



Kurt C. Russ is a former director of Washington and Lee University's Laboratory of Anthropology and an independent scholar from Lexington, VA who has more than 25 years of experience in archeology, material culture/decorative arts research and historic preservation. He is a board member and Vice Director of the Southern Shenandoah Valley Branch of Preservation Virginia and principal with the Virginia Heritage Resources Group.

In recognition of 2011 Preservation Month in Virginia, Russ was invited to deliver two lectures, one on the pottery manufacturing industry in Botetourt County on May 14, 2011 in Buchanan, and the other on the Rockbridge County industry in Lexington on May 15, 2011. The events entitled "*All Fired-Up*" (in Botetourt and Rockbridge, respectively): *19th Century Bricks and Pots* included presentations on early brickmaking by Mike Pulice of the Department of Historic Resources, and were free public educational events organized by the Botetourt County Historical Society and Historic Fincastle and by Historic Lexington Foundation and the Southern Shenandoah Valley Branch of Preservation Virginia. As part of the program, the presenters provided expert identification and evaluation of pottery and bricks furnished by event participants.

On June 18, 2011, Kurt was one of five expert speakers for the first annual Jeffrey S. Evans & Associates Virginia Decorative Arts Seminar, a highly successful one-day colloquium held at the JSE & Associates gallery. The topic, *Stoneware of the Old Dominion: Important New Research and Discoveries*, provided Russ the perfect opportunity to once again share his extensive knowledge on the subject of Rockbridge and Botetourt County, Virginia stoneware.

While most of Kurt's past ceramic-related research and publications has focused on the Shenandoah Valley, he more recently became fascinated with the Richmond area potter, John Poole Schermerhorn and associates and, as an outgrowth of that work, he and Rob Hunter recently completed an overview of the James River Basin Potters and the remarkable assemblage of stoneware they produced.

Kurt is currently partnered with Jeff Evans on *The Virginia Safe Project*, a 2010-2013 research study committed to photographing and documenting Virginia punched-tin paneled furniture in the Shenandoah Valley. Primarily focused on the common nineteenth-century pie or food safe, the study will culminate in a 2013 museum exhibit and accompanying publication. Kurt Russ brings to the project not only his many years of collecting and study of Virginia safes, but a keen eye, unflinching interest and expertise in nineteenth-century material culture.