

# Arsenal Pottery

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<b>Other Names</b>	Joseph Mayer's Arsenal Pottery; Mayer Brothers; Arsenal; Mayer Arsenal; Joseph Mayer; Mayer Company; Mayer Pottery Company; Mayer Manufacturing Company
<b>Present Day Municipality</b>	City of Trenton
<b>Historic Municipality</b>	City of Trenton
<b>Historic Location</b>	Third Street corner of Temple Street; Third Street and Schenck Street
<b>Years in Operation</b>	1876- c.1905
<b>Owners/Operators</b>	Joseph and James Mayer (1876-1893) [Mayer Pottery Company (1876-1889), Mayer Arsenal Pottery Company (1889-1893)]; Joseph Mayer, Isaac Davis and Michael Sewell (1893-c.1905) [Mayer Pottery Manufacturing Company (1893-c. 1905)]

## PRODUCTS

Tableware <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Garden Ceramics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rockingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hardware <input type="checkbox"/>	Art Ceramics <input type="checkbox"/>	Toilet Sets <input type="checkbox"/>	
Sanitary ware <input type="checkbox"/>	Hotel China <input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical porcelain <input type="checkbox"/>	

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCT INFORMATION

Rockingham and brown stoneware, fancy flower pots and hanging baskets, hanging logs, stumps and pedestals, stove collars, yellowware, majolica (Mains & Fitzgerald 1877); Rockingham and yellowware, including tea and coffee pots, jars, spittoons, dishes, bowls, pans, etc., also majolica ware (Industries of New Jersey 1882:178); white granite, decorated biscuit, painted and majolica ware ... jugs, cuspidors and jardinieres a specialty (Potters National Union 1893)

majolica jugs, Toby pitchers, teapots, plates, bowls, creamers, vases, jardinieres and spittoons (Snyder and Bockol 1994:139; Snyder 2005:42-43)

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Wednesday, April 10, 2013

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## MAP REFERENCES

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

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Robinson 1881, plate J: shown as "Mayer Bros. Rockingham Pottery"

Haven 1882: shown as "Meyer Bros. Rockingham Pottery"

Sanborn 1874 (1886), plate 19: shown as "Joseph Mayer's Pottery"

Sanborn 1890, plate 36: shown as "Mayer Arsenal Pottery"

Scarlett & Scarlett 1890, plate 28: shown as "Jos. Mayer Manf'r of Majolica Ware"

Lathrop 1905, plate 5: shown as "Mayer Pottery Co."

## IMAGE REFERENCES

## DUN COLLECTION

September 1886: Mayer Brothers: "'Joseph [S.] Mayer' is the only member of this firm. He states: 'that he owns the Pottery, & square of ground around it, containing 5 houses, worth \$125K, encumbered for \$10K. Farm at White Hill, \$25K. Farm near Morrisville \$5K. Two houses at Chambersburg \$2K, encumbered for \$1K = \$1K. City Railway stock \$1K. Stock in Pottery \$20K. good book accounts \$8K. cash in bank \$8K. Interest in Sand Co. \$40K. Mining stock \$10K. Making net worth \$233K.' It is believed, that in the main, this stmt. Is correct. He overestimates the value of his pottery considerably, \$75K being as high an est. as we can obtain on it. His White Hill farm is worth \$15K, his Morrisville farm \$4K. All the other items are believed to be fairly stated. His daily balance in bank being over, rather than under, \$8K. His success has been wonderful. Not many years ago, when his bro. died, he was in rather tight papers, but for the last 5 or 6 years, he has made net from \$20K to \$25K net, every year. Altho. Addicted to drinking, he has taken care of his means. Buys for spot cash only and is in short credit. He is undoubtedly worth \$100K and perhaps \$150K. He is trying to get out of business and will probably sell his Pottery in the course of the next 6 months, negotiations now being pending. Former estimates too low" (2 [45]:743).

January 6, 1888: Mayer Brothers: "N.C. now owns a fine pottery and a good deal of other real estate" (2 [45]:743).

May 9, 1889: Mayer Brothers: "The above is known as the 'Arsenal Pottery' Joseph S. Mayer, Proprietor makes verbal statement: succeeded Mayer Bros. Oct. 1883 and continues under same style. Is 45 years old, m'd, has been in business 12 years and never failed. Declines making a detailed statement but states he began his business without any considerable money and now has a business paying him \$40K to \$50K annually. He says a plan is now under way, under \$5K forfeit for the sale of the plant excepting about \$15K in bond accounts ... [?] incorporated company, the

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capital stood to be \$175K. The valuation of property is placed at \$165K which includes a mortgage of \$10K against the real estate he paid before the sale ... also includes \$25K glassware, \$15K biscuit ware, \$15K blocks, moulds & cases. He says the consideration is the positively \$150K. He claims to have paying outside interests here & in Kansas, at present is manufacturing Majolica Ivory & Enamelled Ware, he notes amt. [?], he is the patenter of machinery which greatly increases the production & he claims it can be done without the aid of skilled labor. He is of Goodless [?] capacity & fair habits, Banks Trenton Banking Co., is reported having a good account & in excellent credit. Is surely estimated at \$100K though probably worth more" (2 [45]:743).

March 1, 1889: Joseph S. Mayer succeeded March 1, 1889 by the Mayer Arsenal Pottery Co. (Inc.) (2 [45]:743).

## NOTES

"Manufacturers of Rockingham and brown stoneware, fancy flower pots, hanging baskets, hanging logs, stumps and pedestals; all sizes of stove collars for masons use... Mr. Mayer is the only potter in the city of Trenton who is manufacturing Rockingham ware... the original Centennial baseball vase was executed by workmen in the employ of Mr. Joseph Mayer" (Mains & Fitzgerald 1877).

"In the manufacture of Rockingham and Yellow Ware the Mayer Brothers excel ... Their manufactures consist of the colored pottery known as Rockingham and Yellow Ware, and include tea and coffee pots, jars, spittoons, dishes, bowls, pans, etc. of superior make and favorably known to the trade of the country. They also manufacture Majolica Ware, and are importers of printed and decorated ware of various kinds. Their premises are 100x150 feet in dimensions, on which is a three-story brick warehouse and manufactory 25x40 feet in size. There is an additional building of frame, two stories in height, 24x40 feet, and used exclusively for manufacturing purposes; two kilns, storehouses, packing rooms, etc. The best of facilities are provided for the work and employment is given to forty-three hands ... " (Industries of New Jersey 1882:178).

"This was established in 1876, by Joseph Mayer. A small manufactory of Rockingham and yellow ware was previously in existence on the site of this pottery, Third Street, near the State Arsenal. The same kind of ware is still produced, but the introduction of majolica ware is contemplated. Thirty hands are employed" (Woodward and Hageman 1883:693).

"This flourishing enterprise was started in 1876 by Joseph S. Mayer, who conducted it alone up to 1879, when the style changed to Mayer Brothers - Joseph S. and James - by whom the business was carried on until 1882, when, owing to the death of the latter, the concern passed again into the sole control of the founder, who, under the firm name that heads this sketch [Arsenal Pottery], has since continued it with uninterrupted success. The plant, which covers a superficial area of 250x300 feet, and has excellent transportation facilities (by P.R.R. and canal), comprises several commodious three and four story brick structures, connected, and is supplied with ample steam power, and completely equipped in every respect with the most improved machinery, appliances,

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and general appurtenances, including five huge kilns, also a decorating kiln, while employment is afforded to ninety or one hundred hands. The products include majolica and barbotine ware of every variety, vases, jardin[i]eres, and jugs of all sizes, in unique and artistic designs, and a full and fine line of flatware, toy tea sets being a specialty, while a vast and varied stock is constantly carried on hand, and the trade, which extends to all parts of the United [States] is exceedingly large ... Mr. Joseph S. Mayer ... has recently obtained ... five patents, three of which cover the most valuable process of jiggering ware in the known world. It is especially adapted to the manufacture of that class of ware in which the neck is smaller than the middle or bottom part, and formed either with recessed bottom or annular base rim, such as bottles, pitchers, sugars, vases, cuspadores, etc. These it will perfectly form in all their endless variety of internal and external configuration, and unite the ears or handles thereto, without joints or seams, in one simultaneous operation, with marvelous ease and rapidity ... The Star Pottery Company are using one of these patent machines for \$1,000 per year" (Quarter-Century's Progress 1887:264).

"The Mayer Pottery Company of Trenton was one of the six firms in the entire country to produce American majolica ware in the 1880-90's" (Van Hoesen 1973:160).

"The Arsenal Pottery produced well-modeled majolica wares including jugs and Toby pitchers. The company also exhibited their majolica at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The Arsenal Pottery did not mark their majolica" (Snyder and Bockol 1994:139).

"Mr. Mayer was a native of England and came to the United States in 1865, and secured several valuable patents covering the process of jiggering and used the [sic] manufacture that class of ware in which the neck was smaller than the middle or bottom part, and formed with recessed bottom or annular base rim, such as bottles, all in one piece, having neither joint or seam to crack. This concern manufactured Majolica and Barbotine Ware, Vases, Jardiniers, Jugs and Flat Ware" (Wall n.d.:6).

# 1880 Industrial Census

Arsenal Pottery

# 22A

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## Pottery Name in Census

Mayer Brothers

## Capital Invested

\$20,000.00

<b>Number of Hands</b>	30
<b>Males Above 16</b>	20
<b>Females Above 15</b>	0
<b>Children</b>	10
<b>Work Hours in a Day (May to November)</b>	10
<b>Work Hours in a Day (November to May)</b>	10
<b>Skilled Mechanic Wages Per Day</b>	\$2
<b>Ordinary Laborer Wages Per Day</b>	\$1
<b>Total Wages in Year</b>	\$7,800
<b>Months in Full-time Operation</b>	12
<b>Months in 3/4-time Operation</b>	0
<b>Months in 1/2-time Operation</b>	0
<b>Months Idle</b>	0
<b>Value of Material (Including Mill Supplies and Fuel)</b>	\$2,000
<b>Value of Product</b>	\$20,800
<b>Number of Boilers</b>	0
<b>Number of Engines</b>	0
<b>Horse Power</b>	0