

# WPA PRESS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN POTTERY ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 46 MADISON, WI 53701-0046  
WWW.WISCONSINPOTTERY.ORG



## Happy New Year!

Greetings Wisconsin Pottery Association Members (and others)! Hope the holidays have left you with a little Peace, some nice gifts, happy “significant others” and family and a little cash left for antiquing too!

This issue of the *WPA Press* is my last chance to “speak at you”—obviously I’m the ex-president now, but couldn’t resist a final word and a few recollections on 2001.

In my estimation the Wisconsin Pottery Association (WPA) took a turn in an exciting new direction in terms of member involvement and it is apparent that 2002 WPA President Dave Knutzen is going to make these changes a strong point in his “administration”. What I’m speaking of is an increase in member participation.

Early in 2001 and at the last two meetings of the year we spend a bit of time talking about membership—the fact that ours is dwindling— and the need for volunteers for the Show and Sale and for club officers. In addition it seems that general meeting attendance has dropped. But October and November meeting attendees showed a strong response when it came time for vol-

unteers speakers to fill our January and February meeting spots. I so enjoyed listening to a lively discussion of how to handle several member-related topics in November. After a year of worrying about whether there was truly enough interest in our club, this discussion, led by the general membership, was heartening. You see, the officers, in my view, take on the task of providing club structure, but without your *active* participation there is no club. Yep, that sometimes means giving a bit of your time, but I guarantee that you won’t find a more fun group of people with which to volunteer.

In this issue of the *WPA Press* you’ll find a survey that allows you to tell us more about yourselves. Designed by our new president, it will to know who you are and gain information on how the WPA can better suit your needs and interests. Please take a few minutes to fill-out the ten short questions and either bring it to our next meeting, or mail it back. Thanks for your time!

It’s very much been my pleasure—thanks for the lovely plaque presented at the December meeting, and for your participation. Keep up the good work and bring a friend to the next meeting!

—Kari Kenefick, *past-WPA president*

### In this Issue:

- Edgerton History in Clay book
- Interview with WPA Members OriAnne and Paul Pagel
- Edgerton’s Pauline Pottery History
- Dryden Pottery—A Book Review
- Your Input is Requested—The Survey

### WPA Calendar for 2002

- January 8**—WPA Members’ Selected Pieces
- February 12**—Cleaning and Repair of Pottery by Betty Knutzen and Chris Swart
- March 12**—to be announced
- April 9**—Early Weller Patterns by Bill Barker
- May 14**—to be announced
- June 11**—to be announced
- July**—no meeting
- August 24**—WPA Annual Show and Sale featuring Redwing Pottery; Alliant Center, Madison
- September 10**—Ceramic Arts by Tim Holthaus
- October 8 and November 12**—to be announced
- December 4**—WPA Holiday Party (note that this is the first Tuesday in December)

~~~~~  
*All meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month (except July, August and December) at the Shorewood Hills Community Center.*

## EDGERTON'S HISTORY IN CLAY

"Pauline Pottery to Pickard China", a talk presented by Maurice J. Montgomery has been donated to the Arts Council of Edgerton (ACE) to print and sell, with all profits going to the restoration and maintenance of the Pauline Pottery Log Cabin project. The book has been printed by C&M Printing, with a cover design by Jason Londerville—the first printing was for 100 books.

The book can be purchased for \$10 each either at Thymes Past Antique Mall, or Antique & Art Gallery; both shops are on Fulton Street in Edgerton. Please make requests and/or your checks payable to:  
Arts Council of Edgerton

Please include a postage and handling fee of \$3.50 per book for orders by mail.

Ori-Anne Pagel can be contacted at (608) 884-6787 for more information.

*Ori-Anne Pagel for the WPA Press*

## GETTING TO KNOW ORI-ANNE AND PAUL PAGEL

In this issue of the *WPA Press* we've caught up with Paul and Ori-Anne, a couple of our commuting WPA members, to learn about their collecting *habits*, shall we say? And now, in their own words:

**WPA Press:** How did you get started in the collecting business? Did one of you influence the other or did your marriage bring two collecting careers together?

**Ori-Anne and Paul:** When looking for quality, all wood furniture after getting married, antique furniture was the best value.

**WPA Press:** What do you like to collect? Pottery and ceramics only? Everything but pottery and ceramics? Old furniture? Paper goods?

**Ori-Anne:** I liked quality, fine art, beautiful wood furniture or anything. I taught art for ten years.

**Paul:** Victorian furniture, mustache cups, walking sticks, books by Wisconsin authors, old and contemporary art.

**WPA Press:** Where do you like to do your collecting—antique malls? estate sales? others?

**O & P:** We do most of our buying at auctions, garage sales, estate sales. We probably prefer private sales and buy very little on the internet. ([editor's note]: Ori-Anne reports that Paul does 90% of the buying. Paul, could I give you my list??)

**WPA Press:** Do you wander very far from Madison to collect? Do you collect or antique whenever you get out of town?

**Paul:** We antique just about everywhere we go.

**Ori-Anne:** This car stops at all antique shops and rummage and estate sales (when) Paul is driving.

**WPA Press:** Do you have any favorites or a particularly good find that you'd like to tell us about?

**Ori-Anne:** Redwing Brushware, green, a lobby jar, lamps, a couple of vases and all our Edgerton pieces. I still love my Pratt pitcher and Wedgewood Tea set.

**WPA Press:** What else about your antique collecting or other lives would you like to tell us about?

**Ori-Anne:** We both like to spend time at our log cabin near Rice Lake. I am cofounder of ACE (Arts Council of Edgerton) and it's a long story but the short of it is ACE was given the 1840s German-built log cabin from the Pauline Jacobus estate. ACE is charged with preserving the cabin and moving it from its previous property to its new location. So the tasks of research and preservation have begun, and at times are all-consuming. There are many interested people but few strong full-time supporters.

Paul's spare time is spent restoring old gas and electric light fixtures. He also serves as financial officer for his local machinist union. When time is available he enjoys reading the books we collect.

*Many Thanks to Paul and Ori-Anne for sharing their ideas on collecting with us!!—Editor, WPA Press*

## A FEW NOTES ON EDGERTON'S PAULINE POTTERY by Mark Scarborough

*These notes were adapted from Mr. Scarborough's September 11, 2001, talk about Edgerton art potteries before the membership of the Wisconsin Pottery Association, Madison, Wisconsin.*

From about 1888 to 1909, the Rock County, Wisconsin, village of Edgerton was the home of art pottery companies that have since become famed among collectors. These included the Pauline Pottery Co. (a factory phase from 1888 to 1894, followed by a studio phase from 1902 to 1909), as well as the Samson Brother's American Art Clay Works (of 1892-95) and Norse Pottery (of 1903-04) and the 1894 beginnings of Pickard China.

Due to space constraints, this essay examines Pauline Pottery only. That firm dominates most Edgerton pottery talk, as it did my September 11th speech before the membership of the Wisconsin Pottery Association. If the Association permits, I will attempt to sketch the history of the other firms at a later date.

Pauline Jacobus, the first woman to wholly produce art pottery in Chicago, moved to Edgerton in 1888, with her husband, Oscar, who had gained wealth as a member of the Chicago board of trade. She first lived in a rented mansion on Edgerton's quality row, Washington Street, but later purchased, with her own money, a dwelling on the outskirts of the city. She christened this home "The Bogert," after her own maiden name. Born in 1840 in New York,

she had married Oscar Jacobus on December 13, 1861. They were the parents of two children, Allen, born in May 1863, and Jennie, born in January 1869. Fraternal, Oscar was a Republican and a Mason. An 1889 history of Rock County dutifully lists the date of her marriage and the birthdates of her children, but tells us precious little about the woman who lent her name and artistry to Pauline Pottery. "Mrs. Jacobus, who is a most estimable lady, is a member of the Baptist church," the compilers wrote.

Edgerton owed its start to the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway Co., which had literally placed the village on the map in 1853. First settled in 1836 by Robert and Daniel Stone, Edgerton had been incorporated as a city in 1883. The year the Pauline Pottery Co. started in Chicago. The community had been named for Benjamin Hyde Edgerton (1811-1886), the engineer responsible for the railroad's route. When Edgerton officials first approached him about the honor, the engineer allegedly told them: "Better wait after I'm dead. I might do something in the meantime to discredit the name."

The population in 1882, when Thomas Sneath compiled his "Directory" of the village, was roughly 1,000. Ninety businesses in Edgerton then sold everything from groceries to wagons. There was one lawyer, one bank, one ice dealer, one photographer, one newspaper and 15 tobacco leaf merchants. By 1906, when Edgerton boasted a population of 2,416, the tobacco-growing industry of southern Wisconsin had made Edgerton its shipping market, with "about half

the total product of the state going out from this point," according to the G.W. Peck's Wisconsin "Cyclopedia," published that year.

The Edgerton of Pauline Jacobus was a place of enormous contradictions. A shining temple of learning, the "new" Carnegie library, was built in 1907, just four years after the city council had finally outlawed spitting on the sidewalk. An artesian well, sunk down 500 feet, was installed on Edgerton's Front Street in September 1890. A fountain there featured a scantily clad, cast-iron statue of "Psyche," artwork that graced the city's main thoroughfare until 1910. And during the same era and place, beef cattle destined for the Willson Brothers' market were routinely pushed through the downtown's unpaved streets by cattlemen on horseback, with at least one crazed steer getting loose in March 1890. It was finally cornered in the Baptist church yard, where it was shot and killed.

A "superior pottery clay" had been noted by Sneath in 1882, but serious exploitation of Edgerton's pottery possibilities awaited October 1887, when a friend of Edgerton businessman Matthew Croft visited and "became quite enthusiastic in the project of manufacturing pottery" from local clay beds (Edgerton's Wisconsin Tobacco Reporter, 14 October 1887). Croft waned enthusiastic in the local newspaper on November 11 that year: "This is no chimera, or idle dream, or make-believe. We have a bed of clay not surpassed in the United States—from 25 to 60 feet strata, enough to keep at work 50 good plants or potteries ... Our

clay has been analyzed or assayed at the United States mint, also at Birmingham, England, and last of all in Chicago, and it is pronounced excellent. One manufacturer is ready to start a plant with 50 hands on one line alone.”

Although smacking of boosterism, the boast about the “one manufacturer” eventually materialized in the guise of Oscar Jacobus and his wife, the former Pauline Bogert, who had been a Chicago china painter and had studied pottery at the Rookwood School for Pottery Decoration at Cincinnati.

Hiring Ohio kiln-builder John Sargeant and employing Rookwood instructor Laura Fry, the Jacobus family turned out their first Pauline Pottery ware (which was at first incised or impressed, with the firm’s name in block letters, especially during the Chicago period, and later, during its Wisconsin manufacture, was marked with reversed “P”’s straddling a crown) in 1883 at 71 36th St. and 57 Walsh St., Chicago. Heavy, dense clays, imported from as far away as Ohio, curtailed the firm’s ability to produce its main cash product, porous cups used for electric batteries, then in great demand for telephones. Lack of cheap, ready raw material also hindered the creation of the firm’s artware, made under the supervision of Mrs. Jacobus, which consisted of earthenware, underglaze vases, bowls and jars decorated with handpainted blue, yellow or dark green designs, largely inspired by nature, as well as incised and gilded redware. By 1884, the artware was being sold at Marshall Field & Co.’s large department store, according to Sharon Darling’s “Chicago Ceramics &

Glass.”

By late November 1887, Oscar Jacobus had determined that Edgerton’s clay was as good for making porous battery cups as “any other he had yet found,” with the Chicago businessman suggesting the creation of a joint stock company to help expand the Pauline Pottery enterprise in Edgerton (WTR, 25 November 1887). Capital of \$20,000 was raised through stock sales, coordinated in Edgerton by general store owner Emilus W. Babcock, with Oscar Jacobus himself the largest stockholder, with 160 shares (WTR, 10 Feb. 1888; 11 May 1888). There were 400 shares of stock sold, with other major stockholders including John P. Towne, Edgerton’s first attorney; Andrew Jenson, Charles L. Culton and William H. Pomeroy, Edgerton tobacco dealers; Frederick W. Coon, editor of the Wisconsin Tobacco Reporter newspaper; and Thomas Perry and Charles Mabbett, Edgerton general store owners.

An Edgerton warehouse owned by E.C. Hopkins, located on West Lawton Street, had been purchased by the pottery by early March 1888, with Oscar Jacobus (named secretary and superintendent of the concern) supervising construction of a boiler and engine there in April 1888 (WTR, 13 and 20 April 1888). By late February 1888, John Sargeant, of Cincinnati, had been authorized by the firm to build, at this site, three “biscuit” kilns (measuring 7, 8 and 10 feet in diameter, respectively); one “muffle” kiln; one “slip” kiln; and one “trier” kiln. First work on the kilns began March 22, 1888, with all kilns done by May 1888 (WTR, 2 March, 23

March, 30 March, 4 May, 11 May 1888).

Employees at the factory included Fannie Cleaver, Chicago, a graduate of that city’s Academy of Fine Arts, who arrived in Edgerton on June 12, 1888, and worked in the firm’s designing and decorating department that first year through December, then again from September to November in 1889; J.P. Hjort, a Danish man hired as a moulder, whose bride, Louise Rouland, arrived in Edgerton on the 4 a.m. train June 26, 1888, and was immediately thereafter married at the home of an Edgerton minister; and Lena Doane, a Chicago “decorating artist,” who was hired by the pottery in September 1888 (WTR, 15 June, 29 June, 17 August, 28 September, 26 October 1888; 22 November, 28 December, 1889).

The first order for “fancy ware” received by the reincarnated Pauline Pottery (placed by a Boston firm, possibly Kimballs) arrived in mid-May of 1888. Keeping the pottery busy until mid-June of the same year, this shipment of rose jars was probably the first decorated artware made by the Edgerton factory phase of Pauline Pottery (WTR, 11 May, 18 May, 15 June 1888). By 1889, the pottery had received a new machine for making flower pots and jelly jars (WTR, 24 May 1889), while, in 1890, the firm received an order for \$500 worth of lamp bowls from a “Kenosha manufacturer of fancy brass lamps” (WTR, 5 September 1890).

The sudden May 10, 1893, death of Oscar Jacobus, coupled with that year’s financial panic (creating 1929 Great Depression-like financial conditions throughout the

American economy), contributed to the failure of the pottery's factory phase, with the "property of the Pauline Pottery ... sold under foreclosure of mortgage" by mid April of 1894. Later that month, the firm reorganized as the Edgerton Pottery Co., but without any participation by Pauline Jacobus (WTR, 20 April, 4 May 1894). The new firm apparently concentrated largely on the porous cup portion of the business, selling \$10,000 worth of that product in 1894, but itself had failed financially by July 10, 1901, when it was forced into foreclosure. This was apparently because of legal challenges from another firm concerning the manufacturing process of the Pauline Pottery battery cup (WTR 12 July 1901).

Sometime prior to December 1902, Pauline Jacobus purchased one of the kilns from the old firm and had it moved, brick-by-brick, to The Bogert (also operated by Mrs. Jacobus, during this era, as a fashionable summertime resort). The kiln, painstakingly built by a professional, was taken apart by a stone mason while Mrs. Jacobus "stood by with a notebook and pencil, numbering each brick and measuring each part as it was taken down," according to a latter-day historian. The kiln was then reassembled, "with many misgivings as to how it would work" (WTR, 16 February 1939).

Pauline Jacobus remembered this adventure vividly. "I don't suppose that any potter ever watched with more anxiety the output of that first burning," she later wrote. "It was one thing to have theories of how a kiln should be built and quite another to feel solely responsible for the way it had been built. I hov-

ered about the thing while it was still too hot to touch, wondering how my precious jugs were going to come out. And when the bricks had cooled sufficiently to let us open it I was in a fever of excitement until I had made sure that everything was all right ... It had held a great deal of ware since, but it never held any in which I was more vitally interested than it did on that first occasion, which was in so large a measure to settle my future work" (quoted on page 237 of "Wisconsin Heritage," Bertha Kitchell Whyte, 1954).

In time for Christmas, she sold decorated ware that year, and continued to create decorated "studio phase" Pauline Pottery until December 1909, when she closed her Wisconsin pottery for good, effective December 15th (WTR, 19 December 1902, 26 November 1909).

"Parties looking for Christmas gifts will be pleased to learn that Mrs. Jacobus has just burned a kiln and has some fine specimens of the Pauline Pottery," readers of the Edgerton newspaper learned through the means of a tiny classified advertisement on December 4th, 1903. "Prices to suit all. For sale at the pottery in Mr[s].'s Jacobus' home. Phone 111." The last year of the pottery's production "a choice collection" was still on sale at Stewart's jewelry store "and at the pottery where will be found 'seconds' at greatly reduced prices," readers discovered in the Reporter issue of November 26th, 1909.

The Bogert, just beyond the north city limits, in the Dane County community of Albion, was destroyed by fire on July 19, 1911, and, sometime thereafter, Pauline

Jacobus moved first to Madison and then to Texas, where she made a life with her daughter and, later, her son-in-law. "The alarm was telephoned in and the fire apparatus gotten out quickly but when the location of the fire was discovered and being no water supply in reach, only the hook and ladder truck and firemen went to the scene," the Reporter's readers learned in the July 21st, 1911, newspaper. "The blaze started in the roof, either from the chimney or sparks from the kitchen range, and when discovered was quite well underway ... When helped reached there from town the entire roof was a mass of flames and nothing could be done to save the building."

These ads appeared in the Reporter soon after the blaze: "I have decided to sell my furniture, dishes and pottery; also some pictures and two wood mantles." "Mrs. O.I. Jacobus has some choice pieces of furniture, including a large sideboard, some pottery and also some fine Leghorn chickens for sale ... All good bargains" (WTR, 28 July, 1 September 1911).

Mrs. Jacobus died July 16, 1930, at age 89, while residing at the Masonic Home, Dousman. She had been "a guest" there since January 24, 1926 (WTR, 11 July 1930).

The one-time great potter had returned to Edgerton from Texas in the summer of 1927, Mrs. Morris Hitchcock remembered in the late 1930s. "She came back dressed in the fashions of the early (eighteen) nineties," Hitchcock wrote. "She was the loveliest little old lady you [can] picture. In fact, she made you think of that song 'Little Old Lady Passing By' ... Even though she was

a very old lady, she still had her indomitable will, her sense of humor and her quick wit." (WTR, 16 February 1939).

*The WPA Press thanks Mr. Mark Scarborough for his in-depth presentation in September, 2001 and for this article about Edgerton and the Pauline Pottery.*

If you wish to contact Mark, his information is as follows:

Mark Scarborough  
131 Letendre Avenue  
Port Edwards, WI 54469  
mdscarby@yahoo.com

## **DRYDEN POTTERY—A BOOK REVIEW**

Earlier this fall I received an email from The Book Stops Here, publishers of a book entitled "Dryden Pottery". The publisher asked if I would be interested in writing a review of their new book for the *WPA Press* newsletter. Having no idea what a pleasurable task this would be, I agreed.

The full title of the book is "Dryden Pottery of Kansas and Arkansas, An Illustrated History, Catalog and Price Guide". The book was printed in 2001, which is, perhaps not coincidentally, the 55th anniversary of Dryden Pottery (1946-2001).

The Dryden Pottery was originally located in Ellsworth, Kansas. In the Preface, author Joy V. Bliss, speaking of Jim Dryden, states "From 1946 to 1956 this one-man dynamo produced pottery in Ellsworth, Kansas, population around 2,500". A James Dryden, in his Introduction to the book, modestly notes that his entrepreneurial genes along with college coursework in chemistry and art, as well as government loans for his WWII service, made him uniquely prepared to select clays, formulate glazes and finally to find markets for his ceramic wares.

In the book's Forward, noted Camark and Niloak pottery authority and author David E. Gifford comments that "Dryden Pottery is the last great commercial manufacturer of ceramics in Arkansas". Gifford notes that A. James Dryden produced vast amounts of tourist wares and commemorative pieces. Gifford goes on to quote such art pottery experts as Paul Evans,

author of "Art Pottery of the United States" and Dr. John Marion Nelson, "Art Pottery of the Midwest", finally arriving at the answer to the perennial question, art pottery or otherwise, by noting that today's hand-thrown products from Dryden in Arkansas fall squarely into these authorities' definitions of art pottery.

"Dryden Pottery" was written by Gay Leon Dybwad, a retired physicist and Kansas State University graduate who originally started collecting Drydenware on his mother's advice, and by Joy V. Bliss, M.D., a retired physician from the Kansas City area, who suggested this book project based on her interest in Kansas history and the couple's modest Dryden collection.

"Dryden Pottery" is a 8.5 x 11" softback book featuring a beautiful red Grecian pitcher/ewer on the cover. The book includes a CD-ROM containing a color image gallery of Dryden pottery. The authors started the catalog of photographs (black and white photos grace the book pages) using their own collection, but note that their book/catalog effort was generously supplemented by other enthusiastic Dryden collectors, during the books' production.

The book begins with an extensive biography of A. James Dryden (1917- ), founder of the pottery in both Kansas and, later, Arkansas. The second chapter devotes 20 pages to the background and goings-on in Kansas, 1946-56. A third chapter contains 25 pages on the history of the Arkansas Dryden pottery, 1956-present.

Each chapter contains numerous photographs and tracks family

members and relatives along with many/most of the Dryden designers and workers. It is obvious that the Dryden pottery was and still is a family enterprise, with everyone that worked there considered a family member.

As with other pottery histories, we find familiar names – potters and designers that moved from job to job; we hear about their work for Dryden and learn how their pieces were developed and marked.

Next comes a chapter containing an extensive black and white photo catalog, divided into Kansas and Arkansas pieces, and including marks and labels, and even advertisements. Finally, a section on pottery remnants found at the Ellsworth, Kansas site is described, complete with photographs.

The “Dryden Pottery” book is 160 pages, and includes a price guide and the color photograph library on CD-ROM. The contents

of the book can be viewed at this website:

[www.bookstopshere.com](http://www.bookstopshere.com)

The book is \$28.95, plus \$4 for shipping and handling. For purchase information, check the website, or contact the publisher at:

The Books Stops Here  
1108 Rocky Point Court, NE  
Albuquerque, NM87123-1952  
(505)296-9047

email:  
[gldjvb@hubwest.com](mailto:gldjvb@hubwest.com)

*Kari Kenefick*, WPA Press

What would you like to see in the WPA Press that is currently missing? Please be sure to fill-out your survey, included with this issue, and bring to our January meeting, January 8, 2002 or mail it to:

**WPA**  
**P.O. Box 46**  
**Madison, WI 53701-0046**

Your newsletter contributions, in the form of articles and/or information, are welcome. Send them to:

Kari B. Kenefick  
1930 E. Main St., Apt. 3  
Madison, WI 53704