

Why Frankoma-?

Archeologists say that the Great Southwest was the cradle of the American Indians' culture. As the various tribes dispersed in all directions, their art and potting developed according to the materials and inspirations at hand. Most Indian tribes made pottery of some kind because of the universality of clay, and the ease with which it could be prepared and fashioned into so many useful items.

All tribes of the Southwest were potters, producing grain storage jars, water pots, serving bowls, pitchers, plates and such pieces as they needed to store, prepare and serve their food. Ceremonial objects, including sculptured figures, handled pots and bowls were common. Their decorations were slip painted earthen colors, applied with a brush, or incised designs. Their motifs were taken from daily surroundings — animals, plants, flowers, trees, clouds, hills, weapons, figures, etc.

Our pottery of today differs very little from theirs regarding materials, inspiration and uses. While they were limited as to firing methods and refinement of raw materials, we have added glazes and controlled temperatures and developed complex body compositions. But our common uses for pottery are the same — for the preparation, storage and serving of foods. Naturally, we have enlarged our scope of uses — flower containers, decorative tile, lamps and other art objects germane to our modern homes.

"Pottery" has been refined, and developed in so many directions that one's selection of dishes, for example, becomes one of discrete choice according to the mode of living one chooses. America's conception of Freedom and Free Enterprise makes it possible for all classes and strata of its people to select a "dinnerware" or "tableware" from these general classes:

- Pottery
- Earthenware
- China
- Fine China
- Porcelain
- Glass — as well as countless other materials.

Frankoma entered the field of ceramics in 1933, utilizing the heritage left it by its predecessors, the Southwest Indians, by choosing POTTERY as its field of endeavor. Our aim was to combine the traditional art of the Indians, the spirit of the American pioneer and the creative tendencies of the youth of the Great Southwest, and mold them into good pottery forms.

John Frank originator of "Frankoma" came to Oklahoma from Chicago in 1927. His teaching Art and Pottery at the University of Oklahoma and his work with the geological survey — unearthing Oklahoma clay deposits — brought together valuable material for his future venture of "potting." The natural inspiration of the Indians and the opportunities in the new state that had never had a pottery was too much of a challenge to let pass. In 1933 he started a "studio" pottery in Norman, Oklahoma, — equipped with one small kiln, a butter churn for mixing clay, a fruit jar for grinding glazes and a few other crude tools and tables. Help was easy to get in 1933, but it was still