

Office of State Archaeology Lecture Series

North Carolina's Ceramics Through the Centuries

Presented by Dr. Linda F. Carnes-McNaughton

Monday, October 23th, 2017, at 11:30 am in the auditorium,
Archives Building, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh
Free and open to the public



Not long ago, Pennsylvania potter, Jack Troy declared "if North America has a 'pottery state' it must be North Carolina, as there is probably no other state with such a highly developed pottery consciousness," –and he is right! Long before written records existed, American Indian Potters were hand-molding clays for burial urns, smoking pipes, ornamental beads and food storage and consumption. American Indians today continue in the same age-old tradition of hand coiling pottery. For later settlers of European origin and their descendants North Carolina's pottery heritage evolved in other unique ways: it is the most southern state with a well-developed earthenware tradition (ca. 1750s); it is the most northern state with an alkaline-glazed stoneware tradition, in addition to its salt-glaze; and its early potters used a variety of kiln types (updraft, downdraft, crossdraft) in a variety of shapes (round, square, rectangular) burning earthenware and stoneware. It is known for its abundant clays, strong family networks (or clay clans), its survival and resurgence of the craft, and diversity of its continuous heritage. While this overview highlights pottery from the past, let it be said that the potters' wheels in North Carolina have never stopped turning.