

Section IX:

Primitive Vessels of clay

No other artifacts portray as much information about the prehistory of North America than the utilitarian and decorative clay vessels of the Mississippian period. It is postulated that pottery vessels began to appear in the Late Archaic period approximately 3000 BP. Clay fired pottery vessels became standard ware by the time of the Adena people in 2500 BP.; continuing into the Hopewell Late Woodland period 2000BP to 1600 BP.

By 950 BP, the Mississippians began an agrarian lifestyle and pottery vessels became an important trait. Many utilitarian items such as plates, bowls and jars were part of every family assembly. Preceded by clay lined basketry; fired vessels of clay held food items, medicinal herbs and most important became a source of portable water. Adornos (figural effigies attached to the rims of bowls) illustrated ancient artistic talent for depicting exacting and stylized representations of the creatures surrounding the populous.

The first color pottery decoration is a solid red embellishment called "Old Town Red". Later a combination of Red and White is known as Nodena Red on white. Late in the Mississippian period, polychrome decorations of Red and White with addition of black; is called polychrome (meaning many colors). Polychrome was introduced by the

Quapaw of Arkansas and Mississippi. Other forms of decoration included the application of surface engraving and incising. A variety of decorative themes included mythical icons. Mississippians produced Walls and Rhodes engraved in Arkansas and Mississippi while thin walled pottery was being produced by the Caddo in Oklahoma and Texas.

Mississippians are renown for numerous full figured effigies of humans, animals and the "Head Vases" that appeared during this six hundred year primitive lifespan. Interestingly, each region had its own distinctive pottery styling. These traits enable students and scholars to identify the locus and origin of the specific artwork. Unique styling such as diamond shaped eyes on human effigies come from Upper Missouri and the large thighs and hips on vessels come from the Bradley site in Arkansas. Some pottery vessels are extremely distinctive and unusual.

Few replicas were crafted until the shut-down of illegal wholesale excavation in the Mississippi Valley during the late 1980's. A number of persons currently have reproduced previously discovered examples; adding a little creativity of their own, developing unknown rarities for the collector market. Of course, none have stood the test of time!

Unworthy Pottery vessels



Fig. UWP#1: The premier specimen in any ceramic collection is the "Head" vase. These are high dollar pieces with the best examples reaching mid-five figures. This one traveled to Europe and back and was published in an archaeological journal. Sold @ \$5000



Fig. UWP#2: Next to the "Head" vase, the full figure Human effigy water bottle ranks #2. Add paint and the rarity goes up. This one is not Quapaw as represented, especially with a "Chipmunk" face! Sold @ \$3000



Fig.UWP#3: This is one of the new breed of replicas that have appeared since the introduction of the 1989 laws. The imagination is outstanding. All of these are grayware. Sold @ \$1500

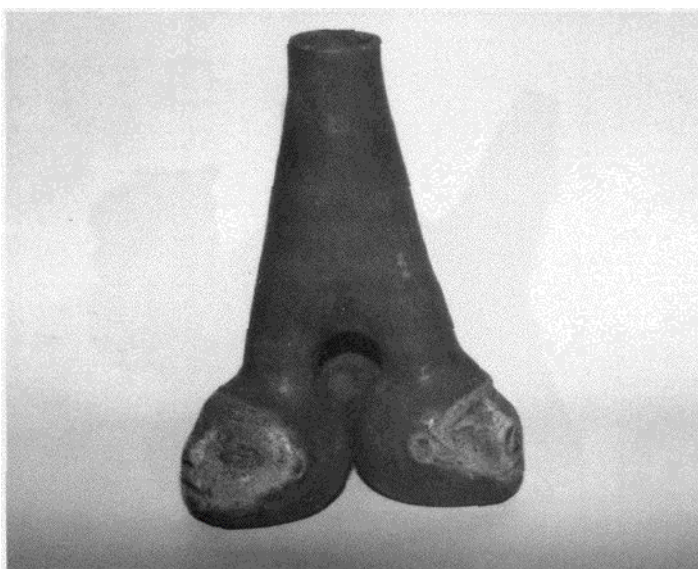


Fig.UWP: A Quapaw Tripodal effigy base painted vessel? Not exactly, the three head effigies each have a different expression, and the paint is straight out of Sherwin Williams. Enough said. Sold @ \$2500

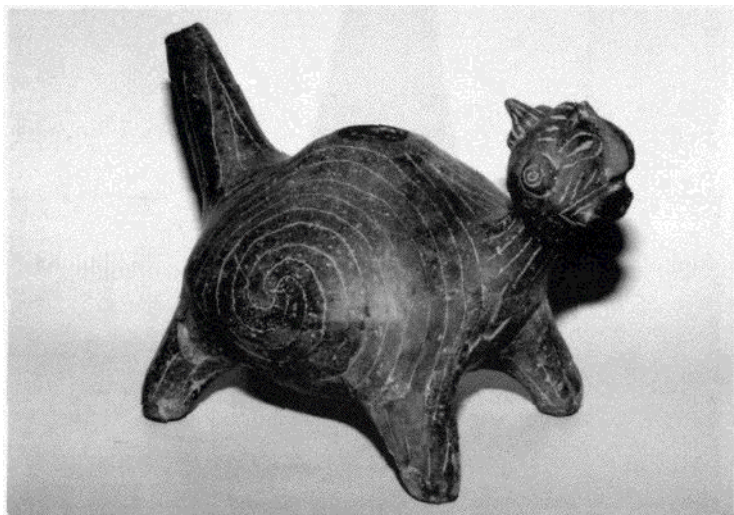


Fig.: UWP#5: Old Town Red is seldom seen with white decor, this animal head vase/bottle has too many strange things going on; the facial expression is odd, the engraving is wrong as is the human ears that adorn this replication of something, Raccoon? Sold @ \$1500



Fig.UWP#6: Human? Animal? Quapaw Teapot! None of the above. Walls engraved? Too much going on and a face that never was seen before, all on one item! That's what makes it rare. Sold @ \$3000



Fig.UWP#7: This bowl has two facing felines of some kind. They are not the style used in Mississippian vessels, nor any other in Prehistoric America. Beware of smiling cats! Sold @ \$2500



Fig. UWP#8: Who ever saw a Pink & white human effigy water bottle? Even Red & White is scarce! The medallion face on a full figure with hands on knees is strange. Sold @ \$3500



Fig.UWP#9: This Kaolin white painted "Head Vase" has an expression that is unreal when compared to authentic pottery vessels of the Mississippi Valley. This one was passed down from generations, unfortunately is not correct. Sold @ \$500

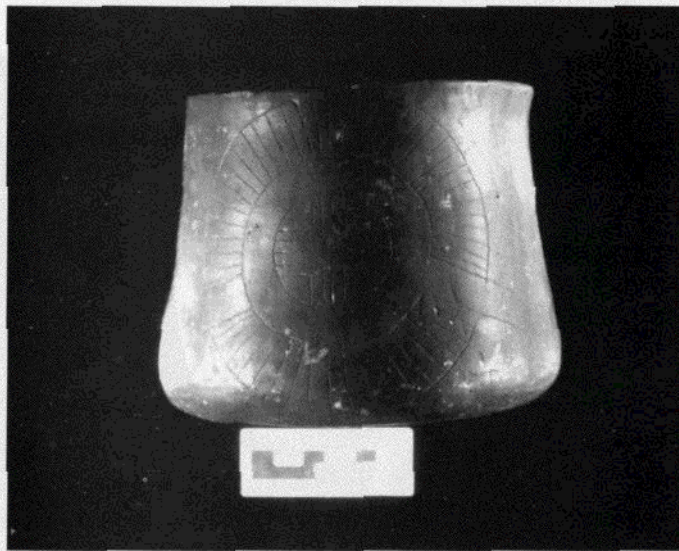


Fig.UWP#10: A handled Bean Pot from Cahokia, minus the handle? We think not. The paint was thick and looked like it belonged on a barn. The engraving was right out of "Sun Circles". Even the inside was painted with brown. Sold @ \$850



Fig.UWP#1 I: The spotted standing Fawn is a subject that appeals to art collectors, artifact collectors and decorators, however this image is very rare and this is not one of the authentic ones. Sold @ \$4500



Fig.UW#12: Quapaw polychrome (many colors) pottery is highly collectible. Unfortunately, a very small amount of it is on the market. This gave rise to reproduction, with almost accurate colors. This one is crudely painted and wrong. Sold @ \$2000

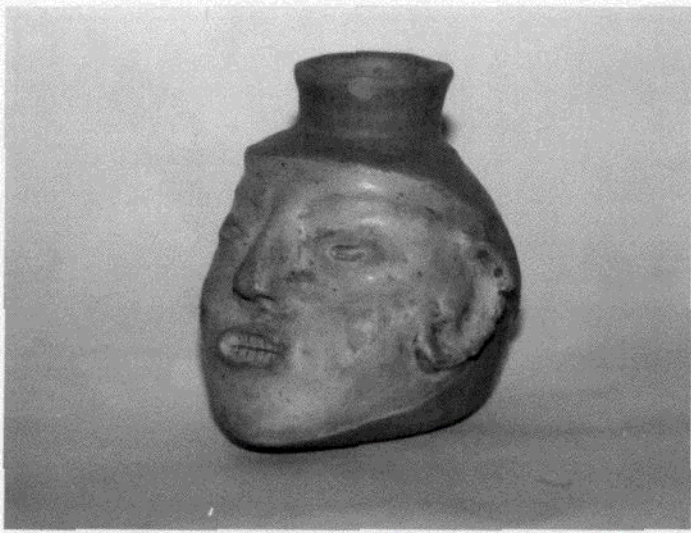


Fig.UWP#13: The Head Vase" pottery is the most expensive in terms of the collector market. This one has bad paint and wrong features, yet the dealer asked \$10000 for it. The wholesale cost is about \$400-500



Fig.UWP#14: Polychrome Quapaw is in demand. This example is probably the work of the same maker as UPW#12. The same mistakes were made again and again. They still sell to the unsuspecting. Sold @ \$2250

Authentic Prehistoric Pottery Vessels



Fig.AP/PVI: Unusual styling for a jar, the wide raised rim of this "Turtle" effigy bowl features a black slip inside as well as a polished grayware slip outside. 8" wide, formerly in the James Durham collection and from Mississippi County, Arkansas.



Fig.AP/PV2: Nicely formed Spool neck Caddo Hodges engraved Water bottle, has a high burnished slip with red ochre filled lines, from Clay county, Arkansas; it measures 7" in height. Value \$ 850-1000



Fig.AP/PV3: This neat Bell plain grayware jar features a "Frog" effigy applied to the vessel. The upturned face and eyes of the frog are well modeled. Measures 7" and from Poinsett Co., Arkansas. Value range \$550-750



Fig.AP/PV4: More rare than animal or reptile jars is the "Head" type jar where the " Opossum" nose, mouth, eyes and ears are depicted as an intricate part of the vessel. Neely's Ferry grayware 9" in length, from St. Francis County, Arkansas. Value range \$850-\$1000



Fig.AP/PV5: A large Lamar engraved handled pottery Jar from the Oconee Basin near Hancock County, Georgia. 9" diameter.

Ex.Baggerley, Stroud collections. Value range **\$1500-2000**



Fig. APIPV6: A very unusual Mississippian water bottle, Nodena white on red. The strange part is the fluted segments at all four directions, it measures 9" in height. Value range \$12001500



Fig.AP/PV7: The hooded rattlesnake head is indigenous to the Mississippians, this one from Western Kentucky has an unusual serpentine head design style, negative paint and measures 9 1/2". Value range \$2000-2500



Fig.AP/PV8: This short spool necked [Mellon](#) vessel is decorated in the typical "Mellon" or Gourd design of alternating Red and white stripes vertically surrounding the pleasing vessel. Value range \$850-1000

Fig.AP/PV9: This is a very unusual pottery grayware bowl with a Human face adorno with a Bear skin hat, Mace effigy on reverse side.Crittenden Co.,Arkansas. Value range \$30003500()

Fig.AP/PVIO: This spool neck Caddo water bottle features Haley engraved design. Found in Clay County, Arkansas, it was formerly in the Kinker collection. Value range \$30003500





Fig.AP/PV 11: The hooded effigy water bottle is unique to the Mississippians. This grayware effigy "Human face" also has some animal characteristics, Mississippi, Arkansas, Ex.Morast, Berner.Value range \$750-950



Fig.APIPVI2: Most rare is the "Bear effigy hooded water bottle in grayware. Seldom are they this well done. Poinsett county, Arkansas, this one is from the Kinker collection. Value range \$850-\$1200



Fig.AP/PVI3: Old "Scarfac&' is rare indeed. Painted Red on Buff and incised with designs, the modeling of this artifact is unique. Found in the upper Arkansas river valley. Caldwell collection. Value:Museum quality.



Fig.AP/IV 14.1 he geolilcilie iul chrome water bottle is from the pueblo period and is much earlier in time than painted vessels of the Mississippian period or Quapaw. This fine vessel is from the Johnson collection. Value range \$2500-3000



Fig.AP/PVh: .\ uc \111J1w1 11Cft \i'c only about 100 authentic, genuine artifacts as such exist. This one is buffware with red paint and perforated earlobes. Dr.Cherry Collection. Value range Museum quality.



Fig.AP/PVI6: This Caddo tall neck Waterbottle has deep incised designs called "Rhodes engraved". These fine vessels were made by hand. Value range \$3000-3500



Fig.APIPV 17: 1 hi Miinhic lxv I i cxccliulla!!\ nice since the release hole did not damage the central image. This is a highly sought effigy artifact. Value range \$2500-3000()



li.AP/I\ I : [\c decided](#) i the Mississippian culture. This Red on Buffware artifact is also heavily incised with decorations. Dr.Cherry collection. Museum quality.



Fig.AP/PVI9: This is one of the most simple forms, the short neck water bottle. This one is Bell plain; a highly polished surface and comes from Arkansas in Mississippi County. Value range **\$150-300**



Fig.AP/PV20: The Human Female Effigy atcrhottIc is

unique. This particular one from Crittenden, Arkansas has a roman nose, breasts, pendulous arms and vertebrae exposed.

Value range \$2000-3000



Fig.AP/PV21: This "Hooded Effigy"waterbottle portrays the human countenance with face only. This Bell plain vessel is only 5" in height and formerly in the Kinker, Berner, Nicholson collection. Value range \$1000-1200



Fig.AP/PV22: The strap handle jar of grit tempered pottery is typical of the Ft.Ancient style from the Ohio river valley and previously in the Dr.Gordon F. Meuser collection. Carroll collection, Value range \$850-\$ 1000



Fig.AP/PV23: Another "Hooded Effigy" water bottle with the effigy of a baby Bear, this artifact is from Clay County, Arkansas and formerly in the F.W. Morast Jr., Berner collection. Value range \$750-b00



Fig.AP/PV24: Highly unusual Human Effigy from Girardeau, Missouri; buffware; half painted white, genitals, etc.formerly in the Hathcock, Hampson, Rowlett, Berner collections.

Value range \$6500-\$7500