

**CHEROKEE CERAMIC TRADITIONS OF SOUTHWESTERN  
NORTH CAROLINA, CA. A.D. 1400–2002: A PREFACE TO  
“THE LAST OF THE IROQUOIS POTTERS”**

by  
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The following article, “The Last of the Iroquois Potters,” is a reprint of M.R. Harrington’s classic 1909 study of the manufacture of traditional Cherokee ceramics by Iwi Katâlsta (Catolster), a master potter from Yellow Hill (now Cherokee), North Carolina. In 1908, Harrington spent a month in the Cherokee communities of the Qualla Boundary to document and collect examples of Cherokee material culture for the Museum of the American Indian (Heye Foundation). During his visit, Harrington attended dances and ballplays, purchased baskets, blowguns, scratchers and moccasins, and commissioned Iwi Katâlsta to produce pottery vessels “in the old style.” Katâlsta, who was born around the time of the Cherokee removal of 1838, learned the potter’s craft from her mother, who was born at the old town of Kituhwa around 1803. By the time Harrington came to Qualla in 1908, Katâlsta had dealt with ethnographers and curio collectors for more than 20 years, building “old style” vessels for academics while younger potters made “new style” Catawba-influenced wares for tourists. Harrington’s work with Katâlsta is especially important because he seized what appeared to be the last opportunity to document an unbroken Cherokee ceramic tradition that had lasted more than 500 years. As such, “The Last of the Iroquois Potters” provides important insights into the Qualla ceramic series (Egloff 1967; Keel 1976)—ceramic wares that figure prominently in the archaeological record of southwestern North Carolina from A.D. 1400 through the Cherokee removal of 1838.

Although mid-nineteenth century travelers and journalists, such as Alexis (1852), had noted the persistence of traditional ceramics among the Eastern Cherokees, Edward Palmer of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Smithsonian Institution) first focused academic attention on traditional potters during an 1881 reconnaissance among the Cherokees. Palmer was followed by E.P. Valentine of Richmond’s Valentine Museum, who came to Qualla Boundary in October 1882 to loot the Saunooke (Nununyi) Mound for artifacts for museum displays. While there, he purchased old Cherokee vessels and commissioned new vessels from local potters. In his field notes, Valentine left an important early record of Cherokee pottery manufacture:

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... we through the kindness of the Chief who acted as interpreter for us were enabled to make arrangements with a squaw [sic] seventy three years of age who had in her younger days made pots for her own use & who at present had two in use, ... which included all the varieties of which she had any knowledge. These pots which were of the same type as those of her ancestors were but inferior in workmanship. The implements which she used in making the unornamented pots were simply a shell & smooth quartz rock. A paddle with a fruit cut upon it was also used when ornamented pottery was to be made. The material is a yellow clay which is beaten with a stick until it becomes uniformly soft. It is then formed into a bar which is coiled into the shape in which the pot is intended to have. Then by means of the hand and the smooth quartz rock above mentioned it is worked into a thin pot of uniform thickness, the shell is then brought to bear, with which all the rough edges are erased. The pot is then placed in the sun where it is allowed to stay until it becomes dry, after which it is put near the fire and turned about occasionally until it becomes comparatively hard. Then a hole about the size of the pot is dug and a charcoal fire started in it. Over this fire which is kept at a uniform heat never allowing it to flame up is inverted the pot. This being done the pot can without the least uneasiness be used for cooking. The larger of these pots are used for cooking corn, beans, apples, etc.; the smaller ones for cooking eatables of greater variety. These pots in addition to the pan shaped pots are also used on the table (Valentine n.d. [ca. 1882]).

In 1888, W.H. Holmes of the Bureau of American Ethnology requested that James Mooney investigate and report upon the state of contemporary Cherokee pottery. Mooney's detailed notes identify Iwi Katâlsta and her mother, Katâlsta, as primary conservators of the ancient art (Figure 1). Holmes states:

[In 1888] Mr. Mooney found that although the making of pottery had fallen into disuse among the Cherokees, three women were still skilled in the art. The names of these potters are Uhyûñli, then 75 years of age, Katâlsta, about 85 years of age, and Ewi Katâlsta, daughter of the last named and about 50 years old.

Cherokee processes differ from the Catawba, or more properly, perhaps, did differ, in two principal points, namely, *a*, the application of a black glossy color by smother-firing, and *b*, the application of ornamental designs to the exterior of the vessel by means of figured paddles or stamps. The employment of incised decoration was more common among the Cherokees than among the Catawbas.

Katâlsta used clay of the fine dark variety obtained near Macedonia Church. She prepared it as did the Catawba women, but in building she sometimes used one long coil which was carried spirally from the bottom to the rim after the manner of the ancient Pueblos and the potters of Louisiana. The inside of the vessel was shaped with a spoon and polished with a stone, the latter having been in use in the potter's family, near Bryson City, North Carolina, for three generations. The outside was stamped all over with a paddle, the body of which was covered with a checker pattern of engraved



Figure 1. Katâlsta and Iwi Katâlsta at work, 1888. Photograph by James Mooney, Bureau of American Ethnology. National Anthropological Archives, neg. no. 1034-A3.

lines, giving a somewhat ornamental effect. The rim was lined vertically by incising with a pointed tool. At this stage of the process the vessel was lifted by means of a bit of cloth which prevented obliteration of the ornaments. When the vessel was finished and dried in the sun it was heated by the fire for three hours, and then put on the fire and covered with bark and burned for about three-quarters of an hour. When this step of the process was completed the vessel was taken outside the house and inverted over a small hole in the ground, which was filled with burning corn cobs. This fuel was renewed a number of times, and at the end of half an hour the interior of the vessel had acquired a black and glistening surface. Sometimes the same result is obtained by burning small quantities of wheat or cob bran in the vessel, which is covered over during the burning to prevent the escape of the smoke.

The implements used by the potters of this reservation are the tool for pounding the clay; bits of gourd or shell, or other convex-surfaced devices for shaping and polishing; the knife for trimming edges; smooth pebbles for final polishing; pointed tools of wood, metal, etc., for incising patterns; and paddle stamps for imparting a rude diapered effect to the exterior surface of the vessel. The stamp patterns are usually small diamonds or squares, formed by cutting

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crossed grooves on the face of a small paddle of poplar or linn wood. [Holmes 1903:56]

Following Mooney, other ethnographers and collectors began wending their way to the Katálstas for “old style” pottery. Frederick Starr, then of the Peabody Museum, visited Qualla Boundary to purchase ethnographic objects and retain demonstrators for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Some of Katálsta’s vessels were exhibited at the fair, and then found their way into the collections of the University of Chicago’s Field Museum.

Prior to his 1908 collecting trip, Harrington sought out Mooney to learn about potential resources and informants living on Qualla Boundary. Mooney undoubtedly directed Harrington to Iwi Katálsta, the daughter of the woman whom Mooney described as “the last conservator of the potter’s art among the East Cherokee.” In the midst of a whirlwind itinerary, Harrington contracted with Iwi Katálsta to make pottery, then observed and documented each step of the process. Harrington obtained the pottery vessels that Katálsta produced, along with the carved stamp paddles she used, and perhaps even the ancient polishing stone that Mooney had seen 20 years earlier. He sent these materials to his friend, Arthur Parker, at the New York State Museum, where Katálsta’s pottery and tools remain today.

Harrington, like Valentine, Mooney, and Holmes, recognized direct continuity between the “old style” wares of Eastern Cherokee potters and the archaeological ceramics found in local mound and village sites. Such evidence of ceramic continuity helped debunk the “Moundbuilder myth” and established a direct linkage between the archaeological past and the ethnographic present. Archaeologists now characterize Katálsta’s wares as part of the Qualla ceramic series (Egloff 1967; Keel 1976), a rubric that encompasses more than 500 years of Cherokee pottery from southwestern North Carolina. Originally formulated by Egloff to describe the late prehistoric and early historic era pottery from the Cherokee Middle Towns area (upper Little Tennessee River basin), the Qualla ceramic series:

... possesses the basic attributes of the Lamar style horizon: folded finger impressed rim fillets; large, sloppy, carved stamps, and bold incising.... The distinctive qualities of the Qualla paste ... moderate to abundant quantities of grit coupled with partial burnishing of the vessel’s interior make Qualla sherds distinctive even when the exterior surface finish is obliterated. [Egloff 1967:34-35]

Keel provides additional detail:

Ceramics of this [Qualla] series, like other series made throughout the area, were produced by the coiling technique. Vessel walls were thinned with mussel shell scrapers. Interiors, as well as some exteriors, were highly polished with small river pebbles. Surface finishes were produced by being paddle stamped (complicated, simple, and checked types), cord marked fabric impressed, smoothed-over-stamped, plain, burnished or polished, corncob marked, and brushed. Decoration of vessels consisted of incised rectilinear or curvilinear patterns on the upper parts of casuela bowls; however, the decoration of rims occurs on all types of the series. Simple rim forms are uncommon.... Flanges, at or just below the lip, are quite common...; but the most popular ... was the everted rim with an added fillet usually embellished with fingernail punctations, notches, or short oblique incisions. [Keel 1976:63]

The inclusive Qualla ceramic series is directly comparable to Tugalo (sixteenth century) and Estatoe (eighteenth century) phase ceramics of northeastern Georgia (Hally 1986), and Boyd ceramics (nineteenth century) of north-central Georgia (Caldwell 1955), and Galt wares (nineteenth century) of northwestern Georgia (Baker 1970; Caldwell 1955, Garrow 1979). All of these wares are associated with protohistoric or historic era Cherokee occupations.

Temporal and spatial variability within the long-lived and widespread Qualla series is, as yet, imperfectly understood. Dickens (1979) proposed subdividing the Qualla phase into early (ca. A.D. 1450–1650) and late (ca. A.D. 1650–1838) phases, but did not specify ceramic attributes or trends that distinguish those phases. Importantly, he notes continuity of the tradition into the twentieth century: “Qualla style pottery persisted in the Middle and Out Towns until Indian removal, and was produced at the Qualla Reservation as late as 1880–1900” (Dickens 1979:26). Dickens (1979) derives the Qualla series from the Pisgah ceramic series, a South Appalachian Mississippian ware group that occurs primarily to the north of the documented Qualla phase area, within the French Broad and upper Catawba river basins (Dickens 1976; Holden 1966; Moore 1981).

Expanding upon Dickens’ work, Ward and Davis (1999) posit a tripartite subdivision of the Qualla phase, with the Early Qualla phase predating A.D. 1450, a Middle Qualla phase (ca. A.D. 1450–1700) subsuming Dickens’ early phase, and a Late Qualla phase (ca. A.D. 1700–1838) encompassing the era of sustained European contact. The Early Qualla phase (pre-A.D. 1450) was postulated to address mounting evidence that the Qualla phase was not a direct derivative of the Pisgah phase, but rather an *in situ* development in the upper Little Tennessee and Hiwassee river basins. Recent analyses have shed more light upon the earliest wares of the Qualla ceramic series and its immediate antecedents. Materials recovered in testing at 31JK291, the Cherokee Casino site,

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document an early fifteenth-century village occupation (Riggs et al. 1997), and ceramics associated with it are consistent with the Qualla series. These wares are grit-tempered, with rectilinear complicated-stamped, check-stamped, or plain/burnished surfaces, smudged, burnished interiors, and simple rims. This small sample of early fifteenth-century ceramics differs from the Qualla series only in the absence of elaborated rims and incised cazuela forms. Slightly later contexts (ca. A.D. 1420) documented at the Coweeta Creek site (31Ma34) yielded similar stamped, grit-tempered wares which exhibit the first known instances of appliqué rimstrips—ceramic hallmarks that clearly constitute early examples of the Qualla series (Wilson and Rodning 2002) (Figure 2). Characteristics of this Early Qualla ceramic assemblage include:

1. large jars ( $\approx$  12 liter) with pronounced shoulders, tall vertical necks, and slightly everted, simple (occasionally castellated) rims (these vessels resemble late Savannah wares);
2. large ( $\approx$  12 liter) and small ( $\approx$  4 liter) jars with distinctive filleted rimstrips with saw-toothed fenestration along their lower edges (these vessels correspond to early Lamar wares and constitute the basis for Qualla phase attribution of the assemblage);
3. limited incidence of hemispherical bowls and small jars with thickened, punctate rims and linear-stamped surfaces (these rim modes correspond to late Pisgah series wares); and
4. small, red-filmed plain bowls with simple incision and a limited incidence of incised cazuela bowls.

The majority of these Early Qualla phase wares evince rectilinear complicated-stamped or check-stamped surfaces, with check stamping largely restricted to jars with simple rims. Also diagnostic of Early Qualla assemblages is the incidence of thin-bodied jars and bowls with dark, very sandy, and highly compacted paste; these differ markedly from later Qualla wares. In general terms, this emergent Qualla series assemblage is most comparable to the terminal Savannah/early Lamar assemblages of northern Georgia (e.g., Rembert phase, Anderson and Schuldenrein 1985; Rudolph and Hally 1985) and does not appear to be closely related to contemporaneous Pisgah series assemblages of the French Broad River basin.

Middle Qualla phase (ca. A.D. 1450–1700) pottery (Figures 3 and 4), best known from the Coweeta Creek site assemblage, is characterized by:

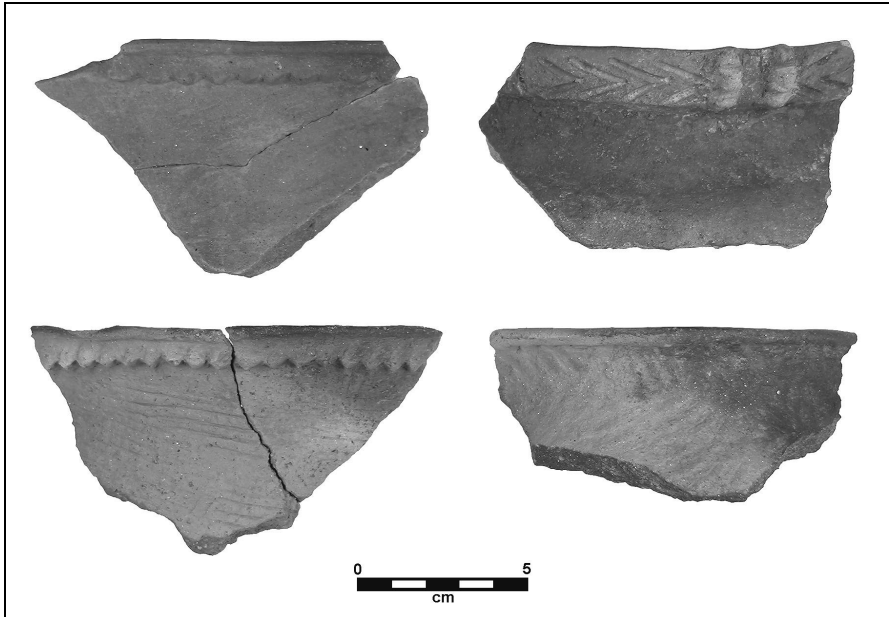


Figure 2. Early Qualla phase ceramics (ca. A.D. 1420) recovered from the Coweeta Creek site: (top left and bottom left) Qualla series rectilinear complicated-stamped jar rims with serrated rimstrips; (top right) Pisgah series jar rim with hachured incisions and appliqué nodes; and (bottom right) late Savannah-like rectilinear-stamped jar fragment with simple rim.

...jars with flaring rim forms, usually adorned with a notched appliqué strip added beneath the lip. ...Middle Qualla phase vessels were most often stamped with a carved wooden paddle. Rectilinear-stamped and curvilinear-stamped designs occurred, with the latter having become more popular during the last half of the phase. Concentric circle, figure nine, parallel undulating line, chevron, and rectilinear line block or herringbonelike designs were popular motifs....

Cazuela bowl forms, with their sharply carinated shoulders, made their debut during the Middle Qualla phase.... Incised designs were executed in a variety of motifs around the broad cazuela bowl shoulders....

Burnishing, check stamping, and cordmarking were minority surface finishes during the Middle Qualla phase, with burnishing being the most popular. [Ward and Davis 1999:181–183]

The Late Qualla phase, as defined by Ward and Davis, is exemplified by single household assemblages from the Tuckasegee site (31Jk12, ca. A.D. 1700–1730) and the Townson site (31Ce15, ca. 1776) (Figures 5 and 6). Ward and Davis note:

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Figure 3. Middle Qualla phase ceramics recovered from the Coweeta Creek site: (top) Qualla series curvilinear complicated-stamped bowl with slightly constricted neck and notched appliqué rimstrip; and (bottom) Qualla series curvilinear complicated-stamped jar with strongly everted rim.



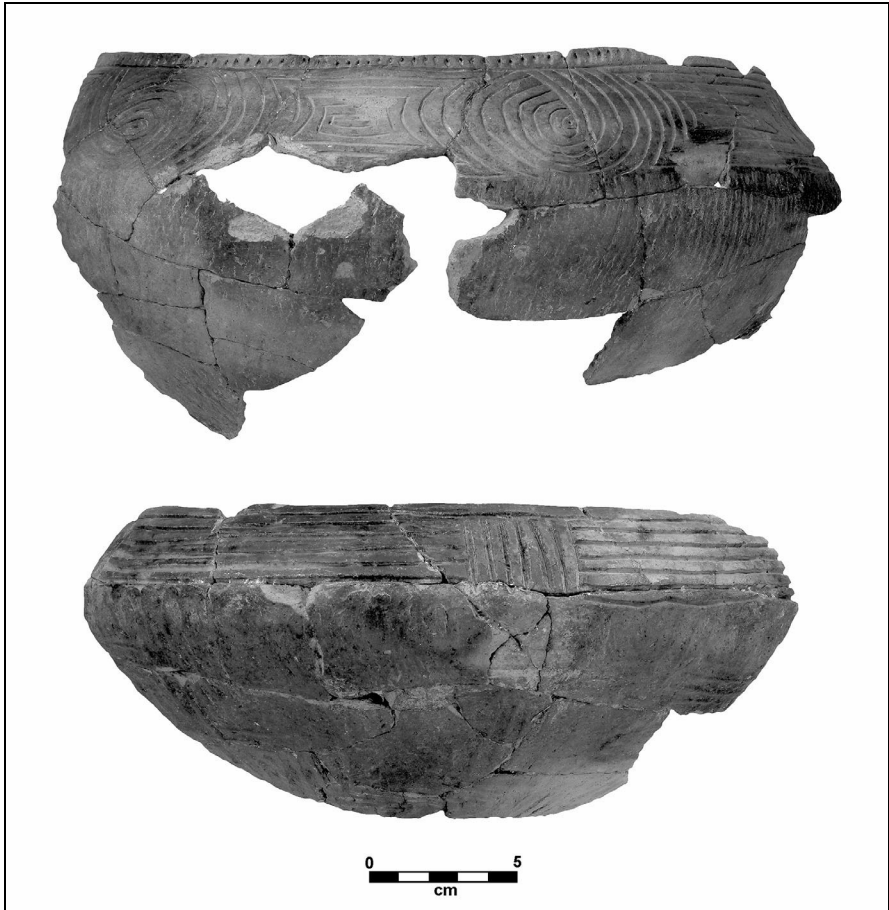


Figure 4. Middle Qualla phase cazuela bowls recovered from the Coweeta Creek site.

The pottery of the Late Qualla phase reflects the relative stability and conservatism that mark the beginning of this phase. No drastic changes occurred to clearly demarcate the Late Qualla ceramic tradition from pottery made during the preceding Middle Qualla phase. Instead, curvilinear, complicated-stamped designs gradually became more popular as rectilinear motifs declined. After the middle of the eighteenth century, all complicated-stamped designs became bolder in form and cruder in execution. Concomitantly, incised decorations and burnishing of vessel surfaces decreased in frequency as cordmarking and corncob impressing became more popular methods of surface treatment....

Although the pots [from Townson site, ca. A.D. 1776] varied in size and surface finish, their general form was very similar. Most were globular jars with broad shoulders and out-flaring rims. Some of the rims were folded,

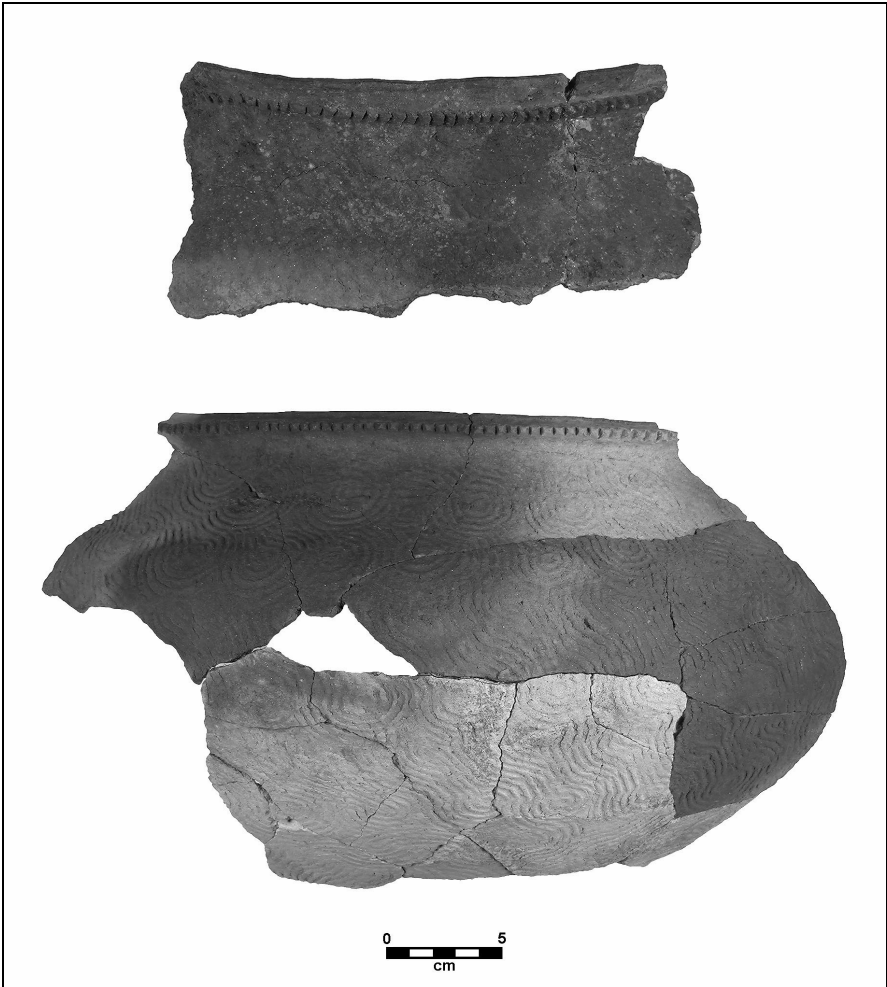


Figure 5. Late Qualla phase (early eighteenth century) jar fragments recovered from the Tuckasegee site: (*top*) rectilinear complicated-stamped tall-necked jar with notched appliqué rimstrip; and (*bottom*) curvilinear complicated-stamped squat jar notched with appliqué rimstrip.

creating a rolled lip, and were unadorned. On other vessels, the folded rim formed a filletlike strip that was notched .... [Ward and Davis 1999:268]

More recent comparisons of Middle and Late Qualla phase samples from Coweeta Creek reveal several points of contrast. Middle Qualla phase jars are characterized by extremely everted rim forms; most are stamped with varieties of the ‘figure-9’ curvilinear motif. Incised cazuela

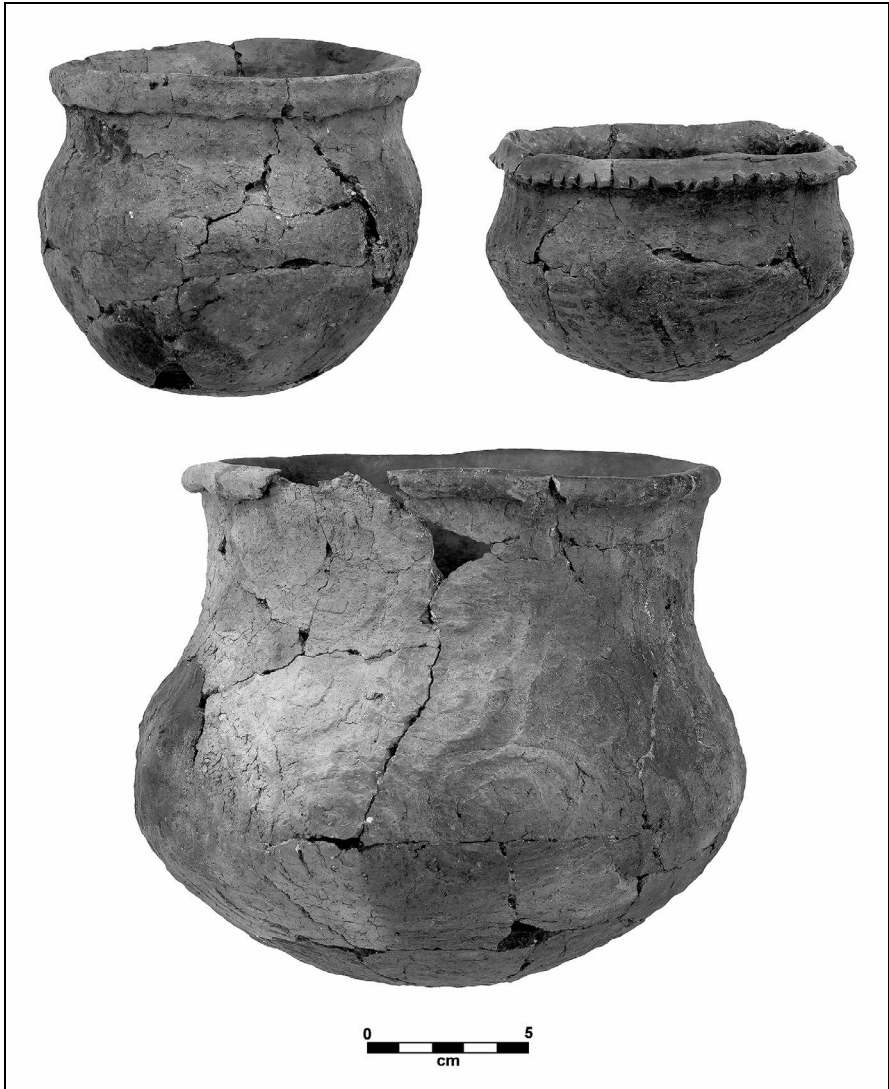


Figure 6. Late Qualla phase (late eighteenth century) vessels recovered from the Townson site.

forms are common and exhibit a wide range of Lamar Bold Incised motifs. Late Qualla phase jars from Coweeta Creek (ca. A.D. 1700–1730) tend to have only slightly everted rims, and rectilinear complicated-stamped motifs appear much more commonly. Cazuela bowl forms and,

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concomitantly, incised decorations are much less common in the Late Qualla phase samples and probably disappear around 1740.

Hally (1986), in discussing long-term continuity in Cherokee ceramic traditions in northeastern Georgia, offers descriptions of sixteenth century Tugalo phase assemblages and eighteenth-century Estatoe phase ceramic assemblages, all of which conform to the more inclusive Qualla series. Hally contrasts and compares the assemblages, which are equivalent to Middle Qualla phase and Late Qualla phase assemblages:

The most obvious difference between the Tugalo phase and Estatoe phase ceramic assemblages is the absence of check stamping in the former. . . . Complicated stamping is more common in the Tugalo phase. Only one basic rim form, the folded rim, occurs on jars in the Tugalo phase. A caldron shaped jar with undulating rim is common in the Tugalo phase but appears to be absent from the later phase, while the squat jar form of the Estatoe phase does not occur earlier. The barred oval and filfot cross stamped motifs are present only in the Tugalo assemblage, while the concentric cross motif is represented only in the Estatoe phase assemblage. Finally, an incised guilloche motif, present in small numbers in the Tugalo phase, appears to be totally absent from the later phase.

Similarities between the two assemblages far outweigh differences. Complicated stamping is the predominant form of surface treatment in both assemblages. Pinched rim jar, tall neck jar, carinated bowl and flaring rim bowl vessel forms differ only slightly between the two assemblages. All numerically important stamped and incised motifs, furthermore, are represented in both assemblages in approximately equal numbers (Hally 1986:111-112).

Late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century trends in Qualla series ceramics are well documented by assemblages recovered from sites along the Hiwassee River in Cherokee County, North Carolina (Riggs 1995, 1999). Samples from the post-1780 settlements of Cootlohee and Takwa'hi exhibit rectilinear complicated-stamped or check-stamped jars with notched or plain appliqué rimstrips and gently recurvate profiles. Prominent in these samples are tall, flaring-walled, flat-based pan forms, typically plain, but also check stamped or rectilinear complicated stamped. Pan rims are generally simple, but occasionally exhibit appliqué rimstrips. Hemispherical or slightly carinated bowls occur as minor elements in these samples. No decorative incision is observed in these samples, and curvilinear complicated-stamp motifs are rare. These Late Qualla phase samples are closely comparable to the contemporaneous Galt series wares from northwestern Georgia (Baker 1970; Caldwell 1955; Garrow 1979; Hally 1986). Like earlier Qualla ceramics, these wares exhibit grit-tempered bodies and blackened, burnished interiors.

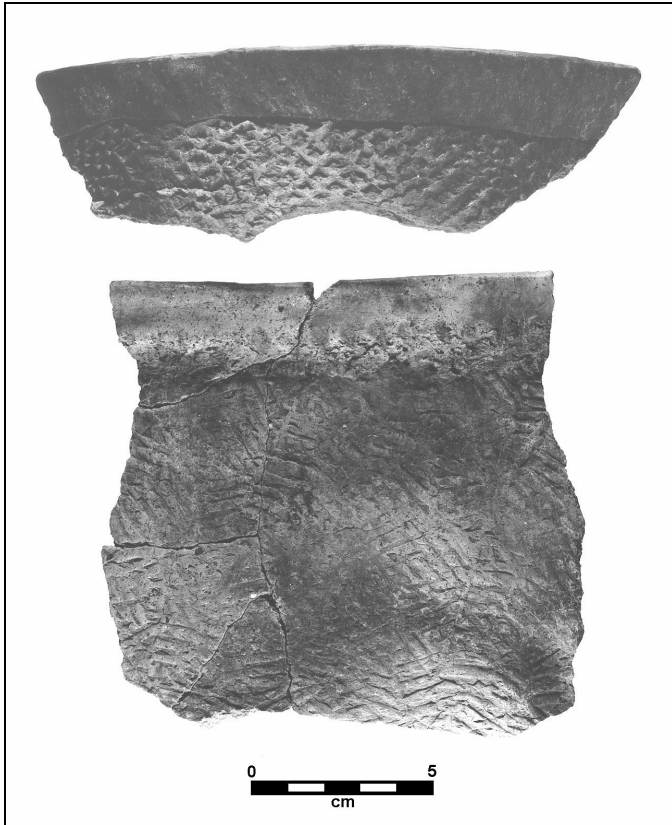


Figure 7. Removal Period (ca. 1838) Qualla series jar fragments from the Chewkeeskee Cabin site.

Ceramics from documented Removal-era (ca. A.D. 1835-1838) household sites in the Hiwassee River Valley (e.g., John Christie, Chewkeeskee, Sataka, and Brush Picker house sites) closely resemble late eighteenth-century wares from the same area, but exhibit even higher frequencies of check-stamped surfaces (>50%) and lack bowl forms (Riggs 1999) (Figure 7). These assemblages also exhibit quantities of mass-produced trade ceramics and metal cooking vessel fragments—vessels that supplanted many of the functions of traditional ceramics. The widespread availability of cheap, mass-produced containers probably spurred substantial narrowing of the traditional ceramic repertoire during the early nineteenth century. Cherokee spoliation claims for household goods lost as a result of the forced military removal of 1838 document

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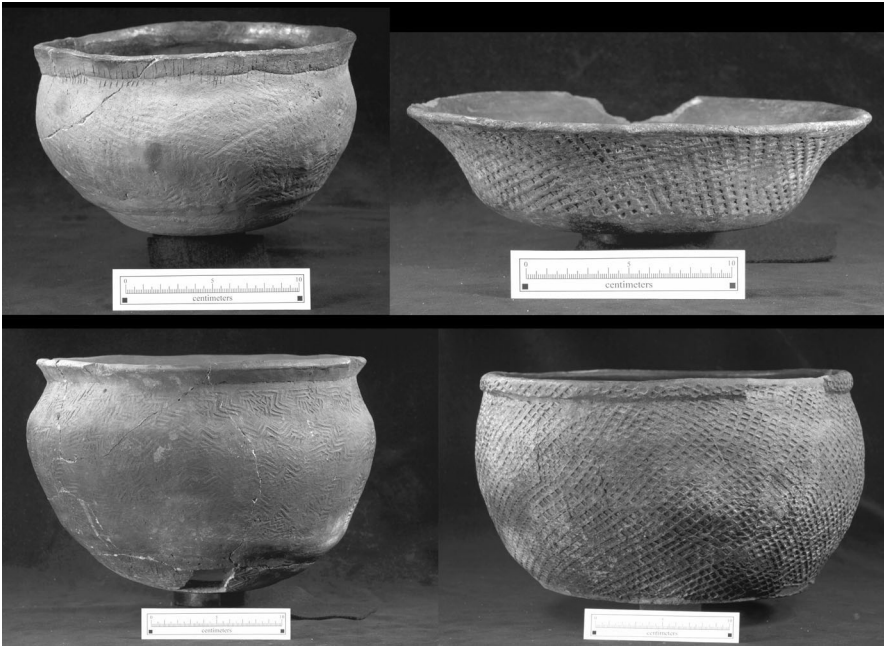


Figure 8. Qualla series vessels purchased in 1882, Qualla Boundary, North Carolina: (*top left*) rectilinear complicated-stamped jar, probably made by Katâlsta; (*top right*) check-stamped pan, maker undocumented; (*bottom left*) rectilinear complicated-stamped jar, probably made by Sally Nic-a-jac-ee; (*bottom right*) check-stamped jar, made by “Widow Saunooke.” UNC-RLA Valentine Collection.

traditional “hommony pots” and “dirt pans” in about 10% of Cherokee households in southwestern North Carolina. Archaeological evidence indicates these wares were much more common (Riggs 1999).

Post-removal era Cherokee ceramics are best known from ethnographic collections assembled in the late nineteenth century. The vessels that Valentine purchased on Qualla Boundary in 1882, now housed by the University of North Carolina Research Laboratories of Archaeology, include ceramic jars, bowls, and pans with grit-tempered bodies, stamped exterior surfaces, and blackened, burnished interiors (Figure 8). The jars tend to be nearly hemispherical with little or no neck constriction and slightly flaring rims decorated with flattened appliqué rimstrips. Jar bases are slightly to prominently flattened and exhibit impressions from commercially made bowls or saucers used as forms in the building process. Exterior surfaces are check stamped or rectilinear complicated stamped; some specimens exhibit both treatments. The large

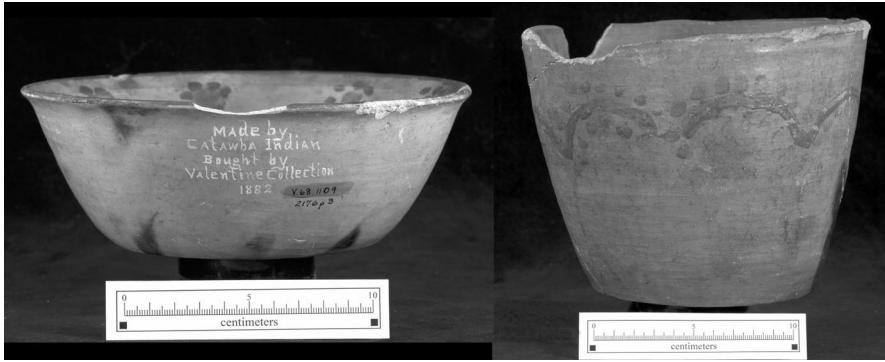


Figure 9. Polychrome painted vessels made by Catawba potter Sally Wahuhu, ca. 1882. UNC-RLA Valentine Collection.

vertical jar with a flat base, shown in Figure 8, appears to have been a post-Removal innovation. Most of the small, flat-based pans are plain or burnished, but check-stamped and rectilinear complicated-stamped examples are also present. It is not surprising that these vessels substantially resemble Removal period examples from archaeological contexts; the potters that Valentine and Mooney observed were active during the mid-nineteenth century, and some had learned their craft from eighteenth-century potters.

During the 1880s, Palmer, Valentine, and Mooney also collected wares of a different tradition from the potters of Qualla Boundary. Catawba potters, some of whom had lived among the Eastern Band Cherokees since 1840, made plain, burnished wares in a wide variety of forms. The Catawba pottery was thin and lightweight, and vessel types often mirrored commercially made mugs, pitchers, kettles, plates, and bowls. Some Catawba pottery was decorated with polychrome painted floral designs (Figure 9). For more than a century, Catawba potters had developed and refined a cottage industry in their homeland around Rock Hill, South Carolina, selling their tailored wares to Anglo-American and African-American customers as far afield as Charleston. In 1888, Mooney visited Sally Wahuhu and Susannah (Harris) Owl, Catawba potters married to Cherokee men, and documented their craft in detail. Mooney observed that the Catawba style pottery was gaining currency among the Cherokees, while the old utilitarian Qualla pottery of Katálsta was waning.

The popularity of the Catawba-style pottery grew with the early development of the tourist trade on Qualla Boundary and the growth of a commercial context for pottery among the Cherokees. With the influx of

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Figure 10. Modern (2002) Cherokee ceramic vessels by Amanda Swimmer. The highly burnished surfaces and incised decorations are twentieth-century innovations inspired by Catawba pottery.

white urban tourists that followed the opening of the railroad into the southern mountains during the 1880s and 1890s, potters found outlets for their wares as tourist curios. White tourists preferred the more familiar, westernized Catawba wares, and Catawba and Cherokee potters were sensitive to such market demands. By the time of the first Cherokee Fall Fair in 1914, all of the pottery displayed in the crafts exhibits was burnished Catawba ware—diminutive vessels made for the tourist trade (Hill 1997:245). Susannah Harris Owl and Nettie Harris Owl, both accomplished Catawba potters and experienced entrepreneurs, led the commercialization of pottery at Qualla Boundary through the 1920s (Blumer 1987). Their success inspired a generation of Cherokee artists such as Maude Welch, Rebecca Youngbird, Lottie Stamper, Cora Wahneetah, Louise Bigmeat Maney, and Amanda Swimmer. These famed Cherokee potters used the Catawba-style wares as a point of departure, innovating new, individualistic styles that constitute the present-day Cherokee tradition. They have drawn inspiration from sources as diverse as San Ildefonso potter Maria Martinez and the crafts programs at Indian boarding schools (Blumer 1980, 1987). Their work has kept Cherokee ceramic arts vital and vibrant through periods of tremendous social, cultural, and economic change for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and their wares, sold to tourists and art collectors, have become definitive markers of Cherokee cultural identity for the outside world (Figure 10).

Now, a twenty-first-century revival of “old-style” Qualla pottery is underway at the hands of contemporary Cherokee artists. Through workshops organized and sponsored by the University of North Carolina





Figure 11. Scenes from the the hands-on workshop on Qualla pottery: (top left) master potter Amanda Swimmer holding a nineteenth-century jar by Sally Nickajack; (top right) Tom Belt and Shirley Oswald discuss a replica of a cazuela bowl from Kituhwa; (bottom left) Aylene Stamper using a nineteenth-century jar as a model; and (bottom right) Amanda Swimmer, Melissa Maney, and Shirley Oswald building ceramic vessels.

Research Laboratories of Archaeology, the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and the North Carolina Arts Council Folklife Program, Cherokee potters have examined firsthand the pottery of Katálsta and her contemporaries, as well as archaeological examples of traditional Qualla pottery that span 400 years (Figure 11). With the help of ceramicist Tamara Bean, this new generation of potters has reached back to learn the ceramic styles and techniques of their ancestors from the wares themselves. Informed by the ethnographic work of Mooney and

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Figure 12. Modern (2002) Qualla series stamped vessels: (*left*) small jar with strap handles by Bernadean George; and (*right*) cazuela bowl by Davy Arch.

Harrington, Cherokee artists like Joel Queen, Bernadean George, Dean Reid, Aylene Stamper, Betty Maney, Davy Arch, and Shirley Oswald are recreating Qualla series pottery for the first time in almost 90 years (Figure 12). Their models for this effort are Qualla series vessels from the University of North Carolina's Valentine Collection (ca. 1882), as well as archaeological pottery from the Coweeta Creek, Birdtown, Tuckasegee, Townson, Nununyi, and Kituhwa sites, also part of the Research Laboratories of Archaeology collections.

By recreating traditional Qualla pottery, contemporary Cherokee potters are not abandoning the last three generations of innovation in ceramic art. Rather, they are expanding their current repertoires to encompass an artistic and technological lineage that they can claim as exclusively Cherokee. Like their grandmothers and great-grandmothers at the turn of the last century, contemporary Cherokee potters must articulate with an external commercial market, but now on artistic terms that the potters themselves define. Indian arts collectors have grown sufficiently educated and sophisticated to appreciate the Qualla pottery of Katâlsta and her heirs, and contemporary Cherokee potters are seeking to stimulate the market with these new-old wares. When M.R. Harrington observed Iwi Katâlsta and wrote "The Last of the Iroquois Potters," he assumed that he was documenting the final death throes of a tradition. He certainly never considered that his brief study might form one of the bases for a revival of Qualla pottery, nor did he foresee that academic collections of ethnographic and archaeological pottery might one day return to Qualla Boundary to inform new generations of Cherokee artists. Like many other researchers who foretold the progressive disappearance of "the old ways,"

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he underestimated the recurrent cycles of tradition and the stubborn resilience of Cherokee culture.

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