

THE KILNS OF SOUTHEASTERN ALBERTA

Ronald M. Getty

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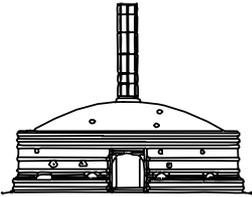
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PREFACE

Every once in a while an opportunity presents itself that is just too good to refuse. Acquiring the land, buildings, equipment and records of the Hycroft China plant was just such an opportunity. When their father passed away, Harry Veiner's daughters, Natalie and Shirley, decided to make a gift of the Hycroft factory to the Friends of Medalta Society who were formed to help preserve the story of Alberta's Pottery Industry.

In recognition of their historical importance, the buildings and old kilns of the Medalta Potteries were declared a Provincial Historic Site in 1975. Medalta was the oldest of the potteries in the Medicine Hat/Redcliff area. It was in business far longer than any of the upstarts that tried to compete with it, and its name was a recognized household word throughout Canada. During the 1920s and '30s, everyone had something made by Medalta in their home—and many still do today—be it a crock, vase, lamp, jardiniere, pitcher or mixing bowl. If it could be made in clay, chances are that Medalta made it, or something just like it.

Unfortunately, quite a few years passed from the time of its designation as an Historic Site until the "Friends" took it over.

By then it was almost too late. The kilns were slowly disappearing brick by brick as uncaring people (probably not knowing that they shouldn't) took one as a souvenir or to make repairs to their property. Glass was broken, roofs developed leaks and whatever was inside soon got dusty, wet and coated with rust. The Friends put a stop to much of this damage, as much as they could afford with the dollars that were all too hard to find for the preservation of this important site. But they soon found that there were some things which were beyond their control.

After Medalta declared insolvency, and after it was reopened by McArthur¹ and later the Thrall family, the buildings were leased for storage and other purposes. Somewhere along the way, one or more of the buildings became contaminated with lead; and, as a result, cannot be used until it is cleaned up. This will take time, not to mention the cost of doing so.

It is for this reason that the Veiner gift of the Hycroft plant was so timely. Here was a building that could be used to exhibit one of the largest pottery collections ever assembled. Moreover, it could be done in the setting of where the pottery was made. Not only could the products be shown, but they could be placed beside the tables where the slip-casting was done, where they were placed on a conveyor belt to go through the dryer, where the rough edges were trimmed from the bowls, where they were glazed and

finally placed in the tunnel kiln that changed the clay to pottery.

In some rooms, one can see the large tanks for mixing the clay or the filter pressing equipment used to de-water the clay slurry, squeezing the clay into cakes. In other areas, you can see the stacks of moulds and how they were labeled to keep track of which were used for what product. Most of the saggars sit empty now, but one can imagine the employees standing at a table, placing the pins in place, laying a plate in place, and repeating the process until the whole saggar was full, ready to be placed in the tunnel kiln.

What an opportunity it was. For the first time, the Friends could almost show a pottery in action. And best of all, they had the collections to show along with the equipment. The Veiner family had also made the Hycroft warehouse stacked high with boxes of cups, plates, bowls and vases available to the Friends. In addition, over the years, the Friends' Society had been fortunate in acquiring four hundred or more Medalta products.

It was not long before some of the Friends got together to look at the feasibility of an exhibit — a big exhibit. Soon they had the promise from many of their members and others in the community to loan their collections to make the exhibit possible. From there, it was only a few weeks until the ideas discussed over a warm cup of coffee were known to be possible. The exhibit was born.

Money was found to clean up the building—and you would be surprised at how much dust, dirt and bird droppings can accumulate within a few short years—and to repair the windows that thoughtless vandals had taken delight in breaking. Thousands of items had to be moved to make room for exhibit cases. One area of the factory was full, and I do mean full, of toilet products and the moulds used to make these toilets, water tanks and bathroom sinks. Perhaps you, like me, do not think of Hycroft as a factory making bathroom fixtures, but indeed it was. In fact, from about 1975 until it closed, Hycroft was only making such products as the market for dishes had all but vanished.

The decision was made to leave other areas of the plant much the way they were found with only the loose dirt being cleaned up. As a result, you can look into the dryer and see the moulds — each holding a bowl — stacked on racks, ready to slowly move through the hot air chamber. Similarly, you can peer into the end of the tunnel kiln and see the saggars slowly coming towards you. Large and small crocks are everywhere. When the factory was in full swing, these would have been filled with glaze mixtures, pins and

stilts. There are stacks and stacks of moulds and saggars, the lifeblood of a working factory, some of them now serving to direct traffic as you walk through the factory.

The main thrust of the exhibition is to show the diversity of products made by the Medalta Potteries Limited and Hycroft China. But these two firms cannot be viewed in a vacuum. Each started out making pottery under another name, and each went through a succession of owners and subsequent name changes. To understand Medalta and Hycroft, one must look at the pottery industry as a whole in the Medicine Hat/Redcliff area. Perhaps the Redcliff firms could have been left out, but then you would not know that the firm was established by Medalta's superintendent Jesse W. Wyatt; nor would you be able to see the similarities and differences in the products made by each of the potteries.

For that reason there is a small exhibition of most of the potteries in the Medicine Hat/Redcliff area. Some, like Clark's Gas City Pottery, are not included as presently we have no pieces definitely attributed to his company. Others, like P.I.E. or New Medalta Ceramics, were in business for such a short period of time that their pieces are extremely hard to find, and the collector's contributing to this exhibit just did not have many to provide. However, each of these firms is discussed more fully in the exhibition catalogue.

Perhaps I should not refer to this book as a catalogue as it was never intended to be an exhibition catalogue. Rather, it is a brief history of the various companies that made pottery in southeastern Alberta. From the earliest beginnings through to the last dying breath of a once vibrant industry, it gives you a glimpse of the men who built the industry, the interplay between the factories, the name changes that took place and, of course, the products that were made by each.

For an in-depth look at the pottery industry you are encouraged to read Marylu Antonelli and Jack Forbes' book **Pottery in Alberta: The Long Tradition**. This very enjoyable read covers the whole industry from the first brick and tile works through to the potteries that were still working in 1976. They aptly cover the major players and the workmen on the production line; they show the interplay and intrigue between the potteries, how they competed with one another, stole one another's workmen, and at times cooperated. Drawing extensively upon the Medalta papers preserved in the Provincial Archives in Edmonton and their numerous interviews with the men and women of the potteries, the authors provide insights into all aspects

of the industry. At times funny, in places raunchy or earthy, it weaves a fascinating story in the words of the people who were there.

I have drawn extensively upon Antonelli and Forbes' book for much of the history and general information presented herein, but the one aspect which they did not cover in any detail was the products themselves. Hopefully, that deficiency is now corrected as this book places a heavy emphasis on the products themselves. But, while it may be desirable, it would be impossible to identify and illustrate all of the items in the exhibition. The cost of taking the photographs would be prohibitive, and the endless listing of the pieces would be monotonous to say the least. Rather, we have elected to place Medalta and Hycroft in the wider context of the industry as a whole. The products that are illustrated are only a cross-section of what was available. Many of them can be found in the exhibition, but not all. Some items, both in the show and the book, are unique. You may never see them elsewhere as they were prototypes of pieces that never went into full scale production; others like the pencil holder were made in very limited numbers and are all but impossible to find.

I wish that it was possible to name everyone involved with the pottery industry, but that would be thousands of names. One would be hard put to find an early Medicine Hat family that did not have someone involved with one of the potteries in the area. It does not seem right to mention only the owners and managers of the factories. It is true that they made the important decisions that brought either prosperity or disaster, but alone they could not have accomplished anything.

It was the workers on the line that made it happen: the mould makers, kiln men, jiggermen, runners, helpers, trimmers, glazers, decorators, packers, book keepers and so on. Each of you has our thanks for the part that you played even though we cannot mention your name.

Also, I would like to apologize here for any oversight in not mentioning a pottery that was located in the area. I have tried to mention all that were more than just a studio pottery, ones that were mass producing a variety of wares which found their way into homes across Canada. But one could have well been missed as there were so many in the area.

THE KILNS OF SOUTHEASTERN ALBERTA

The year was 1906. Alberta—one of Canada’s newest provinces—was barely a year old. Medicine Hat had just incorporated itself and was on the verge of a boom, perhaps rivaling Calgary, Edmonton or Lethbridge in the race to become Alberta’s main industrial centre. The city seemed ideal for commerce. The clear South Saskatchewan river ensured a plentiful water supply, land was abundant—an industrial park had even been set aside—and the Canadian Pacific Railroad’s main line provided direct access to both east and west markets. But best of all, the city had gas; more clean burning natural gas than it knew what to do with. And on that asset the city would build its future.

The next few years were indeed busy. At times the city seemed to be overrun with new faces, all exploring the possibilities of setting up a business in the area. The brick and tile industry saw unprecedented growth both in Medicine Hat itself and nearby Redcliff, just a few miles to the west. Cheap land, almost free natural gas, a wide variety and a plentiful supply of clays—not to mention the railway—were irresistible.

One now well-known person who came to the “Hat” in 1907 was Rudyard Kipling. He was not there as an investor, but to only visit and enjoy himself. He had in fact been to the town twice before, once in 1889 and then three years later in 1892. His 1907 visit, though, was timely as it came just when some of the citizens were thinking about changing the town’s name. Kipling undoubtedly affected the decision when he said “And don’t you think of changing the name of your town. It’s all your own and the only Hat of its kind on Earth.” And it was at this time, too, that he commented on the town having “all hell for a basement,” a reference to the extensive gas fields below the town.

One of the factories choosing Medicine Hat over Redcliff was the Alberta Clay Products Company. From its establishment in 1909, it went on to become a familiar landmark of the city, offering steady employment to hundreds of people over the years. While this company is not really part of the pottery industry that we are examining, it is worthy of note from several standpoints.

First of all, from a strong start declining through the war years—largely due to manpower shortages—it went on to flourish under new management. Harry C. Yuill, who had settled in Medicine Hat in 1884 as a carpenter, acquired controlling interest and provided the capital to refurbish the factory

which had been neglected during the war. From this start, Yuill and/or his family went on to play an important part in the pottery industry of the area, eventually building the Medicine Hat Potteries and taking over an abandoned Redcliff plant. But more about those stories later.

Secondly, the Alberta Clay Products may be of interest to some collectors as they did make a few decorative pieces over the years. Perhaps they were never main production lines, but they have certainly become quite collectable. One of these was a figurine of a frizzy haired dog sitting on a rectangular base. It stood about eight inches high, and I believe it was sold in pairs to sit at either side of the fireplace. One of these dogs sold for close to \$1000.00 at a recent antique show, so if you have one handle it with tender loving care.²

The other item, which came in several sizes, was a frog-shaped figurine probably made to attractively decorate one's garden. All were made of the relatively coarse sewer-pipe clay and were either left the natural colour of the clay or finished using a brown glaze. The frogs were simply marked with the initials of the company, A.C.P., cut into the bottom, while the dog was stamped on the base with the name "Medicine Hat."

But the clay products companies were not the only industries to settle in Medicine Hat to take advantage of the cheap gas. Several greenhouses sprang up, a planing mill, a brewing company and several flour mills. One of these, the Ogilvie Flour Mills Company Limited, was to have a long association with the Medalta Potteries. Over a fourteen year period, starting in 1926, Medalta produced a variety of products—such as mixing bowls, pitchers, teapots, measuring cups and ashtrays—that were distributed throughout western Canada by merchants carrying Ogilvie's products. Later, when we examine the Medalta Potteries Limited, we will take a closer look at that particular venture.

Without further ado, we will examine each of the potteries starting with the builders of the Medalta plant. We could have followed the history of each factory from start to finish; but, instead, we will take a chronological look at the industry, factory by factory. We will look at when the companies were formed, when they closed, the main players, the main changes occurring over the years and the wide variety of products made by each.

SUCCESSION OF EACH POTTERY PLANT

Medalta Potteries' Factory

1912-1914: Medicine Hat Pottery Company Limited

1915-1924: Medalta Stoneware Limited

1924-1954: Medalta Potteries Limited

1958: New Medalta Ceramics

1960-1966: Sunburst Ceramics Limited

Clark's Factory

1916-1922: Gas City Pottery Limited

1922-1924: Canada Pottery

Alberta Potteries' Factory

1931-1936: Alberta Potteries Limited (Jesse W. Wyatt)

1936-1938: Alberta Potteries Limited (Perry and Matuska)

1939: Provincial Industrial Enterprises or P.I.E.

1941-1966: Alberta Potteries Limited (J. Harlan Yuill)

1966-1986: Medalta Potteries (1966) Limited

Medicine Hat Potteries' Factory

1938-1955: Medicine Hat Potteries

1955-1989: Hycroft China Limited

MEDICINE HAT POTTERY COMPANY LTD: 1912-1914

The first pottery factory, established in Medicine Hat in 1912 under the supervision of John A. MacIntyre, was an offshoot of the Western Porcelain Manufacturing Company of Spokane, Washington. By 1913, its two thirty-foot, round downdraught kilns were up and running, and with a labour force of about fifty men, the factory was soon producing a good variety of products.

Not much is known about the actual products as few items have survived the ravages of time. It is quite likely that most of their smaller products were not marked with the name of the company, but the larger ones were. To date, the only stamped products that have shown up are crocks which had the name of the company arranged within an encircling oval, much like the oval stamp used by the later Medalta Potteries Limited. The top half of the crock was glazed a dark brown while the bottom half was all but plain. The size³ was emblazoned in black oxide on the side of the crock above the company's stamp, the decorative numeral attesting to the number of American gallons that it held.

That they made other products—including a combinette or slop jar, a shouldered jug, a teapot and two styles of pitchers—has been determined from an advertisement illustrating those products. However, it is probably safe to assume that its product-line included many other pieces such as water coolers, butter churns, bean pots and mixing bowls. All these products were produced by Medalta Stoneware Limited which took over the factory, and I believe that Medalta's early products are a reflection of the wares of the original company.

Even though Mr. W.E. Clark, the superintendent of the new plant, was an experienced potter from Zanesville, Ohio, he could not keep the fledgling in business. Until the stoneware clays were located and developed at Eastend, Saskatchewan, the company depended upon clay imported from Washington, and the cost of transporting these clays was just too expensive at over \$10.00 per ton. The Saskatchewan clays which could be delivered to Medicine Hat at about \$2.00 a ton were found just a little too late. The pottery closed its doors in early 1914, but not for long. It was soon in business again producing wares under the name Medalta.

MEDALTA STONEWARE LTD: 1915-1924

The new owners of the pottery—incorporated in December 1915 under the name Medalta Stoneware Limited—acquired all assets of the defunct company including the land, buildings and equipment. The plant must have been pretty well intact and ready to go as by May 1916, after some refurbishment, they were back in business using the stoneware clays from Eastend. But times were not easy for them either. Manpower shortages were developing due to the start of World War I, with many of the local able-bodied men enlisting in Medicine Hat's own battalion, the 175th. In addition, Medalta was going head to head with well established American potteries, particularly the one at Redwing, Minnesota, which had the western Canadian market all but sewn up. But Medalta persevered, and within a few years they had captured the western market for stoneware products from the American firms and were starting to make inroads into the eastern Canadian market.

The visit to and the tour of the plant in 1919 by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and his entourage was an event to be remembered by those who were there. The workmen must have been proud to have their factory selected as one of the official places to visit. It certainly was not soon forgotten as Medalta proudly proclaimed the visit in 1922, and later included a photograph of the event in its 1924 catalogue.

“The plant of the Medalta Stoneware Limited has been honored by visits from the H.R.H. Prince of Wales, Ex. Governor General of Canada the Duke of Devonshire and our present Governor General Lord Byng of Vimmy.”⁴

In 1921, Medalta could make the proud claim of “shipping the first carloads of manufactured goods, other than cereals, from Western Canada to points East of Fort William.”⁵ That year they shipped thirty-four cars of stoneware to the east, and 1922 promised to be an even better year with projections of up to sixty carloads.

Medalta was equally proud of the fact that it was a Canadian based company. Its slogan was “**Canadian made Stoneware from Canadian Clay, made by Canadian Workmen and financed by Canadian Capital.**”⁶ From a workforce of twelve in 1916, capable of making about 800 gallons of stoneware per day, they had grown to about sixty in 1922 and were now able to produce over 5000 gallons per day.⁷ At this time they were even looking into the production of white wares such as cups,

saucers and dinner plates. An advertisement in the December 15th edition of the Moose Jaw Evening Times offered a chance to acquire one or more of Medalta's one thousand \$100.00 shares which would finance a plant "to be built to manufacture White Dishes from Saskatchewan White Burning Clay." But for reasons unknown, these plans never came to be. It would be another fifteen years before Medalta got into the making of white dishes.

One of the first things that Medalta Stoneware Limited did was design an attractive stamp to identify the items made in its factory. The stamp, about two inches in diameter, had the company's name and location arranged around the head of an Indian wearing a fully feathered headdress. It is really unfortunate that Medalta had so much trouble placing a clear stamping on the side of its crocks, churns and water coolers, as the Indian-head is quite stunning when it is clear. Most stamps, however, are faint and/or smudged, losing the detail. Eventually, it was replaced with other factory stamps which had the plant's name within an oval.

We can only guess at what Medalta's full line of products was in the early years as the records dating before 1922 are all but missing. Presumably, the line was quite limited until after the war, but we may never know for sure as the only pieces marked with the Indian-head stamp were the larger items like crocks, butter churns, jugs, water coolers and water filters. Smaller items like mixing bowls, pitchers, teapots, bean pots and flower pots were not marked with Medalta's name at all, and we only know their availability from the written records that have survived.

One of these records is a price list dating to September 1922. It is reproduced in its entirety (Appendix I) as it not only shows the wide range of products and the sizes of each, but also what they sold for. Can you imagine buying a one gallon crock for 11.5 cents, a one pint pitcher or a ten inch mixing bowl for about 11 cents each, or a four inch flower pot for only 4 cents? In spite of the detail on this list, it still does not reflect all items made by Medalta at this time. Several miniatures including a jug, crock and churn have been found that date to 1922, and I am sure that other products probably went unlisted as well.

In 1922, Ulysses Sherman Grant, Charles Pratt and W.A. Creer were still the owners, the three having taken over the plant around 1918. I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Reilly, the grand daughter of Mr. Grant, some ten years or more ago and she showed me dozens of items that her father had brought home from the factory. All were unmarked. Not one had a factory stamp on it. Many were one of a kind items, prototypes of vases that never went into production. Others were main production lines such as French and milk pans, and she even had some of the miniature jugs and chamber

pots. But one piece was extra special. It was a head modeled after the one from Mrs. Reilly's doll.

Apparently, when the head of her large bisque doll was accidentally broken, her father took it to the factory to have a new head made. There the pieces were carefully glued back together, and then a mould was made. The new head was slip-cast and a little girl's tears were changed to ones of joy. But why waste a good mould? Why not put it to good use? And so they did. Fifty solid stoneware heads were cast to be used as door stops, and I must admit they would serve that purpose well for they were sturdy, a good size and heavy enough to prop most doors open.

In spite of its diverse line of wares, Medalta was not able to make a satisfactory profit for its investors. Perhaps it was the owners' inexperience in running a pottery, their failure to obtain the funds to buy the new equipment for making "white wares" or maybe it was just plain bad luck that led to the closure of Medalta Stoneware Limited. But whatever the reason, it was not for long as the plant was soon in production again, this time making pottery under the label of Medalta Potteries Limited. But before we examine that company, we will take a look at the pottery owned by W.E. Clark.



Trade Show Exhibition, ca. 1922
Photo Courtesy Medicine Hat Museum Archives

GAS CITY POTTERY LIMITED: 1916-1922 (also known as Clark's Pottery)

When Medalta Stoneware Limited started operations, they hired William E. Clark as their superintendent. He had been the superintendent of the Medicine Hat Pottery Company Limited from 1912 to 1914. Perhaps Medalta should not have done so, as Clark must have already been thinking about setting up his own pottery to go into direct competition with Medalta. He was barely with Medalta for eight months when he left to establish his own small factory in partnership with John Read. Soon the Gas City Pottery Limited, located just a stone's throw from Medalta, was open for business. With one kiln, a small building and a staff of about ten, the pottery started producing stonewares (perhaps only crocks at first), later expanding its lines to include mixing and pudding bowls, jugs, teapots, custard cups, slop jars, jardinières and even an ewer and basin set.⁸

The pottery was never large enough to give Medalta any real competition, and so far as we know, it did not have any distinctive products, ones that Medalta was not making as well. Admittedly, though, we know very little about Clark's products as to date no items have been found with the company's name on them. In all likelihood the Gas City Pottery and its successor, Canada Pottery, did not mark their items with company stamps. Perhaps we will have to wait for archaeologists to excavate the pottery's dump to find out what they made and how they marked them. For now we can only guess.

CANADA POTTERY: 1922-1924

Clark's factory, like Medalta, struggled through the war years and into the new decade barely providing a living for its owners. Around 1922, the name of Gas City Pottery Limited was changed to Canada Pottery, probably hoping to play upon the new-found patriotism of Canadians who were being asked to buy Canadian. Perhaps he was just trying to take advantage of Medalta's well advertised slogan, but if so it does not appear to have paid off. In 1924, Clark moved back to Ohio leaving his son John to close the plant. With John's help, most of their employees found work in the nearby Medalta plant.

At present, the products of the Canada Pottery are know only from a single photograph. It shows a variety of items that were exhibited in a 1922 trade show. While it is quite dark, you can at least make out the general shape of most pieces which includes at least two sizes of mixing bowls, a pudding bowl, a custard cup, two sizes of petites marmites, two sizes of a low Boston style teapot, a Brown Betty or Globe style teapot, a milk pitcher, slop jar, cuspidor and jardiniere.⁹ Many of the pieces are finished in a dark glaze, probably a Rockingham brown. Crocks and slop jars were plain stoneware while the stoneware pudding bowl had blue mottling on it.¹⁰



Trade Show Exhibition, ca. 1922

Photo Courtesy Medicine Hat Museum Archives

MEDALTA POTTERIES LTD: 1924-1954

Perhaps a change in name can bring a new vitality with it. That surely seems to have been what happened when Medalta changed its name from Medalta Stoneware Limited to Medalta Pottery Limited. Just why the name was changed has gone unrecorded, but perhaps it was a reflection of the owners' intent to expand its product-lines. Until now, stoneware products had been the bread and butter of the company. They had explored the white burning Saskatchewan clays only to find that they were not suitable for making the "white wares" around which they had planned the future of the company. Stonewares were still in high demand, though, especially the crocks, and new markets were there for the taking. But Medalta needed a strong man at the helm, one well versed in the pottery trade.



Medalta Potteries Barrel-shaped Churn ca. 1930

They found that leader in Jesse William Wyatt who took over as plant superintendent in late 1924. Wyatt, known as Bill to his friends, undertook his apprenticeship in Bristol, England. There he had learned all aspects of the trade from the front line duties of designing, mould-making, jiggering and preparing glazes, through to the construction of the kilns and the firing of the wares. He was the most skilled pottery man that Medalta had ever hired, and in a few short years he was to prove his worth.

One of the first things Wyatt did was convert the old American wine measure crocks to larger ones measured in British Imperial gallons. Thousands of old moulds were discarded as the new ones came on stream, and by February 1927, Medalta was actively promoting the new line by sending its agents and distributors window display cards to promote the Imperial sizes. They were quick to point out the obvious size difference, and to attract customers they were prepared to keep the price the same, at least for a short time.

“...Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the Medalta Imperial 6, holds practically the same as the #8 Wine Measure, also that the Imperial 8 holds more than the Wine #10.

...Stock MEDALTA WARE, (each crock stamped “Imperial”), and increase your sales. Advertising matter, in the form of Window Display Cards, is available for you.”¹¹

Medalta was into a period of change, trying to keep pace with the ever fickle market-place. The public was apparently satisfied with a plain crock, but not with a plain yellow mixing bowl or a dark brown teapot. Many customers were prepared to pay a little more for an attractive bowl for their kitchen, one of a different colour or with a bit of a design on it. Wyatt was quick to fill the requests coming in from Medalta’s agents. Over the next five years or so he designed hundreds of new products, adding many new sizes to their well established lines. For example, forty and fifty gallon crocks, a fifteen pound butter crock and a ten gallon butter churn



Jessie Wyatt - 1928

were all added. You could now get all crocks in the drain-bottom style if that is what you needed. Some of the completely new products introduced were pigeon and canary nests, dog and rabbit feeders, seal top jars, tobacco jars, ashtrays and a cracker box. And the old styles of mixing bowls, pitchers and teapots were replaced with new attractive styles available in a variety of bright colours.

The Ogilvie Venture

In 1926, the Ogilvie Flour Mills in Medicine Hat approached Medalta about having the factory supply them with items that would be given to customers buying the flour products of the mill. The merchants carrying Ogilvie's products would be the means of distributing the items. Even though the small-town stores shared the cost of the premiums with the Ogilvie company, it was a deal that was just too good to turn down. What better way to keep the goodwill of your regular customers, not to mention getting new ones, than to give a special gift at Christmas!

The 1926 premium differed from those of later years in several respects. For one, the merchants were given a choice as to what product they could get. Most chose a mixing bowl, either six or seven inches in diameter, but a few picked a one pint milk pitcher and others an individual sized Globe teapot. The main difference, though, was that the premiums of 1926 were not marked with the name of the participating merchant or Ogilvie's slogan. That practice started the following year.

For all practical purposes we can say that 1927 was the start of Medalta producing advertising premiums, or "named" goods as they were sometimes called. Prior to this, Medalta had put out a few items to advertise its own name or its Toronto distributor, the Medicine Hat Pottery Company, but not much else unless you include the ginger beer bottles. They had captured some advertising business as at least three firms in the Montreal area, all making head-cheese, were getting bowls with their names on them—Art Beaudin, J.B. Labrecque and R. Lafontaine. And the orders were not that small either. For example, just one of Labrecque's orders was for 4394 five inch bowls and 2443 cups.

But the Ogilvie order was different. In 1927, Medalta stamped the name of about 150 different merchants on just over 12,000 mixing bowls. Just keeping track of 150 rubber stamps must have been an undertaking in itself, and they did have to keep track of them as many were used for two or three years in a row.

The Ogilvie deal seems to have been limited to the three westernmost provinces. The majority of the participating merchants were from British Columbia (111), with Alberta being a distant second (35) and Saskatchewan just a few (6). The city of Victoria alone had fourteen merchants participating, more than twice the number of all Saskatchewan stores.

The premium for 1927 was a small seven inch mixing bowl with an attractive embossed design on the outside. The merchant's name surrounding the central Ogilvie slogan was placed in the bottom of the bowl. A plain one pint tankard pitcher was selected for 1928, and it like the 1929 measuring cup had the merchant's name stamped on the side. Starting in 1930, participation in the program began to decline due to the deepening effects of the depression. Alberta and Saskatchewan orders all but vanished, but some B. C. stores continued to place right through to 1941 when the practice appears to have been discontinued. The Elite sugar and creamer set, decorated with an attractive maple leaf pattern, was the last premium ordered by the merchants carrying Ogilvie's products.



*1 pint pitcher
1928*

Medalta's Artware

The end of the decade saw another major change at the Medalta factory with Wyatt opening a whole new field. Its artware line was introduced. By 1929 Medalta was ready for a major shift in its production. The ownership of the plant had changed hands again—but not the name this time—when the assets of Medalta were sold to R.C. Carlisle and O.C. Arnott of Calgary. The stoneware trade was rapidly declining as glass bottles became the container of choice for wine and ginger beer. At the height of the market in 1927-28, Medalta was making over a quarter of a million one gallon jugs a year, and even more beverage bottles. It was Medalta that kept the liquor commissions of Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan well stocked with various sized jugs, from a small half gallon to a large five gallon one for the serious imbiber. Thorpe's, McLaughlin's, Ye Old Country, Douglas & King, Phillip's and Gurd's were all getting their ginger beer bottles from Medalta.

To set up Medalta's new art department, Jesse Wyatt hired a young man from England. Tom Hulme signed on in 1929 and remained with the factory until it closed its doors in 1954. While Tom was busy getting the needed supplies and equipment, selecting decorations, preparing stencils and training the newly hired staff, Bill Wyatt was making the moulds for their new art line.

By 1930, Medalta was ready to introduce its new attractively decorated products which included a wall plaque, several styles of vases and two sizes of lamp bases. The next year they added several jardinières, six or more new vases, another three or four lamp bases, three different cookie jars and a number of figurines. The latter included a parrot, another bird, a buffalo and a bear which you could get as either a polar bear or a brown bear. They proudly showed their new artwares at several trade shows held in 1930 and 1931. And they were indeed stunning.

The most popular glazed designs included a cottage scene, a wind mill with the blades peaking from behind the building, and the ever so popular silhouetted owls sitting on the branch of a tree. For the discriminating homemaker, or one who could afford it, they produced some special pieces such as the gold fuzzy owl or gold fruit. The fruit pattern was a purple plum with the border accented in gold, while the owl was handpainted in such detail that almost every feather was shown. These special pieces, taking more time to decorate and using the expensive gold trim which also meant an extra firing, cost four times that of a regular decorated piece. By far the most common decorative technique though was to finish the vase, jardinière, bulb bowl, lamp base or figurine with coloured lacquers. An extra firing

was not needed when these coloured paints were used. Once the item left the art department it was ready for the store-shelf.

Hulme's lacquered patterns were many including the daffodil, tulip, apple blossom, bluebell, grape leaf and flower, daisy, iris, corn flower and buffalo berry. The "fruit" patterns included peaches, grapes, plums and later chili peppers. Flowers & fruits were usually depicted in detail, but some were quite stylized such as the stenciled tulip. Geometrical patterns were also available for a short time. One of these can best be described as a chicken-wire pattern, while another was simply a splatter of gold or silver coloured lacquer on a red, blue or green background. Popular hand painted patterns included the sailboat, gondola, a bird in flight or sitting on a branch, a Dutch pastoral scene and Y Kamel in desert scene. Sprigged patterns—ones raised above the surface of the vessel—included the very popular Dutch boy and girl often with a mill behind, an Indian man and maiden, the Chinese dragon, swallows flying over water lilies and a pair of storks.

That Medalta's new artwares were popular is attested to by Medalta having to hire thirty or more workmen to keep up with incoming orders. From a small start in 1930, Medalta's art line was to expand to over 200 different products and well over a hundred different designs, stencils and glaze mixtures.



*Vase #111 ca. 1931
"Happy Valley"*

A New Face - Karl Baumler

When the new owners from Calgary took control of Medalta in 1929, they appointed Walter Armstrong as general manager. Although he and Bill Wyatt had worked together and been shareholders in Medalta Potteries Limited, they had never got along that well. Now Armstrong was calling the shots, and he antagonized Wyatt even further by hiring Karl Baumler, a ceramist trained in Bavaria. Soon, it was time for Bill Wyatt to leave; management was listening to “the new kid on the block” even though Wyatt had far more experience. But Bill was not ready to move from southeastern Alberta nor to get out of the pottery business. He looked to Redcliff to set up his own pottery, and there he went into business with his sons Bert and Bill. By 1931, Wyatt’s Alberta Potteries Limited was up and running, and we will look at that operation after we have completed the Medalta story.

Baumler took over where Wyatt had left off. Under his guidance, Medalta developed dozens of new glaze mixtures. It was during Karl’s tenure that the sponged and variegated decorations were introduced. Rather than plain solid-colour glazes, you could now get a pleasing blend of a single colour, different colours flowing together or even one colour daubed onto another. Around the mid-1930s matt glazes were introduced, and later they were followed by satina finishes.¹²

Baumler continued to diversify Medalta’s product-line. New shaped bowls, teapots, casseroles, pitchers and ashtrays were but a few of the many newly designed products. The limited line of vases, lamp bases, jardinières and bulb bowls grew from a dozen to over eighty different styles, and many of the vases and jardinières could be found in two or more sizes.

The popularity of advertising items declined for a few years; but, starting in the fall of 1934, they once again grew in popularity, reaching their peak around 1938 or ‘39. For a while, it seemed that every store that could afford it wanted an item with its name emblazoned on the side to give to faithful patrons at Christmas time. Garages, grocery stores, lumber companies, breweries and especially hotels were all placing orders. Most were fairly small orders, around a gross in number, but some like the breweries were ordering several thousand at a time.



Medalta's Hotel China - Ed Phillipson

The year 1937 was a busy one for Medalta with major changes taking place at the factory and to the pottery industry itself: Hop Yuill was building his own pottery to go into direct competition with Medalta; all of Medalta's experienced workmen were "jumping ship" to work in the new plant; and even Karl Baumler and Walter Armstrong had taken positions at Yuill's Medicine Hat Potteries, but not before helping to find a new superintendent for Medalta.

Ed Phillipson who was fresh out of school and trained as a ceramic engineer took over as Medalta's new superintendent, but not without some trepidation. His first tour of the factory was almost enough to send him packing. The plant was run down, the equipment was old and outdated and the kilns were not to his liking. He could not really see much of a future with the plant. But he changed his mind and took the position when told that \$250,000 would be invested in the plant. Now the challenge was on, especially with Yuill's new pottery about to open.

Improvements quickly got under way: new equipment was acquired, some of the kilns rebuilt, and new product-lines were brought out. Phillipson's new fireproof ovenwares found a ready market once he had perfected the white-lining of the new style casseroles, pie pans, mixing bowls and roasting pans. But more was yet to come.

The next year Medalta was off on a whole new adventure, one that offered Ed ever so many challenges as a ceramic engineer. The white clays from Willows, Saskatchewan, that he had been asked to test, turned out to be a high-grade ball clay. Medalta could make hotel china with this porcelain clay, and best of all they already owned the clay deposits.

Over the next two years or so Phillipson developed a full line of hotelwares. Tablewares included dinner and side plates, soup and salad bowls, cereal and oatmeal bowls, oval platters, cups and saucers, coffee mugs, teapots, creamers and sugar bowls and many other specialty items. A good assortment of ovenwares was available: oval and round bakers, ramekins, cocottes, pot pie dishes, au gratins, shirred egg and rarebit dishes, sole dishes and custard cups. Serving dishes included muffin covers, fruit comports, salad bowls, olive and celery trays, gravy boats and ice water jugs.¹³ And they were really good products, standing up well to heavy restaurant use and going through an automatic dishwasher several times a day.

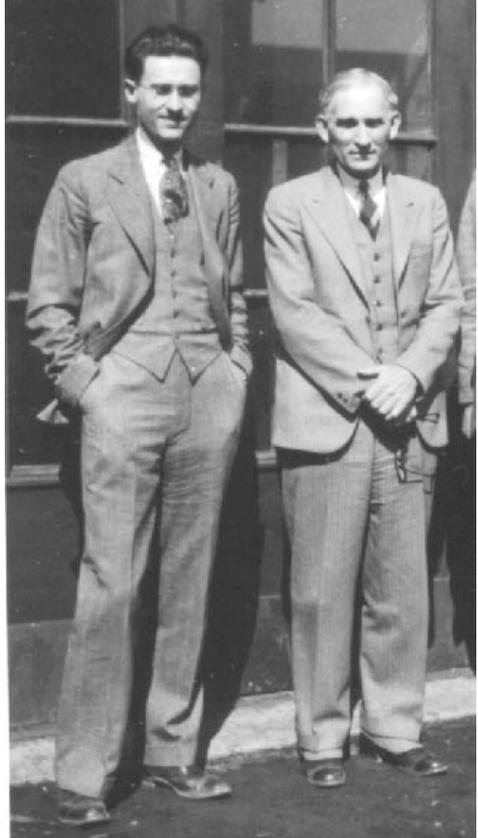
The sturdiness of Medalta's hotel china was unexpectedly and indelibly driven home when a person I was visiting intentionally knocked a plate off his kitchen counter. "See," he said, "nothing short of a direct blow on the edge of the plate will break it." He may have been right, as the plate bounced on the linoleum a few times, but did not break. I was all but in a state of shock from his demonstration, as the plate he had so nonchalantly knocked off the counter was one of the "Mountain Trails" pattern which, at the time, was selling for around \$100.00.

Ed Phillipson broke new ground in many areas. He was constantly searching for the right glaze. He had an awful time perfecting the blue and maroon underglazes, but eventually he did, and Medalta's green banded hotelware—a thin line on each side of a thicker band—soon was found in restaurants throughout Canada. He found the way to keep a bright yellow from being destroyed in the kiln, and as a result Medalta captured large orders from the C.N.R. And it was Ed who invented the machine for making cups with handles already attached. Medalta's hotel china catalogue dating around 1947 states, in part:

**A TRULY SANITAS
HANDLED CUP AT NO
EXTRA COST...**

The handle is an integral part of the Cup and eliminates the possibility of handles breaking from Cups, and what is more important there are no crevices on top and sides of handle to collect bacteria.

*Ed Phillipson (left) with
Professor Worcestor ca.
1934*



An Era Ends - Medalta Closes

After the war, Medalta's ownership effectively fell into the hands of Mr. Fred March who was living in Montreal in 1947, but he pretty well left things as they were. The hotel china market was booming, so why mess with a good thing! But all good things eventually come to an end, and Medalta was no exception. In 1952, the plant once again changed hands, this time to an Ontario owner, W.G. Pulkingham. Pulkingham had visions of making his fortune by producing several patterns of attractively glazed earthenware dishes. Following the war, the practice of giving a plate, soup bowl or what have you as an enticement to buy a theatre ticket had caught on. Medalta had in fact been producing items for such purposes since the late 1930's, two such ventures being with the Isis theatre in Calgary and the Rex theatre in Taber, Alberta. Pulkingham thought the market was ready to boom; in fact, he claimed to have three million dollars worth of orders in hand.

He also thought that the plant could be retrofitted for production of the new ware within two weeks and at a cost of about \$20,000. How wrong he was. Six months and \$175,000 later, the plant was still not running and the tentative orders for the new wares were being canceled by everyone. How was anyone to know that the theatre market would be killed, almost overnight, by the price of televisions coming down to a level where most families could afford one?

Collectors are now quite familiar with some of the new patterns that came out in Medalta's waning years. "Stardust" and "Confetti" were very similar in their decoration, both heavily speckled on a base yellow, cream, pink or green colour. They differed only in the shape of the dishes. Stardust, by far the easier one to find, was round in shape while Confetti was squarish with rounded corners. Other patterns, which often go unrecognized as Medalta products, are marked with round oxide stamps that read "Western Motifs by Hulme." They were available as Series 1 and Series 2 and depicted various scenes such as a ranch gate, coffee pot in a campfire, a coffee pot-bean pot-frying pan, and a brick stove with a coffee pot on it. But by far, the majority of the new products went unmarked with a Medalta stamp. Phillipson showed me a few of these which included solid coloured plates and even a TV dinner style plate which had a circular area at the top to hold an accompanying cup.

It is really too bad that Phillipson's advice was not heeded. He was against the changeover and strongly recommended against it. Medalta's hotelwares were being sold all across Canada, and there was none better to be found anywhere. But it was too late to go back. In 1954, an era had come to an end; Medalta Potteries Limited had fired its last kiln.



*Photo Courtesy of Medicine Hat Museum
Medalta Employees ca. 1927*

ALBERTA POTTERIES LTD (Wyatt's Company): 1931-1938¹⁴

When Wyatt and his sons set out on their own, they did not have a “Daddy Warbucks” to build a brand new factory for them. The crash of ‘29 was behind them, but the effects of the ensuing Depression were just starting to be felt. In spite of this, Wyatt remained optimistic, and after one brief setback, established his Alberta Potteries Limited in an old automobile factory which the town of Redcliff sold to him at the nominal price of \$1.00. To build his plant, he found financial help in the local community, with many ranchers taking a chance on buying shares in Wyatt’s new company.

They knew that Wyatt had what was needed the most; know-how. That, coupled with the will to succeed, soon resulted in an up and running factory. It was not very large—only one kiln to start with; the equipment was not new—much of it was bought second-hand from Medalta; they had to build a good part of the plant themselves; and, they had to find and train the men to do the various jobs. And they did it. By 1931, they were open for business, employing around fifteen workmen, ones who were often asked to wait an extra week or two for their wages.

The new pottery never offered Medalta any real competition even though the wares they made were very similar to Medalta’s and were being sold at a lower price. Wyatt kept his product-line to the items that were most popular at the time. His crocks, for example, were limited to sizes from one to ten gallons, the ones most commonly used for home pickling and storage. He also made several sizes of butter churns and butter tubs. All of these stoneware products were stamped on the side with the name of the pottery on a banner arced above a beaver. Items displaying this attractive “beaver” trademark have now become highly collectable and are prized over the relatively plain Medalta ones. Most now sell in the \$40.00 to \$80.00 range.

Other products were generally marked with an in-mould or impressed stamp, although several oxide varieties are known. The range of products is quite surprising considering the short time that Wyatt was in business and the size of his operation. He made over six different styles of mixing bowls, each available in several sizes. Some bowls were given pattern names such as “Elite” or “Service” or “Rex”. They produced chicken fountains, spittoons, bean pots, pudding bowls, meat pie pans, casseroles, custard cups, barrel-shaped cookie jars and at least six different styles of pitchers.¹⁵ They even had two ashtrays (one with a buffalo embossed in the bottom of the

ash holder) and three styles of teapots. One was plain but large, another they called their “Perfection” teapot, and the third was a two-piece percolating one. The top piece of the percolating one had a perforated cup at the bottom for the tea leaves, with the cup fitting snugly into the lower pot. Of course, if you wanted to, you could use the lower pot as a regular teapot.

Wyatt also competed with Medalta for the advertising market, but by the number of samples that have been found, it was not much of a contest. But if a collector searches hard enough, he will eventually find an advertising ashtray, mixing bowl, pudding bowl or meat pie pan. Some of the firms or store owner’s names that you may find are the National System of Baking, The Bellevue Bakery, J.C. Falconer, Waterton Lakes Hotel & Chalets, and the Dominion Hotel.

They also made a souvenir cup to mark the 1935 Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. On one side was an image of the King and Queen while the opposite side said:

PRESENTED TO
THE CHILDREN OF
REDCLIFF, ALTA.
IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE SILVER JUBILEE OF
KING GEORGE V
AND
QUEEN MARY
MAY 6, 1935

You can also find examples for the towns of Canmore, Alberta, and Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. I would venture to say that other towns also purchased these cups to give to school children, but so far these are the only ones that have surfaced in collections. These cups which are quite hard to find are now priced in the \$100.00 to \$150.00 range.



Alberta Potteries did not overlook the artware market. They, like Medalta, assigned style numbers to their vases and jardinières. The line appears to have been quite limited with the assigned numbers going up by tens. The following have been recorded:

No. 1	7"h	vase - rose design
No. 20	8 1/2"h	jardiniere - Grecian motif
No. 30	9 3/4"h	vase - Grecian motif
No. 40		vase - Grecian dancers
No. 50	11"h	vase - Dutch kids design
No. 60	9 1/2"h	vase - Dutch kids design
No. 70	7 1/2"h	jardiniere - Dutch kids design
No. 80	8 1/2"h	vase - hourglass shape - dancers

Some artwares were unnumbered including a jardiniere and a bulb bowl. They also made some bookends, but I am not sure that they were production items. The pairs I saw were owned by a Wyatt family member; one design was a horse's head while the other was an Indian's head.

The Redcliff plant also made some elephant figurines. The one with its trunk hanging down can be found in several sizes, but so far only the smaller one has had a factory stamp on it. It has been found in various lacquered colours including black and red.

One example of this elephant, finished in coloured lacquers, was made into a piggy bank, or should I say elephant bank. The coin slot was cut into the back of the elephant's body which was painted black. The tusks were white, the eyes white and red, and the mouth and tip of the trunk red. It was a Christmas gift with the gold lacquer inscription reading "INEZ 1933." Perhaps I should have called this item a safe rather than a piggy bank, for there was no easy way to get your money out without breaking it. Fortunately, it was prized so highly by its owner that it was never used as a money bank.

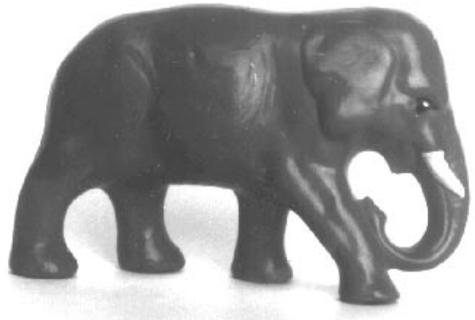
The second elephant is smaller, standing just over three inches high and measuring about five inches long. This one is holding its trunk above its head as if it were saluting someone. So far, it has been found in white or black lacquer colours.

While you can hardly call it artware, Alberta Potteries also made flower pots in several different sizes. So far, only glazed examples have been seen, but the colours were fairly plain. Yellow, dark green or dark brown may have been the range to choose from. Unlike Medalta's early flower pots, Wyatt's were marked with the company's name on the bottom.

Even though Jesse Wyatt had expanded by adding a second kiln and developing a good variety of products, it was not enough to keep him in business. Money was just too tight during the Depression. Many of his local customers had to pay with produce grown on their farms or run up a bill until they could pay, but Wyatt simply could not afford to carry them for long. He was also having trouble with Martin Perry who had left Medalta to join Wyatt's firm as its business manager.¹⁶ For several years they got along well, but something went wrong. Now, they seemed to be disagreeing about everything.

By 1936 Jesse Wyatt had had enough; he sold his pottery and returned to eastern Canada with his son Bill to join his son Bert who had already headed east in 1933 to work at Sovereign Potteries in Hamilton. Bill worked at a lampbase factory until 1937, then he joined Sovereign. Jesse began at an electrical porcelain company called Smith & Stone in Georgetown, Ontario and worked there until he retired at the age of 78. Meanwhile, Martin Perry and Shorty Matuska struggled by for a while at Redcliff, but there was no hope for the survival of the factory. By 1938, they had all called it quits.

For now, the shelves were bare, the workrooms quiet and the kilns cold. But the plant itself was a good one, and it was only a matter of time before someone else would take up the challenge; first, under a new name—Provincial Industrial Enterprises—and then under Alberta Potteries once again.



MEDICINE HAT POTTERIES (Yuill's Company): 1938-1955

(A Division of Alberta Clay Products Company Limited)

Hop Yuill from the windows of the family business, Alberta Clay Products Company, watched while Medalta struggled through the thirties. With a little persuasion from Walter Armstrong who was still Medalta's general manager, Yuill commenced building one of the most modern pottery factories in Canada. Alberta Clay Products was doing well in spite of the Depression, and the company had money to invest in the new venture. He could build "a state of the art" pottery, unlike the Medalta plant which seemed to be a hodgepodge of buildings and work-areas thrown together without any real plan. Of course, Yuill also knew that he would have skilled men to run the plant. It was not very hard to steal Medalta's best men with the promise of better working conditions and, of course, higher wages.

One can almost feel sorry for Medalta, loosing most of its best trained people to the new pottery. I say almost as perhaps Medalta brought it upon themselves. They had become too distant to the daily operation of the plant. Medalta's head office was in Calgary, and instead of giving the plant's managers the freedom to call the shots, they were dictating to them from Calgary. When you peruse the Medalta papers at the Provincial Archives in Edmonton, you can feel the frustration of the local staff. Orders were to be placed through the head office which would pass them along to the factory, often leaving out critical information such as size, colour or agreed price. It is little wonder that Armstrong and Baumler left Medalta to join Yuill's Medicine Hat Potteries.

Late in 1938, Yuill's new pottery was in business. Its main kiln, a tunnel kiln, was placed almost in the centre of the factory. The track within the firing chamber ran in a circle about seventy-five feet across and was some 235 feet from one end to the other. The wares stacked in saggars were loaded on kiln cars that ever so slowly moved through the kiln in a cycle that took up to forty hours from start to finish. It only required one man sitting at the controls to monitor the temperatures within the kiln as the pottery moved from the pre-heating, to the firing and finally the cooling stages. Unlike Medalta's kilns which had to be constantly monitored, the tunnel kiln effectively ran itself.

Medicine Hat Potteries quickly designed an attractive trademark. They came up with their "Little Chief" or what some collector's today refer to as the "Sleepy Indian". The name of the company was arced above the

central figure of an Indian. He had a blanket wrapped around his shoulders and was all but hidden by his large sombrero style hat. The trademark was prominently displayed on the sides of stonewares and the bottom of other products. In time, it was to become as well recognized as the Medalta name.

The salesmen for Medicine Hat Potteries were taking orders faster than the plant could fill them. For a while they had to acquire some products from Medalta to fill the incoming orders. A few collector's have been lucky enough to find a butter crock with the Medalta name on the bottom and the "Little Chief" stamp on the side. Relations between the two companies were strained at times, but for the most part they got along fairly well. At the start, Medicine Hat Potteries was not able to make the large fifty gallon crock, so they asked Medalta to make that size for them, getting Medalta to place the "Little Chief" stamp on the side. Medalta filled their order, perhaps reluctantly, but later they were the ones to ask for favours. One time when Medalta was short of the wooden dashers for a butter churn order, they acquired what was needed from the competition in order for the shipment to be complete.

In time, Medicine Hat Potteries' stonewares included a full line of crocks from 1/4 through to the 50 gallon sizes, butter crocks, pickle jars, shouldered jugs from 1/4 to 5 gallons in size, several sizes of butter churns, an ice-water cooler jar, a "pig" or bed warmer, a spittoon, acid pitcher, chicken fountain, florist jar, several sizes of bean pots, and jam or honey jars. While their line of products was diverse, almost as broad as Medalta's, one gets the feeling that they were never as popular. From a collector's standpoint, it is much easier to find a Medalta piece than a "Little Chief" one. For example, I have seen well over fifty Medalta pigs but only three Medicine Hat ones, and the proportion is about the same for chicken fountains and many other products.

While Phillipson was developing Medalta's hotel china line, Baumler was designing a semi-porcelain dinnerware set for the Medicine Hat Potteries. The pattern was similar to Medalta's first set of dishes specifically made for domestic use, but the decoration of encircling ridges and grooves was far more pronounced. The pattern was called "Hatina" ware and it was sold in sets of up to 43 pieces.



Lampbase after 1945

MEDICINE HAT POTTERIES HATINA WARE

6 lunch plates	6 bread & butter plates
6 cereals	6 cups
6 saucers	6 egg cups
1 covered sugar bowl	1 covered marmalade jar
1 cream pitcher	1 salt & pepper shaker set

One ad proclaimed:

“Colorful - smooth - practical! Smart new ware from Medicine Hat Pottery - you’ll like the good colors of bright red, blue, ivory, green, yellow, light blue ... the silky smooth finish”

Judging by the number of pieces that are preserved in collections, it was quite popular into the early 1940s and then, once again, after the war when it was re-introduced.

The war brought major changes in the plant’s production. From 1941 to the end of World War II, both Medalta and Medicine Hat Potteries were conscripted into producing china for the Canadian armed forces. The wares from Yuill’s plant were plain white with absolutely no decoration whatsoever. In addition, the plates were fairly thick, made to stand up to the hard everyday use to which they were subjected in army bases all across Canada.

After the war, the Medicine Hat Potteries quickly geared up for peacetime production. Malcolm McArthur who had joined the pottery a few years earlier as their cost accountant, took over as general manager when Karl Baumler left. Mac, as he was more commonly known, was to have a long association with the pottery industry, both as manager for others and as the owner of his own company.

One of the most attractive patterns introduced by the Medicine Hat Potteries was designed under Mac’s direction. It came out after the war and was called the “Canadiana” series. White plates through to salad bowls were decorated with scenes from the prairies and northern Canada including a moose, trout, mounted policeman, oil derrick and grain elevator. Smaller items such as cups and saucers were embellished with green maple leaves. Some Canadiana plates were used to commemorate anniversaries and other special events. One such plate was the one made for the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce in 1953.

A second very attractive pattern had beavers and maple leaves raised around the border of the plates. The border was usually finished with a honey coloured glaze while the centre was a plain white. Quite often the

larger 9-inch plate was used as an advertising premium, with the merchant's name and town prominently displayed in the centre. Pieces from merchants in Coutts, Champion and Grassy Lake have all been found. Some dealers are now asking \$50.00 to \$100.00 for these relatively scarce advertising plates.

While the Medicine Hat Potteries was into the souvenir, commemorative and advertising markets, they were never as successful as Medalta. You can find the names of stores and other firms on ashtrays, mixing bowls, platters, plates, and cream pitchers, but they are relatively hard to find. Medalta made advertising items for more than 500 stores and hotels, but the Medicine Hat Potteries' items are presently fewer than a hundred in number. In spite of their scarcity, they do not as a rule command the price of Medalta items. Most can be obtained in the \$40.00 to \$80.00 range but a few can be still be found for around \$20.00.

It is interesting to note that some merchants were ordering advertising premiums from both Medalta and Medicine Hat Potteries. One example of this was the stoneware head-cheese bowls and cups ordered by the Montreal area merchants Art Beaudin and J.B. Labrecque. Medalta was filling their orders as early as 1925 and had a long history of dealing with each of them, but eventually Medicine Hat Potteries captured their business. Did Medicine Hat Potteries undercut Medalta's price, or was it simply a matter of switching companies when Medalta closed? I believe it was the former, but definitive proof has yet to be found. Other examples of this competitiveness include mixing bowls which advertise both the merchant and Ogilvie's products, and dishes made for The Banff School of Fine Arts. The one example which suggests that Medalta's price was being undercut was a pair of ashtrays commemorating reunions for Medicine Hat's own 175th Battalion. Medalta's ashtray dated to 1938 while the Medicine Hat Potteries' one dated to 1951. If not for the price, why did they switch companies?

Items for home use were not overlooked by Yuill's company. Over its lifetime, Medicine Hat Potteries made several styles of mixing and pudding bowls (each available in four or more sizes), candy bowls, chili bowls, three sizes of teapots, a trivet, a pie plate, a coffee pot, a set of refrigerator jars, a ribbed casserole, beer steins, an ice water pitcher with matching tumblers, four styles of pitchers (each in four sizes), jam jars and even a dog dish. One tea set comprised of a cream jug, sugar bowl and teapot—brought out in the early 1950s—looked so awkward that you just had to have it for your home. The only way it can be described is that it was lopsided, as one side was quite a bit higher than the other.

The pottery also went head to head with Medalta in producing artwares. One rather unique vase, designed by Jack Fuller, was a horn mounted on the hoof of a buffalo. While it looked a bit awkward, the flowers actually filled the hollow horn quite nicely. Several Medicine Hat Pottery vases were cylindrical in shape, one with an attractive rose pattern; others were a stepped design, sometimes embellished with small floral patterns. Several of its wall vases were leaf shaped; others were stepped or cylindrical. In total, they made over four different wall vases and at least six different mantle ones. In addition, they also made bulb bowls, glazed flower pots, and three or more different styles of lamp bases.

Someone on staff enjoyed designing animal-shaped planters. Their attractive line included a standing elephant, another upright on its hind legs, a dog, a monkey, and a leaping rabbit. They even made a number of distinctively shaped ashtrays: a saddle, a sleeping deer, an airplane and, for the golfer, a round one with a white ball in the centre.

Decorative plates for hanging on your kitchen or dining room wall were available as well. The series called “Chinook” was given a separate trademark incorporating the “Little Chief” figure. The colourful lithograph scenes were placed in the centre of a large 10 inch plate or 13 1/2 inch platter which had a scalloped-style edge. Sometimes the rims were plain; other times they had leaf-like patterns in gold on a green or a royal blue background. The scenes included quite a number of birds such as a mallard taking flight from a pond, a group of four ducks gliding into a pond, geese in flight, a flushed ring-necked pheasant or a grouse.

Animals were another favoured topic. A deer with suckling fawn, a bear and cub stealing some honey, a charging grizzly, a moose, a ram and an antelope were some of the patterns. There was even a scene of a bear looking longingly at a rainbow trout leaping in the centre of the stream. A rancher could select from a rider roping a calf for branding, a horse’s head, or a pastoral scene of a flock of geese flying over grazing cattle. If you worked in the “oil patch” you could pick the plate showing a derrick; or, if you were a policeman, the one of a mountie looking out across the valley. Today, any one of these plates is highly collectable and priced in the \$60 to \$100 range.

The main advantage that the Medicine Hat Potteries had over Medalta in the early years was its modern equipment and of course its tunnel kiln. Yuill’s company was capable of producing up to 350,000 per month, a staggering number if you stop to think about it. It is unlikely that they ever achieved full production as the market just was not there, at least not for what it cost the company to produce the pieces. They were never able to

successfully compete with the long established European firms or the cheap labour costs of the Asian companies. But try they did.

The Medicine Hat Potteries introduced quite a variety of patterns, trying to capture the interest of the Canadian homemaker. Their “Hatina” ware, or ridged pattern as it is sometimes called, was replaced by their “Matina” ware. This new pattern in brighter colours had an attractive raised spiral flute design around the border. It was followed by plainer patterns with no raised or grooved design, made attractive by a wide selection of lithograph decorations and catchy pattern names. Calico, Rustic, Lazy Daisy and Chop Sticks were some of the regular patterns; and, of course, if you owned a restaurant, you could pick your own design and have the restaurant’s name placed on it. Several rancher’s took advantage of getting personalized dishes. The set decorated with a bull showing the flying W brand was a Christmas gift in 1954 to Wally Wells from a neighbouring rancher, George Murray, who had obtained his own personalized set the year before.



But in spite of all their hard work and the diversity of their wares, the Medicine Hat Potteries just could not make a success of it. All good things must eventually come to an end, and finally in 1955 the Yuill family decided to sell out. The sale of his hobby came as a great surprise to Hop Yuill, for without his knowledge, the family had sold the plant to Marwell Construction of Vancouver.



But, at least, he still had his Alberta Potteries plant at Redcliff.

PROVINCIAL INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES (P.I.E.): 1939

For a short while before Hop Yuill took over Wyatt's Alberta Potteries Limited, the plant was occupied by another group. After Wyatt and Matuska gave up the struggle, the plant sat idle for a few months. Eventually a group of investors¹⁷ acquired the plant and its assets, and started producing pottery under the name of Provincial Industrial Enterprises or P.I.E. for short.

Not much is known about this short lived company as no one has yet taken the time to document its activities. The search could well be a difficult one as it appears that no factory records have survived. In time, though, a search of the Medicine Hat and Redcliff newspapers should give some insights into the company's activities. The Medalta papers in the Provincial Archives contain several letters referring to Medalta acquiring the stock of a Redcliff plant. While the letters do not actually mention P.I.E., I believe that it is this company and not Matuska's which they are referring to. Matuska packed it in around 1938 while these letters date to the early 1940s. Other letters dating to 1938 make clear reference to the Alberta Potteries, but the 1940 ones do not mention any specific company.



One of these 1940 letters provides some information about P.I.E.'s products.

"We wired today in answer to your telegram asking for the stock of Redcliff artware. The list which we are including here, is what we have on hand, with no deductions made for orders. Melville also mentioned these goods and may be going to send in orders for some of them.

We have:	61	Rose bulb bowls
	547	5" jardinieres
	388	6" do
	310	7" do
	150	Fancy do
	317	Cactus pots
	89	Wall plaques - Flowers
	183	9" cake plates
	38	Lamp bases
	109	# 1 Rose vase
	116	Tall Rose vase
	46	# 0 (5") vase" ¹⁸

Quite a number of these products have not shown up in collections as yet: the bulb bowl, jardinieres, cactus pot, cake plate and lamp base. Vases on the other hand can be found, albeit not very many in any one collection. So far, twelve different styles or shapes of vases have been seen.

One of these vases, shows the relationship between Wyatt's Alberta Potteries Limited, P.I.E. and Medalta. The story unfolded with the finding of a vase which was double stamped. The glazed Medalta stamp was placed over the impressed Alberta Potteries stamp which also gave the style number as No. 1. It definitely was not a Medalta style number as it was clearly part of the Alberta Potteries stamping.¹⁹ The same shaped vase is also found with P.I.E.'s identifying stamp (although I have not yet seen any with No. 1 on it); and, of course, you find this vase with a Medalta stamping. It is quite clear that this item was made by all three companies occupying the factory at Redcliff; and, if this vase, I would presume that others were made by all three as well.

Returning to the letter quoted above, the item listed as a wall plaque is probably a wall vase, as P.I.E. did make an attractive wall vase with an embossed floral pattern on it. The other item listed here that is intriguing is the cake plate. Medalta also had a cake plate, and I would sure like to

see P.I.E.'s to see how they compare. Did Medalta copy theirs or was it the other way around? Who knows? Perhaps when one shows up, we will find that they were quite different in design.

As to what other products were made under the P.I.E. name, we only know a few of them at present. They made a sugar bowl and cream pitcher set which has a corrugated pattern on the bottom third of the pieces, and they probably also made a mixing bowl.²⁰ I was advised that they made plates, but unfortunately time was never found to follow up the lead. As expected for service wares, these three products were finished with a glazed decoration. Some were a Dutch windmill design, others a sailboat scene. The vases, on the other hand, were all finished in coloured lacquers and usually decorated with flowers that were either embossed or hand painted on the side of the vessel.

Only time will tell if this company was mainly into vases and jardinières (artwares in other words), or if its product-line was more diversified. At present, one is left with the impression that it was artwares as Medalta took over at least nine of P.I.E.'s vase moulds.

Just why this company was so short lived may be lost forever. If its records have survived, we do not know who has them, and I have not had any luck finding someone who worked at the plant to tell me the story. Perhaps it was funding, cost of materials, the start of the war, or the lack of experienced staff that caused them to close. Maybe it was simply that the market was not large enough to support the three potteries in the area. Whatever the reason, there is no doubt in my mind that this small factory could not effectively compete with the two larger ones in Medicine Hat. Its product-line was not different enough from Medalta's or Medicine Hat Potteries' to fill a niche in the market. So after being open for less than a year, they closed. But, once again, the plant was not to remain empty for long; J. Harlan Yuill would open it within a year or two.

ALBERTA POTTERIES LIMITED (Yuill's Company): 1941-1966

The Medicine Hat Potteries was doing well. Its new factory, only a couple of years old, was off to a good start. It was equipped to produce a good variety of dishes, and it was well manned using the skilled workers which they had been able to entice from Medalta. But one thing they were not really set up for was the production of mixing bowls, and there was a market out there waiting for the investor that had enough foresight and adventurous spirit to capture it. Hop (Harlan) Yuill was such a man.

Hop had worked in the family business for a good many years and was ready to go out on his own. In partnership with Mr. Clark (the one who had convinced him to invest in the mixing bowl venture), he bought the old Alberta Potteries plant and soon had it in full operation.

Luke Lindoe who had been working in the Medicine Hat Potteries plant moved to Redcliff to take over as plant foreman. With a staff of about six, they soon got into the mixing bowl trade, concentrating for the first six months or so on producing a single-burn, jiggered, mixing bowl. The bowl, available in several different sizes, was made using a yellow burning clay and finished with a raw lead glaze. Upon firing, it took on a pinkish hue; and, from examples that have been found in collections, it also crazed quite badly. Within a couple of years, the same bowl was available in a variety of colours such as lime green, yellow and blue.



It is too bad that Luke Lindoe did not stay with the company very long as he probably would have brought quite a unique look to the products of the Alberta Potteries had he been given a chance. Luke had come west to work in the pottery trade, hoping to put his training and interest as a designer to good use. He thought he would get that chance at the Redcliff factory, and when he didn't, he left, eventually setting up his own venture in Calgary.

In time, the Redcliff plant did branch out to produce a good range of products. Stonewares were much the same as those being made in the two Medicine Hat factories: tall crocks, butter crocks, bean pots, jardinières and an umbrella stand. While its artware line was quite small, it did include four or more styles of vases, a bulb bowl, a rabbit-shaped planter, a rectangular planter and a set of log-shaped planters. The rabbit planter is so close to Medalta's in shape that it is hard to tell them apart.

Alberta Potteries also made household items: an ashtray, a casserole dish, a set of baking dishes, a variety of pudding, mixing and salad bowls, a beer stein and even coloured dishes. The dishes, available in various pastel shades, included a soup bowl, coffee mug and salad bowl. They probably also made plates, but so far none have shown up in the collections that have been examined. Shortly after the Yuill family sold the Medicine Hat Potteries to Marwell, Malcolm McArthur went to Redcliff to manage Hop Yuill's Alberta Potteries. There Mac developed what he called his birch-bark pattern barbecue set. Each of the pieces in the set had the appearance of a log or branch. The plates, found in seven and ten inch sizes, look like a cross-sectioned log—almost as if the log was sawn into 1/2 inch slices. On the plates and saucers, encircling rings and radial bands simulate the annual growth rings of the tree. The outer border was rough, bark-like, and coloured to look like the bark of the birch tree. The cup's handle was twig-like, and the bottom third was beveled as if it had been hewn with an axe. Similarly, the sugar and cereal bowls had a hewn base. The milk pitcher, standing just over five inches high, was the most unusual, yet attractive, piece in the whole set. It had the appearance of a hollowed-out branch, one cut from the tree where it branched from the main trunk. It was about four inches in diameter and, like the cup, it too had a twig-like handle. The set was also marketed in other designs and as



a decorative piece to grace walls or display cases. One variety of the pattern which may have been decorated to look like the cross-section of a palm tree was quite unattractive to my eye. Other designs were more pleasing: the buffalo berry, wheat stalks, Alberta rose, a log cabin, and a western motif of a coffee pot and frying pan warming in a campfire.

The large ten inch plates were used to make commemoratives such as the map of Alberta plate made in 1957. Holes were drilled through the back ring of some plates to take the wire for hanging them. A large hand painted elk, moose or ram filled the centre of the plate, and the name of an Alberta town was printed below. Wetaskiwin, Claresholm, Turner Valley and Banff can all be found if you can afford the asking price. These highly collectable plates are now selling between \$75 and \$125 each.

Just when Yuill gave up the Alberta Potteries is not known, but Malcolm McArthur left in early 1958 to set up his own business—New Medalta Ceramics—but more about that later. It is believed that Yuill's plant stayed in operation until Shorty Matuska leased it in 1966, at which time he established Medalta Potteries (1966) Limited.



HYCROFT CHINA LIMITED: 1955-1991

When Marwell acquired the Medicine Hat Potteries plant, he took Malcolm McArthur's advice and renamed it Hycroft China Limited after one of his west coast ventures. Even though Marwell poured more money into the plant, he could not make it a success. Just eighteen months after acquiring the pottery, he put it up for sale.

Harry Veiner stepped in to take the money losing plant off Marwell's hands. Harry had absolutely no training or knowledge of the pottery industry, but he had business aplomb. A self-made millionaire from his ranch and greenhouse businesses—and at the time Mayor of Medicine Hat—Harry viewed the pottery as a challenge worth taking up. In his opinion, there was no reason for the factory to be losing money. The equipment and buildings were sound, they had staff skilled in the trade, and the clay resources were still the best and cheapest that you could find anywhere and the company owned the gas well that supplied the plant.

Harry immediately took over management of the plant, terminating four or five of the superintendents that had become redundant. The office staff was trimmed and he even commandeered the sales part of the operation. "You make the stuff and I'll sell it," he said. Soon he was in the black. As the business grew, he added more staff until he eventually was employing between sixty and eighty of the local people.

But his authoritarian style did not sit well with many of the senior people. Malcolm McArthur was one of the first to leave. Mac had many years of experience, Harry none; yet here was Harry dictating all facets of the operation. Harry was busy selling his new wares, unaware and perhaps not caring that Malcolm had arranged an exclusive with a large retailer for those same patterns which Harry was now selling to everyone. So Malcolm left after being with Hycroft for only a few months, taking half a dozen experienced workmen with him. He quickly settled in at Alberta Potteries at Redcliff.

How I Met Harry Veiner

I had tried to meet Harry Veiner on two previous occasions by accompanying friends to Harry's favourite hangout, his hardware store, but unfortunately I missed him both times. But another chance came up, and I just had to try again.

My father-in-law was going to the “Hat” on business, and said that we’d have time to stop by. During the drive, he mentioned that he knew Harry Veiner, and I thought to myself that’s great, someone who can introduce me, particularly since Harry wouldn’t know me from a hole in the ground. Later, when we arrived at the Hat Hardware, my father-in-law asked the clerk if Harry was in, and indeed he was. She disappeared out back and in a minute or two Harry came out.

“Hello, I’m Bernie... from Brooks” said my father-in-law shaking hands with Harry.

“Uh ha. What did you say your name was again.”

“Bernie... You remember me don’t you.”

“I’m sorry, but no I don’t.”

“Well remember that time you came up to Duchess, to the tea at the hall. You know, the one where we gave you a sandwich with rubber in it instead of ham. Well I’m the one that served you...”

“You’re that dirty no good son-of-a...”

Well I just about died. Here I was hoping to talk to Harry at long last, and this was my introduction! I would have crawled under the table if one had been nearby.

On the way home, I asked my father-in-law for the full story. (I wish I had done so on the way down.) He told me that the Duchess Hall, as a fund raiser, occasionally put on what they called a “man-handled tea.” The men did the work for a change rather than the women. Some of the men even went so far as to dress up in women’s clothing.

At the time, Harry Veiner was running as the Liberal candidate in the Bow Valley riding, and where a crowd was, you could be sure that Harry would show up. The men working in the kitchen at the back must have known that Harry was coming as they had come prepared, bringing a red, tire inner tube with them. When Harry ordered his sandwich—it was either bologna or ham—they made up the “Harry special”. The red rubber was barely visible



thanks to the diced onions that had been heaped on, and they did a good job of making it look like the real thing, even cutting it in half.

My father-in-law who wasn't really in on it, or so he says, was the server for the table that Harry and his friends sat at. He took them their cake and sandwiches on a tray, and then the fun began. Harry who must have been famished took the sandwich in those big hands of his, and opening wide took a great big bite. Ham and onions went everywhere, and Harry just sat there and glared while everyone else was having a good laugh at his expense. If looks could have killed!

Well that was my introduction to Harry Veiner. Actually, it didn't turn out all that bad. Harry had long ago forgiven the pranksters, and he even found some time to talk to me. Not as much time as I would have liked, but enough to answer a few of my many questions.

Veiner was well known, not only in Medicine Hat but in the surrounding communities as well, as a good sport and of course a strong promoter of his city. He was forever challenging fellow Mayors to foot races, and at one time, at Lake Newell, he even raced against a quarter-horse. They say he beat the horse, quite a feat even if it was a short race.

Hycroft's Products

I wish I knew more about the products produced by Veiner's plant, but that was one of the topics that I never got around to discussing with him. Also, at present, there are not very many collectors of Hycroft. In fact, I only know of two serious collectors, and both of them have concentrated on the advertising, souvenir and commemorative pieces that were made over the years. In time, we will probably know as much about Hycroft's line as we do about Medalta's as the factory records were included with the gift of the factory to the Friends of Medalta.

An illustrated price list dating to February 1957 provides a fairly good picture of the stoneware products made by the Hycroft plant. While I have actually seen only their one gallon size, Hycroft listed crocks from 1/4 gallon right up to a 40 gallon one. They also list 3 and 5 gallon ice water jars²¹, bean pots from 1 to 4 quarts, a Brown Betty teapot and a set of 7, 9 and 11 inch mixing bowls. The mixing bowls have a spiral flute decoration on the outside.

The other items illustrated on this price list are all household ones such as dinnerware sets, a coffee mug, teapot, milk pitchers and jugs, pudding bowls, mixing bowls and salt and pepper shakers. You could get your set in plain white or coloured in yellow, blue, green or pink. The set which the Medicine Hat Potteries called "Matina" ware was referred to by Hycroft

as its “Balmoral” shape. It, like the Matina pattern, had a spiral flute design around the rim of the flatwares and on the outside of the other pieces in the set.

While the 1957 price lists make no mention of patterns like “Calico,” I am sure that they too were available. Hycroft took over a working factory, not one that had been closed for several years. They acquired all assets of the Medicine Hat Potteries, including the moulds and patterns, and they surely could have been making the Calico and Chop Sticks patterns if they had wanted to. And by 1959, they were, as Calico and a whole raft of new patterns were listed in its 1959 flyer.

HYCROFT’S 1959 HAND DECORATED PLATE PATTERN

Capri	Swiss Dots	Idlewyld
Cubes	Serenada	Dolly
Dots	Autumn	Tartan
Breeze	Denim	Polka Dots
Calico	Lynn	Jack Straw

By 1967, they had expanded their line to include: Chinook, New York, Yellow Rose, Yellow Side Rose, Spray Rose, Game Bird, Wheat, and Maple Leaf. Most of these new patterns were produced using brightly coloured decals rather than being hand painted. Finally, in 1969, the last year for which I have records, the Eva and Jill patterns are listed.

However, there are a number of other pattern names which you can find that have not yet been matched to any price lists. These include: Fantasia, Dots ‘n Blocks, Cross Weave, Doodles, Mandarin, Gardenia, Reflection and Waterton Park. All of these are probably regular patterns like the rest, rather than a special order for a particular restaurant such as the Bamboo Gardens.

You could, of course, get personalized dinnerware: a set with your name on it, your brand, your favourite subject, or the name of your cafe or restaurant. One of the favoured decorations was to have your personal selection framed within the loop of a lariat.

While flatwares were a mainstay of the plant, they were also into a wide variety of other goods that could be used to make souvenir and commemorative items. These specially made-to-order wares are what Hycroft is best known for in the collectors’ market. One of their most popular pieces was the stetson hat. For a while, perhaps mainly in Marwell’s time, they used the old Medalta stetson hat moulds, but they were soon

replaced with their own design. Hycroft's hat was flat on top with a fairly broad furrow, not high and rounded as was Medalta's. And, judging by the number of hats that can be found, it was a very popular souvenir and gift item. There are literally hundreds of different ones; so many, that I finally gave up trying to record all the different names. They are getting harder and harder to find at flea markets and antique shows, but with luck you can still pick them up in the \$6.00 to \$12.00 range.

Even limiting yourself to Hat ashtrays, I am sure that you could specialize in any subject that caught your fancy and still be able to build a good sized collection. Political figures such as Senator Gladstone or M.L.A.'s Deane Gundlock and Ray Ellis can be found. Clubs, service organizations and associations are well represented—ones like the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association, the Kiwanis Club and the 175th Battalion Association. You can find the names of grocery or hardware stores, restaurants, trade unions and airlines. You might want to limit yourself to souvenirs giving only the names of Alberta towns and cities such as Calgary, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. The Calgary Zoo seems to have made a regular practice of ordering hats year after year, as you can find three or four different wordings. I even saw quite an unique one for the Calgary Zoo; it had a miniature "Dino" standing on the top of the rim.

Probably the next most popular item for inscriptions was the small and large safety ashtrays. The small ashtray is six inches across while the large one measures about 8 1/2 inches. In this style of ashtray, the ring of butt holders—and there are twenty or more—is an inch or so in from the outer rim, and that is what made it a safety ashtray. When resting on the butt holder, a burning cigarette could not fall out to scorch your furniture.

Once again you can find every subject imaginable: rodeos, the R.C.M.P. centennial, Canada's centennial, Alberta's provincial crest and flower, unions, faculty clubs and so on. Ed Phillipson showed me one that Harry Veiner had given to him and his wife. In the centre was a spray of red roses, and at the bottom it simply said "Ed & Raye Phillipson."

In addition to the two styles of stetson hat ashtrays and the pair of safety ashtrays, Hycroft made about eight others including a plain, low round one with three butt holders at an oblique angle, a higher round one with three butt holders at right angles to the rim, two oval-shaped ones, a rectangular one, a square one, and two sizes of wheel-shaped ones. I cannot say for certain that the item in the shape of the province of Alberta was an ashtray, but I think it was. Nearly all of these ashtrays were hand decorated giving the name of a store or a special event like an anniversary or convention. The

round ashtray with the right angled butt holders was made into a curling trophy by drilling a hole through the bottom for mounting the brass figure of a curler.

Plates ranging in size from eight to fourteen inches in diameter were also popular for producing souvenirs and commemoratives. Many collectors find them more appealing than the ashtrays as when they are displayed on a plate shelf, they can really add to the decor of the room, not to mention the history that they tell.

Ones you can find include 8-inch plates relating to the Social Credit movement in Alberta. Two were made for Women’s Auxiliaries while a third commemorated the three Social Credit Premiers—Aberhart, Manning and Strom. Larger plates like the Fish and Game and the Futurity Stakes²² series were effectively sets, coming out year after year. The Fish and Game ones are very colourful showing various hunting and fishing scenes. As with the ashtrays, you can find every subject under the sun: a potato conference held in Lethbridge, town anniversaries like Schuler’s 50th, bonspiels, churches²³, clubs and a wide variety of businesses. The large 12 and 14 inch plates may have been chosen for special presentation pieces. Ones named to Tommy Primrose, Archie Boyce and Bill Noble might be one of a kind, or perhaps they were given to all who attended a special dinner honouring their community service. Most commemorative plates fall in the \$10.00 to \$20.00 range, but some like the large 14-inch ones may bring as much as \$40.00.

Harry Veiner made a practice of giving gifts to his friends and the regular customers of his various businesses around town. Perhaps, he could even write the cost off as a business expense or political contribution as many of these gifts were marked on the bottom with one of two special stamps.

MERRY CHRISTMAS COMPLIMENTS OF HARRY VEINER MAYOR OF MEDICINE HAT	May the Centennial Year bring you Health and Prosperity with Compliments of Harry Veiner
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These stamps have been found on vases, and several different plates. One was a calendar plate for the year 1963, another was named to Bill Noble whom I presume was a personal friend of Harry’s, and the other bore the 1967 Centennial maple leaf logo.

In the early 1980s, I had the pleasure of meeting Rose Stickle who was the one who did much of the decorating that you find on Hycroft items. Harry's warehouse was reportedly full of plates, ashtrays and other items that had gone through the first two or three firings—the biscuit firing, the decal firing, and then the one after the clear glaze had been applied. They were blanks if you like, either plain white or decal decorated items waiting to be finished.

When an order came in for a special commemorative piece or a souvenir, it was Rose's job to decorate it. Some needed decals, others a rubber stamping; but, almost without exception, all had to be hand painted or lettered to some extent. That was what Rose excelled at. She was the one that accented the butt holders in gold, added the hatband, the name of the city or town and, at times, the special presentation verse. It is her steady hand that you see, and if you were wondering why the hand lettering on different pieces looks so much the same, you now know why.

Much of the decorating that Rose did was applied in a gold glaze, but occasionally platinum (silver coloured) was used. Both of these glazes were low firing ones. They could not go through the kiln with the biscuit ware since the gold would just evaporate in the hot flame; therefore, they were fired separately in a low temperature kiln where the flame was kept around 900 degrees.

The gold trim and lettering done by Rose was applied over-glaze, or in other words on top of the clear glaze. It is for this reason that you often find the gold wearing off your ashtray or plate. The soft gold and platinum glazes simply do not stand up well to repeated washing, scrubbing or rubbing.



Safety Ash Tray 1961

In the waning years, Hycroft did not take many specialty orders that required Rose's delicate touch. Veiner had effectively given up this aspect of the business by 1985.

Hycroft actually had quite a varied line of products, but what they excelled at was the specially named pieces—commemoratives, souvenirs, and advertising items. I believe that if one were to put together a list of these products you would find that Hycroft items number more than all the other potteries put together, including Medalta which had over 700 different ones.

While Hycroft had quite a number of different plate patterns, they were not too successful. They just could not match the cheap price of imports, and homemakers were not prepared to pay the premium for a made in Canada product. In regard to the hotel china market, Hycroft did not seriously try to compete in that field. Their dishes were quite thin and would not have stood up to the heavy use and rough treatment found in restaurants. However, a few restaurants did place orders such as the Bamboo Gardens.



Firestone Give-a-way

NEW MEDALTA CERAMICS: 1958

Malcolm McArthur at last had his own pottery. His stint with Alberta Potteries in Redcliff had been a short one; now he was ready to really try to make it on his own. With the same men that had followed him to Redcliff, he started producing wares under the name New Medalta Ceramics. The chosen name was an apt one as Mac had acquired the buildings and equipment of the old Medalta plant at a very reasonable rental, and perhaps he could develop a healthy business more quickly by using the well recognized Medalta name. He even had Tom Hulme, Medalta's art director, working with him, so he had no fears regarding the decorating end.

They quickly settled in at the old Medalta plant, and just when things were starting to look good, disaster struck. On that not to be forgotten day, Christmas eve 1958, the phone rang telling him that the factory was on fire. There went his dreams up with the smoke from the plant. He had poured all the spare cash that he had into reopening the Medalta plant, and now it was all over.

The fire had been intentionally set, and Mac was pretty sure he knew who had started it. He even got the license number of a car leaving the area, but unfortunately no proof could ever be found, and the culprit got off scott free.

The one dream that Malcolm had brought with him from Redcliff was that of making it rich on his birch-bark barbecue set. In fact, just before the fire, he had more or less wrapped up a deal with Dairy Queen. Can you imagine the value of such a venture?—a fast food company franchised all across North America. Of course the fire killed that deal as well.

New Medalta Ceramics, however, did manage to produce some birch bark barbecue sets in the six short months that they were open. These sets are hard to find, but if you search hard and long enough you will eventually pick up a set stamped with his company's name. Once again, the large plate was used to produce commemorative items. The one you are most likely to find commemorated British Columbia's centennial. Basically the design was a map of the province, reading at the top "British Columbia Centennial" and at the bottom "1858-1958." As you would expect, the Dogwood—the provincial flower—was depicted on the left-hand side of the plate. On the other side where northern Alberta would be, you can find various crests. So far two crests have shown up, but it is likely that others were available as well. One plate exhibited the B.C. provincial crest while the other was Abbotsford's. This plate was also an advertising piece as it had on the back "Compliments of Clayburn Harbison Ltd.," an Abbotsford firm.

The mainstay of New Medalta Ceramics was the same as that for most

of the potteries in the area—stonewares. They made crocks of various types and sizes and of course bean pots, but if they were marked with a company stamp, I have yet to see one. It is not too hard to find a sample of the beer stein which they made, and as was typical of the industry, they were emblazoned with a crest or decorated to commemorate a specific event. The one with the crest of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on its side is now selling in the \$75.00 range. Another, not so highly prized, or priced, was made for the Winnipeg Press Club and marked “Beer and Skits” above a comic scene.

The only other products which they made that have shown up in collections are vases, and they made at least four different styles ranging from five to ten inches in height. They could be acquired in attractive glazed finishes from solid colours to ones decorated with floral and leaf designs. It is only recently that collectors and dealers have recognized just how hard it is to find pieces made by McArthur’s company. Some dealers are now asking up to \$125.00 for a vase, but if you are lucky you can still pick up a bargain.

SUNBURST CERAMICS LIMITED: 1960-1975

Sunburst was the last pottery to fire its wares in the old Medalta kilns. McArthur having lost everything in the fire sought a wealthy partner to help rebuild the Medalta plant. He soon found one in the Thrall family of Lethbridge, Alberta, who had built up considerable assets through their MacIntyre Ranching Company and Mountain Minerals Limited. Within a year or so, following restoration of the fire-gutted buildings, the pottery was back in production making items under the name Sunburst Ceramics Limited. Malcolm was manager and part owner of Sunburst, but not for long. Ralph Thrall Senior and Junior were not comfortable with having any partners, and so they approached McArthur in 1961 offering to sell the business to him or to buy him out. From the start the answer was written on the walls; there was just no way for Mac to raise the \$100,000 or so to buy the plant from the Thralls. So Malcolm had to sell his share, even though he did not want to, and that was finally it for him. Malcolm left, vowing never again to get involved with another pottery.

From 1960 to '65 the company remained in Medicine Hat, but due to the continuing deterioration of the factory and the necessity to modernize the operation, the plant was relocated to Lethbridge, Alberta, in 1966. There the Thralls with considerable financial support from the Province, poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into a new plant and the most modern equipment that money could buy. But it was never enough. The Sunburst plant in Lethbridge finally closed its doors in 1975 when the Alberta Government refused to pour more money into it.



*Onion Serving Plate
Sunburst Ceramics*

For a plant with a life-span of only fifteen years, Sunburst Ceramics was indeed prolific, producing around 200 different products. Compared to Medalta, which made well over 700 different items during its history, 200 may not seem many; but, next to Medalta and the Medicine Hat Potteries, Sunburst had the most variable product-line of the potteries located in southern Alberta.

Sunburst's Products - The Medicine Hat Plant

Sunburst's first products included crocks, low butter crocks, bean pots, casseroles and mixing bowls, along with the birch-bark barbecue set of dishes that McArthur had designed when he was with Alberta Potteries. Crocks included the 1/4, 1/2, 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 gallon sizes (15, 20, 30 and 40 were added later); low butter crocks came in 3 and 5 pound sizes; bean pots were available in 1, 2, 3 and 4 quart sizes; lug-handled casseroles came in at least four diameters, 5, 7, 8, and 11-inch; and mixing bowls included 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13-inch diameter ones. Sunburst's mixing bowls with a basket-weave bottom were advertised as "Flecktone" coloured sets due to the numerous dark speckles scattered evenly throughout the ivory (white), yellow or blue glaze. The casseroles included "Flecktone" and "Snowtone" colours as well as solid and flowing ones. The "Snowtone" finish was aptly named as it had a white flowing glaze (snow) at the top. Bean pots, too, were decorated this way, but they also could be acquired in the reddish-brown "Homesteader" design. One bean pot was quite different in having advertising impressed into its lid; it was dated 1963 and stamped "Top Hat Convention-Medicine Hat."

According to a Sunburst catalogue, the only other items produced in the Medicine Hat plant were an onion soup bowl and a pudding bowl. I suspect that the handled chili bowl and a planter were also made in the "Hat" but the catalogue does not mention them. The chili bowl is found in two varieties—one with rounded sides while the other is straight. Similarly, two variations of the onion soup bowl are found—one with small lug handles and the other with longer more slender, decorative handles.

The catalogue does not mention the birch-bark barbecue set, but it too must have been made in the early years while McArthur was still at the plant. Sunburst's barbecue set was effectively the same as the original design. The only change appears in the handle of the cup, where the open twig-like one was replaced by a closed D-shaped handle to make it sturdier.

Sunburst's Products - The Lethbridge Plant

Sunburst's new lines had a distinctive look to them, often depicting, or in the shape of, the foods that were served on them. The designs that you can find include celery, asparagus, onions, corn and what may be artichokes. Shapes varied from rectangular to round and oval, and they were often compartmentalized. The vegetable designs stand out in sharp relief, and often the rim is finished in decorative flutes or scallops.

One serving plate in the shape of a fish used the fish's eye to hold a small two-inch sauce bowl. Another, a round one eleven inches in diameter, depicts a fish in low relief rather than being shaped like one. You can even find a dish in the shape of a scallop shell, and the one to serve escargot could not be anything but snail shaped. Another dish, round in shape and with six moulded cups to hold the escargot, undoubtedly was used for cooking the snails as it came with a short stubby handle.

Sunburst, like Medalta, assigned style numbers to many of its pieces. These numbers, impressed into the clay, usually are found on the underside near the Sunburst trademark. Most of the numbered pieces have been ashtrays, but at least two vases and what I believe to be fruit bowls were assigned numbers as well. The fact that the numbers range from 8 to 118 leads me to believe that at least 118 distinctive items were produced. However, just a few of these have been seen, and only time will tell if there are indeed that many different pieces.

SUNBURST'S STYLE NUMBERS

Ashtrays: Nos. 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 25, 32,
33, 35, 43, 52 and 61

Fruit or Condiment bowls: Nos. 109, 110, 111 and 118

Vases: No. 115 and 117

Ashtrays came in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours. Many are what can only be described as leaf-shaped; others are irregular, rectangular, squarish, triangular, pear or even boat-shaped. The smallest one was only 5 1/4 inches long while the largest was 17 inches. A few were in solid colours such as cane, but most were a blend of colours. Various blends of greens and browns are most commonly found, but ones with blue, white and orange as part of the mixture also show up from time to time.

One ashtray, a pear-shaped one assigned style No. 22, is found with and without advertising. The fact that the advertising for the Auto Electric Service Company Limited is incorporated into the mould is unusual, as it means that a separate mould from the regular No. 22 was required to make this piece. This ashtray is also interesting as it celebrates the company's 50th anniversary in 1968. So far this is the only evidence that the numbered items were made in the Lethbridge plant and not the Medicine Hat one.

Many items do not have style numbers on them including square, rectangular and lenticular-shaped ashtrays and one style of vase.

Sunburst also produced three types of small pedestalled trays that could have served as candy or nut bowls or even card trays. The first of these was a triangular-shaped dish measuring almost six inches on each side. The embossed decorations found on the inside of the trays are the provincial flowers as the trillium, wild rose, tiger lily and dogwood have all been found. The only other pattern found so far is the maple leaf, one of our national symbols. Some but not all of the trays have a pattern name on the bottom; both the "Dogwood" and "Wild Rose" have been found. Finally, you can find this style of tray holed through the pedestalled base for hanging it on the wall, or with felt or cork pads at each corner for resting in on furniture.

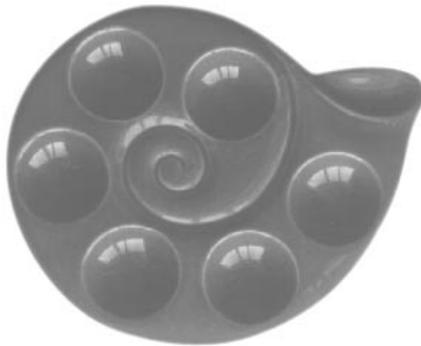
The second tray pattern is a square-shaped one, about six inches in size, and it like the triangular pattern often has protective pads on the base. So far, none have been found that were holed for hanging on a wall. The pattern names that you can find on these trays include Snowflake, Mountain, Grain and Forest.

The third pattern is a round tray measuring about six inches in diameter. The only pattern name found so far is "Moose", but other designs include a goose and a pheasant. These like the square pattern may not have been holed for hanging on a wall.

You can also find a pedestalled cup with a parachute design on the side, perhaps used for serving sherbet or ice cream. Another item is decorated with an oriental design and the words "SIL GEN GUNG" on the side. They also made a jardiniere or planter, two styles of beer steins (one advertising "SHAW GMC TRUCKS"), a canister set, a cup and a fluted coffee pot with matching mugs. Their bowl line was expanded with the addition of three new styles which had decorative ribbing or scalloped edges, and they even made a Roman pot and a clay bread-baker.

Sunburst also made at least three different compartment plates that may have been used for serving condiments or to eat from. One had five compartments, four small arced around a larger one, while the other two had six around a larger central one. All can be found in a variety of solid colours including white, yellow, orange and two shades of green. Another plate, probably for TV dinners, was divided into two halves and had an embossed ring at one side to hold a four-inch diameter sauce bowl. It also came with a matching cup that could be set within the ring.

Sunburst made one set of dishes that was usually finished in a dark brown glaze. It is identified by the stick-like pattern around the border and by the “N. Grav” signature on the back. Neils Gravsen, who worked for Sunburst in 1963 and later in 1972-73, was the artist/designer of this set. The set includes a cup and saucer, 6, 8 and 10-inch round plates, a soup or cereal bowl, a 9-inch salad bowl, a cream and sugar set (the sugar having two handles) and at least two sizes of rectangular serving trays. To complete your table setting, you could also purchase the trays fitted within a brass frame.



Sunburst Ceramics Escargot Plate

MEDALTA POTTERIES (1966) LTD: 1966-1986

When Yuill finally decided to give up his Alberta Potteries at Redcliff, Shorty Matuska was there to lease the plant. In partnership with Bill Crockford, Matuska took over the kilns which Jesse Wyatt had built around 1932. Crockford kept the books while Shorty looked after the production end of the operation. He like many others in the pottery business had learned the trade after first starting with Medalta as a handyman in the late 1920s.

Medalta (1966) Limited got off to a quick start. They did not have to design and make a whole bunch of new moulds as they had apparently acquired many of the ones used by the Alberta Potteries. But half a year later disaster struck them too. It was a replay of McArthur's—the factory burnt to the ground, leaving only the two beehive kilns standing.

But, that was enough for them to try again, and with a loan from the Alberta Government, they erected a new quonset-style building. And what a building it was. It was such a disaster that it soon got the nickname of the “Wonder Building.” Matuska had cut corners by not hiring skilled carpenters, and he had not given much thought to what he was doing. The building was sound enough—too sound for it had no vents for the escape of moisture originating during the drying and firing process. It simply rose to condense on the metal roof, subsequently falling at times like a light rainstorm. But they were stuck with it.



But the loan from the government was not enough to keep the faltering company going, so local investors had to be taken in as shareholders. One of these was Roy Ogilvie, and as time went on, he found himself getting more and more involved with the daily operation of the factory. Eventually, in 1971, when Matuska died, Roy had to choose between his farming activities and the pottery business, so he chose the latter. Ogilvie as owner and manager stayed on to run Medalta (1966) Limited until it finally closed in 1986.

Ogilvie, prior to his involvement with Medalta (1966) Limited, had no experience or knowledge of the pottery industry whatsoever. He soon picked it up, though, by reading everything he could find on the subject, but mainly it was through the good old means of trial and error. He learned the skill of mould-making, in many cases copying and/or modifying old Medalta moulds which the plant had acquired years before. And he quickly had to pick up the art of loading and firing a kiln as those jobs had always been done by Shorty Matuska.

Under Ogilvie's guidance, the operation was never big—only fifteen to twenty workmen at its peak—but it was successful in that it was not loosing money. It could have done even better but workmen trained in the pottery business were a dying breed. As the old hands retired or passed away, the plant was forced to cut back on its production. Young people simply were not interested in learning the trade. It was hard, hot, sweaty work and the wages were lousy. In its last years, the workforce declined to about five people. They could not even keep up with the orders that were coming their way.

The first products made by Medalta Potteries (1966) Limited, as expected, were similar to those of Yuill's Alberta Potteries for Matuska had taken over the plant lock, stock and barrel. They had all the moulds from the Yuill operation and perhaps even a few going back to Wyatt's time. In fact, when Medalta (1966) Limited put out its first price list in October 1966, it illustrated items with a Alberta Potteries' stamp. They had not yet had time to make crocks marked with their own name.

This price list shows that stonewares were, once again, a mainstay. You could buy regular crocks in sizes from 1/4 to 20 gallons. butter crocks in three or five pounds, and bean pots from one to four quarts. Brown bean pots were the cheapest, but if you wanted something more colourful you could get one in a holly green colour. They also made ice water containers; the one was barrel-shaped like Medalta's, the others were simply three or five gallon crocks which had been holed to take a spigot. They also advertised an 18-inch high cylindrical-shaped pot as an umbrella stand, but it could,

and would, serve equally as well as a florist vase.

Mixing bowls could be purchased from a small one just six inches in diameter to a large fourteen inch one, and you could select from colours in plain cane to powder blue, pink or yellow.

Two styles of jardinières, both in three different sizes, were available. The fairly plain one (referred to as a bucket in the price list) was straight sided but widening from the bottom to the top. The other, more rounded, had vertical flutes running from the bottom to just below the rim. For your garden, you could get an 18-inch high pedestalled urn, and for your home a small 4-inch African violet pot.

Finally, as indicated on the price list, you could get a good variety of red clay products: flower pots from 2 to 10 inches, bulb pans from 4 to 8 inches, azalea and fern pots from 6 to 8 inches, and 10 and 12 inch hanging baskets.

Apart from this one price list, I know far too little about the products made at Medalta (1966) Limited, particularly the ones designed and made by Ogilvie. My research efforts largely concentrated on the Medicine Hat factories and not the Redcliff ones, and I never found the time to extensively interview Roy Ogilvie.

However I did visit the Redcliff plant several times, and from memory I will have to recall some of the many products that I saw. Perhaps there are collectors who have a good number of Medalta 1966 items, but I have not yet run across them; therefore, I have not been able to draw upon that source either. It may just be that Medalta '66 products are too new for collectors to give them serious consideration, but now that the plant is closed, that may soon change.

Their small crocks were decorated for use as pantry jar sets. You could get them in attractive glazes or as a special commemorative set marking Canada's centennial in 1967 or Alberta's 75th birthday in 1980.

Ogilvie made a variety of small items such as whales, cups, jam jars (one with a turtle on the side), and miniature jugs. Some of these—the miniature jug for one—were given as souvenirs to the many school children that visited the plant on one of their field trips. For your living room you could get an ashtray or a beer stein. The beer stein was regularly chosen to produce souvenir or commemorative items. Larger kitchen items included casseroles, milk pitchers, napkin holders or a salad bowl. For your bathroom, or that old commode in the corner of your bedroom, you could even get a wash basin and ewer set, and it was actually quite an attractive one.

Artwares were not overlooked either, although there may not have

been very many of them. You can find a swan-shaped planter—much like Medalta's but larger—and at least one style of vase.

I wish I had asked Roy about the bust of an Indian that he made. Some say that only a few were made, and that it was supposed to be modeled after Geronimo, but I am not sure. Perhaps someone that worked for Medalta 1966 will be able to tell us for sure.

Where there was a need, Roy stepped in to fill it. One such example was the chicken fountain saucers that he made. Among the original Medalta stock that he had picked up—and I do not know the details such as why or when he got the stock—was a bunch of chicken fountains; but, since there were no saucers to go with them, Roy made up some moulds in order to sell them as complete units. Another example was lids for butter churns. Many Medalta collectors had churns which were missing their lids so that became another product which he made.

Medalta's Cypress pitcher showed up under their name as did pudding bowls and ice buckets. These moulds must have all been with the Medalta stock that Medalta 1966 acquired.

They also made some items using moulds from the Alberta Potteries or Sunburst plant. The one you find for sure, and there may be others, was the mould for the birch-bark pattern cereal bowl. Once you become familiar with the glazes used by Medalta (1966) Limited, you can readily pick theirs out from the others as they were brightly coloured with a variety of speckled and flowing glazes.

To close the story on Medalta (1966) Limited, I would like to warn you that not all its items are marked with its own stamp. To muddle the picture for collector's, Medalta (1966) Limited used one of Medalta's rubber stamps to mark some of its products. When I asked Roy about this, he told me that it was simply a matter of expediency. At the time, they did not have a stamp small enough to fit the bottom of little items such as cups and jam jars. They did, however, have a box full of old Medalta stamps; so, they simply rummaged through it hoping to find one suitable for their purposes.²⁴ Unfortunately for collectors, they did find one, and that has led to more than one case of mistaken identity.

THE FINAL WORD

Suggested Readings and Where to Get Them

It is hoped that we have whetted your appetite for more—both information about the potteries in the Medicine Hat area and the products that were made by them. To help you in your search, we have included a suggested reading list. It gives the various books and articles that have dealt with different aspects of the Medicine Hat pottery industry. Most are about Medalta, but you can also find an article about the Alberta Potteries among the listed.

To find these books or articles, start with your local library as you may find some of them there. From there, check with your local museum. If they have Medalta or other pottery collections, they may have some of the harder to find articles like those in the *Canadian Collector* or the *Material History Bulletin*. And if both of those avenues fail, write the Glenbow Library at 130 9th Avenue S.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2G 0P3, as they have copies of all the articles.

If you really want to look deep into the Alberta pottery story, the best place to start is the Provincial Archives in Edmonton, as they have over fourteen file boxes full of records from the Medalta Plant. Smaller, yet interesting holdings, can be found at the Medicine Hat Museum and Archives and the Glenbow Archives. And be sure to ask about photographs as well, as all three of these archives have some excellent pictures showing different aspects of the industry in addition to price lists, catalogues and other records.

You Can Help the Author's Studies

I might as well put a plug in here for your help as well. My studies into the products of all the potteries located in Alberta are ongoing, and I would welcome hearing from you. If you have unusual pieces, uniquely finished items, advertising pieces, souvenirs, commemoratives or named hotel china, I would welcome a note or photograph advising me of what you have. Many of the items made by the smaller potteries like P.I.E. and the Gas City Pottery Limited are poorly known, and your help in documenting them is definitely needed.

Perhaps you just have a question or two that you would like answered—like the location or date of a named piece. I will try to reply to all letters that I get, but as this is my hobby, I will have to fit those letters into my spare time which is always far less than I would like.

You can write to Ronald Getty at 216 Maddock Way N.E., Calgary, Alberta, T2A 3X3, or phone (403) 273-1132. I might add that I, too, can provide you with photocopies of the articles, but it will take me longer than it would the Glenbow Museum.

Collections for Viewing

At some point you may want to look at the pieces themselves. If you do not know anyone that has a collection, you might start by visiting your local museum. You will find that most museums have a few pieces of Alberta made pottery, if nothing else a crock or mixing bowl. But there are some that have very good collections and it is well worth the trip to visit them.

But please, be warned, write or phone beforehand to make an appointment to see what they have. Chances are that only a small part of their collections will be on exhibit, if any at all; and, to see what is behind the scenes, in storage, you will have to make an appointment.

You should probably start with the Glenbow Museum as it has the best overall collection—pretty well something from all of the potteries in the area. Their Medalta and Medicine Hat Potteries' collections are particularly strong, but their Alberta Potteries, Hycroft and Sunburst are not bad for showing the range of products made by each. Their P.I.E. holdings are the best you will find anywhere, but they are nevertheless quite small, only about a dozen pieces. Their Medalta (1966) Limited collections are pathetic, but even at that they are still the largest in any Alberta museum.

If you are in the Edmonton area, contact the Provincial Museum to arrange a visit. Their collections are mainly Medalta, but you will find most of the potteries represented to some extent. One thing that they have, not found in other museums, is the decals used to decorate Medalta's baby wares. They also have some moulds, biscuit ware and saggars that other museums do not have. And keep in mind that the Provincial Archives has the Medalta records and some photographs worth looking at.

At present, the Friends' collection when not on exhibit is stored in the Medicine Hat Museum, so you may have to make only one stop to see both collections. The Friends' collection is, at present, largely comprised of Medalta or Hycroft items, but the whole collection may not be available for viewing as it is still being catalogued. You will not find a better Hycroft collection in any other museum, and the Medalta holdings are not bad either.

The Medicine Hat Museum's collections are, like Glenbow's, a good cross-section of all the potteries in the area. Probably, once again, Medalta is the strongest, but the others are well worth the visit. They have quite a number of advertising and other items that you will not find in any other museum collection. Once again, remember that they have an archives. They have some pictures taken at "Made in Alberta" trade shows dating to the 1920s or 1930s that show an interesting array of products.

Finally, if you are in the Ottawa area, visit the Canadian Museum of Civilization (C.M.C.) in Hull, Quebec. They acquired the Richard and Jean Symonds' collection which numbered about 800 pieces. Roughly 400 pieces of this collection were illustrated in the Symonds' 1974 booklet, so there are many items that you will not have seen before. In addition to Medalta, their strong point, the C.M.C. also has a good selection of pieces made by Medicine Hat Potteries; and, next to Glenbow, it has the best P.I.E. collection even though it only numbers about eight pieces.

Collecting Alberta Made Pottery

If you are not yet a collector, but this booklet has given you the desire to become one, then these few comments may be helpful. First of all, collect because it is fun to do so. Do not collect in the hope that it will be a good investment. It may turn out to be just that, but you can never be sure. Attractive or unusual glazes, uncommon designs, advertising items and rare, hard-to-find pieces will likely increase in value, but the more common ones such as mixing bowls, crocks and plain hotel china will likely not increase very much, and in some cases could even lose their value.

What you should pay for a piece is really up to you. Price guides are just that, only a guide. If you really need a piece to complete a set, or you just want it because it was named to a merchant from your home town, then price may not be of too much concern. But, to make sure that you do not pay an outrageous price for something, by all means pick up whatever price guides you can find, but be warned there are not many that mention Alberta made pottery.

By far the best way to become knowledgeable is to visit antique and collectible stores, go to the special antique shows that come to town, and go to auction sales. You can still pick up some good bargains at auction sales, especially rural ones, but the best bargains will likely be found at garage sales and flea markets.

One of the best things you can do as a new collector is to introduce yourself to those who are bidding against you at an auction. When you meet fellow collectors a whole new world will open for you; most will gladly share both their information and collections with you. It might not happen when you first meet, but once you find that you really share a common interest, I am sure that they will open their homes to you.

Perhaps the main question to ask yourself is “What should I collect.” The answer depends on many things: your interests, how much of a challenge you want, the depth of your pocketbook, how much room you have to display your collection, and perhaps even what will the rest of the family put up with.

I will not try to answer all those questions but perhaps a few guidelines will help. If you want a real challenge—the most difficult of the potteries to find—then try collecting P.I.E. or New Medalta Ceramics. Your collection will never be a big one, but you will certainly end up with an unique collection. While some dealers are aware of how hard it is to find the items made by these companies, the prices as a rule are still not too high due to few collectors chasing after them.

I would not even suggest that you try Medicine Hat Pottery Company Limited (1912-1914) or Clark’s two companies as you might look for a year before you even get one item. The Alberta Potteries though, both Wyatt’s and Yuill’s companies, are another good choice if you want a fairly challenging area yet one where you could, in time, get a collection of a hundred or more pieces. Once again, the prices for most items are not outrageous, and many pieces can be picked up in the \$20.00 to \$30.00 range.

The items made by Sunburst, Hycroft and Medalta (1966) Limited are what I call the poor man’s collectible. Most of their decorated, commemorative, souvenir and advertising items can be acquired in the \$10.00 to \$20.00 range, and you can still find quite a few around the \$5.00 mark. These companies are also the best bet for showing up at garage sales and flea markets. Sunburst closed in 1975 while the other two were still producing items into the 1980s, and for that reason you still find many of its products being used in homes.

Even if you just specialized in one of these companies, you could easily accumulate a collection of over 100 different items. But watch out; once you start adding different decorative patterns, colours, advertising slogans, souvenir and commemorative items, your collection could quickly grow to 300 or more. For example, one Hycroft collector who largely limited his

collection to named pieces (advertising-commemorative-souvenirs) now has around 300 pieces! And it's still growing.

Medalta has been collected for a long time, especially since the Symonds' published their book - *Medalta Stoneware & Pottery for Collectors*. It has acquired the reputation as the "thing" to collect; and, of course, with more people chasing after it than the other potteries, the price has gone up accordingly. Medalta is no longer cheap to buy, especially the advertising and highly decorated pieces. Unless you have a mansion, or better yet your own museum, it would be pointless to try to collect an example of every different product made by Medalta. Over the years, they designed over 700 different products, and that is not including the various sizes that many of them came in.

But if you chose to specialize in a particular area such as mixing bowls or pitchers, you could limit your collection but still have fun putting it together. You might even want to expand your pitcher collection to include ones made by all the different potteries rather than just Medalta's, and my guess would be that such a collection could easily add up to more than 150 different pitchers!

The items made by the Medicine Hat Potteries (1938-1955) are still fairly easy to find, and as a rule about half the price of Medalta items. Since they also had a good variety of different products—200 to 300 is my guess—you can certainly build quite a large collection if that is your desire.

What you decide to collect, may come to you only after you have tested the field to find out what you really like, or how hard it is to collect in a given area. There is nothing more frustrating than going to stores, antique shows or flea markets, week after week, only to find that they have none of the items which you are collecting. It is no fun at all if your search has been made too difficult.

What you will find is that collecting is a great way to meet people and make new friends with those with whom you share a common interest. Hook up with another collector—hopefully one whose interest is different from yours—to make the flea market and antique sale rounds. Two pairs of eyes are always better than one. It is also a great way to get out for some exercise, and best of all you will have a lot of fun.

The Friends of Medalta Society

The kilns of Medicine Hat/Redcliff are all quiet now. The last load has been fired, or has it?

Not if the Friends of Medalta have their way. They have plans to revitalize one or more of the potteries that provided a living for so many people over the years. Will it be the original Medalta plant or the newer Medicine Hat Potteries/Hycroft plant? Perhaps it will be a combination of both.

The Friends would like to see Medicine Hat become the pottery centre in Alberta. A place where you can go to see the kilns and buildings that once bustled with activity, the equipment that was used to grind and mix the clay or press it into cakes, the moulds ready to be filled with slip, the vats (usually large crocks) once filled with glaze mixtures, the pins set within the saggar ready to hold the stacked plates, or the stilts that permitted the nesting of bowls.

It will be a showplace of the products made by the various potteries, from the smallest souvenir to the largest crock weighing around 200 pounds. A museum to which you can bring your favourite piece to find out what it was called, how it was used, which company made it, when it was produced and perhaps even how many were made.

The Friends would like to see the museum become a centre for the study of the Alberta pottery industry. A place where you can examine catalogues, price lists, invoices, letters and photographs. And best of all, the Friends would like it to be a working pottery. Wouldn't it be nice if a part of the factory could be set up so that you could actually see a piece being made from start to finish? Maybe someday you will be able to place a special order for a piece with your name on it, or ones named to friends as your special birthday or Christmas gift to them.

How You Can Help the Friends

In time, all these things are possible, but for now the concern is for preserving the buildings and for gathering the items that will make it all possible. And you can help.

Start by joining the Friends of Medalta. Find out what their goals are, help them plan for the future, help them get more people involved in the project, and help them get the backing of the politicians who can tap the funds needed to bring the project to fruition.

If you do not like to get involved in those aspects, there are always other things you can do. Perhaps you would like to try your hand at putting up displays from time to time, photographing items or interviewing people. Whatever your skill and interest, let the Friends know. Your offer of help will be appreciated.

You can also help by building up the reference material and collections that the Friends need to tell the pottery story. Perhaps you have a small collection that you would like to donate. It might only be one item, but perhaps it is that special piece which tells an interesting or unusual story.

I remember one crock that had such a story. It was a normal five gallon crock except that it had four holes through its side, about two inches up from the bottom, as well as one through the bottom itself. Apparently Medalta quickly made a few of these crocks when the river rose to flood the flats. They were used as a filter to keep the pumps from plugging up with the debris that was floating around.

Other items that will help preserve the pottery story are price lists, catalogues, brochures, envelopes, letterhead, packing slips, letters, photographs and even stories. If you or a family member worked in one of the potteries, you probably have photographs of the plant, the equipment, the products or the people at work. Any of these would be of interest.

And best of all, the Friends are a registered charity and therefore can provide you with a receipt for income tax purposes. Anything that you donate to the Friends, from photographs or letters to vases or crocks, can be evaluated by an expert so that you get the full benefit of your gift.

I mentioned stories. Yet another way you can help is to record those stories for posterity. If you did not actually work in a pottery yourself, sit down with a relative or friend that did, turn on your tape recorder, ask questions and relish the stories that come your way. Transcribe the tapes if you have time, but if not, just turn them over to the Friends as they are.

And, if you find that you cannot help in any of these ways, perhaps you can aid the Friends by simply sending them a cheque. They can always use gifts of money for the furtherance of their goals. And, if nothing else, give them a call or send them a letter. Let them know that you are behind the project, that you care, that you want to see it happen, and I am sure it will only make them work that much harder on our behalf.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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- Ronald Getty and Ester Klaiman, "Identifying Medalta, 1916-1954: A Guide to Markings," *Material History Bulletin* 12, pp. 17-60, Spring 1981.
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- Ronald Getty, "Medalta's Art Wares," *Canadian Collector* Vol 17, No. 5., pp. 51-55, September/October 1982.
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APPENDIX I

THE FOLLOWING PRICE LIST IS THE WHOLESALE CARLOAD PRICE LIST FOR ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN, AS SPECIFIED IN OPTION GIVEN TO MR. U. S. GRANT UNDER DATE OF SEPTEMBER 14th., 1922.

Type	Size	Price	Unit
Butter low	3 lb	.06	each
	10 lb	.14	each
Butter Crock	1/2 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	1 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	2 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	3 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	4 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	5 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	6 gallon	11.5 cents	per gallon
	8 gallon	13.5 cents	per gallon
Butter Crock (with handles)	10 gallon	8 cents	per gallon
	12 gallon	14.5 cents	per gallon
	15 gallon	6.5 cents	per gallon
	20 gallon	16.5 cents	per gallon
Crock Covers	25 gallon	18.5 cents	per gallon
	1 gallon	8 cents	each
	2 gallon	11.5 cents	each
	3 gallon	11.5 cents	each
	4 gallon	17.25 cents	each
	5 gallon	23 cents	each
	6 gallon	23 cents	each
	8 gallon	29 cents	each
	10 gallon	35 cents	each
	12 gallon	35 cents	each
	15 gallon	46 cents	each
Churns (Bodies)	20 gallon	46 cents	each
	25 gallon	46 cents	each
	3 gallon	15 cents	per gallon
	4 gallon	15 cents	per gallon
	5 gallon	15 cents	per gallon

Type	Size	Price	Unit
Churn Covers	6 gallon	15 cents	per gallon
	8 gallon	17 cents	per gallon
	3,4,5,6 gallon	15 cents	each
French Pans	8 gallon	17 cents	each
	1/4 gallon	7.5 cents	each
Pickle Jars Complete	1/2 gallon	10 cents	each
	1 gallon	13.5 cents	each
	1 gallon	20 cents	each ²⁵
Jugs Imperial	5 gallon	20 cents	each
	1/4 gallon	10 cents	each
Bean Pots with covers	1/2 gallon	3.5 cents	each
	1 gallon	18 cents	each
	2 gallon	36 cents	each
	5 gallon	90 cents	each
	2 quart	17.5 cents	each
	3 quart	20 cents	each
	4 quart	25 cents	each
Chicken Fountains	6 quart	30 cents	each
	1/2 gallon	13.33 cents	each
	1 gallon	20 cents	each
Saucers for Chicken Fountains	1/2 gallon	6.66 cents	each
Stone Milk Pans	1 gallon	10 cents	each
	1 quart	7.5 cents	each
	2 quart	10 cents	each
	3 quart	12 cents	each
	4 quart	14 cents	each
	6 quart	21 cents	each
	8 quart	28 cents	each
Mixing Bowls	6 inch	7 cents	each
	7 inch	8 cents	each
	8 inch	9 cents	each
	9 inch	10 cents	each
	10 inch	11 cents	each
Yellow Bowls	4 inch	55 cents	per dozen
	5 inch	75 cents	per dozen
	6 inch	\$1.05	per dozen
	7 inch	\$1.35	per dozen
	8 inch	\$1.85	per dozen

Type	Size	Price	Unit
	9 inch	\$2.65	per dozen
	10 inch	\$3.75	per dozen
	11 inch	\$4.90	per dozen
	12 inch	\$6.00	per dozen
Yellow Pitchers	1 pint	\$1.70	per dozen
	1.5 pint	\$2.10	per dozen
	2 pint	\$2.50	per dozen
	3 pint	\$2.95	per dozen
Cuspidors		\$2.00	each
Jam Jars	1 quart	7 cents	each
Jam Jar Covers	1 quart	4 cents	each
Pantry Jars			
(Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Salt)		\$1.25	per dozen
Pantry Jar Covers		80 cents	per dozen
Pickle Display Bowls		75 cents	each
Chambers		30 cents	each
Chamber Covers		17.5 cents	each
Slop Jars		43.33 cents	each
Slop Jar Covers		21.66 cents	each
Stone Footwarmers		\$7.00	per dozen
Meat Roaster (Top)		32.5 cents	each
Meat Roaster (Bottom)		32.5 cents	each
Mexican Water Jar		\$4.50	per dozen
Cooler Body	5 gal.	\$1.75	each
Ice Chamber for 5 gal. Cooler		75 cents	each
Cooler Cover		50 cents	each
Filter (Top)		\$1.25	each
Filter (Bottom)		\$1.25	each
Filter Cover		50 cents	each
Estels' Cooler Body		\$1.25	each
Estels' Cooler Base		75 cents	each
Estels' Cooler Cover		50 cents	each
Estels' Syrup Container		50 cents	each
Dalton's Ice Chamber		30 cents	each
Chemical Tanks	28 " long	\$7.50	each
Chemical Tanks	42 " long	\$10.00	each
Battery Jars	25 " long	\$25.00	each
Battery Jar Covers		\$20.00	each

Type	Size	Price	Unit
Custard Cups		55 cents	per dozen
Cut Flower Vases (Small)		\$1.25	per dozen
Cut Flower Vases (Large)		\$3.25	per dozen
Lawn Vases		\$4.00	each
Jardinieres	8 inch	25 cents	each
Hanging Baskets	10 inch	25 cents	each
	12 inch		30 each
	14 inch	37.5	each
Red Flower Pots	6 inch	\$5.30	per hundred
Red Half Pots	7 inch	\$8.00	per hundred
Fancy Flower Pots	4 inch	\$4.00	per hundred
	5 inch	\$5.50	per hundred
	6 inch	\$7.50	per hundred
	7 inch	\$11.00	per hundred
	8 inch	\$16.00	per hundred
	9 inch	\$22.00	per hundred
	10 inch	\$28.00	per hundred
	12 inch Plain	\$30.00	per hundred
Fancy Saucers	4 inch	\$2.00	per hundred
	5 inch	\$2.75	per hundred
	6 inch	\$3.75	per hundred
	7 inch	\$5.50	per hundred
	8 inch	\$8.00	per hundred
	9 inch	\$11.00	per hundred
	10 inch	\$14.00	per hundred
12 inch Plain	\$15.00	per hundred	

APPENDIX II

PRICE GUIDE TO ALBERTA MADE

POTTERY

This price guide is included to give you an idea as to what your pottery pieces may be worth. It is intended not for the collector but for the person with some pieces in their home. It is to help you in making a decision as to how much you should ask for an item, or to know if the offer that has been made is a fair one. And should you decide to donate it to the Friends or some other museum, what amount the tax receipt may be for.

It is impossible to list every item or every decoration as there were so many of them. And remember it is only a guide. Prices vary considerably from one area of Canada to another. For example, British Columbia, Alberta or Saskatchewan advertising pieces may bring a better price in their home province as that is where you are most likely to find collectors who have specialized.

Also, do not expect a dealer to offer you the price at the top of the given range. They, too, must make a living and need some room for a markup.

The price ranges given here are for items in good shape, ones with no cracks, chips, staining or other damage. Such damage usually cuts the price in half, but can be more or less depending on how rare the piece is. Also the item must be marked with the name of the company that made it.

As a general rule, collectors only want pieces that have the factory name stamped somewhere on the item. The main exception to this rule is advertising, commemorative and souvenir pieces. It is desirable that they be stamped as well, but they are collected, not for the stamp but, rather, the story that they tell.

Finally, if you are unsure what something may be worth, keep it until you have a chance to check out several antique stores, shows or auction sales. Unless you want to sell it quickly, do not be afraid to ask what may seem to be a high price for it. The buyers will soon let you know if it is too high. They may make you a counter offer, and you can of course always settle somewhere in between.

PRICES

Medicine Hat Pottery Company Limited

(1912-1914)

Gas City Pottery Ltd (Clark's Pottery)

(1916-1922)

Canada Pottery (Clark's Pottery)

(1922-1924)

Too few products are known for these companies to provide any real price guide. The only known stamped pieces are crocks made by Medicine Hat Pottery Co. Ltd., and they are usually priced quite low as they are not recognized as very early pieces. Should you have stamped pieces from any one of these potteries, I would suggest that you find a museum that is willing to accept them, as they are indeed museum pieces.

Item	Price
Crocks	\$30 - 60

Medalta Stoneware Limited

The majority of small items such as jam jars, bean pots, teapots, mixing bowls, hour-glass vases, jardinieres, etc. are not stamped. (add 25% for all items with the Indian head stamp)

Item	Price
Crocks, 1 to 8 gallon sizes	\$30 - 60
Crocks, 10 and up gallons	40 - 80
Churns	80 - 200
Ice water, coolers, jars and kegs	100 - 200
Water filter (top & bottom)	150 - 200
Pickle crocks	50 - 100
Pantry jars (salt, tea, coffee, sugar)	50 - 75
Miniatures - jug, crock, churn or chamber pot	150 - 250

Medalta Potteries Limited

Price	Item
Crocks, 1 to 8 gallon sizes	\$20 - 50
Crocks, 10 and up gallons.....	30 - 80
Churns.....	80 - 200
miniatures - jug, crock, churn or chamber pot.....	100 - 300
Ice water, coolers, jars and kegs	100 - 200
Ice water jars - with advertising	150 - 400
Water filter (top & bottom).....	150 - 200
Pickle crocks - 1 & 5 gallon sizes.....	30 - 80
Pantry jars (salt, tea, coffee, sugar, rice).....	75 - 125
Bed warmers or “pigs”	50 - 80
Spittoons	50 - 120
Acid pitchers	100 - 200
Chamber pots, slop jars	30 - 50
Bean pots - plain	30 - 50
Bean pots - advertising Catelli or Rosaire	40 - 80
Cookie jars - solid colours	40 - 80
Cookie jars - decorated - lacquered or glazed	100 - 175
Mixing bowls - plain cane or yellow	20 - 40
Mixing bowls - coloured blue, green or red	30 - 80
Mixing bowls - decorated and/or with advertising.....	150 - 250
Pitchers - plain cane or yellow	20 - 40
Pitchers - coloured blue, green or red.....	40 - 100
Pitchers - decorated ships, mills, owls, etc. - add 30% for handpainted varieties	60 - 150
Pitchers - decorated and/or with advertising	75 - 200
Teapots - plain brown or green	40 - 60
Teapots - coloured blue, green, red, etc.	50 - 100
Teapots - decorated ships, mills, owls, etc. - add 30% for handpainted varieties	80 - 150
Teapots - decorated and/or with advertising.....	100 - 200
Ashtrays - plain coloured.....	20 - 40
Ashtrays - advertising and/or decorated	40 - 125
Vases - coloured glazes.....	40 - 80

Item (cont'd)	Price
Vases - coloured lacquers (storks, Dutch, ships, birds, dragon, swallow, gondola, camels, etc.)	100 - 225
-plain lacquers like gold & silver	50 - 80
Animal Planters	60 - 100
Jardinieres	\$60 - 120
Lamps - solid glaze colours	40 - 80
Lamps - decorated with coloured lacquers	125 - 250
Figurines - goat, buffalo, polar bear or birds	150 - 300
Hotel china - cups, plates, soup bowls white, solid colours, green or red band	5 - 15
Hotel china - pitchers, platters, celery or olive trays	
Hotel china - named or fancy decoration add 50%	25 - 50
Ice water pitchers	40 - 80
Oven wares - green, brown, and white lined smaller items	10 - 30
Oven wares - larger pieces, hot water, teapots, casseroles, room service bowl	40 - 90

Alberta Potteries (Wyatt)

Item	Price
Crocks, 1 to 10 gallon sizes (beaver trademark)	\$40 - 80
Butter crocks (beaver trademark)	30 - 50
Churns (beaver trademark)	80 - 200
Bed warmers or "pigs"	50 - 70
Chicken fountains	30 - 60
Barrel cookie jars	40 - 60
Bean pots	30 - 40
Casseroles	20 - 40
Mixing bowls - solid colours	20 - 40
Mixing bowls - with advertising	60 - 80
Pudding bowls & meat pie pans - plain	15 - 40
Pudding bowls & meat pie pans - with advertising	30 - 70
Pitchers - solid colours	20 - 50
Teapots - plain brown or coloured	40 - 60
Teapots - percolating - green mottled	60 - 100
Ashtrays - plain	20 - 30
Ashtrays - with advertising and/or decorated	40 - 80
Vases - coloured lacquers & glazes	30 - 60
Jardinieres - coloured lacquers	30 - 60
Bulb bowls - glazed	20 - 50
Cups - silver jubilee, presented to school children	100 - 150

Provincial Industrial Enterprises

Item	Price
Vases	\$50 - 100
Cream pitcher or sugar bowl	30 - 70
Mixing bowl	30 - 50

Alberta Potteries (Yuill)

Item	Price
Crocks, 1/4 to 5 gallon sizes	\$15 - 40
Crocks, larger than 5 gallons	30 - 50
Butter crocks	15 - 30
Umbrella stand	30 - 50
Bean pots	20 - 30
Mixing bowls - solid colours	10 - 30
Mixing bowls - with advertising	30 - 60
Ashtrays - plain	10 - 20
Ashtrays - with advertising and/or decorated	20 - 35
Vases - glazed & decorated	20 - 80
Rabbit-shaped planter	40 - 60
Log-shaped planter	20 - 50
Jardinieres & bulb bowls	20 - 60
Mugs, soup bowls & salad bowls - coloured	8 - 20
Barbecue set - birch bark pattern	10 - 40
Birch bark pattern plate - advertising/commemorative	40 - 120

Medicine Hat Potteries (Little Chief)

Item	Price
Crocks, 1/4 to 8 gallon sizes	\$20 - 50
Crocks, 10 and up gallons.....	30 - 80
Butter crocks	30 - 60
Churns.....	80 - 160
Jugs, 1/4 to 5 gallon sizes	20 - 80
Ice water coolers	80 - 150
Ice water coolers - with advertising.....	150 - 300
Pickle crocks	30 - 50
Bed warmers or “pigs”	40 - 70
Chicken fountains	40 - 60
Acid pitchers	80 - 150
Bean pots & honey jars - plain	30 - 50
Bowls - glazed, various colours.....	15 - 40
Bowls - with advertising	40 - 80
Casseroles	20 - 40
Pitchers	15 - 50
Pitchers - with advertising	30 - 60
Teapots & coffee pots	20 - 40
Teapots - decorated.....	40 - 70
Ashtrays - plain coloured.....	10 - 20
Ashtrays - advertising and/or decorated	30 - 70
Ashtrays - sleeping deer, saddle & airplane	40 - 80
Vases - coloured glazes, mantle & wall types	30 - 70
Vases - decorated	50 - 100
Planters - animal & top-hat shaped.....	30 - 70
Jardinieres.....	60 - 80
Bulb bowls & candy dishes	15 - 30
Lamps	40 - 80
Figurines - most in plaster, designed by Jack Fuller.....	75 - 250
Wall plaques - designed by Jack Fuller	65 - 180
Dinnerwares - cups, plates, soup bowls, etc. in white, solid colours or plain decorations	5 - 15
Dinnerwares - pitchers, platters, celery or olive trays	20 - 40
Dinnerwares - named or fancy decoration add 50%	
Ice water pitchers.....	20 - 40
Tumblers	5 - 15

Hycroft China Limited

Item	Price
Plates - Canadiana series	\$40 - 100
Plates - beaver & maple leaf border	50 - 100
Crocks, 1/4 to 10 gallon sizes	15 - 40
Crocks, 10 to 40 gallons	30 - 80
Ice water jars, 3 & 5 gallon sizes	40 - 80
Bean pots	10 - 30
Bowls - glazed, various colours	10 - 30
Pitchers	10 - 20
Teapots	15 - 30
Ashtrays, hat - advertising and/or decorated	5 - 12
Ashtrays, safety - advertising and/or decorated	8 - 20
Ashtrays, others - advertising and/or decorated	10 - 25
Vases	20 - 40
Figurines - trumpeter swan	30 - 60
Dinnerwares - cups & saucers, plates, soup bowls, etc. named patterns like Breeze, Lynn, etc.	5 - 15
Dinnerwares - pitchers, platters, celery or olive trays	10 - 30
Dinnerwares - named or fancy decoration add 50%	
Plates, 8 & 10 inch - advertising and/or decorated	10 - 25
Plates, 12 & 14 inch - advertising and/or decorated	20 - 40

New Medalta Ceramics

Although this company made crocks and bean pots, I have not seen any at sales; therefore, it is not possible to give them a price range. If you do find stamped ones, I would suggest the price range should be about the same as Yuill's Alberta Potteries items.

Item	Price
Vases	\$60 - 125
Beer steins - advertising	40 - 75
Barbecue set - birch bark pattern	15 - 40
Birch bark pattern plate - advertising/commemorative	25 - 80

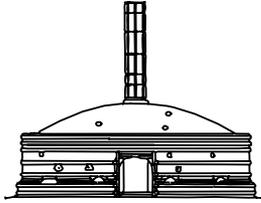
Sunburst Ceramics Limited

Item	Price
Crocks, 1/4 to 5 gallon sizes	\$10 - 40
Crocks, 10 to 40 gallons	20 - 70
Butter crocks	15 - 25
Bean pots	15 - 30
Bean pot - advertising lid.....	30 - 40
Casseroles	10 - 25
Roman pot & bread baker.....	10 - 20
Mixing bowls	10 - 40
Ashtrays - plain.....	8 - 20
Ashtrays - with advertising and/or decorated	15 - 30
Vases	20 - 50
Planters	5 - 15
Jardinieres & bulb bowls	20 - 60
Trays - round, square & triangular (floral emblems).....	8 - 15
Compartment plates	5 - 15
Tiered serving trays	10 - 25
Serving plates - design of item being served.....	10 - 30
Chili & onion soup bowls.....	5 - 10
Coffee pot	10 - 20
Mugs, cups & saucers	4 - 8
Dinnerware set - signed N. Grav. - smaller items	5 - 15
- larger items, bowls and serving trays	10 - 25
Barbecue set - birch bark pattern	10 - 30

Medalta Potteries (1966) Limited

Item	Price
Crocks, 1/4 to 5 gallon sizes	\$10 - 30
Crocks, 10 gallons & larger	20 - 50
Pantry jar set	15 - 30
Pantry jar set - commemorative	20 - 40
Butter crocks, 3 & 5 pound sizes	10 - 20
Bean pots	15 - 30
Casseroles	10 - 20
Mixing bowls	10 - 30
Salad bowls	10 - 20
Pitchers	10 - 20
Beer steins - advertising	10 - 20
Cereal bowls - birch bark pattern moulds	8 - 12
Novelties - such as whale or turtle jam jar	10 - 20
Mugs, cups & saucers	5 - 10
Ewer & Basin set	80 - 120
Bust - "Geronimo"	75 - 125

You can support the Friends of Medalta Society by picking up a copy of this book at the Clay Products Interpretive Centre for \$15.00 or by sending \$18.00 which includes postage and handling (Price subject to change).



Friends of Medalta Society

**703 Wood Street
Medicine Hat, Alta
T1A 8S9 Canada
Phone 403-529-1070
FAX 403-580-5868
<http://www.medalta.org>**

References

¹ Antonelli and Forbes were consistent in misspelling some names: Malcolm MacArthur should have been McArthur; Ed Philipson, Phillipson; and Willow Saskatchewan, Willows.

² The Medicine Hat Brick and Tile Company Limited also made a series of ashtrays which were designed by Luke Lindoe. So far, I have seen three different ones which depict various types of kilns through the ages. They too are collectable, but not anywhere near as pricey as the Alberta Clay Product's figurines. You can also find a small, round ashtray made by Phillipson's National Porcelain Company.

³ So far only 2, 3 and 4 gallon sizes have been seen, but undoubtedly others were available as well.

⁴ Provincial Archives, Accession No. 69.235, No. 6. "History and Progress of the Medalta Stoneware Limited, Medicine Hat, Alberta", undated document ca. December 1922.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Medalta measured its production in this manner as crocks were by far its best selling product. 5000 gallons a day could mean 5000 one gallon items or 500 ten gallon ones, but the usual daily production was a mixture of the various sizes.

⁸ Clark's Gas City Pottery product line presently is known only from an advertisement in the 1920 Wrigley's Alberta Directory.

⁹ If you want a clearer view of the Canada Pottery products, you should examine the original photograph in the Medicine Hat Museum Archives. You can pick up quite a lot of detail using a magnifying glass.

¹⁰ The Medicine Hat Museum has a pudding bowl made by Clark which appears to match the one shown in the Canada Pottery photo.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Accession No. 69.235/200. Letter dated 14 February 1927.

¹² Baumler may have left Medalta before satina finishes were introduced, but I am sure that he had a hand in their development.

¹³ This listing of hotel china is but a partial one, trying to show the wide

range of products that were introduced within a very short period of time.

¹⁴Wyatt actually gave up ownership in 1936, but the factory continued for a brief time making wares under the same name. In its waning years, the plant was owned by Martin Perry (Wyatt's former partner) and Shorty Matuska.

¹⁵Two of Alberta Potteries' pitchers were given numbers and you will find them impressed into the bottom as "No. 1" or "No. 2."

¹⁶Perry had been a travelling salesman for Medalta, largely working the Alberta, Saskatchewan and, to a lesser extent, Manitoba circuit.

¹⁷Reportedly, the group owning the plant were Mormons, but this belief has not been substantiated as yet.

¹⁸Ibid., Box 12, No. 409. Letter dated 11 March 1940.

¹⁹Medalta assigned style No. 97 to this vase in 1940.

²⁰The mixing bowl that I saw was not marked, but its decoration and design led me to identify it as a P.I.E. piece.

²¹It is interesting to note that the accompanying illustration shows a Medalta ice water jar, showing that Hycroft got their moulds from the Medalta plant.

²²The yearly order for the Futurity Stakes was about 500 plates. Few orders for decorated wares were over 200 and many were quite small.

²³Orders for homecomings and church commemoratives usually numbered in the 100 to 300 range depending on the size of the town.

²⁴The stamp used was No. 19 as illustrated in the Symonds' book *Medalta Stoneware and Pottery for Collectors*.

²⁵The 5 gallon pickle jar was listed at the same price as the 1 gallon

Notes:

