

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 7
Issue 1 January 2000

Article 4

1-1-2000

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Recommended Citation

(2000) "On-Going Research Report: Potter-Specific Variability in Nineteenth-Century South Carolina Colonoware," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol7/iss1/4>

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On-Going Research Report: Potter-Specific Variability in Nineteenth-Century South Carolina Colonoware

Chris Espenshade of Skelly and Loy, Inc., reports that he is continuing his research on late colonoware of the South Carolina coastal zone. He is currently examining potter-level variability in the colonoware from three contemporaneous slave settlements in Beaufort County. The three sites, the Colleton River slave street, the Bonny Shore slave row, and the Pinckney Landing slave row, provided a unique research opportunity (Espenshade 1998; Pietak *et al.* 1998; Eubanks *et al.* 1994; Kennedy *et al.* 1994). The sites are found within three miles of each other, and two were part of the same plantation system. All date from the nineteenth century and yielded large amounts of slave-made colonoware pottery.

Chris is examining intra- and intersite variability in vessel form, construction details, approaches to vessel finishing, fir-ing, and decoration. So far, the work of three to five potters is inferred, and there is no evidence for the exchange of vessels between slave communities. The research will ultimately provide insight into the Calabash estate (or hidden economy) and the nature of the colonoware tradition. Chris plans to present his preliminary results at the SHA 2001 meetings.

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