The Ceramic Works of David Drake, aka, Dave the Potter or Dave the Slave of Edgefield, South Carolina

Jill Beute Koverman

University of South Carolina - Columbia, koverman@mailbox.sc.edu

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Fig. 1. Sample of jug, jars, and pitchers, Dave Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield, S.C., 1840–59. Alkaline-glazed stoneware. Collections of McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, Larry and Joan Carlson, and Dr. and Mrs. James K. Smith. Photo, courtesy of McKissick Museum.
The Ceramic Works of David Drake, aka,
Dave the Potter or Dave the Slave of
Edgefield, South Carolina

Jill Beute Koverman

This study examines the extant work of a prolific potter, an African American named David Drake, who as a slave often signed his work "Dave" and incised verses he had written into his clay vessels. One hundred twenty-nine vessels either clearly marked or attributed to Dave were catalogued, photographed, and compared to define stylistic traits based on forms, glazes, dimensions, marks, handwriting, and dates. Combined with archival research, the author has answered questions surrounding incongruous theories about the life and work history of Dave posited by earlier scholarship. Other questions, such as how did Dave learn to read and write and when did he die, remain unanswered.

In 1800 a boy of African descent was born into slavery in the Edgefield District of South Carolina. Named Dave, he grew up in Pottersville, a hamlet one mile north of the Edgefield courthouse and town square. Geographically bordered on the west by the Savannah River, Edgefield was the center of this western judicial district, a fertile area situated along the fall line with rich clay deposits, numerous creeks and streams, and forests of hardwood and pines. A political hotbed, Edgefield was to be the birthplace of ten governors and nine lieutenant governors, many of whom lived during the same time as Dave. Over the course of his life, Dave belonged to several masters who were related in one manner or another, including Harvey Drake, Reuben Drake, and Jasper Gibbs, possibly the Reverend John Landrum and Dr. Abner Landrum, and, the last one, Lewis Miles. Dave worked as a potter or "turner" for all these men and produced alkaline-glazed stoneware in vast quantities and sizes. Dave was one of seventy-six known enslaved African and African American men and women who worked in the Edgefield District's twelve pottery factories during the antebellum period. Because he often wrote the date and/or signed his name on the side of the vessels he produced, his work is the most identifiable of all the Edgefield potters, black or white (Fig. 1). Dave also wrote rhyming couplets on twenty-seven extant works; of the 129 vessels surveyed by the author, twenty-four, or 18.6 percent, were incised with poetic verse (see Chronological List of Dave's Verses). Writing poetry on pots as early as 1834, Dave was one of a small percentage of enslaved Africans and African Americans who were literate; however, it is not known whether Dave was
Fig. 2a. Edgefield District, "Mills Atlas of South Carolina," 1825. (From Robert Mills, Atlas of the State of South Carolina [Baltimore: F. Lucas, 1825].) Photo, courtesy of McKissick Museum.

Fig. 2b. Detail of Fig. 2a.
taught to read and write by Dr. Abner Landrum (also editor of the newspaper the *Edgefield Hive*) as some scholars suggest, or whether he learned on his own. At the end of the Civil War in 1865, Dave took the surname Drake and was listed in the 1870 United States census as "David Drake, turner." By 1817 the old Edgefield District was the "crossroads of clay" in the United States, where English, Continental, African, and Native American traditions were blended with Chinese glazing and firing technology to give birth to the alkaline-glazed stoneware tradition (Fig. 2a). This type of stoneware was a durable, low-cost, and nontoxic alternative to lead-glazed earthenware and salt-glazed stoneware, and it met the needs of small farms and plantations in South Carolina and parts of Georgia. Various clays were identified and mined, then refined and turned into utilitarian vessels such as jugs, churns, and storage jars. Abundant pine, poplar, maple, and hickory trees were cut down and used to fire the kilns. Wood ash, lime, and feldspar were mixed with clay and water to create the alkaline glaze. The use of slave labor made the large-scale production of stoneware profitable. In the 1860 United States Industrial Census, Lewis Miles's pottery factory was valued at $5,000 with an output of 50,000 gallons of stoneware. Ten males and four females worked for Miles; the men were paid $200 and the women $41 a month. Dave may have received some wage, but there is no documentary proof, as an account book is not known to survive, and the census records do not elaborate on which workers were paid. Some enslaved craftsmen received a very small monetary compensation for their work, particularly if they were hired out by their owner. In the antebellum South, it was typical for the majority of the craftsmen on plantations to be enslaved African Americans, who often were carpenters, blacksmiths, tanners, and wagon wheelwrights. The spiritual beliefs of the different African ethnic groups shaped their social hierarchy and divided craft-making roles according to gender. In Africa it was the women who were generally potters. This role was based on the special "female" qualities and "energies" derived from the earth. Potters were not allowed to marry outside their group and frequently were aligned with the blacksmiths because of their "magic." In Africa, those who had been trained as blacksmiths often were trained as goldsmiths as well, holding a special position of power within the community because they worked with ores, gifts from the earth, which, like clay, were transformed by fire. The majority of African utilitarian pottery vessels were produced using the coiling method, in which coils of clay are built up into the desired form and then smoothed and joined together. Water jugs were also made by using an anvil to beat the clay around another round object into the desired form and thinness. The vessels were air dried or fired in a pit. The female Catawba Indian potters of South Carolina, as well as the Moche, Aztec, and Inca potters in Central and South America, used coiling methods similar to those of the female potters in Africa and male potters in Asia. In Western Europe, and particularly in Germany, France, Britain, and Ireland, potters were generally men. Digging and refining the clay for the pots, turning the pots, mixing the glazes and glazing the vessels, chopping the wood for the kiln, and finally loading and firing the kiln are all tasks requiring heavy labor. It was a necessary trade because vessels for storing and cooking food were a universal need. As time passed, European ceramic forms changed along with their degree of decoration in response to the discovery in Germany of the hard-paste porcelain formula, which resulted in the increased production of European porcelain, the refinement of its usage, and the inevitable sophistication of technology and taste. But little changed in terms of the utilitarian forms that were produced; the standard European glazes were composed of tin, lead, and salt, not the alkaline glaze found
on Edgefield pottery.

Utilitarian pottery from around the world shares certain basic characteristics. Vessels used for food preparation and storage, especially those for liquids such as water, wine, and beer, need to be watertight. Others used for cooking need to withstand the heat of the cook fire. These latter vessels generally have three legs and are called tripod or spider pots. Water jugs, pitchers, or spouted vessels are all common "jug" forms. The differences between cultures in food service and storage vessels generally can be found in their applied decoration, which reflects the cultural aesthetic. Water jugs made in Africa are similar in form to those created by the ancient Greeks and by Native Americans in North, Central, and South America, although major differences can be found in the overall size and in the pouring spout and handles. Early vessels were mainly earthenware because of the available clay and the lack of firing technology. The Chinese were the first to fire at temperatures exceeding 1,200 degrees Centigrade, which they achieved perhaps as early as 500 B.C. The kilns used and built by the Chinese were down-draft chamber kilns, with the firebox at the base and the flue or chimney at the higher end. These wood-burning kilns were filled with unglazed utilitarian vessels and, when fired, produced an ash glaze, which occurred naturally when ashes from the burning fuel traveled toward the chimney and dropped down on the stoneware vessels, fusing with the clay body. The design, color, and thickness of the glaze were not predictable; the final appearance was left to chance. This worked well with the oriental aesthetic, where the outcome was not predetermined by man, but came from nature.

The exact source or origin of the alkaline glaze in Edgefield is unknown, but it may have been derived from newspaper and scientific accounts, or achieved through experimentation at the potteries operated by the Landrum family. Using a mixture of local clay, wood ash or lime, and feldspar and/or silica with water, glaze was applied to the vessels by dipping or pouring. The glaze was not achieved naturally as on early Chinese wares, although the ultimate results of the Edgefield pots varied with the iron, kaolin, feldspar, and silica content of the clay used for the glaze, as well as with the firing process. A potter named Thomas Chandler appears to have had the greatest control over his glaze formulas and kiln environment. Edgefield potters and those who followed in the Southern alkaline-glazed stoneware tradition used "groundhog" kilns, an updraft-type kiln built into the ground, which may have been an American derivative of the English Newcastle kiln.

Dave learned the potter's art from men of European descent, and he learned to throw on a wheel, most likely a treadle wheel. The vessels produced by Edgefield potters have traditional English shapes, and the consistent forms of Dave's work, particularly the early examples made before 1840, indicate this European influence. In all likelihood, Dave began turning pots in his late teens under the tutelage of Dr. Abner Landrum and his copartners: Landrum's brother Amos and his nephew Harvey Drake, to whom Dave, who lived at Pottersville, belonged from his youth until Drake's death in December 1832. Robert Mills, in his Statistics of South Carolina, wrote that the success of Pottersville, or Landrumsville as he identified it on the 1825 Atlas, was due in large measure to Dr. Abner Landrum's influence as a physician, potter, and newspaper editor (Fig. 2b). In 1985 the historian Orville Vernon Burton further clarified Mill's information about Pottersville and its economic role, indicating that it was not just a pottery but a small hamlet with a blacksmith shop, a hotel, a newspaper, a tannery, and a number of other prosperous businesses as well. Dave was an acknowledged member of both the Pottersville and the Edgefield communities, as indicated in the Edgefield Advertiser newspaper article from May 11, 1859, entitled "Old Pottersville and Dr. Landrum":
A clever writer in the South Carolinian discourses of old Pottersville and Dr. Landrum in pleasant terms... Do we not still mind how the boys and girls used to think it a fine Saturday frolic to walk to old Pottersville and survey its manufacturing peculiaristics? to watch old DAVE as the clay assumed beneath his magic touch the desired shape of jug, jar, or crock, or pitcher as the case might be?¹³

While potters often wrote on their wares or marked them in some way, maker's marks are not the only means of identifying a potter. Studying measurements, decorations (either incised or applied), and handle forms and methods of attachments provides a clearer image of the potter's hand. Early vessels made during the 1820s at Pottersville bear similar traits to later definitive works signed by Dave. The profiles of the 1821 jug attributed to Pottersville and the jug dated “Oct. 26, 1853” bearing Dave's name and the mark “Lm” for Lewis Miles are almost identical (Figs. 3, 4). While the earlier jug is shorter and slightly heavier at the base, the measurements of the two jugs differ only by an inch. These similarities suggest that at the Lewis Miles factory in 1853, Dave continued the tradition established at Pottersville by Harvey Drake in 1821.

Three jars with incised and slip-applied writing made at Pottersville between 1830 and 1836 help establish that Dave learned the art of the potter from Harvey Drake. The first of these, with the inscription “15” and “Harvey Drake,” is the only surviving signed example of Harvey Drake's pottery (Fig. 5). This large food storage jar, which has a glassy, olive green glaze and four slab handles attached just below the rolled, banded rim, is very similar in form to another food storage jar inscribed in iron slip “Hiram Gibbs / Union District / S Cr. / Presented 1836,” documented by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The large size and four handles of these vessels make them unusual. The fifteen-gallon piece signed by Drake must date before his death in December 1832 and has a height of 19 1/2 inches and a maximum circumference of 60 inches. The “Hiram Gibbs” jar is dated 1836 and measures 18 1/2 inches in height and approximately 60 inches in maximum circumference. Referring to the “Hiram Gibbs” jar, Carlee McClendon, a contemporary historian and collector who grew up in Edgefield, wrote in the Pottersville Hive that this particular slip-decorated jar was made by Dave.¹⁴ In the book Great and Noble Jar, Cinda Baldwin describes the same piece: “This jar is almost identical to the storage jars turned by the slave potter Dave in Edgefield and was most likely produced in Edgefield for Gibbs' Union District plantation.”¹⁵ Baldwin does not mention, however, the close business and family ties between Gibbs and the Drakes. This connection must not be overlooked in attributing a maker to this vessel, especially since the partnership of (Reuben) Drake and (Jasper) Gibbs purchased Dave from the estate of Harvey Drake.¹⁶ The brothers Harvey and Reuben Drake had been in partnership at Pottersville from 1822 until the elder brother's death in 1832, and in the following year, 1833, Reuben and Jasper Gibbs became business partners in a pottery. Additionally, Jasper Gibbs married Harvey and Sarah Drake's daughter Laura on April 7, 1839, at Pottersville.¹⁷ Neither Baldwin nor McClendon was aware of the fifteen-gallon “Harvey Drake” vessel at the time of their writing. The third jar, in the collection of the Charleston Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, is another food storage jar with a glassy glaze and four handles (Fig. 6a). On the top of one of the handles is the incised date “16 November 1834” and on another a small C-shaped incision (Fig. 6b). The measurements are 18 1/2 inches in height with a maximum circumference of 53 inches.

Two other storage vessels surveyed are similar in form to the “Harvey Drake” and “Hiram Gibbs” jars. The first is incised with the date “29th March 1836” and the following four-line
Fig. 3. Jug, Dave or Harvey Drake, Pottersville Stoneware Manufactory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1821. Incised “1821.” H: 14 1/8”; Circ.: 37 3/8”. Collection of Phil and Debbie Wingard.

Fig. 4. Jug, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1853. Incised “Lm Oct. 26, 1853 Dave.” H: 15 1/8”; Circ.: 37”. Collection of Paul and Sally Hawkins.

Fig. 5. Storage jar, Harvey Drake, Pottersville Stoneware Manufactory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1822–32. Incised “15” and “Harvey Drake.” H: 19 1/2”; Circ.: 60 1/2”. Collection of Phil and Debbie Wingard.

Fig. 6a. Storage jar, Dave, possibly Drake and Gibbs factory at Pottersville, Edgefield District, S.C., 1834. Incised “Novr 16th 1834” and small upside down “c” on handle. H: 18”; Circ.: 53”. Collection of The Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C. Photo, courtesy of The Charleston Museum.

Fig. 6b. Detail of Fig. 6a.
Fig. 7. Storage jar, Dave, possibly Drake and Gibbs factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1836. Incised “29” March 1836” and on the opposite side the verse “horses, mules and hogs—/all our cows is in the bogs / there they shall ever stay / till the buzzards take them away—.” H: 16 1/8”; Circ.: 52 3/4”. Collection of Bert and Jane Hunecke.

Fig. 8. Storage jar, attributed to Dave, possibly Drake and Gibbs factory, Edgefield District, S.C., ca. 1836. Incised with eight dots. H: 15 1/2”; Circ.: 52 1/2”. Collection of Brent Yates.


Fig. 10. Storage jar, attributed to Thomas Chandler, Chandler Factory or Phoenix Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., ca. 1840. Iron slip decoration. H: 19”; Circ.: 55”. Collection of Jim and Faye Yates.
verse: "horses, mules and hogs— / all our cows is in the bogs / there they shall ever stay / till the buzzards take them away=" (Fig. 7). Although the vessel does not bear his name, it is clearly Dave's work and his writing, the attribution again based on later works signed "Dave." The glaze is light olive green to oatmeal beige in color with a drippy appearance and a glassy surface on which there is some crackling or crazing. The rim of the jar is very thick, chunky, and a bit lopsided. It is not the rolled rim seen on later jars but like those of the Drake and Gibbs jars. The same lopsidedness and glaze coloration are also found in the rim of yet another storage jar having no distinguishing marks except for a row of dots that are not easily seen under normal light (Fig. 8). The maximum circumference of this jar, 52 3/4 inches, is the same as the "29th March 1836" jar (Fig. 7). The height and the base circumference measurements of the two pots differ by less than an inch. Because of the similarities in form and size, as well as in the glaze coloration and clay body, a positive attribution to Dave as the maker can be made for this jar with the row of dots.

The consistency of forms and glaze colors of these vessels spanning the fifteen-year period from 1821 to 1836 seems to suggest that Dave began his training under Harvey Drake and worked at Pottersville until 1836. His later masters, Reuben Drake and Jasper Gibbs, like many other men in Edgefield, moved westward and settled in Louisiana to escape the financial depression in South Carolina and to acquire inexpensive land. Dave remained in the Edgefield District and by 1837 was working for Lewis Miles, who married Mary Sarah Landrum, the daughter of the Reverend John Landrum and the sister of B. F. Landrum, both of whom operated potteries in the Edgefield District. By 1840 Dave belonged to Lewis Miles and writes about his situation on a storage vessel now in the collection of the Charleston Museum: "Dave belongs to Mr. Miles / wher the oven bakes & the pot biles." Many vessels have different variations of markings for this period, including "Mr. Miles," "Mr. L. Miles," and "L miles" with and without Dave's name (Fig. 9).

Within the community of Edgefield, most potters were capable of turning vessels as large as twenty gallons, but Dave and Thomas Chandler are the only Edgefield potters known to produce vessels with a larger capacity. Several twenty-gallon water coolers and jars have been attributed to Chandler at the Phoenix Factory about 1840 and at his own factory between 1850 and 1852 (Fig. 10). Chandler's pots reached a height of more than 31 inches, with the circumference varying according to vessel usage. By 1843 Dave, too, was making immense storage jars reaching up to twenty-seven inches in height. To make them, he used the coiling method, thereby combining the African and Native American methods dominated by women. The same potting technique was used also by male "folk" potters in China and Japan who created utilitarian vessels much like those produced for the agrarian, plantation economy in Edgefield.

Dave's tallest known vessel from the 1840s, 27 inches high, bears the inscriptions "Mr. L. Miles Dave" and "not counted" on one side with the date "May 16th 1843" incised on the opposite side (Figs. 11a, b). The shape of this pot is more cylindrical and not as wide as the thirty- to forty-gallon jars Dave made in the late 1850s. The later jars are wider in circumference; however, all of the enormous vessels were made in a similar manner by joining separately made sections. First the base was turned on the wheel, then the upper sections were applied to the base in coils or turned separately, joined and adhered by smoothing the clay together. On the 1843 piece, the bottom third has cracked along the seam where the two clay sections were joined. Its glaze coloration, oatmeal beige, is the same as other pieces made in the 1840s. This piece appears to mark Dave's transition from turning small jars of fewer than
twenty gallons in capacity to creating immense jars of more than twenty-five gallons in size. The inscribed phrase, “not counted,” has been interpreted to mean that Dave was not certain of the gallon capacity of the jar. The vessel actually could hold approximately twenty-five to thirty gallons, although there are no incised tick marks or other indicators of size, such as those found on other jars of enormous size. The elusive phrase also could mean that the vessel was damaged and not included in the kiln count.

In the 1850s Dave’s ability to turn large vessels was in great demand. Of the 129 vessels by and attributed to Dave and surveyed by the author, 46 (36%) were produced in the 1850s, and of these 9 were jugs, 2 were churns, and 35 were food storage vessels. Eighteen of the storage vessels could hold more than fifteen gallons and were 19 inches or taller, and 12 of those 18 were inscribed with poetry. The glazes changed in color with a large group produced in 1857 bearing a deep, iron-rich brown glaze over an orange clay body (Figs. 12a, b, 13). If the pots were small enough, they were dipped into the glaze vat, whereas if they were too large to be dipped, the glaze was poured over the sides of the jars. By 1859 the glaze color smoothed out to a deep olive green with traces of rutile, or titanium dioxide, appearing in the glaze. Often they had poems or other inscriptions on the sides. Two of the largest vessels made by Dave are in the collection of the Charleston Museum and are on permanent display. These forty-gallon jars are both dated “13 May 1859” (a Friday), are signed “Dave & Baddler,” and bear verses: “Great & noble Jar / hold sheep goat & bear” and “Made at Stony bluff / for making lard enuff.” They measure 28 3/4 inches and 25 3/4 inches in height and have a maximum circumference of 79 3/16 inches and 81 3/16 inches, respectively, and the forms are reminiscent of the fifteen-gallon jar by Harvey Drake. Baddler is the name of the person who assisted Dave in the production of these two colossal jars, but the actual identity of Baddler—whether free or enslaved, black or white, male or female—is unknown. Dave’s poetry ranged from romantic to patriotic to religious (see Chronological List of Dave’s Verses). On two separate occasions, in November 1858 and again in August 1860, Dave used the same New Testament verse taken from Revelation 13:2, “I saw a leopard with a lion’s face, / then I felt the need of grace” (Figs. 14a, b).

Dave continued to work for Lewis Miles during the Civil War, even after the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863, but as a man in his sixties, he no longer produced enormous vessels. This could be explained either by his age or, what is more likely, by the decline of the plantation system, as planters and farmers no longer needed large vessels to store upward of fifteen gallons of meat. After the Civil War, Dave remained in the old Edgefield District, and although he probably worked at the Lewis Miles Pottery, even after Lewis Miles’s death in 1868, no vessels signed and/or dated by Dave after 1864 have been found yet (Fig. 15). Neither is there any record of a “David Drake” or “Dave Drake” in the 1880 United States census for Aiken County, the area where the Lewis Miles Pottery was located when the districts were divided into counties.

As research and information known about Dave, that is, David Drake and the other Edgefield potters—both black and white—reaches a wider audience, additional examples of Edgefield pottery have been uncovered in barns, cellars, and cupboards. It is the hope of this author that the research advances and the body of information continue to grow, so that one day a more complete story of David Drake and Edgefield pottery can be told.
Fig. 11a. Storage jar, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1843. Incised "May 16th 1843" and on the opposite side "L miles Dave / not counted." H: 27 3/4"; Circ.: 70 1/4". Private Collection.

Fig. 11b. Detail of Fig. 11a.

Fig. 12a. Storage jar, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1857. Incised "Lm July 6, 1857" and on the opposite side "for Mr. John Monday." H: 21 3/4"; Circ.: 48 1/2". Collection of McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina. Photo, courtesy of McKissick Museum.

Fig. 12b. Detail of Fig. 12a.

Fig. 14a. Storage jar, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1860. Incised “Aug 7, 1860 Dave” and on the opposite side the verse “I saw a leopard & a lions face / then I felt, the need of grace.” H: 16 3/4”; Circ.: 54 1/4”. Collection of Bill and Ann Cox.

Fig. 14b. Detail of Fig. 14a

Fig. 15. Storage jar, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1864. Incised “Lm March 31, 1864 Dave.” H: 15”; Circ.: 39 3/4”. Collection of Lou Edens, Museum on the Commons, Mt. Pleasant, S.C.

Fig. 16. Storage jar, Dave, Lewis Miles Factory, Edgefield District, S.C., 1840. Incised “Mr. L. Miles 27th June: 1840 / Dave” and on the opposite side the verse “Give me silver or either gold / though they are dangerous; to our soul.” H: 14 1/2”; Circ.: 40 1/2”. Collection of Dr. and Mrs. James K. Smith.
Chronological List of Dave's Verses as Found on Vessels

Put every bit all between surely this jar will hold 14
12 July 1834
South Carolina State Museum, Columbia, S.C.
horses, mules and hogs—all our cows is in the bogs there they shall ever stay till the buzzards take them away =
29 March 1836
Collection of Jane and Bert Hunecke (Fig. 7)
Better thing I never saw When I shot off the Lions jaw
9 November 1836
High Museum of Art, Atlanta
Ladys & Gentlemens shoes Sell all you can & nothing you'll loose
29 January 1840
Private Collection
Give me silver or; either gold though they are dangerous; to our soul
27 July 1840
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. James K. Smith (Fig. 16)
Dave belongs to Mr. Miles where the oven bakes & the pot biles
31 July 1840
The Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C.
Another trick is worst than this Dearest Miss, spare me a kiss
26 August 1840
Collection of Bill and Ann Cox
I wonder where is all my relations Friendship to all—and every nation
16 August 1857
Collection of Larry and Joan Carlson
I made this jar for cash Though its called lucre trash
22 August 1857
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
A pretty little girl on a virge volca[n]ic mountain, how they burge
24 August 1857
McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, Columbia
Making this jar: I had all thoughts Lads & gentlemen: never out walks
30 January 1858
Private Collection
If you don't listen at the bible you will be lost
25 March 1859
Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, Madison, Ga.
I made this for our, Sott it will never—never,—rott
31 March 1858
High Museum of Art, Atlanta
This noble jar will hold 20 fill it with silver then you'll have plenty
8 April 1858
Private Collection
A very large jar which has 4 handles= pack it full of fresh meat—then light candles—
12 April 1858
Collection of Dr. John A. Burison
When you fill this jar with pork or beef Scot will be there to get a peace
A dedication is inscribed opposite:
This jar is to Mr Seglir who keeps the bar in orangeburg / for Mr Edwards a Gentle man who formly kept Mr Thos bacons horses
21 April 1858
Private Collection (Fig. 17)
The sun moon and—stars in the west are a plenty of—bears
29 July 1858
Collection of Leon and Elmaise Register
I saw a leppard & a lions face then I felt the need of—grace
3 November 1858
Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, N.C.

When Noble Dr. Landrum is dead
May Guardian angels visit his bed
14 April 1859
Private Collection

Hive is eighteen; hundred + fifty nine
unto you all I fill in—, cline
18 April 1859
Private Collection

Good for lard or holding fresh meats
blest we were, when Peter saw the folded sheets
3 May 1859
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Made at Stony bluff,—
for making [lard] enuff
13 May 1859
The Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C.

Great & noble Jar
hold sheep goat & bear
13 May 1859
The Charleston Museum, Charleston, S.C.

The forth of July—is surely come
to blow the fife = and beat the drum
4 July 1859
Atlanta History Center, Atlanta

I saw a leopard & a lions face
then I felt, the need of grace
7 August 1860
Collection of Bill and Ann Cox (Figs. 14a, b)

A noble jar, for pork or beef—
hen carry it a round to the indian chief
9 November 1860
Collection of Tom and Ann Cousins

I—made this Jar all of cross
If you don’t repent, you will be lost
3 May 1862
Jill Beute Koverman is currently the Collections Manager for Historic Charleston Foundation in Charleston, South Carolina. Koverman began her initial research on Dave the Potter while working with Dr. John A. Burrison at the Atlanta History Center and continued the project while a graduate research fellow at McKissick Museum, University of South Carolina, where she completed her master's degree in art history in 1998.

Notes

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5. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1860, Edgefield District. South Carolina Department of Archives and History.


8. Baldwin, Great and Noble Jar, pp. 17–19, who cites the theories of the American ceramics scholar Georgeanna Greer and the folklorists John A. Burrison, Charles T. Zug, and John Michael Vlach. Greer cites the works of William Cookworthy, the letters of Pere d’Entrecalles (a Jesuit missionary whose letters, published in 1717 and 1724, describe porcelain production including glaze recipes using lime and ash), and Cookworthy’s relationship to Richard Champion (who came to South Carolina from Bristol, England, in 1784 to produce porcelain) as a plausible source for the production of alkaline glaze in Edgefield. Burrison notes that one of the Landrums may have read the d’Entrecalles letters,
as Dr. Abner Landrum was a member of the elite and a highly educated and scientifically minded physician. Vlach supports this thinking with the contention that one of the Landrum family may have read the d'Entrecolles letters, also published in Jean-Baptiste du Halde's *The General History of China* (1736, English edition), which by 1777 had become a standard reference work on Chinese customs.

9. Baldwin, *Great and Noble Jar*, pp. 20–21: “The southern groundhog kiln may be an American derivative of the English Newcastle kiln, a rectangular structure ranging from eleven to thirty-five feet long and eight to twelve feet high, with an arched roof, a fireplace at the front, and a doorway and chimney at the opposite end. A flash wall, constructed two to three feet from the front, protected the ware from the flames of the firebox and provided better heat distribution.”


18. Baldwin, *Great and Noble Jar*, pp. 36–38. Drake moved to Louisiana between 1835 and 1837 and opened a general store. He later owned a large saltworks in Natchitoches Parish. The Gibbs family moved to Louisiana around the same time as Drake and settled at Gibsland.
