



## The Archeological Campaign of 1937: Williams Site

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Article Summary: This is one of a series of 1937 archeological site reports that can be accessed individually. The series includes: [Ashland Site](#), [Pawnee Creek Site](#), [Cornish Site](#), [Fontenelle Forest Site](#), [North Plattsmouth Site](#), [Majors Site](#), [Williams Site](#), [Heywood Site](#), [Osborne Site](#), [Whitten Site](#), [Morehead Site](#), [Indian Cave](#), [McKissick Site](#), [Conclusion](#).

Cataloging Information:

Photographs / Images: restored pot, incised pottery

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## WILLIAMS SITE

During the course of work on the Majors Site our attention was called to the presence of cultural material in a work road cut on the farm of C. D. Williams, and, at the suggestion of the owner, our next investigation was made there. The road had been cut through the terrace margin on the west bank of Duck Creek, a now dry tributary of the Missouri River, exposing on both sides a deposit two feet in depth, from which several pottery fragments had been removed. Excavation was carried from the road in both directions to a depth sufficient to remove the culture-bearing stratum and to expose any disturbances beneath its base.

The soil of this layer, containing sherds, flint, bone, stone, and charcoal, had the appearance of refuse,

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45. Cooper 1936, pp. 64-65-66 and Plate XXXIV, 2, 3.

46. Strong, 1935, Plate XI, 2, f.

47. Gilder, 1914.

48. Ibid, p. 67.



# PLATE XIX

1. Restored pot, Williams Site. Height  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches greatest diameter,  $11\frac{5}{8}$  inches.
2. Incised pottery, Williams Site.



strongly suggesting that this was a midden deposit rather than a general occupation area. Beneath it were seven pits, usually rather shallow, which contained material of the same nature. Owing to the similarity of soil it was impossible to determine whether or not the pits extended above the base of the general zone of refuse, so that it is even possible they were sunk from the level of the present surface. There is no doubt, however, that the materials recovered from all parts of the excavation pertain to a single cultural complex.

The pits, invariably round, ranged in diameter from 40 to 52 inches and in depth from 8 to 37 inches beneath the base of the cultural level. Their basin-shaped floors and shallowness fostered the supposition that they were merely the lower portions of considerably deeper cache-pits whose upper portions could not be distinguished from the surrounding soil.

### *Pottery*

The pottery, of which there are 127 rim and handle and 1467 body sherds, appears, despite certain variant features, to be basically similar to that previously found in Nebraska aspect sites, especially those away from the Missouri River. The characteristic form appears to be globular with a moderately flaring rim of widely varying height (Plate XIX, 1). A very low inconspicuous rim occurs more frequently than is usual, and very high rims are rare. Handles include 18 of loop type, most commonly broad and invariably extending from the lip to the body below the neck, and one tongue-like unperforated lug. Seventeen sherds represent the occurrence of a usually narrow collar, with which handles are never associated, and a rimless bowl is indicated by three fragments. The color of the exterior surface, which has been roughened with a wrapped paddle and usually smoothed on about 60 per cent of the sherds, varies from gray through brown to orange-red; this last color is more frequent than usual. Associated especially with



the lighter colors is a gritty feel to the surfaces caused by the outcropping of fine tempering material.

This ware is most commonly undecorated, and what little decoration does occur is usually crudely executed. Of the direct rims 18 have diagonal incisions across the lip and one is notched on the rim exterior immediately below the lip. Designs on the collared rims are various, consisting of incised horizontal, cross-hatched and diagonal lines, and in one instance, scalloping at the lower margin of the collar. Those without incised decoration are invariably roughened with a cord-wrapped paddle. Body decoration is confined to a small number of sherds, one of which is part of a bowl on which rectilinear designs are crudely incised. Several fragments, including nearly the complete rim of an unusual vessel of medium size, were recovered from one of the pits. Its high flaring rim and flattish shoulder area are covered with light incised designs composed of zigzag bands interspersed with horizontal lines, and two small opposite loop handles are attached to the rim and neck (Plate XIX, 2). The brown, smoke-blackened outer surface, which is paddled and smoothed, has a hardness of about 5.0, and the walls of the shoulder area are extremely thin, ranging from 1/16 to 1/8 inch.

Pottery clay provided the material for each of the four pipes recovered. Two and possibly a third are of the obtuse-angle elbow type, but one of them is peculiar in having a hole bored into the bowl at the inner side of the angle, probably after a portion of the stem had been cut or broken off. This supplementary perforation was presumably intended for the insertion of a stem. These three specimens are undecorated except for a crude incised line encircling the bowl of the one last described. Owing to its broken condition the complete form of the fourth, an effigy pipe, is not certain, but it was probably tubular, and the bowl end appears to have been modeled to represent an animal's head.

Aside from pottery the only artifacts found were of stone, for none of the extremely rare bone and shell fragments appear to have been worked. The end scrapers are of the usual variable forms, but the arrowpoints, triangular or with slightly convex sides, are never notched. They are, however, of the type common in Nebraska culture sites rather than the small delicately chipped points characteristic of the late cultures in the area. Less numerous are knives and scrapers of roughly elliptical, ovate or lunate forms.

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