



Newsletter of the  
Potteries of Trenton Society

## *A Sugar Bowl of William Young & Sons or William Young's Sons* Richard W. Hunter

An interesting early product of Trenton's industrial potteries was recently acquired on ebay by POTS member Robert Cunningham of Hamilton, New Jersey. Apparently made either by William Young & Sons or by the successor firm William Young's Sons, this specimen is an oval bowl, slightly over four inches tall, roughly five by four inches across at the rim, and 4.75 by 3.75 inches at the base. The vessel has a bulbous form, a low foot ring and a seat for a lid. The lid does not survive. Applied at the shoulder, one at either end of the vessel, are two molded faces that are remarkably reminiscent of – although somewhat smaller than – the distinctive faces that the stoneware potter James Rhodes sometimes attached to the shoulders of his jars, and perhaps also flower pots, during the brief period that he was active in Trenton, *circa* 1774-84 (Liebeknecht and Hunter 2003; Skerry and Hood 2009:205-206). Indeed, one wonders if the makers of this bowl had seen and been inspired by examples of Rhodes's work.

The basic bowl shape was made in a mold, as shown by the vertical seams that are visible at opposing ends of the vessel. The sprig-molded faces have in fact been applied over the seams, partly concealing them from view. The bowl is fashioned as highly fired earthenware and its lightly crazed, lead-glazed exterior and interior surfaces range in color from a dirty dark grey through several shades of

lighter grey to a light tan or yellowish cream. The coloring appears to have been much affected by use and age, and was probably originally a light cream. The vessel falls into the broad category of ironstone china and was most likely considered as cream-colored earthenware by its manufacturers. Although its function is not entirely certain, its size and shape, along with the fact that it had a lid, lead one to suppose it was probably a sugar bowl.

Slightly off-center on the base is a black transfer-printed makers' mark consisting of an eagle with its wings raised and partly outstretched, and its legs planted firmly on a rock (or prey). Beneath this motif are the letters "W. Y. S." No previously published image of this mark has been found, although Edwin Attlee Barber has ascribed it to the firm of William Young & Sons and avers that the marks employed by this company "were, in 1858, an eagle; from 1858 to 1879, the English Arms" (Barber 1904:44-45). No supporting information is provided for this statement, but numerous subsequent publications on American pottery marks have repeated Barber's claim.

The pottery manufacturing firm William Young & Sons originated in 1853 as William Young & Company, a partnership of William Young and his sons, Edward, John and William, Jr. with Richard Millington and John Astbury. The company initially

### Contents

A Sugar Bowl of William Young & Sons or William Young's Sons Richard W. Hunter .....	1
Molly Merlino, Founding POTS Member .....	3
2014 Trenton Ceramics Symposium.....	4
The Alice Maddock Collection: A Gift to the City of Trenton ..	6
Winterthur Ceramics Conference .....	7

*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 – Jay Lewis; Secretary – Brenda Springsted. Board: Ellen Denker, Richard Hunter, Meta Janowitz, Jay Lewis, Emma Lewis, William Liebeknecht, Brenda Springsted, Rebecca White. Newsletter Editor: Patricia Madrigal*

leased the pottery works of Charles Hattersley, newly built on the east bank of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, adjacent to the east side of the Camden and Amboy Railroad branch line, at the southwest corner of Perry and Carroll Streets. This site later became well known as the City Pottery and eventually developed into one of the main production hubs of Thomas Maddock's Sons. The early production of William Young & Company concentrated on porcelain door hardware, notably door knobs, escutcheons and door plates, but within a year or so the firm had expanded its repertoire to include two increasingly popular types of hard, high-fired earthenware known as white granite ware and C.C. (cane or cream-colored) ware.

In 1855-56, William Young & Company parted ways with Charles

Hattersley and erected their own new pottery works a short distance to the northwest on the opposite side of the canal. This site later became known as the Excelsior Pottery. Here the company and its successors grew rapidly into one of Trenton's foremost porcelain and ironstone china producers, enjoying more than half a century of industrial prominence. In March of 1860, Millington and Astbury left the Youngs to establish their own pottery in partnership with Theophilus Poulson on a site adjacent to the City Pottery. At this point William Young & Company reorganized as William Young & Sons, an entity that operated under that name until William Young, Sr.'s death in 1871. Shortly after the elder Young's demise, the firm reorganized again as William Young's Sons, continuing in business under that name until it was bought out by



the Willets brothers, Joseph, Daniel and Edmund, in 1879. It was during the period of the Willets Manufacturing Company ownership from 1879 to 1917 that the Young family's pottery works became known as the Excelsior Pottery and attained its reputation as a maker of fine porcelain wares, including the much revered Belleek (Liebeknecht *et al.* 2005; Hunter Research, Inc. 2013).

Based on the historical information above, the eagle and "W.Y.S." mark are thought to reference either William Young & Sons or William Young's Sons as the maker of this sugar bowl, and the date of its manufacture may be pegged as between 1860 and 1879. Any further insights on this unusual vessel are welcome.

#### References:

Barber, Edwin Attlee

1904 *Marks of American Potters*. Patterson & White Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Hunter Research, Inc.

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Liebeknecht, William B. and Richard W. Hunter

2003 *The Richards Face - Shades of an Eighteenth-Century American Belarmino*. *Ceramics in America 2003*, edited by Robert Hunter, pp. 259-261. The Chipstone Foundation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Liebeknecht, William, Nadine Sergejeff, Rebecca White and Richard Hunter (Hunter Research, Inc.)

2005 *Historical and Archaeological Investigations at the Excelsior Pottery*

Site, Southard Street Bridge Replacement Project, City of Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey. Report on file, New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (NJDEP), Trenton, New Jersey.

Skerry, Janine E. and Suzanne Findlen Hood

2009 *Salt-Glazed Stoneware in Early America*. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

#### *Molly Merlino*

#### *Founding POTS Member*

POTS is saddened to report the passing of Molly Merlino, one of our founding board members.

Molly was an enthusiastic member of POTS in the early years. She was the only board member who actually worked in Trenton's pottery industry, having worked at Lenox, first in the figurine department and later in fine china. Her contacts with and insight into the ceramic and arts community were instrumental in helping to establish POTS.

Molly was an advocate for the arts on a local and statewide level, and she was active in a number of Trenton-based organizations, including The Friends of the New Jersey State Museum, the Trenton City Museum, and The Mill Hill Playhouse. She managed the shop of the Trenton City Museum, which was named "Molly's" in her honor. She brightened the lives of all who met her.

Molly is survived by her children and grandchildren. Her service and accomplishments are numerous; for a full listing of her activities and honors, please visit <http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/trenton/obituary.aspx?pid=168073169#sthash.rNxgQtjc.dpuf>

## 2014 Trenton Ceramics Symposium

### *Isaac Broome: America's First Ceramic Sculptor*

The Potteries of Trenton Society is pleased to partner with the New Jersey State Museum and the Trenton Museum Society to present our eleventh annual Trenton Ceramics Symposium on April 5, 2014. This year our speakers will celebrate the life and work of sculptor Isaac Broome, the first sculptor to work in the American ceramics industry. Although perhaps best known for his famous *Baseball Vase*, created for Ott & Brewer's display at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, Broome made other models for that display, and he was also a designer, modeler and manufacturer of tiles in Trenton and Brooklyn.

An American sculptor, ceramic modeler and teacher, Isaac Broome (1836-1922) was educated at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, where he was elected an Academician in 1860 and taught in the Life and Antique department from 1860 to 1863. In 1854 he assisted Thomas Crawford with the statues on the pediment of the Senate wing of the US Capitol in Washington, DC, and tried unsuccessfully to establish a firm for architectural terracotta and garden ornaments in Pittsburgh and New York. Beginning in 1875, Broome was employed as a modeler by Trenton's Ott & Brewer pottery. The parian porcelain sculpture he created for their display at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia won medals for ceramic arts. Following his success at the Exhibition and at the Exposition Universelle of 1878 in Paris, for which he was appointed USA Special Commissioner, he was active as a teacher and lecturer and was keenly interested in educa-

tional, political and industrial reforms. He also continued as a modeler for potteries in Ohio and Trenton, including the Trent Tile Co. and the Providential Tile Co. in Trenton, producing major work as late as 1917, when he modeled a parian portrait bust of Walter Scott Lenox for the Lenox Company.

The Symposium will open with registration and reception from 9 to 10 a.m. Light refreshments will be served. Lectures in the morning will examine Broome's life and work. After a catered lunch in the State Museum's galleries, the afternoon talks will examine Broome's famous *Baseball Vase* from many aspects.

This year's keynote speaker will be Molly Randolph. Randolph, who recently completed her thesis on Isaac Broome for her master's degree in the history of decorative arts from the Smithsonian-George Mason University program, will present an overview of Broome's life and work. She is currently the curator of the Old Governor's Mansion at Georgia College in Milledgeville, Georgia.

Michael W. Padwee, an historian and collector of United States art tiles, will examine "Isaac Broome and the Spirit of Innovation and Design in the Tile Industry after the Centennial Exhibition." Padwee has published "A Field Guide to the Key Patterns on the Backs of United States Ceramic Tiles, 1870s-1930s" and writes a regular column, "Tile Back Views," for "Flashpoint, the Newsletter of the Tile Heritage Foundation" and for the THF's e-newsletter.

Ellen Denker will present Broome's famous *Baseball Vase* as a

## 2014 Trenton Ceramics Symposium

key document in the history of American baseball and as the first work in American clay officially classified as art. She may be assisted in this endeavor by members of the Neshanock Base Ball Club, a group of re-enactors from Flemington, New Jersey, who will be costumed in authentic uniforms of the late 1800s and who will explain the game as it was played in Broome's day.

The day will finish with a closing reception sponsored by the Trenton Museum Society to be held at Ellarslie, the Museum of the City of Trenton, in Cadwalader Park. Participants will be able to view the Society's collection of Trenton ceramics, including an exhibition case devoted to Broome's work.

POTS has been able to secure a group of tickets for the Trenton Thunder game on April 5 for Symposium registrants who would like to linger over baseball. The Thunder is an Eastern League Class AA Affiliate of the New York Yankees, and has been recognized as the "Nation's Best Franchise" for providing an outstanding and unique fan experience. The April 5 game will be one in the Thunder's season-opening series against the New Hampshire Fisher Cats, an affiliate of the Toronto Bluejays. The Thunder and the Fisher Cats finished the 2013 regular season in second and third place, respectively, in the Eastern League's Eastern Division. Those who register in advance will be able to add tickets for the April 5 game to their order for the Symposium. No tickets will be available to late registrants.

The Trenton Ceramics Symposium is open to the public. The registration fee is \$35 if paid by March 14.

Members of the Potteries of Trenton Society, the Friends of the NJ State Museum, and the Trenton Museum Society may attend for \$30, if paid in advance. Everyone who pays at the door will be charged \$40. Registration includes all lectures, lunch, and the Ellarslie reception. A mail-in registration form may be downloaded and printed from POTS website:

[www.potteriesoftrenton.org](http://www.potteriesoftrenton.org); or interested parties may contact POTS President Patricia Madrigal at 609-695-0122 x 100 or [president@potteriesoftrenton-society.org](mailto:president@potteriesoftrenton-society.org). POTS cannot take credit cards, but checks are welcome.



Isaac Broome's *Base Ball Vase* as pictured in Jennie Young, *The Ceramic Art* (1878)

## *The Alice Maddock Collection: A Gift to the City Of Trenton*

For more than 100 years, Trenton, New Jersey was one of the two major pottery centers in the United States. By 1880 hundreds of independent potteries operated within the city of Trenton, employing thousands of potters, modelers, decorators, gilders and designers. In response to the need for skilled workers, the School of Industrial Arts (most closely associated with the 1910 Cass Gilbert-designed Kelsey Building on West State Street) was opened in 1898 to train potters and other young people in their trades.

Mrs. Alice Maddock, wife of Thomas Maddock of the British pottery family, saw the need for ceramic models at the school for students to study - including objects that could be handled and patterns that could be emulated. She had developed "one of the most comprehensive collections of blue and white china of the period contemporary with the Revolutionary War" which she bequeathed to the city of Trenton in 1902 for use and display at the School of Industrial Arts.

The Trenton City Museum is proud to announce an exhibit of the Alice Maddock Collection as seen at the School of Industrial Arts in 1903. Over 200 pieces from her collection are on display including beautiful blue transfer print platters made by mid 18<sup>th</sup> century British potters, a Copeland parian pitcher with a molded design of putti gathering grapes ca 1850, and a Mason's Patent Ironstone pitcher with a peony and bird pattern ca 1820-1825. Some interesting pieces are broken and included in the collection to demonstrate early repair techniques - metal staples. To this constantly handled study collection, time has not been kind. Pieces

are broken and repaired and some are chipped, but they, like Trenton, are beautiful even with the scars of time.

Other donors also contributed to the study collection at the School of Industrial Arts over the years, and pieces from their collections will be included in the exhibit as well. Edward C. Stover, a treasurer of the school, donated Chinese porcelains and other decorative arts pieces including a reticulated lobster on display. Edmund C. Hill, the man responsible for bringing Frederick Law Olmsted to Trenton to design Cadwalader Park, donated money to the school so that it could purchase important pieces including a Minton, footed urn *pâte-sur-pâte* on teal blue ground decorated by Leon Solon with a Greek goddess spinning and capturing a putti in her web. Members of the Pottery and Porcelain Manufacturers of Trenton raised funds for the purchase of the John Hart Brewer Collection in honor of one of the owners of Ott & Brewer, creators of some of the most outstanding art pottery in the United States, which they then donated to the school.

In 1941, the School of Industrial Arts was renamed Trenton Junior College. In 1967, it merged with Mercer County Community College, and in 1972, when the college opened its new campus in West Windsor, the collection was packed away and moved to West Windsor. In the 1980s, then mayor Arthur B. Holland began a successful campaign to return the collection to Trenton to be part of the permanent collection at the Trenton City Museum which had opened its doors in 1978.

The collection as received at

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Winterthur Ceramics Conference

Wilmington, Delaware

## *Image Is Everything! Ceramics and the People Who Owned Them*

This year's Winterthur Ceramics Conference considers how past owners interacted with their ceramics, whether they were acquiring fashionable new dinnerware or figures during the 1700s or, later, were researching and collecting antiques. Join Winterthur and an international cast of scholars as they study both Chinese and Western ceramics and their contexts over time.

Experience lectures presenting new research as well as hands-on workshops offering up-close access to the Winterthur collection. The speakers and formal lectures include:

Dr. Jan Daniël van Dam, Senior Curator Ceramics & Glass, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (1989–2012)  
*The History of Dutch Ceramics Influenced by Chinese and Japanese Porcelain, 1600–1800 and European Redwares: Drinking Tea in Holland, England, and Germany, 1680–1920*

Leslie B. Grigsby, Senior Curator, Ceramics & Glass, Winterthur  
*The Image of Perfection: Ceramic Figures as a Reflection of 18th- and 19th-Century Society*

Ron Fuchs, Curator of the Reeves Collection, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, VA  
*The Euchlin and Louise Reeves' Collection of Chinese Export and European Ceramics.*

Thomas Michie, Russell B. and Andrée Beauchamp Stearns Senior Curator of European Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
*"Bought of Nobody for Almost Nothing": Anne Allen Ives and China Collecting in 19th-Century New England.*

Al Luckenbach, Anne Arundel

County Archaeologist  
*Ceramics from The Lost Towns in Maryland, 1650–1730*

Julie Emerson, The Ruth J. Nutt Curator of Decorative Arts, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle  
*West Meets East: The Evolution of the Ceramics Collections at the Seattle Art Museum*

To learn more about the conference, please call 800.448.3883 or view the conference brochure at [www.winterthur.org](http://www.winterthur.org). For additional information on scholarships, download the scholarship application.

Registration begins January 21, 2014.

## *The Alice Maddock Collection*

(Continued from page 6)

the museum has been cataloged by the volunteers of the Trenton Museum Society and will be on display in its entirety in the second floor galleries of the Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie in Cadwalader Park from February 21 – June 15, 2014. The opening reception is on February 21 from 6-8 pm and is free and open to the public.

## *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 Membership \$25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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