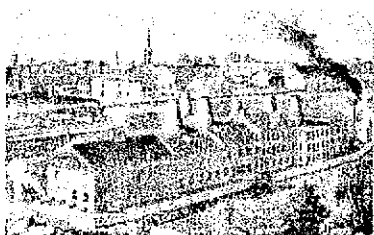


# TRENTON POTTERIES

Newsletter of the  
Potteries of Trenton Society



## *American Standard to Close Hamilton Plant*

**A**merican Standard will close its Hamilton plumbing fixtures plant by the end of this year. Built in 1924 by Thomas Maddock's Sons Company, the 76-year old plant can trace its roots back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Trenton dominated the American sanitary ware industry.

Thomas Maddock, a potter who emigrated to the United States in 1847, came to Trenton in 1873. He partnered with Millington and Astbury, who had established the Carroll Street Pottery (today the home of the Trenton Rescue Mission) in 1859. The pottery was manufacturing dinnerware, but Maddock was interested primarily in producing sanitary earthenware, such as toilets, bathtubs and sinks. At that time the market was dominated by British producers. After much trial and error, Maddock perfected his sanitary ware and went on to receive a number of patents for toilet design.

The public, however, was not immediately convinced that Maddock's products were of good quality, so he marked his wares with the British coat-of-arms and the words "Best Staffordshire Earthenware made for the American Market." This fooled enough people into thinking they were purchasing English toilets, and eventually led to the success of his sanitary ware.

As he gained increasing control over the Carroll Street Pottery, Maddock shifted production from tableware to sanitary ware.

Thomas Maddock's sanitary ware was without American competitors until 1879, when the Enterprise Pottery was established in Trenton. By 1891 almost all the sanitary ware sold in the United States was manufactured in Trenton, but a labor dispute resulted in Trenton's losing its grip on the market.

Thomas Maddock & Sons Company was very successful in Trenton, with its operations spread over a number of sites in the city. After Thomas Maddock passed away, his sons reincorporated as Thomas Maddock's Sons Company. In 1924 they built a new plant on Klocker Road in Hamilton Township. In 1929 the firm was purchased by the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company, which later merged with the American Radiator Company, forming the company known today as American Standard.

American Standard will shift its production to factories in Ohio, Mexico and Costa Rica. According to company officials, the Klocker Road plant is one of their oldest and smallest plants, operating at only half capacity.

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*The Potteries of Trenton Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of Trenton's ceramic past. Officers: President - Patricia Madrigal; Treasurer - Amy Earls; Secretary - Christy Morganstein. Board: Ellen Denker, Barbara Goldberg, David Goldberg, Richard Hunter, William Liebeknecht, Molly Merlino, George Miller, Brenda Springsted. Newsletter Editor: Patricia Madrigal*

## Book Review

Thomas L. Rago. *Collector's Guide to Trenton Potteries.*

The Trenton Potteries Company (TEPECO) was created in 1892 by combination of the Crescent, Delaware, Empire, Enterprise, and Equitable potteries. The pottery was known primarily for its sanitary plumbing wares. This book, however, tells the story of the company's production of vitreous china Art Deco and Neoclassical style art wares and gift wares from 1932 to 1942.

The book's focus on these few lines during a short production period is a strength of this identification guide with prices. The author provides the details necessary for identifying Trenton Potteries Co. art wares, including a brief company history and its supporting contemporary documents, a section showing marks and their dates, and above all excellent photographs reproduced at large scale showing the variations in glaze colors and shapes that are the basis for differences in the values of individual pieces. Other variables affecting pricing, such as condition and decorative details such as decals, hand painting, or multi-color glazes, are illustrated and pointed out in captions.

The book is organized by vessel form. In addition to the main production items, vases and urns, relatively rare forms such as cornucopias, lamps, and wall pockets are pictured. TEPECO and Trent Art China vases and urns are listed separately.

The author's use of company catalogs, price lists, letters, and brochures and of advertisements in contemporary magazines is the basis for caption descriptions using accurate potters' terms, rather than attributed names, for many of the pieces. Other artifacts useful in telling the story of these art wares include the 12 sample color tiles with names as well as historic maps,

workers' photographs, a copperplate with 1902 patent marks, and sherds collected from one of the factories.

In building his collection of American art pottery, particularly New Jersey wares, one of the author's goals was to write a book showing Trenton's significance in American ceramics history and the beauty of its art pottery. Although this identification guide only skims the surface of Trenton's rich pottery-making history, the detailed story of Trenton Potteries Co. art wares is well presented in this book.

The book's title is ambiguous, suggesting a comprehensive guide to the city's many potteries and their wares. Addition of the word Company to the title would have made it clear that the book is about only one of these potteries, the Trenton Potteries Co. A few more descriptive words in the title would have clarified further that the book is about one of the company's short-lived lines, rather than its primary sanitary ware production. Given the time depth and varied production of the Trenton ceramics industry, however, it will take a number of books to do justice to this history. Individual company histories and collectors' books such as this one that address discrete aspects of the industry are valuable building blocks in documenting that history.

POTS members may be gratified to know that the Potteries of Trenton Society and several individual members are listed in the Acknowledgments, and the POTS newsletter was used for background information on Trenton's pottery history. In addition, several POTS members contributed information or pieces from their collection for inclusion in the book.

Amy C. Earls  
Treas., Potteries of Trenton Society  
Book and Exhibit Review Editor, *Ceramics in America*

Thomas L. Rago.  
*Collector's Guide to Trenton Potteries.*  
A Schiffer Book for Collectors. Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer, 2001. 160 pp., 300+ color photographs by T. M. Rago, bibliography, index. \$39.95. Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310; (610) 493-1777; Schifferbk@aol.com; www.schifferbooks.com; also available at large chain bookstores.

## David J. Goldberg

### Founding POTS Member

With POTS less than two years old, it hardly seems possible that we could be mourning the passing of a founder. Yet, it is our sad duty to report that Dave Goldberg died on June 18 at home in Lawrenceville. He was 70 years old.

Dave was crucial to founding our group. Having drafted our incorporation papers, he also drew up our constitution and by-laws and guided our policies. He was especially influential in developing our relationship with New Jersey's Department of Transportation, which was the original funder for our current heritage projects. What brought Dave to his vital role in the organization was his intimate knowledge as a long-time researcher, writer, and collector of Trenton's pottery history as well as his vocation as an attorney. His book, *Potteries, The Story of Trenton's Ceramic Industry: Preliminary Notes on the Pioneer Potters and Potteries of Trenton*, was published in 1998.

In addition to POTS, Dave was a trustee of Ellarslie, the Trenton City Museum, and guided the development of its permanent exhibition on the history of Trenton's pottery industry. He was active nationally as a collector, too. A long-time board member of the American Ceramic Circle, he was its president at the time of his death.

The organization's recent Journal XI and the Index of its first ten issues were published under his direction.

Dave graduated from Rutgers University and the University of Pennsylvania School of Law. He was an attorney for more than 45 years, counsel to New Jersey Governor Richard J. Hughes from 1964 to 1966, the state's first Commissioner of the Department of Transportation (1966-1970), chairman of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority (1990-1994), and chairman and member of the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission. He had recently become a trustee of the Invention Factory, an industrial history museum to be housed in the old Roebling Complex.

Dave is survived by his wife, Barbara Goldberg, also a founder of POTS, two children and their spouses, four grandchildren, two brothers and two sisters, nieces and nephews. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of them.

To his family, friends, colleagues, and community, Dave was a wise counsel with a clever and quick wit. His pragmatic approach to every issue and generous dedication to the many communities to which he belonged are models for all of us to admire and emulate. We will miss him very much.

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Potteries of Trenton Society

## ***POTS Membership***

Membership in the Potteries of Trenton Society is open to all interested in Trenton's pottery industry and the ceramic products manufactured here. We welcome pottery workers, historians, archaeologists and collectors. Your contribution is used to support newsletter, lecture, meeting, and conference costs.

Annual Memberships:

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_ Couples (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_ Students (\$15, with ID) \_\_\_\_\_ Seniors (\$15)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make your check payable to the Potteries of Trenton Society and mail to:

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