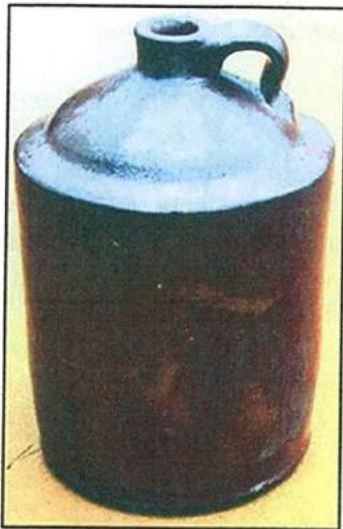


A first for Georgia Pottery

Before 1820, stoneware pottery was being made in northern Washington County. As Indian land cessions opened the Southeast to settlers, the demand for household goods spread westward. Potters using the innovative and distinctive alkaline glaze figured predominantly in domestic food and beverage storage and preparation in the South until the early twentieth century. Some Southern potters still practice the craft in this distinctive tradition today.



Northern Washington County became the home of a stoneware pottery community, like those which became fairly common throughout the South, in the early 1800s. Washington County census records indicate that all of the early potters in the county lived within a few miles of each other in northern Washington County. This area contains large quantities of kaolin, a high-quality pottery clay. In the late 1800s, the Georgia State Geologist pronounced the kaolin in that area "of excellent quality." Washington County now produces the largest yield in the state from kaolin mining operations, and kaolin is now the state's largest export product.

(Brochure copy by Bill Jordan)

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The Brown House Museum

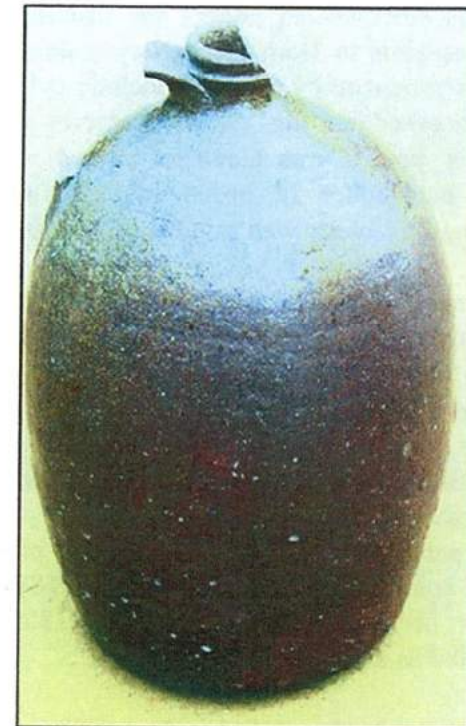


The Brown House Museum is an 1850s house museum and a local history museum. It is the headquarters of the Washington County Historical Society. In November 1864, General William T. Sherman commandeered the house for his headquarters while Mrs. William Gainer Brown and her children were permitted to stay in their home. Brown family descendants owned the house until its purchase by the Society in 1989.



Early Pottery

in Washington County,
Georgia



The Brown House Museum

268 North Harris Street
P.O. Box 6088
Sandersville, Ga 31082
(478) 552-1965

How it began; Who Were the Potters?

Cyrus Cogburn and Abraham Massey (1785-?) pioneered the Washington County stoneware pottery community by 1818 when they moved to northern Washington County from the old Edgefield District, South Carolina. They attracted other skilled potters and inspired some local residents to learn the pottery-making craft. Vessels produced by Cogburn include cylindrical wide-mouthed jars, jugs, bowls, preserves jars, and chamber pots. Cyrus Cogburn moved west by 1830, but stoneware production continued in Washington County well into the early 1900s.

James Bustle (1804- ?), raised close to Cogburn's pottery shop, probably learned to make pottery from Cogburn. He was a potter in Talbot County in 1840, possibly taking over the Cogburn pottery operation there after Cogburn moved west again. Bustle was in Crawford County by 1850, and listed as a jug maker there in 1860.

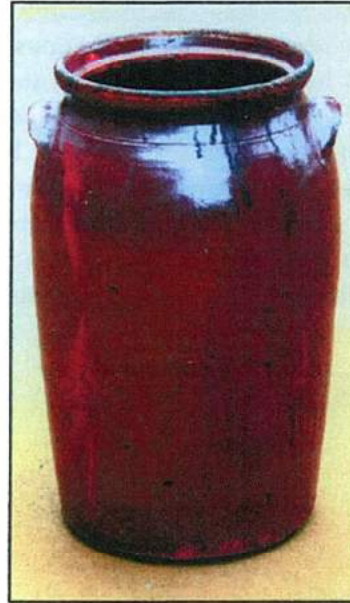
A potter named **James M. Bussell**, probably James' son born in Crawford County in 1844, was present in Washington County by 1880, and identified as a potter here in 1898.

Lucius Jordan (1816- after 1880) was the Washington County potter whose ware is perhaps best known to scholars and collectors of Georgia stoneware. Jordan occasionally marked his wares with "J" or "LJ" on the shoulder below the neck. He was listed in local records as a potter in 1860 and 1864, but was still alive in 1880.

The large amount of surviving Jordan stoneware suggests that he worked at the craft for many years. Many intact Jordan vessels remain in Washington County homes.

The **Redfern** family pottery tradition in Washington County began in 1838 when **Branson Redfern** (1810-after 1870) arrived from North Carolina. Branson's sons **John R. Redfern** (1827/28-1910) and **Andrew Redfern** (1838-1918) are known to have been potters in Washington County.

In addition to the typical stoneware products, the Redfern potters also made stoneware grave markers which were used by their family and sold to others in the community. The Redferns were close



neighbors of Lucius Jordan, and were making pottery at the same time. Andrew Redfern still lived with his father in 1860, when he was listed as a potter in the census. In 1898 the Georgia Geological Survey reported that John and Andrew Redfern were still potters in Washington County.

The county census recorded **William B. Lewis** (1804-1874) as a potter in 1850. Lewis may have been working in Abraham Massey's pottery shop as early as 1828. Lewis soon joined Cogburn and Bustle in the migration from Washington County to the Jugtown pottery district in Upson and Pike Counties. He was back in Washington County and listed as a potter in 1850. When William Lewis died in 1874, John Redfern served as an appraiser of the property of the estate. Lewis' estate inventory included pottery. John Redfern was also present at the Lewis estate sale, where he bought pottery-making equipment.

In 1910 the **Brumbelow** pottery was established in the Chalker community by brothers **Walter Brumbelow** (1864-1916), **Oscar Brumbelow** (1871-1944), and **Newt Brumbelow** (1879- ca. 1930). The Brumbelows came to Washington County from Jugtown, and operated the pottery until the late 1920s. The Brumbelows broke with the Washington County tradition of using alkaline glaze, using Albany slip on the exterior of their wares.

The Washington County alkaline-glazed stoneware tradition influenced several later pottery communities. As Indian cessions continued to make land available for settlement, many Georgians moved west; several Washington County potters who won western land in Georgia land lotteries followed the trend.

The Beckoms, Browns, and Longs, early settlers of Washington County, are among the founders of the pottery communities in Crawford County and Jugtown. Members of the Cogburn and Bussell pottery families also joined the westward migration. These first Georgia pottery families are primarily

responsible for forming new pottery communities, transmitting the Washington County pottery tradition not only to the new Georgia counties, but across the southern United States.

The Georgia Humanities Council assisted with the cost of this brochure and the exhibit.