

9-6-2012

Reconstructing Ohio's Ancient Past One Pot Sherd at a Time

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Recommended Citation

Cline, Mack; Jones, Caitlin; and Magnone, Anthony, "Reconstructing Ohio's Ancient Past One Pot Sherd at a Time" (2012).
Undergraduate Research Posters 2012. 15.

https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/u_poster_2012/15

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Reconstructing Ohio's Ancient Past One Pot Sherd at a Time

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Department of Anthropology

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Abstract

The primary focus of our research was to analyze, conserve, and reconstruct ancient prehistoric pottery from the Cramer Village Site, a Fort Ancient-era (AD 900-1200) site located on the west bank of the Scioto River in Union Township, Ross County, Ohio. By examining several key diagnostic features, such as surface treatment, temper, and cord-marking, we were able to positively determine the age and cultural affiliation of the Cramer Village pottery housed in the Department of Anthropology. As part of this research, more than 2,500 prehistoric ceramic sherds were carefully examined, cleaned, sorted, and matched in an attempt to reconstruct specific vessel shapes and forms. Some 45 diagnostic rim sherds were identified and most of these sherds closely match and correspond to known early Fort Ancient ceramic types. These sherds revealed many interesting surface features including incising, cord-marking, and even painted surfaces. Our analysis of the Cramer Village ceramics should significantly contribute to a more precise understanding and interpretation of Fort Ancient ceramic typology, thus shedding new light on Ohio's ancient past.