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# Earthenwares and Salt-glazed Stonewares of the Rochester-Genesee-Valley Region: An Overview

George R. Hamell

## EARTHENWARE

Among the earliest arrivals to the Genesee Country of western New York during the late 18th and early 19th centuries were craftsmen who were to supply many of the domestic needs of the growing agricultural and milling communities of the region (Turner 1849; 1851). Among these men were brown earthenware or (redware) potters who fashioned simple lead-glazed earthenware vessels from local clay for the homemaker's table, pantry, and dairy. For the purpose of this study, the Genesee country region (Figure 1) is defined as Rochester-Monroe County and the area of six surrounding counties (Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Wyoming, Genesee, and Orleans).

Until the second quarter of the 19th century, it is believed that most of the growing urban and larger rural communities of the region supported the part-time or full-time activity of a resident potter or potters. The primary products of the local brown earthenware potter (and after 1823 of the local salt-glazed stoneware potter) were heavy-duty utilitarian wares used for the storage, preparation, and serving of foodstuffs and beverages.

The embargo period prior to the War of 1812 and the war itself seem to have stimulated the growth and establishment of several earthenware potteries in the Genesee region. On February 11, 1812, the property auction announcement of John Pound of Farmington, Ontario County included mention of "... a quantity of homemade earthenware; ..." (*Ontario Repository, and Western Advertiser* 1812 a: 3). About three months later, the West Bloomfield Village, Ontario County, potter Wheeler Griffin (Barber and Hamell 1974: 16), was offering a 6¢ reward for the return of an indentured apprentice by the name of William Dunlap, aged 16 (*Ontario Repository, and Western Advertiser* 1812: 3). The firm of Cochrane & Tracy of Buffalo about 80 miles to the west advertised their need for "... a Journeyman POTTER - One who understands his business and can come well recommended, ..." in another Canandaigua newspaper on July 18, 1815 (*Ontario Messenger* 1815: 3).

Bulky utilitarian, lead-glazed earthenwares and salt-glazed stonewares had also been imported into this region during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Archeological evidence documents the use of simple lead-glazed earthenwares, delftware, and salt-glazed

stonewares by the Seneca Iroquois of this region as early as about 1650-70. By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, some of these wares were undoubtedly the products of eastern New York, New England, and New Jersey potteries. On December 24, 1821, the Rochester merchant, William Pitkin, was offering a "... large assortment of Jersey Stone Ware, consisting of JUGS, POTS, JARS, PITCHERS and FLASKS, of various sizes, ..." (*Rochester Telegraph* 1821: 3). On October 19, 1824, a year after the opening of the Erie Canal to Rochester, Pitkin was offering "70 doz. JUGS, POTS, &c. of EASTERN Stone Ware, just received, and for sale by the dozen, lower than they can be obtained from Albany or Troy" (*Rochester Telegraph* 1824: 3).

In 1974, the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC) organized a temporary exhibit entitled "Clay in the Hands of the Potter: An Exhibition of Pottery Manufactured in the Rochester and Genesee Valley Region, ca. 1793-1900" and published a catalogue of the same title (Barber and Hamell 1974). Both the exhibit and catalogue presented the results of recent research into this manufacture, as well as updated, elaborated upon, and in some instances, clarified previously published sources (Barber and Hamell 1970; Chase 1971, 1972; Ketchum 1970; McVean 1972). To these previously published sources, the following new information and observations may be added.

William Berczy's journal entry of January 1793, mentioning the potter he accidentally came upon, is the earliest known reference to a potter working in the Genesee region. Berczy, a German, was the agent in charge of the settlement of 70 German immigrant families in the Genesee Valley in 1792 (Richardson and Cowan 1942: 153-233). The settlement was named "Williamsburg" after Charles Williamson who acted as the American agent for the Pulteney Association, a group of English investors, who owned the land and who were promoting its settlement. Williamsburg was carefully laid out on the east side of the old confluence of the Genesee River and Canaseraga Creek about three miles south of the present village of Geneseo, New York (Cowan 1942).

Berczy kept a journal of his activities at Williamsburg, most of which were directed to securing provisions, tools, and utensils to enable the Germans to set up housekeeping.

of the (Canandaigua) lake, and rendered good service in furnishing crocks, plates, platters and such wares for the old-time housekeepers. The parties engaged in operating this pottery were known as the firm of Wagstaff and Rifford . . . upon the island formed by lake, canal and outlet lived a German named Rifford, one of the firm engaged in the manufacture of earthenware. The business was continued a number of years. He had three log structures; one for the preparation of the clay, which was ground by horsepower; one for his ovens, to bake the ware; and the third as a dwelling (McIntosh 1876: 114-15).

Four earthenware kiln subfloors have been excavated by the RMSC: one on the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site, West Bloomfield Township, Ontario County, ca. 1801-32; one on the Elias Seymour Pottery site, East Avon Township, Livingston County, ca. 1830; and two on the Morganville Pottery site, Stafford Township, Genesee County, ca. 1845-1900 (Barber and Hamell 1974: 8-10, 26-27, 31). All were simple updraft kilns of the beehive or bottle-shape, ranging in basal diameter from about 10-15 feet. They were apparently constructed of local red earthenware brick upon an essentially circular subfloor of stone (cobble, small boulders) packed with clay. The kilns at both the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site and the Morganville Pottery site had two fireboxes each, placed opposite to each other. A central flue connected both fireboxes, and additional flues from each firebox paralleled, or nearly so, the sides of the kiln.

With the possible exception of the Elias Seymour Pottery site, there is no archaeological evidence that earthenwares produced in this region were fired twice, that is, both a bisque and a glaze firing: a single firing was apparently the rule. Also, no saggers have been positively identified, although a variety of kiln furniture is present on all the sites: stacking tiles, cockspurs, and pinched or cut wedges. (Barber and Hamell 1970: 35; 1974: 15).

The 1862 probate inventory of Alvin Wilcox's estate offers the most complete contemporary description of some of the equipment used in a local earthenware pottery, as well as its relative values and that of some of the wares produced. This inventory included: 1 peddler's wagon, \$20.00; 1 lot of shop boards (drying boards), \$5.00; 1 lot of refuse earthenware (seconds), \$5.00; 1 lot of unburned ware, \$5.00; 1 tile machine with fixtures, \$8.00; 1 lot of round 10-inch tile, \$2.00; 20 sets of candle molds (clay tubes, their interiors glazed, set into a wooden frame), \$10.00; 1 lot of candle molds (individual clay tubes), \$2.00; 1 peddler's box, \$1.50; 1 clay mill (pug mill), \$10.00; 1 tile press, \$2.00; 1 glazing mill, \$1.00; 2 clay turning lathes

(potter's wheels), \$4.00; 2 kilns for burning tile and earthenware, \$40.00; and 1 drying frame, \$3.00. This is the only such inventory of a local pottery that has been located (Ontario County Probate Records).



Figure 2. Lead-glazed earthenware plate. Drapemolded with coggled rim. Glazed on interior surface only. Marbleized or joggled yellow (white) slip decorations under the glaze. Excavated on the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site, West Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York, ca. 1801-32. Diameter: 7½". Unless noted otherwise, all photographs are courtesy of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. William G. Frank, photographer.

It has been suggested that Charles Gleason took over the pottery operation in Morganville, Genesee County, in 1845, when he purchased the lot, on which the pottery was later known to have been located, from his uncle, Wilson Gleason, then a resident of Westmoreland, New Hampshire (McVean 1972). Wilson Gleason had acquired the lot in 1837 from Fortunatus Gleason Jr., his brother and the father of Charles Gleason. That Charles Gleason had begun the manufacture of earthenware by 1846 is now confirmed. In a mortgage agreement dated September 23, 1846, Charles Gleason agreed to pay to Charles Lathrop, also of Morganville, \$750.00 in installments

" . . . in good first rate Brown earthenware at the wholesale cash price delivered at the shop of the said Gleason . . . as soon as it can be made and the remainder in monthly proportions . . . to be paid in saleable assortments the said Lathrop may order any kind of ware he may want that could be reasonable and usually made . . . . It is understood that the wholesale price is thirty five cents on a dollar below the retail price . . . ."

It had been thought that Charles Gleason's father, Fortunatus Gleason, Jr., had established the pottery at Morganville in 1828-29. Fortunatus Jr., like his brother, Lyman, had



Figure 1. Major pottery making communities in the Rochester-Monroe county area of New York. Earthenware: 1. West Bloomfield Village and Township, ca. 1793-1865; 2. Morganville Village, ca. 1829-1900. Stoneware: 3. Lyons Village, ca. 1825-1904; 4. Mount Morris Village, ca. 1835-1846. Earthenware and Stoneware: 5. Rochester Village and City, ca. 1823-1910.

Strangers in a strange land and often without the provisions and credit promised them, they faced many frustrations. Among the Germans at Williamsburg was a potter, but it is doubtful whether he had either the time or the necessary equipment to have set up shop there. On August 6, 1793, the Germans prepared an "Address of the German Colonists in the Genesee to their Superintendent William Berczy" in which they listed their many grievances, one of which detailed their lack of tools and materials. Among the idle "mechaniks" at Williamsburg were "... three joiners & four Carpenters which have not half their Implements, and a Potter, a Brower and a Tanner entirely deprived of any Implements" (Richardson and Cowan 1942: 242-43).

The two potters mentioned by Berczy in 1793 are the earliest known in the Genesee region. The one from whom Berczy bought "... the most necessary Earthenware ..." is believed to have been located somewhere in old Bloomfield Township to the northeast of Williamsburg (Hamell 1973a).

Other early potters or potteries have been documented in the following localities: Shortsville Village, ca. 1819 (McIntosh 1876: 179); Frederick Rifford (and Wagstaff, and Abijah Merrill) in Canandaigua Village, ca. 1799-1829 (Hamell 1973b; McIntosh 1876: 114-15); Nathaniel Rochester in West Bloomfield Township, ca. 1801-32 (Barber and Hamell 1974: 7-15; Hamell 1973c); Charles S. and Heber C. Kimball in West Bloomfield Village, ca. 1815-18 (Hamell 1973d); Wheeler Griffin in West Bloomfield Village, ca. 1809-25 (Barber and Hamell 1974: 16); and Daniel and Marvin Gates in North Bloomfield Village, ca. 1800 (Hamell 1973e; Yates 1922).

Few descriptions of these potters or potteries exist in the contemporary records and only two of the preceding pottery sites have been located. The earliest and most detailed description of one of these potteries is that of Frederick Rifford's pottery in Canandaigua. According to William H. McIntosh, the

... pottery was located at the foot

moved to Morganville from the family home in Westmoreland, New Hampshire. There is circumstantial evidence that there was a pottery in operation in Morganville at least by 1835. However, Charles cannot be identified in the documents as a potter before 1846, nor can his father, Fortunatus Jr., before 1850. Recent information, however, provides circumstantial evidence for Lyman Gleason's possible involvement in the Morganville Pottery prior to 1846.

Lyman and his wife, Priscilla, had moved to Morganville in 1827, and remained residents of the community through the 1830's but by August 1840 they had become residents of Leroy, Genesee County. His occupation is unknown, although there is some suggestion in the deed records of his involvement in milling. However, by the late 1840's, Lyman and his wife had moved to Paris, Brant County, Ontario, Canada, where he established a pottery, employing five persons. According to the 1851 census, the pottery was "... new to this place, ..." and the census taker went on to note "what the cause (is) I do not know, but the ware has not the finish on it that imported goods have" (Newlands 1976: 48). Collectors familiar with the rich opaque glazes of the Morganville earthenwares will recognize that the census taker was probably referring to similar glazing on Gleason's Canadian wares; Gleason's Paris, Ontario pottery closed in 1857.

Sufficient research into local earthenware sites and potters permits several generalizations about local earthenware to be made, relating to form and decoration, in relation to the potters who made them. A few will be mentioned here. Early earthenware jugs of this region, for instance those excavated on the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site, had their handles attached from the neck from which they arc upwards and then downwards to attach at the shoulder. Rather than having a necessarily chronological significance, this form of handle attachment may be in the British country pottery tradition (Brears 1971: 62, 70) as transferred to this region by British potters, or potters of British or New England descent (Watkins 1950: 235-36). A similar method of handle attachment has been noted elsewhere in North America where immigrant British potters set up shop (Burrison 1973: 221-26; 1975: 396; Ferrell 1976; Webster 1971: 87-105).

By the mid-19th century, local earthenware jugs were usually equipped with handles attached in a manner identical to contemporary local salt-glazed stoneware jugs: perpendicular to the lip or neck and then down to the shoulder. This latter form of handle attachment probably represents a "Germanic tradition" and reflects the heavy German immigration into western New York in the 1840's and following decades. Much of this immigration was into urban communities like Rochester and Buffalo, but Germans also moved out into the rural areas. Among these immigrants were undoubtedly

potters. Both forms of handle attachment were noted among the wasters (dating ca. 1850-54) excavated by the Rochester Museum and Science Center in 1970 at the Alvin Wilcox Pottery site (Barber and Hamell 1970: 28). Wilcox employed both Germans and Englishmen during this period. However, all of the known extant examples of earthenware jugs from the pottery and almost all known extant examples from other potteries in the region have their handles attached in the "Germanic tradition" (Barber and Hamell 1974: 20; Smith 1974: Figure 60). The influence of contemporary and locally produced salt-glazed stonewares is similarly seen in the forms of local earthenware pots (crockers) and jars and the frequent use of ear handles on them from about 1825 and later (Barber and Hamell 1974; Smith 1974: Figures 63 and 66).

Slip-decorated earthenwares were produced in this region from ca. 1793-1850. With several exceptions dating to the period ca. 1825-50 which will be discussed later, the slip decorations are either geometrical or abstract and were applied directly over the clay body of the ware (Barber and Hamell 1974: 12-14; Smith 1974: Figures 28 and 51). Trailed-slip decoration upon wheel-thrown pans and deep dishes, upon a few hollow wares and upon drape-molded, coggle-rimmed plates were found at both the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site and the Wheeler Griffin-Alvin Wilcox Pottery site in West Bloomfield, ca. 1801-30. There is limited archeological evidence that similar wares were produced at other earthenware potteries in the Genesee region during this same period. Usually this trailed-slip decoration was done in white slip only (appearing yellow through the glaze). However, several sherds pertaining to wheel-thrown pans and deep dishes and to a few hollow wares have been decorated in both white and dark brown-black, or white and green-trailed slip.

Numerous fragments of drape-molded, coggle-rimmed plates (Figure 2) were also found at the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site which had been decorated in marbled or joggled white slip (Barber and Hamell 1974: 12; Smith 1974: Figure 28). These plates are similar in both form and technique of decoration to 18th century wares produced in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, England, and France. A few of the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery examples had the marbled white slip dusted with specks of copper green.

Fragments of two plain rim, drape-molded plates and a bulbous pot or jar and a cover from such a pot or jar were found at the Nathaniel Rochester Pottery site. The plates were decorated on their interiors, and the pot or jar and cover were decorated on their exteriors with white slip, manganese black and copper green dripped/splashed onto the clay body of the wares or into their glaze. A similarly decorated fragment of one of these plates has also been found at the Griffin-Wilcox Pottery site. Several extant hollow-

wares, usually bulbous-bodied and probably dating to the period ca. 1820-40 (Figure 3), have turned up in the region with similar, multi-colored dripped or splashed slip and glaze decorations (Smith 1974: Figure 51). A pair of porringers, probably from western New York and dating to the same period, are also known with marbled slip and glaze decorations over an underlying engobe (Smith 1974: Figure 22).



Figure 3. Lead-glazed earthenware jar. Wheel-thrown with a clear lead glaze on exterior and a dark mottled brown glaze on the interior. Dripped yellow (white) slip with manganese black and copper green decorations under and in the exterior glaze respectively. Attributed to western New York State, ca. 1820-40; possibly one of the potteries in West Bloomfield Township, Ontario County. Height 9". Collection of Ralph and Madolyn Strong, Pittsford, New York.

Only a few exceptions are known to the usual geometrically or abstractly slip-decorated wares just described. A common trailed-slip decorative motif used in this region and elsewhere consisted of a pair of parallel lines with an undulating (sine curve) line between them (Barber and Hamell 1974: 14). This decoration was usually done only in white slip. However, examples in white and brown-black slip are also known. A recently discovered small, eared churn, ca. 1825-30, is similarly decorated on the upper part of its exterior (Figure 4). The churn also bears the following inscription in trailed white slip, "C Belote Bloomfield Ontario County". According to federal census records for the town of Bloomfield, the Jonathan Belote family were residents of what later became the village of West Bloomfield during the period ca. 1810-30; among them was a Christopher Belote, born in 1808 (Ter-

williger 1978). The churn is tentatively attributed to the Wheeler Griffin-Alvin Wilcox Pottery, ca. 1809-62 in the same village.

Earthenwares produced in the Genesee region through the first quarter of the 19th century usually employed a clear lead glaze which intensified the salmon red color of the clay beneath. Although a clear lead glaze continued to be used through the end of the century, there was a tendency by the 1830's for local earthenware potters to introduce opacifiers and coloring agents into their glazes. This was undoubtedly done to make their wares more attractive and to thereby increase their competitiveness with local stonewares, much of the latter bearing increasingly more elaborate cobalt blue decorations from the 1840's through the 1870's.



Figure 4. Lead-glazed earthenware churn. Wheel-thrown with a clear lead glaze on the exterior and interior. Trailed yellow (white) slip decorations and inscription at the shoulder area. Inscribed "C Belote Bloomfield Ontario County." Attributed to the Wheeler Griffin-Alvin Wilcox Pottery, West Bloomfield Village, Ontario County, ca. 1825-30. Height 13½". Collection of Bryce and Audree Chase, East Bloomfield, New York.

An unusually decorated earthenware jar prob-

ably from central or western New York, ca. 1830, displays this tendency (Figure 5). Bulbous in form, the jar is covered with an opaque brick red glaze through which a well-executed decoration of a bird on a leaf has been incised (Hamell 1977: 118). The bird and the leaf were then colored in with either cobalt blue or manganese black. In the 1850's and 1860's, Lorenzo Johnson of Newstead, Erie County, was producing earthenware jugs, pots, jars, and churns having typical stoneware forms. Some of Johnson's wares imitated contemporary salt-glazed stoneware even more directly in their decorations. Johnson commonly used an opaque grey-green, or mottled gray-green and tan glaze on the exteriors and a brown-black glaze (in imitation of Albany slip) on the interior of some of his wares. Upon the exteriors of such wares, blue slip floral decorations were skillfully brushed (Barber and Hamell 1974: 34-36), relating these wares in technique and appearance of their decorations to delft and faience wares (Figure 6). Johnson also produced at least one vessel (a jar) with a brushed floral decoration in manganese (Hamell 1977: 12B).

There are some broad similarities in forms, glazes, and decorations among the earthenwares produced in central and western New York. These similarities can best be explained by the movements of potters (sometimes as the result of marriage) from one locality to another during their careers. The movements, sometimes more



Figure 5. Lead-glazed earthenware jar. Wheel-thrown with a brick red opaque glaze on the exterior and a mottled greybuff opaque glaze on the interior. Manganese black, or cobalt blue filled incised bird decoration on the exterior. Attributed to central or western New York State, ca. 1830. Height: 10". Private Collection.

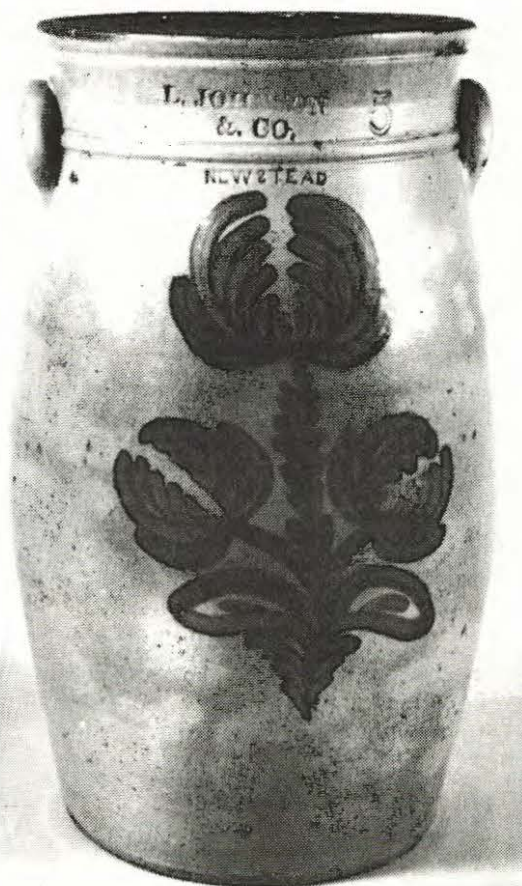


Figure 6. Lead-glazed earthenware churn. Wheel-thrown with a mottled tan and grey-green opaque glaze on the exterior, and a dark brown glaze on the interior. Brushed, blue slip floral decoration on the exterior. Impressed "L. Johnson & Co./Newstead"; Erie County, New York, ca 1850-60. Height: 17". Collection of Frank and Carol Scheuttie, Buffalo, New York.

than once, of the following potters: James Banford, Lewis Griffin, James Johnson, Charles and Heber C. Kimball, Elonzo D. Lewis and George Prosser, link earthenware potteries in the following communities: Rome and Utica, Oneida County; West Bloomfield, Ontario County; Bushnell's Basin and Mendon, Monroe County; Avon, Livingston County; Morganville, Genesee County; and Newstead, Erie County (Barber and Hamell 1970: 1974; Hamell 1971; 1973a-e). West Bloomfield was the home of six of the seven previously listed potters at some point in their careers.

Marked earthenware from the Genesee region is not uncommon; most of the marked examples date to the period, ca. 1840-60. Numerous examples are known which bear the impressed marks "A WILCOX", "A. WILCOX/West Bloomfield" ca. 1825-54, or "A.WILCOX/& HURLBUT/West Bloomfield" ca. 1854-62; or "C. GLEASON" or "C. GLEASON/MORGANVILL" ca. 1845-54, or "MORGANVILL" (Figure 7) ca. 1845-1900 (Barber and Hamell 1970; 1974). Other less



Figure 7. Lead-glazed earthenware pot; wheel-thrown with "furred" mottled red-brown and tan glaze with small metallic (lead) spots throughout the exterior and interior. Incised undulating and horizontal bands around the pot near the top. Impressed below each ear handle and twice on the rim, "MORGANVILL"; Genesee County, New York; ca. 1860-69. Tentatively attributed to George Prosser, former West Bloomfield, Ontario County potter (Barber and Hamell 1971: 18, 21-2; Barber and Hamell 1974: 23,29). Height: 5 3/4". Private collection.

common impressed marks can be associated with each pottery. The impressed mark of "Ed (win) Prosser", the brother of George, has been found on wares ca. 1850, which also bear the impressed "A. WILCOX" mark (Figure 8). Bottles bearing the impressed name, "S. DUSTIN", a Batavia druggist, were also produced at the Morganville Pottery, sometime between 1882 (?) and 1900.

Marked earthenware from other identified potteries in the region is much less common. These impressed wares include: "E D LEWIS" / BUSHNELLS BASIN", Monroe County, ca. 1848-54; "L. JOHNSON", "L. JOHNSON/NEWSTEAD", or "L. JOHNSON/& CO/NEWSTEAD", Erie County, ca. 1850-60; and "C.CORNELL/AURORA" (East Aurora), Erie County, ca. 1837. Three examples of earthenware are marked only with their presumed place of manufacture: a large storage pot, ca. 1840 with "Lima" (Livingston County) written twice in dark glaze on the interior and like the Belote churn described earlier, probably produced in a West Bloomfield pottery; and a double-handled jar, ca. 1840-60 impressed "AUBURN, N.Y.", Cayuga County. A few other marked earthenwares from central and western New York are known and described elsewhere (Ketchum 1970).

Most earthenware potteries in the Genesee region had closed by the end of the Civil War

due to the competition from local salt-glazed stoneware potteries which offered a more durable and nontoxic (lead-free) glazed ware. The local earthenware potteries which did continue into the last half of the 19th century diversified into the manufacture of drain tile, pipe, and flower-pots (Hamell and Barber 1970, 1974; Ketchum 1970; McVean 1972). Alvin Wilcox was among the first of many manufacturers in the region to mass produce drain tile and pipe through the use of an extruding machine introduced from England about 1850 (Weaver 1964). Drain tile had been used in this region as early as 1838, but this horseshoe tile had been handmade over a rounded piece of timber (Johnson 1868).

The market for lead-glazed earthenware was further reduced as glass and tin containers became increasingly available and popular. Few earthenware potteries in this region survived to the end of the century. Among the last to close around the turn of the century were Charles Ford's pottery in rural Morganville and John Schmidt's pottery in urban Rochester (Ketchum 1970: 181-82).



Figure 8. Lead-glazed earthenware jar; wheel-thrown with a mottled red-brown and tan glaze on the exterior and interior. Impressed "A. WILCOX/ West Bloomfield/ED PROSSER"; Ontario County, New York. ca. 1850-54. Height: 9". Private collection.

## STONEWARE

Stoneware clays are not naturally occurring in central and western New York, and it was not until the opening of the Erie Canal to Rochester in 1822-23 and to Buffalo in 1825 that its manufacture in western New York could begin. The Erie Canal made it economically feasible to transport the necessary clays from the New Jersey area to Lyons, Wayne County, and to Rochester, Monroe County, and in 1835 to Mount Morris, Livingston County, with the opening of the Genesee Valley Canal to that community. The histories of the salt-glazed stoneware potteries at Lyons, ca. 1823-1901, and at Mount Morris, ca. 1835-46, are briefly sketched in the Rochester Museum and Science Center's 1974 pottery catalogue (Barber and Hamell 1974) and further detailed in other recent publications (Chase 1971, 1972; Ketchum 1970). Some new information, however, is presented below.

Although stoneware was apparently manufactured in Rochester as early as 1823-27 (Ketchum 1970: 176-77), the earliest stoneware which can be definitely attributed to the city is that of Nathan Clark & Company, ca. 1839-51 (Figure 9). Documents relating to the Burger family offer some insights into John Burger Sr.'s involvement in Clark's Rochester pottery. (Burger n.d.; Jefferies n.d.) These documents include legal agreements, deeds, and John Burger Sr.'s emigration papers. The latter records that on July 19, 1832, at the age of 21, "Jean" Burger, "potier", immigrated to New York from Alsace, Lorraine. For sometime after that date but before 1839, he was employed at Nathan Clark's Lyons pottery. When Clark decided to open a stoneware pottery in Rochester, John Burger Sr. was selected to manage it. Clark's Rochester operation began subsequent to July 15, 1839, when Albert Risley, John Burger, and Eleazar Zinger, all of Lyons, purchased a lot in the city on which there stood a "Brick building used as a Pottery and a kiln for burning Stone Ware". The partnership of Nathan Clark & Company, Rochester, was composed of Nathan Clark, Thompson Harrington of Lyons, and John Burger Sr., each owning a 1/3 interest. Clark sold his interests in his Mount Morris pottery in 1846, and his interests in his Lyons and Rochester operations in 1851. Harrington and Burger remained partners in the Rochester pottery until July 19, 1854, when Harrington sold his interest to Burger.

By the late 19th century and probably throughout the period of stoneware manufacture in this region, the kilns used in the manufacture of salt-glazed stoneware were of the downdraft type. According to interviews with former potters at Lyons, hickory was originally used to fire the kilns; coal later replaced wood. (Avery 1950). In addition, sometime during the third quarter of the 19th century, steam power was introduced to turn the pug mills and pottery wheels. Most of the stoneware produced at Lyons, Mount Morris, and Rochester was salt-glazed on the exterior and coated with a wash of "Albany Slip" of various shades of



Figure 9. Salt-glazed stoneware churn. Wheel-thrown with a salt-glazed exterior and "Albany Slip" on the interior. Trailed, cobalt blue slip eagle decoration on the exterior. Impressed "N. Clark & Co./Rochester, N.Y.", Monroe County, ca. 1839-51. Height: 19 1/2". Collection of John and Elizabeth Morgan, Pike, New York.

brown or brown-black on the interior (Figure 10). During the 1870's and the following years, stoneware produced at Lyons was also frequently glazed with "Albany Slip" on the exterior. Since Rochester and Lyons were located along the Erie Canal it is not surprising to note that the stoneware potteries there had their own canal boats to import necessary raw materials and distribute their finished wares to communities along the Erie Canal. During Jacob Fisher's operating of the Lyons stoneware pottery, ca. 1872-1902, a delivery wagon was also carried aboard the canal boat to service more inland communities along the route. (Biederbecke 1952).

Salt-glazed stoneware from Nathan Clark's Mount Morris pottery is noted for its classical bulbous forms, not particularly for its decoration which usually consisted of a simple, brushed-on leaf decoration in cobalt blue. However, two of the few known incised pieces from this region have a Mount Morris origin. One is a cylindrical jar with the usual brushed-

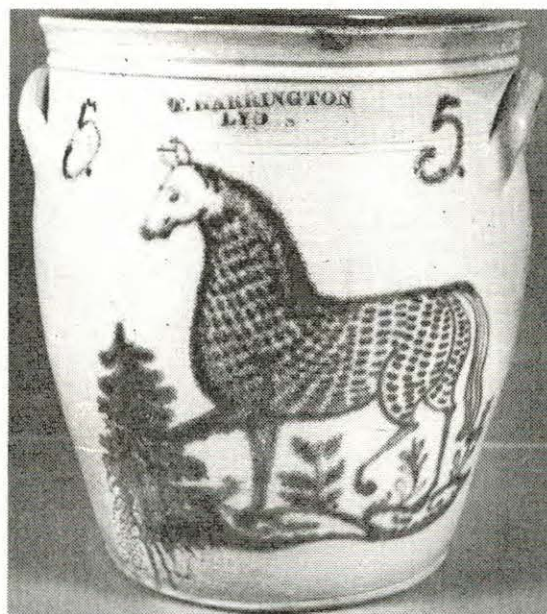


Figure 10. Salt-glazed stoneware pot. Wheel-thrown with a salt-glazed exterior and "Albany Slip" on the interior. Trailed, cobalt blue horse decoration on the exterior. Impressed "T Harrington/Lyons": Wayne County, New York, ca. 1851-71. Height: 13 3/4". Collection of John and Elizabeth Morgan, Pike, New York.

on cobalt blue decoration on the front and a child-like incised eagle on the back (Barber and Hamell 1974: 45). The other piece is a jug which has a cobalt blue filled, incised decoration of an American warship on the front (Figure 11). Several incised vessels from Lyons are known also and date to the period of Nathan Clark & Company, ca. 1825-51 (Guilland 1971: 138-39).

Much stoneware, spectacularly decorated in cobalt blue trailed slip, was produced in Rochester during the period ca. 1839-68 by Nathan Clark & Company and its successors, Harrington & Burger and later, John Burger (Sr.), and by Frederick Stetzenmeyer, ca. 1849-55 (Barber and Hamell 1974: 47-50, 53). Indeed there are often remarkable similarities in the decoration used by these potteries, suggesting a common decorator or inspiration for decorations (Figure 12). However, research in the Rochester city directories of the period fails to reveal any reference to decorators (or women) employed at these potteries. References, however, are made during the period ca. 1827-80 to manufacturers, potters, agents, firemen, salesmen, and laborers employed in the Rochester potteries.

Germans, either as owners, owner-operators, or as employees, dominated the lead-glazed earthenware and salt-glazed stoneware potteries of Rochester from about 1840 through the end of the century. German representation in pottery manufacture elsewhere in the state during the mid to late 19th century was also significant. According to a statistical analysis of the 1875

New York Census, Monroe County had the third highest proportion of German-born among its population in the state, about 12% (Seaton 1877: Map L and 445). Erie County to the west was highest with 19%. According to this same source, there were 367 potters employed in the state, 346 males and 21 females. Of these, about 41% were born in the United States, about 30% in Germany, about 23% in Great Britain, and the remaining 6% elsewhere.

Like the local earthenware potters and potteries, there were numerous links between the stoneware potters and potteries of Lyons, Mount Morris, and Rochester. Some of these were business relationships already mentioned; others were family ties (Barber and Hamell 1974).

Furthermore, several of the potters involved in the Lyons, Mount Morris, and Rochester stoneware potteries can be traced from other communities in New York and elsewhere: Thompson Harrington from Hartford, Connecticut (Ketchum 1970: 172-73; Watkins 1950: 195 and Figure 96); George G. Williams from Athens, New York (Chase 1971, 1972; Ketchum 1970: 174-76); and Charles H. and Harvey F. McBurney probably from Jordan, New York

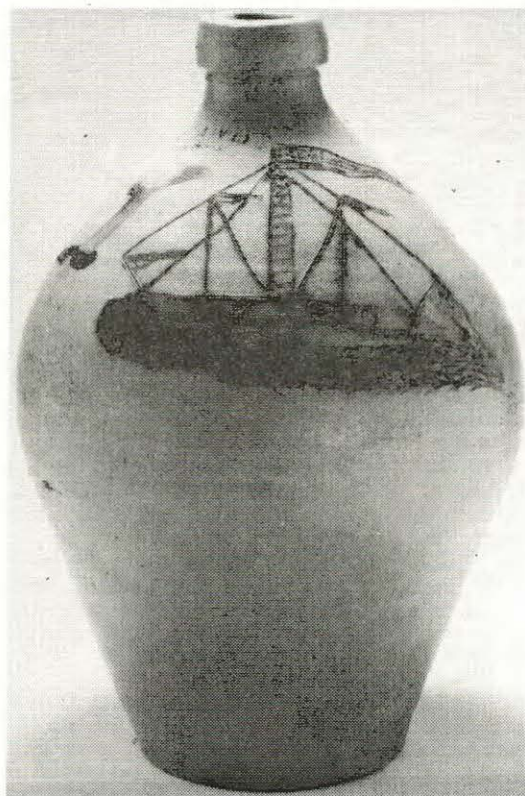


Figure 11. Salt-glazed stoneware jug. Wheel-thrown with a salt-glazed exterior and "Albany Slip" on the interior. Cobalt blue filled incised decoration of an American warship on the exterior. Impressed "N Clark and Co./Mount Morris": Livingston County, New York, ca. 1835-46. Height: 11 1/2". Private collection. Photograph courtesy of the Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, New York.



Figure 12. Salt-glazed stoneware pot. Wheel-thrown with a salt-glazed exterior and "Albany Slip" on the interior. Trailed, cobalt blue slip rabbit decoration on the exterior. Impressed "F Stetzenmeyer/Rochester, N.Y."; Monroe County, ca. 1849-55. Height: 12 3/4". Collection of John and Elizabeth Morgan, Pike, New York.

(Ketchum 1970: 143-44; Rochester city directories ca. 1875-1888). Justus Morton, formerly of Lyons (Figure 13), moved on to establish a stoneware pottery at Brantford, Ontario, Canada (Chase 1971, 1972; Newlands 1977; Webster 1968). Two other former Lyons potters, ca. 1850, Shem Thomas (Barber and Hamell 1974: 41) and James Mantell, born (and possibly trained) in England, can be traced to Penn Yan, New York (Ketchum 1970: 153; Shedd 1978). Shem Thomas later appeared at Cowden & Wilcox's stoneware pottery in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (Shedd 1978).

The Mount Morris stoneware pottery closed in 1846 or perhaps 1850 and the Lyons and Rochester potteries closed by 1900-1910. Like their former earthenware potter competitors, the stoneware potteries succumbed to competition from the increased use of glass and tin containers, and refrigerators. More importantly, the remaining market for stoneware in the northeast was being absorbed by fewer, but larger and more mechanized potteries like those in Syracuse, New York (Case 1973; Ketchum 1970: 124-31), and Ohio (Blair 1965) which relied upon railroad, canal, or lake transportation to widely distribute their wares.

#### FOLK POTTERY

If "folk pottery" was produced at all in western New York it was produced in the small earthenware potteries during the last decade of the 18th century and the first quarter of

the 19th century. The phrase, "folk pottery", may be selectively applied to the output of some of the smaller earthenware potteries in this region after that date. It should not be applied to Lyons, Mount Morris, and Rochester stoneware which was produced in stoneware factories, employing a division of labor and other methods of mass production, and by individuals who were more potters by place of employment than by tradition. That is not to deny the possible folk origins behind a few of the decorations occasionally used on some of these stonewares, particularly, the sun-burst face frequently seen on Harrington's Lyons wares (Barber and Hamell 1974: 42), which can be traced to early 18th century England (Cooper 1968) and further back still to the Near East (Frierman 1975: 54, Number 112). In view of the connections already mentioned between these potteries, it is also interesting that this same motif was used by the McBurney pottery at Jordan, New York, and the Cowden & Wilcox pottery at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Clay industries in the greater Rochester area survived into the 20th century in five types of manufacture: brick, earthenware drain tile and pipe, insulators, terracotta and stoneware sewer pipe (Ries 1895, 1900). Employees in all five such industries occasionally used the available raw materials to produce what is popularly termed "folk art".



Figure 13. "Albany-Slip" covered stoneware pitcher; wheel-thrown. Sprigged floral, and swag and tassel decoration around the exterior. Impressed on the bottom, "LYONS"; Wayne County, New York, ca. 1840-50. Tentatively associated with Justus Morton who was employed at Nathan Clark's Lyons pottery during the early 1840's. This pitcher may be favorably compared to a sprigged-decorated pitcher impressed "WOODYATT & CO.", and made in Brantford, Ontario, Canada in the stoneware pottery established there by Justus Morton in 1849 (Newlands 1977: 24-5, Figure 10; Webster 1968; 1971: 176). Height: 8 1/2". Private collection.

American sewer pipe pottery or sewer pipe folk art includes objects of sewer pipe clay and glaze which were made by employees of sewer pipe factories for their personal use, or as gifts to relatives and friends during the late 19th and 20th centuries (Adamson 1973). It also includes special promotional products such as match-holders, paperweights, etc., which were distributed directly by the companies. Most examples are sculptural in form, either produced in molds or hand-modelled. Numerous examples are known which were signed and/or dated by their makers.

This special class of salt-glazed stoneware has long been associated with the Ohio area, where it has its greatest collecting interest. However, four of the earliest and best-documented examples have a Rochester, New York, origin (Barber and Hamell 1974: 54-55; Hamell 1973 f-g; 1974). More importantly, the three earliest of the preceding examples were thrown on a potter's wheel with additional incised, hand-modelled, and sprigged-on decorations. The later decorations were made from molds taken from decorations on contemporary English Doulton stonewares. These three early examples are pitchers of between one and two quarts capacity which were made at Otis & Gorsline's Rochester Sewer Pipe Company on Oak Street, Rochester, New York. The pitchers are hand-inscribed on the base by their makers and bear the dates of 1888, 1889, 1890 respectively (Figure 14). The earlier two pitchers can be attributed to William Lyle, an immigrant Scottish potter and foreman (later superintendent) at the company between



Figure 14. Salt-glazed sewer pipe stoneware pitcher. Wheel-thrown with slightly metallic reflecting, red-brown sewer pipe glaze on exterior and interior surfaces. Hand-modelled floral and frog decorations on the front; sprigged-on decorations on sides taken from Doulton, Lambeth, originals; and all-over incised, "tree bark" decorations. Inscribed on the base "Otis and Gorsline/Rochester/N.Y./September 19, 1889"; and attributed to William Lyle. Height: 7". Private collection.

the years 1875-1892. The third pitcher was made by William Hirzel, an immigrant German potter, employed at the factory from about 1889 to 1917. Several unmarked pitchers are also known and may be attributed to either of the two men. Hirzel also made a bank for "tobacco money" in 1901 in the form of the familiar Staffordshire seated spaniel of the previous century (Bishop 1977: 108).

With the close of the last of the earthenware and stoneware potteries in this region, local sewer pipe and terracotta companies and ceramic insulator factories were among the few industries where potters could find related employment. It is with the "folk pottery" or "folk art" produced by employees in these factories that "traditional" pottery manufacture in the Rochester and Genesee Valley region ceased but not without one final postscript.

As far as can be determined, the last traditional potter to work in this region was Guy Dougherty. Dougherty was born in Denton, Texas, and worked during the 1920's at several traditional potteries in the southern United States, including the William T. B. Gordy Pottery in Alavton, Georgia; the George Clayton Pottery in Inman, South Carolina; and in North Carolina (Burrisson 1973: 196; 1977; Zug 1977). During the 1930's through the early 1950's, Dougherty came north during the summer to display his craft at the Roadside Craftsman in East Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York. Numerous examples of his wares turn up at local flea markets and garage sales, most of it bearing the circular printed "ROADSIDE CRAFTSMEN/HAND MADE/E. BLOOMFIELD, N.Y." mark on their bases. Occasionally a piece will be found initialed "G.D." and dated. It is reported that he fired his wares in a "groundhog" kiln; the forms of some of his wares, particularly pitchers, are southern in tradition. Although he used commercially-prepared stoneware clays and glazes, some of his wares echo local earthenwares of the previous century. With that, this overview ends where it started, somewhere in old Bloomfield Township, Ontario County, New York.

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