



## “Little Wash” and His Big Crock

By James L. Murphy

**T**he faint cobalt stenciling is a little difficult to read but after more than 100 years still remains decipherable as “G. W. Brown/Roseville, O./20.” As such, it is possibly the only known marked example of stoneware produced by stoneware potter **George Washington Brown**.

Twenty gallon stoneware crocks were not unheard of during this period, though throwing them on a potter’s wheel required considerable skill, and even larger, 30 and 50 gallon crocks still occasionally surface at farm sales and antique auctions.

**G. W. Brown** was **George Washington Brown**, one of three men of that name who lived in the Roseville area. Brown family genealogist **Carole Williams** (Williams 2004; pers. comm. August 11, 2008) has nicely sorted them out:

1. **George Washington Brown** (1824-1900), son of **Joseph Brown**, married **Lucy Pemberton** and was “an energetic, astute businessman and investor... his business ventures included a lumber mill and brick kiln.” According to his obituary, “When the manufacture of stoneware in this territory assumed proportions and the railroad facilities allowed, he was among the first dealers in that article and placed millions of gallons of the product on the market, at a handsome profit... He built the **Brown Block** and the **Bank Building**, his handsome residence on Main street, the row of dwellings at the south end of Main street, the large warehouse building in the vicinity and was the moving spirit in the construction of several other residence properties in the town.” Note that he was a *dealer* in stoneware.

2. **George Washington Brown** (1842-1912) son of **William Brown** and nephew of the above **G. W. Brown**. This **G. W. Brown** married **Caroline Pemberton**, the elder sister of **Lucy Pemberton Brown**. No doubt partly because “Lucy’s husband” and “Caroline’s husband” would probably not do in those days, **Lucy Pemberton’s** husband was known as “*Big Wash*” and **Caroline Pemberton Brown’s** as “*Little Wash*.” It was “*Little Wash*” who was the potter.



The faint blue stenciled crock reads “G. W. Brown/Roseville, O./20.” It is possibly the only known marked example of stoneware produced by stoneware potter **George Washington Brown**. [Photo courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

3. **George Washington Brown** (1861-1916) nephew of No. 1 **G. W. Brown**, was the son of **James E. Brown** and brother of **Sarah “Sadie” McCoy**. With his father, this **G. W. Brown** operated a general store on the northwest corner of First and Main Streets in Roseville (Murphy and Williams, 2008).

The earliest reference we have to the **G. W. Brown** pottery is the 1866 atlas of Muskingum County, which locates it on

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the east side of the road (County Road 87) in the SE ¼ SE 14/ section 10, Clay Township. Local histories indicate that the pottery was “remodeled” in 1878. The 1880 population census lists the 38 year old potter and wife Caroline, while the 1880 manufacturing schedule indicates he had four hired hands, producing \$2,600 worth of stoneware annually. The pottery was still in operation in 1897, producing cooking ware, with eight males and two females employed. The 1900 census lists him as a “farmer,” though this does not mean the pottery was no longer active. It is included in the 1918 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps but was no longer in operation by that time.

Because “Big Wash” operated a “stoneware depot” in Roseville and much of the ware he shipped was undoubtedly derived from his nephew, it might be questionable whether the stenciled label referred to the manufacturer or the dealer; in either case, it seems clear that this “big crock” was made at the stoneware pottery of “Little Wash.”

An article in the “*Zanesville Times Signal*” of October 4, 1940, mentions the pottery of **Washington Brown** and the 1878 date for rebuilding, as well as the fact that his grandson, **Robert Brown**, was then (1940) operating the **Mohawk Novelty Pottery** in Roseville. **Robert Brown** (1895-1965) was the son of **Orvil Odell Brown** (1873-1951), who produced and sold an eight-piece set beautiful light-blue-glazed cooking ware (Murphy, 2005).

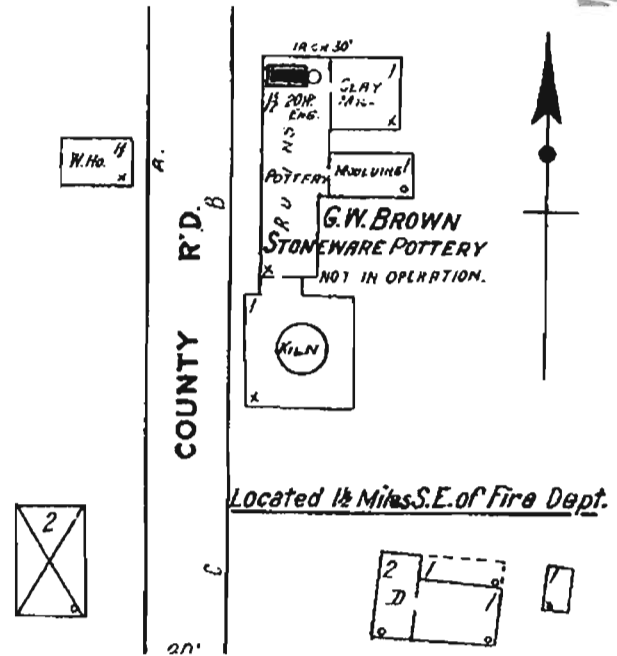
Until about twenty years ago, the site of “Little Wash’s” pottery dump or waster pile remained undisturbed and was an important archaeological site. Unfortunately, it was on the edge of an Ohio Dept. of Reclamation reclamation project and despite warnings of the archaeological consultant (Murphy 1992), was completely destroyed by an ODNR “subcontractor.”

### Acknowledgements

Caroline J. (Mrs. Robert) Williams has been of inestimable help in providing genealogical and historical information for this article.

### References

- Murphy, James L.  
1992 “Phase I and Phase II Archaeological Survey of Two Proposed Burrow Areas, Clay Township, Muskingum County, Ohio: Toth II Reclamation Project (MK-CL-02).” Submitted to the Division of Reclamation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources.
- 2005 “Only Made and Sold By O. O. Brown.” *Roseville Legend*, Fall, 2005, p. 1, 5.



The 1866 atlas of Muskingum County identifies the location of the G.W. Brown Stoneware Pottery on the east side of the road (County Road 87) in the SE ¼ SE 14/ section 10, Clay Township. The 1918 Sanborn Fire map indicates that the pottery is not in operation. [Map provided courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

Murphy, James L., and Carole J. Williams  
2008 “The Real (Brown &) McCoy.” *Roseville Legend*, Fall, 2008, p. 1, 4.

Williams, Carole  
2004 “The Brown Brothers,” *Roseville Legend*, Fall, 2004, p. 1, 3-5.