



# Turners and Burners: The Folk Potters of North Carolina (Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies)

*Charles G. Zug*

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This richly illustrated portrait of North Carolina's pottery traditions tells the story of the generations of "turners and burners" whose creations are much admired for their strength and beauty. Perhaps no other state possesses such an active and extensive ceramic heritage, and one that is entirely continuous. This book is an attempt to understand both the past and the present, the now largely vanished world of the folk potter and the continuing achievements of his descendants. It is a tribute that is long overdue.

From the middle of the eighteenth century through the second quarter of the twentieth century, folk potters in North Carolina produced thousands of pieces of earthenware and stoneware -- sturdy, simple, indispensable forms like jars and jugs, milk crocks and butter churns, pitchers and dishes, ring jugs and flowerpots. Their wares were familiar and everyday, not innovative or unusual, because they were shaped through generations of use for specific functions. The utilitarian forms were so commonplace and embedded in daily life that few individuals documented the craft. *Turners and Burners* is the first book to chronicle these pottery traditions, with close attention to distinct regional and temporal patterns and the major families involved. It explores in detail the traditional technologies used, from the foot-powered treadle wheel to the wood-fired groundhog kiln.

Terry Zug became interested in North Carolina pottery in 1969 shortly after moving to Chapel Hill. In 1974 he began documenting the craft and traveled throughout the state recording the reminiscences of potters, former potters, and members of potters' families who recalled the old craft in remarkable detail. He systematically photographed and cataloged old pots, located early shop sites, and carefully recorded the remaining waster dumps of broken shards and decaying equipment. His primary source, however, was the potters themselves. Their tape-recorded interviews provide an insider's view of their world and reveal the powerful underlying logic and autonomy of their craft.

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