

# Huberhaus Pottery

(Continued from Page B16)

case of terminal roots," he said. It took some conjuring to convince his Panama-born wife to move into the area, but she now loves the area as much as he does.

When he returned to the area, he had no intentions of becoming a potter. However, his Uncle Charles Huber, who was the local historian and who had painstakingly developed a unique, traditional approach to redware pottery, asked him to buy his business.

"I seemed to have an inclination for doing it. I liked doing it and I liked the rustic redware style that's my uncle's trademark," said Huber, who purchased his uncle's business in 1991.

According to Huber, each potter has a certain style or technique that identifies his pottery.

Huber said that his own style is similar to his uncle's but as the years go by, his own style is becoming more prevalent.

"Our style" is utilitarian pottery that serves function — it's made to

be used. It's more than "just for nice," Huber said as he fingered a pie plate. The redware has a doily imprint in it — a trademark carryover from his uncle.

He does some sponge painting on redware, popular today and also centuries earlier. Almost every size of pie plates, bowl, jug, crock, cup, pot, pitcher, candlestick, dog dish, bird house, and serving dish is part of Huber's stock. What he doesn't have, he will custom-make.

The Hubers like to search for original redware. Most pottery is unmarked. Because the early potters were often in a hurry, they seldom cleaned off the bottom of the clay pot and fingerprints are often evident.

Although most pottery was not decorated, slip trailing was sometimes used on plates and then glazed. The clear glaze turned yellow after firing.

A few pieces show elaborate designs and have humorous sayings slip-trailed on them. One saying written in German is used occa-

sionally by Huber that translated, reads: "I cook what I can. What my pig doesn't eat, my husband will."

Some potters dated the pottery and some even wrote comments on the pottery, such as "It's a sunny day today," or, "I saw my first robin."

The most stirring comment that Huber found on a piece of dated pottery made by a potter named Stahl read: "Nazis invade Poland."

Comments such as that increase the value of the historical piece.

Huber occasionally inscribes a message on the bottom of his redware.

In the Huber's backyard is a pottery shed where he does all the work.

After the pottery is formed on the wheel, it is fired in a kiln at 1,900 to 2,000 degrees.

"Other clays take higher temperatures, but redware will melt if fired at a higher temperature," Huber said.

Redware pottery is dishwasher, microwave, and oven safe.

In the colonial period, potters often had dual occupations, such as farming and pottery making.

Throughout the winter, they worked on their pottery. A few pieces were made in advance but most were special orders from settlers' wives who had broken a crock or bowl and needed a replacement or for additional kitchen ware.

The colonists often needed to wait several months until the potter had enough pieces to fill a walk-in, beehive kiln. It was a slow process that took three days to start a fire and reach the high temperature. When the fire reached the right temperature, it sounded like a train whistle.

"There are instances of potters

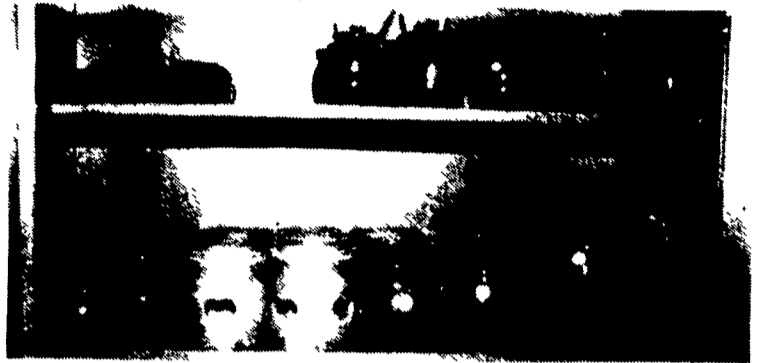
being killed from exploding kilns," Huber said.

If it is not glazed, the redware pottery may be stacked for the firing process.

Huber doesn't gather his own clay at the riverbanks like his ancestors did. Instead, he orders processed clay from a Pittsburgh source.

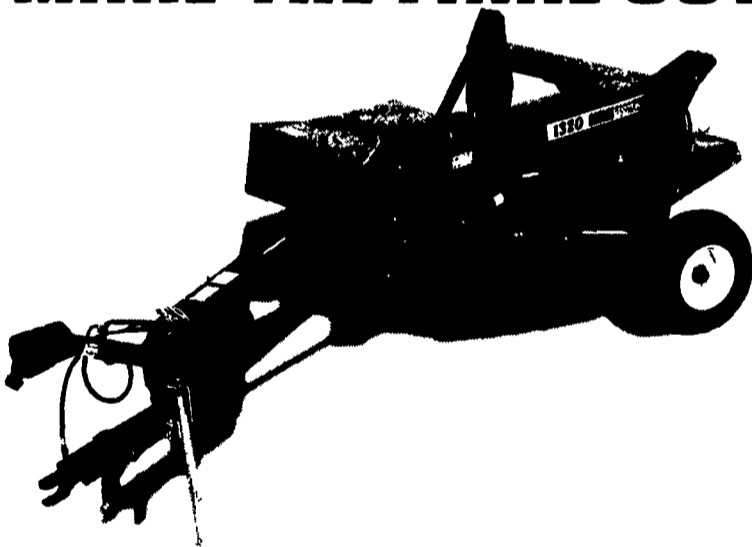
In addition to demonstrating at historic shows, Huber teaches pottery at schools and holds classes for students during summer months.

Huberhaus Pottery is located at R.D.#2, Box 433L, Myerstown, PA 17067 or call (717) 866-6152.



The shelves are filled with redware ready to be transported to a show. According to Huber, "Redware pottery pie plates make the best pie because the crust is nice and flaky."

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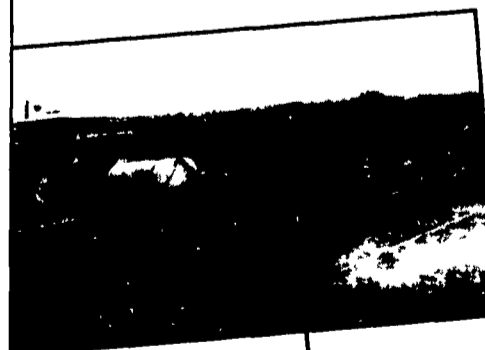
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