

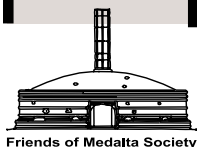
#8

Winter
1999

The Medalta Review

(A newsletter for Collectors of Alberta Made Pottery)

Celebrating
Alberta's
Ceramic
History



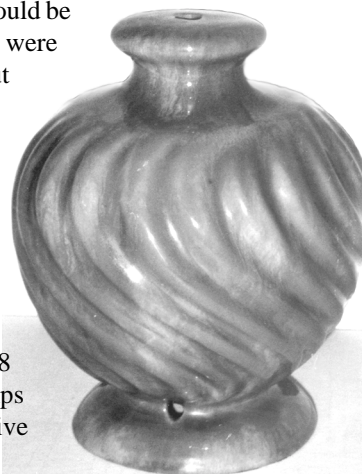
Recent Finds

Medalta Lamp Base, Style No. 56

It took over sixteen years to actually see a specimen of the lamp assigned style no. 56 by Medalta, but we now know that it really exists, that it did go into production.

The existence of this lamp base came to my attention around 1983 when Ed Phillipson turned a group of photographs over to me for the Glenbow Museum's archival collections. The photos were black and white ones and many were so dark that it was impossible to see the image clearly. The no. 56 lamp was one of those dark images, and even though it was not very clear, it was included in Bruce Douglas' book on Medalta's Lamps and perhaps that image played some role in finding the lamp.

I would have bet that this lamp base would be another one of the many lamps that were never marked with a Medalta stamp, but I would have been wrong as this one was stamped with the G.14 oxide mark. The occurrence of this stamp is not unexpected as G.14 is the stamp commonly found on the column shaped lamp assigned style no. 85 which was introduced in 1938. While the records are somewhat incomplete, the present evidence indicates that 1938 was also the year when the series of lamps assigned style numbers 52 to 58 inclusive were brought out.



The other theory I had formed to account for the scarcity of this lamp was that it would prove to be one with some design flaw such as a thin base which could lead to ready breakage. That too proved wrong as the lamp is actually quite a substantial one. I think that it would take a lot to break it.

As you can see from the photograph, the lamp has a marked swirl pattern in an S-shape covering the whole main body of the lamp. If I have any criticism of the lamp it is that the swirl pattern is too overpowering, both too wide and too deep to be pleasing to the eye. It almost seems that the main body of the lamp base is out of proportion to both the small top and the lens shaped base.

As expected for lamps made during the later half of the 1930s, it was produced using the yellow burning clay. The colour is fairly typical of that period being glazed in a blend of light and dark greens. It stands 8 3/4" high, measures 5 1/8" across the base, has a maximum circumference of 22 7/8" and weighs 1285 grams.

For your interest the base was originally found in eastern Canada in the Montreal area. The price of \$300.00 seems a bit high but in view of the fact that it is the only one to have shown up so far and that it bears a Medalta mark, perhaps it was not out of line. I must admit that were I still collecting for the Glenbow Museum, I would have been willing to meet that price.

Medalta's New Style Sick Feeder

Not too long ago one of the Calgary based dealers had the fortunate experience of

Continued on page 2

Renewal Time

Wow! Another year has already gone by. We now have eight issues behind us and the amount of information to share still has no end in sight. New products, decorations, advertising pieces and information are still showing up, and as long as you keep sending me reports about your new finds we will share it with one another through the newsletter.

Our mailing list now numbers just over 80 in total, most are pottery collectors but we now have a couple of institutional members as well. We would like to see this number grow, so please share your copy with fellow collectors in hopes that they too will like what they see. The Friends of Medalta Society who look after the layout, printing, mailing etc. have told me that we are now at the break even point at least in so far as recovering direct costs.

For those of you who have not already done so, please take this opportunity to renew your subscription for another year. Once again we have tried to make it as easy as possible by including an addressed envelope for your use. The subscription rate remains the same at \$20.00 for the year, so please take a minute to make your cheque out to The Friends of Medalta Society and drop it in the mail.

Thank you once again for your support and interest in making the newsletter possible. •

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From the Editor

It hardly seems possible to me, but another year has come and gone. Time truly does pass faster when you are enjoying what you do, and I must admit that I do like sharing my knowledge of Alberta made products with you. I look forward to another year of the Medalta Review.

Last May I took a full time position with the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede to fill their newly appointed position as Stampede Archivist, and while I am enjoying the challenges of the new job it does limit the amount of time that I have available to pursue my pottery interests. It is almost impossible to record and photograph collections outside of the city of Calgary as weekends are just too few and not long enough to really travel anywhere.

However, many of our subscribers have come to my rescue by taking photographs of their new finds to send to me. Others have sent me a photocopy of the stamp or pattern name that appears on a piece. Some have even brought me more into the electronic age than I had wanted to be by sending me e-mails

instead of a real picture. In time I may join those that are so advanced in using digital cameras, video recorders or what have you to take and send pictures, and I might even have to start saving all my pictures and information on CD's as more and more of you send me pictures.

Personally, I still like hard copy (a printed copy) of books, catalogues and newsletters. I like something that I can carry with me for reference, and portable lap-top computers are not what I have in mind. However for those who are into the electronic age, we are pleased to be able to provide you with electronic versions of the newsletter and other materials and there are some benefits for taking advantage of downloading an electronic copy. The images are usually clearer

than the printed version and some pictures are in colour and, hopefully, more colour ones will be used in the future issues just as soon as I find a way to send colour images quickly.

Your help is appreciated even though I sometimes forget to acknowledge it, and it is still needed. Our question and answer column only appears when I receive questions that may be of interest to a wider number of readers and if they are ones that I can answer. Sometimes, all I can say is that I don't know and there does not seem to be much benefit in including those questions in the newsletter. Those questions included ones such as: What was the exact date that Medalta closed? and When did Harry Veiner take over the Hycroft plant? Others like What union did Medalta workers belong to? I may have been able to answer if I had the time to look up the answer, but regretfully I did not have time to search for the answer.

But please keep the questions and information coming, and my thanks once again to each of you who have phoned me to tell me about your new finds or to help keep me posted on prices. I sincerely wish all our subscribers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Many of you will receive a special piece of Alberta made pottery for Christmas;

Continued from page 1

finding, not one but, three of Medalta's new style sick feeders. For many years this style of sick feeder was known only from its illustration in the 1947 Medalta Hotelware Catalogue, and even with these three new additions my count is still only seven in total.

I was never able to acquire this style of sick feeder for the Glenbow collections as the

**Sick Feeder
(New Style)
3" dia. x 2 3/4" deep**

CAT. No.
W192 - White
GB192 - Green Band
RB192 - Red Band
S192 - Slipware



only specimen offered to the museum was a cracked one with staining along the crack. That was around 1981 and at that time the dealer wanted \$200.00 for it. I might have paid that for a mint one, but not for one in relatively poor condition.

I heard that the asking price for these new style sick feeders was \$150.00 and that the dealer took an offer of \$130.00. In my opinion, it was a good buy at that price considering their scarcity.

For your interest I have included Medalta's ads from its 1947 catalogue that illustrate the two styles of sick feeder (sometimes called an invalid cup). The old style was likely in production by 1939 although the earliest actual reference I have at present is December 1940. The new style presumably came out after the war.

As you can see from the ads both styles were available in

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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.

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the usual hotelware colours: plain white, green band, red band and coloured slipware. Coloured slipwares were nothing more

than the colour of your choice ranging from various colours of banding to ones with coloured exteriors and white interior. However, I have never seen any style of sick feeder, either new or old, that was not plain white. If any of our readers have one of these cups in a colour other than white, please let me know about it.

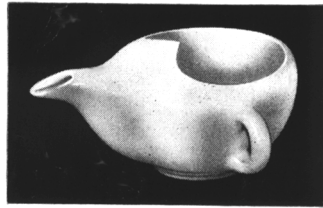
For those of you who do not have one, the old style sick feeder is fairly easy to find and I would not pay more than \$25.00 for one.

An Individual Sized Cream & Sugar Set by Medalta

This little cream and sugar set was one of the donations received by the FOMS over the summer. I cannot be sure just what Medalta marketed this set as, but my guess is that it was brought out to compete with the individual cream & sugar set made by Medicine Hat Potteries.



When I first saw this set, particularly the small creamer, my first reaction was that the set was a fake. The colour of the clay used in making the pieces appeared to be yellow, and as the creamer was basically the single eggcup with a pinch on the rim to form the spout, I expected it to be made from the white clay. The Medalta stamp on the creamer also suggested that white clay should have been used in making this piece. Also, both pieces had been painted in the CPR blue colour, but of course it was



Packed 8 doz. to carton.
Shipping weight approx. 55 lbs. per carton.

**Sick Feeder
Oldstyle
3 3/4" dia x 2 1/4" deep**

CAT. No.
W191 - White
GB191 - Green Band
RB191 - Red Band
S191 - Slipware

G.14 stamp on the sugar bowl and the other the G.33 (small letter variety) on the creamer, but both had a dull look to them. Thinking that the dullness might have been caused by covering a fake stamp with nail polish, I got out my acetone bottle and started wiping the bottom of the creamer. As expected the coating over the Medalta stamp started to come off, but not the stamp itself which indeed was under the original blue glaze. As I worked away further, though, what appeared to be yellow clay gave way to white and the white was not fired clay but soft plaster.

At this point, not wanting to completely destroy the piece, I stopped working on it, but I was fairly well convinced that the piece was someone's attempt at making a phoney. It appeared that white plaster had been used to make the piece, that it was painted to simulate the CPR blue and that the rim area of the bottom had been painted yellow to suggest that the fat or yellow clay had been used in its production. But, whoever had made this fake had blown it, as they selected the single eggcup to model the creamer after rather than one of Medalta's hotelware creamers. The perpetrator of this fraud, unlike me, did not know that Medalta never made a

creamer of this shape. How wrong I was?

Once I stopped working on the piece, I back tracked to find out more about it. I called the donor and advised him of my findings and much to my surprise I discovered that he was the one making all the modifications. He had indeed painted the pieces, but it was to cover the white plaster repairs and cracks that resulted from an accident which broke the sugar bowl. The creamer when acquired had a thin chip missing from the base, and to improve its look it had been

dull being a latex paint, rather than glossy as is the CPR glaze. The Medalta stamps on the bottoms looked OK,

one being the

filled in with white plaster before repainting it. That is the white plaster that had been coming off with my scrubbing.

Armed with this new information and now knowing that original pieces were to be found under all the recently applied plaster and paint, I stripped them down to the basics in just a few minutes by boiling them for a few minutes in a pot of water. The blue paint peeled off, the broken pieces separated as the glue softened and the plaster infills were easily brushed away. Underneath were a couple of real gems as you can see from the photograph, but they did have some unexpected features. Both were glazed in a medium blue shade, both were made using the yellow clay and the creamer was in fact a new shape modeled after the eggcup.

The sugar bowl by size and shape is basically the miniature chamber pot without an attached handle. It stands 1 1/2 inches high and is about 2 3/4 diameter across the top. It differs from the bedpan in being thicker walled. I have only seen one other sample like it, also marked with the G.14 stamp on the bottom, but it was finished in a crimson glaze. The owner of that piece, Vicki Douglas, called it a saki cup and it well could have been used in that manner.

The creamer with its relatively small spout when compared to other Medalta creamers stands 1 7/8 inches high and is about 2 inches across the top. Undoubtedly it was made using the mould for the footless eggcup as the measurements are within the range of variation found for the footless eggcup. •

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enjoy it, and happy collecting to each of you in the year 2000.

Ron Getty, Editor

P.S. As you can see, I did not get the newsletter finished before Christmas as I had hoped. So much for my last year's New Year resolution. My sincere belated wishes anyway.

R.G. •

A New High for Medalta 7-inch Plates

Palomino

One of the real surprises to me was the price realized for a couple of Medalta's specially named/decorated hotelware side plates at the 25th of October Hall's auction, although some of the collectors at the sale did not seem too surprised by the bidding. Both plates went for the same amount \$140.00 with the GST and buyer's premium on top of that bringing the price to about \$160.00.

Admittedly, they were both beauties and ones that you do not see very often, but I thought they would go for around the \$75.00 mark. Maybe the large 9 or 10-inch dinner plates would go for \$140.00 but not the



smaller side plates! Perhaps the size has no bearing on price when it comes to scarce and beautifully decorated plates as they so seldom appear on the market.

Regretfully I only have a picture of one of the plates, the Palomino one. I do have a group shot of the Stockman's Inn pattern, but so far I have not been able to locate it. Perhaps I will be able to show this pattern in a future issue of the newsletter.

The Palomino pattern was made for a restaurant located in Fort Macleod, Alberta, according to two of the young women who did most of the banding and special decorating for Medalta at the time.

The pattern is indeed eye catching at least for the pieces with the horse

on them. As expected the horse is coloured to look like a Palomino horse with the main and tail finished in white. The horse rearing on its hind legs fills the center of the plates and covers much of the side of the milk pitchers. On the plates the name Palomino is found on the rim at the bottom in rope style lettering while the upper edge of the rim is decorated with a ranch-style gate scene.

The items that I have recorded in this pattern include a petite marmite, a two ounce handled creamer, a large 2 pint milk pitcher and the 7" side plate. The only piece without the Palomino horse on it was the petite marmite, but it was decorated with the ranch gate. All the hollow wares were yellow on the exterior and white on the interior with a black line or band between. The plates have a yellow rim separated from the white center by a narrow black band. The stamps found on the Palomino pieces indicate that orders were placed from at least 1950 to 1953. •

Follow-Up

A Couple of New Hycroft Back Stamps

Thanks to a B.C. collector we now know that Jack Straws was also among the stamps which included the pattern number along with the pattern name. He sent me a photocopy of the stamp on the back of the plate and as you can see it turned out very well.

The other stamp and pattern that I had not recorded before was number 540 assigned to the Corsage pattern. As you can see from the picture of the stamp, it appears that Corsage/540 was a separate stamp from the Hycroft one as the two units are misaligned.

As is typical of the 501 to 565 pattern numbers, it was found on the large dinner plate.



The finding of this plate came as a pleasant surprise when I stopped at Innisfail to check out

the second-hand store along the town's main street. I actually found nothing there as the Blue Mountain pieces that I was interested in had tiny chips on them. However I asked the lady in charge if there were any other antique stores in town and she directed me to one near the northeast



end of town. There amongst a clutter of everything imaginable, I found the Corsage plate. I am not sure I want to go back there as it was so crowded that I was afraid to turn around for fear of knocking something off the shelf, but I likely will as who knows next time I may find another new pattern.

There, I also found a nice but small Blue Mountain vase, so indeed it was a good day.

This finding of the Jack Straws plate confirms my belief that we will eventually find all the numbers from 1000 to 1800. The pattern numbers higher than 1800 have not been seen on products, and I suspect that they never will be as the practice of including the pattern numbers was dropped by 1958.

If there is going to be an exception, I would pick the Calico pattern assigned number 1100 as Hycroft already had stamps on hand with the original 504 number on them. The only other number still to be found is 1600 and from the Hycroft records it will either be the Mandarin or Cross-Weave pattern. Both of these patterns are listed in the Hycroft records as number 1600, and to complicate matters even more, the Lynn pattern was also assigned number 1600. My guess is that it will be the Mandarin pattern which is found with the number on it, but only time will tell.

In review, the 1000 numbered stamps include:

1100 Calico, 1955-1975 (no numbered sample seen as yet)
1200 Denim, 1957-1969
1300 Tartan, 1957-1969
1400 Diamonds, 1955
1500 Dots N' Blocks, 1957-1958
1600 Mandarin, 1957 (no numbered sample seen as yet)
1600 Cross-Weave, 1957 (no numbered sample seen as yet)
1620 Pioneer, 1966-1967
1700 Jack Straws, 1957-1969
1800 Fantasia, 1957-1958 •

Dopey Has Been Found

About three years ago, I received the listing of figurines made by Alberta artist Jack Fuller and marketed through Medicine Hat Potteries as indicated by the Little Chief stamp on the bottom. At the time, I had seen about half of the forty



some figures listed, and since then most of the others have surfaced at antique shows. The one that continued to elude collectors was Dopey, and I was particularly interested in seeing this piece as I really had no idea what it would be. With the newly found specimen now in the collections of the Friends of Medalta Society (FOMS), we know that the figurine is indeed the friendly & innocent dwarf from Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarf. Personally I thought that Dopey would be one of Jack Fuller's caricature horses or perhaps even one of the cowboys he had worked with over the years. Two of the other figurines on the listing of his works were the drunken cowboy and the singing cowboy, so why not a dopey cowboy? I had thought of the dwarf Dopey as a possibility as the late 1930s timing was right for producing this character, but why only one? Why not a set of eight or more figures of all the dwarfs, Snow White herself, the wicked Queen or witch or even the Prince that woke Snow White from her sleep?

Anyway, it is nice to know that Dopey is indeed a dwarf and who knows, perhaps he was not the only figure from Snow White that was produced by Jack Fuller.

As is usual for the Fuller models, Dopey is made using a white plaster and finished with coloured paints. The figures can be damaged quite easily since they are unfired, but in this instance Dopey is in excellent condition. As you can see from the picture included here, Dopey is in a standing position on a more or less round brown base. The figure is not identified in any way that I could see either with the name Dopey or with Jack Fuller's signature and/or trademark, but there is absolutely no doubt that he is Dopey the dwarf. Just look at him; his stature, clothing and especially those big ears attest to whom he is.

The smiling, happy character who is glancing to his left is wearing a black hood and cloak which is tied around his waist with a reddish-brown belt. The face and other exposed body areas are finished in

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Hall's Auction

The October 25th Hall's auction, consisting of some 156 lots, was in many respects a disappointment, not only to me but also to the auctioneer. I was disappointed due to the lack of unusual items in the sale. Perhaps I have to some extent grown dependent on Hall's to provide me with new and interesting pieces for the newsletter. The Harmer sales certainly had a large number of rare and unusual pieces in them, and I guess that I was looking forward to more of the same.

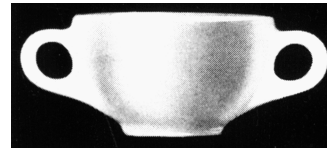
The quality of the items was also disappointing in many ways as a good number of the pieces, the Medalta ones in particular, had cracks and chips on them. The prices realized were for the most part a reflection of the condition of the pieces, although it did not seem to have much effect on the owl lamp in the sale.

The auctioneer's disappointment came in the number of items consigned for the auction. He had thought that the number of lots would be 250 to 300 but after a couple of promised groupings fell through he only had time to round up just over 150 listings.

On the other hand the auction was truly a buyer's market for a change. I thought that many of the pieces went for half of what they should have brought.

Medalta's bouillon cup was one such example. Two were available in the sale, one in crimson and the other in CPR blue, and they went for about twenty-three dollars each. Both were in perfect condition. The lucky couple that acquired them mainly buy mint pieces as they use Medalta's dishes for their everyday use.

When I acquired my first bouillon cup for the Glenbow Collections around 1984, I paid \$25.00 for it, and it was the thin/thick/thin green band pattern on white, not one of the solid colours ones. A couple of years



after that I saw a group of about six of the coloured ones at an antique show in Calgary, probably the Blue Mountain sale, and the vendor was asking \$30.00 each for them. Since then, I have not seen any for sale again, and so I consider them somewhat rare. In addition to the crimson and the CPR blue, royal blue and gray are the only other solid colours which I have seen.

The most expensive item in Hall's auction was a globular 4 1/2" high "Fuzzy Owl"

lamp that went for about \$880.00 including the buyer's premium and the GST. I thought it would go for less than that as it had a triangular shaped piece broken out of the interior edge of the bottom. Even though the damage was where you cannot see it when the lamp is on display, I thought it would lower the price somewhat.

The next highest priced piece or pieces was a pair of hourglass shaped vases, style no. 104, 10" size, in next to new condition and finished in coloured lacquers. The pattern is the swallow sitting on a branch with water lilies below which is relatively hard to find in comparison to the flying swallow pattern. The bird which perhaps looks more like a robin than a swallow by its colouring is executed in relief (perhaps sprig work) and is contrasted against a fairly dark green background colour. As usual, the pair of vases had some gold banding around the rim. The picture shown here is not the actual piece as I did not have access to the

collection to take my usual pictures, but it serves to illustrate the pattern.

The price of about \$410.00 each was in keeping with other choice lacquer painted pieces that have sold at previous Hall's auctions. •



Checklist of Hycroft Backstamps Having a Pattern Number

In the last issue I mentioned that I would give Hycroft's pattern numbers that will likely be found on Hycroft products, and I say "likely be found" as I have only seen a few of them so far. On the list below, they are the ones with an asterisk beside the number. The reason I expect most of them to be found is that the pattern numbers were assigned consecutively, and we now have a record of most of the numbers assigned in the 1000s.

The list was compiled from the Hycroft business records, mainly its invoice records, and I believe the date range to be fairly accurate, likely within 3 or 4 months each way. It could be off by a few months as when I was compiling the list I literally had to look through thousands of invoices, and it would have been quite easy to miss some here and there. One group of patterns is known only from invoices listing samples that were sent to one or more of Hycroft's distributors. No actual reference was ever found to indicate that any sets of these patterns had actually been sold. This group was the Melody series, pattern numbers 556 to 561, and at present I have no idea what any of them looked like.

In looking at the chart given below, we can see that even though the numbers were assigned consecutively, this did not always go hand in hand with the sale dates that I gleaned from the Hycroft invoices. For example the first two patterns, 501-LeChateau and 502-Kensington Rose, first showed up in the 1956 invoices while patterns 503 to 509 all appeared in the 1956 records.

There is likely a number of different explanations for these seeming incongruities including poor sales (or lack of sales), listing the pattern before the decals were received from the supplier and my missing the pattern name/number on the invoices as I went through them.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 501 LeChateau, 1956-1957 | 559 Melody in Copenhagen Blue, 1956 |
| 502 Kensington Rose, 1956-1957 | 560 Melody in Willowtime, 1956 |
| * 503 Game Birds, 1955-1975 | 561 Melody in Peachtime, 1956 |
| * 504 Calico, 1955-1975; later became 1100, 1957-1975 | 563 Carmen, 1956 |
| * 505 Flamingo, 1955-1964 | 565 Wheat, 1956-1969 |
| * 506 Monarch Rose, 1955-1957 | 1100 Calico, 1955-1975 |
| 507 Wee Spot O' Heather, 1955-1963 | * 1200 Denim, 1957-1969 |
| 508 Shooting Stars, 1955-1957 | * 1300 Tartan, 1957-1969 |
| * 509 Everglades, 1955-1957 | * 1400 Diamonds, 1955 (only a rubber stamp seen) |
| 510 Anemone, 1956-1957 | * 1500 Dots 'N Blocks, 1957-1958 |
| 512 Brookside, 1956-1957 | 1600 Mandarin, 1957 |
| 513 Morning Glory, 1956-1957 | 1600 Cross-Weave, 1957 |
| 514 Gardenia, 1956-1957 | * 1620 Pioneer, 1966-1967 |
| 515 Silvery Pine, 1956-1962 | * 1700 Jack Straws, 1957-1969 |
| * 516 Wayside Flowers, 1956-1957 | * 1800 Fantasia, 1957-1958 |
| 517 Bluebell, 1956-1957 | |
| * 518 Waterton Park, 1956-1957 | |
| * 520 Suffield, 1956-1957 | |
| 521 Juanita, 1956-1957 | |
| 522 Banff Park, 1956-1957 | |
| * 523 The Little Red Hen, 1956-1960 | |
| 524 Regency, 1956-1957 | |
| 525 Wildwood, 1956-1957 | |
| * 526 Top O' The Morn, 1956 | |
| 527 Connaught Rose, 1956-1957 | |
| 528 Haliburton, 1956-1964 | |
| 529 Glenwood, 1957 | |
| 530 American Beauty, 1956-1960 | |
| 531 Normandie (green), 1957 | |
| 532 Normandie (yellow), 1956-1957 | |
| 533 Petit Point, 1956 | |
| 534 Holiday, 1956-1960 | |
| * 535 Rose Arbor, 1956-1957 | |
| 536 Wistful, 1957 | |
| 537 Capri, 1957; later became no. 2500, 1959-1964 | |
| 538 Jill, 1956-1969; also listed as no. 16 sometimes | |
| 539 Pasadena, 1956 | |
| * 540 Corsage, 1956-1957 | |
| 541 Blossomtime, 1956-1957 (also Blossom Time) | |
| 542 Wild Rose, 1956 | |
| * 543 Festival, 1956-1957 | |
| 544 Winston Rose, 1956-1957 | |
| 545 Idlewylde, 1956-1957; later became no. 2600, 1959-1964 | |
| 546 Garden Grove, 1956 | |
| 547 Riviera, 1956 | |
| 548 Naples, 1956 | |
| 549 Castlewood, 1956-1957 | |
| 550 Grapevine, 1956-1957 | |
| 551 Bar-B-Q, 1956-1964 | |
| 552 Springtime, 1957-1964 | |
| 553 Gold Edge, 1956-1957 | |
| 554 Rosslyn, 1956-1957 | |
| 555 Rosalee, 1956-1957 | |
| 556 Melody in Pinewood, 1956 | |
| 557 Melody in Springtime, 1956 | |
| 558 Melody in Azure, 1956 | |

Also in this listing I have given other numbers that were assigned to the same pattern. Jill No. 538, for example, was sometimes listed as No. 16 and Capri No. 537 later became No. 2500 as listed from 1959-1964. No. 1600 is listed twice as both Cross-Weave and Mandarin as both appear in the Hycroft records. Is one of these numbers wrong or is this an instance where the number was reused when the original pattern was discontinued? Perhaps, the finding of a numbered piece will answer the question. •

Named But Not Numbered

This issue completes the illustrations that I have of the Hycroft stamps that include the pattern name as part of the stamp. The stamp illustrations include a couple of varieties for some of the stamps. Most of these variations are stamps with and without the word Alberta after Medicine Hat. One, the Vitrified Hotelware stamp, is a difference in the size of the stamp; others like the Denim pair, where one is missing the word "Canada", may simply reflect a faulty stamp.

The Calico stamps shown here also clearly illustrate that the layout from one stamp order to the next could result in some variation. In one stamp the words "Calico" and "Hand Decorated" are fairly close together, and in one of the other stamps they are somewhat spread out. At present I can do little more than show these variations, but hopefully at some time in the future one will be able to relate some of these variations to specific years of use.

As usual I would welcome a photocopy of any stamps or stamp variations not shown here.

Selected Hycroft Patterns

In the last issue we illustrated and discussed half a dozen of Hycroft's dinnerware patterns. We will continue illustrating the varied patterns in this and future issues in the hope that it will encourage some collectors to add these pieces to their collection.

The FOMS is exploring the possibility of dedicating an exhibit area to show Hycroft's patterns, giving the pattern name and number when known and soliciting the public's help in identifying the unknown patterns. I hope that time and resources will permit such an exhibit as it promises to be quite colourful.

CORSAGE - No. 540

Corsage is found on the Balmoral or swirl edge style of dishes and the invoice records indicate that it was sold



only in 1956 and 1957. The pattern is comprised of what appears to be four fairly large roses in a tight cluster placed in the center of a white plate. One rose is grey and white, another is yellow, another light pink and white and the last one is a dark pink with white highlighting on the petal tips. Green leaves are found around the roses. The rim of the white plate is finished with a gold band on the edge, leading to gold stippling which extends about half a centimetre inward.

The prices that I recorded were \$3.10 for 20 piece sets, about \$7.50 for 32 piece ones and \$11.60 for 53 piece sets. By August 1957 customers were being advised that Corsage was no longer available.

As it does not appear in the sales records very often, we can presume that it was not a very popular pattern.

CALICO - No. 504, later No. 1100

Calico was made on the coupe shape dishes, and the first year that it appears in the Hycroft sales records is 1955.

It had a very long history of production as it was still being sold in 1975. Without doubt it was the most popular pattern made by Hycroft as thousands of twenty piece starter sets were sold over the years. Even today, it is a hot seller when it can be found in good condition.

That Calico was available from 1955 onward stems from the fact that it was originally a pattern produced by Medicine Hat Potteries. We presently do not know when the 'Little Chief' introduced this pattern but in all likelihood it was after the end of World War II. The Medicine Hat Potteries Calico back stamp shown here is one of only a few of the Medicine Hat Potteries stampings that give the pattern name.

Hycroft originally assigned Calico the pattern number 504 and occasionally that number is given in the Hycroft invoices dating to 1956 or

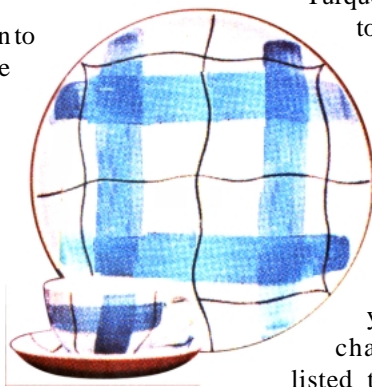


Hycroft's Named Backstamps



earlier. After that, Calico is always referred to as number 1100 when the number is given, but usually it is simply referred to by name. Everyone knew what Calico was; there was no need to give its pattern number.

Calico is similar in design to the Denim pattern that we looked at in the last issue of the Review. It differs in not having a speckled variety and in the pattern being formed by four broad bands at right angles to one another giving a central square. A thin undulating black line is



found on the outer edge of each broad band and another set of black lines run through the center at right angles to one another.

Because Calico was in production for such a long period of time, you find it in a wide variety of colours and on different styles of dishes, particularly the cups. Just what these changes included is not fully known but at least some of them are known. Some of the October 1956 sales records mention the old and the new style, and other specify that accessories such as the oval meat platter would not be available until sometime in 1957. One record from October 1956 mentions Calico TV sets at \$7.20 a dozen. I do not presently know for sure what the TV set looks like, but Hycroft did make dinner plates with a depressed circular area near one side to hold a cup and, perhaps, that is what is being referred to. Do any of our readers have such a plate in their collection for I have yet to see any in the Calico pattern?

There are certainly colour difference between the sets marked with the 504 stamp and the later stamps. The one difference that I have noted is that the original maroon colour was much darker than the later maroon. There also appears to be a difference in the width of the bands but as I have seen so few of the early Calico pieces I cannot be sure.

Calico's colours were for the most part quite bright. The records give various listings usually including yellow,

pink, blue, blue-green, maroon and chartreuse; however other records give the colours turquoise, lime, coral, blue-grey. Coral and pink are often listed on the same invoice so they must be different colours.

Turquoise and blue are never listed together so they well may be the same colour, particularly since a few invoices list the colour as turquoise blue. And I suspect that chartreuse and lime are the same colour as they too are not listed together, although you sometimes have chartreuse and green listed together. The

green mentioned on those invoices is likely the blue-green.

Judging by the colours that I have seen in collections, not what is listed on the invoices as I never took the time to record the numbers of each colour sold, I would say that the bright colours were the most popular: yellow, blue, chartreuse and pink. Maroon and blue-green, the dark colours, are not seen as often.

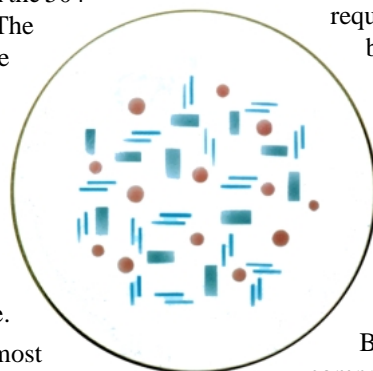
As to prices for Calico sets, I only recorded them for the early years. In 1957 the 20 piece sets sold between \$3.00 and \$3.75 wholesale, some 32 piece sets for \$7.25 and some 53 piece sets for about \$10.50.

DOTS 'N BLOCKS - No. 1500

The only listings I have for this pattern cover the years 1957 to early 1958, and it likely was not too popular as it does not appear in the sales records very often. By

May 1958, businesses requesting this pattern were being advised that it was no longer available.

It is found on the round coupe style dishes and is a relatively simple geometric pattern. On the large dinner plates the Dots 'N Blocks pattern is comprised of 13 pink dots (several sizes), 11 grey rectangles (several sizes) and 15 pairs of parallel blue lines, all



intermixed on a white plate lightly speckled with blue-grey. On smaller pieces such as the creamer, the pattern may consist of only one or two of each of the geometric shapes. So far, I have not recorded any colour variations but they may yet be found. To date, I have not seen more than half a dozen pieces in this pattern.

JACK STRAWS - No. 1700

The earliest record that I have for this pattern is 1957, but it appears to have had its origin in Medicine Hat Potteries as the 'Little Chief' produced a pattern called Pick-Up-Sticks. The Pick-Up-Sticks name also appears in the Hycroft invoices and perhaps Hycroft produced

the pattern under that name from 1955 to 1957; but, if so, no named pieces have shown up as yet.

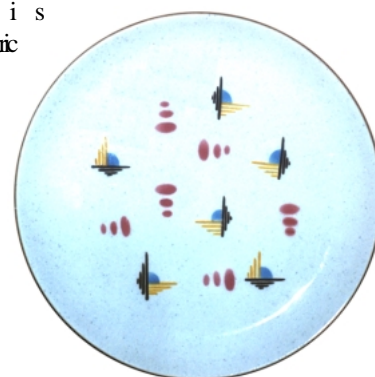
The dishes are found in the coupe shape and the pattern consists of blue, yellow, black and pink coloured straws

against a white background completely speckled in fine grey. The straws appear to be randomly placed over the upper surface of the plate and overlap one another as would a dropped pile of pick-up-sticks. In 1957, 20 piece sets sold for around \$4.50 each, 32 pieces for \$7.50 and 53 piece sets for \$13.50. Its popularity is attested to by the pattern remaining in production until 1969.

For your interest, the Medicine Hat Potteries' pieces in the Pick-Up-Stick pattern had the sticks in black, yellow and wine colours all against a pink background.

FANTASIA - No. 1800

This
geometric

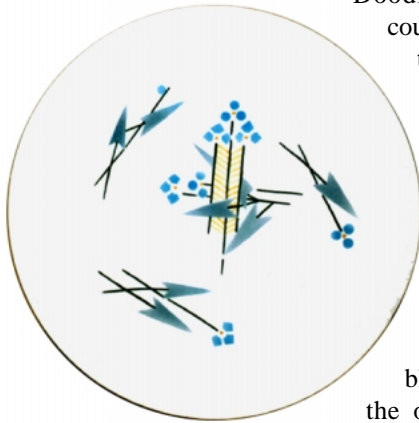


pattern is more colourful than either Dots 'N Blocks or Doodles and it, like those patterns, is found on the coupe style of dishes. On the dinner plates the hand painted pattern consists of six each of two repetitive designs: the first comprised of three pink ovals decreasing in size, and the second of four black lines and four yellow lines decreasing in size and at 90 degrees to one another and with a 1/4 blue circle within the right angle. The top of the plate is fully covered with a light speckling of blue-grey.

The sale dates for this pattern cover the period 1957-1958, and it too does not appear very often. The price for 20 piece sets ranged from \$5.00 to \$6.00 and a 53 piece set was listed at \$18.50 so it certainly was not one of Hycroft's cheapest patterns.

DOODLES - Pattern No. not Known

This pattern is seldom mentioned in the Hycroft invoices and production appears to have been limited to the year 1957. A pattern number, if ever assigned, was not been given in any of the Hycroft records that I looked at.



Doodles is found on the coupe style dishes, and on the dinner plates the pattern consists of a central group of three grey arrowheads with black shafts; two shafts running between the arrowheads, one with a cluster of three blue balls at the end and the other with three blue squares; three more vertically

running shafts, the central one with three balls at the end and the two side ones with squares; and with a yellow chevron pattern between the three black shafts. Around the central design, one finds three other groupings of one or two arrowheads with either ball or square cluster around the central grouping. The top of the plate is basically white but the whole is lightly speckled with grey.

The only price that I recorded from Hycroft's invoice records was \$6.30 for a twenty piece set and perhaps this explains why the sales were low. It was just too expensive for most people!

Personally I like the design, although the yellow coloured chevron-like pattern seems out of place (blue or grey ones may have looked better).

I should point out that some of the 1957 sales records also mention a pattern called arrowheads, and there is one bit of evidence suggesting that Doodles and Arrowheads were one and the same. One plate in the FOMS collections, which came from the old stock in the Hycroft warehouse, had a paper label on it identifying the pattern as Arrowheads but the plate itself was marked with the Doodles backstamp shown here. My guess is that Doodles was the official name while Arrowheads was the more descriptive but unofficial name. To date I have not seen the name Arrowheads on any backstamp. •

Continued from page 5

brown skin tones. He stands about 8 3/8 inches high (including base) and the base is about 4 3/8 inches in diameter. The Little Chief stamp appears in black ink on the bottom of the base.

The FOMS obtained Dopey for the low price of \$100.00 but I personally know a couple of people who would be willing to pay around \$500.00 to add this figurine to their collection.

FULLER'S MOUNTIE

With Dopey, the FOMS also received a six inch high Royal Canadian Mounted Police figurine. Fuller made two mounted police figurines, however, all examples which I have seen have been the same size as this one. Perhaps the larger one is a different pose,

Continued on page 10 column 3



Medicine Hat Potteries' Pieces

Designed by Jack Fuller

One of the Records that has survived the ravages of time and is now safely kept in the records held by the Friends of Medalta Society is a price list of the products that were designed or sculptured by Jack Fuller. As you can see from the reproduction of the list as given below, the pieces were numbered from 1 to 51, although there are in fact only 44 items listed. Numbers 18, 29, 32, 33, 34, 44, and 46 are missing, but at one time the list was likely continuous. Why these numbers were dropped from the list may never be known for sure, but if I may speculate, I will suggest some likely answers.

Jack Fuller likely gave Medicine Hat Potteries a list of the sculptures that he had on hand, and I suspect that MHP selected the ones that they thought would sell and dropped the rest. Some were likely deemed too risqué as Jack loved to do nudes.

We definitely know that there was a figure assigned number 18 as it is one of the numbered pieces shown in the photograph that I have included here. Unfortunately I only had access to a very dark photocopy of this picture and I cannot make out what this figure looks like.

The rest of the items shown in the picture are indeed the ones identified by number on the listing: # 1 the wall plaque showing an Indian's head in profile, #7 a Mountie, #11 mountain goats bookend, # 16 a horse head wall plaque and so on. Collectors that have these pieces have advised me that many, but not all of them have the "Little Chief" trademark on them.

Many of the figurines on this list have a date associated with Jack Fuller's trademark and the ones that I have recorded vary from 1936 for # 23 (the skull and keg ashtray), to 1937 for # 11 (mountain goat bookend) and to 1939 for #20 (grizzly bear). This dates the list to 1939 or later which agrees with the pencil note on the top of the list dating it to 1939-1940.

MEDICINE HAT POTTERIES PRICE LIST OF JACK FULLER'S SCULPTURES

#1	Indian Head Plaque (Profile)	6.00	dozen
#2	Indian Head (Wall Ornament)	3.50	"
#3	Indian Head (Wall Ornament Squaw)	3.50	"
#4	Indian Bookend (Stalking Indian)	9.00	dozen pair.
#5	Indian Ash Tray (Tom-Tom)	6.00	dozen
#6	Black Bear Ash Tray	5.00	"
#7	Mountie (10 Inches)	6.00	"
#8	Cree Indian Dog Musher	9.00	"
#9	Crow Indian Bookend	18.00	dozen pair
#10	Mountain Sheep Bookend	6.00	dozen pair
#11	Mountain Goat Bookend	6.00	" "
#12	Pack Horse Bookend	7.20	" "
#13	Saddle Horse Bookend	7.20	" "
#14	Squaw with Papoose Bookend	9.60	" "
#15	Buffalo Ash Tray	2.50	don
#16	Horse Head	3.50	"
#17	Hector Crawler Plaque	6.00	"
#19	Yodelling Cowboy	7.20	"
#20	Grizzly Bear	3.50	"
#21	Indian Head Bookend	7.50	dozen pair
#22	Indian Girl (Ornament)	6.00	dozen
#23	Skull & Keg Ash Tray	3.50	"
#24	Tomahawk Ash Tray	2.50	"
#25	Black Bear with Beer Kegs	3.50	"

#26	Drunken Cowboy Bookend	9.00	dozen pair.
#27	"Sitzmark" Skier Ash Tray	9.00	dozen
#28	Arm Chair Lamp Base	12.00	"
#30	Redman's Wireless	24.00	"
#31	Sunworshipper	7.00	"
#35	Sunworshipper Bookend	20.00	dozen pair
#36	#2 Indian Head Bookend	12.00	" "
#37	#3 Indian Head Bookend	12.00	" "
#38	Mexican Hat Ash Tray	3.50	dozen.
#39	Wagon Wheel Ash Tray	3.50	"
#40	Sheep Head Ash Tray	5.00	"
#41	Mountie (6 Inches)	5.00	"
#42	Black Bear Bookend	9.00	dozen pair
#43	Grizzly Bear (Ornament)	6.00	dozen
#45	Buffalo Ash Tray	3.50	"
#47	Cowboy Hat Ash Tray	3.00	"
#48	Black Bear Ash Tray	3.50	"
#49	Large Buffalo	10.00	"
#50	Dopey Lamp Base or Ornament	6.00	"
#51	"Tex" Cowboy	10.00	"

As you can see from this listing, the Fuller pieces were priced by the dozen and the bookends were sold as pairs. Some pieces were listed at \$2.50 a dozen or about 21 cents each, and the most expensive one was #30, "Redman's

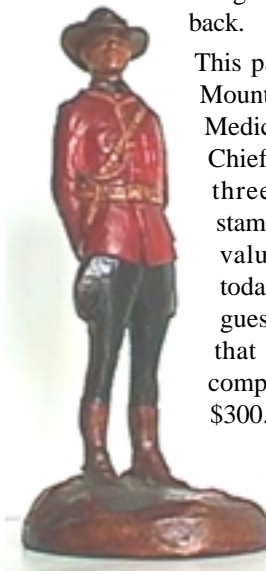
Wireless," at \$2.00 per figure. Anyone with the foresight to pick up a dozen of the 'Wireless' figurines would have made a hefty profit at today's prices. The last one that I had a report on sold for just over \$1000.00. •

Continued from page 9

dressed differently or shown along with some other individual or feature such as his horse. If one of our readers can send me a photograph of the other Mountie I will include it in a future issue of the newsletter.

The Mountie is standing on an oval shaped base which has a flattened area at the front with the impressed initials R.C.M.P. He stands six inches high and is depicted wearing his full-dress scarlet uniform consisting of the red serge tunic, black riding breeches with the yellow stripe down the side and, of course, his brown Stetson hat. The lanyard and belts are painted in yellowish-brown and the exposed skin areas in flesh tones. He is posed with his hands behind his back. As usual the main figure and base are in white plaster, but in this instance Fuller has had to use some other material (perhaps paper of some sort) to form the thin brim of the Stetson hat which has been damaged by being bent at the back.

This particular sample of the Mountie is not marked with Medicine Hat Potteries' Little Chief stamp, but I have seen three or four that were stamped. What would be the value of the Mountie at today's prices? I can only guess that this size, and one that was stamped by the company, would sell in the \$300.00 to \$400.00 range but, admittedly, I have not seen one for sale for some time. •



INVOICE

MEDICINE HAT POTTERIES

BRANCH: THUNDERBOLT, ONT. HILLSBORO, N.B.

NO 2687

SOLD TO: The Service Hardware, CITY.

SHIPPED TO: SAME.

TERMS: 2% 30 days, but not less than 10% discount subject to 10% discount after 30 days.

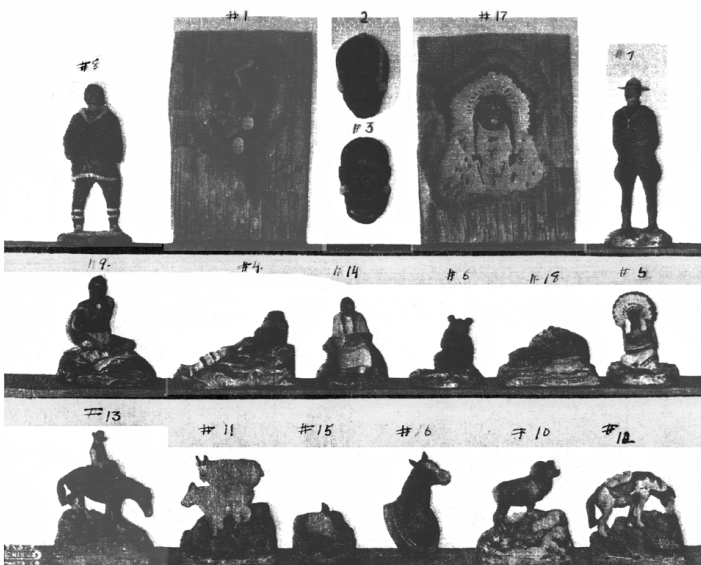
OUR ORDER NO. _____

YOUR ORDER NO. _____

CAR NO. _____

F.O.B. Plant. _____

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT	TOTAL
1	Mountie.	6.00	.60	
				.50
	8% Government Tax			.04
				.54



Box 204, 703 Wood Street SE
MEDICINE HAT, Alta.
Canada T1A 7E9
Phone/FAX 403-529-1070
<http://www.medalta.org>

