

TRENTON POTTERIES

Newsletter of the
Potteries of Trenton Society



Minutes of the Potters Union Transcribed by Richard W. Hunter

The last issue of Trenton Potteries (Vol. 3, Issue 4) published an excerpt from a ledger book containing the minutes of early organizational meetings for what soon became the Potters Union. The ledger entries document the minutes of meetings held over two main periods when Trenton potters were involved in union organization: from August 1868 to May 1869, and from November 1874 through October 1879. POTS plans on transcribing these minutes and making them available on our web site. As a first step we are publishing excerpts of the minutes from the 1868-1869 period.

The first published excerpt covered August 1868 to January 1869. The minutes from those meetings document how the workers established membership dues and a code of rules and worked to raise funds for the union. The first grievance was also recorded during this time.

*In this issue are the minutes of meetings held between January and May 12 of 1869. These minutes document several grievances and the onset of a strike that was to last into late August of that year. For background on the strike, please see Marc Jeffrey Stern's *The Pottery Industry of Trenton: A Skilled Trade in Transition, 1850-1929* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 1994). All of the minutes of 1868-69 were recorded by John D. McCormick, who served as Secretary to both the hollowware pressers branch union and the amalgamated union.*

The minutes of 1869 are reproduced here almost in their entirety and with limited editing.

Trenton, Jan. 12, 1869.

Wm Ray, from the firm of Cook &

Co., brought a grievance before the meeting relative to handling chambers. The firm wanted him to stick "turned up" handles for 52 cts. a score doz. He was instructed, by a unanimous vote of the meeting, to handle none at that price, or less than 8 cts. a doz., or by the day. Leonard Foster was elected trustee, vice John Reed, resigned. Adj.

Trenton, Feb. 2, 1869.

The Hollow-Ware Pressers met at their rooms, the Vice President in the chair. After the reading and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting a report was received from Cook & Co's Pottery, relative to a 4's granite Ewer. The firm said that none of them would be made unless they were made down town at other potteries. The report was accepted, and the parties interested were instructed, if occasion required, to notify the Secretary, to call a general meeting.

James Connell and Wm Podmore were elected auditors. The following nominations for officers were made: For President, John Munro, James Reed. Vice President, Thomas Littleton, Wm Ray. Secretary - John D. McCormick. On motion, the nomination closed. Treasurer - Edward Dwyer, Thomas Lawton. Auditors - Leonard Foster, Jas. Connell, Wm Podmore, George Hart, Joshua Stockwell.

Trenton, Feb 9 '69.

It was reported from Cook & Co.

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The Potteries of Trenton Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of Trenton's ceramic past. Officers: President—Patricia Madrigal; Treasurer—Amy Earls; Secretary—Christy Morganstein. Board: Ellen Denker, Barbara Goldberg, Richard Hunter, Jay Lewis, Emma Lewis, William Liebeknecht, Molly Merlino, George Miller, Brenda Springsted. Newsletter Editor: Patricia Madrigal

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that Michael Whelan was offered a situation there if he would make the granite Ewers about which there was a dispute. Before beginning, Mr. Whelan wanted the advice of the Union.

On motion, he was instructed not to go to work unless he got the Union price; and it was decided that he receive five dollars per week from the Union until such time as he got a situation, said weekly sum to be raised by subscription.

On motion, a committee was appointed, consisting of John Munro and Edward Dwyer, to visit the potteries where there was non-members, and invite them to join the Union and to attend the next meeting.

Trenton, Feb. 16, 1869.

The Hollow-Ware Pressers met at their rooms, the President in the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. A report was received from Cook & Co. that that firm put Michael Whelan to work without making the Ewers in dispute. The committee appointed to visit the potteries reported having been courteously received and was greatly encouraged by the good disposition that existed. A large number promised to join. The report was accepted.

The following committee on reunion was elected:- Leonard Foster, Thomas Littleton, Joseph Cotton, James Reed, Wm Ray.

Michael Kearney, from Moore & Co., brought a grievance relative to round soup tureens. He was asked to make 4's 6's and 9's at 60 cts. all around. Upon comparing the size with the stands at Bloors and other places, he found that Moore & Co's stands were

nearly or a full size larger.

On motion, he was instructed to make no more unless he got 70 cts. all around. Adj.

Trenton, March 2, 1869.

Michael Kearney, from Moore & Co., reported having been asked to make the round soup tureen stands in dispute, and throw out the 4's and count 6's as 4's and 9's as 6's, for 60 cents all around. A list of prices was drawn up, and,

On motion, he was instructed to be governed by said list, the sizes not to exceed the sizes for which these prices were paid. The following is the list:
Round Soup Tureen Stands:

12 inch, 72 ½ cts 11 inch, 67 ½ cts
10 inch, 62 ½ cts 9 inch, 57 ½ cts

The meeting proceeded to election of officers for the ensuing half year, with the following result: President - John Munro. Vice President - Thomas Littleton. Secretary - John D. McCormick. Treasurer - Edward Dwyer. Auditors Leonard Foster, James Connell, Wm Podmore. Assistant Secretary, Thomas Littleton.

Jas. Reed, from Millington & Co., reported that the firm finally consented to pay \$1.05 for the large 9's granite ewers, and \$1.25 per doz. for 6's, but that the firm hoped the Union would be satisfied with \$1.00 a doz. for the 9's. Mr. Reed was instructed to insist on \$1.05 for the 9's and was authorized to tender to Millington & Co. a vote of thanks from the Union, for their liberality in paying the Union price. Adjourned.

Trenton, March 9, 1869.

Jas. Reed, from Millington & Co.'s.

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reported that the firm hesitated to pay \$1.25 per doz. for the 6's Ewers. The resolution of the previous meeting was adhered to.

On motion, a general meeting was called on Thursday evening 11th inst. to take action on the shapes and sizes at Thomson & Coxson's pottery. Adj.

Trenton, Mar. 11, 1869.

A special meeting assembled at the usual place, the President in the chair. A statement was made of an unusual occurrence at Moses & Co's Pottery. Mr. Munro had been making a very difficult shape of covered dishes, and asked an advance of a shilling a dozen in price. Isaac Davis, the manager, refused to give the advance, and discharged Mr. Munro without giving any previous notice, as is the custom. All the other pressers were asked to make the dishes, but they promptly refused, whereupon Mr. Davis ended by locking out the whole lot. This high-handed proceeding created profound indignation.

On motion, the Secretary was instructed to invite the Manufacturing Potters' Union to a conference at an early day, to arrange sizes, prices and shapes. The following persons were elected to represent the Union in the proposed conference: John Munro, Thomas Littleton, John D. McCormick, James Reed.

The question relative to Thompson & Coxson's pottery was laid over. The pressers at Moses were instructed begin at the old prices, but not to make the cover dishes unless the advance was given, if allowed from the present time, should the conference allow the advance. Adj.

Trenton, March 12, 1869.

A special meeting was held, the President in the chair. In the affair at Moses & Co., it was reported that the covered dish moulds would not be put out, the advance would not be given until after the conference decided it, and the men would not be allowed to go on, unless they consented to make the covered dishes. The instructions of the previous meeting were adhered to.

It having been discovered that Isaac Davis had sent notes to a number of the potteries urging that his men should not get employment, and particularly Mr. Munro,

On motion, the latter gentleman was authorized to consult a lawyer on the subject, the expense, if any, to be borne by the Association. Adj.

Trenton, March 16, 1869.

The Pressers met, the President in the chair. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. It was reported by the proper committee that Mr. Barton did not advise bringing the case of Mr. Monroe into Court.

A report was received from the employees of Brearley & Stephens that the firm wanted the large granite ewer made for a 9's or all must stop work. The men ceased work. The Union sustained them, and appointed a committee consisting of Ralph Owen, Thomas Littleton, and Enoch Baddeley, to confer with B. & S. in reference to the matter. Adj.

Trenton, March 20, '69.

Special meeting was held, the president in the chair. It was moved and carried that men who worked

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only three days of a week be exempt from the levy. The meeting received payment of levies, and adjourned.

Trenton, March 18, '69.

The Pressers met, the President in the chair. Reports were received from Moses & Co. and Greenwood Pottery, that no change would be made in their list of prices, until the men resumed work. A delegation from the flat-pressers was received, offering their assistance. A vote of thanks was tendered them.

On motion, the Secretary was requested to write to potting districts in America, asking assistance, and also to notify the Staffordshire papers of the condition of things here.

On motion, a levy of \$1.00 was imposed upon all pressers at work Bloor's excepted, to support those locked out. Adj.

Trenton, March 23, '69.

A special meeting of pressers was held, the President in the chair. On motion, members were allowed to speak only twice on one subject, five minutes each time. A new list of prices was drawn up by the meeting, and the printed list of the bosses rejected. On motion, it was unanimously agreed not to resume work until the bosses accede to the list drawn up by the meeting. Adj.

Trenton, March 27, '69.

A special meeting was held, the President in the chair. The second printed price list of the bosses was submitted and examined, and On motion was rejected, and the motion of the previous meeting adhered to.

On motion, the Secretary was re-

quested to draw up a statement of grievances and have the same published at an early day.

On motion, Coxson's men were authorized to work at the old prices, with the understanding that they have the benefit of any advance gained. Adj.

Trenton, March 29, '69.

A special meeting was held. The following were appointed a soliciting committee: To visit Elizabeth, Newark, Jersey City, and New York, - John Miller, Enoch Baddeley. Do. Philadelphia, John Sedmond, Joshua Clews. Adj.

Trenton, April 2, '69.

A special meeting was held to appoint a committee to solicit aid in this city. Edwin Aldersea, Jos. Cotton, Benjamin Shelby, Stewart Beatty, Leonard Foster, and Wm Podmore were elected.

On motion, it was decided that the employees of Cook & Co. cease work. Adj.

Trenton, April 3, '69.

A special meeting was held. The treasurer of the Pressers presented a claim for moneys he had paid out of the treasury to make up a deficient levy.

On motion, he was requested to let the loan lay over for the present. A committee from the Flat Pressers was received, who proposed that all moneys hereafter received be thrown into a common fund. The proposition was accepted. Adj.

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Trenton, April 6, '69.

A meeting of Pressers was held at their rooms. A communication was received from the soliciting delegates for the New York direction, containing \$8.75 from Elizabeth potters.

It was moved and carried that married men receive \$1.00 for their wife, and 50 cents for each child. The Secretary was authorized to communicate with the bosses, inviting them to arbitration. Adj.

Trenton, April 12, '69.

A special meeting of Pressers was held at their rooms. A letter was received and read from the bosses, expressing their willingness to hold a conference. Ralph Owen and John Munro were appointed to confer with them. Adj.

Trenton, April 13, '69.

The Hollow-Ware Pressers held a special meeting to hear the request of the conference committee. Messrs. Young, Cook and Delicker represented the bosses. Both parties talked freely together for nearly four hours, but nothing definite was accomplished in regard to a settlement. Adj.

Trenton, April 21, '69.

A general meeting of all branches was held. The Secretary was requested to write a communication for the columns of the Workingman's Advocate; also, to publish a card of thanks to the Ball committee.

It was moved and carried that the potters hold a pic nic on the first Monday in May, tickets, 50 cts. Flat Pressers pay a levy of \$3.00 each. Adj.

Trenton, April 26, '69.

A general meeting of all branches was held at the usual place, John Munro in the chair. On motion, John Dalton received \$15.00 to take him to his home in Illinois, Isaac Eaton received \$7.00 to help him to go to England. Geo. Brunt was refused money for a similar purpose.

On motion, all advertising expenses relative to the lock-out were to be borne by the Central Board. also, that the potters meet and parade in procession through the streets on the day of the pic nic. Adj.

Trenton, April 27, '69.

A special meeting was held to hear the report of delegates appointed to confer with Richard Millington relative to a settlement. On motion, the terms offered by him were accepted. Enoch Baddeley was admitted to the meeting to make an explanation of his conduct in going to work. He tendered his resignation as a member, which was accepted. Adj.

Trenton, May 12, '69.

A special meeting was held, the president in the chair. A donation of \$100.00 was received from Charles V. Mead, in aid of the Locked-Out Potters. A vote of thanks was tendered to him, and the Secretary was requested to inform him of the same by letter. Thomas Waldron reported a case of distress that appealed to the sympathies of every potter. On motion, he was loaned \$10. to relieve said case.

Robert Montgomery was elected a member of the Central Board. Adj.

End of entries for 1868-69.

Upcoming Events

Tile Festival, May 17-18

The 5th Annual Tile Festival will be held Saturday, May 17 (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and Sunday, May 18 (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, 130 Swamp Road (Route 313), Doylestown, PA 18901.

This two-day show, sponsored by the Bucks County Department of Parks & Recreation, will feature tours, demonstrations, family and kids workshops, door prizes, and food more. Historic and contemporary art tiles will be on display and available for purchase.

Admission is \$5.00. Proceeds will benefit educational programs at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works. For more information call 215-345-6722.

Ceramics in America Conference 2003, May 16-17

Winterthur's sixth annual Ceramics in America Conference will be held May 16-17 at the Winterthur Museum in Winterthur, Delaware. Leading experts will share their research and discuss objects from the 17th through 19th centuries, focusing on ceramics made or used in America and how those wares fit into a larger world context.

For registration information or to receive a brochure with more information about the conference, contact Kelly Van Camp, Public Programs, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE 19735; phone: 302-888-4786; email: kvancamp@winterthur.org.

Stoneware Traditions and Contemporary Practice, August 24-30

POTS board member Ellen Denker, together with studio potter Mark Shapiro, will teach a week-long class *Stoneware Traditions and Contemporary Practice* at the Penland School of Crafts in Penland, North Carolina, August 24-30, 2003.

This class is an unusual opportunity to spend a week immersed in the rich history of traditional American stoneware and respond to its vocabulary through clay work. Students are requested to bring notebooks and cameras for museum and studio field trips as well as old and new pots to discuss. Open to potters of any skill level and collectors who want to get dirty.

The Penland School of Crafts is a national center for craft education located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina. Penland offers one-, two-, and eight-week workshops in books & paper, clay, drawing, glass, iron, metals, photography, printmaking, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors artists' residencies, educational outreach programs, and a craft gallery open to the public.

For more information contact Penland School of Crafts, Post Office Box 37, Penland NC 28765-0037. Phone: 828-765-2359; fax: 828-765-7389; email: office@penland.org; web site: www.penland.org.

Correction

The last issue of Trenton Potteries contained an incorrect web address for POTS. Our site is located at potteriesoftrenton.org.

We apologize for any problems this may have caused.

Membership Meeting, Sunday, May 4

Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 4, the first ever POTS members' gathering. Because POTS is a relatively small group, we can all get to know each other and find out what others look for and collect in Trenton pottery and porcelain.

We will start the afternoon with a one-hour show and tell session. Members who wish to share a special piece or find answers to a difficult puzzle piece can present them to the group for general discussion. Archaeologists Bill Liebeknecht and Patty Madrigal will set up a display of the latest interesting archaeological finds from downtown Trenton sites.

The "show and tell" session will be followed by a generous "meet and greet" period with plenty of time to

enjoy each other's company and taste some delicious tea cakes made by board members.

This event is free to members and their guests. Membership sign-up forms and back issues of our newsletter will be available. Everyone is encouraged to bring a prospective member or two.

We hope we see everyone --

Who: Members of POTS and everyone interested in Trenton's ceramic past

When: Sunday, May 4, beginning at 1:30 p.m. (finish at 3:30 p.m.)

Where: Ellarslie in Cadwalader Park, Trenton.

For more information, call Patty Madrigal at 609-695-0122 or email pmadrigal67@yahoo.com.



Bill Liebeknecht, Bert Denker and Ellen Denker identify pottery at last year's Dish Discovery Day.

We're on the web! Check us out at
www.potteriesoftrenton.org

Phone: 609-695-0122
Fax: 609-695-0147
Email: madruga@hunterresearch.com

120 W. State Street
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The Potteries of Trenton Society

POTS Membership

Membership in the Potteries of Trenton Society is open to all interested in Trenton's pottery industry and the ceramic products manufactured here. We welcome pottery workers, historians, archaeologists and collectors. Your contribution is used to support newsletter, lecture, meeting, and conference costs.

Annual Memberships:

_____ Regular (\$20) _____ Couples (\$25) _____ Students (\$15, with ID) _____ Seniors (\$15)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

email _____

Please make your check payable to the Potteries of Trenton Society and mail to:

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