

1-1-2015

Wilson pottery: pottery production in the context of enslavement in the South

Lindsey J. Komes

Follow this and additional works at: <https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/studentengagement-honorscapstones>

Recommended Citation

Komes, Lindsey J., "Wilson pottery: pottery production in the context of enslavement in the South" (2015). *Honors Capstones*. 1395.
<https://huskiecommons.lib.niu.edu/studentengagement-honorscapstones/1395>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research & Artistry at Huskie Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Capstones by an authorized administrator of Huskie Commons. For more information, please contact jschumacher@niu.edu.

University Honors Program

Capstone Approval Page

Capstone Title (print or type)

Wilson Pottery: Pottery Production in the
Context of Enslavement in the South

Student Name (print or type)

Lindsey Komes

Faculty Supervisor (print or type)

Dr. Kerry Sagebiel

Faculty Approval Signature

Dr. Kerry Sagebiel

Department of (print or type)

Anthropology

Date of Approval (print or type)

4/30/2013

HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT THESIS SUBMISSION FORM

AUTHOR: Lindsey Komes

THESIS TITLE: Wilson Pottery: Pottery Production in the Context of Enslavement in the South

ADVISOR: Dr. Kerry Sagebiel

ADVISOR'S DEPARTMENT: Anthropology

DISCIPLINE: Anthropology

YEAR: 2015

PAGE LENGTH: 20

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Yes

ILLUSTRATED: Yes

PUBLISHED (YES OR NO): No

LIST PUBLICATION: N/A

COPIES AVAILABLE (HARD COPY, MICROFILM, DISKETTE): Yes

ABSTRACT (100-200 WORDS):

Pre-Civil War Southern pottery was at time produced by slaves. This is true in the case of J. M. Wilson's pottery in Seguin, Texas. By cataloguing and researching materials from a small collection of excavated pottery, the function of various vessels will become evident. In addition, inferences can be made about why slaves chose to make this pottery, even after gaining their freedom due to the Emancipation Proclamation. Materials will be catalogued and analyzed using spreadsheets, then compared and contrasted. Both the similarities and differences between the sherds can reveal important facts about pottery production by enslaved peoples in the Southern United States. Overall, this research will fill a considerable gap in knowledge of pre-Civil War pottery production.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Wilson Pottery: Pottery Production in the Context of Enslavement in the South

**A Thesis Submitted to the
University Honors Program
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree**

With Upper Division Honors

Department Of

Anthropology

By

Lindsey Komes

DeKalb, Illinois

May 2015

Abstract

Pre-Civil War Southern pottery was at time produced by slaves. This is true in the case of J. M. Wilson's pottery in Seguin, Texas. By cataloguing and researching materials from a small collection of excavated pottery, the function of various vessels will become evident. In addition, inferences can be made about why slaves chose to make this pottery, even after gaining their freedom due to the Emancipation Proclamation. Materials will be catalogued and analyzed using spreadsheets, then compared and contrasted. Both the similarities and differences between the sherds can reveal important facts about pottery production by enslaved peoples in the Southern United States. Overall, this research will fill a considerable gap in knowledge of pre-Civil War pottery production.

Historical Context

John McKamie (J.M.) Wilson Jr. was born in Mecklinburg County, North Carolina in 1808, into an upper class family. He graduated from Washington University in 1827, where he pursued law. However, he soon had a change of heart and became a licensed preacher just like his father. He began to preach at his father's old church in Rocky River, North Carolina. In 1831, he married Philadelphia Herndon Fox, the daughter of a Virginia plantation owner. While John preached, he probably was involved in agriculture as a supplemental means of income. Therefore, he probably owned slaves, which was likely how he was able to live so well on a pastor's salary. While living in North Carolina, the Wilsons had six children: Edmund, Sarah, Alexander, John, Laura, and William (Brackner 1981:17).

Then, the Wilsons and their slaves moved to Fulton County, Missouri, where the seventh child, Richard was born. The slaves the Wilsons brought to Missouri included Hiram, George, Eliza, Wallace, and James Wilson. They may have brought two other slaves, Calvin and Andrew Wilson as well. While in Missouri, John established a seminary and school for young women. In 1855, his last child, Clara, was born and Wilson decided to leave Missouri. This was likely a political decision, due to the events that took place during the struggle over Kansas, which became known as Bleeding Kansas.

Bleeding Kansas was the violent conflict that took place over the status of the state. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 called for popular sovereignty in the state of Kansas, allowing the settlers of the new state to decide whether to allow slavery. This caused a major clash between pro-slavery Southerners, and anti-slavery Northerners. This conflict often erupted in violence. This so-called “proxy war” preceded the Civil War and foreshadowed further violence to come. “Being a slaveholder, Wilson would have been greatly upset by and perhaps participated in the 1855-1856 struggle over the new state,” (Brackner, 1981:18).

Wilson moved south, probably to protect his monetary investment in slaves. The family settled near the Guadalupe River in Texas, which was on the westernmost fringe of plantation culture. This fertile area led to further prosperity for the family. The Wilson family arrived in Seguin, Texas in the winter of 1856, bringing with them nineteen slaves. Soon after, Wilson took over the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Seguin. In addition, he also took over as headmaster of Guadalupe College. However, he was well aware of the struggles of living in a frontier community such a Seguin. The cost of food preservation was extremely high, because prices were high as a result of the lack of pottery production in the area. Therefore, at the time,

all stoneware had to be imported, at great cost to users. Stoneware is ceramic, utilitarian pottery that gets its name from its dense and hard nature. Wilson's "idea was to help the Seguin area preserve food over a longer period of time and perhaps to help himself to some profits," (Brackner 1981:21).

Wilson, with the help of his son and son-in-law, leased three hundred and fifteen acres north of Capote Hill for twenty-five years for the sum of one dollar. "Articles written by John M. Wilson for the Texas Almanacs of 1870 and 1872 explain that he had no prior knowledge of the manufacture of stoneware at the time of his arrival in Texas," (Greer n.d.:1). Previous to Wilson's venture, several others had tried and failed to produce pottery in the same area. This failure lay in the inability to find a suitable clay source for creating a good stoneware. However, in his dealings with county residents, Wilson was able to find clays in "ample quantity, and of good quality to make excellent ware," (Wasson 1968; Wilson 1870:144). In addition, Wilson's search helped him to form an understanding of the distribution of clay throughout Texas, which today is known as the Wilcox formation. Although Wilson found all of the ingredients needed to make stoneware readily available, it was a matter of the consistency of the clay. According to Wilson, previous pottery-making attempts had failed due to clay that was too calcareous, causing the ware to melt when subjected to the heat of the kiln. This means the clay contained too much calcium carbonate, which gave it a chalky texture. Therefore, Wilson located the original pottery on a geologic formation known as the Carrizo Sands.

Deposited in the Eocene, the Carrizo Sands are 'medium to very coarse grained up to size of rice, poorly sorted, friable, non-calcareous, thick bedded, light yellow to orange and

brown; weathers yellowish brown, locally iron-oxide banded; characterized by ridges thickly forested with oak,' (Bureau of Economic Geology 1974) [Brackner 1981:25].

The extensive oak forest provided ample fuel for the kilns. There is no record of any person with the occupation of potter in the 1860 Guadalupe County Census, which implies that the master potter at Wilson's pottery was a slave. The later creation of a pottery by Hiram Wilson along with James and Wallace Wilson makes it reasonable to assume the three slaves were the potters at Wilson's pottery. This first Wilson Pottery was also known as the Guadalupe Pottery; this site produced utilitarian stoneware until 1869 (Morgan 2009:14).

However, Wilson's interest in the pottery would soon wane. The Civil War tore the country apart, and Wilson sent two of his sons to fight for the Confederacy. Although no actual fighting took place in Texas, the state did see a population increase as well as improved economic growth. This was due to the emigration of many Southern slaveholders, looking to avoid the invading Union forces. Nevertheless, this was not true everywhere. In Seguin, the prosperity that had been enjoyed before the War dried up when the fighting started. Another major event that had an impact on Wilson's pottery was the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. Despite the delayed knowledge of this decision in Texas, this freeing of the slaves meant Wilson no longer had the free labor source to run his business. "By 1866 everyone in Seguin and the surrounding area knew about emancipation," (Brackner 1981:61).

"Reverend Wilson sold his half interest in the pottery at 41-Gu-6ⁱ to M. J. Durham on September 29, 1869," (Brackner 1981:68). Durham took this opportunity to relocate the pottery a mile northwest of the original. This move was likely because this new location was closer to certain usable clay sources. Marion J. Durham was a potter born in South Carolina, and likely

familiar with the Edgefield pottery tradition. This pottery tradition was defined by the “free painted and slip trailed decoration,” (Greer 1981:170). This two-color slip decoration technique was used on the alkaline glaze pottery made in Edgefield. It was in the Edgefield District where the famous slave potter, Dave, worked. Dave was a literate slave, taught by his master, who signed and dated the pottery he made. This is extremely unique among pottery produced by slaves and is therefore very valuable (Joseph 2011:134-155). Wilson had also spent some time in the Edgefield District, making him somewhat familiar with the economic potential of such pottery and the process of making stoneware.

The second pottery, the Wilson-Durham-Chandler Pottery (41-Gu-4), was the second location of Wilson pottery production (Morgan 2009:14). Marion Durham and John Chandler, both potters, moved to Texas from South Carolina in the 1860s and purchased pottery manufacturing equipment from Wilson when he closed the Guadalupe Pottery. Durham and Chandler founded a new pottery site closer to the raw clay source and the road connecting Seguin to the Capote community (Morgan 2009:14). This site was used into the early twentieth century. At this site, both salt glaze and alkaline glaze pottery was produced and both kiln types, groundhog and beehive, were utilized.

In response to Wilson’s deal with Durham, and perhaps the Emancipation of slaves, Hiram, James, and Wallace Wilson decided to establish their own pottery. Exactly why they made this decision is not clear, however, it came at a time of tension between whites and Freedman in the County. In addition, pottery making was a very valuable skill at the time, which is probably why these men continued as potters even after being freed from slavery. “H. Wilson & Co. (41-Gu-5)ⁱⁱ is located further from the main road than the other establishments and is on a

different creek,” (Brackner 1981:68). There are five identifiable differences between pottery made at J. M. Wilson’s site and that produced by H. Wilson & Co. First was the predominance of salt glazing. This was likely due the lack of knowledge of the alkaline glaze formula. “The predominance of salt glazing here may indicate that the South Carolinians were in control of the alkaline glaze formula at the earlier site and that the Wilsons fell back on the only system of glazing that they could accomplish,” (Brackner 1981:73). Another difference was the slip used for the interior of the vessels. It had a rich, dark color, and was unlikely to be found in the area. Therefore, it may have imported. H. Wilson & Co. also began producing lids for their vessels, rather than tie down rims. Tie down rims projected strongly from the vessel which made it possible tie down a cloth cover tightly over the vessel (Greer 1981:66). Additionally, they created a unique horseshoe shaped jar handle. Lastly, the vessels were all stamped with the maker’s mark – “H. Wilson & Co.” Overall, “The Hiram Wilson pottery site is characterized by salt and local slip glazed stonewares of an ovoid form,” (Greer n.d.:4). The pottery was operational from 1869 until Hiram’s death in 1884. After Hiram’s death, James and Wallace Wilson rejoined Durham’s pottery.

Hiram Wilson could be considered one of, if not the first black entrepreneur in Texas. “This was a noteworthy step in the post-Civil War economic transitions in Texas,” (Morgan 2009:15). After the creation of the pottery, Hiram purchase 600 acres of land for the sum of five hundred dollars on which he established a Freedman community. A school, a church and a cemetery were built on this land. The community became known as Capote. “The rest of the land he sold in lots of forty acres to individuals bringing other free slaves and their families to his small community,” (Morgan 2009:16). Additionally, other than owning the pottery business,

Hiram was also a Baptist minister. In many ways he was very similar to his old master, J. M. Wilson.

Background of the Southern Pottery Tradition

“The pottery produced at the Wilson sites, as well as many potteries in Central Texas, reflected the Edgefield style of utilitarian stoneware,” (Morgan 2009:37). Such pottery was produced using a potter’s wheel, utilizing clays that were collected from various streambeds. The growth of the pottery manufacturing business in Texas is due to the high quality of such clay, especially that which was used to create Wilson pottery. Although the clay was of fine quality, additives were still required to make the clay into a consistency ideal for producing stoneware. The additive ingredients were mixed into the clay using a pug mill. These mills consisted of “a cylindrical vat in the center of which a shaft was fitted with wooden or metal rods placed in a spiral pattern extending from the shaft out almost to the vat wall,” (Greer 1981:37). “These mills were usually powered by a horse or mule,” (Greer 1981:37). The clay was then wheel thrown into various forms. Once the vessels were dried, one of two different glaze types were used to decorate them. These were salt glaze and alkaline glaze. Slip, a combination of clay and water, was also sometimes used to decorate vessels. Lastly, the vessels were fired in a kiln. Wilson pottery was produced using two different types of kilns, a groundhog kiln and a beehive kiln. “Alkaline glazing along with the use of groundhog type kiln are two main features of a style of ceramic production known as the Southern ceramic complex or the alkaline glazing tradition,” (Burrison 1973:71-72). Alkaline glazing was one of the two types of glazing used at the J. M. Wilson site. Most of the sherds found at the site with alkaline glaze have a green hue and a shiny surface. However, “alkaline glazes can take many colors, depending on the nature of the

ingredients,” (Morgan 2009:38). Alkaline glaze originated in America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the Edgefield District of South Carolina. This glaze type was originally brought to America by English potters, replicating an oriental glaze formula. However, this tradition has deep roots in English pottery making. The materials for making alkaline glaze were mixed together, then applied to the exterior of vessels by pouring it over the form or by dipping it into a vat of the glaze. “One reason for the glaze’s popularity and persistence into the twentieth century in rural areas of the southern United States was that all of the ingredientsⁱⁱⁱ necessary were easily available and cost almost nothing,” (Greer 1981:203). The mixture also produced a more durable glaze than other glazing traditions. This glaze type was used at J. M. Wilson’s pottery, but not at H. Wilson’s pottery, implying Hiram did not have knowledge of the technique.

The other glazing technique used by both John Wilson and Hiram Wilson was salt glazing. This glaze type was first used in fifteenth century Germany, but it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that it was used in North America. This technique is based on the chemical reaction that occurs when salt is thrown into the hot kiln. It creates a hard and transparent glaze, with the texture of an orange peel. Ordinary rock salt can be used to achieve this effect and is thrown into the kiln mid-firing, when the pottery is close to the vitrification point. Vitrification is the maturing of the clay, where the particles fuse together by filling up the spaces between with glass. This makes the vessel water proof. This glaze type was traditionally associated with a beehive kiln, but it seems at the Wilson-Durham-Chandler site both a beehive and a groundhog kiln were used when producing salt glaze pottery. J. M. Wilson’s pottery used only a groundhog kiln to produce pottery but apparently used both glaze types. The later pottery of Hiram Wilson

(H. Wilson and Co.), also exclusively used the groundhog kiln, but only produced salt glaze pottery (Morgan 2009:39-40).

The kilns at the Wilson sites were constructed of hand-made bricks. The first type of kiln used by the Wilson potters is the groundhog kiln. These types of kiln are usually built into a hillside, with a door to the firebox at the base and a long, low interior chamber. The other end of the chamber had a chimney that came up out of the hill. The pottery is stacked in the chamber through the opening in the firebox, usually by a small individual, such as a child. Kiln furniture is used to keep vessels from sticking together. The second kiln type was the beehive kiln. This type was much more versatile due to its high, vaulted ceilings which allowed more space and therefore could fire more pottery at once. Pottery could be stacked in several layers in this type of kiln, which required even more kiln furniture than was used in a groundhog kiln. In this kiln type, there are two fireboxes and they are both located below the pottery chamber. It is unclear why both J. M. Wilson and Hiram chose to use groundhog kilns exclusively, especially considering beehive kilns were better for salt glaze, (Morgan 2009:38).

Methods

When studying the collection of pottery, it was necessary to form an analysis sheet in order to properly analyze the sherds. Microsoft Excel® was used to create the analysis sheet. Several attributes of importance were recorded for each sherd. Because there were only twenty four sherds in the collection, it was possible to include more attributes, which increases the ease of analysis. The first determination made for each sherd was the vessel form. This is one of, if not the most essential, information needed to draw important conclusions about the function of

each vessel. Some of the classifications included bowl, pitcher, jug, and churn. However, it is difficult if not impossible to determine form if the sherd being analyzed is not a rim.

If it was a rim, there are several attributes that were considered. The first being rim form. This attribute is concerned with the angle of the rim, whether it is vertical, horizontal, or outwardly flared to a degree. Next, rim thickness was measured. Using a caliper, the width of the largest part of the rim was measured and recorded. Then, the sherd was placed on a diameter sheet with various size circles to determine diameter. When a rim was placed on the sheet, it could be compared to different circles until a similarity in the angle of rim was found. Then based on which circle was chosen, the diameter was recorded. In the same way the percentage of rim present was found. The circles each include various tick marks which indicate different percentages. Then the rim was simply measured. Lastly, the lip form of each rim was determined. Of this attribute, there are two possibilities, rounded or square.

Regardless if the sherd was part of the rim or the body of a vessel, the next attribute that was measured was wall thickness. This measurement again required the use of the caliper on the widest part of the wall of each sherd. The next step is probably the most difficult, which is determining the glaze color of the interior and exterior of the sherd. This is not an easy task, because it requires the use of a Munsell Soil Book (Munsell Color 2010), in which there are a variety different colors, including many which look very similar. In addition, these attributes require the most careful recording. One letter or number mistake can make it appear as if the sherd is a different color. Determining the color is the most time-consuming part of the analysis process. The Munsell book is also used to determine paste color, but this task is far easier because paste color has less variation than glaze color. The last step when looking at glaze, is

considering the glaze type. Given the two types of glaze found at the Wilson sites, either salt or alkaline glaze, this is a simple process due to the defining feature of each type. With salt glaze, one simply looks for the dimples resembling an orange-peel on the surface of the vessel.

Alkaline glaze on the other hand has a shiny, crackled look.

Once the glaze has been analyzed, the next step is to look at the surface treatment of the vessel, this can also include any decoration found on the vessel. One thing in particular present with Wilson Pottery is the stamped numbers found on some of the sherds. “The most common mark found upon American stoneware is the capacity numeral,” (Greer 1981:137). However, this numeral marking was usually only found on vessel with a capacity larger than one-gallon. The capacity number could be written by hand or impressed on the vessel using a special marker made of wood or clay. These markings were not only for utilitarian purposes, but served as a sort of decoration as well. Some pottery was also incised with a design, or in other cases signed by the potter.

The last two columns of the analysis sheet are core and inclusions. The core refers to center or middle of vessel wall and is often different in color than interior or exterior surface. The core will be a darker color if the vessel was not fired evenly or at a hot enough temperature. Inclusions are also known as temper. Temper is any material that is added to the clay to make it more suitable for pottery production. Temper improves the clays workability and keeps it from developing cracks, especially when fired. It is important to note if the inclusions are fine, medium, or coarse. The coarser the temper, the more noticeable it is when looking at the paste (Rice 1987:406-408). Additionally, this makes it easier to determine what sort of material the

temper is, whether it is rock, shell, or some other substance. The last column is for comments, where any unique features that did not fit into any other categories are recorded.

Analysis

This collection is from site 41-Gu-6, the original Wilson Pottery. The sample is relatively small in comparison to most other collections excavated from sites and therefore, the sherds can be looked at one by one and subsequently compared and contrasted. The sherds were grouped together by form, and then discussed individually. There were five groups. Bowls, churns, and jars were each a group. There was another group of two sherds that were labeled parts of a cup. Jugs and bottles were grouped together because of the small sample. Lastly, all the indeterminate sherds were discussed together as well. This analysis was conducted using the information from the analysis sheet, and was used to draw final conclusions about pottery production in Texas in the context of enslavement.

The next set of vessels is bowls. Bowls are usually finished on both sides and have a concave curvature. “The bowl is an open form, usually with a mouth larger in diameter than the base of any other section of the form,” (Greer 1981:97). Bowls were used in food preparation, for mixing as well as to hold and pour milk. The sherds that appear to have qualities of bowls are numbers



one, eight, fourteen, and twenty. All four sherds are rims, but do not seem to have any correlation to one another in terms of rim thickness, diameter, or wall thickness. There is some similarity in

terms of interior and exterior glaze color. Two sherds, number fourteen and twenty both fall into the 10 YR range. Although the comparisons are not exactly the same color, it is important to note the colors are in the same range, and the variability in color could be a result of firing or slightly different variations in the consistency of the slip or glaze. Sherds number one and eight did not seem to have any glaze, which can account for the variability in terms of color. However, it is interesting that neither of these two bowls were glazed. These two unglazed bowls also exhibit interesting decorative patterns. Sherd one had dot impressions in the surface, about three centimeters from the rim. From the looks of the impressions, they were produced using a finger, especially since partial fingerprints can be seen in the dots. Sherd eight has several lines incised near the rim, possibly 1/12, but it is unclear. This could have been used to indicate carrying

capacity, similar to the stamped numbers, or it could have been some type of

signature or perhaps even a date marking.

One of the two glazed bowls, sherd twenty, has a number two impressed into the top of the rim, indicating the bowl has a two gallon capacity. As for paste color, all four



sherds fall within the 10 YR range, indicating the same clay source was likely used for all four vessels. Overall, the bowls seem to have more similarities than the pitcher group.

There are only two churns in the sample, sherds three and eleven. “Churns almost always were made in a tall semi-ovoid or cylindrical form. The sizes are most commonly three-, four-, five-, and six-gallon capacities,” (Greer 1981:93). They also have lugs or handles on either side.

These two sherds lack any similarities, coming from completely different parts of each vessel. Sherd number three has an olive interior with a gray exterior salt glaze. Additionally, it is a base sherd, with a number three impressed on the bottom, indicating three-gallon capacity. This measurement is consistent with the common carrying capacity of such vessels. Sherd eleven on the other hand, has no glaze at all. However, it does have a lug handle that is commonly found on churns, which is why it has been classified as such. There are only two churns in the sample, but when considering the rarity of the form, this is understandable.

This collection has two jars, sherds fifteen and eighteen. Sherd fifteen is a wide mouth jar, while sherd eighteen is a small mouth jar. These two sherds were determined to be jars based on their defining qualities. After examining Greer's *American Stonewares: The Art and Craft of Utilitarian Potters*, both sherds fit examples shown in the text. Sherd fifteen can



be compared to the example of a wide mouthed jar produced by J. M. Wilson (Greer 1981:84). It has a handle consistent with the example found in the book and the curvature of the vessel seems comparable as well. The small-mouthed jar, sherd eighteen, would have had a large carrying capacity, which is validated by the number four impressed near the rim. This four-gallon jar is very similar to an example by Collin Rhodes, a potter from the Edgefield District in South Carolina (Greer 1981:86). The large size of both jars indicates a wide range of uses, though the most likely would have been to store or preserve foodstuffs such as flour or lard (Greer 1981:83-

87). This range of uses makes jars, in both forms, the most common type of pottery produced during this time (Greer 1981:87).

The first group is parts of a cup, which included sherd numbers four, and five. At first, it was thought sherd number five could be part of a pitcher. Pitchers were used for storing and pouring liquids, which required a handle and a spout.

Sherds with handles as well as the proper size could be pitchers. However, although sherd number five has the handle, it lacks the proper measurements for a pitcher; it is too small. Upon further inspection, it was discovered that sherds four and five fit together. The remnant of the handle on sherd four matches up with the rest of the handle present on sherd five. This is a further indication that the vessel is far too small to be a pitcher. Instead, these two sherds could form a cup.



“Although very rare, these were made by potters upon request, especially when other types of tablewares were not available,” (Greer 1981:117). In addition, the clay seems too thin to indicate the vessel was a mug, another type of tableware used for drinking liquids. Furthermore, mugs were often “combed or decorated in other ways,” (Greer 1981:117). However, there was no evidence of decoration on either sherd.

The last definable group contains several different forms due to lack of samples for comparison. Therefore, this group includes jugs and a bottle. These are sherds thirteen, twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-four. The only real comparison that can be made is between the two jugs, sherds twenty-two and twenty-four.

Fortunately, these two mouths are extremely similar, almost identical. They measure almost the same on the rim and the wall, and the diameter for both is five centimeters. Additionally, the interior and exterior glaze is a light olive gray alkaline glaze. These two matching jugs suggest that this was a popular form that was produced frequently; the vessel dimensions could be replicated almost exactly among them. In



addition, sherd thirteen is also a jug, part of the body possessing a handle. Because the presence of a handle could indicate several different forms, Greer's book was consulted to find similar examples (Greer 1981:77). A tall, double-handled jug made by H. Wilson & Co. circa 1875 was a good match. Although the example is from the later pottery, because Hiram Wilson was working with J. M. Wilson first, it seems reasonable that a similar version was produced at the Wilson Pottery. Sherd twenty-three is also a bottle neck.

However, it is smaller in diameter and thickness than the jugs, which lends itself towards a bottle rather than a jug. Bottles were



intended for holding small amounts of liquid. This particular bottle was salt glazed, rather than alkaline.

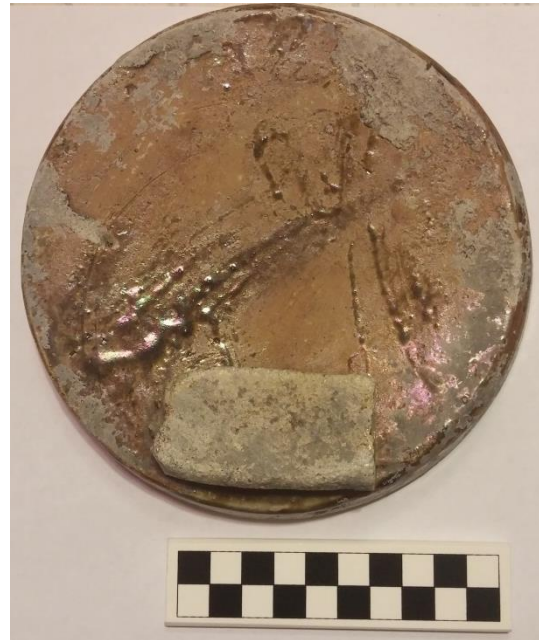
The rest of the collection was labeled “indeterminate” because of a lack of rim form or other defining features used to identify vessel form. Some of these sherds were very basic, however, there are several noteworthy ones that will be mentioned here. The sherds in this group with particularly interesting attributes including sherds ten, twelve, and sixteen. Sherd number ten, although not a rim form, can be narrowed down to a number of forms that have a large carrying capacity. This is known because of the number three impressed on the exterior of the sherd. As said earlier, the numbers that were impressed into vessels indicated carrying capacity in gallons. Therefore, whatever vessel type this sherd once was had a three gallon carrying capacity. This probably would have been a large bowl or jug, maybe even a churn. Because the vessel had to be fairly large, many of the smaller vessel forms can be eliminated. In addition, it seems that this vessel was not glazed, because the sherd has a rough surface that lacks any of the indications of either glaze type. Despite this, it is stamped with the number, which is interesting considering if the vessel lacked glaze, it also lacked the ability to carry liquids.

Sherd twelve on the other hand has a very different kind of surface treatment. Along the exterior edge of the sherd, there are circular protrusions, bumps. However, these protrusions are not simple pushed out from the inside, but rather fixed to the vessel using extra clay. This would have been more difficult for the potter



than other vessels. Additionally, this pottery was used for utilitarian purposes, so adding extra decorative elements is fairly rare. However, it is possible it was simply a practice vessel, from a potter practicing his skills. On the other hand, the sherd does show signs of salt glazing, which means the vessel was completed.

The last sherd, number sixteen, is interesting because it has a piece of kiln furniture fused to the base. This sherd is the base of a vessel of medium size. The shape indicates it may have been something like a churn, due to the curvature. While the vessel itself is not unique, the presence of kiln furniture makes it somewhat noteworthy. Kiln furniture were pieces of previously fired clay, square or rectangular in shape, which were used to separate unfired vessels in a kiln. These pieces kept the vessels from fusing together during the firing process. However, in this case, the piece of furniture became fused to the vessel with glaze, which likely happened because too much glaze was applied to the vessel, causing the furniture to stick and fuse when fired.



Conclusions

The Wilson Slaves probably learned to make pottery from either Wilson himself or someone like Durham. They then worked for Wilson until he decided he no longer had an interest in producing pottery. By this time, they had been freed from slavery. Therefore, instead of using their new talents to work for Durham, they decided to create their own company. Hiram

and his associates became very successful, which had important implications in history. Hiram is even considered by some, the first African American entrepreneur in Texas (Morgan 2009:13). Overall, the collection has some very interesting stylistic elements considering the pottery was strictly meant for utilitarian use. This might have been the potters practicing making different types of vessels. The other possibility is that the potters were able to make a limited number of vessels for personal use. Because the potters were making the pottery for themselves they would have been able to decorate the vessels as they pleased rather than following the strict guidelines set on pottery that was to be sold.

ⁱ “In the United States a special system is used for numbering archeological sites. The number tells the state, county, and the order in which the site was recorded. Each state has its own number—the number for Texas is 41. Each county in Texas has a special abbreviation that is used in site numbers. The last part of the site number tells how many sites were recorded in the county before this site.” (Texas Historical Commission 1998)

ⁱⁱ See above.

ⁱⁱⁱ These included the naturally occurring clay and a temper of silica or fine grain sand.

References

Brackner, Elmer J.

1981 *The Wilson Potteries*. Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, Austin.

Burrisson, John A.

1973 *Georgia Jug Makers: A History of Southern Folk Pottery*. Ph. D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. University Microfilms, Ann Arbor.

Greer, Georgeanna H.

1981 *American Stonewares: The Art and Craft of Utilitarian Potters*. Schiffer Publishing Limited, Exton.

Greer, Georgeanna H.

1979 *Kirbee Kiln: A Mid-19th-Century Texas Stoneware Pottery*. Manuscript on file (report no. 31), Office of the State Archaeologist.

Joseph, J. W.

2011 "All of Cross" – African Potters, Marks, and Meanings of the Folk Pottery of the Edgefield District, South Carolina. *Historical Archaeology* 45(2):134-155.

Morgan, Molly

2009 Introduction: The Wilson Family and the History of the Wilson Pottery Sites. In *Archaeological Research at the Wilson-Durham-Chandler Site*, pp. 13–17, edited by Molly Morgan. Archaeological Studies Report No. 16. Center for Archaeological Studies, Texas State University-San Marcos, Texas.

2009 Wilson Pottery. In *Archaeological Research at the Wilson-Durham-Chandler Site*, pp. 13–17, edited by Molly Morgan. Archaeological Studies Report No. 16. Center for Archaeological Studies, Texas State University-San Marcos, Texas.

Wasson, Jean Andrews

1968 Letter sent to Dr. Georgeanna Greer on November 23. In possession of Dr. Greer. San Antonio.

Wilson, John McKamie

1870 "Potteries, clay, etc., in western Texas". In *The Texas Almanac of 1870*, edited by W. Richardson, pp. 144-146. Richardson & Co., Galveston.

Sherd #	Vessel Form	Rim Form	Rim Thickness	Rim Diameter	% of Rim Present
1	Bowl	Extremely out f	1 cm	50 cm	12%
2	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	Churn	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Cup?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	Cup?	Vertical	0.62 cm	15 cm	13.50%
6	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Bowl	Horizontal	1 cm	21 cm	19%
9	Bowl	Vertical	1.4 cm	35 cm	8%
10	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Churn?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	Pitcher?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
14	Bowl	Horizontal	1.85 cm	32 cm	10%
15	Wide Mouthed Jar	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
16	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
17	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18	Small Mouthed Jar	Slightly out flai	2.15 cm	17 cm	37%
19	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
20	Bowl	Horizontal	2.3 cm	30 cm	22%
21	Indeterminant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
22	Jug	Vertical	0.96 cm	5 cm	100%
23	Bottle?	Slightly in flaire	1 cm	3 cm	100%
24	Jug	Vertical	0.94 cm	5 cm	100%

Lip Form	Wall Thickness	Glaze Color Interior	Glaze Color Exterior
Rounded	1.6 cm	7.5 YR 6/2 pinkish gray	7.5 YR 6/2 pinkish gray
N/A	0.65 cm	2.5 Y 8/4 pale brown	2.5 YR 8/3 pale brown
N/A	0.47 cm	5 Y 5/3 olive	5 Y 6/1 gray
N/A	0.43 cm	2.5 Y 7/1 light gray	2.5 Y 6/1 gray
Rounded	0.36 cm	GLEY 1 7/1 light greenish gray	GLEY 1 6/1 greenish gray
N/A	0.51 cm	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray	5 GY 5/2 grayish green
N/A	0.72 cm	2.5 Y 5/1 gray	2.5 Y 5/1 gray
Rounded	0.72 cm	7.5 YR 5/4 brown	7.5 YR 5/4 brown
Rounded	1.22 cm	2.5 Y 8/2 pale brown	10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown
N/A	1.05 cm	2.5 Y 4/4 olive brown	10 YR 3/6 dark yellowish brown
N/A	0.70 cm	N/A	N/A
N/A	0.83 cm	5 Y 6/3 pale olive	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray
N/A	0.67 cm	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray	10 Y 6/2 light grayish olive
Rounded	0.73 cm	10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown	10 YR 4/4 dark yellowish brown
N/A	0.60 cm	7.5 YR 3/3 dark brown	10 YR 3/2 very dark grayish brown
N/A	0.70 cm	2.5 Y 4/4 olive brown	2.5 Y 4/6 olive brown
N/A	0.75 cm	10 YR 4/3 brown	5 Y 7/2 light gray
Rounded	0.95 cm	5 Y 6/3 pale olive	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray
N/A	N/A	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray	5 Y 5/4 olive
Rounded	0.98 cm	5 YR 3/2 dark reddish brown	10 YR 4/6 dark yellowish brown
N/A	1 cm	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray
Square	0.6 cm	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray
Square	0.48 cm	2.5 Y 6/4 light yellowish brown	10 YR 3/6 dark yellowish brown
Square	0.5 cm	5 Y 5/2 olive gray	5 Y 6/2 light olive gray

Glaze Type	Surface Treatment/Decoration	Paste Color
None?	Dot impressions, 3.1 cm from rim	10 YR 8/3 very pale brown
Salt	None	2.5 YR 8/4 pale brown
Salt	number 3 impressed on underside of base and lip around	10 YR 5/1 gray
Salt	0.37 cm incised line 0.65 cm from base	GLEY 1 5/1 greenish gray
Salt	None	GLEY 1 5/1 greenish gray
Alkaline	None	10 YR 7/3 very pale brown
Salt	None	2.5 Y 7/3 pale brown
None?	1/12 incised near rim	10 YR 6/1 gray
Salt	None	2.5 Y 6/2 light brownish gray
Indeterminant	number 3 impressed into the exterior	10 YR 6/2 light brownish gray
None	No glaze present	2.5 Y 5/1 gray
Salt	Circular protrusions along exterior edge	2.5 Y 7/2 light gray
Alkaline	Glaze only present on half of exterior	5 Y 8/2 pale yellow
Alkaline*	None	10 YR 5/1 gray
Salt	None	5 Y 6/1 gray
Alkaline	None	5 Y 6/1 gray
Alkaline	None	5 Y 7/2 light gray
Alkaline	number 4 impressed into the exterior near rim	2.5 Y 5/1 gray
Alkaline	None	10 YR 8/3 very pale brown
Salt	number 2 impressed into the top of the rim	10 YR 6/3 pale brown
Salt	number 3 impressed into the exterior	2.5 Y 5/1 gray
Alkaline	None	5 Y 6/1 gray
Salt	None	10 YR 5/1 gray
Alkaline	None	2.5 Y 5/1 gray

Core Present?	Inclusions	Comments	Similar Examples from Greer, etc.
No	Sand		pg. 96
No	Sand		
No	Sand	Fits with sherd #5	
No	Black specks	Reminent of handle	
No	Sand	Handle present	
No	Sand	Handle	
Yes	Sand	Handle, drip of alkaline glaze	
Yes	Sand		
No	Sand		pg. 100
Yes	Sand		
Yes	Black specks	Handle present	pg. 94
No	Sand		
No	Sand		pg. 104
No	Sand		
No	Sand	Handle present	pg. 84
No	Sand	Piece of kiln furniture fused to base	
No	Sand		
No	Black specks		
Yes	Black specks	Handle	
No	Sand		
No	Black specks		
Yes	Sand		pg. 76
No	Black specks		pg. 81
No	Black specks		