

Website Art Hunt: Hodges Engraved Caddo Headpot



Search Historic Arkansas Museum's online collection for this object. Now, answer the following questions about it.

Where was it found? _____ What is it made of? _____

This Caddo head pot is unique. The facial features are rendered in a stylized, minimalist fashion similar to a small number of faces found on other Caddo vessel types in southwest Arkansas. The design evokes decorations on East Arkansas Mississippian head pots, but the engraved rendering is unique to the Caddo. The design encircling the left eye is found incised on east Arkansas head pots, and on human heads and figures rendered in other Mississippian media, including engraved shell and copper. The figure can be understood as a bird wing, or a raptor with folded wings, or a human hand with fingers pointing down, or all simultaneously. The location of the engraving with the eye in the center of the palm creates the well-known "eye in hand" motif. The multilayered meanings of the motif, along with engraved panels elsewhere on the head, convey information about death, the afterlife, and the spirit world. Eye-in-hand motifs in some situations represent the portal in the night sky through which human souls gain entry to the upper world and to their final home in the village of souls found at the end of the star path we call the Milky Way.

Read on to learn some Fast Facts, Explore and create a coil pot of your own...

Frameworks: Frameworks:H.12.1.3, D2.His.2.K-2, G.11.3.1, D2.Geo.11.3-5

Historic Arkansas Museum is a historic site museum, interpreting the territorial and early statehood periods of Arkansas. For other educational materials, including videos, online tours and more, visit our website or our Facebook page.



200 E. 3rd Street • Little Rock, AR 72201
501-324-9351 • HistoricArkansas.org

Find us on:  facebook.  @HistoricArk  @HistoricArk



FAST FACTS: The Caddo are first mentioned in written history in 1542 when the Hernando de Soto expedition enters their nation on the journey through Southwest Arkansas. The leader of each Caddo community is called the *caddi*.

EXPLORE: Take a closer look at the head pot. What do you see first? _____

How would you describe this piece of pottery to someone who isn't looking at it? _____

VOCABULARY

Head Pot- a rare form of Native American pottery found almost exclusively in Northeast Arkansas and the bootheel of Missouri

Coil Pot- pottery made by stacking and joining coils of clay on top of each other

ENGAGE: Make Your Own Coil Pot!

Native American pottery was formed by coil construction. Coil pots were difficult to make. Use the instructions below to try to make a coil pot. Because of the deep spirituality associated with Native American head pots, we ask that you please be respectful and do not try to replicate this form and make your own head pot. These vessels were sacred and should be studied and admired, but not recreated.

Play Dough Ingredients

- 1 cup of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 1 cup of water

Combine ingredients into a bowl. Knead until smooth.

Step One - Knead the clay between your hands for a minute or two before shaping it.

Step Two - Make the base. Roll a chunk of clay into a ball, place it on a work surface and then flatten it with your hand. It should be about ¼" thick.

Step Three - Make your first coil. Start with a chunk of clay shaped like a thick sausage. With the tips of your fingers, gently roll the clay back and forth while at the same time slowly moving your hands outward. This is the secret to getting the most consistent coil thickness. Roll the coil until it is about ¼" thick.

Step Four - Attach the coil to the base. Start by wrapping the coil around the base. When you reach the starting point of the coil you can either trim it to make one loop or continue wrapping the coil on top of the first layer.

Step Five - Use your fingertip to gently blend and smooch the coil to the base. It is important to make sure the different coils are securely attached to each other or they will separate when dried.

Step Six - Continue adding more coils until you reach the height you desire.

