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## Current Research: Update on the Hodges Collection of Native American Artifacts

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## Current Research: Update on the Hodges Collection of Native American Artifacts

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# Current Research:

## Update on the Hodges Collection of Native American Artifacts

**Mary Beth Trubitt**

Arkansas Archeological Survey

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During the 1930s and 1940s, Thomas and Charlotte Hodges of Bismarck, Arkansas, surface collected and excavated artifacts from archaeological sites in Arkansas. Most came from ancestral Caddo sites in the Middle Ouachita River valley in Clark and Hot Spring counties, with a small portion originating from Southeast Arkansas sites. The Hodgeses, along with Vere Huddleston and Robert Proctor of Arkadelphia, were amateur archeologists at a time when there were few professional archeologists working in the state. Philip Phillips of Harvard University photographed some of the Hodges and Huddleston collections during his 1939 Ouachita River Valley survey, and Alex Krieger from the University of Texas photographed artifacts from the Hodges, Huddleston, and Proctor collections, using some to illustrate a typology of Caddo pottery (Suhm and Jelks 1962) that we still employ today.

In 1977, the Joint Educational Consortium, Inc. (JEC), a cooperative venture between Henderson State University (HSU) and Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, acquired the Hodges Collection (which by that point included Huddleston's collection). Since 1977, it has been curated by the Arkansas Archeological Survey's HSU research station staff. We have inventoried, photographed, and documented objects, published research articles, and created educational exhibits from this large collection (Early 1986). Ann Early was able to use the Hodges catalog and Huddleston's notebooks (plus Phillips's photographs) to link some of the artifacts to known archaeological sites in the Arkansas state site file system. As we have finished detailed documentation of whole and partial ceramic vessels in the collection, we have begun publishing this information in the *Caddo Archeology Journal* (Trubitt 2017, 2019; Trubitt and Evans 2015). The Hodges catalog describes individual artifacts and site locations; Huddleston left more detailed notes that we have used to reconstruct grave lots from sites he collected.

One of the main purposes of our vessel documentation has been to advise the JEC as they consult with the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma about the collection. In the spirit of cooperation, the JEC transferred 59 lots of human bone, and 43 vessels and 70 other artifacts that could reasonably be identified as associated funerary objects, to the Arkansas Archeological Survey's Coordinating Office in Fayetteville in 2017 for Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) documentation. Formal notices of NAGPRA inventory completion have now been published in the Federal Register (2019a, 2019b).

Henderson State University is committed to the on-going stewardship and preservation of this significant historical collection. Using university funding and grants from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council, HSU is rehabilitating the historic Caddo Center building on campus. The main hallway is finished as a permanent space for storage and interpretation of the JEC Hodges Collection, and there is a classroom for interpretation, museum studies, and anthropology classes.

In 2019, we moved much of the JEC Hodges Collection artifacts from closed curation to "open curation" in the Caddo Center (Figure 1), using the University of Arkansas Museum Collections Facility in Fayetteville as our model. Open curation (also known as open storage or visible storage), makes the collection more accessible to university students and faculty, local residents, researchers, members of descendant communities, and other interested visitors while maintaining a secure, climate-controlled facility. During the move, we completed a re-inventory of the collection (Table 1). The total artifact count is lower than the 1995 inventory of ca. 50,000 objects, in part because in 2019 we counted "sherd lots" as unreconstructed partial vessels, rather than as individual sherds. In addition, I have used information from Hodges and



Figure 1. Museum studies intern Rae'Shawn Jones installs artifacts in the Caddo Center, March 2019 (Arkansas Archeological Survey photograph).

Huddleston records to identify the context of objects in the collection. Overall, 28 percent of the artifacts can be linked to specific archaeological sites, with 72 percent of unknown provenience. The majority of the whole, partial, and reconstructed pottery vessels have known site provenience, and 3 percent of the vessels have been identified as associated funerary objects, 21 percent as unassociated funerary objects, and 76 percent from unspecified contexts.

Publication of the artifact documentation continues. To date, detailed descriptions of 237 ceramic vessels have been published. John House and I are preparing a journal article that describes 12 vessels, partial vessels, and ceramic effigy fragments in the JEC Hodges Collection from the Menard-Hodges mound site (3AR4) in Arkansas County. An additional 100 or so vessels collected by Huddleston will be described with available information on context in a future paper.

With a small grant from the Arkansas Archeological Survey's Hester Davis Fund, Teka McGlothlin and Sarah Shepard (Arkansas Archeological Survey, Coordinating Office) came to Arkadelphia in November 2019 to use innovative 3D scanning



Figure 2. Teka McGlothlin and Sarah Shepard demonstrate 3D scanning process to Professor David Sesser's museum studies class, November 2019 (Arkansas Archeological Survey photograph).

technology to document a set of effigy vessels in the Hodges Collection for further research and interpretation (Figure 2). The Arkansas Archeological Survey's 3D digital imaging lab has been funded in part by the Roy and Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust. The team documented 36 of the most unique and fragile objects in the collection with high-resolution 3D models. This work builds on previous 3D scanning of Caddo ceramics from Texas sites by Robert Z. Selden (2016).

Currently, we are preparing grant proposals to fund the development of interpretive materials in several different media. Our goal is to use 21st century technology to engage with students and visitors to the Caddo Center as well as to connect using the Internet with those who cannot travel to Arkadelphia. We plan to explain the significance of the Hodges Collection and use the objects to educate visitors about past and present Caddo Indians.

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Category		Associated Funerary Object	Unassociated Funerary Object	Unknown Context	Total
Ceramic Vessels:	Provenienced	40	288	656	984
	Unknown Prov.	3	3	381	387
	Total	43	291	1037	1371
Other Ceramics:	Provenienced	1	27	6435	6463
	Unknown Prov.	0	0	11558	11558
	Total	1	27	17993	18021
Chipped Stone:	Provenienced	4	10	2642	2656
	Unknown Prov.	0	0	13663	13663
	Total	4	10	16305	16319
Ground Stone:	Provenienced	3	5	181	189
	Unknown Prov.	0	1	1063	1064
	Total	3	6	1244	1253
Animal Bone, Fossils:	Provenienced	5	15	170	190
	Unknown Prov.	0	0	173	173
	Total	5	15	343	363
Shell:	Provenienced	55	15	22	92
	Unknown Prov.	0	0	421	421
	Total	55	15	443	513
Minerals, Historic, Wood:	Provenienced	2	4	180	186
	Unknown Prov.	0	0	512	512
	Total	2	4	692	698
TOTALS:		113	368	38057	38538

Note: Associated Funerary Objects were transferred to ARAS-CO for NAGPRA documentation in 2017.

Table 1. Context of Inventoried Artifacts, JEC Hodges Collection.

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