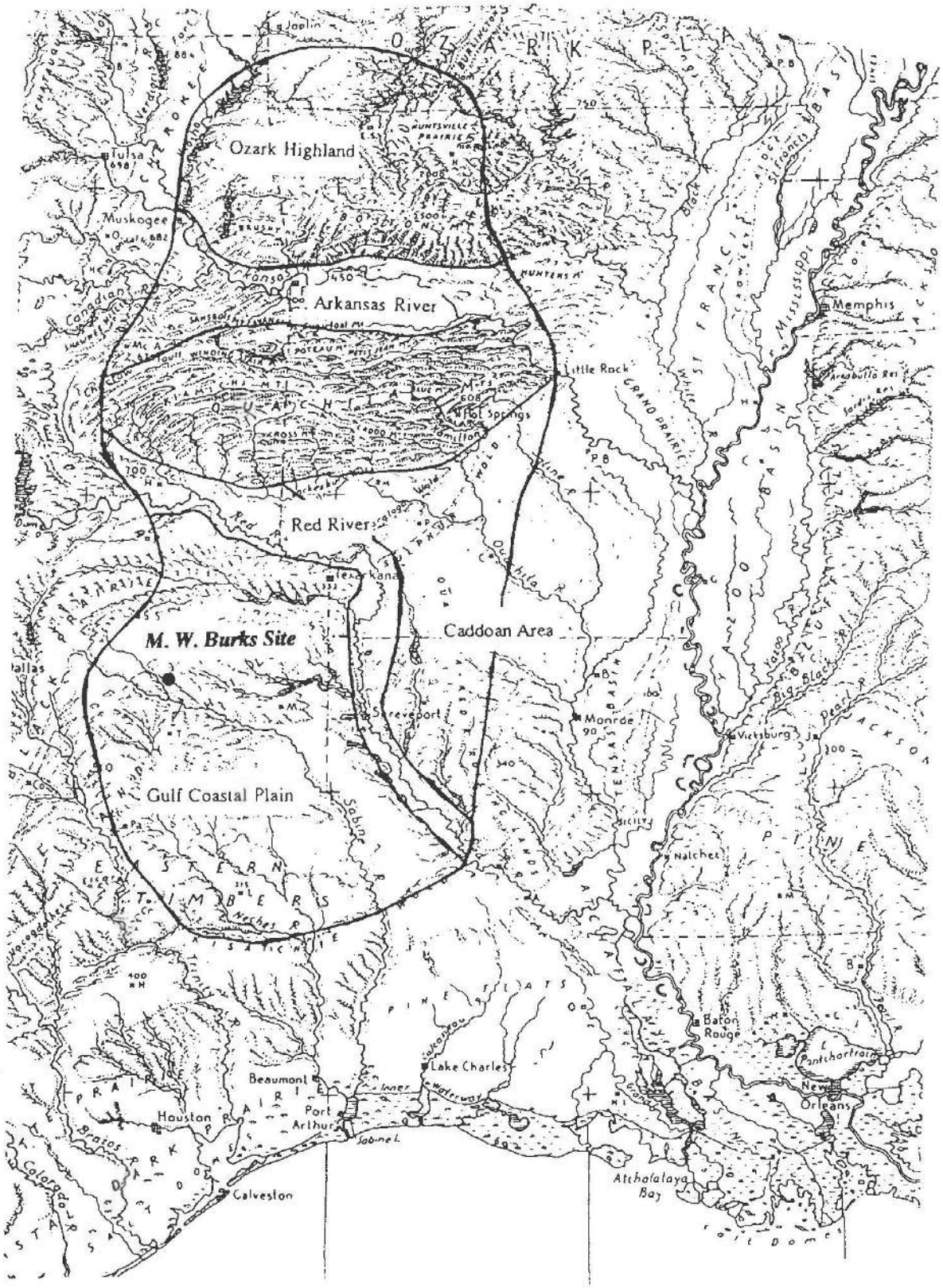

Figure 1. The location of the M. W. Burks site in the Gulf Coastal Plain of Texas.

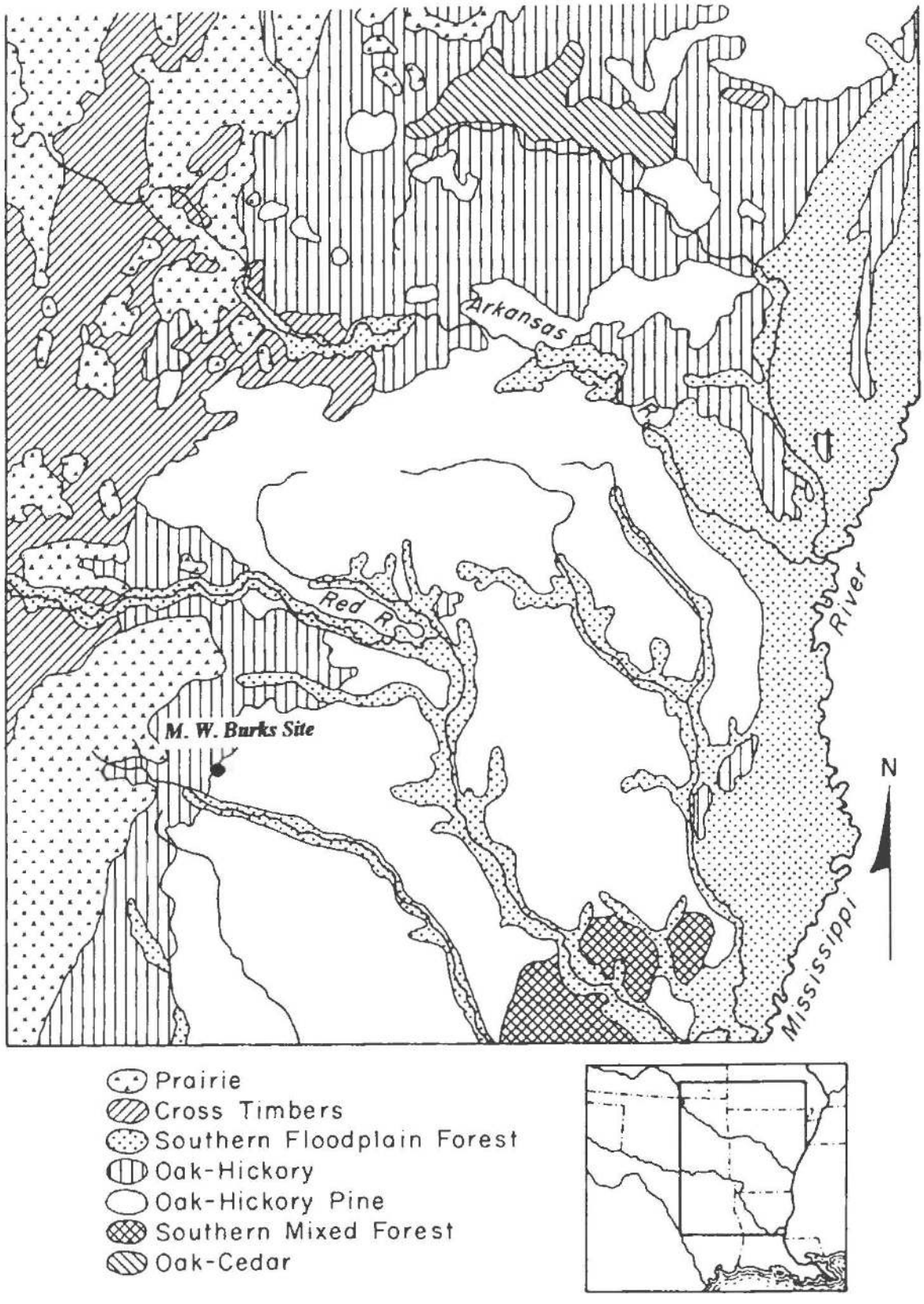

Figure 2. The vegetational setting of the Burks site in the Oak-Hickory-Pine or Pineywoods habitat.

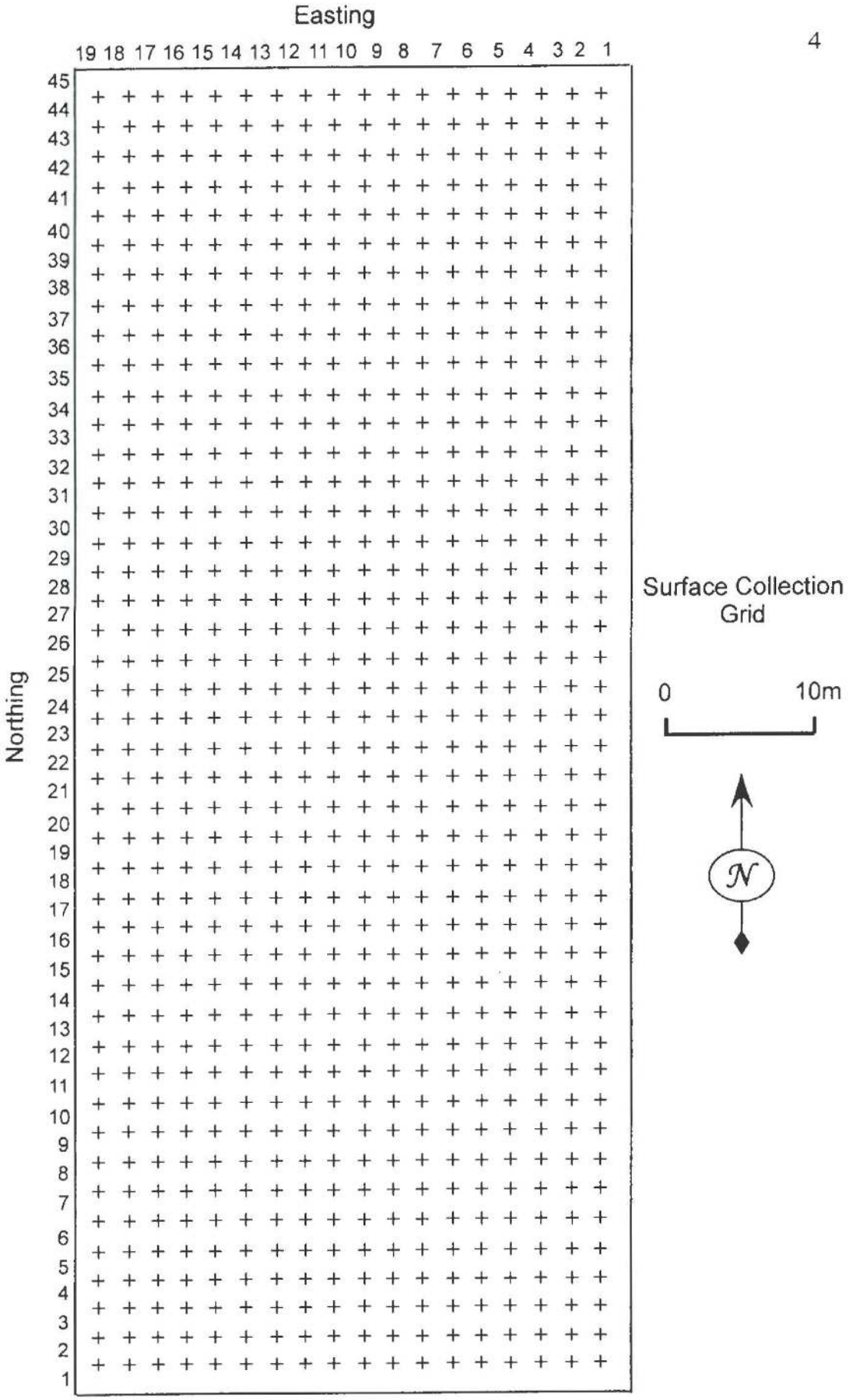

Figure 3. Surface collection grid.

recovered artifacts) apparently continues a few meters to the south of the grid, and extends an unknown distance to the east and west of the surface collection grid (Figure 4).

The densest area of the Caddo sherds is a ca. 46 x 20 m area in the center of the surface collection grid, on the highest part of the landform (see Figure 4). There are five smaller clusters of plain sherds (and three virtually overlapping clusters of plain rim sherds) within this 920 square meter area, and it is likely that these clusters represent both household clusters of pottery broken during use as well as pottery sherds and broken vessel sections deliberately discarded in trash middens away from currently occupied house structures.

Decorated sherds have approximately the same distribution pattern as the plain sherds, with a ca. 2160 square meter covered with sherds from decorated pottery vessels (Figure 5). There are several small higher-density clusters of decorated sherds in the central and northern parts of the site, and two larger areas in the southern part of the grid that each cover at least 50 square meters (see Figure 5).

These particular clusters of decorated pottery sherds at the southern part of the Burks site surface collection grid appear to be in trash midden contexts. This same area is the only part of the Burks site where animal bones and mussel shell fragments were recovered during the surface collection (Figure 6). In fact, the area with animal bone and mussel shell together covers a ca. 25 x 20 m area in the southern part of the grid (see Figure 6).

This same area is also characterized by pieces of burned clay and daub (Figure 7). These pieces likely ended up in a trash midden context through the periodic clean-up and burning of trash, scattering dirt on the midden trash to cover it up (and lessen the smell), and discarding house debris during remodeling and construction efforts taking place elsewhere on the site.

Lithic artifacts are notably scarce at the Burks site in the surface collection. There was a very light scatter of lithic debris and flake tools (Figure 8) in the same area as the clusters of plain and decorated sherds (see Figures 4 and 5), but no notable concentrations anywhere within the surface collection grid. The knapping of chipped stone tools was obviously not a principal activity of the Titus phase Caddo occupants of the Burks site.

Several dark-stained areas, thought to be midden exposures, were also visible on the surface with improved exposure conditions and a good rain. We defined four middens (A-D) within the surface collection grid (Figure 9). Middens A and D at the southern part of the site may be trash middens, as they occur roughly in the same area as the concentrations of animal bone and mussel shell fragments (see Figure 6). These middens are approximately 50 (Midden A) and 85 (Midden D) square meters in size.

The other two lighter midden stains (Middens B and C) are just north of the other two, and are considerably larger. Midden C is about 18 m in diameter, while Midden B is about 20 m in diameter (see Figure 9). It is likely that these two midden areas mark the locations of different household structures. They may represent households that were occupied contemporaneously, but it is more probable that each is a temporally separate household cluster area associated with one or another of the two southern middens (that are 2-5 m away). Without any radiocarbon dates from the different middens, it is impossible to determine which middens are associated with one another. However, given the distance and spatial separation between the likely household middens and the likely trash midden deposits—and the idea that trash middens should be as far removed from habitation areas as

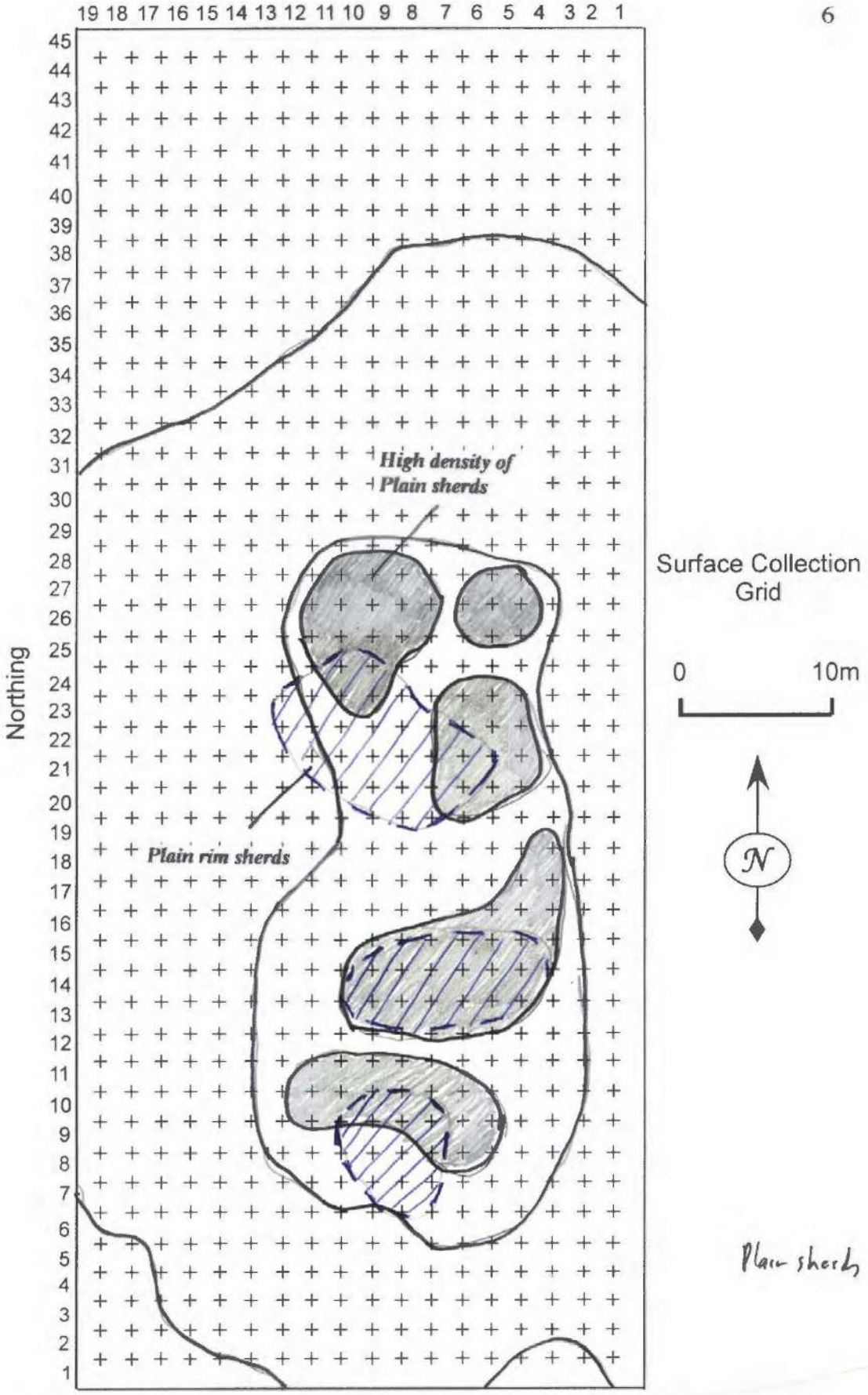

Figure 4. Distribution and density of plain sherds and plain rim sherds

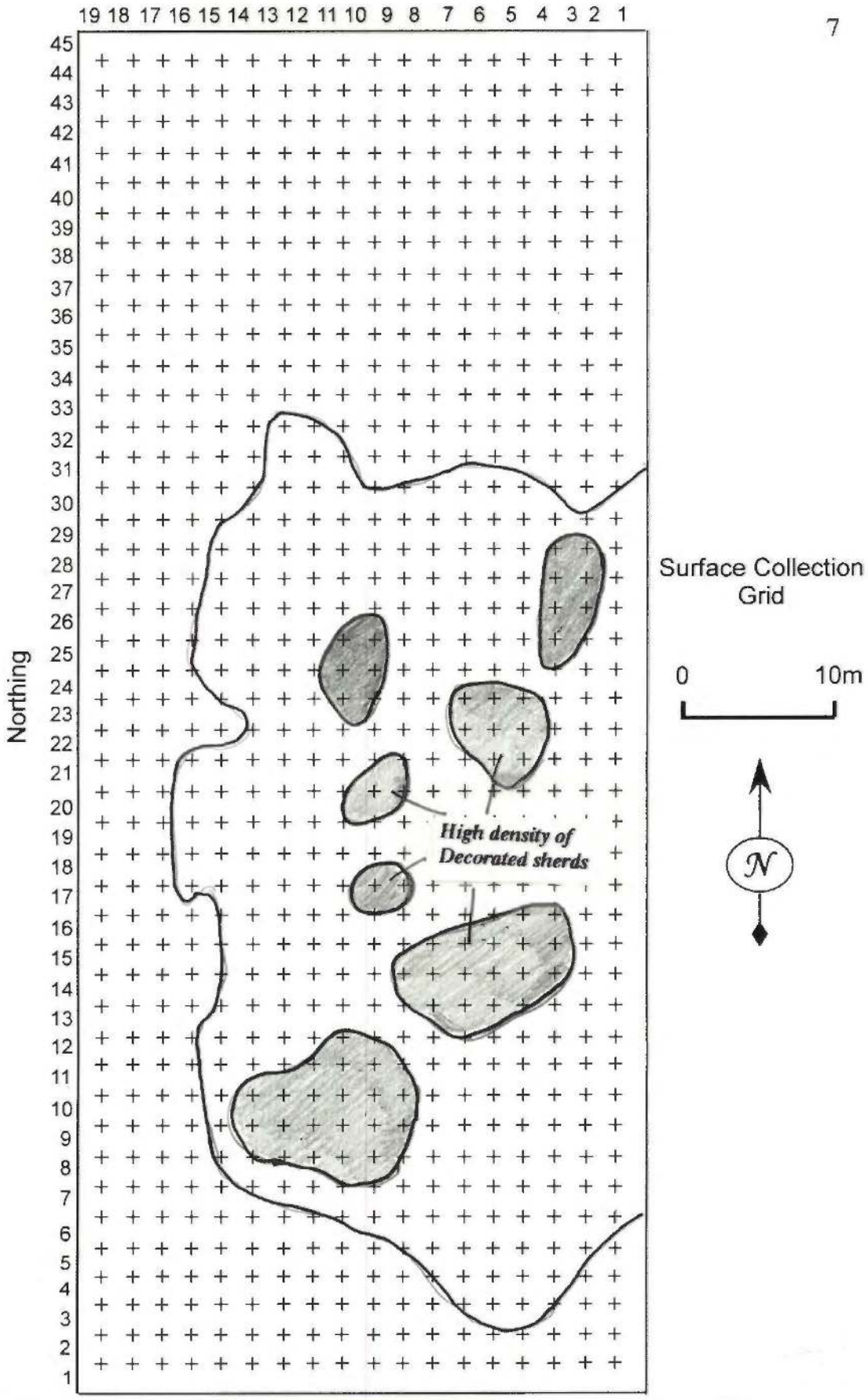

Figure 5. Distribution and density of decorated sherds in the surface collection grid.

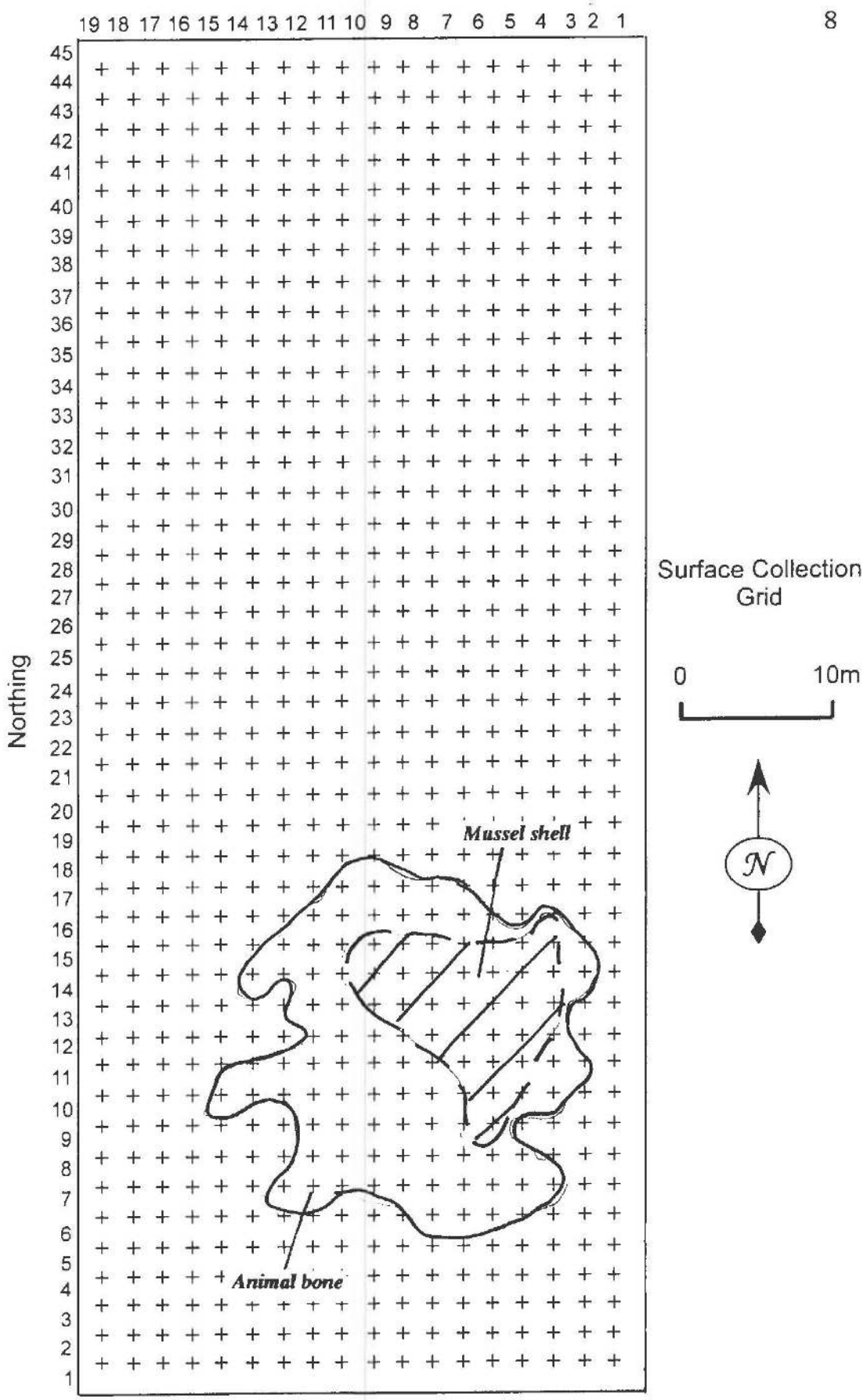

Figure 6. Distribution of animal bone and mussel shell.

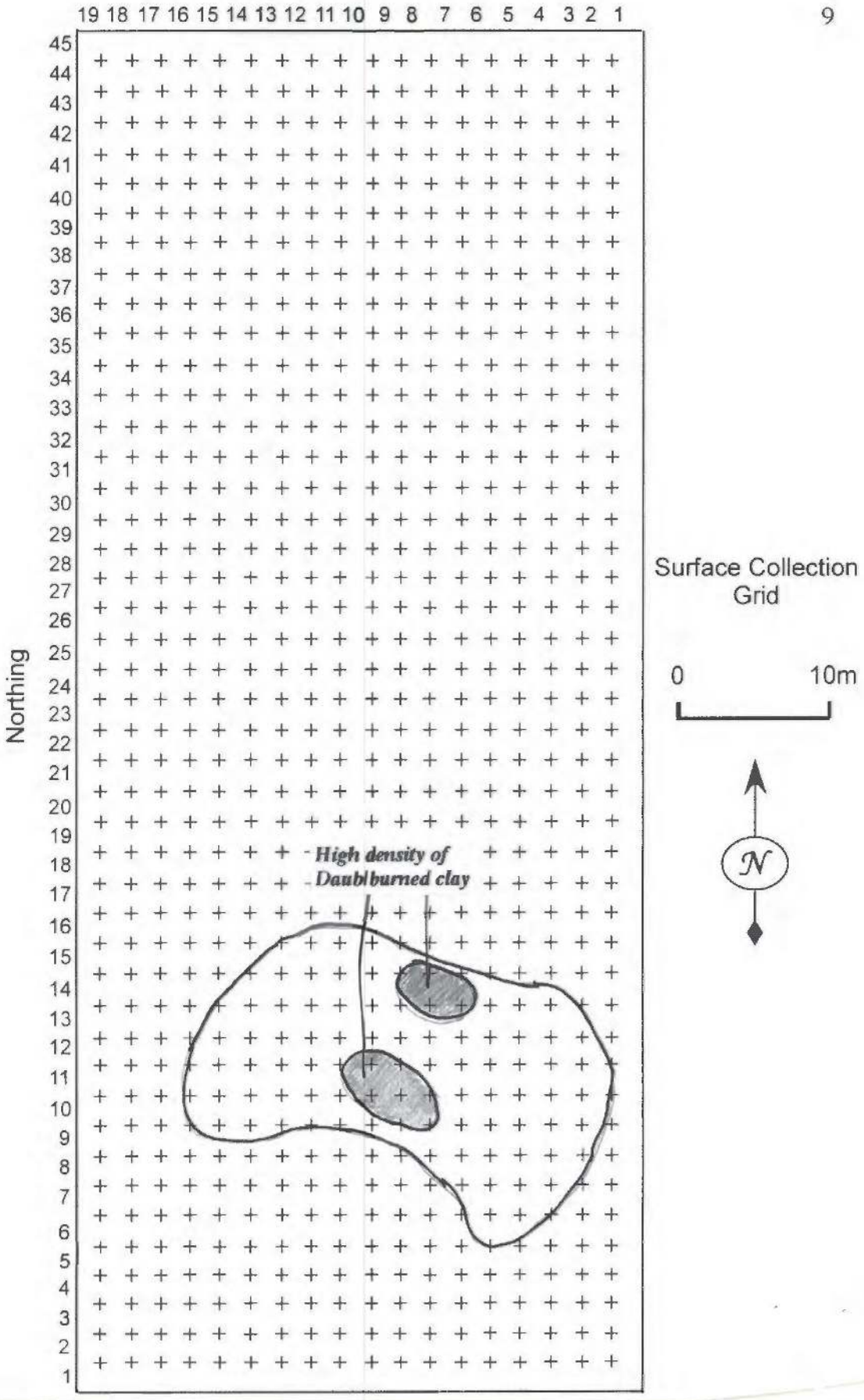

Figure 7. Distribution and density of daub and burned clay.

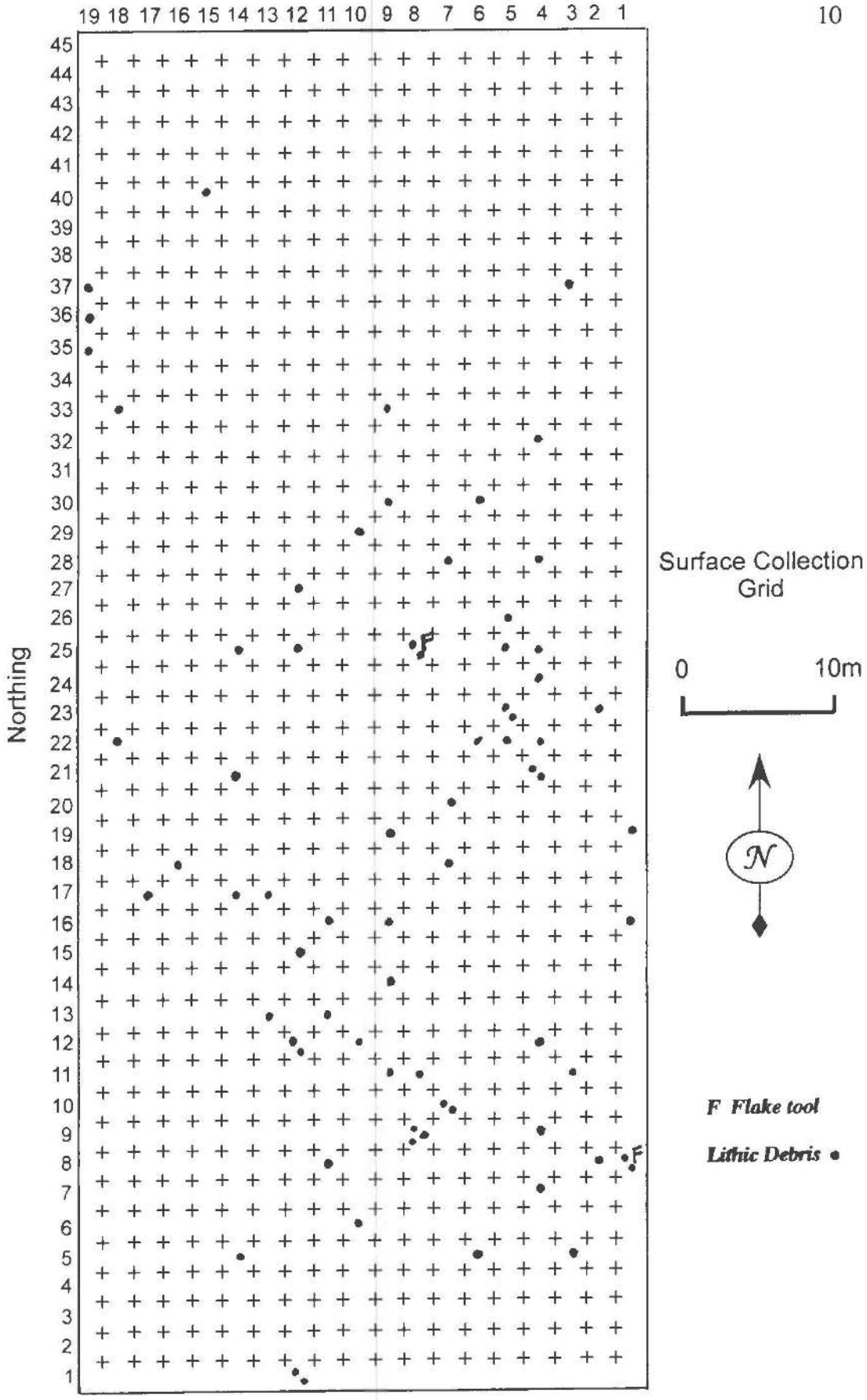

Figure 8. Distribution of lithic debris and flake tools.

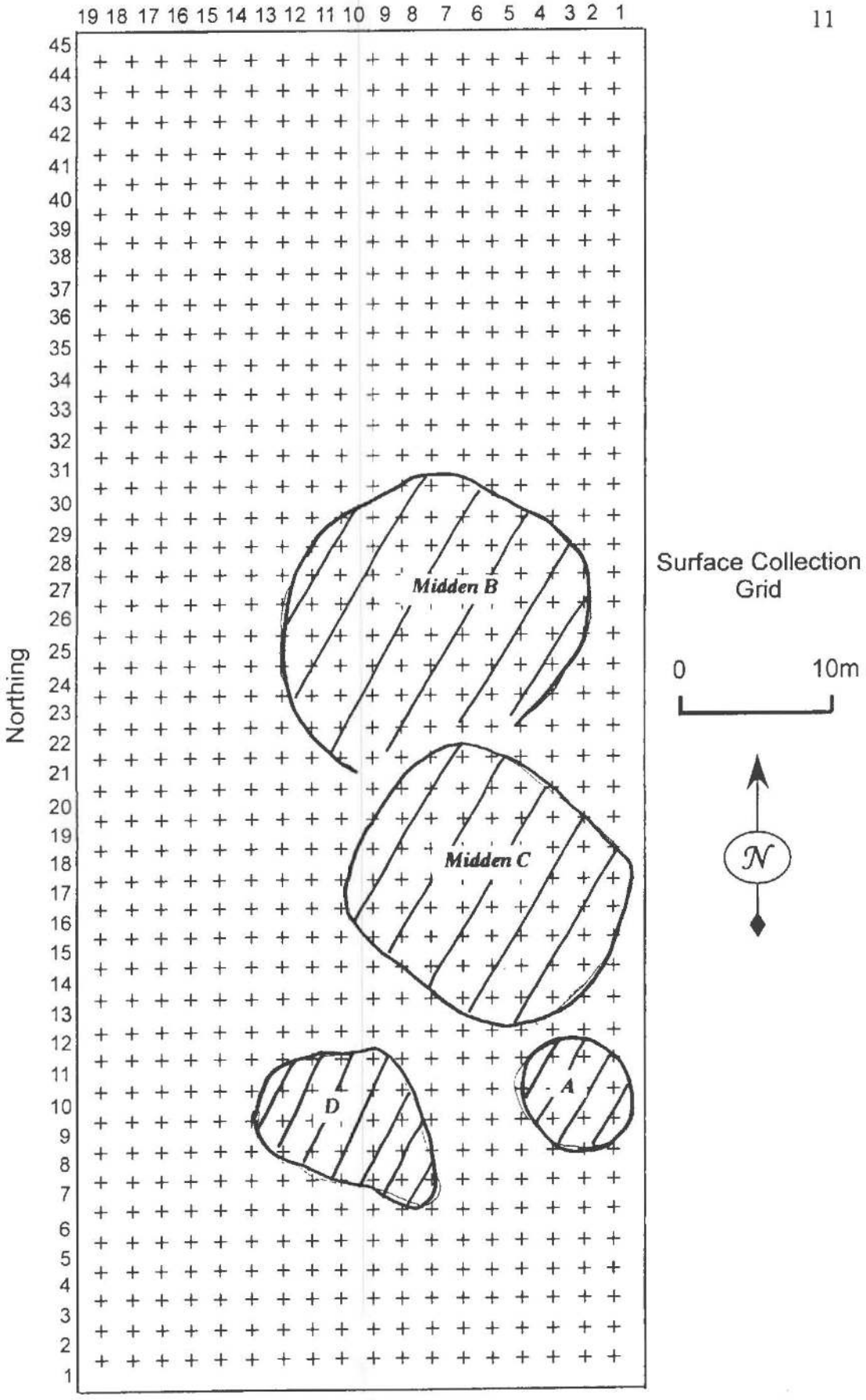

Figure 9. Distribution and probable extent of Middens A-D at the M. W. Burks site.

possible—then I suggest that Middens A and B are an associated pair, while Middens C and D are another (see Figure 9). Further excavations are needed to sort out the spatial and temporal relationship of the midden deposits at the Burks site.

In late October 1978, a limited amount of excavations were completed at the Burks site to: (1) obtain information in a controlled manner on the character of the buried archeological deposits across the landform, (2) gather a larger sample of ceramic, lithic, and faunal remains from three of the midden deposits, (3) expose and excavate the one burial lying under the fence post at the south end of the site (see above), and (4) determine the potential for preserved features in and below the middens.

Unit 1

This unit, covering ca. 6.2 square meters, was placed in the area of the landform where Bruseth and Skiles had encountered a large Ripley Engraved carinated bowl in a shovel test next to a 1960s fence post. This is at the southern tip of the landform, ca. 20 m south of the Late Caddo habitation area (Figure 10). Other than a few pieces of lithic debris, a flake tool, and fire-cracked rock, there was little evidence of habitation remains here.

Those excavations exposed a single smoothed pebble and a cluster of eight ceramic vessels lying approximately 49-56 cm bs (Figure 11). This included Vessel H, the red-slipped carinated Ripley Engraved bowl hit by the fence post excavations years earlier. These vessels appear to be funerary objects placed with a single Late Caddo Titus phase burial (Burial 1), with the individual probably placed in the grave on its back, with its head to the east, and facing west. Vessel H would probably have been near the head. The ceramic vessels found in this burial are discussed in more detail further on in this article.

Unit 2

Unit 2 was a 1 x 1 meter unit excavated to 40 cm bs in Midden A (see Figure 10). Sediments consisted of a brown loam plow zone from 0-20 cm, a dark brown sandy loam charcoal-streaked midden deposit from 20-30 cm bs, and an underlying light yellowish-brown clay loam B-horizon. No pits or other features were noted in the unit profile (Figure 12) or floor exposures.

There was a high density of prehistoric ceramic sherds (n=431) in the Unit 2 archeological deposits, but little else. Only six pieces of lithic debris came from the Unit 2 excavations, along with two small fire-cracked rocks, and a single piece of daub/burned clay.

Unit 3

This unit was excavated in Midden B (see Figure 10), and it was also 1 x 1 meter in size. It extended to 50 cm bs, exposing a brown loam plow zone from 0-15 cm bs, overlying an undulating midden deposit that extends to ca. 40-45 cm in depth. A compact yellow clay B-horizon lay below the midden (Figure 13).

This unit also had a very high density of ceramic sherds (n=443). Also recovered in the Midden B archeological deposits was a small amount of animal bone (n=8), daub/burned clay (n=2), lithic debris (n=17), a flake tool, and fire-cracked rock (n=3).

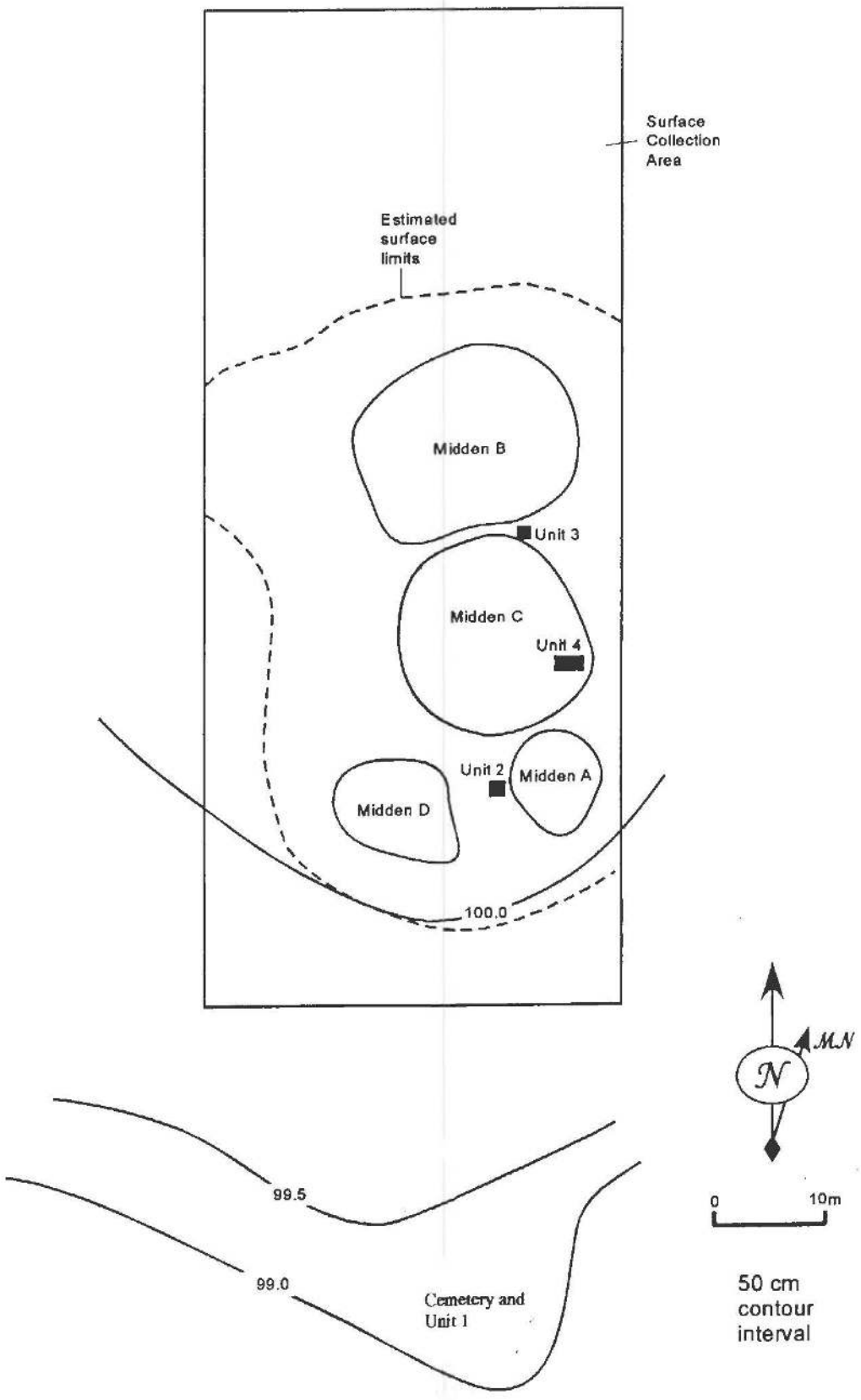

Figure 10. Middens, cemetery area, and location of excavation units at the M. W. Burks site.

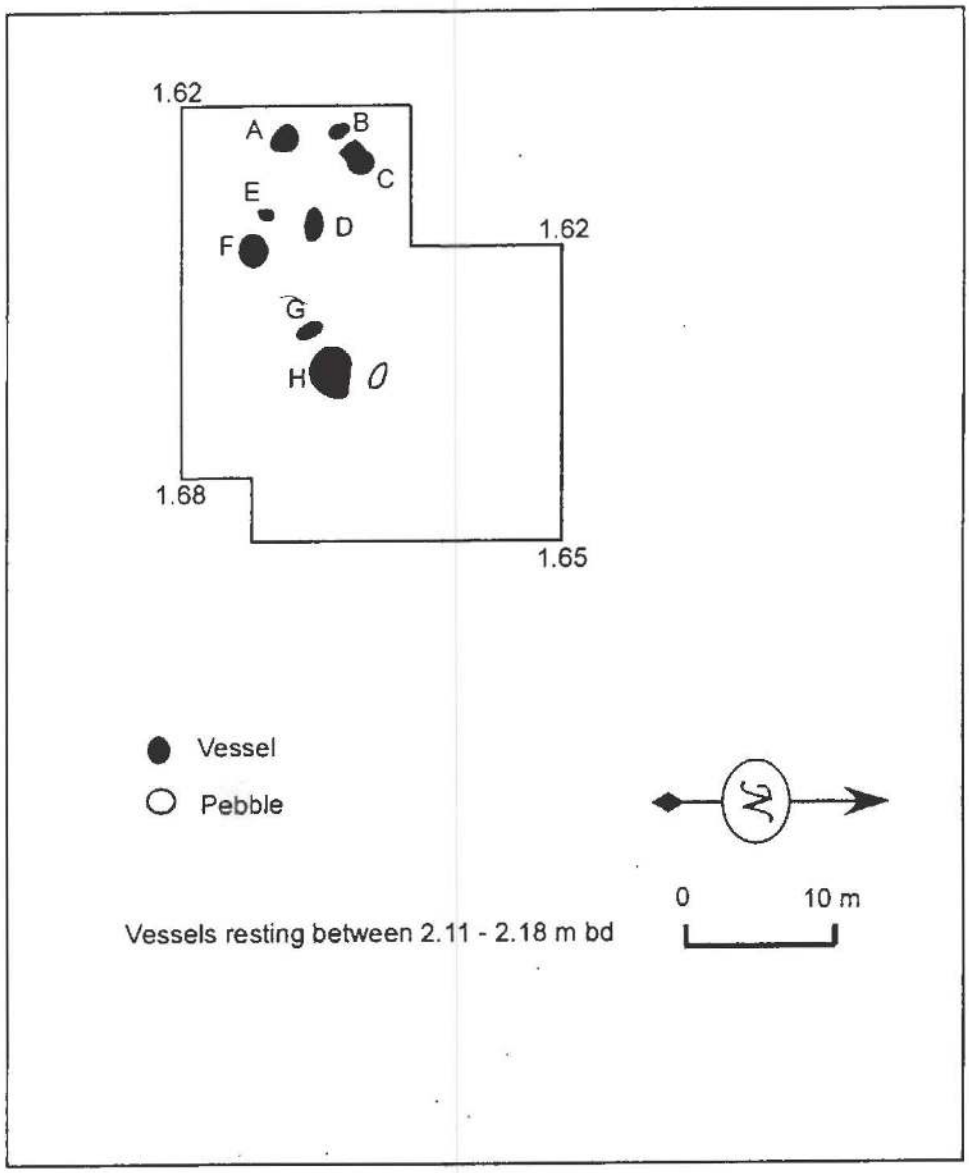

Figure 11. Plan map of vessels and pebble associated with Burial 1 in Unit 1.

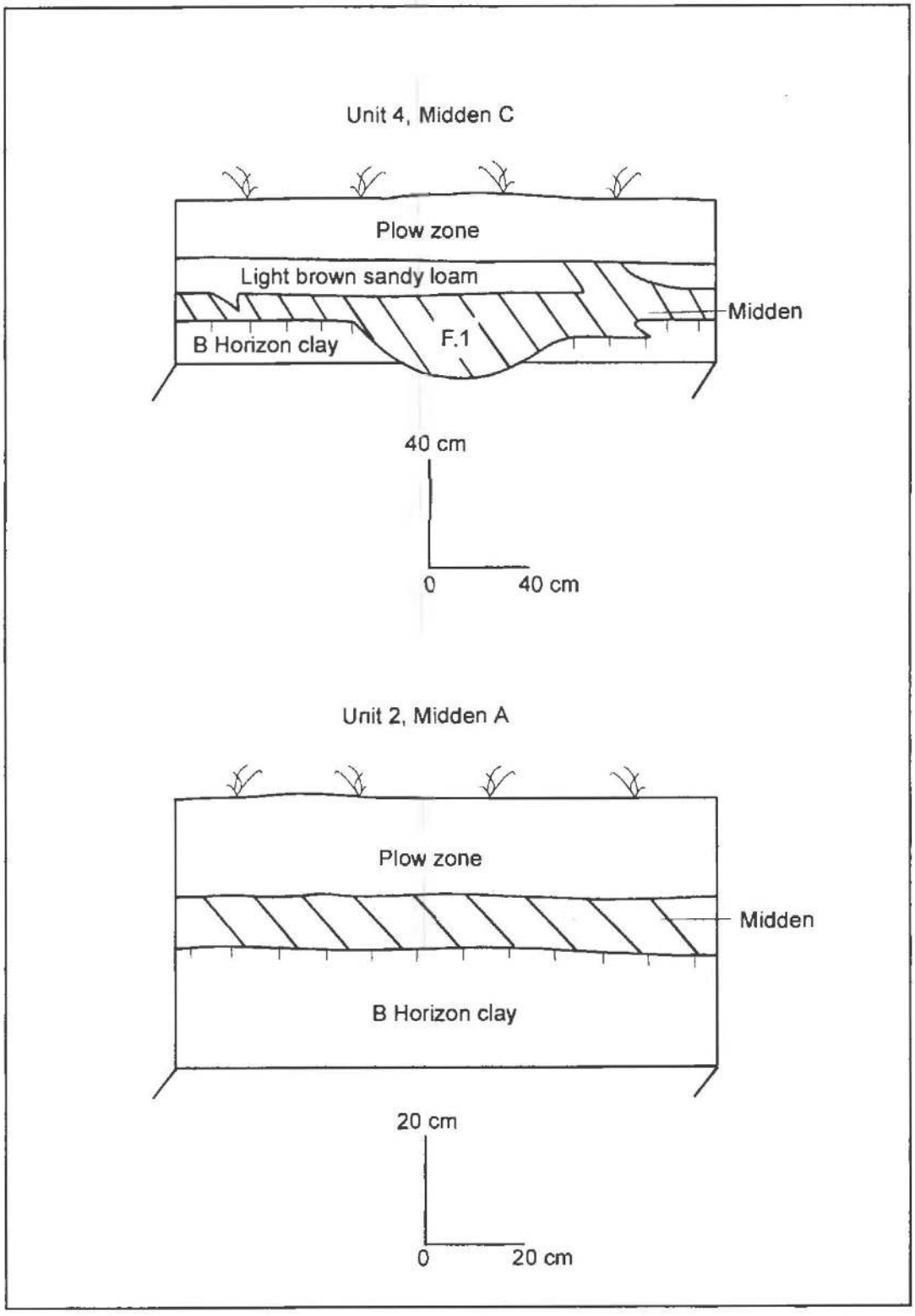

Figure 12. Profiles of Unit 4 (Midden C) and Unit 2 (Midden A)

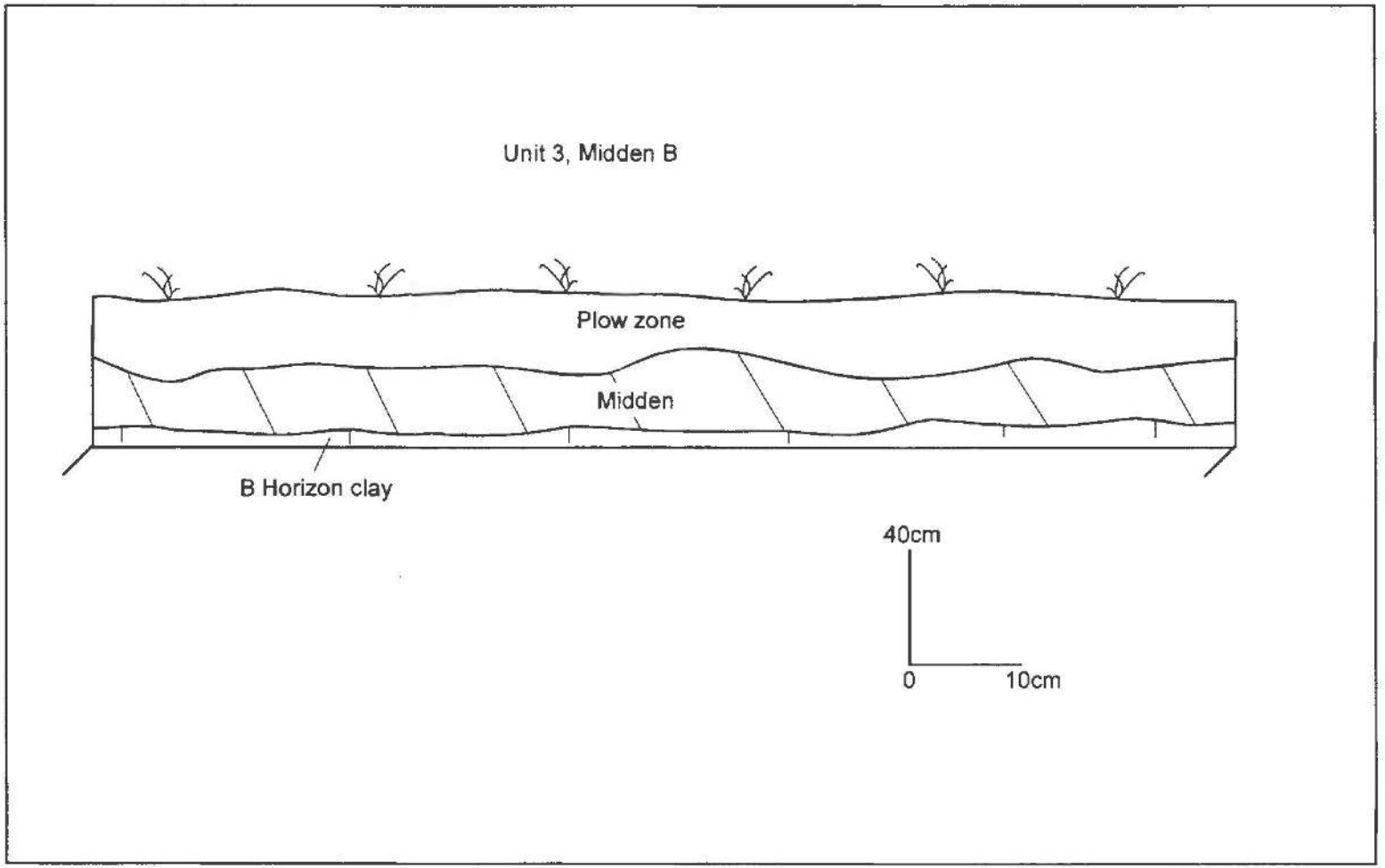

Figure 13. Profile of Unit 3 (Midden B)

Unit 4

Unit 4 was a 2 x 1 meter excavation placed in Midden C (see Figure 10). A pit feature was identified during the excavation of an initial 1 x 1 meter unit, and Unit 4 was expanded to better uncover it. In this unit, the dark brown loam plow zone extended to 25 cm bs (see Figure 12), and was underlain by an old plow zone to ca. 35 cm bs; plow scars cut into the midden that lay below this old plow zone. The undisturbed midden itself (or perhaps a buried occupational surface marking a house structure?)—a dark brown charcoal-streaked sandy loam—was only 10 cm in thickness, and overlay an orange clay loam subsoil.

Feature 1 was exposed in the floor of Unit 4 at ca. 45-49 cm bs, and it was a maximum of 16 cm in thickness. The feature is a basin-shaped pit about 1.09 meters in diameter that had been filled with midden deposits. It may have been a storage pit. Feature 1 contained animal bones and charred nutshells, as well as six pieces of daub/burned clay.

A total of 784 sherds were recovered in the Unit 4 excavations, a density of 392 sherds per square meter. Additionally, there was a small amount of daub/burned clay (n=2), lithic debris (n=14), a flake tool, and small pieces of fire-cracked rock (n=5).

Prehistoric Artifacts

Ceramic Sherds

There were more than 4300 sherds recovered in the systematic surface collection and limited excavations at the Burks site, including 820 decorated sherds. A detailed analysis of the sherds from the site has never been completed (Chester P. Walker has agreed to undertake such an analysis), but some information is available on the decorated sherds based on Perttula's examination (Table 1).

Table 1. Decorated Sherd Assemblage from the Burks site.

Decorative Method	Total No.
FINEWARES (n=427)	
Engraved	227
Engraved-punctated	1
Red-slipped	199
UTILITY WARES (n=393)	
Incised	138
Punctated	24
Punctated-Incised	8
Appliqued	43
Appliqued-Incised	4
Appliqued-Punctated	3
Neck Banded	35
Brushed	113
Brushed-Appliqued	3
Brushed-Incised	19

Table 1. Decorated Sherd Assemblage from the Burks site, cont.

Decorative Method	Total No.
Brushed-Punctated	1
Trailed	2
Total	820

The fine ware sherds from the Burks site are dominated with engraved sherds from Ripley Engraved carinated bowls, compound bowls, and bottles. There is one distinctive Ripley Engraved, *var. Walkers Creek* vessel sherd, which has a punctated panel above the engraved motif on the rim of a carinated bowl. The many red-slipped sherds (see Table 1) are from both plain red-slipped bowls and carinated bowls and from red-slipped Ripley Engraved vessels. Plain red-slipped vessels are a distinctive aspect of western Titus phase ceramic traditions, seen from sites such as Burks, other sites in the Dry and Little Dry Creek drainage in the upper Sabine River basin, and Titus phase sites in the upper and middle reaches of the Big Cypress Creek basin (Perttula 2005:405). In Titus phase sites in these areas, red-slipped wares comprise between 6-24 percent of all the decorated sherds (Perttula 2005: Table 11-11). These same areas had red-slipped wares in abundance in earlier Middle Caddoan period times (ca. A.D. 1200-1400). On eastern Titus phase ceramic tradition sites (i.e., in the Big Cypress Creek basin south of the confluence of Prairie and Greasy creeks with Big Cypress Creek), red-slipped sherds account for less than 3-5 percent of the decorated sherds.

Among the utility wares, the most common decorative methods in the Burks site ceramics are incised (n=138) and brushed (n=113), followed by appliqued (n=50) and neck banded (n=35) decorations (see Table 1). The incised and brushed sherds are probably from Maydelle Incised and Bullard Brushed cooking jars, while the appliqued sherds are from simple appliqued McKinney Plain jars. The neck banded sherds are from La Rue Neck Banded vessels.

Brushed pottery is much more common in eastern Titus phase ceramic tradition sites, where it may comprise 50-70 percent of all the decorated sherds, but is much less abundant in western Titus phase ceramic tradition sites like Burks. At Titus phase sites in Lake Fork Reservoir in the upper Sabine River basin, brushed pottery was virtually absent (Bruseth and Perttula 1981). Western Titus phase ceramic tradition sites (especially in the upper Sabine River basin) tend to have much more appliqued and neck banded utility wares. For instance, simple appliqued McKinney Plain jar sherds account for between 5-24 percent of the decorated sherds in western Titus phase sites like 41WD51, Steck (41WD529), Underwood (41CP230), and Burks, but only 0.4-3 percent of the decorated sherds from Titus phase sites in the Big and Little Cypress Creek basin.

Seven sherds from the Burks site have been analyzed by instrumental neutron activation analysis to determine the manufacturing locale of the pottery found at the site. All seven sherds have been chemically sourced to the Titus chemical compositional group (Perttula 2005:Table 11-12). This finding suggests that the ceramics at the Burks site were made from local clays, as the Titus chemical group primarily includes sherds made from clays in the Sabine and Big Cypress Creek basins of northeastern Texas (Perttula 2005:410).

Ceramic Vessels, *by Bob D. Skiles and Timothy K. Perttula*

Eight vessels (Vessels A-H) were found associated as funerary offerings with Burial 1 (Table 2). Six of the vessels were apparently placed on the north side of the burial (see Figure 11), assuming the grave was oriented east-west like other Titus phase burials (cf. Perttula 2005; Perttula and Nelson 1998; Turner 1978, 1992), and two other small vessels—a compound bowl and a carinated bowl—were on the burial's south side. The vessels include one miniature red-slipped plain bottle, one jar, two compound bowls, and four carinated bowls. The six engraved bowls are the Ripley Engraved type (see Suhm and Jelks 1962; Thurmond 1990). Each of the vessels was tempered with grog, by far the most common aplastic used by Titus phase potters as an addition to the paste.

Table 2. Vessel Attributes, Burial 1, M. W. Burks site (41WD52)

Vessel No.	Form	Orifice Diameter*	Main Body Diameter*	Height*	Wall Thickness**
A	CB	23.8	22.5	15.5	4.0
B	CP	10.0	8.5	5.5	3.0
C	J	13.4	14.7	18.5	6.0
D	CB	14.0	11.5	7.6	3.5
E	B	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
F	CB	12.8	10.8	6.8	3.5
G	CP	16.6	14.4	10.0	3.5
H	CB	26.6	25.3	14.7	4.0

CB=carinated bowl; CP=compound bowl; J=jar; B=bottle

* measurements in cm

** measurements in mm

The miniature red-slipped bottle (Vessel E) was loaned by the Curator of Collections at Southern Methodist University to the Hopkins County Museum in Sulphur Springs, Texas, before it could be studied. No other information about the vessel is available.

The La Rue Neck Banded jar (Vessel C) has a rough neck-banded and poorly smoothed rim panel, with four applique nodes beneath the lip (Figire 14). The rim is rounded and has an everted lip. The body is smoothed and undecorated, except for four applique fillets that quadrate the vessel from near the base to the rim/body juncture. The fillets end in nodes.

Both compound bowls are relatively small in size, with orifice diameters ranging between 10-16.6 cm, and they have rounded and rolled lips. Vessel B (see Table 2) is likely a miniature form based on a height of only 8.5 cm. It has 12 poorly executed engraved and excised pendant triangles on the vessel shoulder (Figure 15), and a red hematite-rich pigment had been smeared in the engraved lines. Fire clouds are present on the vessel base and body. The larger compound bowl (Vessel G) has two parallel engraved lines on the rim panel and the engraved decoration on the shoulder consists of four sets of cross-hatched pendant triangles divided by vertical and diagonal engraved lines (Figure 16). A white kaolin clay pigment was present in the engraved lines. The vessel was well-polished, while the interior was burnished. Fire clouds are present on the vessel base.

Figure 14. La Rue Neck Banded jar (Vessel C)

Figure 15. Engraved compound bowl (Vessel B).

Figure 16. Vessel G, an engraved compound bowl.

The four carinated bowls fall in two size ranges: (a) small vessels (Vessels D and F) with orifice diameters between 12.8-14.0 cm and heights between 6.8-7.6 cm, and (b) large carinated bowls with heights greater than 15 cm and orifice diameters ranging between 23.8-26.6 cm (Vessels A and H). The latter vessels are comparable to Titus phase carinated bowls at the Mockingbird site with volumes greater than 2-4 liters (Perttula 1998a:218). The carinated bowls have rounded and exterior rolled out lips.

The two small carinated bowls have Ripley Engraved scroll motifs on the rim (cf. Thurmond 1990:Figure 6b); the design motif is repeated four times around the rim. The scroll dividers and fillers are cross-hatched and excised, and traces of a white pigment were preserved in the engraved lines of Vessel D (Figure 17), while Vessel F had red pigment smeared in the engraved design (Figure 18).

The large Ripley Engraved carinated bowls have the scroll and circle motif (cf. Thurmond 1990:Figure 6c) repeated four times around the rim, with cross-hatched engraved and excised fillers along the scroll and in the central circle element. Vessel A had a red pigment in the engraved lines (Figure 19). Vessel H has a well-preserved deep red slip (Figure 20) on both interior and exterior vessel surfaces.

It is possible that the engraved "circle" in the central part of the motif is not a circle at all, but a representation of a peyote button (see Tunnell 2000: Figure 1). When I showed the pottery design (cf. Thurmond 1990:Figure 6c, e) to the late Curtis Tunnell, an expert on peyote ceremonialism in Texas, he commented that it "looks like a candidate for peyote symbolism to me. I believe any member of the Native American Church, or any Huichole, would immediately say Peyote if they saw those designs" (Curtis Tunnell, July 6, 2000 e-mail to the author). Bobby Gonzalez of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma, and several elders of the Nation, have also commented on the close similarity between these particular Ripley Engraved designs and peyote buttons.

Figure 17. Ripley engraved carinated bowl, Vessel D.

Figure 18. Vessel F carinated bowl.

Figure 19. Large engraved carinated bowl, Vessel A.

Figure 20. Red-slipped engraved carinated bowl (Vessel H).

If this is correct, it clearly suggests that as early as the 15th century A.D. (if not earlier), the Caddo peoples living in northeastern Texas were familiar with peyote and probably with peyote ceremonialism. It also suggests that the Caddo, either through intermediaries or through pilgrimages of their own, had knowledge of or had journeyed to the peyote gardens in southern Texas (Tunnell 2000: Figure 2) long before they had the horse. Spanish missionaries do describe the use of peyote by Caddo shaman in the early 18th centuries (Swanton 1942:121), and it is possible that the history of peyote use and ceremonies by the Caddo reached back several hundred years earlier, specifically to the mid-15th century by the Titus phase Caddo peoples.

Daub/Burned Clay

Only a handful of pieces of daub/burned clay were recovered in the archeological investigations at the Burks site. The 66 pieces from the surface collections and limited hand excavations indicate that there are no burned structures at the site. The few pieces that were found probably are the product of outdoor cooking activities and the cleaning of clay-lined hearths.

Lithic Artifacts

The lithic artifacts from the Burks site include 121 pieces of lithic debris (73 pieces solely from the surface collection), 94 small pieces of fire-cracked rock (82 from the surface collection), and six flake tools; half of the flake tools came from the excavated units in the habitation area. Not much on-site chipped stone knapping of lithic raw materials took place at the site—given the very low density of chipping debris—and most of that was apparently designed to produce expedient tools from suitable flakes for the occasional butchering of large game animals (i.e., deer). If the fire-cracked rock is part of the Titus phase occupation—and not the product of an earlier prehistoric occupation—then some hot rock cooking probably took place at the site as a supplement to the direct heat cooking of foods using ceramic cooking jars.

Faunal Remains, *by Bonnie C. Yates*

A total of 163 faunal elements were recovered in the midden excavations, the majority (51 percent) from Feature 1. The following animal species have been identified in the small sample: snapping turtle (n=2), box turtle (n=3), turtle (n=8), channel catfish (n=1), deer (n=9), rabbit (either swamp or jack rabbit) (n=1), and turkey (n=1). At least two deer are represented in the Feature 1 sample, and deer and deer-sized elements were also common in the fauna from the units in the habitation areas. About 47 percent of the bone had been burned—from blackened to calcined—particularly the deer and deer-sized faunal elements.

Plant Remains

Two flotation samples were obtained from the Burks site, one from midden deposits in Unit 3 (7.1 liters) and the other from Feature 1, Unit 4, 45-55 cm bs. Only a small amount of nutshell was recovered from either the light or heavy fractions, including 22 Hickory (*Carya* sp.) nutshells weighing 1.0 g and two Oak (*Quercus* sp.) nutshells (weighing <0.1 g). More extensive flotation analyses of the contents of the middens and features at Burks would undoubtedly recover charred corn cobs, cupules, and kernels, along

with larger samples of nutshells and an occasional seed, as these types of plant remains are relatively common in Titus phase contexts (Dering 2005; Perttula 1998, 2005).

Summary and Conclusions

The M. W. Burks site is a Late Caddoan period (ca. A.D. 1430-1680) habitation site that was investigated in 1978 as an adjunct to the Lake Fork Reservoir project being conducted by archaeologists from Southern Methodist University. During the course of the work done almost 30 years ago, a large area was plowed and systematically surface-collected, a few small units were hand-excavated in the domestic archeological deposits (associated with several middens), and a single burial was investigated from the associated family cemetery at the Late Caddoan period habitation.

The Burks site is well-preserved, with two middens marking areas of trash disposal, as well as two others that are probable house clusters. The cemetery was situated south of the residential areas (see Figure 10).

Ceramic sherds are particularly abundant at the site—where vessels must have been used for cooking, food storage, holding liquids, and serving foods—and the styles of decoration found on the sherds, especially the Ripley Engraved fineware and the many red-slipped vessels, indicate that the occupation was by Caddo peoples affiliated with what archaeologists call the Titus phase (see Perttula 2004:396-407). The Titus phase Caddo peoples were a series of kin-related agricultural peoples (relying on production from rain-fed fields, see Doolittle 2001: Table 5.1), that lived in the Pineywoods and Post Oak Savanna of northeastern Texas, and had a complex religious and political life. Calibrated radiocarbon dates on Titus phase sites span the period from ca. A.D. 1430-1680, or perhaps a generation or two later. We were not able to obtain any radiocarbon dates from the Burks site, but based on the specific Ripley Engraved motifs on the vessels as well as the frequency of red-slipped pottery, it seems likely that the Caddo occupation took place in the 15th and 16th centuries, perhaps ending in the early 1500s.

The Burks site was a Caddo site occupied year-round by one or two groups of Caddo families. The range of domestic materials recovered in the trash midden areas and probable house clusters, along with limited evidence from other contemporaneous Titus phase settlements of structure rebuilding, suggests that this site was occupied perhaps only one or two generations at a time. The Caddo settlement here would have then been moved to another area nearby where farming was possible. Small family cemeteries tended to occur on such small settlements. The wide distribution of artifacts across the site—whether found associated with the middens—suggests that during the Caddo occupation at the Burks site, many activities by the adults and children that lived there took place outside the houses. These outside areas would have been marked by trash-filled pits, hearths, and posts. There may also have been ramadas, arbors, and granaries in these areas where food was processed and stored, and the people went about their daily life, now more than 500 years ago.

We were fortunate to have been presented with the opportunity to conduct archaeological research at the M. W. Burks site. Through that opportunity in 1978 we were first able to learn something new about the spatial organization and composition of a Titus phase domestic habitation site, and also gain a better understanding and appreciation of the material items (especially the ceramic vessels) that the Caddo peoples made and used while they lived at the site. We have barely scratched the surface, literally, of the archaeological deposits at the M. W. Burks site, and the site still holds tremendous research potential. We

hope that future archaeologists will return to the Burks site to try to learn more about the Titus phase Caddo peoples that lived there.

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