

A Guide to Georgia Indian Pottery Types

By

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This web site is a modified version of our publication on the same subject published in the journal *Early Georgia*, the journal of the Society for Georgia Archaeology. This was originally published in 1999 as volume 27(1) of that journal. That publication and this modified web site represent the culmination of hundreds of hours of work by us and tens of thousands of hours of work by the many people referred to herein, as well as the effort of hundreds of other unnamed people. It has been created to serve the needs of professionals and amateurs for the identification of newly found Indian pottery sherds from Georgia (and some adjacent areas). Another purpose is to put into one source information that is available, for the most part, in exceedingly rare documents and places. Indeed, many of these documents exist in fewer than a half dozen yellowing copies that have been in the hands of aging professionals since the 1960s or earlier. The authors share a genuine concern that much of this hard-won data, primarily gathered in the 1930s through 1950s, would be lost to the future of Georgia archaeology if the effort was not made now to compile this guide. The senior author has been actively involved for 40 years with this information, much of which must be considered folk knowledge. The web page will be updated as new information become available. If you see errors, or have additional updates or new type information please contact Dr. Mark Williams at jmw@uga.edu.

It is appropriate that a brief history of the development of the data presented in this web page be outlined. The classification of pottery into formal types in Georgia was a direct product of the WPA excavations in the southeastern United States during the 1930s. The massive excavations in the South produced huge quantities of sherds, and archaeologists learned that this material, if used properly, could provide the first tool available for arranging past archaeological sites and cultures into chronological sequences. This effort was led in the late 1930s by a small number of excited 20-something professionals who got the break of a lifetime leading major excavations. These people founded the still active Southeastern Archaeological Conference in 1938, primarily as a vehicle for sharing their new awareness and discoveries about pottery. The SEAC newsletters from the pre-war years were devoted to publishing their new ceramic type descriptions. And many of these were from types found in Georgia.

The major individuals involved in the original definitions of Georgia ceramic types were: Charles Fairbanks, Joseph Caldwell, Robert Wauchope, Jesse Jennings, Antonio Waring, and Arthur Kelly. In Florida the work was led by John Goggin, John Griffin, and Gordon Willey. In Tennessee Tom Lewis and Madeline Kneberg were the leaders, while in Alabama David DeJarnette, Stephen Wimberly, Bill Haag, and Marion Heimlich were busily naming types. No work was conducted in South Carolina, but Joffre Coe was busy working at the Town Creek site in North Carolina. All these initial definers of the ceramic types of the deep South are now deceased. After World War II, William Sears, Carl Miller, and David Chase joined the game in Georgia, as did Hale Smith and Ripley Bullen in Florida. These archaeologists also are now deceased.

By the 1960s several new young professionals were working in Georgia, including Lewis Larson, David Hally, and Frank Schnell. A new generation of post World War II baby boomers studied under the aforementioned scholars. These include Chester DePratter, Mark Williams, Marvin Smith, Pat Garrow, Ray Crook, Karl Steinen, and Frankie Snow. By the late 1960s most of the currently defined ceramic types had been recognized and defined, indeed, the majority of these were recognized by the late 1950s.

To our knowledge, the first (and perhaps only!) formal confab designed to study, summarize, and discuss the ceramics of Georgia since the late 1930s was conducted by Dr. Joseph Caldwell as a Graduate Seminar at the University of Georgia in the Fall quarter of 1969. The students of that class (including Williams, DePratter, Gail Schnell, Kent Schneider, Don Crusoe, Betty Smith, and a few others) put together under Caldwell's close direction and guidance a [list](#) of 254 ceramic types known or thought to have been in Georgia. Caldwell probably named or was involved in the naming of as many types as any other researcher, thus his guidance in this endeavor was critical. That list was used as the beginning point for the types presented in the present publication. It is likely that some on that list should not have been included. We have not completely dropped them, however, because Caldwell had a massive knowledge of Georgia ceramics, and put his general stamp of approval on the list. Certainly he is the person who should have created the present work, but his early death at age 57 in December of 1973 precluded this possibility.

The 1969 list was put together with much help from the 1967 *Bibliography of Pottery Type Descriptions* published by the Southeast Archaeological Conference as Bulletin 4 and edited by Bettye Broyles. This rare publication, although not complete, has proved valuable for creating the reference section for the present volume. Most of the rare publications were available in Mark Williams' collection or from colleagues in the Athens, Georgia, area. Copies of all these are being placed at the Georgia Archaeological Site File in Athens for future curation and use by 21st century archaeologists. A few of the rare documents have yet to be located, however.

We subsequently have found many more types in obscure locations. Further, we have included many types that were referred to only in unpublished notes, because many of these have become part of the folk knowledge of long-time practitioners of Georgia archaeology. Some completely obsolete types have been listed simply to be as complete as possible.

This Web Site is at best a guide, not a one-stop reference. We have not tried to include all possible information about each and every type listed here, and the reader is still referred to the original publications. Many of the publications referred to here have extensive discussions of types that may be important to readers.

We have presented the types in a simple alphabetical order, rather than a chronological one because many overlap or the dates are uncertain. The simple [Quick Key](#) should help individuals locate appropriate type names, or at least get started with the identification process. Incidentally, one of us (Williams) suggested in 1978 (Williams 1978) that Georgia ceramics could benefit from a reorganization based upon the so-called Type-Variety system. While we believe this may still be a worthy goal, Georgia archaeologists have shown no desire for such a system, and in

order to minimize controversy, and to increase the general use of this document we have not pushed that here.

There are well over 400 types presented in this web page. This is certainly a massive and perhaps irrational number of named types, perhaps more than in any other state in the U.S. Certainly no one needs to know all these. Probably 60 percent of them are of no real value at the present time. But there is another truth here. Georgia is centered on an area of the South with an incredible diversity of prehistoric ceramic styles. Located at the southern extreme of the Appalachians, it was the crossroads for many people and ideas for many centuries. This may contribute to the diversity in recognized ceramic styles.

The format of the presentation here is borrowed directly from the format used by Philip Phillips in his monumental 1970 study of the Yazoo Basin in northwestern Mississippi (Phillips 1970). It is more concise and ultimately more useful than the style used by most Georgia researchers in the 1930s-1950s. Researchers in the Carolinas have also recognized this in their recent publication (Anderson 1996).

For every type the *Background* section lists the who, what, and where of the original definition of the type. The *Sorting Criteria* section lists the major defining characteristics, not every known characteristic. The number of illustrations and photographs is not great considering the huge number of types. They do cover the range of surface treatments, however, by reference to related types in most cases. The information from the original type descriptions has usually been paraphrased, and the sections on *Chronological Range* and *Geographical Range* have been updated based upon our best current estimates.

For most of the types we have simply listed the Chronological Range by period name. Although archaeologists will forever joyfully argue about the exact dates for these periods, Table 1 provides a useful guide for these dates for the uninitiated (Williams 1994:76)

PERIOD DATE RANGES

Late Archaic 3000-1000 B.C.

Early Woodland 1000-300 B.C.

Middle Woodland 300B.C.-600 A.D.

Late Woodland 600-900 A.D.

Early Mississippian 900-1200 A.D.

Middle Mississippian 1200-1350 A.D.

Late Mississippian 1350-1600 A.D.

Table 1: Date Estimates for Periods.

The **References** section for each type is not intended to be complete, but is merely a starting point. We may well have missed some important references, as well as some types. Also included is an **Illustration References** section that lists references for illustrations out other sources. Many images associated with the pottery types included here are from the Laboratory of Archaeology's Type Collection, these images are not included in the **Illustration References** section.

For the original publication we acknowledge the editorial help and formatting advice of Dr. Steve Kowalewski, then editor of *Early Georgia*. We thank Dr. Chester DePratter for contributing some of the information included herein. We also thank Kim Lewis, Debbie Rose, Ryan Ross, and Caroline Wardlaw for quickly providing the first draft of the [Quick Key](#). Thompson scanned the black and white images and typed the first rough draft of most of the type descriptions, as well as the initial list of references. Williams dreamed up the original project, wrote this Introduction, provided guidance to the references for Thompson, edited the entire text adding many new types, and formatted the entire page. We collectively are responsible for the mistakes that are included herein. The web version was the idea of Williams. His 2005 Honors Introduction to Anthropology class at the University of Georgia did much of the leg work in initially implementing it. The bulk of the creation of the former (created in June 2005) is the work of Williams. Thompson (while distracted by writing his PhD dissertation!) has reviewed the entire web page, provided limited editing, and lent much emotional support to Williams and this page.

The information in this Guide hopefully will continue to be corrected and modified as better data become available. For now, however, we hope this summary will be useful to a wide audience, and the hard-won information it contains will not have to be recreated as the original rare documents and researchers slowly disappear and become part of Georgia's archaeological record. Finally, we also wish to make a special acknowledgment to our fathers, Woody Williams and the late Emory Thompson, who gave both of us the joy of learning and loving encouragement to follow our interests in Native American studies.

In 2011, Lloyd E. Schroder joined the pottery team. Lloyd is a an amateur archaeologist of the absolutely best sort. He has created, with the cooperation of Williams, maps of the distributions of many of the pottery types, and integrated them into the web pages. Lloyd has also sought out and taken new photographs of many pottery types that were either not or poorly illustrated up to this point. His contributions of energy and drive are equally welcome to this little project. We have also been adding a few new types to the mix. In 2013, Amanda Roberts Thompson came on board and assisted with correcting some errors on the website. After server issues, in early 2014 we decided to do a general update to the look of the website and improve search capabilities. Amanda with the help of several undergraduate workers (Adam Coker and Isabelle Cantin) took over the migration of data from the old web page to the new current one.

Credits

The initial version of this web page was developed in April of 2005 by Dr. Mark Williams' Honors Introduction to Anthropology class at the University of Georgia. The bright and hard-working students in this class included: Adele Handy, Bethany Bernard, Sudipta Chakraborty, Casey Dickey, Katie Fulmer, Todd Gaston, Brittany Junod, Amelia Kohli, Amanda Lovett, Kristen Moles, Mike Mooney, Kelli Parker, Amit Patel, Jessica Pratt, Rebecca Rowsey, Katherine Ryan, Beth Scoggan, Bryan Stillwagon, Chris Stokes, and Tim Supakorndej.

Of these students, Mike Mooney is to be singled out as the initial developer of the html code and Adele Handy is acknowledged for overall management of the project of the tedious task of converting the pottery type data from the book into the current web-based medium.

Mark Williams took the students work and, with the help of Victor Thompson, edited the page into its current form during May and June. It was first put online in July of 2005.

In the spring of 2006, Joey Piergrossi and Chris Daniel added more photographs and implemented the use of popups for all images. Williams cleaned up the code and modified some of the images in the summer of 2006.

In the spring of 2009 Williams' Material Culture class, with his help and that of the computer guru of the Anthropology Department Curtis Combes, converted the web page to a Joomla page for easier maintenance. Several types missed in earlier versions were added, and several internal mistakes were corrected. The students included Shannon Curry, Kyle Dondero, Pam Enlo, J.J. Gunnells, Justin Holcombe, Hollie Pennington, Alisabeth Pritchett, Kyle Renz, Ben Shirley, and Dara Vaughn.

Lloyd E. Schroder began helping with the site in 2011 and with the assistance of Williams created maps of the distributions of many of the pottery types and helped to integrate them into the website. Further, Lloyd also added additional photographs of pottery types that were not well illustrated.

In 2013, Amanda D. Roberts Thompson, Laboratory Manager, corrected some errors on the website and began the process of creating a new website for the pottery page. This began in 2014, when Roberts Thompson and several undergraduates assisted in migrating information into the new pottery website. Adam Coker and Isabelle Cantin were incredibly helpful in this process.

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