

## LOCAL INDIAN CERAMICS

This area was occupied very early - 8,000 BC or earlier. The early residents came to this area because of the abundant food resource provided by Galveston Bay. It is not known how many different groups came here but the last group to occupy the Seabrook area arrived in about 300 BC and remained until just after 1800 AD. They entered the historical records as the "Orcoquisac" Indians. The more famous Karankwa Indians lived further south along the Texas coast.

The name, "Orcoquisac", is derived from the Caddo language which was the 'lingua franca' of this area at that time. It translates into "river people." The spelling of their name varies depending on who was doing the recording but the Spaniards, who had a lot of interaction with the local Indians, spelled their name 'ORCOQUISAC.' All of the Indian pottery displayed here comes from an Orcoquisac site near Seabrook.

The Orcoquisac were a fairly advanced group of people, probably because of their association with the considerably advanced Caddo (i.e., cities and agriculture) to the immediate north. The technology of ceramics did not enter this area until about 100 AD, which is the same time that the bow and arrow appeared. Indian ceramics were produced in the La Porte-Seabrook-Kemah vicinity from approximately 100 AD until about 1600 AD, at which time it became easy to obtain metal pots and/or Anglo ceramics.

Archeologists divide Indian ceramics into categories by decoration and tempering agent. Decoration means either the color added to the ceramic or the design imprinted or incised into the unbaked clay. Tempering agent means the material added to the clay so that it would not crack while being heated. Unfortunately, nobody has been able to deduce any characteristic that would indicate more specifically the time span of specific types of Indian pottery. That is, sometimes bone tempered pottery appeared before sand tempered pottery, and some times it was the other way. It is not unusual to find a little bit of all types of tempering agent at a single site.

Decoration is of no help in determining a time of production but it can be a useful indicator of the region of origin. For example, along the southern coast of Texas one can find pottery decorated with asphaltum (because asphaltum was available). In far west Texas and on into New Mexico, one can find exotically decorated pottery and an impressive display of firing technique - highly ornate. Local pottery is more utilitarian in nature and generally tempered with sand. Most of it belongs to a category called "Goose Creek". It can be Goose Creek Plain (i.e., no decoration) or Goose Creek Incised where decoration is scratched into the pot before baking