

Northeast Historical Archaeology

Volume 46 *Northeast Historical Archaeology*

Article 2

2017

Introduction

Meta F. Janowitz
metacer68@gmail.com

Rebecca L. White
AECOM Technology, rebecca.white@aecom.com

Deborah L. Miller
Aecom, deborah.l.miller@aecom.com

George D. Cress
AECOM Burlington, george.cress@aecom.com

Thomas J. Kutys
thomas.kutys@aecom.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/neha>

 Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Janowitz, Meta F.; White, Rebecca L.; Miller, Deborah L.; Cress, George D.; and Kutys, Thomas J. (2017) "Introduction," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 46 46, Article 2.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/neha/vol46/iss1/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in *Northeast Historical Archaeology* by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Introduction: Philadelphia Queensware

Meta F. Janowitz, Rebecca L. White, Deborah L. Miller, George D. Cress, and Thomas J. Kutys

This volume begins with a lengthy discussion of documentary evidence for the production of creamware, called queensware, in the United States, with an emphasis on Philadelphia potters. The shorter articles that follow describe queensware vessels found at sites in the Middle Atlantic region and, in some cases, the people who bought them. The authors hope the articles in this issue will contribute to a better understanding of American queensware production as well as aid archaeologists in the identification of this type of pottery on their sites.

Ce volume débute par une discussion exhaustive des sources historiques sur la production du Creamware, appelé Queensware aux États-Unis, en mettant l'accent sur les potiers de Philadelphie. Les articles plus courts qui suivent décrivent les récipients en Queensware trouvés sur des sites de la région du centre du littoral de l'Atlantique et, dans certains cas, les personnes qui les ont achetés. Les auteurs espèrent que les articles dans ce numéro contribueront à une meilleure compréhension de la production américaine du Queensware et aideront les archéologues à identifier ce type de céramiques sur leurs sites.

The work presented in this issue began when archaeologists found distinctive, thin-bodied buff- to cream-colored ceramic vessels among the artifacts excavated on several Middle Atlantic archaeological sites. Although the ceramic shapes resembled those of creamwares, their lead glazes were too yellow for creamware. The contexts in which they were found were too early for yellow ware, plus, many had forms—tea wares and plates—not common in yellow ware. Research led to their identification as local attempts to manufacture creamware. Susan H. Myers, in her comprehensive 1977 survey of pottery manufacture in the Middle Atlantic and Northeastern United States, called attention to efforts by early 19th-century potters to make light-colored earthenware in imitation of British creamware. She noted, however, that “no examples have been definitively attributed to any of the fineware potteries of this period” (Myers 1977: 5). In her later, extensive study of pottery making in Philadelphia, Myers included documentary information about potters who made this ware, but she did not have access to any conclusive illustrations or

descriptions of their vessels (Myers 1980: 5–11). Thanks to excavations in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Virginia, archaeologists now have samples of 19th-century American-made creamware, known at the time as “queensware.”

The term “Queen’s ware” was first used by Josiah Wedgwood, according to the British historian Simeon Shaw, after Wedgwood presented a caudle set made in his new cream-colored ware to Queen Charlotte in 1762, on the occasion of the birth of the Prince of Wales. Charlotte and her husband, King George III, were pleased with the vessels, and Wedgwood became “potter to her majesty” (Shaw 1900: 185–186). “Queen’s ware” came to be used by British potters as a trade name for creamware.¹ In the United States, many merchants sold what is today called creamware under the names “Queen’s ware,” “Queensware,” or “queensware” (Miller and Earls 2008: 72). The same terms were used by early 19th-century potters to advertise their own versions of light-colored refined earthenwares. As used by the authors in this issue, the terms American, domestic, or Philadelphia queensware refer to

1. For a discussion of the use of this term, go to <http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/ColonialCeramics/Colonial20Ware20Descriptions/Creamware.html>.

light-colored, lead-glazed, refined earthenware vessels made in the United States during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in forms that mimicked contemporary British creamware and pearlware vessels. The specific vessels recovered from archaeological excavations and discussed in this issue were likely made in Philadelphia, based on the proximity of many of the sites to that city, the documented scale of production there, and contemporary advertisements (examples of advertisements are cited in several of the articles).

The excavated vessels described in this issue allow archaeologists to go beyond the documentary information to define body and glaze characteristics of Philadelphia-made American queensware, i.e., Philadelphia queensware. The Philadelphia potters imitated English creamware and pearlware using American earthenware clays that fire to a light color, ranging from off-white through pale yellow to very pale brown to dark buff. Some vessels are very well fired, some less so, possibly because of problems potters had in developing a new type of ceramic. Some bodies are rather soft, while others are as hard as creamware; often the hardest bodies are the darkest (buff), and the softest are the lightest colored (almost white), but this is not a constant.

Glaze colors range from light buff to yellow and, rarely, an almost-pumpkin color; the yellow hues vary from olive yellow to pale yellow to darker yellow (Munsell colors 2.5Y 7/6–7/8, 2.5Y 8/3–8/6, 2.5Y 7/6–8/6, and 2.5Y 6/6). These variations are probably due to differences in paste color, firing conditions, or the possibility that metallic oxides were either mixed into the lead glaze or were not filtered from the glaze prior to use. The glaze has crazed on some vessels, sometimes to the point of flaking off almost entirely. Body and glaze colors are occasionally inconsistent, with different shades appearing on the same vessel, but most have uniform bodies and glazes. Some vessels have green speckles or blotches in

their glaze, and some plates have green coloring around their rims in imitation of shell-edge plates.

Many queensware vessels manufactured in Philadelphia were wheel thrown, while others, particularly plates, were molded. In general, the vessels are well potted, with evidence of lathe trimming. Rouletted, reeded, and engine-turned decorations, seen on contemporary Philadelphia red-bodied earthenwares, are found on some queenswares. Most of the excavated queensware vessels are tablewares or tea wares, in spite of the variety of forms advertised by some manufacturers (e.g., the 1812 advertisement for the Washington Pottery cited in White et al., this issue), although there is also evidence of more utilitarian forms, such as chamber pots, storage jars, and basins, from several assemblages.

The early 19th-century potters discussed in this issue were by no means the first to make light-colored earthenware in British North America. Attempts to manufacture refined earthenware vessels had begun in the colonies as early as the 17th century, when a short-lived tin-glaze manufactory was established in Burlington, New Jersey; its vessels were sent to the Caribbean as well as to local markets, according to contemporary accounts (Barber 1976: 54–56; Springsted 1982). During the last half of the 18th century a few potters tried to make light-colored lead-glazed ceramics in imitation of English cream-colored wares (Barber 1976: 100–106; Myers 1977). Archaeological discoveries have shown that John Bartlam in South Carolina and the Moravian potters in North Carolina succeeded in making creamware vessels with glazes both colored (with green and brown blotches, often called “tortoiseshell”) and uncolored (Bivins 1972; South 1993; Beckerdite and Brown 2009; Hudgins 2009; Hunter 2009). These American vessels were made by English-trained potters or by established colonial potters who were taught by English immigrants, as was the case later in Philadelphia. In Boston, tortoiseshell-glazed light-colored vessels were made



Figure 1. Locations discussed in this issue by author (Base map Darby [1818]; map by Thomas J. Kutys, 2018).

around 1770 by an American potter who probably used English vessels to create molds for his own dishes (Kuettner 2015).

American queensware manufactured during the early 19th century was a product of contemporary economic and technological conditions in the United States. It was a difficult period for port cities whose economy depended on trade with Europe and her Caribbean colonies. The 1806 Non-Importation Act, the Embargo Act of 1807, (repealed in 1809, but replaced a year later by the Non-Intercourse Act), and the War of 1812 all caused disruptions in commerce between the United States and Europe, particularly with Great Britain. Following the 1807 embargo, American exports fell 80% and imports

declined by over 50% (Nash, Jeffrey, and Davis 1986: 319, 320; Randall 1993: 580). Conditions did not improve to any great extent after repeal of the embargo, and the blockade of East Coast ports by the Royal Navy during the War of 1812 exacerbated the scarcity of imported goods. The British began their blockade in 1812 in South Carolina and Georgia, and the following year extended it north to the Middle Atlantic states. By early 1814 the blockade was extended into New England and was not removed until peace was declared in 1815. The events of 1806–1815 encouraged the growth of American industries by curtailing the availability of English products; various groups of craftsmen/entrepreneurs, including potters, attempted to manufacture

merchandise that would meet the demands of local consumers who were accustomed to English goods (Myers 1980; Peskin 2003; Irwin 2004: 800–821).

At the same time, entrepreneurs in the United States were taking advantage of British technological developments in ceramic production through the employment or sponsorship of British-trained potters. The introduction of new technology, availability of financial backing, and expanding markets resulted in workshops that had a greater degree of industrialization (Watkins 1950; Barber 1976; Myers 1977, 1980). The new techniques, in particular press molding, which standardized production and increased output, were used in some American potteries (Myers 1980: 8). Craft potters continued to make redwares for kitchen use, even as other potters and entrepreneurs established shops that specialized in refined earthenwares for the table. What distinguished early 19th-century American queensware manufacture from earlier manufactures in particular was the scale of production backed by entrepreneurs who were not themselves potters, and marketing opportunities provided by the scarcity of British ceramics. Nevertheless, even though the American queensware potters had financial support and technical skills, marketing opportunities were short lived, due to the overwhelming amounts of relatively inexpensive creamware and pearlware vessels shipped to the United States by British merchants after the end of the war in 1815 (Myers 1980: 17, 22; Miller and Earls 2008: 76–77).

The lead article in this issue, by Rebecca L. White, Meta F. Janowitz, George D. Cress, Thomas J. Kutys, and Samuel A. Pickard is an investigation of the documentary evidence for the manufacture of American queensware during the early 19th century. This article is based in large part on information from newspapers and private correspondence, with an emphasis on Philadelphia. The other articles in this issue discuss particular archaeological

sites and the vessels found at each (FIG. 1). They are arranged in order of their proximity to Philadelphia rather than chronologically. Cultural resource management projects, some recent and some conducted earlier, were the original reasons for the site excavations. Large-scale public archaeology projects in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, such as the ongoing I-95 expansion in Philadelphia², have produced significant artifact assemblages that include Philadelphia queensware vessels. The second article, by Deborah L. Miller, describes examples from the city itself, including one of two known marked vessels. Excavations in Independence National Historical Park, particularly in conjunction with recent construction on Independence Mall, have unearthed a variety of Philadelphia queensware vessel forms. The next article by Kimberly M. Sebestyen, describes, in detail, vessels from other Philadelphia sites that are now in the collection of the State Museum of Pennsylvania. The fourth article by George D. Cress, Thomas J. Kutys, Rebecca L. White, Meta F. Janowitz, and Samuel A. Pickard, is concerned with vessels recovered from areas of Philadelphia outside its historic core; neighborhoods that were not yet part of the city during the early 19th century. Vessels found in Camden, New Jersey, directly across the Delaware River from Philadelphia, and the household with which they are associated, are the subject of the article by Thomas J. Kutys and colleagues. George D. Cress, Rebecca L. White, and Ingrid A. Wuebber shift the focus from the immediate Philadelphia area to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in their article about vessels found there. Lancaster was well within the economic sphere of Philadelphia merchants and craftsmen, as was northern Delaware, where other queensware vessels have been found. Meta F. Janowitz and Christy R. Morganstein examine another household's assortment of Philadelphia queensware and speculate about how it got to Delaware. The last article, by Barbara H. Magid, uses

2. For an interactive online report of these excavations, go to <http://diggingi95.com/>.

documents and artifacts to make the connection between Philadelphia potters and artifacts from a privy deposit in Alexandria, Virginia. In a way, the Miller and Magid articles serve as bookends to the others because the second of the two known, marked examples of Philadelphia queensware is from Alexandria. The articles, as a group, illustrate that, when owners can be identified, the people who occupied these sites and had Philadelphia queensware among their household goods were not impoverished; their incomes would not have limited their choice of ceramic wares. In at least two cases, the McLean household in Delaware and the Snowden family in Alexandria, the probable purchasers of Philadelphia queensware were supporters or related to supporters of political policies that encouraged American industries.

The period during which American queensware was made was a time of experimentation and change for American potters, either by choice or by necessity (Watkins 1950; Barber 1976; Branin 1988). The authors hope the articles in this issue will contribute to a better understanding of American queensware production between 1807 and 1822, as well as aid archaeologists in the identification of this type of pottery on their sites.

References

- Barber, Edwin Atlee
1976 *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States*. Reprint of 1893 edition. Feingold & Lewis, New York.
- Beckerdite, Luke, and Johanna Brown
2009 Eighteenth-Century Earthenware from North Carolina: The Moravian Tradition Reconsidered. In *Ceramics in America*, ed. by Robert Hunter and Luke Beckerdite, 2–67. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.
- Bivins, John
1972 *The Moravian Potters in North Carolina*. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- Branin, M. Lelyn
1988 *The Early Makers of Handcrafted Earthenware and Stoneware in Central and Southern New Jersey*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, Rutherford, NJ.
- Darby, William
1818 *Map of the United States including Louisiana*. Engraved by James D. Stout, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Library of Congress <<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3700.ct001072>>. Accessed 27 February 2018.
- Hudgins, Lisa
2009 Staffordshire in America: The Wares of John Bartlam at Cain Hoy, 1765–1770. In *Ceramics in America*, ed. by Robert Hunter and Luke Beckerdite, 68–80. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.
- Hunter, Robert
2009 Staffordshire Ceramics in Wachovia. In *Ceramics in America*, ed. by Robert Hunter and Luke Beckerdite, 81–105. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.
- Irwin, Douglas A.
2004 The Aftermath of Hamilton's 'Report on Manufactures'. *Journal of Economic History* 64(3): 800-821.
- Kuettner, Angelika R.
2015 "Tortoise Shell Ware Made in this Town": A Reexamination of the Benjamin Leigh and John Allman Partnership in Boston. *American Ceramic Circle Journal* 18:33-47.
- Miller George L., and Amy C. Earls
2008 War and Pots: The Impact of Economics and Politics on Ceramic Consumption Patterns. In *Ceramics in America*, ed. by Robert Hunter, 67–108. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.
- Myers, Susan H.
1977 A Survey of Traditional Pottery Manufacture in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States. *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 6:1-13.
1980 *Handcraft to Industry: Philadelphia Ceramics in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- Nash, Gary B., Julie R. Jeffrey, and Allan F. Davis
1986 *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*. Harper & Row, New York.

Peskin, Lawrence A.
2003 *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Randall, Willard Sterne
1993 *Thomas Jefferson: A Life*. Henry Holt & Co., New York.

Shaw, Simeon
1900 *History of the Staffordshire Potteries and the Rise and Progress of the Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain; with Reference to Genuine Specimens and Notices of Eminent Potters*. Scott Greenwood & Company, London. Google Books <<http://books.google.com/books?id=OSEDAAAAYAAJ&pg=PR9&dq=Simeon+Shaw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=KuwgUraHOZWpsQSKzYEQ&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Simeon%20Shaw&f=false>>. Accessed 26 December 2017.

South, Stanley
1993 *The Search for John Bartlam at Cain Hoy: American's First Creamware Potter*. University of South Carolina, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Research Manuscript Series, Book 216. Columbia. Scholar Commons: The Institutional Repository of the University of South Carolina <http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/archanth_books/216>. Accessed 26 December 2017.

Springsted, Brenda Lockhart
1982 *A Delftware Center in Seventeenth Century New Jersey*. American Ceramic Circle Bulletin 4: 9–46.

Watkins, Lura Woodside
1950 *Early New England Potters and Their Wares*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Author Information

Meta F. Janowitz is a Senior Material Specialist at AECOM and on the faculty of the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She is an archaeologist who has been working with historic-period ceramics for more than thirty years. Her principal research interests are locally made salt-glazed stonewares and earthenwares and the potters who made them.

89 Moraine Rd
Morris Plains, NJ 07950
meta.janowitz@aecom.com

Rebecca L. White is Senior Research Analyst for AECOM in Burlington, New Jersey. She has twenty years of experience in archaeological excavations, artifact analysis and historical research on sites in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern United States. Her research interests include historical domestic and industrial archaeology with an emphasis on early American manufacturing sites.

437 High Street
Burlington, NJ 08016
rebecca.white@aecom.com

Deborah L. Miller is a Materials Specialist and Archaeologist at AECOM in Burlington, NJ, and consulting archaeologist at Stenton, a National Historic Landmark in Philadelphia, PA. She has more than fifteen years experience managing and analyzing urban archaeological collections, and specializes in eighteenth and nineteenth century ceramics. Her principal research interest is ceramic production in Philadelphia and the greater Delaware Valley before 1830.

706 E. Phil Ellena St.
Philadelphia, PA 19119
deborah.l.miller@aecom.com

George D. Cress is a Senior Archaeologist for AECOM in Burlington, New Jersey and has over thirty-five years experience in archaeology and cultural resources management. He has participated in excavations throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region, Tennessee, and in England, and has served as Principal Investigator and Field Director on numerous cultural resources surveys, and data recovery investigations. His experience encompasses prehistoric, historic, urban, and mortuary archaeological investigations. Research interests include the archaeology of early American manufacturing and industrial

processes and the evolution of the urban landscape.

437 High Street
Burlington, NJ 08016
george.cress@aecom.com

Thomas J. Kutys is the Archaeology Laboratory Manager for AECOM in Burlington, NJ and has over fifteen years of experience in archaeological investigations and artifact analysis within the Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, and Southeast regions of the United States. His research interests focus primarily on the 19th and early 20th centuries in America, and include neighborhood identity and formation in urban America, the civic role of private clubs and organizations in urban neighborhoods, the archaeology of leisure, and the study of historic glass bottles and their distribution patterns across urban settings.

437 High Street
Burlington, NJ 08016
thomas.kutys@aecom.com