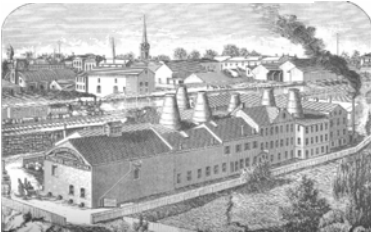


TRENTON POTTERIES

Newsletter of the
Potteries of Trenton Society



Mercer Pottery Company Postcards

Courtesy of Amy Earls

Amy Earls recently acquired a series of postcards sent to the Mercer Pottery Company (the cards were brought to her attention by POTS members Bob Wagner and Marge Miccio of Artifacts Gallery in Trenton.) A common thread runs through these cards — that the potteries of Trenton, because of their proximity to local merchants, were able to provide faster customer service than their rivals in England.

Figure 1 is a postcard from 1879 admonishing the pottery for not filling the complete order and not providing an explanation why only part of the order was sent. Of interest is the sentence “We have not bought a penny’s worth of Am[erican] ware from

any other house since dealing with you, and so depend on you to fill our orders when given.” Over 125 years ago customer service was as important as it is today.

Figure 2 was sent by a merchant named Cleavenger on September 24, 1884. It reads in part “Gents., please express the following today by R. R. Exp....as I have sold set to be del[ivered] Thursday for a wedding.” September 24, 1884 was a Wednesday, therefore the merchant fully expected his order to be filled and shipped that day for arrival on Thursday.

The card from the VanDyk Furniture Co. (Figures 3) is interesting for the dates to be found on it: it was mailed from

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

Figure 1. One Cent US Postal Card, postmark: PAINESVILLE, O., MAY 24, 1879

Dr Sirs

Your bill of 21st ult. [ultimo] is at hand containing a part only of order of 14th is with no explanation of why part of order was filled and not all. Some of the omitted articles we are entirely out of and need at once. We have not bought a penny’s worth of Am. ware from any other house since dealing with you, and so depend on you to fill our orders when given.

Yours truly,

A. P. Baldwin

Painesville, O

Mercer Pottery Postcards

(Continued from page 1)

Paterson on May 13, and received in Trenton on May 15. A letter was sent out that day, and the order was filled on May 20th. Although this could have been a back order

that the merchant was asking about, the turnaround time is impressive, and certainly not possible with the potteries overseas.

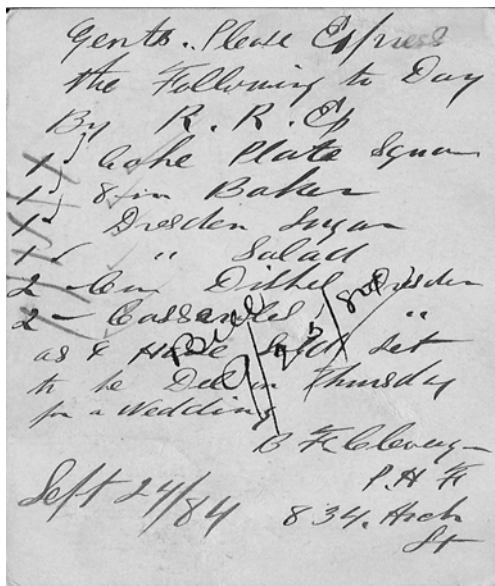


Figure 2. One Cent US Postal Card

postmark: PHILADELPHIA, PA. / SEP 24 84 / 8 30 AM

Gents, Please express the following to Day By R. R. Ex

1 Cake Plate Square

1 8 in Baker

1 Dresden Sugar

1 " Salad

2 6 in Dishes Dresden

2 Casseroles "

as I have sold set to be del[ivered] on Thursday for a Wedding

B. F. Clevenger

P. & F.

834. Arch St

Sept 24/84

Handwritten over the above: Bill 9/25/84

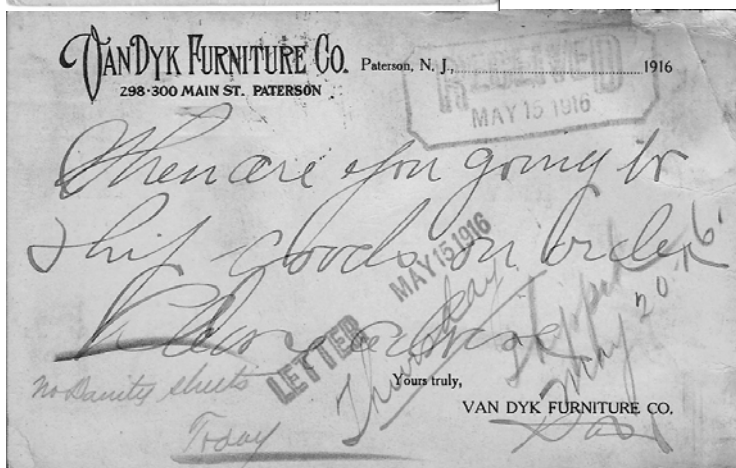


Figure 3: One cent postcard, postmark: PATERSON, N.J. MAY 13 1916 10 PM

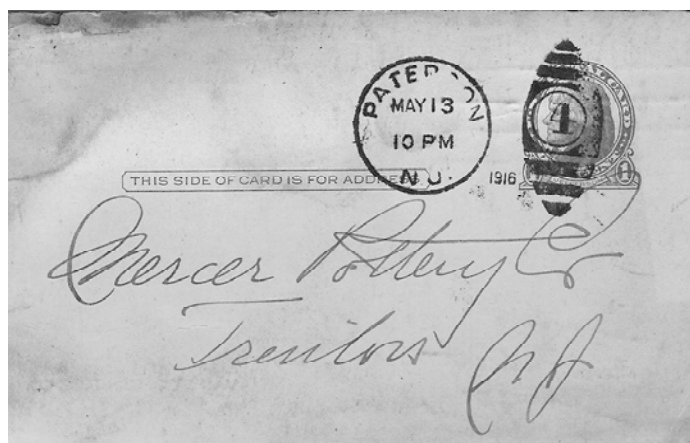
Letterhead: Van Dyk Furniture Co. / Paterson, N. J. / 298-300 Main St. Paterson

When are you going to ship goods on order
Please advise
Yours truly,

VAN DYK FURNITURE CO.
DA

Stamped: RECEIVED / MAY 15 1916 **Handwritten in pencil:** No Dainty sheets / Today

Stamped: LETTER / MAY 15 1916 **Handwritten in red pencil:** Thursday **Handwritten in blue pencil:** Shipped / May 20 '16



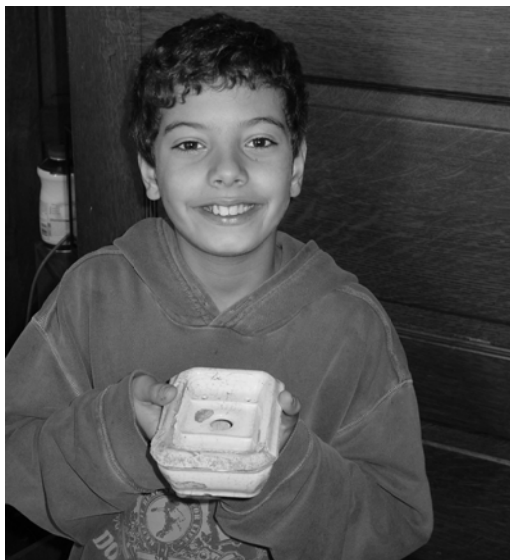
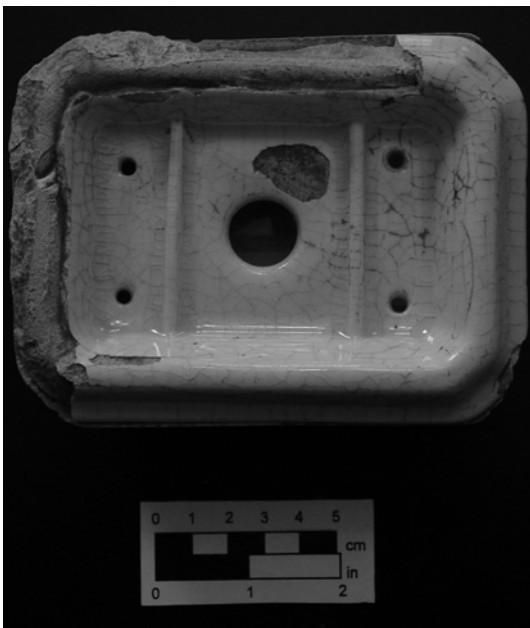
An Isaac Davis Soap Dish

At the end of October we received an email from Drew Cardelia, a 5th grade student in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. As part of a school sponsored archaeological program, he found an ironstone soap dish, also called a soap box. The soap box was formed in two pieces: the bottom dish and the perforated drain. These were cemented together before being fired and glazed. There is a ledge around rim for a lid.

The soap dish has a partial makers mark on the back. The mark is black printed "British Royal Arms" featuring a crown atop an oval shield with entwined letters "ID"; the shield is flanked on the left by a lion and on the right right by a unicorn, with "T. P....ORKS/...D" underneath. It is a mark from Isaac Davis' Trenton Pottery Works, which operated from 1875-1887 in the old Taylor & Speeler pottery works, originally founded in 1852 and the first industrial pottery in

Trenton.

The mark is of particular interest because it is a prime example of American manufacturers trying to fool the buying public into believing that they were purchasing English ceramics, which were held in higher esteem at the time. On first glance the mark resembles a British coat of arms, but upon closer inspection is revealed to be not an English mark, but rather an American one.



New Jersey Terra Cotta: Building an Industry on Clay



Detail of tile panel designed and made by Mueller Mosaic Company for the Kelsey Building (now Edison College), West State Street, Trenton, 1911. The Kelsey Building was built to house the Trenton School of Industrial Arts.

The Potteries of Trenton Society (POTS) is pleased to announce its association with the New Jersey State Museum in the development and presentation of our fourth symposium on New Jersey ceramics entitled "New Jersey Terra Cotta: Building an Industry on Clay." This year's symposium will be held Saturday, April 21, 2007, in the State Museum's Auditorium at 205 West State Street, Trenton. Speakers will explore New Jersey's clay resources, terra cotta manufacturing in the state, and its use on buildings in New York City, Philadelphia, and Trenton. A box lunch is included in symposium registration.

This year's symposium examines the contribution of New Jersey's important terra cotta makers to urban skylines in the region. Forty-eight companies operated in the U.S. during the period of terra cotta's greatest popularity (1880-1930), and New Jersey had the largest concentration of terra-cotta manufacturers. Outstanding clay deposits, proximity to markets, and a wide variety of transportation options all contributed to this industrial prominence. Architectural terra cotta is extraordinarily adaptable as a building material. It can be molded, sculpted, and glazed to imitate all sorts of other materials or used for its own characteristics. Architects in the early 1900s thought it a superior medium because of its longevity, imperviousness, color, and imitative qualities. It was also lighter and cheaper than stone. Most of the architectural terra cotta made in New Jersey was used as ornamental cladding on skyscrapers, but it was also found useful for grave markers, hitching posts, carriage blocks, chimney pots, and statuary.

On April 21, registration and light refreshments beginning at 9:30

a.m. will be followed by an introduction to New Jersey's clay resources presented by Peter Sugarman, research specialist with the NJ Geological Survey. The morning's talks will continue with archaeologist Richard Veit and curator Mark Nonestied, who will discuss New Jersey's terra cotta manufacturers. Susan Tunick, president of the New York Friends of Terra Cotta and author of *Terra-Cotta Skyline*, will survey uses of New Jersey terra cotta in significant buildings of New York City and environs. After a box lunch, Ellen Denker will introduce participants to Trenton's tile makers and describe the driving tour that POTS has developed of significant tile and terra cotta buildings surviving in Trenton. If they choose, participants may also take a tour of Trenton-made tile installations in the New Jersey State House.

Advance registration for this year's program is \$35.00 for the general public and includes morning refreshments and a box lunch. POTS members and Friends of the New Jersey State Museum receive a \$5.00 discount on advance registration. The POTS website includes a registration blank to print and mail. Advance registration will be accepted by mail only with payment by check or money order. Registration at the door will be \$40 for all. Please register early.

Trenton is accessible by automobile and train. For more information about this year's symposium, including advance registration and traveling instructions, please visit the POTS website (www.potteriesoftrentonsociety.org) or the New Jersey State Museum's website (newjerseystatemuseum.org).

The New Jersey State Museum is a division of the New Jersey Department of State.

Advance Registration Form**New Jersey Terra Cotta: Building an Industry on Clay***Presented by*

Potteries of Trenton Society and the New Jersey State Museum

Saturday, April 21, 2007**9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.****New Jersey State Museum Auditorium, 205 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey**

Advance registration must be received by **April 6, 2007**; after that date, you must register on site. We regret that we do not take credit cards; check or money order only. All advance registrations must be made via the mail; telephone registrations will not be accepted. On site registration is \$40. Registration includes lunch.

Please Print

Name: _____

Affiliation (for name tag): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email _____
(optional) (for email confirmation of registration)

Meeting Registration Fees:

Member Potteries of Trenton Society \$30.00 _____

Member Friends of the NJ State Museum \$30.00 _____

Non Member \$35.00 _____

Please circle your choice for sandwich (if no choice is made we will make one for you):

Cheese

Turkey

Roast beef

Tuna

Registration will be \$40 the day of the symposium.

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

Potteries of Trenton Society, Amy Earls, Treasurer, PO Box 121, Florence, NJ 08518

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 _____

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