

TEMPORAL TRENDS IN NATIVE CERAMIC TRADITIONS OF THE LOWER CATAWBA RIVER VALLEY

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Bennie Keel's 1972 work at Upper Sauratown was the opening salvo of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology's 30-year Siouan Project, which continues under the guise of the ongoing Catawba Project. Keel's early work at the protohistoric Hardins and early historic era Belk Farm sites in the Catawba River Valley continues to inform the current phase of Piedmont Siouan research. This study compares and contrasts Keel's Hardins and Belk Farm ceramic assemblages with those from the later Catawba sites of Nassaw Town, Old Town, and New Town to achieve a diachronic view of Catawba ceramic development. This comparison reveals a long span of stylistic and technological continuity abruptly terminated by rapid emergence of the modern Catawba ceramic tradition between 1760 and 1770.

During his 10 years with University of North Carolina's (UNC) Research Laboratories of Anthropology (now Archaeology) (RLA), Bennie C. Keel revolutionized archaeological fieldwork and analysis in North Carolina. His landmark investigations in the southern Appalachians established a regional cultural sequence that remains robustly applicable after 30 years of subsequent research (see Keel 1976). Keel's work on southern Appalachian Middle Woodland cultures and their linkages to the broader "Hopewell Interaction Sphere" phenomenon (see Chapman and Keel 1979) continues to inform research across the Eastern Woodlands.

Less heralded are Keel's short-term forays from the RLA to test or salvage endangered sites throughout the state. Many of these brief, opportunistic investigations yielded discrete bodies of data that have since assumed greater significance within new frameworks of inquiry. Such is the case with Keel's early work at Hardins and Belk Farm, lower Catawba River Valley sites that documented evidence of fifteenth-century and seventeenth-century occupations, respectively. David Moore (2002) incorporated data from these investigations into his groundbreaking synthesis of Catawba Valley Mississippian, and evidence from Belk Farm served to link prehistoric and protohistoric era ceramic traditions in the Catawba River Valley with those of presumably Catawban-speaking communities of the early historic era.

The study presented in this article integrates ceramic assemblage information from Keel's work at Hardins

and Belk Farm with recently acquired evidence from mid-eighteenth-century Nassaw town, Revolutionary War era Old Town, and Federal period New Town (Davis and Riggs 2004) to track broad patterns of stability and change in native pottery traditions in the lower Catawba River Valley (Figure 1). Inclusion of these eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century samples extends Moore's (2002) analysis of Catawba River Valley ceramics to achieve historical linkage with contemporary Catawba Indian ceramic practice (see Baker 1972; Blumer 2004), thereby addressing Moore's (2002:159) admonition that "clearly, formal comprehensive analysis of pottery from well-documented eighteenth-century Catawba towns will ease the dilemma we currently face in understanding the possible relationship between protohistoric period Catawba valley pottery and the historic period pottery associated with Catawba peoples."

Ceramics of the Late Pre-Contact Era: The Hardins Assemblage

Keel first documented evidence of late Mississippian period occupation in the lower Catawba River Valley at the Hardins site, located along the South Fork of the Catawba River near present-day High Shoals in Gaston County, North Carolina (Keel 1966, 1990). The RLA conducted limited salvage investigations at the site in 1966, following the discovery of a grave at Hardins by soil-borrowing operations for a highway project. Investigators documented two late Mississippian period graves and two contemporaneous pit features before soil borrowing resumed. These contexts yielded 132 ceramic sherds, which Keel (1990:10) characterized as representing "the earlier part of emerging Catawba ceramics," an assertion based primarily on the Hardins pottery's similarity to seventeenth-century wares from Belk Farm and the location of both Hardins and Belk Farm within the historic Catawba territory. Keel (1990:8-10) describes the "emerging Catawba ceramics" of Hardins sample and Belk Farm, noting that

during this period a group of ceramics appear in the Catawba River basin that can be traced directly to those made by the historic Catawba Indians.

This pottery is well made, relatively thin, and hard. ... The paste is generally fine and tempering material tends to be fine sand although crushed quartz occasionally finds use as an aplastic. There is a fairly wide range of forms—open bowls, casuela bowls, collared jars, and pots with slightly constricted

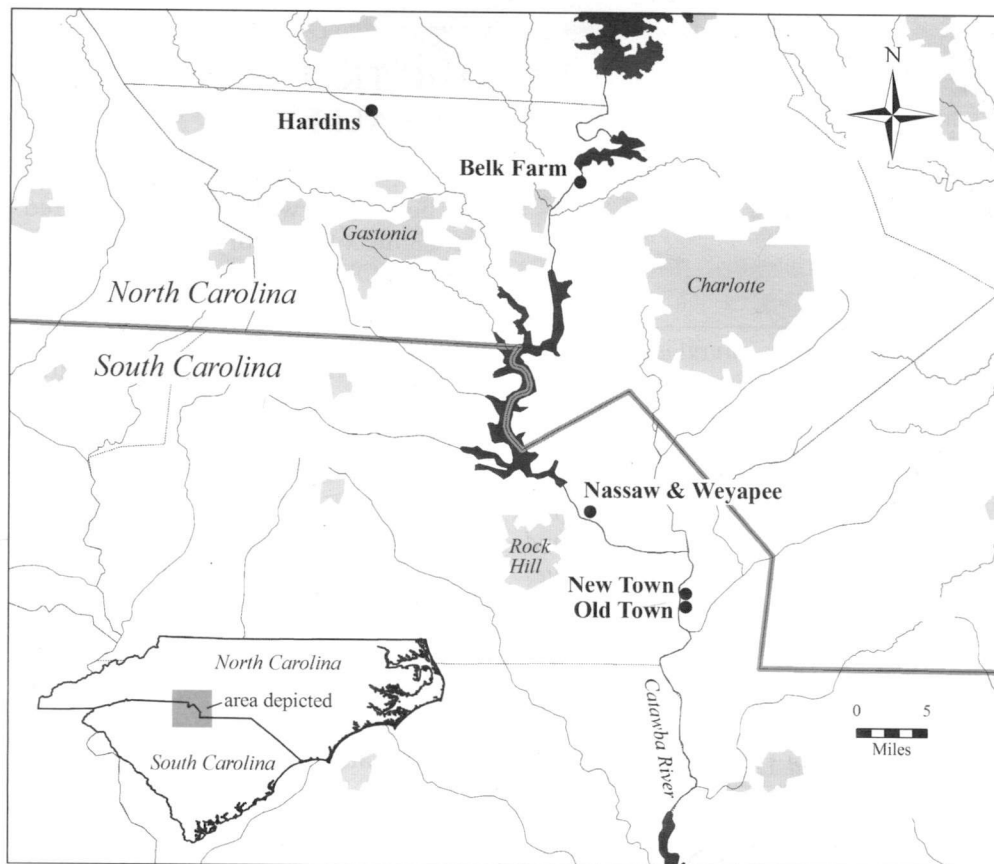


Figure 1. Map indicating locations of study sites in the lower Catawba River Valley.

orifices. Rim forms are straight with rounded or flattened lips on bowls; however, flaring rims are commonly found on jars and pots. Rims may be thickened or folded on these forms. Embellishments include notching on the lip ... and punctations at the intersection of the rim fold and the vessel neck. Lips may be rounded or flattened. Surface finishing techniques include corncob marking, carved paddle stamping with check or complicated designs including curvilinear ... or rectilinear motifs ..., cord marking, smoothing ..., and highly executed burnishing. ... Decorative techniques include punctations ..., incision ..., applied nodes or rosettes and occasionally painting. ... Incised decoration consists of parallel lines dipping to form semicircles, or rectangular motifs. Incised designs ... generally are restricted to burnished or plain surfaced vessels. Punctations are often placed between the upper incised line and the lip ... or along the shoulder of casuela bowls. Hollow reed punctations are frequently placed just below the rim of constricted mouth pots and jars. ... A band of raised nodes occasionally occurs near the rims on bowls, jars, and pots.

Sherds from Hardins represent large jars with slightly constricted necks and simple or thickened rims decorated with stylus notching or cane punctation as well as hemispherical and carinated bowls with simple rims (Figure 2). Fifty-seven percent of definable sherd surfaces are complicated stamped, and most of these are attributable to jars. Thirty-seven percent of Hardins sherds are plain or burnished. Rims of vessels with plain bodies are decorated with zones of dense,

multiline bold incision with semicircular bracket motifs (Figure 2e). Other observed treatments include cob marking, check stamping, and painting. These wares conform to the Cowans Ford series, which Moore describes as

thin, sand-tempered and fine quartz-tempered sherds with primarily plain/smoothed, burnished, complicated stamped, and corncob-impressed exterior surfaces. Some sherds also exhibit net-impressed or brushed exterior surfaces. Vessels include restricted-neck jars that often feature folded or appliquéd rim strips. Carinated bowls are also present. ... Cowans Ford pottery is similar to Burke series pottery; it is another regional variant of Lamar pottery and is thought to date to ca. A.D. 1350–1700. (Moore 2002:132)

The Hardins sherd assemblage is most notable as a local manifestation of the Lamar ceramic tradition (see Hally 1994) in the lower Catawba River Valley in the precontact era. Subsequent work at the nearby Hardins II and Crowder Creek sites recovered comparable Lamar tradition Cowans Ford series ceramic collections. Moore (2002) and DePratter and Judge (1986, 1990) indicate that such Lamar tradition ceramics dominate the entire Catawba-Wateree basin during the late prehistoric and protohistoric eras. Lamar tradition ceramics are widely distributed across the Southeast at the time of European contact (Hally 1994).

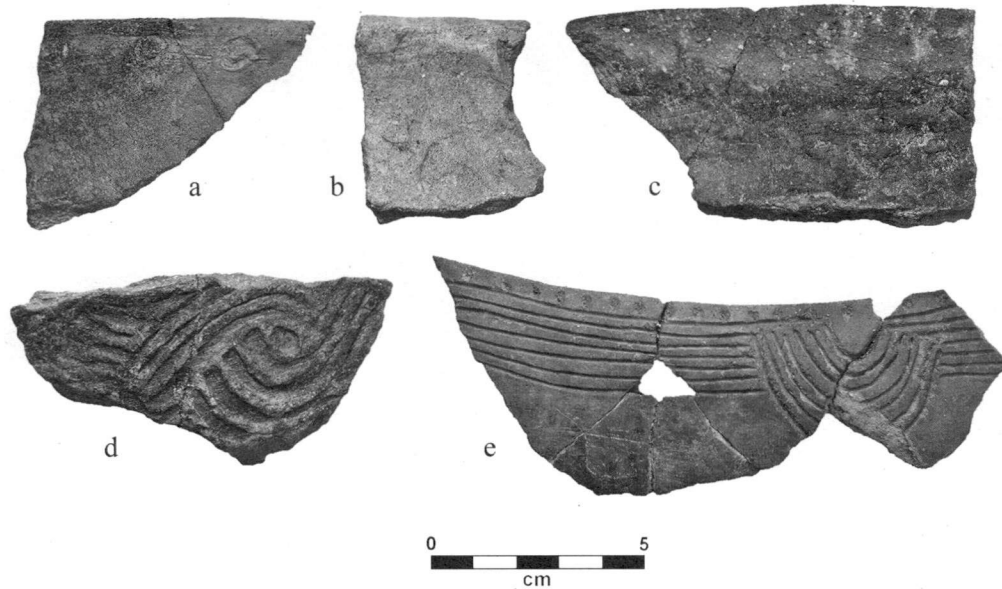


Figure 2. Cowans Ford series ceramic sherds from the Hardins site (ca. A.D. 1500): (a–c) thickened rim jar fragments; (d) curvilinear complicated stamped sherd; (e) bold incised cazuela rim.

Core attributes of this tradition, such as complicated-stamped surface treatments, folded rims, or appliqué rimstrips on jars, and bold incised treatments on carinated bowls, occur as predominant elements of assemblages from the Gulf Coast northward to the Yadkin River basin and from the Atlantic Coast westward to the Coosa-Tallapoosa basin. The tradition crosscut polities, societies, and entire language families in an information network that shared details of ceramic technology and style on a supra-regional scale. This network of cultural communication and practice extended one river basin to the northeast of the Catawba-Wataeree valley but apparently dissipated quickly beyond that.

Ceramic Continuity in the English Contact Era: The Belk Farm Assemblage

Persistence of Lamar tradition ceramics in the lower Catawba River Valley through the English Contact period is indicated by assemblages from Belk Farm, located on the main branch of the Catawba River near present-day Mount Holly, North Carolina. This early historic era site was long known to local pot hunters, who reportedly removed more than 200 burials from the property before soil borrowing for an airport project prompted a brief RLA investigation of the site in 1964 (*Asheville Citizen* 1964). Keel directed excavation of two small blocks and two truncated pit features that yielded more than 500 Cowans Ford series sherds and vessel sections, along with 200 glass trade beads, a brass button, a rolled brass “tinkler” bangle, and a peach pit. Diagnostic elements of the bead assemblage,

particularly Cornaline d’Aleppo-type compound beads, indicate an occupation in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries.

Forty percent of the Belk Farm sherds evince complicated-stamped surfaces—primarily spirals or concentric circles motifs (Figure 3e). Most of the stamped sherds derive from medium to large, recurvate-walled jars with everted rims elaborated with appliqué rimstrips or folds with stylus-punctated hachures (Figure 3a–d). Thirty-nine percent of Belk Farm sherds are plain or burnished-plain fragments of hemispherical or carinated bowls. These vessels, like those at Hardins, are decorated with rim or shoulder zones of multiline incision with nested festoons (Figure 3f–h). The Belk Farm collection also includes fine cord-marked, which account for 10 percent of surface treatments (Figure 3j), and cob-marked jar fragments (Figure 3a, b). Two small jars evince handle appendages (Figure 3i).

The Belk Farm material is broadly comparable to the Hardins collection in the prevalence of sand-tempered wares with complicated-stamped surfaces and Lamar-style incision on plain or burnished-plain surfaced vessels. Although the Belk Farm assemblage is considerably more diverse than the Hardins sample, perhaps due to larger sample size, the general similarity of these samples is immediately evident, and it bespeaks regional continuity in ceramic practice across two centuries. Moore (2002:158) suggests that

The Belk Farm site is believed to represent a historic Catawba Indian occupation and as such represents the only link joining a prehistoric ceramic tradition now documented for the entire Catawba valley with ceramics used by the historic Catawba peoples. However, it must be stressed that the ethnic

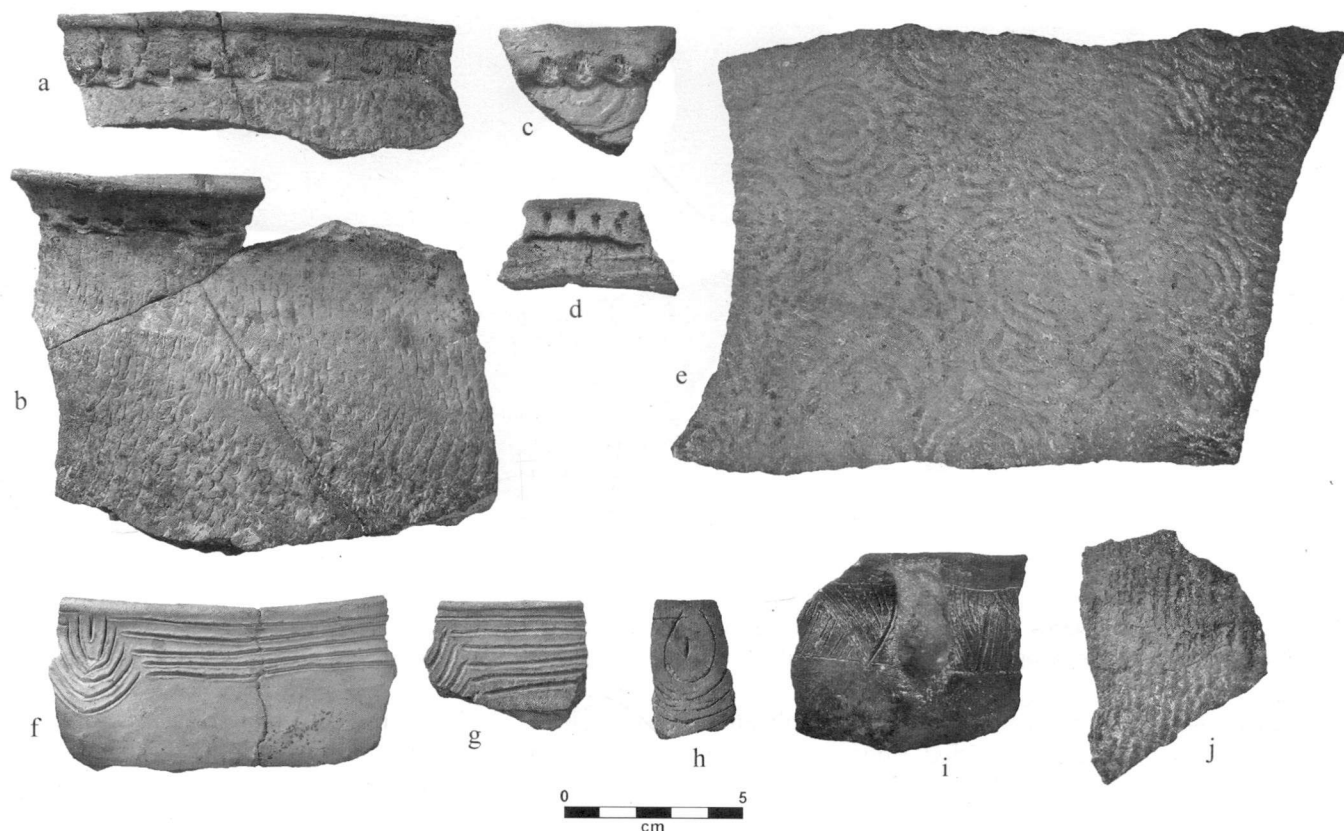


Figure 3. Cowans Ford series ceramic sherds from the Belk Farm site: (a–d) jar rims with appliqué rimstrips; (e) curvilinear complicated stamped jar fragment; (f–h) bold incised cazuela rims; (i) small jar rim with fineline incised treatment and plugged loop handle; (j) cord-marked sherd.

identification is based solely on the proximity of the Belk Farm site to the documented early-eighteenth-century Catawba villages located farther south on the river.

Moore's proposed identification of Belk Farm as an early historic Catawba Indian village component is bolstered by contemporary English accounts (e.g., Byrd 1987 [1728]; Lawson 1967 [1709]; Lederer 1958 [1672]; Mathews 1673 [in Cheves 1897], 1954 [1680]) and maps (e.g., Gascoyne 1998 [1682]; Locke 1998 [1671]) that document Catawban-speaking groups (i.e., Ushery/Esaw/Kadapau/Cataba) (see Rudes et al. 2004) occupying the lower Catawba River basin during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This interpretation is also strengthened by the close comparability of Belk Farm wares to ceramic wares recovered in recent RLA investigations at Nassaw and Weyapee, historically documented mid-eighteenth-century villages at Nation Ford in present-day Fort Mill, South Carolina, 30 miles downstream from Belk Farm. Nassaw, and the adjacent satellite village of Weyapee, are represented on Evans's 1756 map of the Catawba Nation. Nassaw (or *Nieye-Isua*, cognate for the Yssa of the Bandera accounts and the Ushery and Esaw of early English records) was the politically dominant commu-

nity of the Catawba Nation through the first half of the eighteenth century (see Byrd 1987 [1728]).

Mid-Eighteenth-Century Catawba Ceramics: The Nassaw and Weyapee Assemblages

Investigations over two field seasons at Nassaw and Weyapee documented 48 pit features, along with numerous other facilities, midden deposits, and architectural evidence within compact, nucleated village areas. Two lines of evidence suggest brief village occupations prior to the Catawbans' documented abandonment of the Nation Ford locality in 1759. Posthole patterns of dwellings at Nassaw exhibit no evidence of repair or reconstruction, and Binford's (1978) formula regression analysis of a sample of 459 kaolin pipestems from Nassaw and Weyapee yields a median date of 1762.

Investigations at Nassaw and Weyapee recovered 26,000 ceramic sherds; 3,570 of these derive from pit feature contexts, and a sample of 1,242 sherds larger than 2 cm is considered here. Like the Cowans Ford series wares from Hardins and Belk Farm, the Nassaw

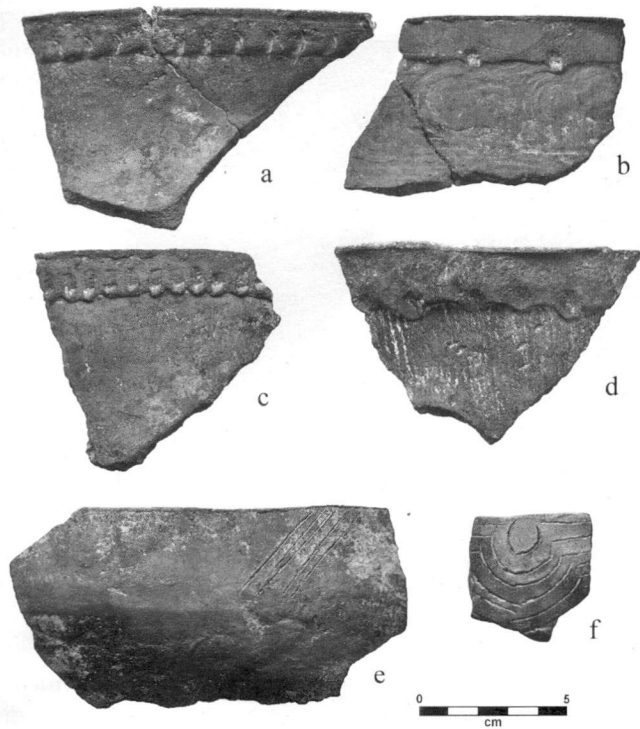


Figure 4. Cowans Ford series ceramic sherds from the Nassaw site: (a, c) plain jar rims with appliqué rimstrips; (b) curvilinear complicated stamped jar rim with punctate rimstrip; (d) cord-marked jar rim with finger pinched appliqué rimstrip; (e-f) plain carinated bowl rims with fineline incision.

and Weyapee sherds exhibit sand or fine quartz temper, and most vessel interiors are well smoothed or burnished and smudged. The Nassaw and Weyapee sample includes fragments of complicated-stamped or cord-marked jars with well defined necks and slightly excurvate rims. Stamped jars exhibit folded rims or rimstrip appliqué embellished with notches or square stylus punctations, closely comparable to those at Belk Farm (Figure 4a-c). A single complicated-stamped motif, a circular spiral on a field of straight parallel lines (Figure 4b), can be discerned among complicated-stamped sherds. Cord-marked jars have rimstrips as well, but are decorated with finger molding or thumbnail notching (Figure 4d). Plain and burnished-plain surfaced wares are primarily hemispherical or carinated bowls, many of which are decorated with a shoulder or rim zone of fine multiline incisions, with nested festoon motifs (Figure 4e-f). Most incisions appear to have been executed with very fine styluses, such as knife points or straight pins. Plain and burnished wares exhibit finer aplastics—some are essentially temperless—and much thinner walls than stamped or cord-marked jars.

Plain or burnished-plain surface treatments are slightly more prevalent at Nassaw and Weyapee than

Belk Farm, as are cord-marked sherds, while stamped wares are proportionally less prominent. However, various surface treatments appear to be differentially distributed across the sites; plain wares (62 percent) dominate pit features north of the core Nassaw village area, where cord-marked wares (2 percent) are a minor constituent. Pits in the core areas of Nassaw and Weyapee exhibit surface treatment distributions more similar to Belk Farm, with 35 percent plain/burnished-plain sherds, and 37 percent stamped surfaces, but also with 27 percent cord-marked wares. These spatial distributions may reflect distinct ceramic practices among Nassaw and Weyapee households or community segments, possibly an indication of the influences of refugee groups that streamed into the Catawba Nation in the half century after the Belk Farm occupation. Adair (1930 [1775]) reports that upwards of twenty languages were spoken by members of the Catawba confederacy in 1743, and many of these groups must have arrived with distinctive potting practices. Nevertheless, the Nassaw and Weyapee collections do not present strong evidence for the juxtaposition or coalescence of disparate ceramic traditions but variation within the relatively stable Lamar-tradition Cowans Ford ceramic series. Ceramic evidence of the mid-eighteenth-century cultural pluralism of the Catawba Nation may be represented at the nearby sites of Charraw, Weanne, Suchah, and Noostee, settlements of previously distinct nations.

Documentary accounts indicate that Nassaw, Weyapee, and the other Catawba villages abandoned the Nation Ford locality in December 1759 in response to a catastrophic smallpox epidemic that cut the Catawba population by half (McReynolds 2004; Merrill 1989:195). The survivors regrouped under the protection of the English at Pine Tree Hill—present-day Camden, South Carolina—where they remained for two years (Brown 1966; Merrill 1989:195; French 1977 [1761]:294). Approximately 300 Catawbans returned to their old territory in 1762 and formed two villages near Twelve Mile Creek at Van Wyck, South Carolina, 14 miles downstream from Nation Ford. RLA investigations at Old Town (ca. 1762–1780, 1781–1790), the northern village associated with King Haigler, identified six probable cabin locations. Excavations in two Old Town loci revealed ten subfloor cellar pits and five basin-shaped pits. Associated materials, including English ceramics, distinctive arrays of glass beads, and English coins, indicate that these pits can be temporally segregated as two immediately successive components, with a presumed hiatus that corresponds to the 1780 destruction of Catawba settlements by Lord Cornwallis's army and the flight of the Catawba population to Virginia. Their 1781 reoccupation of the old nation is reflected in the later pits at Old Town.

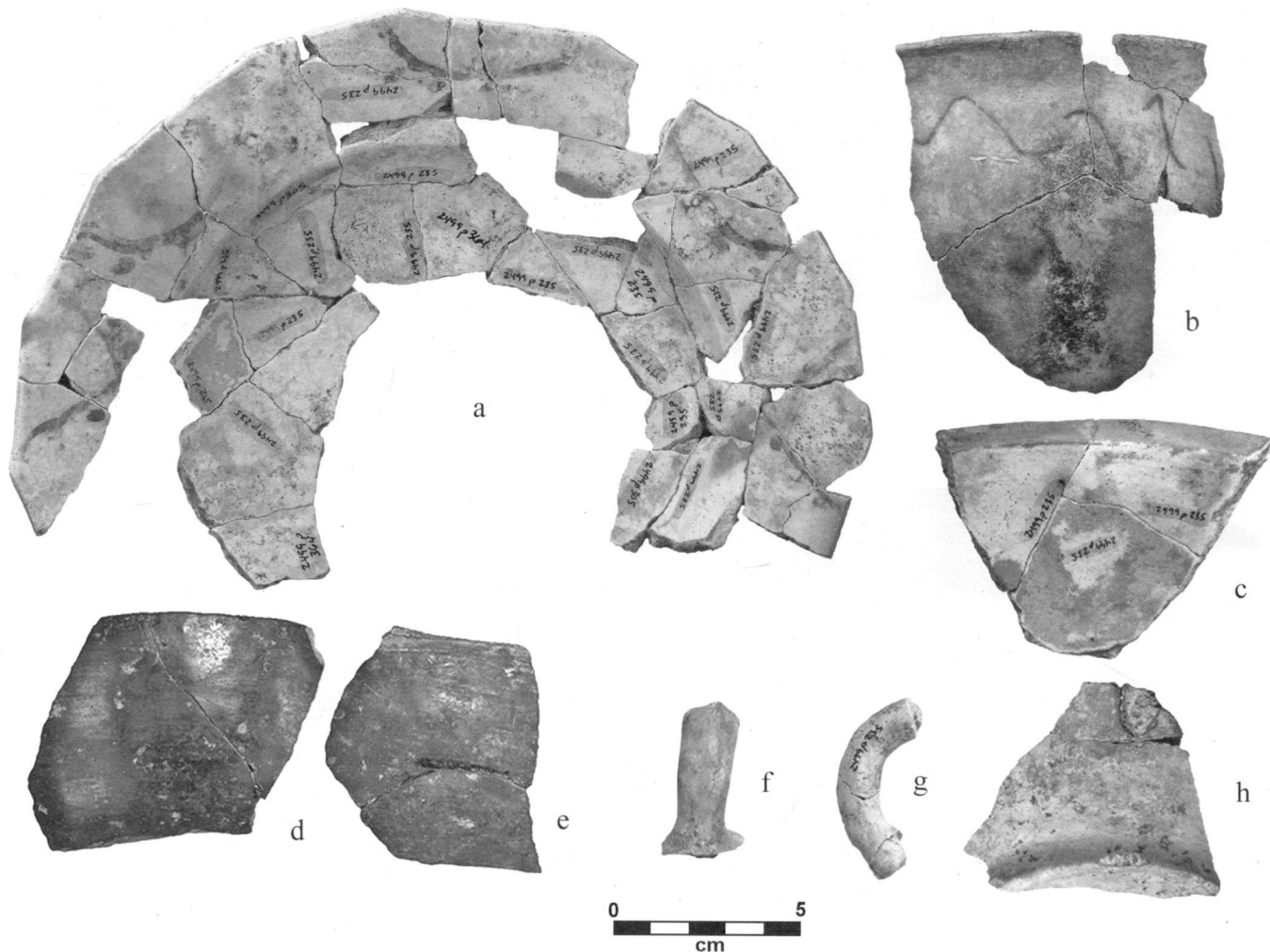


Figure 5. "Colono-ware" ceramic sherds from late colonial period contexts at the Old Town site: (a) 16-sided plate with painted festoon decoration; (b) small jar with fineline painted design; (c) red painted plain pan fragment with beveled lip; (d-e) polished blackware "drinking pot" fragments; (f-g) loop handle fragments; (h) bowl fragment with pedestal base.

Late Colonial Era Catawba Ceramics: The Old Town I Assemblage

Pottery from pre-Revolutionary War Old Town contexts differs markedly from the Lamar tradition Cowans Ford series wares of Hardins, Belk Farm, and Nassaw. All of the Old Town vessels are fine-bodied, temperless facsimiles of English redware pans, cups, bowls, plates, patty pans, jugs, and pitchers (Figure 5). Vessel surfaces are exclusively plain, burnished or polished, with burnished and smudged interiors. Vessel rims are plain, with flat or beveled lips; bowl and cup bases have footings or pedestal bases. Some vessels appear to be slipped, while others have hand-painted accents such as dots, dashes or swags in direct emulation of English slip-trailed decorated wares. Fine-line painted decorations are typically executed in a dark brown (as yet undetermined) pigment; broader stripes and dots are rendered in deep red paint. Old Town potters selected particularly pale bodied clays for

many vessels, creating suitable palettes for such painted decorations. The early Old Town assemblage also marks the advent of Catawba polished blackware (Figure 5d-e).

These wares signal an abrupt sea-change in the Catawbas' long-held potting traditions. This shift apparently occurred in the decade between 1759 and 1770, when potters trained in building Lamar tradition Cowans Ford pottery used their skills to create the "colono-ware" style commonly understood as "Catawba pottery," a ware still produced by contemporary Catawba artists (Baker 1972). The technological precedent for this ware may have been the fine-bodied, thin-walled, burnished cazuelas at Nassaw, but the vessel assemblage is clearly informed by the refined earthenwares and stonewares of the English, Scots-Irish, and German settlers who streamed into the Catawba-Wateree Valley in the 1750s. The rapid emergence of this new Catawba ware may reflect the Nation's sojourn at Pine Tree Hill, where economically stressed refugee

pottery encountered commercial demand for ceramics in the undersupplied Carolina backcountry, and repurposed their production to suit Anglo-American and African American markets. Trade in Catawba ceramics in the late colonial period backcountry is indicated by a 1772 account of itinerant Catawba potters peddling their wares door to door (Smyth 1784) and by quantities of Catawba "colono-ware" in late colonial era and Revolutionary War era archaeological contexts at Charleston, Camden, and Cambridge, South Carolina (Baker 1972; Joseph 2004; Kenneth Lewis, personal communication 2008; South 1974).

The rapid transformation of the Catawba ceramic tradition mirrors the social and cultural transformation of the Nation. Prior to the population collapse of 1759, the Nation consisted of independent towns that maintained some degree of cultural and political autonomy, as reflected in the persistence of separate tribal identities denominated in colonial records (e.g., Evans 1756). After 1759, the survivors of the epidemic are simply glossed as "Catawbas," and prior tribal distinctions disappear to colonial observers. Development of the homogeneous Catawba colono-ware style, with forms and finishes dictated by extrinsic market forces, obviated any prior variation in ceramic practice among the constituent groups of the Catawba Nation, reflecting the new reality of constructed, unified identity. Catawba potters' abrupt abandonment of the long-held Lamar ceramic tradition also signals a final withdrawal from the information network that had long maintained regional and supra-regional ceramic similarities across diverse native polities and societies. Linkages within this network undoubtedly declined through the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with the progressive fragmentation and reordering of the native landscape due to effects of European colonialism, and the broader meanings of this shared tradition were probably lost by 1759. Instead, Catawba potters entered into another far-flung information network, one in which styles were determined on the other side of the Atlantic and spread through the medium of commercial exchange. Catawba potters were at the periphery of this Staffordshire-centered network, and may not have shared understandings of ceramic styles informed by emerging Georgian notions of purity, regularity, and uniformity, but the potters of Old Town clearly perceived the ceramic attributes required for success at their edge of the global marketplace.

Post-Revolutionary War Era Catawba Ceramics: Old Town II and New Town Assemblages

Pottery from late Revolutionary War era and early Federal period contexts at Old Town illustrates

subsequent development of the new colono-ware complex (Figure 6). By the 1780s, the Old Town potters shifted from clays that produced light buff colored wares to clays that produce the golden brown hues still favored by Catawba potters. Change in clay selection accompanied abandonment of fine-line brown painting in favor of red or black accents that contrast with the darker bodies. Catawba potters also focused their efforts on fewer vessel forms, particularly concentrating on refinement and production of flaring-walled, flat-based milkpans (Figure 6). These later Old Town wares are generally comparable to the "Catawba" (Wheaton et al. 1983) and "River Burnished" (Ferguson 1990) types documented in South Carolina Low Country contexts.

Later contexts at Old Town also yielded small quantities of creamware and pearlware sherds, an indication of the growing availability of imported refined earthenwares in the backcountry after the Revolution. The influx of these imported wares probably diminished regional markets for pale-bodied Catawba tablewares, and Catawba potters may have found a new niche in production of food storage and preparation vessels.

These trends in Catawba pottery are further evident at New Town (ca. 1800–1820), a Federal period village site located approximately one mile north of Old Town. RLA investigations at this diffuse village documented seven cabin loci distributed across 12 ha (Davis and Riggs 2004; Riggs et al. 2006). Excavations at six of these locations recovered a wide array of diagnostic Federal period materials, such as English-made pearlware and creamware sherds, bottle glass and glassware, coins, cast-iron vessel fragments, riding tack hardware, ammunition, and jewelry, as well as more than 62,000 low-fired earthenware sherds.

The New Town pottery closely resembles Old Town wares, with temperless or very fine sand-tempered bodies and thin, uniform vessel walls. Exterior finishes are exclusively plain, in most cases with secondary burnishing or polishing. Interior finishes are typically well-smoothed or burnished and smudged black (Figure 7). Approximately 10 percent of rim sherds are decorated with orange or red pigment, typically applied to contrast against the blackened fields of lip interiors. Lumps of orange pigment recovered from New Town contexts appear to be desiccated commercial sealing wax.

The New Town vessel assemblage includes pans, jars, bowls, plates, bottles, cups, and handled pots, in a variety of sizes, as well as unique forms (Figure 8). Most of these vessels mirror commercially available English ceramics or cast iron ware found at the site, although recurvate-walled jars with everted, thickened or collared rims and flat bases (Figure 7h, k) may be adaptations of traditional native cooking jars.

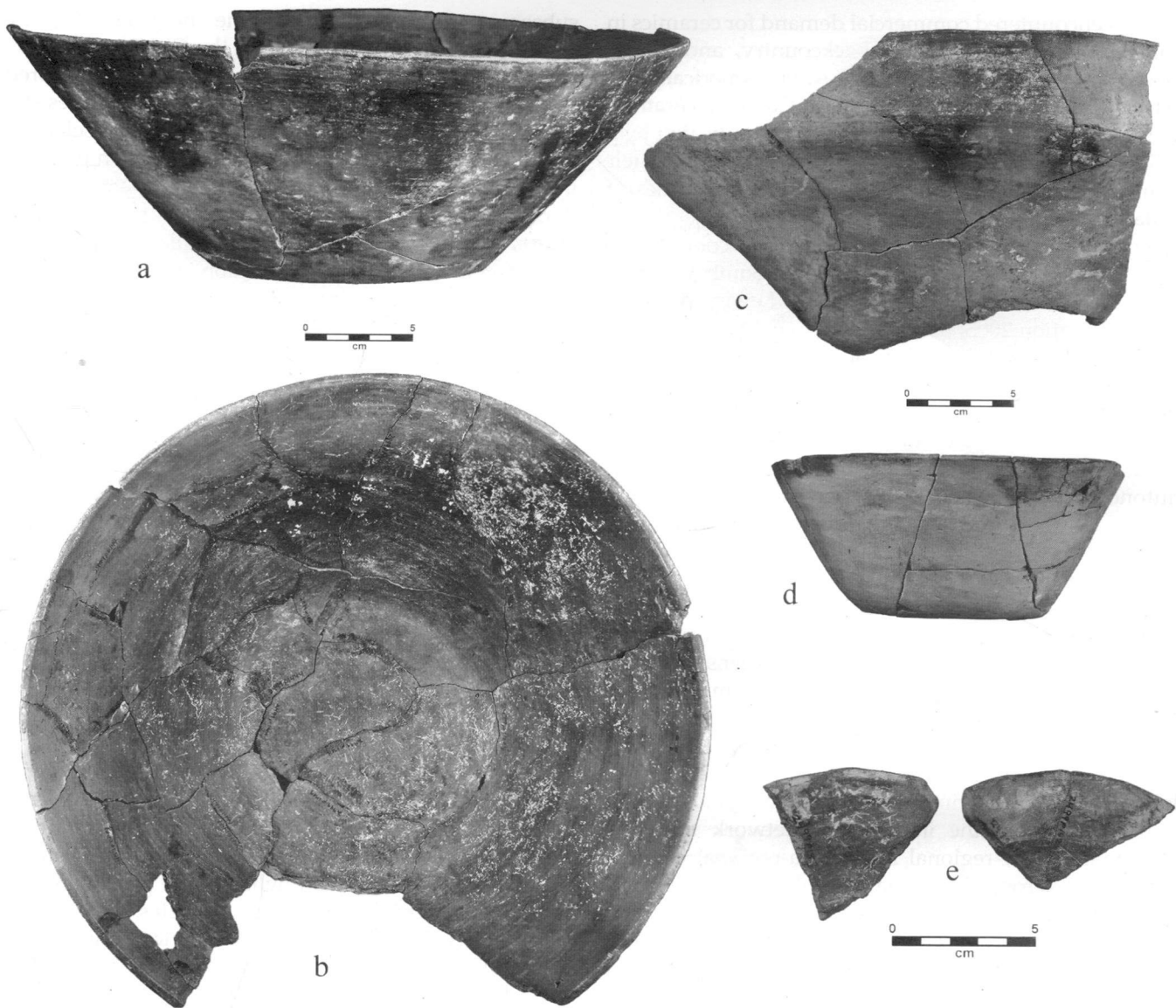


Figure 6. "Colono-ware" ceramic vessel fragments from post-Revolution contexts at the Old Town site: (a-b) profile and interior views of large, flat-based milk pan; (c) large carinated bowl fragment; (d) small pan with perforated colander base; (e) bowl rim fragments with scalloped lips and painted accents.

The absolute abundance and diversity of Catawba wares at New Town reflects the conspicuous role of pottery production in the economic life of the community. When Calvin Jones (1815) visited New Town in 1815, he witnessed a bustling ceramic industry aimed at American markets, noting, "Next to Newtown. ... Men gone hunting and fishing. Women making pans—Clay from the river—shape them with their hands and burn them with bark which makes the exposed side a glossy black. A pitcher a quarter of a dollar. Sell pans frequently for the full [measure] of meal. Saw some sitting on their beds and making pans."

Archaeological evidence for large-scale and high frequency ceramic production at New Town includes pottery waster dumps, faceted and polished burnishing

stones, and trench features that appear to be clay curing facilities of the type used by contemporary Catawba potters (Steven Baker, personal communication, 2005).

The important role of pottery in the early-nineteenth-century Catawba economy is further attested by William Gilmore Simms (1841:122), who noted that during his boyhood in the 1810s,

it was the custom of the Catawba Indians ... to come down, at certain seasons, from their far homes in the interior, to the seaboard, bringing to Charleston a little stock of earthen pots and pans ... which they bartered in the city. ... They did not, however, bring their pots and pans from the nation, but descending to the Lowcountry empty handed, in groups or families, they squatted down on the rich clay lands along the

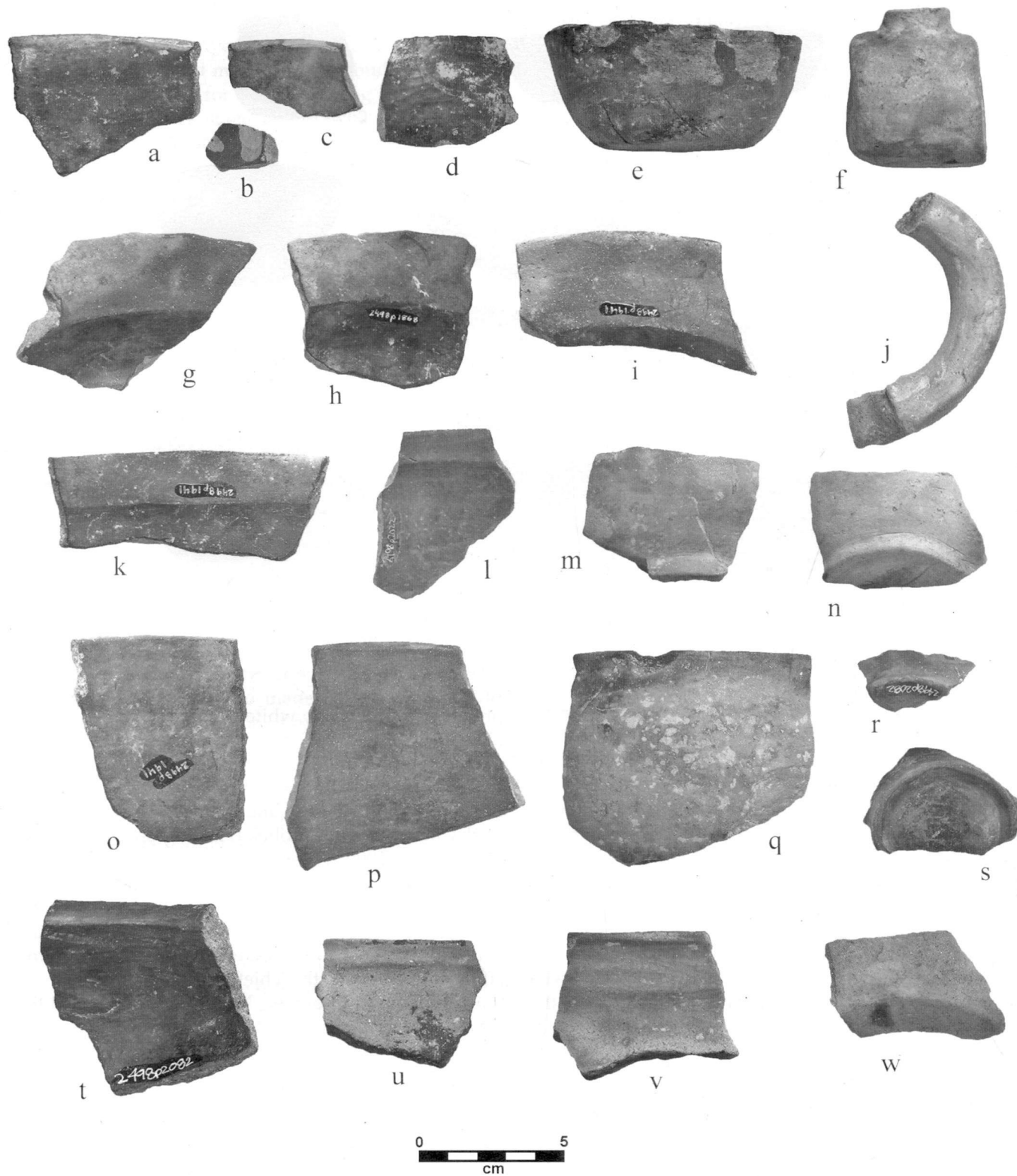


Figure 7. "Colono-ware" ceramic sherds from the New Town site: (a-d) red-on-black painted vessel fragments; (e) small cup/ bowl with red painted rim; (f) keg effigy bottle; (g-i) soup plate brims; (j) loop handle; (k-l) beveled-rim bowl sherds; (m-n, r-s) bowl bases with footrings; (o-p) milk pan rims; (q, t) porringer rims; (u-v) thickened rim cooking jar fragments; (w) flat bowl/pan base.

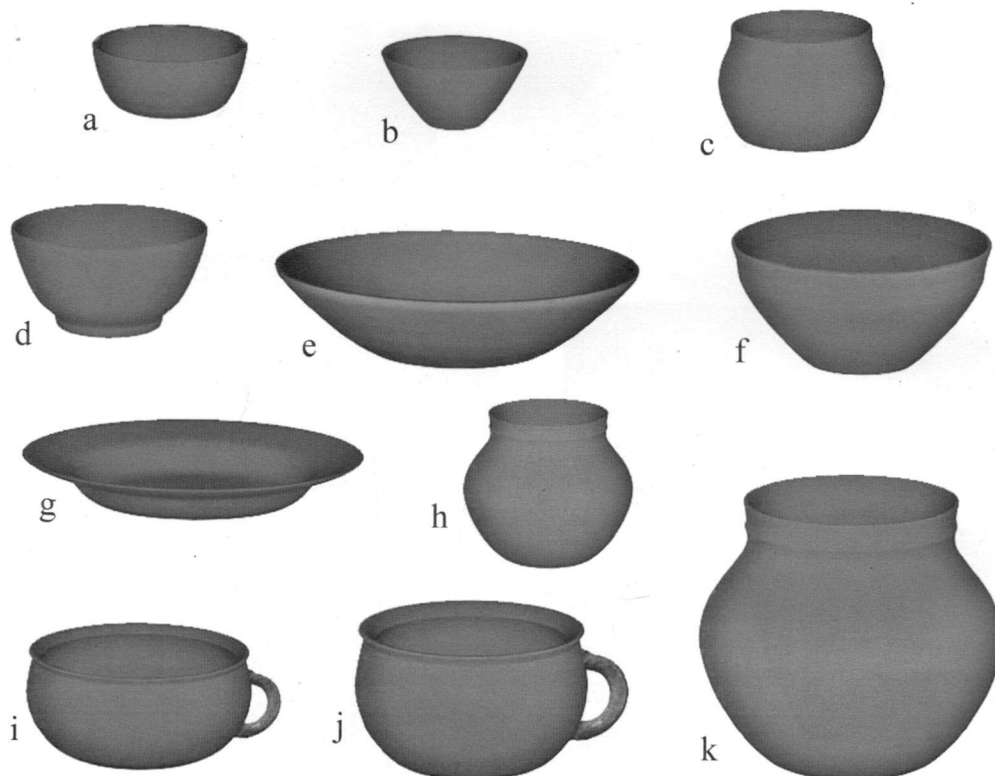


Figure 8. Catawba "colono-ware" vessel types documented at New Town: (a–b) cups; (c) drinking pot; (d) bowl with footring; (e) milk pan; (f) beveled-rim bowl; (g) plate/soup plate; (h–k) thickened rim cooking jars; (i–j) handled pot/porringer (Courtesy, Mark Plane).

Edisto, ... there established themselves in a temporary abiding place, until their simple potteries had yielded them a sufficient supply of wares with which to throw themselves into the market.

Another observer recounted that "the Catawba Indians ... traveled down from the up-country to Charleston, making clay ware for the negroes along the way. They would camp until a section was supplied, then move on, till finally Charleston was reached ... their ware was in great demand" (Gregorie 1925:21).

These accounts clearly indicate that ceramic production and sales developed as a focal element of Catawba economy by the early nineteenth century, and the widespread distribution of Catawba-made wares in Federal period contexts across South Carolina (e.g., Anthony 1979, 1986; Beck 1995; Drucker and Anthony 1979; Ferguson 1980, 1990; Lees and Kimery-Lees 1979; Wheaton et al. 1983, Wheaton and Garrow 1985) attests to the scope and scale of the pottery trade. The itinerant pottery trade was also politically important for the Catawba Nation. It kept the small Catawba community visible to the political elites of South Carolina, and it helped to mediate the Catawba position as racial attitudes and policies hardened in the new republic. Through the medium of the pottery trade, the colono-ware-style earthenware pans, plates, and bowls became reified as symbols of Catawba identity, readily inter-

pretable to Catawbas, whites, and African Americans alike (see Simms 1841).

This itinerant trade in utilitarian colono-ware pottery greatly diminished after 1840, but continued into the twentieth century near the Catawba community in York County, South Carolina (Harrington 1908, Holmes 1903). After 1900, Catawba potters began to reorient their production to meet growing demand by tourists and curiosity seekers hungry for souvenirs of the "vanishing red man." Catawba potters innovated new curio forms, such as miniature clay canoes, animal effigies, and jars with "chief's head" adornments. A tourism boom in Cherokee, North Carolina, fueled this new aspect of the pottery trade; Cherokee shops sold great quantities of Catawba curio pottery as Indian souvenirs.

Catawba potting was also buoyed by increasing demand for "living history" exhibitions. Beginning in the late 1920s, Catawba potters participated in exhibitions for museums, historical reconstructions, colleges, and other venues, steadily garnering attention for Catawba ceramic art and tradition. In the 1970s, shows at the McKissick Museum in Columbia, South Carolina and at the Smithsonian Institution featured Catawba pottery as "real" art, garnering interest by the burgeoning Indian arts and crafts market. The new found prominence of Catawba pottery as collectible art

spurred master potters such as Georgia Harris, Edith Harris Brown, Sara Ayers, Doris Blue, Earl Robbins, Arzada Saunders, and many others to build larger and more refined wares for discriminating consumers—opening yet another stage in Catawba pottery style. Their work perpetuates the strong association of pottery production with contemporary Catawba identity (Blumer 2004) and continues to serve as political mnemonic—as evidenced by the Sara Ayers pot displayed in the White House library.

Conclusions

Diachronic comparison of the Hardins, Belk Farm, Nassaw, Old Town and New Town ceramic assemblages reveals two distinct, successive traditions—Lamar-tradition Cowans Ford series wares (ca. A.D. 1350–1760) and Catawba colono-wares (ca. A.D. 1760–present). The abrupt stylistic and technological shift between these ceramic traditions is the sort of disconformity once accepted as de facto evidence of population replacement, yet conjunctive analysis of the documentary and archaeological records indicates direct continuity between the Nassaw and Old Town communities across this ceramic threshold. The demonstrable historical linkage between the community of potters who produced the Cowans Ford series wares at Nassaw and those who made colono-ware at Old Town enables interpretation of contemporary Catawba ceramics as part of a continuum that stretches into the precontact era. While contemporary Catawba wares bear little formal or stylistic similarity to their Cowans Ford series precursors, they appear to be the products of a continuous community of practice, thus bearing out Keel's 1966 suggestion that Hardins pottery represented "the earlier part of emerging Catawba ceramics"—with a twist. In the absence of samples that were directly associated with documented Catawba Indian occupations, Keel's characterization was just a well-informed guess at the time, but it has since served as a hypothesis for further research and a challenge to document and decipher patterns of stability and change in the ceramic traditions of the lower Catawba River Valley.

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