Welcome to Treasures from the FCS Archives, a repository of resources for teachers and history enthusiasts!

Every month, we are sharing photos, artifacts, documents and other treasures for you to review, discuss and discover. We encourage you to click the links, scan the photos and dig deeper into these treasures, all of which can be found in the Fulton County Schools Archives. Enjoy!

Cherokee Pottery: Yesterday and Today

Are the Cherokees still around today? Yes; however, as educators we tend to focus on the lives of the Cherokees before European contact and then finish the unit with the loss of life, land, and possessions during the Trail of Tears. This approach leaves students without a clear understanding of the ways Cherokee culture continues to evolve as tribal members respond to and shape the world around them.

Just like other American citizens, members of today’s Cherokee tribes have diverse interests and occupations. Some members of the Cherokee tribes are working to preserve traditional artforms like basketmaking, wood carving, and pottery.

In this edition of Curiosity Corner, we are going to examine the evolution of Cherokee pottery by featuring two clay pots located at the Teaching Museum South, which also houses other examples of traditional and contemporary Cherokee crafts and tools. This modern pottery provides us insights into how Cherokee artists, like Mary Thompson, honor the traditions of their ancestors while adding their own unique take on this artform.

The Cherokee trace the start of their pottery tradition to the Didanisisgi, which is a Cherokee word for a type of wasp that builds its nest from mud. Over the centuries their pottery has taken on many different styles and techniques as artists learn from each other. This piece of pottery provides a window unto the Cherokee culture, its history and its continuing evolution in contemporary times.

Click here for a timeline of important events in Cherokee History. Additional information can be found at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.