



## Uhl Collectors Society

March, April and May 2000



# Uhl from the Ground Up

Sometimes in our rush to find examples of Uhl pottery we need to remember just how many different steps it took to make a piece of our favorite collectible.

The year was 1849 when August Uhl started his pottery business with a partner named Henry Henn at Evansville, Indiana. This area had other pottery companies in business and appeared to have plenty of the pottery requirements such as wood and coal for firing the area clay.

Uhl continued to search for better quality clay and discovered top quality clay at the Huntingburg, Indiana area.

Most potteries of that era the early production pieces that were hand turned and salt glazed. The glazing process was accomplished by adding salt to the fireboxes during the firing process. When the salt volatilized it gave the pottery that familiar orange peel effect common to this technique.

With over 100 competitors in pottery business around the Indiana area during 1929 most of them were producing pipe, brick or tile.

Like many potteries in the surrounding states of Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky, Louis Uhl was constantly trying to upgrade his products. He kept a diary of 87 different test formulas.

The search to find a better quality formula for "slip" used for pouring inside molds continued. Experimental pieces had a number scratched in them that related to the recorded formula kept in the diary.

Uhl pottery also tried to perfect red clay to make plates for decorating. They used a clear glaze. Obtaining the honey colored fire clay was accomplished by using a

slope mining technique which starts by finding a suitable vein of clay exposed along a hillside. Tunnels were dug into the hillside along the vein. As the mining increased more tunnels were added which branched away from the main entry. Since the clay was usually found below a coal vein (which usually had a slate vein over it) workers would use dynamite to break loose the clay.

After transporting the clay from the mine it had to weather for about 90 days before the washing process.

A blunger mill was used to mix the weathered clay with water and steam. This mixture was similar to the thickness of cream. Next it was fed through a 60-mesh screen to remove foreign particles larger than 1/60<sup>th</sup> of an inch.

The liquid screened clay was then held in a cistern until it was pumped into a filter press. It had 85 chambers and each chamber had a canvas liner. Here is where the water was separated from the clay. While under pressure water passed through the canvas and the clay remained inside the filter press.

From the filtering process the clay was stored in bins until it was needed for pugging. This step involved the addition of the correct amount of water to the clay for either pouring into molds (jiggering) or turning (which required a stiffer mixture).

Molds were made of plaster of paris on site. Since most molds could only be used once a day then redried before using again, several molds would be needed to run a single product.

When the piece was removed from the mold it was hand finished by smoothing the rough edges. Also if a handle was required it was applied to the piece at this time. Again

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we write, it is March 1, and we have had 2 weeks of extraordinary weather in southern Indiana, and according to the gurus of climatology, at least another 10 days to come. Most everyone is getting anxious to begin a new season of auctions, shows, yard sales and just uhling around. (We swear. We had resolved not to use the term "uhling" but this opportunity was just too much to pass up.)

We are rapidly moving toward the 2000 convention on June 23 and 24. By now you should have ordered your commemorative which will be mailed to you on or about June 1. The board believes that the 2000 commemorative is a piece that will please most members.

At our last board meeting, many items dealing with the convention were addressed. Among them was the project to video interview former employees of the pottery. In order to bring this project to fruition, we really need your input. In January we had asked you to submit questions you might like to have asked. There was no response from the membership. Isn't it interesting that folks say that they want input and when given the opportunity they are silent. It is likely that if there is a complaint to be made about something, silence will no longer prevail. This project cannot move forward without your help. Please send those questions to us.

We will have a display of hard to find, one of a kind, unusual and seldom seen pieces from various collections. If you have such a piece and are willing to have it displayed in a locked case, please advise ASAP. Cabinets will be provided by the folks at Jasper Cabinet Co., the leader in quality-crafted display and curio cabinets for the home.

An attempt will be made to have a table set up on Saturday morning for the purpose of authentication of questionable pieces. This table will be in the same area as the show and sale. We caution and urge you to conduct yourself with grace and dignity if you do not hear what you want to hear. That failure to do so is the real drawback to having such a table staffed by people with years of experience and knowledge. Consequently it is difficult to secure appropriate staff.

By now, you have found that [www.uhlcollectors.org](http://www.uhlcollectors.org) is up and running. We have had an excellent initial response to our web site from around the country and as a result some new members. Stephanie has received many positive messages. Again, thanks to her for her superior work in designing the site.

Remember again that your board is committed to making the society the best it can be. In this process, given the conditions, we strive to meet as many requests as possible. As long as there are people in the world, there will be differences. Keeping each person happy and pleased is a lofty goal, but impossible to attain.

Finally, a reminder that according to the UCS Constitution, we exist "in order to increase the knowledge and appreciation of pre-1945 Uhl pottery". Continue to share your knowledge, your collections, and your friendships.

Sincerely in that spirit,

Lloyd and Marge Martin



## Officers and Board Members

If you have a comment or suggestion concerning the Uhl Society, you can contact any or all of the officers and board members below.

### Officers

**Lloyd & Marge Martin, President**

1582 Gregory Lane

Jasper, IN 47546

812-482-2492

•Term: 6/99 - 6/01

**Leah Kleeman, Vice President**

4427 S. S.R. 162

Huntingburg, IN 47542

812-482-7315

•Term: 6/99 - 6/01 as Vice-President  
6/01 - 6/03 as President

**Elma A. & Beverly Leslie, Sec./  
Treasurer**

801 Poplar Street

Boonville, IN 47601

812-897-3681

•Term: 6/98 - 6/00

**Dave & Donna Swick, Press  
Secretary**

506 Martin Street

Newton, IL 62448

618-783-3455

email: ddswick@psbnewton.com

•Term: 6/98 - 6/00

### Board Members

**Alvin Schwartz**

225 Park Street

Worthington, IN 47471

812-875-3129

•Term: 6/97 - 6/00

**Gary & Diana Abel**

RR1 576 Hwy 61 N

Lynnville, IN 47619

812-922-3848

•Term: 6/98 - 6/01

**Tom & Stephanie Trambaugh**

12 Bellbrook

Loogootee, IN 47553

812-295-9892

email: tbaugh@dmrct.net

Term: 6/99 - 6/02

## Strictly Classified



REMEMBER THAT

**UHL COLLECTORS SOCIETY MEM-  
BERS CAN ADVERTISE FREE OF  
CHARGE.**

### WANTED

Roof to #525 wren house.

David Seng #702

4114 W 300 N

Jasper, IN 47546

812-634-9641

## Letter Received

Hi

I am selling my antiques and collectibles April 15 and 16.

9:00 AM on the 15th of April

11:00 AM on the 16th of April

at the Jasper National Guard Armory in Jasper, IN.

155 pieces of Uhl - some very rare. Hull, Rookwood, McCoy and also a lot of furniture.

For information call:

Ella M. Nigg

Jasper, IN

812-634-9126

### YEAR 2000 CONVENTION NOTICE

Uhl Collectors Society Members should call for reservations for this year's convention if you have not already done so. Prices will be \$69 for outside rooms and \$89 for poolside rooms. If you desire adjoining rooms you should reserve two rooms and share the cost between yourselves. Do not expect the hotel to split the cost for you.

### COMMEMORATIVE SUGGESTIONS

The UHL board members would appreciate any ideas you might have for upcoming commemoratives. Please send a postcard to President Lloyd and Marge Martin with your suggestions.

## Auction Results

Prices from results submitted by Lloyd and Marge Martin from a on site auction.

Black cat planter - \$60

Blue syrup pitcher w/lid M - \$180

Tied baby shoe pink pair M - \$180

#183 Blue grape pitcher - \$60

**OUR NEXT UHL  
CONVENTION WILL BE  
JUNE 23 AND JUNE 24,  
2000.**

### Notice

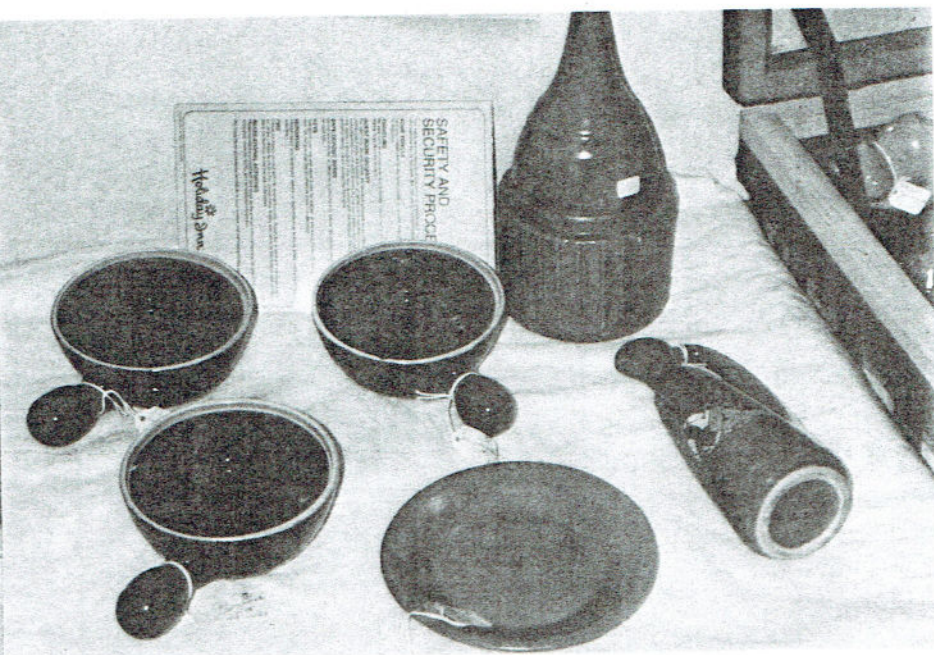
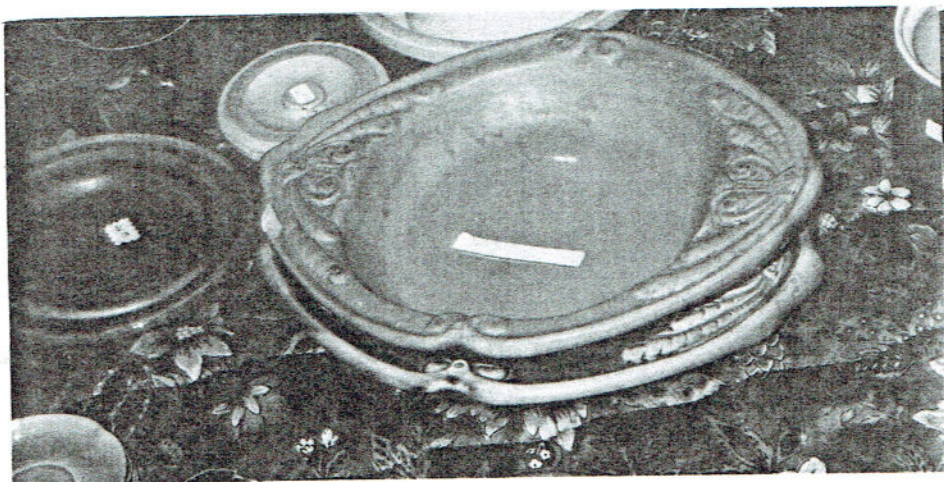
*Due to our professions requiring more and more of our time, we will not be running for re-election as newsletter editors at this year's convention.*

*If you are interested in this position please contact any board member or give us a call.*

*Thanks*

*Dave and Donna Swick*







(Continued from **THE GROUND UP** page 1)

the piece had to dry for 24 hours before the next step of glazing started.

Jiggering utilized revolving molds in which the clay was pushed into its form by using a special designed tool or "shoe" which allowed the desired thickness of clay to be attained. This technique was used to provide a pattern to the outside of a piece such as a mixing bowl.

Glazing was done by dipping, spraying or pouring the liquid on the item. Glazes were a mixture of several components. Uhl pottery had several different glaze formulas available. Any area on the piece that could come in contact with another piece had to have the glaze removed from that particular area or it would stick.

Drying again had to be completed before the item could be fired. After the drying process, items were placed inside the coal fired kilns. Filling the kilns was a challenge to maximize each load before firing.

The kiln at Uhl pottery had 10 fireboxes around it that supplied even heat distribution inside. A 2400 degree F temperature was needed and required a slow increase in heat (it took 65 hours to complete this step). After the desired heat was attained then the kiln was allowed to gradually cool down. The cooling process took about 3 to 4 days.

Finally after the kiln cooled enough workers had the hot job of removing the pieces from it. Next stop was the warehouse for storage prior to shipment.

The next time you pick up a piece of Uhl pottery think of its long trip from the clay mine!

## POTTERY POURRI

Prices taken from Internet (www.ebay.com) during March 2000

M denotes "Marked"

Miniture creamer M	\$482.00
Blue bellied pitcher M	\$51.00
Blue #528 casserole dish M	\$36.00
Blue individual soup #148	\$46.00
Blue barrel pitcher M	\$51.00
Half gallon jug M	\$93.00
Blue refrigerator jug M	\$150.00
Blue ball pitcher M	\$197.50
Acorn jug	\$31.00
Green Jane Uhl mug HT-M	\$75.00
3 gallon water cooler (no lid) M	\$261.00
Pink chilli bowl M	\$31.99
Salt & Pepper shaker Pink	\$36.00
Brown cereal bowl M	\$45.00
Pink batter bowl	\$71.00
White mini baseball jug	\$46.00
Chicken waterer w/bottom M	\$112.50
Yellow flagon stein Chicco	\$56.00
1995 Comm. churn	\$49.00

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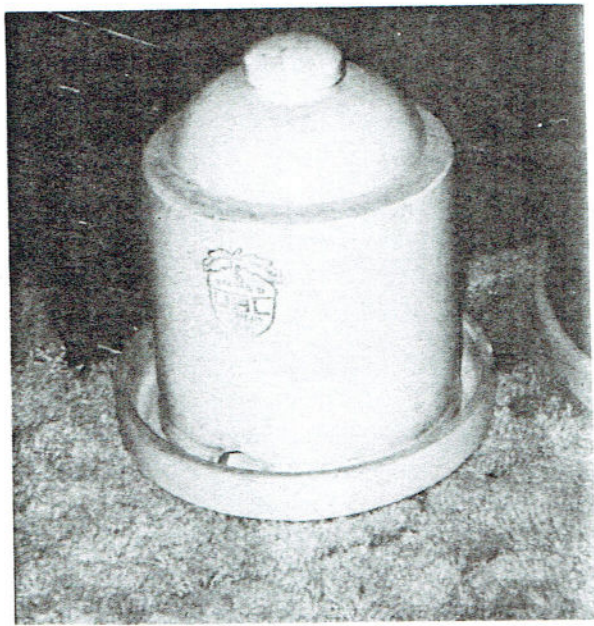
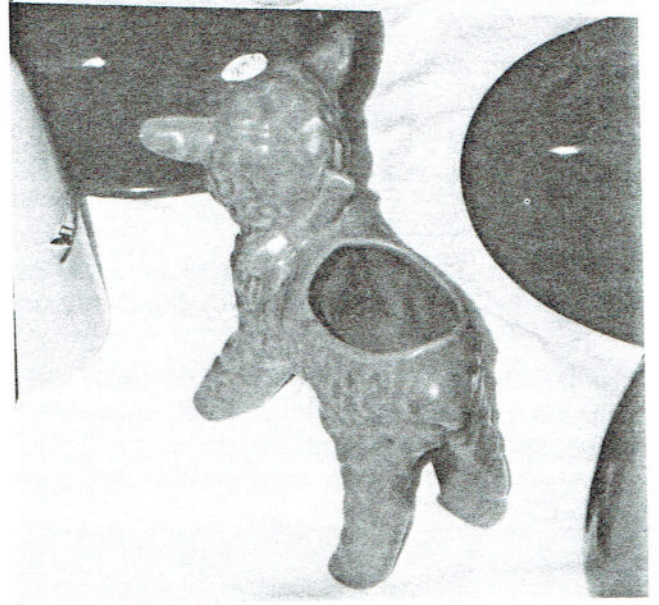
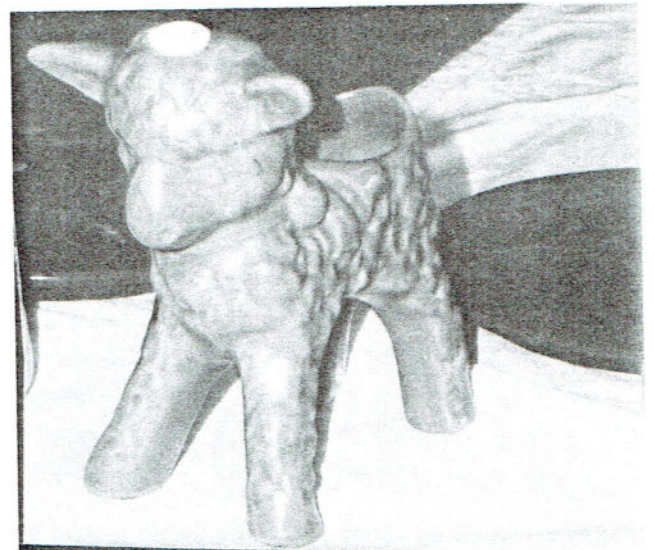
*Visit the world wide web site at*

**www.uhlcollectors.org**









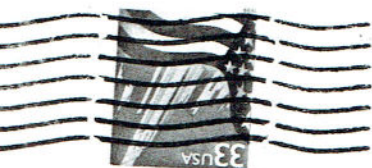


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VINCENNES, IN 47591

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