December 2025 Newsletter

Was Abner Landrum a Secret Abolitionist in South Carolina?

By Carl Steen*

The innovation and development of alkaline-glazed stoneware pottery in America occurred in the Edgefield District of South Carolina in the early 1800s. These potteries, including those established by Dr. Abner Landrum and his family, employed enslaved and free African-American laborers in the 19th century. Landrum (Figure 1) was born in what is now Edgefield in 1784 and moved to the state capital, Columbia, in 1831 (Baldwin 1993: 223). He died in 1857 and was buried in a family plot near his home in Columbia, which is still standing and occupied (Steen 2019). He is best known for introducing alkaline glazed stoneware manufacture to the South, but he also trained as a physician, studied chemistry and mathematics, and owned a print shop (Steen 2011). Landrum developed a method of grafting

Figure 1. Silhouette portrait of Abner Landrum.

pecan branches to black walnut trees that resulted in the modern paper shell pecan—a revolutionary development in that field (Kenline 2012). He founded a town of artisans and craftsmen on the outskirts of Edgefield (Figure 2) that became known as Landrumsville, and later, Pottersville (Mills 1826; Calfas 2013; Fennell 2021).

Figure 2. Landrumsville on the 1826 Mills Atlas map of Edgefield District.

The first decades of the 19th century were a period in which the country was bent on making fundamental decisions about its future (Wallace 1951; Edgar 1998). Dr. Landrum was in favor of industry and science, and printed the pro-industrial newspaper, *The Hive*, first in Edgefield, and then Columbia (Steen 2019). The *Hive* was published in response to the Nullification movement, a pro-slavery, anti-industrial group that spawned the Confederacy (Freehling 1966). His views were at odds with many of his slave-owning contemporaries, spurring his move to Columbia. Indeed, Landrum wrote in *The Hive* that he was attacked in his office by a cane-wielding brother of the state Governor for the offense of pointing out that the Governor held shares in Northern manufacturing companies, making that official's loud, public opposition to manufacturing hypocritical (*The Hive*, in Kenline 2012).

To further illustrate the popular attitude in antebellum Columbia, in a discussion of two men who were reportedly tarred and feathered and run out of town, a prominent resident noted: "No one dares denounce it in a high tone of indignation," wrote William Preston (1855), a Whig nullifier, "for fear of being suspected of abolitionism. In truth, we are under a reign of terror and the public mind exists in a panic." The Nullificationists, descendants of the Anti-Federalists of the late 18th century, favored expanding agricultural output through increased slavery, and a complete focus on agriculture. This highlights a complex issue central to

American history that has been discussed in detail by a virtual army of historians, so the reader is encouraged to explore the topic at will.

Abner Landrum is best known for his pottery (Steen 2011). At a time when only a handful of potters in the US were making stoneware, he introduced the practice in the deep South and applied a beautiful green alkaline glaze that he is said to have developed himself (Greer 1970, Ferrell and Ferrell 1976). Following European traditions early American stoneware makers focused on salt glazes (Turnbaugh 1985, Ketchum 1987). Although it is suggested that Landrum invented the process for an alkaline glaze, that is unlikely. He may well have discovered the recipe—the formula for the glaze—but, in fact, alkaline glazes have a long history in the Mediterranean and Asia, and were known, but seldom used, in Britain and America (Bordley 1805; Rhodes 1957, Ketchum 1987, Burrison 2006, Steen 2011).

In pioneering research, the ceramic historian Georgianna Greer (1970, 1977, 1981) suggested that Landrum had learned of the glaze through Richard Champion. In England Champion was a business partner of William Cookworthy, the man who made the first "true" porcelain in England in the 1750s (South 1993). Champion emigrated to Camden, South Carolina, an inland trading center, in the 1780s and died there in 1791 (Lewis 1976, 2017).

It is possible that Champion knew of John Bartlam, a master potter who emigrated to Charleston from Staffordshire in the 1760s, and moved to Camden in the 1770s (South 1993, 2004). Bartlam made soft paste porcelain in Charleston in the 1760s, so he was doubtlessly aware of alkaline glazes (South 2004). However, Bartlam died in 1782, before Champion arrived, and before Abner Landrum was born. In Camden Bartlam made a deep yellow "Carolina Creamware" among other earthenwares (Lewis 1976; 2017: 175). How he could have transmitted his knowledge is unknown, but he employed workers who could have passed such information along. His assistant, Richard Ellis, for instance, passed through the pottery at Salem, North Carolina on his way North, and taught their potter, Rudolph Christ, to make creamware (South 1970; Bivins 1972). Again, however, Champion was a businessman, and his personal papers have no mentions of pottery making in South Carolina (Rauschenburg 1991).

Another pioneering researcher, the folklorist John Burrison (1983), speculated that Landrum had read about the glaze in articles published in a Charleston newspaper in the 1730s. The article examples I have seen were excerpts from DuHalde's History of China (1735). DuHalde never visited China, but rather collected reports from his Jesuit colleagues who had.

One was Pere D'Entrecolles. At that time China was closed to Europeans and D'Entrecolles was one of a very few Catholic missionaries allowed into the interior. He was, in fact, an industrial spy.

In the original letters, published in 1715 and revised in 1719, D'Entercolles attempted to chronicle pottery manufactures in southeast China in general. He discussed a number of pottery glazes, but not in great detail. He was more interested in what clay formulae were best for porcelain bodies, and which additions made glazes different colors—cobalt for blue, for instance—than in fine transparent glazes. He did describe celadon, however, which was similar at a basic level to the alkaline glaze later developed in the southern US. Yet, the character of such alkaline glazes can be much more complex. The ash used, for instance, might come from a specific species of grass at a particular stage of its maturity (Zug 1986; Burrison 2006), rather than from pine or oak ash from local sources.

The question of how this bit of knowledge was passed along remains a problem. It is possible that Abner Landrum stumbled across a cache of antique newspapers, or even DuHalde's book, but that does not seem likely. Further, an examination of the D'Entrecolles letters did not reveal any sort of detailed description of the pottery making process. His discussion of kilns is limited to a brief observation that they put the pots in the kiln and fired them. So, although this was a step forward for European potters wanting to make porcelain, it is not likely to be the sole source of alkaline glaze knowledge. In fact, skipping ahead in the story, an author from Baltimore who focused on scientific agriculture described a glaze made from "Wood Ash and Sand" being used in Philadelphia in 1805 (Bordley 1805).

As stated above, the first researchers (Greer 1970; South 1970; Burrison 1983; Zug 1986) to consider alkaline glazed stoneware in detail believed Landrum had read about the process of making and glazing pottery in a book published by a French Jesuit, Jean DuHalde. But, as has been argued elsewhere (Steen 2011, 2014), even if Landrum did read about this glaze somewhere, he would still need to learn how to make pottery first hand. Many people can make pottery, but training is required. There was a pottery shop in the nearby trading center of Augusta, Georgia, during the first decade of the 19th century (Rauschenburg 1991: 108). This was owned by a merchant, tavern, and inn owner from Virginia, Nathaniel Durkee. Landrum also studied medicine in Augusta. There he partnered with Dr. John Brazier, a native of Philadelphia who studied under Dr. Benjamin Rush, the pre-eminent physician of the time.

Rush was a leader in advancing scientific medicine, and a personal physician for George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, among others. Given the distance from his home in Edgefield (about 30 miles), Landrum probably boarded in Augusta during the week. Nathaniel Durkee also owned an inn and tavern on the river front that was popular with American Nationalists in favor of a strong Federal rule, as opposed to the more independent Southerners (Rauschenburg 1991). The former favored national unity, while the latter favored independent states rights to rule themselves. Again, here we can see the development of a nascent Confederacy, and the roots of later conflicts. So Abner Landrum was well acquainted with science, industry and modern thought, and favored moving on from agriculture to industry. He did not rely on slave labor (Calfas 2013), as discussed below.

The first decade of the 19th century was tenuous for the young United States. The French and English were at war, and both wanted the US on their side. American shipping was preyed upon by both sides, with the British even conscripting American sailors who were born before the Revolution. The need for domestic industries was underscored, and great efforts toward industrialization were made, mostly in the North (Myers 1989, Miller 1991), for reasons discussed above. In Philadelphia, a center for pottery making in the US, the firm of Binney and Ronaldson, the first company to forge printers type in North America, had decided to expand their operations, and built the Columbian Pottery (Miller and Levin 2017). Their goal was to make porcelain and refined earthenwares, like Creamware. At that time they advertised in the major newspapers along the Atlantic Coast that they were in search of fine white clay:

> "A person who has been born and bred in Britain to the pottery business . . . being anxious to procure the best possible materials . . . hereby solicits the attention of such patriotic gentlemen throughout the union as may feel disposed to patronize his establishment, to such clays or flints as may be found in their respective neighborhoods and invites them to send specimens . . . to Messrs. Binny and Ronaldson." (quoted in Myers 1989: 6)

In 1809 the following was published in both the Charleston and Savannah newspapers:

> Doctor Landrum has lately discovered a Chalk in Edgefield District, in this state, which is represented to be of superior quality—equal at least to that of Edgeworth manufactures near Liverpool—there is a great body of this chalk substance in said district and will soon be highly useful to the country and profitable to the proprietors. (*Charleston City Gazette*, July 25, 1809)

As will be seen below, Landrum took samples North, as he tried to learn about the quality of his clay and its possible applications in making refined, industrial ceramics (Smedley 1883; Steen 2011). In all likelihood he traveled by land up the Great Wagon Road, and visited potters along the way. He made his way to Philadelphia, where he, given his interest in printing and industrial pottery making, doubtlessly met with Binney and Ronaldson and observed their operations. Their factory likely inspired the massive, well-built kiln Landrum established at Pottersville.

In 1809 alkaline glazes were already known in Philadelphia. Local potter Andrew Duche claimed to have made true porcelain when he attempted to open potteries in SC and GA in the 1740s, though no examples of his wares has ever been found (Rauschenburg 1991). A porcelain and refined earthenware manufactory was attempted in Philadelphia in the 1770s by an Englishman, Gousse Bonnin, and a local man, George Morris (Hood 2017), so they may have introduced the idea of leadfree glazes at that time. John Beale Bordley, a proponent of scientific agriculture, strongly opposed leaded glazes, and wrote in 1805 that he had hired a brickmaker in Philadelphia to demonstrate the utility of a glaze made "from wood ash and sand" so alkaline glazes were clearly known in Philadelphia when Landrum arrived. Bordley wanted potters to stop using the dangerous and deadly lead glazes they had traditionally used. He was mostly ignored by traditional potters—who likely ignored Bonnin and Morris as well. Some country potters continued to make lead glazed redwares well into the 20th century.

Pennsylvania was largely settled by Germans who brought a tradition of pottery making with them. Philadelphia also attracted expatriate French Huguenots. As early as the 1720s Anthony Duche, Miguel Hillegas, Valentine Standley and others were beginning to make salt glazed stonewares decorated with blue and purple slip and elaborate incising and body molding seen on the German Westerwald wares (Bower 1985; Rauschenberg 1991).

They exported the technology to the other colonies and salt glazed stonewares came to be manufactured in Maryland, Virginia, New York and elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic (Bower 1985). A stoneware potter named Branch Greene was active in Philadelphia between 1809 and 1827 (Miller and Levin 2017), and the vessels he produced (illustrated in various auction sites online) are nearly identical in form to the Landrum's early wares (Steen 2014). So a visit to Philadelphia, which was the seat of learning in the US, as well as a center for industry, would allow Abner Landrum to study the scientific background and observe the pottery making

process in action. The library of the American Philosophical Society there was the home of numerous texts related to manufacturing, including the French potter Pallisy's work on glazes (Rauschenburg 1991).

Thus, even without direct documentation, it appears that Landrum did indeed travel to Philadelphia and learn about pottery making. It is also likely that he took this opportunity to recruit some unknown stoneware potter to teach him and his workers to make the wares, as the earliest vessels were very well made and used a highly refined glaze formula. As the dream of industrial manufacture waned following the War of 1812 and the re-opening of the English trade, Abner and his brothers John and Amos Landrum stopped trying to make porcelain and creamware "fine wares," and focused on utilitarian stonewares. The early glazes were less exactingly formulated, and they even developed a local brown slip glaze similar in appearance to Albany slip (Steen 2011). However, in 1830 Landrum clearly stated in the Charleston Newspaper that he could produce "upcountry porcelain" (Baldwin 1993). When he established his pottery in Columbia around 1837, the earliest wares made there had light green, refined glazes on early ovoid bodies (Steen 2019). At Pottersville at this time glazes were more variable, and vessels seem to have been made more expediently, with straighter sides (Calfas 2013; Arjona 2017).

Figure 3. A portrait drawing of John Vickers (Smedley 1883: 142).

John Smedley on John Vickers and Abner Landrum

In 1807-1809 Philadelphia was a center for industry and scholarly research where Abner Landrum could look into the science aspects, and observe living potters in action. On his trip to the North, Landrum made the acquaintance of a Quaker potter named John Vickers (Figure 3). Their interaction is recorded in an 1883 book by John Smedley entitled

"Recollections of the Underground Railroad in Chester County." This short entry is set out in full below, and I have added comments in bracketed notes. In 1883 John Smedley published a book on the activities of the Underground Railroad in Chester County, PA (see Figure 4). He wrote:

> In 1803 he [John Vickers] married Abigail Paxson and remained in the place in partnership with his father in the manufacture of pottery; they having an extensive reputation for their superior skill in making a fine variety of ware. (1) [This was his father, Thomas Vickers' shop—John was born in 1780 and was thus about the same age as Abner (James 1978)]
>
> A young man named Abner Landrum, son of a wealthy planter in Georgia, found a species of clay on their plantation, which is thought would make very fine porcelain ware. He came north to learn more of the quality, and of the manner of making it into fine ware. He was directed to John Vickers, as one of the most extensive and reliable manufacturers in the country. It was early in the morning when he arrived. The family had finished breakfast. As he had not eaten they prepared a table for him. Sarah Vickers, then about sixteen, waited on him. She noticed as she moved around his eyes followed her unusually, and after eating he turned pleasantly toward her and asked "Do you ladies here in the north wait on the table?" "Oh yes" she replied "we have no slaves here."
>
> During the early part of his visit he remarked that he saw [an African-American] boy going out of their lane with a basket, and a book under his arm, as if he was going to school. "Is my surmise correct?" he asked?
>
> "It is" replied John, "We think colored people need education, and are entitled to it as well as white people."
>
> [Landrum] raised his hands and turned up his eyes for a moment as if struck with astonishment, then with a look of thoughtfulness he slowly remarked "Well that is a new idea to me entirely. I never thought of such a thing as educating the colored race. It takes me by utter surprise. But I declare the idea pleases me."
>
> There was something more than ordinarily good, congenial and kind in the heart of this young Southerner that pleased John, who was himself a young man at the time, and a warm natural friendship was thereby established. [Landrum] made the Vickers house his home while visiting other places of interest in the vicinity, and a correspondence was kept up between them for many

> years. During [Landrum's] stay with this intelligent and benevolent abolition family, he became so imbued with the just and noble principles of liberty to all, and with a sense of the injustice and degradation of human slavery, that he would never afterwards own a slave, but was instrumental in many instances in nullifying to some extent the harshness and cruelty with which the slaves were generally treated in his section of the south. (Smedley 1883: 151–152)

Figure 4. General view of possible Underground Railroad Routes (Smedley 1883). Note that one branch leads directly through Columbia.

This passage leaves us with a lot to unpack. First, it clearly states that Landrum traveled to the North with samples of clay to learn about making porcelain, or "fine ware." This suggests that he did not read about it in a newspaper or book in Edgefield and start making pottery in isolation. If he did, in fact, read the D'Entrecolles letters and the DuHalde and Palissy books, it is more likely that they would have been available at the libraries in Philadelphia than in the South, where there were no institutions for research before the 1810s. The Charleston Library was formed in the 1770s, but did not have a copy of the DuHalde book, according to the library staff. The potters and entrepreneurs Landrum visited may have had copies of these and other books pertinent to his research that may not have been available in the South.

In his travels he also learned lessons about life and culture. Before the 1790s it was rare to find enslaved workers in the Backcountry. Their labor was worth far more on the rice plantations of the Lowcountry than on simple backcountry farms (Burton 1985). The introduction of new strains of cotton and a revolutionary gin that allowed it to be processed efficiently, caused short staple cotton agriculture to boom in the early 1800s (Gray 1940; Calfas 2013). Slave importation from Africa ended in 1808, but enslaved African Americans were brought in from the Lowcountry and adjacent states to provide labor. Abner Landrum's father Dr. Samuel Landrum, was not a slave owner, so it seems reasonable to assume the son may not have been inclined to aspire to slave ownership even without meeting John Vickers. Smedley said Landrum never owned a slave. It appears Landrum never personally owned an enslaved individual, although members of his family did.

When they married, Landrum's wife Methelum Presley was accompanied by a girl under 14, and ownership of this person was apparently left to her in her father John Presley's will in 1828. Over the course of the 19th century the Federal Census shows that the Landrums owned or housed a young woman under 14 in 1820. Abner's name is not found in 1830, though an A. Landrum enumeration could have been either him or his brother Amos. This person had two young daughters, but no wife is noted. Two enslaved males, age 10-36, and a female age 24-36 lived in the household. In 1840 a 24-36 year old woman, and a boy and girl less than 10 years old were in the Abner Landrum household. In 1850 two females aged 13 and 17, and a boy aged 11, were enumerated. In 1860, after Abner's 1857 death, his wife Methelum claimed ownership of two women 20-26, a male, age 20, and five children under ten. This could include the three mentioned in 1850, and their children. Interestingly, all are enumerated as "Mulatto." They lived in two houses, suggesting at least one active family unit. All of the Landrum sons at home at the time were age 23-32, and unmarried.

So when Abner Landrum was alive the Landrums never owned more than four people, and did not participate heavily in the slave economy. The industrial and agricultural censuses that are available show that none of his pottery or print shop workers were his property. Is it possible that the Landrums provided shelter for these people, and even sent some along to the North? Could the Landrum pottery in Columbia have served as a stop on the Underground Railroad? Could these residents have been waiting for a ride? Enslaved potters had a little more freedom of movement than field hands: they cut and transported trees and dug clay. Some

carried wagonloads of pottery to sell to the isolated plantations, as well as to customers in larger towns, such as Camden (*Camden News* 1812) and Columbia. Edgefield stoneware was common on Lowcountry plantations as well. Escape by sea as hired workers or stowaways was a common means of travel from the deep South. Thus the people on the wagons had a little more cover for traveling unaccompanied. Could they have carried a passenger or two on their way to freedom? Their need for secrecy leads us to ask many questions for which there are no clear answers.

Was Abner Landrum really, as Smedley (1883: 152) said, "instrumental in many instances in nullifying to some extent the harshness and cruelty with which the slaves were generally treated in his section of the South"? Perhaps by example, and perhaps by word, but in South Carolina society at the time to even mildly favor abolition would have been, at best, frowned upon, and more likely vociferously condemned. As noted earlier, Abner Landrum was caned in his office by the Governor's brother-in-law after he reported in the *Hive* that the Governor owned stock in Northern textile mills. Both Abner and his son Palissy had printing contracts with the state government, so it seems likely they kept their opinions to themselves (Steen 2019). So, the social situation and the known temperament of the man, suggest it, but was Abner Landrum a discrete Abolitionist? An active member of the Underground Railroad? We may never know for sure, but it would be nice to see some of those letters between Abner Landrum and John Vickers and learn more about their relationship.

Abner Landrum and Dave Drake

The famed potter Dave Drake developed his skills as an enslaved youth and continued pottery production after the Civil War and emancipation. He may have been born at Pottersville around 1800 (Goldberg and Witkowski 2006; Todd 2008). A man named Dave was passed from the estate of Harvey Drake in 1832 to his brother Reuben Drake and his partner, Jasper Gibbs, in 1832. Abner Landrum trained the Drakes, and passed ownership of his pottery along to them in 1819. Subsequently the Pottersville kiln passed back and forth between a number of partners, including some that ended up in the pottery center at Shaw's Creek. The earliest dated pot attributed to Dave was made in 1834, when the Drakes were still in business (Todd 2008). So it is entirely possible that Abner Landrum returned from John Vickers pottery in 1809 and some time thereafter chose a smart, young, African-American child to see for himself if a local child

could be taught to read and write, and learn a craft. This could be motivated by scientific interest as much as humanitarian goals.

If "Dave" was the child, he showed it was possible. As early as the 1960s local collector and historian Ralph McClendon (Greer 1970) said that Dave had learned to read by setting type at Landrum's print shop. Clear documentation of this is lacking. Is it possible Mr. McClendon heard tales from his elders on this topic? As with most Edgefield topics there is little documentary evidence to confirm or deny this contention, and that which is cited is usually contradictory or unclear. For instance a newspaper article from 1863 tells of going to Pottersville on Saturdays "in years gone by" to be amused by "Old Uncle Dave . . . a grandiloquent old darky . . . that had been connected with the Hive." In this article, Dave extols the virtues of "good old buttermilk." How many years had gone by between the observation and printing of the article? If he was connected with the Hive it would have been prior to1831. A man named Dave was passed from Harvey Drake to Drake and Gibbes in 1832 in his estate sale. The Pottersville factory floundered and seems to have been out of business by the mid 1830s, when its workers moved to Shaws Creek and Kirksey Crossroads, forming new shops (Castille et al 1988; Steen 2016). The Pottersville property was purchased by a neighboring landowner in 1850, and it may not have served as a pottery afterwards (Calfas 2013).

Signed pots show that a man named Dave was making and inscribing vessels at a pottery located at Horse Creek, SC by 1840 and he stated in verse that he "belonged to Mr. Miles" (Goldberg and Witkowski 2006). A turner with that name was sold from the John Landrum estate to his son, B.F. Landrum in 1847. He was the second most valuable slave in the sale. In 1865 a man named Dave signed a work contract as a pottery worker with B.F. Landrum, while another man named Dave signed a contract with Lewis Miles as a farm hand. In the 1870 census David Drake lived with Mark Jones, a potter in the same neighborhood as the B.F. Landrum and Lewis Miles potteries. He is called a potter, and given the name Dave Drake in an 1873 newspaper article. Author Leonard Todd (2008) interpreted that surname as proof that Dave Drake was the man trained and employed at Pottersville.

Physical evidence of Dave working at Pottersville is rare. In their excavations George Calfas and Chris Fennell found a few sherds with incised script, but only a few, out of many thousands of sherds. Incised sherds are found at many sites (Steen 2011, 2014), and do not stand

as proof that the marks were necessarily made by Dave Drake. A few extant dated vessels have been attributed to Dave at Pottersville, but he did not sign his name on them, just the date. A bottle dated 1820 is attributed to Abner Landrum, so finding inscribed sherds is not necessarily proof that Dave was the writer.

If Dave learned to read and write at Pottersville it was not until he somehow ended up living with Abner's brother, Rev. John Landrum, on Horse Creek that he began inscribing vessels with regularity. At that point he seems to have been owned by John Landrum, though documentation of the transfer is not on record. John's daughter Mary married Lewis Miles, but died soon after. Upon Mary's death Miles married her sister Sarah. In John Landrum's estate sale a turner named Dave was sold to B. F. Landrum in 1847. Somehow Dave apparently became Sarah's property when the estate was finally settled, and he is said to have worked for the Miles from 1849 to 1865. Lewis Miles and B. F. Landrum Sr. were partners in a pottery operation. There is a burst of vessel inscribing activity between 1840 and 1842, and then, for some reason, nearly none until 1849 (Goldberg and Wittkowski 2006). In 1840 Dave was apparently living with Lewis Miles, John Landrum's son in law, as an inscribed pot proclaims: "Dave belongs to Mr Miles / Where the oven bakes and the pot biles / July 31, 1840." Where they lived is unclear. Newspaper accounts state Lewis Miles was living at and operating John Landrum's old mill in 1849 (Goldberg and Wittkowski 2006). However, in 1840 John Landrum, B.F. Landrum, and Lewis Miles lived in separate households. Signed and dated pieces from the late 1840s and the 1850s are common, with the practice apparently ending around 1863. The last known inscribed piece is dated 1867 (Steen 2011). So, is teaching a young boy named Dave to read and write an example of Abner Landrum's exemplary treatment of the enslaved, as Smedley suggests?

Was Abner Landrum a secret abolitionist? John Smedley seems to say he was, but if that fact came out in South Carolina in the years leading up to the Civil War, when Abolitionists were reviled locally, he would have been subject to violence and jail. There was, as William Preston noted, an atmosphere of hatred and paranoia toward anyone even suspected of abolitionist leanings. In his obituary the writer noted that Abner Landrum was "much respected . . . notwithstanding bitter partisans arrayed against him on account of his Union Sentiments" (*Edgefield Advertiser* April 3, 1859). So if he was an Abolitionist it would have been necessary for him to keep it secret if he wanted his family to survive. That he was successful is good, for

him, but leaves us with questions and speculation. Even if he did not serve as a participant in the Underground Railroad, he does seem to have supported the cause, if ever so quietly.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to George Calfas, Chris Fennell, Brooke Kenline-Nyman, Sean Taylor, and Linda Carnes McNaughton for their help and inspiration. Thanks also to my deceased teachers, Steve Ferrell, Terry Ferrell, Arthur Goldberg, and Stanley South. Never took a formal class from any of them, but learned so much in discussions of pottery and culture.

Note

* Carl Steen, principal, Diachronic Research Foundation, Columbia, SC.

References

Arjona, Jamie M.
2017 Jug Factories and Fictions: A Mixed Methods Analysis of African-American Stoneware Traditions in Antebellum South Carolina. *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 6(3): 196–224.

Baldwin, Cinda
1993 *Great and Noble Jar: Traditional Stoneware of South Carolina*. University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA.

Barber, Edwin Atlee
1904 *The Pottery and Porcelain of the United States*. Feingold and Lewis, New York.

Bivins, John
1972 *The Moravian Potters in North Carolina.* University on NC Press, Chapel Hill, NC

Bordley, John Beale
1805 *Essays and Notes on Husbandry and Rural Affairs*. Budd and Bartram, Philadelphia, PA.

Bower, Beth
1985 The Pottery-Making Trade in Colonial Philadelphia: The Growth of an Early Urban Industry. In Turnbaugh, Sarah P., ed., *Domestic Pottery in the Northeastern United States, 1625 -1850*. Academic Press, New York.

Burrison, John
1983 *Brothers in Clay: The Story of Georgia Folk Pottery*. University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA.

Burrison, John,
2006 Fluid Vessel: Journey of the Jug. *Ceramics in America*, Chipstone Foundation, Madison, WI.

Burton, Orville Vernon
1985 *In My Fathers House are Many Mansions:" Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC

Calfas, George
2013 Nineteenth Century Stoneware Manufacturing at Pottersville, South Carolina: The Discovery of a Dragon Kiln and the Reinterpretation of a Southern Pottery Tradition, PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, IL.

Castille, George, Cinda Baldwin, and Carl Steen
1988 An Archaeological Survey of Alkaline Glazed Stoneware Production Sites in the Old Edgefield District, South Carolina. McKissick Museum, and the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Edgar, Walter
1998 *South Carolina: A History*. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC.

Fennell, Christopher
2021 *The Archaeology of Craft and Industry*. Univ. Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Ferrell, Stephen, and Terry Ferrell
1976 *Early Decorated Stoneware of the Edgefield District, South Carolina*. Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, SC.

Freehling, William
1966 *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina*. Harper and Row, New York.

Goldberg, Arthur, and James Witkowski
2006 *Beneath His Magic Touch: The Dated Vessels of the African-American Slave Potter Dave*. Ceramics in America, Chipstone Foundation, Madison, WI.

Gray, Lewis C.
1946 *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*. Carnegie Institute, Washington, D.C. Contributions to American Economic History, Publication No. 430.

Greer, Georgianna
1970 Preliminary Information on the Use of the Alkaline Glaze for Stoneware in the South, 1800-1970. *Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology Papers* 5: 186–187.

Greer, Georgianna
1977 Groundhog Kilns: Rectangular American Kilns of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 6(1): 42–54.

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

James, Arthur E.
1978 *The Potters and Potteries of Chester County, Pennsylvani*a, Schiffer Publishing, Exton, PA.

Joseph, J. Walter Sr.
1976 Alkaline Glazed Stoneware from a Waster Dump in Aiken, SC. The "Poor Potter" Moves South. Paper Presented to the ASSC, Columbia, SC.

Kenline, Brooke
2012 Capitalist Entrepreneurs and Industrial Slavery in the Rural Antebellum South. MA Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Ketchum, William C.
1991 *American Stoneware*. Henry Holt and Co. New York.

Landrum, Abner
1815 Report to the State Legislature, South Carolina Governor's Report, Columbia, SC.

Lewis, Kenneth E
1976 *Camden: A Frontier Town*. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Lewis, Kenneth E.
2017 *The Backcountry Venture: Tradition, Capital and Circumstance in the Transition of the Wateree Valley, 1740-1810*. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC.

Miller, Deborah, and Jed Levin
2017 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *Ceramics in America*, Chipstone Foundation, Madison, WI.

Miller , George L.
1991 A Revised Set of CC Index Values for Classification and Scaling of English Ceramics from 1787 to 1880. *Historical Archaeology* 25: 1–25.

Mills, Robert
1826 *Statistics of South Carolina*. Hurlbut and Lloyd, Charleston, SC.

Myers, Susan
1989 *From Handicraft to Industry, Philadelphia Ceramics in the First Half of the 19th Century.* Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.

Rauschenberg, Bradford
1991 Andrew Duche: A Potter "a Little Too Much Addicted to Politics." *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 17(1): 1–101.

Rauschenberg, Bradford
1991 John Bartlam, Who established "New Pottworks in South Carolina" and Became the First Successful Creamware Potter in America. *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 17(2): 67–79.

Rhodes, Daniel
1957 *Clay and Glazes for the Potter*. Chilton Book Co., Philadelphia, PA.

South, Stanley A
1970 The Ceramic Ware of the potter Rudolph Christ at Bethabara and Salem (Forsyth County), North Carolina, 1786-1821. The Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology Papers, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

South, Stanley A.
1970 A Comment on Alkaline Glazed Stoneware. Conference on Historic Sites Archaeology, Papers, Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

South, Stanley A., and Carl Steen
1993 *The Search for John Bartlam at Cain Hoy: America's First Creamware Potter*. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

South, Stanley, Carl Steen, and Lisa Hudgins
2004 John Bartlam: Staffordshire in Carolina. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Steen, Carl
1994 An Archaeological Survey of Pottery Production Sites in the Old Edgefield District of South Carolina. Diachronic Research Foundation, Columbia, SC.

Steen, Carl
2001 Industrial Pottery in the Old Edgefield District of South Carolina. In *Ceramics in America*, G. Miller and R. Hunter, editors, University Press of New England, Hanover, N.H. University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.

Steen, Carl
2011 Alkaline Glazed Stoneware Origins. *South Carolina Antiquities* 43(1/2): 21–32.

Steen, Carl
2011 The Last Dave Pot? *Ceramics in America*, Chipstone Foundation, Madison, WI.

Steen, Carl
2014 Archaeology at the Rev. John Landrum Site - 2011-2013. *South Carolina Antiquities* 46(1): 21–34.

Steen, Carl
2014 *A Cultural Resources Inventory of the Bear Branch Heritage Preserve*. Diachronic

Research Foundation, Columbia, SC.

Steen, Carl
2016 *Archaeology at the B.F. Landrum Stoneware Kiln Site: 38 AK496*. Diachronic Research Foundation, Columbia, SC.

Steen, Carl
2016 *Archaeology at 38GN16: A Stoneware Pottery in Greenwood County, South Carolina*. Diachronic Research Foundation, Columbia, SC.

Steen, Carl, and Corbett Toussaint
2017 Who Were the Potters in the Old Edgefield District? *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 6(2): 78–109.

Steen, Carl
2019 Artifacts from the Landrum-Stork Site (38RD288). *South Carolina Antiquities* 47: 87–101

Todd, Leonard
2008 *Carolina Clay: The Life and Legend of the Slave Potter Dav*e. W.W. Norton, New York.

Turnbaugh, Sarah Peabody, editor
1985 *Domestic Pottery of the Northeastern United States, 1625-1850*. Academic Press, Orlando, FL.

Wallace, David Duncan
1951 *South Carolina: A Short History*. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, SC.

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

Wingard, Phillip
2013 From Baltimore to the South Carolina Backcountry: Thomas Chandler's Influence on 19th Century Stoneware. *Ceramics in America*, Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee, WI.

Zug, Charles
1986 *Turners and Burners: The Folk Potters of North Carolina*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC.

Return to December 2025 Newsletter:
http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news1225/news1225.html