



a natural state

Artist: Billie Anne McKellar

Video 1: Spotlight (The Interview), Part A: Background

Billie Anne McKellar: The pottery is the only tradition that has survived. For hundreds and hundreds of years in our tribe, we've lost so many things, like the language, and our myths and legends. The pottery is what kept the tribe going, and it's so important to me that that tradition is carried on today because that was the livelihood of my grandparents, and my mother and father when they were beginning to start out as a young couple, because my father could not go into town and get a job. He could only get a job working in the fields, and my mother also, to pick cotton and things like that and work on farms, and they would make pottery to supplement that money for their family.

Catawba Elder: My mother made pottery, my grandmother made pottery, and my mother made pottery every summer, and we'd always have to rub, and she'd always take pottery to Cherokee and sell it, and she would take it to the Winthrop College and sell it when it was an all-girl's college in the winter time, to sell it to make money for Christmas.

She would take dozens and boxfuls, and most times, she would sell them like they were selling for like a dollar a dozen. And she'd make a trip all the way to Cherokee to sell the pottery. We would work all summer long so she could make a trip up there before the Fall.

Billie Anne McKellar: We didn't have stores or anywhere to sell our pottery, so we went to Cherokee, where there's a big tourist attraction, and I remember going with my grandparents to Cherokee. They would wrap their pottery in newspaper and put it in a box- a cardboard box, and take it to Cherokee to sell. That would be a weekend for us. We'd go one day- on Saturday, usually, and come back that same day. And the pieces only sold for like twenty-five cents. For a piece of pottery like this, twenty-five cents. That would be about all that they would get for the pottery. And today, I would probably get forty-five for it.

It's just so important that future generation know about this pottery, and have a feel for it, and a love for it as I do, and my grandparents did, and my mother. She was very- she worked in the pottery after she retired. That's when my interest was peaked more, and to share it with others, and to do demonstrations at schools and festivals, just like my grandmothers did, and my mother, because we want to expose it to everyone. We don't want to just keep it in the tribe, we want to share it with others, and working at the cultural center, we're able to do that. *End.*