

**Life With a MEDALTA-HOLIC**

by Donna Kellett

I still can recall one of my earliest experiences with Medalta. My husband Bill and I were on our honeymoon in February 1991. Although we were staying at the elegant, stately Empress Hotel in Victoria, Bill wanted to introduce me to the other, finer things in life. Like his favorite pizza; so bland-tasting, I preferred the box it came in. And then, there was Value Village.



As I wandered around the massive thrift store, Bill suddenly appeared, flushed with excitement, and holding something pink in his hand. "Look at THIS!" he whispered excitedly. I turned to view what I thought was the ugliest-looking object I had ever seen. Its only redeeming value was the delicate pink glaze that covered it. It was a large letter "V" on a small pedestal. There were two large holes in the top of the V, and some dots and lines on the base. I wrinkled my nose, then looked at Bill with profound bewilderment. "What IS it?" I asked, not sure if I really wanted to know.

"It's Medalta," he said, with a 'doesn't everyone know that' tone in his voice. Medalta...the name conjured up images of some tacky insurance agency, or perhaps some foul-tasting foreign condiment. "Medalta?" I asked. Bill explained the name of the company to me. He continued, "This is their World War 2 'Victory' bud vase, and it's really rare!" I looked at



it again. The idea of sticking beautiful flowers into such an abhorrent object was obviously beyond my comprehension. Thus began my reticent journey into the world of Medalta.

Bill had a massive collection, which included Medalta, Hycroft, and Sunburst, that he had started some five years earlier. However, the esthetic attributes of each piece he showed me grew progressively worse. Mustard yellows, avocado greens, browns which I can only describe as having human biological properties, things with specks, plaids, and stripes - I saw them all. Bill showed each piece with the pride and excitement of a five-

*Continued page 3*

**Dyson's Pickle Jar:**

**A MYSTERY SOLVED**

For many years a collector Tony Schlachter and I have suspected that the Dyson pickle jar, which you see in the marketplace from time to time, was made by Medalta. Now I believe we have the proof and it is rather interesting how it all came together.

My reason for looking at all Dyson pickle jars was based on the Medalta letters preserved in the Provincial Archives in Edmonton. The letter reproduced here suggests that prior to 1926 the Dyson Vinegar Company was obtaining some sort of vessel from Medalta, as why would they be asking Medalta about a new type of



one gallon pickle jar if they were not already being provided with one?

Tony's reason for watching for a Medalta made Dyson pickle jar was based on leads and stories that came his way every once in a while. Several times he just missed out on getting one.

So we both searched for the elusive jar for well over ten years. I, examining

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## A Note From The Editor

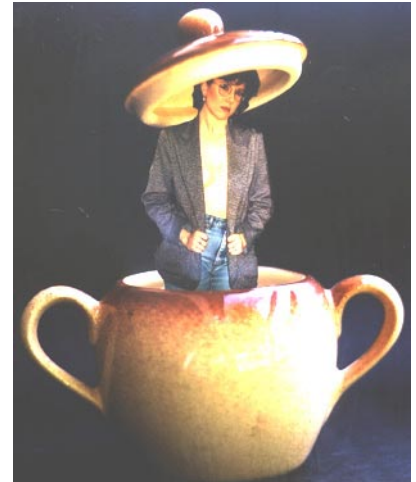
Please accept my apology for being late in producing the newsletter which seems to be normal for me. I need deadlines to get my act together. I promise to try harder to get it out at the end of every quarter.

The special issue on the Malibu Club is all but ready to go to the printer. I received a fifteen page package from the Vancouver City Archives which answered most of my many questions. I will soon be taking my summer holidays and completing that special issue will be my first priority.

Finally I would like to thank Donna Kellett for her article "Life With a Medalta-holic". I truly enjoyed it and I hope you do as well. Donna and Bill's collection is a good cross-section of all the Potteries located in the Medicine Hat area. For security purposes they have asked me not to give their phone number here, but if you would like to visit them when in the Vancouver area, please contact me and I will pass their phone number along to you.

And here's the Medalta Potteries (1966) Limited sugar bowl that Donna didn't mention. I too might feel overwhelmed.

The Editor



## The Medalta Review

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The Medalta Review is published quarterly in the interest of keeping collectors of Alberta made pottery informed on newly found products, current prices, history of the potteries and other aspects relating to the Alberta pottery industry. Each issue includes a Hycroft and Medalta section. Other columns will bring you reports regarding Alberta Potteries (Wyatt and Yuill), Athabasca Potteries, Medicine Hat Potteries (Little Chief), Medalta (1966) Ltd., Provincial Industrial Enterprises (PIE) or Sunburst Ceramics, and our question and answer column will reply to inquiries from our readers and museum visitors. Subscription is \$20.00 per year. Back issues are available from the Friends of Medalta at \$5.00 each plus postage and handling.

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every  
Dyson  
jar that I  
saw in  
hopes of  
finding a  
Medalta  
stamp on  
either the  
back or the  
bottom; and  
Tony, following  
up every lead  
that came his  
way. Well, finally  
the search  
paid off for  
Tony. He got his  
jar, or sort of.

While he did not get a pickle jar marked with both the Medalta and Dyson stamps, he got the next best thing - a jar identical in shape and size to the Dyson jar that was marked with one of the Medalta Stone-ware Limited oval stamps, the one designated G.3 which I believe was in use from 1918 to 1922.

Both jars are effectively identical in shape and measurements. They stand 8 3/4" high, measure 6 1/2" across the bottom and the

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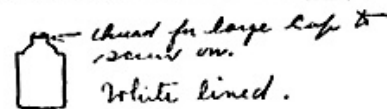
**CARTER**  
WISCONSIN

March 8th, 1926.

Medalta Potteries Limited,  
Medicine Hat, Alta.

Gentlemen:

Dyson has a new type one gallon Pickle container in mind. A sort of a one gallon Thermos bottle. If you can make these containers, we firmly believe, the volume will greatly exceed the regular Spring Top crock. The part they wish you to make is as follows.



The most serious point to overcome is a leak proof, yet cheap top. Is there anyway that you could make a thread on above container on which Mr. Dyson could screw or use the caps we are sending you under separate cover. Probably the style of thread used on the bottle wrapped with caps, would be easier for you to make. Advise us what you can do about making these threads. The mouth of the container would be the size of, and to fit, the large cap.

Please advise how many No. 56 Tensets you have on hand, that could be delivered to Mr. Dyson. How soon could you make delivery of 500 dozen?

In our last letter we asked you for the weight you had on hand for Winnipeg. You back-ordered quite a lot of stuff that should have come forward in the poolcar now rolling.

Yours very truly,

JAMES B. CARTER, LIMITED.

per

JBC/PD.

opening at the top is 3 1/2". But is this enough to prove that Medalta made the Dyson jars or did they simply make a very

Continued on page 3



close copy of another company's product?

While I pondered this question and waited for the photographs to illustrate this piece in the newsletter, fate stepped in and provided the answer. It happened about six months after I first heard about the Medalta marked jar. One of the emails sent to the FOMS from a person in Wyoming was passed along to me in early March. In it he asked for information about the age, value and any other information about a 5 gallon jug that he had picked up. I could hardly believe my eyes when I opened the picture files that were included for they showed a jug with both the Dyson and Medalta stamps on it.

As to what the jug was used for, we can get some clues from Dyson's letterhead. My guess is vinegar, based on the size of the jug; but who knows, perhaps it could have been used for syrup. Possibly it was just an error in marking the jug resulting from an employee grabbing the wrong rubber stamp. If it was indeed a finished product and not some sort of marking error you would expect the two markings to be neatly lined up or better yet placed on opposite sides of the jar.

Whatever the reason, it does not really matter. The important thing that it reveals is that the Dyson & Medalta stamps were contemporaneous, and this I believe is the final proof that the pickle jars only marked with the oval Dyson stamp were indeed made by Medalta.

As to values, the jar marked with the Dyson stamp sells in the \$60.00-\$75.00 range. I can only guess at what the Medalta marked one might sell for but, if I was still buying for the Glenbow Museum, I would go as high as \$150.00 without a second thought.

Returning to the James B. Carter letter, which includes a sketch of the new thermos bottle style of pickle jar being requested by the Dyson company, I should point out that Medalta did produce such a white lined bottle. However all of the thermos style bottles that I have recorded were made much later as the Medalta stamps on them date them

to the late 1930s or later. Did Medalta make a thermos bottle as early as 1926? I do not know, but this letter indicates that they may have. •



*Life with a Medalta-Holic - Continued from page 1*

year-old showing his squiggly artwork to his parents. But then he told me this hideous stuff was worth lots of MONEY! Once again, I stared at my husband in bewilderment. Other people paying big money for ashtrays shaped like cowboy hats? It was almost beyond belief. Nevertheless, I slowly got accustomed to the idea.

Of course, as with any Medalta-holic, we had to make our pilgrimage to Medicine Hat, the Mecca for its devotees, and both the Hycroft and Medalta factories, which was Bill's Kaaba. He was utterly dumbstruck when we arrived at the Hycroft factory. I asked him if we were supposed to walk around the building three times to be blessed. I also remember taking a picture of Bill while we were in the gift shop. When I saw the photo later, it looked as if he were having a religious experience with a teacup, his eyes closed in a spiritual rapture.

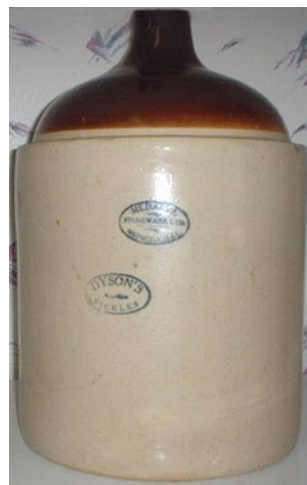
One thing that truly surprised me later on about my husband's pottery, was that once in a while, I'd see something that wasn't ugly. In fact, it was - do I dare say it? - attractive! The larger and more diverse Bill's collection became, the more often I would find an attractive piece. However, I hesitated to point them out to my Medalta-holic spouse. After all, I had a reputation to maintain...

Sometimes, when I look at our overflowing, pottery-filled basement, I have to wonder if Bill has been taking lessons from Jimmy Stewart in "It's A Wonderful Life". Remember when Jimmy puts those dollar bills in the safe, hoping they'll make babies? I'd swear Bill's been doing that with the Sunburst, rendering him a great, great, great grandfather by now!

However, one thing I have been pleasantly surprised at on my Medalta journey, has been the special friendships Bill and I have acquired along the way. These are kind, generous people, who have literally taken us into their homes as well as their hearts. No prototype ashtray or bean pot could come close in value, when compared to such wonderful people.

So if anyone says to me, "If I had a dog as ugly as that Medalta, I'd shave his butt, and make him walk backwards", I'll just say, "But I'll have lots of valuable pottery, lots of money, and wonderful friends. And you'll have a dog with a cold backside!" Ah, the joys of being a Medalta wife. As they say, a thing of beauty is a joy forever...until you drop it.

Editor's note: For those readers that have the booklet "Know Your Medalta: Vases" some of Donna & Bill's Medalta vases are shown in the top photo (three shelves) on page 88. •



*David J. Dyson Limited*  
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## Just Another Alberta Potteries (WYATT) Bean Pot

How many of us have walked by a bean pot like this, missing out on an interesting and rare find? I suspect that I have. I see so many bean pots at antique shows that I seldom give them a second look anymore, but now I will have to start paying attention to them.

The typical and most commonly seen bean pot made by Jessie W. Wyatt is the one where the lid sits on a ledge just inside the rim. This new find, at least new for me, is a variety with no internal ledge at all. Rather the lid fits over the rim as shown in the photo showing the two bean pots side by side.

Wyatt's Alberta Potteries Limited was in business from 1931 to 1938 although Wyatt was only there until 1936, and at present there is no way to limit the period when bean pots were made. So far I have only recorded the 2-quart size being made by Wyatt's company. If he made other sizes I have not yet heard of them, and if you have other sizes I would welcome hearing about them.

The only marking that I have seen on the bean pots is an impressed one reading "ALBERTA POTTERIES



LTD. REDCLIFF CANADA" and both varieties of the bean pots shown here have that marking. Measurement of the bean pots show them to be about 4.5 inches high x about 8 inches diameter across body.

The handles are excluded from the measurements as they usually project both above and out from the main body about 1/2 inch. The size is indicated by an impressed 2 in the bottom just above the center.

The colour of Wyatt's bean pots encompasses a good variety of browns. Some are quite light and other are a fairly dark brown, and I have even seen one that is best described as a reddish-brown.



Wyatt made bean pots generally sell in the \$30.00 to \$60.00 range when complete and in good condition. Dealers likely are not aware of the different styles of lids and therefore I would expect both styles to be in the same price range. •

## Follow Up: Chicken Fountains

This half gallon chicken fountain sold for about \$125.00 on ebay. The price was not too surprising as fountains from the Medalta Stoneware Limited period, 1920-1924, are so hard to find and it did have a saucer with it as well.



Another fountain auctioned on ebay in the past month, one gallon in size with the reinforced hole and bearing the Medalta Potteries Limited stamp no. G.5.d, had one bid of \$99.00 US or about \$150.00

Canadian. Even though it included a saucer and was in excellent condition, I thought the price was too high as they are not that hard to find.

And thanks to a B.C. collector, I can show you this small B&K fountain that differs in having the feedbag placed on the backside rather than above the cut-out. It was likely sold as a second as the glaze had run so badly. •



## A P.I.E. Vase

This prize showed up at the recent Blue Mountain Antique Sale in Calgary. I consider all pieces of P.I.E. (Provincial Industrial Enterprises) prizes as they are so seldom seen in the marketplace, and this one especially so as it sold for under \$100.00.

When I first saw this piece I just knew that it was something special. The shape was a familiar Medalta one, style no. 97, but it was decorated in the lacquered chicken-wire pattern. What jumped out at me was the fact that Medalta only used the chicken-wire decoration for a few years in the early 1930s, yet this was a style number and shape dating to 1939. It certainly called for a closer look for, if it was indeed made by Medalta, it showed that the chicken-wire

decoration was used much later than I thought.

It actually was not too surprising to find that it was a P.I.E. as it was indeed one of that company's shapes. It was also a shape first developed by Jesse W. Wyatt's Alberta Potteries Limited (1931-1938), and if



anything I had been hoping that it was marked with a Wyatt stamp.

The wire pattern was in dark blue lines with some green mixed with the blue in places, all against a lighter blue background, and it had gold trim around both the base and the rim. The vase stands about 6.5"

high and the P.I.E. oxide stamp on the bottom is one of the round varieties. There was no sign of any impressed marking in the bottom as is often the case on this style of vase.

It is only the second example that I have recorded for the use of the chicken-wire pattern by P.I.E. The other one in the Glenbow Museum collections has an orange chicken-wire pattern on a yellow background as well as the similar gold banding around the base & rim. •





Quick Picks

**A Medalta Lamp Base**

This beautiful lamp base recently showed up in Ontario. The image is what I refer to as the Dutch sailboat scene as the silhouetted people in the foreground appear to be wearing Dutch costume (hats). With their backs to us, they are watching the sailboats off in the distance behind.

Basically the lacquered lamp is finished in shades of blue, with the main decorated body being separated from the black top and bottom by a gold coloured incised line. The Medalta name, as shown here, is written on the bottom in white oxide.

This large round shouldered lamp base, standing about 12 inches high, was in production from 1930-1932 only as indicated by trade show photographs from that era and listings in the stock ledger.

Specifically, the Medalta stock ledger for 1932 refers to blue Dutch lamp bases, and I believe that this is the lamp base they are listing. At that time the finished lamp, complete with brass fixtures and shade, sold for around \$2.00.

This one started out at \$300.00 and quickly jumped to \$450.00, but even at that price it was a good buy in my opinion.

**A Medalta Hat Ashtray**

This hat made in 1950 (stamp no. G.53) showed up at the Western Memorabilia Show & Sale at Cody, Wyoming, held June 22, 2001. The advertising "SOUVENIR [slightly arced]/MADE IN/MEDICINE HAT" is in black, standing out sharply against the yellow glaze. I was in Cody on business for the Calgary Stampede and happened to run across this piece priced at \$15.00 US, not a bad price even after conversion to our lowly dollar.

I actually spent quite a bit of time in search of

Alberta made pieces. What I hoped to find at the Western Show was some of Hycroft's dinnerwares depicting Hereford, Charolais or Black Angus cattle or perhaps the Colt and Mare pattern. Hycroft sold many dishes with the owner's brand and/or name on the sets to outfits located in Montana and Wyoming. While I saw lots of western dishes, including branded ones, none were made by Hycroft.

The same naming has been recorded on the horseshoe shaped ashtray (open bottom variety) and vase style No. 603 as shown here. The vase is pink with a white interior while the horseshoe shaped ashtray has a blue border on an otherwise all white ashtray.

**A Hycroft Hat Ashtray: A.F.G.A.**

This hat is a good example of how the item and the invoice record complement one another, in this case the invoice record identifying the naming on the hat ashtray. I am sure that not many collectors would know what A.F.G.A. stands for and one must wonder why they did not put the actual name on the piece instead of an obscure acronym.

Before I acquired this hat to pass along to the Friends of Medalta Society, I received an email from the seller asking what the ini-



tials stood for. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately for me, he did not add the information to the description, information that might have helped to get more than one bid for the piece. In any case, I was the high bidder at \$2.99 US and, even after shipping charges, it was still under \$10.00 Canadian.

The invoice indicates that this order was for 102 white hats with gold trim and with "A.F.G.A./1964/CALGARY,CANADA." at \$1.20 each on 4

September 1964 (invoice #3296). It was billed to D.R. King of Calgary.

An earlier order for 127 ashtrays with gold trim and with "A.F.G.A./Calgary/1962" in brown lettering at \$ .80 each on 17 September 1962 (4569), with the silkscreen at \$7.50 extra,

was billed to the Alberta Floor Covering Golf Association, Calgary. Together these invoices suggest that A.F.G.A. stands for The Alberta Floor Covering Golf Association. Now why didn't I think of that the moment I saw A.F.G.A.!

One fact the 1964 invoice did not give was the colours. This hat is white with Calgary, Canada in gold while the A.F.G.A./1964 naming is in black. The hat is trimmed with gold around the brim along with having a gold hatband. •

## Some Medicine Hat Potteries Artwares

A list dating to August 1940 which gives the style or product numbers of all the pieces made by Medicine Hat Potteries to that time, was among the papers in the Malcolm MacArthur collection. In time, I hope to share this listing with you but, for now, I only sought permission to reproduce selected pages, two of which are shown here.

These pages list the products assigned numbers starting with a C- prefix. Two pages not shown here list the numbers C-1 to C-12 indicating that these numbers were assigned to lamp bases. Unfortunately there is no description whatsoever making the list useless in identifying the specific number given to the lamp bases that are presently known.

Bruce Douglas has illustrated the five known MHP lamp bases in the more recent copies of his duo-tang booklet titled "Medalta's Lamps" and for that reason I will not show them here at this time. I suspect that most of our readers have the lamp booklet, but if not let me know and I will send you a photocopy of that page.

The sheet listing the lamps says that lamps No. 1 and 2 are listed on the jiggered ware list and indeed they were assigned product numbers 99 and 100. No. 99 is listed as a cylindrical lamp base while no. 100 is listed as a spherical lamp base, and both had a top and a bottom portion.

One of the five known lamps is a cylindrical one and it does in fact have a style number on the bottom, an impressed "No. 1L". At present, I have not seen a spherical lamp although I have been advised that a collector has one. If I can track it down I will try to get a picture of it to show in a future issue of the newsletter.

To confuse matters, C-1 and C-2 were later assigned to vases, and those I will illustrate in the next issue of the newsletter.

From C-12, the numbers jump to C-50 and they are continuous from there to C-69 inclusive. Once again they jump to C-101, being listed through to C-111 on the list shown here. Higher numbers, such as C-112 to C-115 do exist. Since they are not found on this document we can assume they were introduced after August 1940.

I have not seen examples of all the C- number products listed here but for the record I will show the artware ones that can be matched up. C-50 (the Bridge ash tray) and C-51 (the Shamrock ash tray) are likely as much decorative as functional but to date I have not seen examples of them. That leaves only two items from the listing C-50 to C-69 to show herein as most of the products on this list are not what I would classify as artware, such as the refrigerator boxes, teapots, ewers and the Cordova service wares. (Cordova was the term used here for what was later known as Matina ware.)

The first is C-60, the tall liqueur jar that was discussed in Issue No. 2 of the newsletter. At that time I did not know what MHP called this item so I simply referred to it as a spouted/handle vase. The two recorded samples were in blue, one a medium to dark blue and the other a light turquoise blue,



and both stood about 8.5 inches in height.

C-64 is the other item on this list that is as much decorative in nature as functional. In this list it is referred to as an "Animal Ash Tray" but all of the six or so C-64 ashtrays that I have recorded have depicted a fawn in a sleeping position. On these, the fawn was glazed in soft browns with the rest being in white to cream

The ashtray is small, roughly oval in shape (with one corner squared off), measuring about 5" x 4" across the base and stands about 1 1/2" high.

The second listing shown here, C-101 to C-111, is what I would classify as true artwares. MHP identifies most of them as vases although collectors often refer to the animalistic shapes as planters. Many of these pieces do not actually have the C- numbers impressed in the bottom or back but, as they are so distinctive in shape, we can be sure of our identification.



The common glaze colours that you find for most of these vases is white, yellow and two different shades of blue. Many of the animal shaped planters have the features such as eyes, mouth, whiskers, tongue, etc. accented

in red or black. As these were applied overglaze, and apparently just painted on they can be removed quite easily when washing the piece. Therefore, it is quite common to find these pieces with no accenting at all.

Shape No.	Article	Drawings on same sheet
C-50	Bridge ash trays	
C-51	Shamrock ash trays	
C-52	Small rect. refrig. box	
C-52A	" " " " cover	
C-53	Med. " " " "	
C-53A	" " " " cover	
C-54	Large " " " "	
C-54A	" " " " cover	
C-55	Embossed ewer	
C-56	3 cup T. pot cover	
C-57	5 " " " "	
C-58	7 " " " "	
C-59	Syrup dispenser	
C-60	Tall liqueur jar	
C-61	10 oz. Hot water pitcher	
C-62	10 oz. " " " " cover	
C-63	1 gal. Ewer, plain	
C-64	Animal Ash Tray	
C-65	8 oz. Ind. Chicago Tall Teapots (Small)	
C-66	Creamer with Handle (Cordova)	
C-67	Sugar with Handle (Cordova)	
C-68	Sugar Cover - (Cordova)	
C-69	Salt & Pepper (Cordova)	

Shape No.	Article	Drawings on same sheet
C-101	Small Bunny (manicure)	
C-102	Elephant vase	
C-103	Cat vase	
C-104	Monkey vase	
C-105	Horn and Hoof Vase	
C-106	Modernistic wall vase	
C-107	Wreath wall vase	
C-108	Modernistic floral vase	
C-109	Wing vase	
C-110	Streamlined Hare vase	
C-111	Kid ornament	

So far I have only recorded pink for wall vase C-107, but others may well be finished in this glaze too as I really have not been all that diligent



in recording the colours of MHP pieces.

**C-101** Small manicure bunny. This little rabbit sitting on his haunches stands about 4.75" high and is about 4" long (back to front) and 2.5" wide. So far, it has only been recorded in a yellow glaze. Specimens bearing the C- number have not yet been seen. This little bunny is very hard to find and so far I have only heard of one specimen that had the Little Chief stamp on it.



**C-102** Elephant vase. MHP actually made two styles of elephant planters, one standing upright and the other standing on all fours. At present I do not know which one was assigned this style number. The upright elephant stands about 7" high while the one standing on all four feet is about 5 1/4" high x 8" long. Neither style has been found with the C- number on it.



The vertical elephant, with his front legs behind his back, is quite tippy and I suspect that most specimens got broken. It is certainly ten times harder to find than the one standing on all fours.



**C-103** Cat vase. This figurine planter is quite stylized for a cat with its relatively long face. I, and other collectors, have always referred to it as the dog shaped planter. We probably thought of it that way due to its face and relatively short stubby tail. It measures about 6 1/4" high x about 6" long. The C- number has not yet been recorded on any examples.



**C-104** Monkey vase.

The monkey with a silly grin on his face and one hand above his head stands about 5 3/4" high x 7" long.



The C- number has not yet been recorded on any specimens.

**C-105** Horn and Hoof vase. I was advised that this vase was designed by Jack Fuller (see newsletter no. 8 for some information about Fuller) but,



if his signature is anywhere on the piece, I cannot find it. It stands about 8 1/4" high and is usually glazed in brown & cream tones, oftentimes a very dark brown. The C- number has not been observed on any specimens.

**C-106** Modernistic wall vase. This cylindrical vase which does have the C- number impressed in the back stands about 9 3/4" high.



**C-107** Wreath wall vase. The C- number is usually impressed in the back of this vase. This leaf shaped vase with a berry-like cluster at the top is about 9 1/2" high x 4 1/4" wide.

There is another vase with just the number 107 impressed in the back (the one on the right in this picture) and my guess is that it is later in date, perhaps coming out after the Great War and perhaps replacing the earlier design. This wall vase measures 10 1/2" high x 5 1/2" wide. Its colour range is s o m e w h a t wider as I have recorded two tone glazes and a speckled grayish-purple glaze.



**C-108** Modernistic floral vase. This vase with a squarish base and stepped flower holders expanding to the top measures about 8 3/4" high x 4 3/4" wide. Some specimens have the number "108" impressed in the back but not all do and, even



though there is no C- prefix, I think this is the correct identification. A similar vase, but a wall one, is also found and like so many of MHP vases it has no number on it.

**C-109** Wing vase.

At present I am not sure what this vase might look like as the C- number has not yet been seen on any pieces.

**C-110** Streamlined Hare vase. While no examples have been found where the C- number is impressed in the item, there can be no mistaking this vase with any other. In the past I have referred to this item as the leaping rabbit planter but now we know what MHP called it. It stands about 4 1/4" high and is about 9 3/4" long.



**C-111** Kid ornament. I have not yet seen this piece but an Edmonton collector has promised me a picture of what may be it. Hopefully, I will be able to share it with you in the next newsletter.

In conclusion, in regards to prices, most of these pieces sell in the \$60.00 to \$100.00 range. The really rare ones like the manicure bunny and kid ornament could well fall in the \$175.00 to \$300.00 range, while the hard to find ones like the horn & hoof vase and the upright elephant could range up to \$175.00.

## Some Recent Prices

Ebay, the internet auction, has set some new highs. The first one worthy of mention was the large twist cord handle cookie jar finished with the glazed sailboat design. There were actually two of these that recently sold. As is often the case with ebay, if a particular piece fetches a good price another one appears on the auction within a week or two.

The first cookie jar that appeared sold for about \$750.00 and the second one about \$830.00 US, which is about \$1250.00 Canadian, and it did not even have a lid! I thought that both of these jars went too high, but admittedly they are few and far between as I had recorded only two others previously.

If you want to see one of these beauties, plan a visit to the Malmberg Farmstead Museum this summer (see newsletter no. 6 for a story about this museum). Kathy has one of these cookie jars on display as part of her Medalta exhibit of several hundred pieces that includes more than two dozen very rare items. However, please remember that homestead tours are by appointment only, so please call Kathy at 403-684-3545 to schedule your visit.

And then there was Calico, and this was Hycroft Calico, not the harder to find MHP Calico. Some of the accessories set all time records. In Canadian dollars a green jumbo shaker sold for \$62.00, a blue cream & sugar set for \$105.00, a blue 8-inch dinner plate for about \$55.00 and a pink one for \$46.00, a blue 12" platter \$75.00 and a blue 13.5" x 10" oval platter for \$170.00 (wow!).

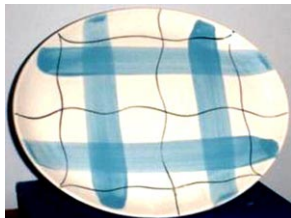


Perhaps the biggest surprise of all though was three 9.5 inch dinner plates selling for \$258.00. That is over \$85.00 each. This frenzy, as always, brought out another 50 or more pieces of Calico and, as expected, reason took over. In later auctions, 9.5" plates sold for about \$16.00 each and many other items did not even get a single bid..

If it was not Calico though, it did not go that high. For example a 14" platter in the yellow & blue Swiss Dot pattern by Hycroft sold for only \$38.00.

Even more surprising was some of the bargain basement prices that "Little Chief" items went for. A 14" platter in the Tree Branch pattern by Medicine Hat Potteries for only \$32.00. I believe its true value to be twice that for I have never seen another one.

A Calico 9-inch TV dinner plate (a plate with a cup ring set off to one side to hold the cup securely) sold for about \$15.00.



Once again, I have seen very few of these plates and in my opinion it was a very good buy even though the cup with it was likely not the right one for the set. Its colour was described by the seller as a "French blue". •

## More Hycroft Patterns

The Fall 2000 Blue Mountain Antique show produced a couple of interesting Hycroft finds. One of these was a Breeze pattern plate and the other was the Jill pattern, no. 538. The Breeze dinner plate was actually a gift to me, and it was not until I got home that I discovered that it was different from the one illustrated in Issue 8 of the Medalta newsletter.

The second piece, also a dinner plate, did not even look like a Hycroft piece other than being the right shape and size. The colour and decoration were not like the Hycroft pieces that I am familiar with, and for a new pattern the price of \$10.00 was a very good buy in my opinion. When I saw the name I was taken aback as the only Jill pattern seen up to this time was the one found on orbit or oval shaped plates.

### Jill Pattern, Pattern No. 538

The first Jill pattern shown here is a floral pattern found on the round coupe style of dishes. As is typical of Hycroft's early patterns, the plate measures 10 inches in diameter not 10½ as they later switched to. While the flowers are actually in two shades of green, when viewed as a whole they are mainly dark green. They have black centers with some white around, and are attached to black stems with the leaves in two shades of grey. The pattern effectively fills the whole top of a plain white plate.



Jill was one of the patterns for which I ran across several numbers. The earlier Hycroft invoices 1956-1958 gave the number as 16, and then some of the later 1958 ones listed it as no. 538. As you can see from the backstamp, this is the 538 Jill and I think that the earlier Jill no. 16 was likely this same design.



My interpretation of the Hycroft numbering system is that they first started assigning numbers from one to what-



ever. All I have seen so far in the numbers below one hundred is 8 (Jamaica), 16 (Jill) and 21 (Agate). At some point in time, probably within six months or so, Hycroft decided to start assigning numbers from 100 onwards as new decorative patterns were added to its line. They got up to number 565 after which they started going up by 100s for the most part, starting with 1100 and going through to 2700. The Jill pattern pieces most often seen in the market place are the orbit or oval shaped dishes, and as far as I can tell this Jill pattern was never assigned a pattern number. It seems to have been introduced in 1958 and it stayed in production through to 1969.

This Jill pattern is best described as a geometric design comprised of a pair of overlapping star-like designs at each end of the 9.5" x 10.5" dinner plate. One of the 4-point stars is in blue while the other is in yellow. Sometimes the pair of star-like decorations at each end have a cluster of maroon coloured dots nearby, but others are simply on plain white.

When I first ran across the variety without the maroon dots, I thought that it was an unfinished piece as it had no Hycroft stamping on it. However, since then, pieces have shown up in the marketplace, both well used and with Hycroft backstamps on them. I have not seen too many pieces of Jill suggesting that the pattern may not have been that popular, and I cannot tell whether the dotted or the plain variety was more popular as both have been recorded in almost equal quantities so far.



## Chicken Fountains Revisited

The last issue of the newsletter discussed chicken fountains made by Medalta, Alberta Potteries (Wyatt) and Medicine Hat Potteries, but space did not permit covering everything that Medalta made. That we will do now.

In your letter of October 28th you inquired about the so called Jamesway Chicken Fountain. We have on hand 25 moulds of these, in good shape, as to cast etc. see your records of moulds and patterns. The jigger price for these fountains is higher than for our regular fountain and they are rather difficult to make. One hundred fountains cost \$1.50 for jiggering and one hundred saucers 55¢. The clay used is approximately the same as in our regular fountain, but the finishing cost is higher, because three small knobs of clay have to be set in the inside of the saucer, just in line with three cut outs in the fountain itself, leaving just a small opening between the saucer and fountain for the water to flow. The cost of these are 1¢ per fountain, otherwise the cost would be the same as our regular fountain. The difficulty in the manufacture of these fountains is, the shape facilitates cracking and checking during drying and burning.

The letter reproduced here, dated October 27, 1937, clearly shows that Medalta made another variety that I have yet to see in anyone's collection. An Ontario collector, who keeps me informed about his finds back east, told me about seeing a chicken fountain unlike anything that he had seen before. Regretfully, he did not pay too much attention to it as he is not a stoneware collector. Many collectors are not into stonewares other than to have a few to round out their collections as they simply, for the most part, are too big and heavy.

The reason I refer to the Supreme Chicken Fountain rather than the Jamesway as in this letter is because Medalta changed the name to Supreme in later letters. It was copied after the Jamesway Fountain, and since there was some concern that the name Jamesway may have been patented, they simply gave it a new name.

Was it the one described here? I do not know but please, if anyone has one of these Supreme chicken fountains or a catalogue illustration of the Jamestown fountain after which it was modeled, please send me a picture.

The Medalta papers also include a list of moulds that were discarded in the late 1930s. One of the items on this list was a two gallon chicken fountain. Perhaps this and the

Supreme fountain are one and the same, but we will have to wait until one shows up.

Finally, I would like to mention the reverse crocks that were made by Medalta, so called because the Medalta stamp is upside down in relationship to the open top. These crocks have a small hole 1/2 inch or smaller in diameter just down from the rim, and the obvious conclusion is that they were made to use as chicken watering



ing pans. Both the 1/2 and 1-gallon sizes can be found and the crocks work well with the regular chicken fountain saucers of the same sizes.

The Medalta stamps found on the crocks include several varieties of the oval G.5 series and that is one of the Medalta stamps that was in use for a long period of time. At present I will not venture a date range other than the broad range of 1930-1954.

All examples that I have recorded were made on the pot press using a metal die. Being made this way, they have no size markings impressed in the bottom, and the wall slope inward ever so slightly in order for the vessel to slide readily from the die. •

## The Breeze Pattern Revisited

In issue 8 of the newsletter I illustrated and discussed the Breeze pattern that we are familiar with. Since then two variations have come to my attention. Both have the Breeze pattern name on the back as expected but other than that I can tell you little about the pieces. Were they regular lines or variations, special orders, or were they simply experimental pieces?

The breeze decoration on the round coupe style of dishes came from the Hycroft Warehouse a few years ago when a dealer, then located at Mission, B.C., bought a very large supply of named and decorated wares from one or both of Harry Veiner's daughters. Rumors at the time spread like wildfire, for by the time I heard the story it was claimed that he had cleaned out the Hycroft warehouse completely.

While he did not clean them out, he certainly cornered the market on some items, pretty-well getting all of the large mixing bowls, a large number of the advertising and commemorative pieces, nearly every last piece of Calico and most of the other decorated dinnerwares.

This round Breeze plate, 9.5" in diameter, was one of his acquisitions and I heard that originally there was about 20 of these plates. I have not yet heard of side plates, cereal bowls, etc. to match the plates. As you can see from the picture, the colourful floating leaves go all around the border of the plate. The nine leaves coloured in yellow, brown and blue alternate three times around the perimeter of a white plate.

The second Breeze pattern plate, an orbit shaped one, was given to me at the Blue Mountain show in thanks for helping to identify some unmarked pieces. It was not until I took it home and started to catalogue it as an addition to the FOMS collection that I realized it was a different layout of the leaves. The Breeze you commonly see has the six leaves clustered at one end with a few leaves inside the outer ones. This Breeze variation has the leaves only around the edge. Breeze is one of Hycroft's hand decorated patterns, so you expect some differences, but I did not expect to find this much. •



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## Questions & Answers

Dear Sir:

*We have received your quarterly The Medalta Review since it was first published, and have enjoyed every one... The enclosed picture is of a piece we picked up about 3 years ago and we are wondering if you can help us as to when it was made. We suspect the mid to late 1930s as that was the time this store operated... It is marked in the center of the inside of the bowl as follows:*



On the bottom it has:

**MEDALTA  
 POTTERIES  
 Medicine Hat  
 Canada**

Sincerely, June and Jack, B.C.

Dear June & Jack:

I am pleased to hear that you have been subscribing to the newsletter ever since it was started and I truly hope that it has been useful to you. The bowl that you picked up is indeed a beauty and thanks to the picture that you enclosed, I know exactly which bowl you are inquiring about.



The Medalta letters refer to this bowl in various ways such as a cheese bowl and the salad set but its official name appears to be the Harlequin bowl. It came in 4,5,6,7, and 8-inch diameters originally and later at least one additional

size (11.75 inches in diameter) was added. It is made using metal dies on the machine that Medalta referred to as its pot press and, because a metal die was used, it does not have any impressed size markings on the bottom. The dies were received from Riverside Iron works around January 8, 1938.

The bowl was made through 1941 and likely a few years later. At present there is no evidence that it was made after the war.

The decoration and advertising on your bowl, along with the Medalta stamp (the large variety of the G.33 stamp date the piece 1938 to 1941 at the latest. Regretfully, I never ran across the order for this item in the Medalta records, so I cannot give you a more specific date. So far, this is only the third example that I have heard

of, so I would consider it a fairly rare find. In Alberta, I believe that the Molina bowl would likely fetch between \$250.00-\$350.00

as you do not see that glazed floral pattern and advertising on the same bowl very often.

Happy collecting,  
 The Editor