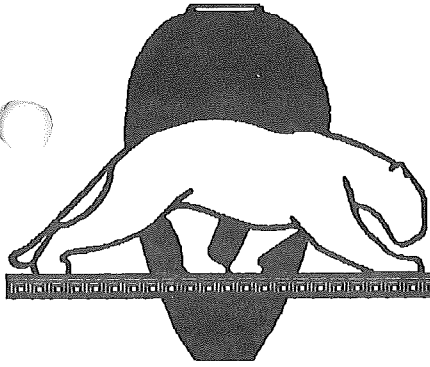


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Pot & Puma

Published by the Frankoma Family Collectors Association



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Joseph Richard Taylor
His Life and His Legacy

A Gift

Why I Collect Frankoma

S & P's --
The Black & White Of It

Get to Know Your Officers

My John Frank School

The Magic Of Mud

FROM THE PRESIDENT

RAY STOLL

ORCHIDS TO ALL! Less than a month from the time you read this, we'll be together at our second annual reunion. It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since that first joyous occasion in Sapulpa, where a now-vibrant association was born.

A lot of hard work and devoted effort on the part of a few people have made this a reality. First, orchids to Bob Hase who conceived the idea of forming the group and fostered its early growth through his newsletter. Second, a bouquet of orchids to Donna Frank and Nancy Littrell for their untiring efforts at expanding the membership and keeping the family and friends informed through the *Pot & Puma* and the *Prairie Green Sheet*.

Third, orchids go to Jeannie and Tom Grogg for shouldering the burden of planning and organizing this year's reunion. Fourth, orchids to Steve Littrell, who has done such a fine job of making collectors and dealers across this country aware of our existence by being a great Publicity and Public Relations Chairman. And finally, orchids to Phyllis and Tom Bess for their outstanding efforts in recruiting new family members by including "Come Join Us" cards in all their new books they've mailed.

Thanks to these fine people, and others, who have also contributed their time and efforts to further the FFCA, we are a growing, healthy entity, able to fulfill our goals of furthering the understanding and appreciation of collectible Frankoma Pottery, while expanding the friendship and fellowship among those who share our goals. ■

FROM THE SECRETARY

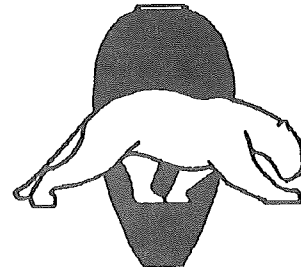
DONNA FRANK

Bon Appetite!?! There's a very bright, colorful, classy magazine called *Bon Appetite*, appropriately designed for gourmets (and probably a few gourmands out there). The November 1995 issue will be called "Thanksgiving in the Heartland," and will feature some of the old Frankoma dinnerware. We don't know how prominent Frankoma will be, but Joniece and Phyllis Bess have spent several hours in phone interviews with their staff of writers, and several pieces were shipped to them to photograph. We believe it will be a very nice presentation, because they've never done anything less than first class. Just FYI, if you want to pick up a copy.

COLOR KANDY GONE . . . For personal reasons, Kandy Steeples has resigned from Frankoma Pottery, after many years of loyal service and hard work. Kandy is the daughter-in-law of the late Ted Steeples, former Vice President and Plant Manager, and our beloved friend of forty-five years.

Kandy has filled many roles in many departments, having learned as much about the business as almost anyone. We're very sad to think we'll no longer hear her cheerful, helpful, and caring voice on the phone when we call Frankoma for assistance or information. We wish you the best of luck and happiness in your new job, Kandy. But there are those of us who shed a tear or two the day we heard of your departure. We, the collectors, will sincerely miss you.

But you're still a member of our Frankoma Family, and we'll keep in touch through our newsletters—and of course we'll expect to see your smiling face at our annual reunions for many years to come! ■



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ABOUT THE COVER:

Joe Taylor's first baby head sculpture, Donna Ruth Frank at nine months old, reproduced by Frankoma 1934-36. *Extremely rare.*

Very few Donna Ruth Baby Heads were produced by Frankoma. Joe Taylor believes fewer than 10 were made. So let's take inventory and solve this mystery, in an unofficial kind of way. If you have a Donna Ruth baby head in your collection give me, Donna, a call and I'll add yours to my count. I'll start us off by placing one hash mark on the tally sheet.

Photography by Phyllis Bess.

EDITOR, Donna Frank
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CIRCULATION, Donna Frank, Steve Littrell
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& Elaine Stoll

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Saddler & Steve Littrell
PUBLIC RELATIONS, Steve Littrell
RESEARCH, Phyllis Bess, Pat Warner

COVER PHOTO: Baby head of Donna Frank by Joseph R. Taylor (Ceramic Sculpture, 6 3/8 inches high.) Frank Family Collection, Sapulpa, OK.
Photography by Phyllis Bess.

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FROM THE HISTORIAN

MAXINE SADDLER

'TIS ABOUT TIME! There are books, organizations, hobbies, how-to's, and where-to's of every description these days! If you're a hunter, there are magazines about every kind of gun and ammunition, including what you can shoot with which ones. If you're a fisherman--and you specialize--there are trout books, bass books, catfish books, books on equipment, and how-and-where-to-fish-for-what instructions books!

Now, 'tis about time the *collector* has some how-to and where-to books and information--especially the Frankoma collector!

My dear fellow FFCA members, realize that you have arrived on the ground floor of this special endeavor, created to pull us, the Frankoma collectors, together into one unified group. Know that you would have to search through libraries and archives everywhere to find the information being offered to you as an FFCA member. *Begin a reference library now by saving your great newsletters!*

As we meet and get acquainted, either in person or by mail, we find this Frankoma collecting is not--and should not--be a hodge-podge activity. Your FFCA is really taking care of this, my friends. As we exchange and compare notes and finds, we realize that collectors of Frankoma are spread all across these great United States. What fun it is to hear *what* you've found--and *where* you found it!

Just recently, two of us members compared notes. One had found a pair of #49H Oil Derrick Salt and Peppers in Western Oklahoma. But wait! These were *extra* special. These were made in 1957 for Oklahoma's Semi-Centennial celebration!

When this chit-chat letter came to me, I was thrilled to be able to write back to say that I also have a pair of the #49H Semi-Centennial Oil Derricks--and mine were found in *Mansfield, Ohio!*

This Frankoma stuff is to be found in every single state. And that fact alone brings us together as a group--and a very special group it is!

Just start out searching for *any* Frankoma! When you find something like the #49H S&P, then start learning about what other special pieces were made in that year, and begin to look for them.

TESTAMENTS BY THOMAS

TOPIC: WHERE



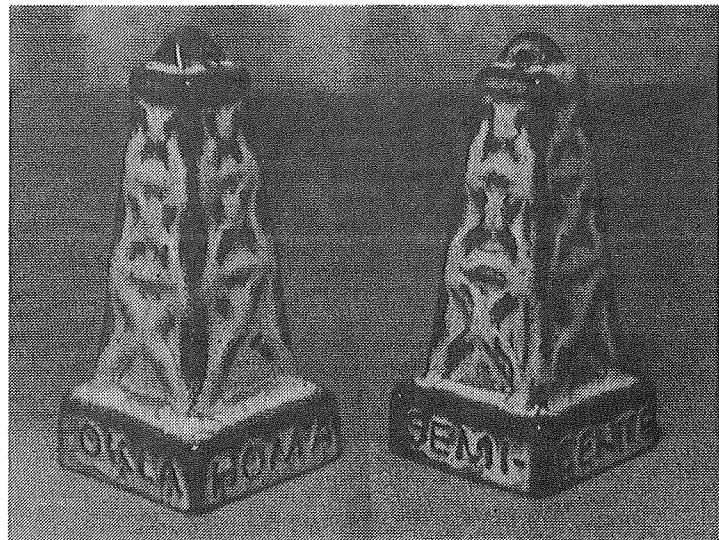
"Where do you find it?" is the question most frequent asked me. I find it like most other people--in the strangest places.

We all know of great finds at flea markets, malls, yard sales, etc.. My best finds come from other dealers, collectors and pickers. I've found one of the best ways to locate the good finds is with a high profile of honesty and knowledge. I don't mean to say that if I'm at a garage sale or flea market, and someone offers me a Mermaid Flower Frog for a buck and a half, that I'm going to give the person \$500 - plus. But if that person asks

how much I think it's worth, then I'm bound by conscience to give them my honest opinion and my three prices -- what I'll pay for it now, what I hope to get for it, and its established retail value, if any. To qualify this last statement, I must ask what the value of a Mermaid Flower Frog is. To me it might be worth \$500, to you it may be worth \$1,000, and to a non-Frankoma person it probably isn't worth \$5.

So how much is it worth? To quote one of my dear old friends, and believe me I do have a few, "It's worth what anyone who wants it is willing to give for it."

Don't make the mistake that I've made--offering more than the person asks.



#49H Oil Derrick S & P
Made in 1957 for Oklahoma's Semi-Centennial celebration

There's that gorgeous trivet, "Arrows to Atoms"--not only a very beautiful item, but a history lesson in itself! Quote from the back of the trivet:

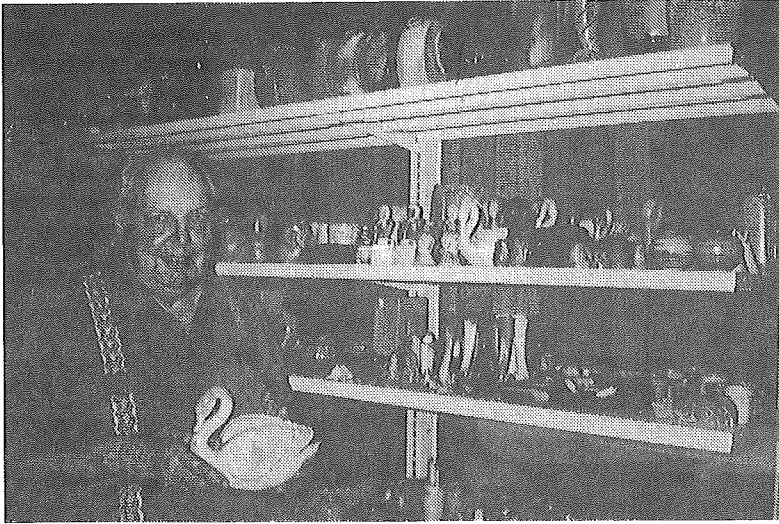
*In less than a lifetime, Oklahoma has gone
from Pioneers to World Leadership . . .
from Horses to Airlines . . .
Tepees to Towers . . . Arrows to Atoms.
1907-1957 - Semi-Centennial Celebration.*

Now add a few more years, and we find that Frankoma does it again with Oklahoma's Diamond Jubilee, 1907-1982. This special plate (#OK1-DJ) has

even more history to reveal. The front of the plate features a statue of the Pioneer Woman (in the Ponca City, OK town square), industry, lakes, Indians, church, cattle, covered wagon, and Will Rogers. The back of the plate shows the State Capitol, state flower, state tree, state bird, and is signed by Oklahoma Gov. George Nigh.

We are always interested in *what* you've found, as well as *where* you found it. Drop us a note! Or tell someone!

*This is what makes
our history!*



GET TO KNOW YOUR OFFICERS

Samuel A. "Pat" Warner, Okc, OK
FFCA Vice President

So how does one get "Pat" from Samuel? Beats me. Maybe my parents started calling me that because I was born on March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. I never knew my name was Samuel until I started grade school.

Born in Oklahoma City, I grew up on the west edge of the city. What was then a good place to raise our chickens, rabbits, pigeons, a milk cow and a pony, is now almost in the heart of a forever-spreading Oklahoma City.

I've always been a collector of one thing or another. As a teenager, I became fascinated with old Indian relics, and especially the beautiful Indian beadwork. Later, my most prized find was a full-blood Ponca girl, Cynthia, whom I married and added to my collection. We have three daughters and five grandchildren, all living in OKC.

Shortly after we were married, I was drafted and sent to Europe with the 26th Infantry Division (that Yankee division from Massachusetts). When I returned in 1946, Cynthia and I opened an Indian museum and craft shop. It was located at the junction of old Highway 66 and Grand Boulevard on the northwest side of the city, where the two major highways now cross.

We were quite successful with the enterprise, and at one time had over twenty Indian women sewing for us in their homes. Cynthia ran the store while I worked days. In 1954, the state acquired the property we were on for an interchange, so we had to vacate. We sold our most valuable items and art

works to several museums, including Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, and various collectors.

After the war, antique guns were plentiful, so for ten years I traveled to gun shows all over Oklahoma and Texas, specializing in old Colts and Winchesters.

When old fire arms became harder to locate, I began collecting U.S. and foreign coins, specializing in Spanish Colonial and coins of the 1910-1917 Mexican Revolution. After that, it was old Georgian and American coin silver, all of which we liquidated in the early 1980's.

After thirty-eight years and four million miles with Roadway Express, I retired in 1988. And it was just about then that we discovered Frankoma Pottery! At last I had the time to devote to my new passion. Cynthia and I began haunting malls and flea markets all across Oklahoma. She was good at spotting the choice small pieces--salt and peppers and animals--while I usually found the larger ones.

I cannot recall which pieces of Frankoma we acquired to start our collection, as there were several we bought at the time. But we have truly enjoyed owning many rarities, purchased mostly from dealers and collector friends.

And Frankoma continues to be our passion. We're always looking for the rare and unusual. I confess my favorite colors are the earliest ones--the "single" glazes from the old Frank Potteries and those early Norman pastels.

Cynthia is very active in the Eastern Star, Amaranth, and White Shrine. I've been a Mason for many years and remain active there. *B*

This year my 9-year-old son is starting to home school, and I am his teacher. When we began, I asked him what we should name our school. I added that many schools are named after presidents, thinking he might want to name it for Washington, or Lincoln, or Kennedy.

Without a moment's hesitation, however, he exclaimed, "John Frank!" When I asked him why Mr. Frank, he explained, "Well, John Frank is the one who pays for all this. You work for Frankoma, and Daddy sells old Frankoma. It has to be the John Frank School!"

So we are making a sign to go over our "school room" door--THE JOHN FRANK SCHOOL. One of his assignments last week was to write a small essay on a subject of his choosing. The following is what he wrote.

Jeannie Grogg

MY JOHN FRANK SCHOOL

By Derek Grogg, OK
Age 9



I am Derek Grogg, and I go to school at home. I collect "peach" color Frankoma. It's a pretty small collection now, but I am still hunting for some more pieces.

Mom told me that every school has a name, and most of them are named after presidents. But mine isn't named after a president, it is named after Mr. John N. Frank. He is the person who started Frankoma Pottery in Oklahoma. I named my school after Mr. Frank because my family and I are interested in Frankoma. It's fun to learn about the history of John Frank and the old Frankoma.

When I grow up I want to work at Frankoma. ★

Frankoma Cryptoquote

By Gretchen & Kaydee Adams, MN
Age 12 & 7

Here's how to work it: **L A B Y D X R B**
is **F R A N K O M A**

One letter stands for another. In this sample L is used for the letter F, B for the two A's, etc.. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints.

HS ZKK CDODMCR NM

GNV VD TRD NTQ BKZX

-- FQZBD KDD

WHY I COLLECT FRANKOMA

By John Walker, Tulsa, OK
Age 16

My Frankoma collection began when my grandmother gave me a prairie green teapot she owned for about fifty years. At the time I did not know it was Frankoma, or that it was even worth anything. I am sure it was, though, as she bought it before World War II. I did not even know what Frankoma was, except that my school had taken a field trip to the factory when I was in second grade. At the young impressionable age of ten, I knew I liked Frankoma, but mainly because my mother and grandmother talked about how great it was.

However, as I grew older, I began to want to collect something all my own. Baseball cards or stamps were the logical choices, as that was what other children my age were collecting. But I wanted to collect something different, something that I would keep and still be collecting for years to come. Therefore, since I already had a collection of five or six pieces my mother had bought, I decided on Frankoma.

I could just as easily have chosen some other pottery or glassware, but Frankoma is unique, in a sense. When you walk into an antique store, it is easy to spot the pieces of Frankoma, which are

recognizable by their distinctive shapes and glazes.

At first I simply bought all the Frankoma I could find, paying hardly any attention to color, clay, or shape. I collected unadorned bowls and plates with the same fervor I went after Christmas cards and sculptures. Of course I must admit this was largely because of the difference in prices. However, when you live in a town only twenty minutes away from the Frankoma plant, you soon realize that if you do not decide on a certain type of Frankoma to collect, you could go bankrupt just buying every C-1 mug you see at a garage sale. It seems everyone living in Tulsa has at least five or six pieces of Frankoma stashed away in their house somewhere.

So I decided to collect mainly Frankoma in the flame glaze. This may sound like a very limited area of collecting, but it is nice to have an attainable goal to strive for. Of course, I am still into the Frankoma that everyone else is, such as Christmas cards, political mugs, and Silla-Gems, but for a person of fifteen years old who has no Frankoma to build on, it would take more money that I like to think about to obtain complete sets of these items.

It is a good thing that I live in Tulsa, where there seems to be a plethora of Frankoma, rather than in some other states where there is a dearth of the pottery. Otherwise, I probably would not be able to afford what Frankoma I have already bought. However, being able to afford the pottery is part of what makes Frankoma so enthralling. While I will probably never own a Frankoma Kid, or a Harlem Hooper, anyone who wants to can afford a Frankoma mug or paperweight can.

Of course, there may come a day when I must part with my Frankoma, such as when I have to gather up enough money to go to college. I hope with all my heart that this day never comes, because I am not sure that I will be able to force myself to sell it. In the meantime, however, it is great to be collecting Frankoma, and to have a club like this to share the experience of Frankoma with other people who have the same interests.

(Ed. Note: We learned that John writes for his high school newspaper. We would encourage you to persevere, John, as we believe you have a very rich future! Thanks for sharing your great story with the Family!)

A GIFT

By Maxine Saddler, OH

Collectors! Frankoma Collectors!!
"When asked, "What is your favorite?"
"What is your most rare?" "What IS?"

We most always answer, like a parent when asked of their children, "No favorite, all are prized equally".

Now, come on . . . Of course when we really think about it we like this one best because . . . It was a surprise . . . It was a gift . . . It is my favorite color . . . It is . . . and on . . . and on . . . Let's think about what we consider *our most rare*.

My most *rare* piece of Frankoma- Was a gift! Was a surprise!! *And no one has one like it.* That is right, No one!

This is the story of a FRANKOMA RAM'S HEAD BUTTON. In the middle 1940's John Frank made three or four little ram's head buttons to be used on a

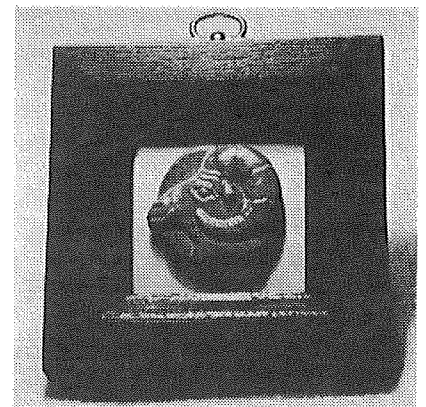
leather purse he was making for his, Grace Lee. Many years later (1984) Grace Lee found the only two (2) left in her button box. Being the loving giving person she is, Grace Lee sent one of them to me as a gift. She thought I might like *one*. Wow !! Who is she kidding. She said she would put the other one in with the jewelry in the Frankoma Museum.

My husband, Howard, put mine in a little walnut frame and made the back on a hinge so you could raise it and see John Frank's name scratched on the back.

We told Grace Lee her "Blue" button should not be in with the pieces of jewelry and if she would send it to Ohio, Howard would put it in a frame also.

If you visit the Frankoma Museum, look for the little BLUE RAM'S HEAD in a little walnut frame.

VERY RARE, VERY PRECIOUS. only three or four were made especially



Ram's Head Button in frame

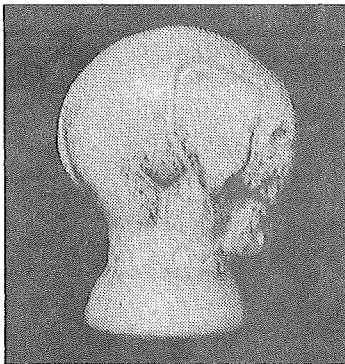
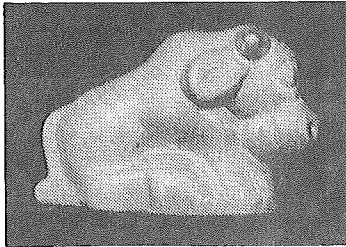
by John Frank for his Grace Lee. There are only TWO (2) left . . . One in the Frankoma Museum and one in my FRANKOMA ROOM here in Ohio.

Think I am not proud?

S & P's ~

The Black And White Of It

By Gibb Green, CO



Mr. Frank's Elephant is circus style, with all four feet and trunk perched on a round riser. These Elephants are a close second to the Bulls in cuteness and humor.

Well, now for the black and white of it--salt and pepper, that is! In over sixty-plus years of pottery, Frankoma has lovingly crafted some of the most interesting, charming, and useful salt and pepper shakers known to mankind.

To get my prejudices out of the way right up front--I like the early ones best of all, especially the *animals!* Number One in my book are the Bulls (#166H). I have a Blue Gray Jade pair, and a pair in Prairie Green. Of course, these are 1942-only productions. The facial expression on the critters is whimsical and priceless. Thanks, Mr. Frank.

Let's go back to the early days, to the 1936 Frankoma catalog, to be exact. The first pairs to appear are the #45H Modern and the #44H Barrel or Beehive. My 45's are in Indian Blue and, therefore, circa 1942. Simple, beautiful, and fitting together like bookends, they have (like a lot of early Frankoma), a bit of Greek and Egyptian flavor. My 44's are early Onyx Black and were found by my spouse in Wichita. Again, simply beauty. Barrels or Beehives? The catalog says Barrel, but to me they're somewhat "beehivey," so I prefer to call them Beehives to distinguish them from the later #97H Barrels.

And now for the Class of '42. Here the animals came onto the scene, specifically the #165H Pumas, the #160H Elephants, and the previously-praised Bulls. My Pumas and Elephants are both Prairie Green--still my favorite glaze, and the all-time "flagship" color for Frankoma. The Pumas are the easiest to find. I've owned four pair. I purchased the only Bulls and Elephants I've ever seen. Mr. Frank's Elephant is circus style, with all four feet and trunk perched on a round riser. These Elephants are a close second to the Bulls in cuteness and humor.

I suppose the snails are animals, too, even though they didn't make Page 99 of Mrs. Bess' first book. Very cute

and tiny salt and peppers, they are common in both Prairie Green and Desert Gold (my two colors). But I'd pay a handsome price for a pair in *Redbud!*

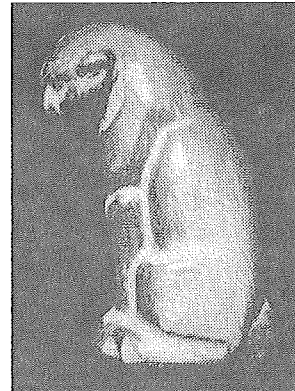
Now for some more 42-ers! The #47H Teepees, the #87H Balls, the #10H Moonshine Jug, the #93H Guernseys, the #94H Wagon Wheels, and probably the #86B or H Jug (like the rare #554 Jug) were all introduced. The Wagon Wheels are very common, designed to

companion the dinnerware of the same name. The Teepees are easy to come by also, but frequently the pole tops are chipped or broken off. The Balls, the Moonshine Jug, the Guernseys, and the #86's are very rare. My 87's are over-fired Prairie Green. I still love 'em, though, as they companion my little Batter 553's. I got lucky and found the two

Moonshine sets in Prairie Green and Sky Blue. I really fell victim to dumb, blind luck when I found my Blue Gray Jade Guernseys. I'm still looking, hoping and praying, for a set of 86's. I know of only three collectors who have them.

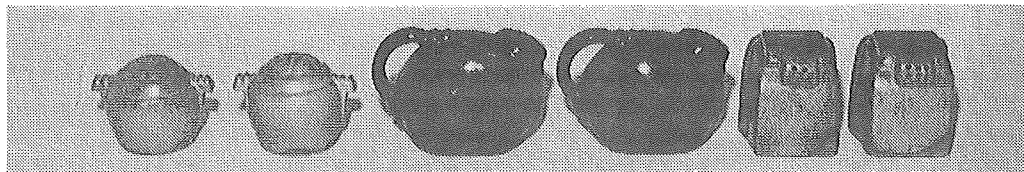
Speaking of rarities, the #40H monogrammed salt and pepper (Page 111, Bess, Book One) are really, really hard to find. I know of only two pair. In fact, I'd pay three or four times the Bess or Cox book price for either the #86H or #40H. So that's the end of the 1942's.

Frankoma also produced four other Ada clay salt and peppers to go with dinnerware sets, in addition to the little Wagon Wheels. They are all 1948-49 vintage. The #94HL Horseshoes were a second set to go with Wagon Wheels. The #7HS and #24H were small and large squares to companion the Mayan-Aztec. The #5H Plainsman shakers were also in two sizes, the larger probably intended for stove use. The one-piece #4H Cactus shaker was part of the Lazybones line. I like the early Plainsman shakers, drilled on both sides,



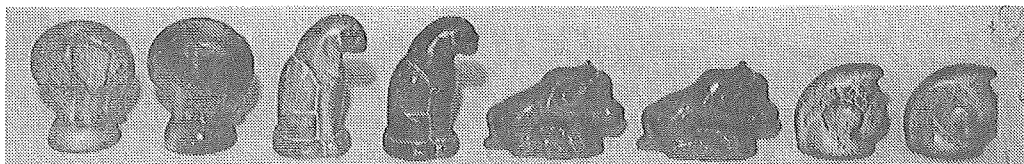
ROW 1: EARLY S&P SETS

- #44H Barrel¹ 36 - 42
- #86B Jug² 38 only
- #45H Modern³ 36 - 42



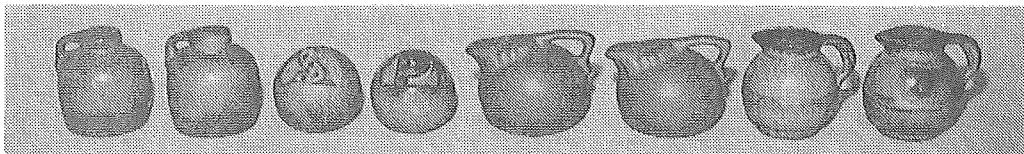
ROW 2: ANIMAL S&P SETS

- #160H Elephant 42 only
- #165H Cat⁴ 50 - 57
- #166H Bull 42 only
- #558H Snail 42 - 49



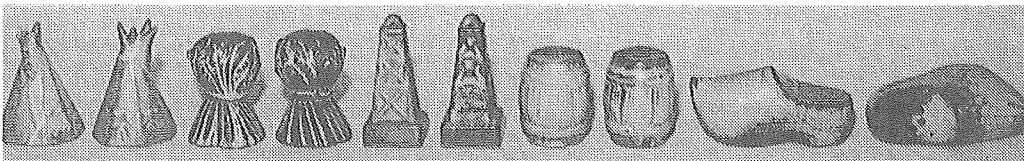
ROW 3: 1942 ONLY S&P SETS

- #10H Uncle Slug Jug
- #40H Monogrammed
- #87H Ball
- #93H Guernsey



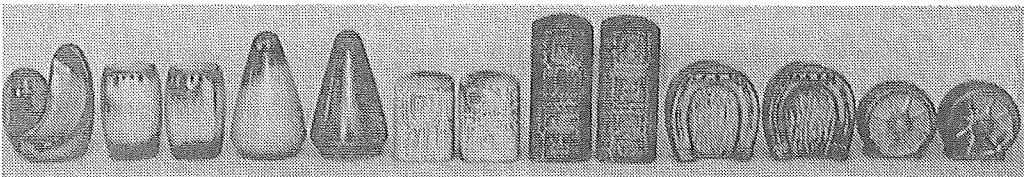
ROW 4: NOVELTY S&P SETS

- #47H Teepee 42 - 60
- #48H Shock of Wheat 51-57
- #49H Oil Derrick 50 - 60
- #97H Barrel 50 - 61
- #915H Dutch Shoe 57 - 60



ROW 5: DINNERWARE SETS

- #4H Lazybones
- #5H Plainsman
- #6H Westwind
- #7HS & 7H Mayan-Aztec
- #94HL W. Wheel Horse shoe
- #94H Wagon Wheel



so those folks bent on future cardiovascular problems can lay the black and white on thick to salad plate and dinner plate with one quick flick of the wrist! All dinnerware shakers are common. The early 1950's saw two more novelty sets, the #49H Oil Derricks and the #48H Wheat Shocks. Both are common, but not easy to find in Ada clay. Also the #97H Whiskey Barrels came along to accompany Barrel pitchers, mugs, bakers and mini-bakers. The dinnerware shakers, as well as the #49H, #48H, and the #97H are tough to find in glazes other than Prairie Green and Desert Gold.

We'll save discussion of post-Ada clay shakers for another time. Mr. Frank gave three molds to the Creek Indians--the Oil Derricks, the Teepees, and the Wheat Shocks. All three are fairly

common in Creek glazes at the flea markets and antique places I frequent.

Generally, oh Great and Wise Salt and Pepper Expert Article Writer--how fair are Bess and Cox prices on salt and peppers?? We asked, but he wasn't available, so G. G. will answer. I say, for the most part, right on. I'll pay a premium for Redbud, or any of the pre-1942 glazes. I'll also spend more freely on the animals.

I hope that I've conveyed to you, dear readers, that *Frankoma salt and peppering is not a black-and-white issue!* Years of manufacture, identifying glazes, and fair pricing are all somewhat "guess and by gosh." But I'll live with that.

I truly love my bunch and the pursuit of more! ☺

Ed. Note: According to our Expert Researchers the following points should be added to this discussion.

¹The 1936 catalog referred to this S&P as #44 Small, 1938 as #44 Barrell. In 1942, the number was changed to #92H Barrel S&P.

²The 86B Jug S&P appears only in the 1938 catalog.

³The 1936 & 1938 catalogs referred to this S&P as #45 Modern, in 1942 the H was added #45H and called Modern Carved Cubes. We believe 1942 to be the year Frankoma began to use the letter H to denote S&P's

⁴In 1942 catalog this S&P was #167 Cat S&P. It was not until 1950 catalog that this S&P is denoted as #166H Cat S&P. No catalog ever used Puma to describe this S&P only CAT.

JOSEPH RICHARD TAYLOR

As Told to Donna Frank

JOE TAYLOR - THE BOY

DF: Let's start at the beginning, Joe. Tell us a story. Where were you born and raised?

JT: I was born in 1907 near the town of Wilbur in eastern Washington state. My birthday and my father's birthday were February 1 and 2, but we could never quite remember which was which, and I still don't know for sure. We were homesteaders in what was still a wild frontier, living off the land. There were eight of us children, five boys and three girls, I was second in the line. Actually, there were nine of us, counting my mother's little brother whom she had raised. Dee was only ten years old, so he was more like a brother to me than an uncle.

I was two and a half years old when my parents decided that we could do better for a place to live, so we packed all we owned into a covered wagon and headed south. We traveled down through eastern Washington, through Oregon, and into northern California. Apparently, my folks were having second thoughts during our tour, because one day we sold the covered wagon and horses and made our way up to Alberta, Canada.

When we arrived in Alberta, we were out of money, and it was crucial that my father find a job. One day he rode over to the J-Bar Ranch, a large cattle ranch, and happened to arrive when they were breaking horses. My father, being an excellent horseman, jumped in to help them, and by evening he had been hired. The very next morning he was made foreman.

My Uncle Dee was the same age as the ranch owner's son, about fourteen, and a close friendship immediately blossomed. They both loved to wrestle and box together. When the Canadian government announced it was having a national tournament for amateur boxers, the cowboys all got together and took Dee and the owner's son up to Edmonton, that's when my uncle became the amateur boxing champion of Alberta. I didn't get to go with them, but Dee was a very thoughtful big brother, as uncles go, and he brought back children's boxing gloves for my brother Hank and me.

So Hank and I were enthusiastic boxers before we even started to school, and

being near the same age and size, we were a good match for each other.

Everyone fought on the frontier. But on the frontiers of New Mexico and Arizona, they fought with guns. They shot each other, and that was that. But we used our fists, not guns. And that was a good deal, because we lived to fight again and again. My brother and I continued to practice boxing, because that was our play, and we loved it. I never dreamed that boxing would be such a benefit to me later on.

Everyone fought on the frontier. . . but we fought with our fists, not guns, so we lived to fight again and again.

There were days at a time it was actually too cold, or the snow was too deep, to go to school. It was during those times that Hank and I, eight and nine years old, began trapping and selling furs, and we saved enough to buy a few cows. It was my first taste of what it took to be a cattle rancher, even on a very small scale.

DF: When did you know you wanted to pursue art as a career?

JT: When I was eight years old, I had already begun to make pencil drawings of animals. I drew a picture of a saddle horse, entered it at the county fair, and took first prize. The next year, I entered a drawing of a race horse, and again won first prize. When I was ten, I no longer wanted to compete in the children's category, and I entered my drawing of a work horse at the adult level. This time I had learned from pictures in the Timothy Eaton catalog (the Canadian equivalent of Sears) how to shade my drawings, and it opened up a whole new dimension for me. I won another first prize that year, but this time in competition with the adults. This may sound a bit lofty, but you must remember I had a rather small audience. Nevertheless, my parents were very proud of me. And that was my beginning work in art.

The following interview with Joseph Taylor took place in June of 1995. Joe and I first sat together in his living room in Norman, Oklahoma, where I asked him questions about his childhood, his schooling, the influences that led him to become an artist, the opportunities that were given him, as well as those he made for himself, how he views his own life, and how he feels about the choices he made in his lifetime. I wanted to record the life of this gifted gentleman in words that came directly from him, only him, and from no other source.

HIS LIFE AND HIS LEGACY

JOE TAYLOR - THE YOUNG MAN

Our family moved back to Washington State in time for my brother and me to start high school. We bought a house, and the man who held our mortgage was known for foreclosing for little or no reason, and we didn't want to take a chance on that happening to our family. So Hank and I took a year off from school and got jobs in a saw mill. I was only fifteen, and the minimum age to work at the mill was eighteen. Hank and I were almost exactly the same size, so we passed ourselves off as eighteen-year-old twins. We worked for that year and managed to pay off the mortgage to secure our house. Then I had to keep lying about my age. So during my teens I had three eighteenth birthdays!

Then we started high school the next fall at Chehalis, Washington. There were no art courses offered, but I did all the annuals for those four years, which was good practice. It was my freshman year that I met my lovely Elsie, and we became sweethearts. Neither of us ever recovered. We were together from that time on.

When that tiger purred for me, I guess that was the beginning of my life-long love affair with cats.

I had already developed an avid interest in scholastics. I was unbeatable. I had graduated from grade school with the highest grades in the county, and I was getting addicted to this business of "excellence." So in high school I hit for the same goal and graduated at the head of my class. I had already decided I wanted to go to college and get a degree in art, although I had no idea I could ever make any money being an artist.

In order to feed myself and pay for my schooling at the university, I had to find work, and because of my scholastic record, I was able to get a job in the library, but it wasn't enough to keep me in school. I had to find something to supplement my meager income.

In the meantime, I often went home on weekends to visit my family. My father and all my brothers did a little boxing and, having one brother who was unbeatable, as

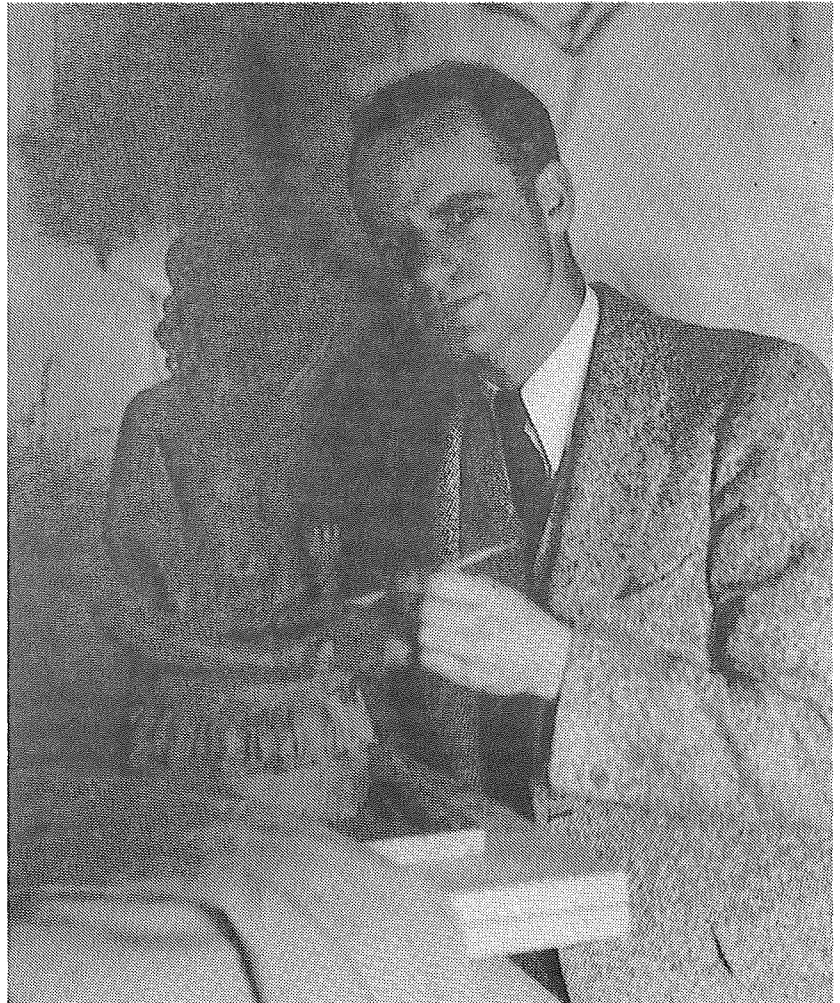
well as an uncle who was the champion of Alberta, we boxed every chance we got.

My first semester at the university, there were boxing matches between fraternities, and they found out I could fight. There was no one in my weight division at my rooming house, so I signed up. But I had only three days to prepare myself for the first match, so I lost that one. I went down once, but it was from pure fatigue that I fell. I simply wasn't ready.

After a couple of weeks of hard training, I could beat anyone my weight. When I knew I wasn't going to last long in school without some money, I went with one of the fellows to the Seattle Athletic

Club to look around. I was told they were paying boxers \$10 for every four-round match. Well, \$10 then had every bit the purchasing power of \$100 today, and I didn't have to fight very many matches in order to stay afloat.

There were about a dozen promoters working out of Seattle at that time, each with his own string of boxers, and they were interested in taking me on. I explained to them that I wasn't interested in becoming a professional boxer, or even in taking the championship, that I just needed to make some extra money to help me through school. They didn't quite understand that, because they thought I had a good career in



1940's Joe Taylor with sculpture
Photograph courtesy

Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library

boxing, but they accepted it. So I started boxing. My first year in college, I had made a niche all my own.

One weekend Elsie and I went to visit our families, and my brother said, "I won't need my car this weekend, so why don't you take it?" We drove across the border into Canada and got married. But it was in the depression and, in order to spread around the few jobs there were, the government didn't allow two incomes in the same family, so we had to keep our marriage a secret for two years before we could announce it.

As soon as I arrived in Norman I was told to go and meet John Frank, head of the Ceramic Art Department.

All the while, I was finding time to visit the Seattle zoo to study the anatomy of various animals, and I did hundreds of drawings and several sculptures. I was particularly fascinated with one tiger. This was in the days there were few safety laws about getting near the cages. As I became a frequent visitor to this large cat, he began to recognize me. When he saw me approaching, he would rear up on his hind legs, put his paws on the bars, and rattle his cage to greet me. He was huge! He must have stood at least twelve feet tall. What a magnificent specimen he was! He would then put his head against the bars, and I would reach in and scratch his head. When that tiger purred for me, I guess that was the beginning of my life-long love affair with cats.

I would then sit and model him, and I believe he actually knew what I was doing. He would stay in one position for a while, then move to another, and another, as if he were posing for me. And this tiger began to recognize that I was doing a replica of him. He watched me very intently as I worked. I didn't fully believe at the time that was what was happening, but I later learned that many animals do recognize models of their own shapes and respond to them. And my tiger was obviously very intelligent.

One day I saw a little East Indian man standing over to the side watching me as I came over to greet and pet my friend. His mouth dropped open, and I believe if he could have turned white, he would have. He immediately ran over and scolded me, telling me that, other than himself, I was the only human ever to have touched this beast, and that he had killed the last trainer he

had. Normally an animal is put to death when that happens, but because he was such an extraordinarily beautiful and perfect specimen, they granted him a special dispensation and allowed him to be sold to a zoo. Of course I was rather surprised by this revelation, since he was such a pussycat for me. I never stopped what I was doing; I just made sure the trainer was not around to watch me.

In my senior year, there was an art show that included artists from Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, and British Columbia. This was a show for professionals, not students. But I did a wood carving, entered it, and won the grand prize for the whole show. At the same time, I had a purchase award for a carved walnut deer, which was bought by the University of Washington Art Museum.

Phi Beta Kappa has long been considered the most prestigious of our honoraries at the college level. However, it was the ruling then that those in the fine arts--music, drama, sculpture, design, etc.--were not eligible for the award, because those were not deemed "scholarly endeavors." However, a good many on university faculties of that time were Phi Beta Kappas, and they were permitted in special cases to elect a person, if the consent was unanimous, to receive the coveted Phi Beta Kappa key. I had never heard of a recipient in the arts. But, as I mentioned before, I had become addicted to scholastic excellence, and I had continued in that direction. I so consistently made A's in everything I studied that I was elected by the faculty to receive the honor.

JOE TAYLOR - THE PROFESSIONAL MAN

I graduated with a double major in painting and sculpture. Elsie helped me send out a hundred and twenty-five letters for teaching jobs, and this was at a time that almost no one was hiring teachers at the college level. But Professor Jacobson at the University of Oklahoma, the same gentleman who had hired John Frank five years earlier, received one of those letters, and I suppose my accomplishments must have somehow impressed him, or at least they got his attention. He wrote to Washington to check me out. Because of my scholastic record, as well as my accolades in art, he invited me to come to Oklahoma and teach sculpture beginning the fall of 1932.

I started teaching with the title "Instructor." It didn't take me long to begin showing my works at various major exhibitions, and I soon began getting offers to teach at other schools. So to keep me, OU started raising my salary, which didn't make me at all unhappy. Soon I was elected to the Oklahoma Artists Hall of Fame, for which I sculpted that bronze self-portrait. My election to the Hall of Fame may have had something to do with my being made a full professor shortly thereafter.

DF: When did you and my father meet?

JT: As soon as I arrived in Norman, late summer of 1932, I was told to go and meet John Frank, head of the Ceramic Art Department. So I knocked at his door, arriving when he and Grace Lee were at the dinner table. Donna, not quite six months old, was in her high chair. I sat down at the table with them, and we began getting acquainted.

Elsie and I had no children, and unfortunately we never did. But we both were quite taken with Donna, and we soon became her "Uncle Joe and Aunt Elsie." When she was nine months old, I sculpted her head in clay. When John began his own little company, he put the piece into his Frankoma line, but only a few were ever made, because it was not a particularly "saleable" item. It was the first baby head I had ever done, and I later received many commissions to do children of university faculty members and other families throughout the state.

DF: Joe, tell me about your relationship with my father. What things did you do together outside the gates of the university?

JT: Well, of course he and Grace Lee, and Elsie and I, attended a lot of the faculty events together. We were both so busy with our teaching and the work we were doing for ourselves that it wasn't possible to get together and just "hang out together" as often as we would have liked. But we did get away many times to go hunting. We hunted rabbits and quail, and sometimes wild duck.

DF: I never knew my father liked hunting! Was he any good at it? I just can't imagine him as a hunter.

JT: I'll admit I had to teach that city boy a few things, but he got pretty good at it. Of course, we didn't hunt for the sport of it. We hunted in order to have something to put on the table. We were still in a depression, you know.

DF: Did you spend much time at the little Frank Potteries factory?

JT: I did go there from time to time to see how he was progressing. And John did make some molds and cast some pieces for me, things I wanted to make duplicates of now and then. Of course he was always willing to do that for me. It was good to be with him in a different environment, other than scholastic. We enjoyed each other.

John tried to persuade me to quit my teaching job and go into business with him, suggesting we call the business "Frankaylor Potteries"

DF: Did you ever do any designing at the plant?

JT: I did most of my design work in my own studio, but as I remember, I believe I did design two or three pieces for him there, although I couldn't possibly say for sure which ones.

DF: Do you remember when you began designing for my father?

JT: As soon as John and I were acquainted, he approach me about reproducing some of my pieces, and although I never had in mind becoming "commercial" with any of my art, I let him use some of my smaller cats and horses and other figures. I was very pleased he wanted to.

DF: How was it decided which pieces he would use? Did you choose them, or did he?

JT: It was always by mutual agreement. Sometimes I would offer a piece, and he'd say it was too difficult to make a mold for it, or he didn't particularly care for the piece, or he didn't think it would sell. Then sometimes he would choose something that for some reason I couldn't give him. But it was always by mutual agreement.

DF: Did he pay you for them outright, or what was the arrangement?

JT: Our agreement was that Frankoma would pay royalties to me for their use. But then, John's business was not exactly an overnight success. John and Grace Lee were having a very difficult time getting started, and I never demanded payment. I was just happy to help him out for the time being with a few small pieces. Eventually I was paid some, but not until years later. I understand that some of those pieces of mine that John produced in the early days

are quite in demand now by collectors. You know, at one time, John tried to persuade me to quit my teaching job and go into business with him, suggesting we call the business "Frankaylor Potteries." Well, I appreciated his faith in my work, but for the first time in my life I was enjoying a bit of security, and I wasn't willing to give all that up for something so purely speculative. I don't know what would have happened if I had, but being quite happy where I was, I declined his offer.

DF: Joe, was it you that designed the Frankoma logo?

JT: No, contrary to popular belief, I did not design the Pot and Puma logo. I did the original Pacing Leopard, but John

used that cat and put the logo together himself, although he did ask for my criticism along the way while he was doing it.

DF: Can you tell us more about your friendship with John Frank? He often referred to you as the "ultimate artist's artist." That said a lot about his feelings for your work. And the mention of your name always brought a warm smile to his face. He was very proud of his friendship and his association with you.

JT: I was very fond of John as well. We respected each other's work as fellow artists. But beyond that, I genuinely liked John. He was honest, and he was always going in a forward



**Sculpture by Joe Taylor
Photograph courtesy**

Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library

direction. He had such energy! He was certainly not easily discouraged. One thing in particular I appreciated about him was that he was obviously a man of strong religious beliefs. But unlike so many others, he was not in the least "pious" about it.

DF: What a nice thing to say about him. I haven't heard it put in those words, but that's a very good observation. That was him. Thank you.

Owning an ocelot was a sneaky way of getting to study all those beautiful cat poses, especially when I took him hunting.

DF: Joe, can we talk about Tigre? How did you get an ocelot all the way from Colombia?

JT: I didn't. Actually, a lady in Oklahoma City owned Tigre, given to her by a relative in Colombia, South America. Tigre (pro. Tee-ger) is the Spanish word for tiger, and they call them that because it's the closest thing they have to tigers there. Colombian tigers, or ocelots, are much larger than ocelots anywhere else in the world, so he was quite good sized when we got him, even though he was only about half grown and still cutting his permanent teeth. The lady raised show dogs, you see, and with this big cat around, the dogs were always in an uproar and were constantly needing stitches and bandages. So she was looking for someone to give him a good home, and we happened to hear about it. But she was asking \$300 for him. Well, Elsie and I couldn't come up with that kind of money. This was in the mid-1930's, you know, and few people had money like that. The price came down to \$100, and we still couldn't meet it. But we just waited, and when it came time for the woman to leave for the dog shows and couldn't take Tigre with her, we offered her \$30, and she took it!

DF: I remember how I loved going over to your house--much more than to any of the others' that baby sat me. I was only three and four and, call me a snob, but I didn't particularly like the kids I was sent to play with. I loved to sit and watch Tigre. He was just the most magnificent, awesome living thing I had ever seen! Now, I think that was *my* first love affair with cats!

JT: Well, as special as Tigre was, he was also a typical cat. He could be so

sweet and loveable but, like a cat, he'd stand and fight anything that would fight him. That was before air conditioning, so in the summers he liked to stay in the basement where it was cooler. Many times I would come home to find Tigre and Elsie down there curled up asleep on the sofa with their arms around each other like a mother and her baby.

He was always very loveable with us. But dogs! Now, that's another story. You see, Norman had just suffered a population drop because of the depression, and many families had moved away and left their dogs behind. So there were a lot of stray dogs around town who had nothing to do but chase cats. These dogs you could see coming down the alley. And when they smelled cat, Tigre smelled dog, and he was ready.

He was on a very long leash that had a ring on the end and hooked onto the clothes line, so he had plenty of room to run. Tigre would get back as far as he could from the alley and lie down and wait, then run and leap and catch the dog in those powerful jaws of his. Of course there wasn't a dog anywhere that stood a chance against him. One of us would run out and grab Tigre's collar, give it a half turn to cut off his wind, and make him turn the dog loose. I never understood why those dogs never learned to stay away from him.

This happened frequently, but there was one day I guess he set a record. I came home, and Elsie was practically in a state of hysteria. "We're going to have to do something about this cat!" she shouted. "I had to rescue five dogs today!" Well, Tigre was just being a cat, and a jungle cat at that, doing what cats do.

(At this point, I brought out Phyllis Bess' new book and began to browse through photos of his early works, asking Joe to tell us about them.)

DF: Didn't you use Tigre as a model for this well-known Pacing Puma?"

JT: Undoubtedly, Tigre contributed to that figure more than any other cat I used. You see, ocelots, pumas, tigers, leopards, they're all similar because they're all wild felines. If you're very familiar with the features unique to each of them, you can use one as a model to sculpt any of the others by just making some slight modifications, because cats all have generally pretty much the same range of motion and postures.

DF: Here's the Coati-Mundi, Joe. Did you have a model for this one?

JT: No, I didn't have a model for that, but I watched and studied one for a long time while a woman held it in her arms outside a zoo in Australia. That was on our first trip to Australia. We both had an avid interest in foreign cultures and languages, so we did a lot of traveling.

DF: This darling Pekingese pup--did you have a live model for this one?

JT: This Pekingese belonged to a woman who loved him very dearly. The dog would sit on his hind legs and pose that way for ever so long a time. As long as you kept talking to him, he'd listen to you and not move. He was a very sweet little dog.

DF: Ah, and here are the Colt and the Prancing Percheron. You obviously have a great love for horses, haven't you?

JT: Oh yes, I certainly do. Being around horses when I was so young probably had something to do with my starting out with horses in my art career. Yes, I've always had a great fondness for horses, so naturally I've used them a lot as subjects.

DF: Oh, and here's the fan dancer! I understand she was inspired by a rather famous lady.

JT: Oh yes, that was Sally Rand. A very beautiful and graceful dancer.

The Metropolitan is where an artist hopes to wind up one day after many years of exhibiting! But as soon as this one was finished, it started at the top.

DF: What about the Harlem Hooper and the Torch Singer?

JT: Well, you see, that was the kind of entertainment that was going on in New York at the time Elsie and I were there, 1942, just after World War II broke out. Those were typical of the entertainers we saw in Harlem. They were very earthy and very dramatic, and so appealing to do figures of. They had no inhibitions whatsoever, as you can see.

DF: Here's the Indian Bowl Maker. What a classic piece that is!

JT: Yes. I think that followed my friendship with Acee Blue Eagle. He was a friend of your father's, too, of course.

DF: And this powerful piece--the Amazon Woman.

JT: This was quite an early piece, soon after I came to Norman. It was a figure I arrived at by way of my early stone carvings. They lent themselves to that kind of massiveness, and then I suggested that in the "roundness" of the forms of some of my females.

DF: Hmm. "Rubinesque," I think they call it.

JT: Ah yes, "Rubinesque." That's a good word for it. That keeps it scholarly, doesn't it? (We both had a good laugh at this point.)

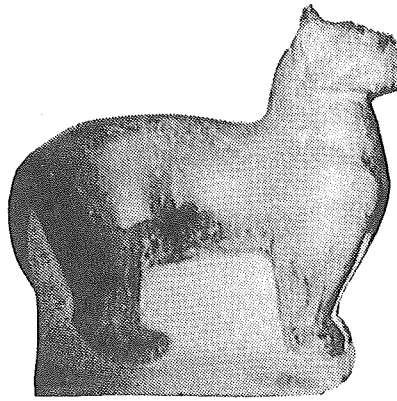
DF: May we now go into the other room and talk about some of these pieces here in your home. Now, here's an unusual cat, quite different than most of your other cats. It's a bit on the abstract. It's stocky and quite massive. And it's far more symmetrical than any of your others.

JT: This is one of the two major pieces I did while at Columbia that semester in New York. I was studying sculpture and was in the process of finishing this piece. There was a man who was getting ready to have a showing, and he was told by someone that he should come and take a look at this one. Well, he apparently liked what he saw, and he asked if I could have it ready in a week. I said I thought I could. He asked what I was going to call it, and I said, *Jungle Madonna*. You see the kittens there beneath the cat? They're subtle, but they're there. Well, the man hesitated for a minute and said the term "madonna" was more or less Biblical in origin, that someone might be offended by it because of its religious significance. But in a couple of days he came back to look at it again.

The third time he returned, he said he just had to show this piece, and he wanted to show it at the Metropolitan Museum. Well! The Metropolitan is where an artist hopes to wind up one day after many years of exhibiting! But as soon as this one was finished, it started at the top.

The next Sunday morning, it appeared on the front page of the Arts section of the New York Times, almost half a page large. And there it was--the *Jungle Madonna*.

Later on, in another exhibition, it was stolen and disappeared for seven years. Then one day, out of the blue, I got a call from an attorney who said a client of his had confided to him that he had it in his garage and wanted to return it, but only if charges wouldn't be filed against him. Of course I agreed, because I was happy to find it. I did have to take



Jungle Madonna



Black Belgian Marble Horse

some paint off the side with a chisel. My guess is that a fraternity had used it and painted it up. But anyway, I was very pleased to get it back.

DF: Joe, what about that huge black horse over on the table? Tell me the story of this one! It's so large, and muscular, and bold! What a powerful piece! What is it made of?

JT: That's the other piece I did that semester at Columbia. It's made of black Belgian marble. It's the densest, heaviest marble known to man. I can tell you that to work in that medium means you're going to break a lot of tools along the way. Many museum won't show anything over two hundred pounds, you know.

DF: And just by running my hands over its highly polished surface, I can feel the incredible denseness and imagine how heavy it is. How much does it weigh?

JT: It's well over two hundred pounds when it's crated, because the crate has to be so massive to hold it. At one time I had it displayed at the end of the hall near my office. The campus gallery in the building next door wanted to exhibit it, but we wondered how we'd get it over there.

I had a young man in one of my classes who had just won the title of *Mr. Texas*, so you can imagine how big and muscular he was. I asked if he'd help me transport it over there, and he said he'd be glad to do it. So he picked it up and carefully carried it down the stairs. But when he got to the bottom, he started to stagger, and his legs began to buckle. I quickly took it out of his arms, walked across to the next building, up a flight of stairs to the gallery, and put it on the pedestal. *Mr. Texas* never quite got over that.

DF: Now let's sit down over here and talk about these wonderful cats of yours in the corner.

JT: (Picking up the reclining cat, he sat it on his lap and gently ran his hands over its head and back.) This one is in a repose that almost all cats assume. (He then pointed to the other two cats in the grouping.) They all develop these interesting, related spaces that are very graceful in their relationships. You see, these various poses cause the parts of their body to make the shapes of these spaces. I've always found those spaces so fascinating. And of course, owning an ocelot was a sneaky way of getting to study all those beautiful cat poses, especially when I took him hunting. I'd turn him loose and let him run around and play and climb trees, and I'd study him. And Tigre would always come when I called him to get back in the car and come home.

DF: Tell me about this outstanding home of yours. I know it was featured in *Life Magazine* at one time. I understand Bruce Goff didn't build it specifically for you, but for someone else. Tell us how you came to live here.

JT: As you know, Bruce Goff was head of the Architecture Department here at OU for a good many years. I admired his work very much, and he admired mine, so we were already friends.

It was about the time John and Grace Lee were building their home, or

perhaps a little later than that. A Mrs. Ledbetter commissioned Bruce Goff to build her a house, because she was getting a divorce, and this was to be where she would begin her new single-again life. She asked Bruce to design her a "ranch type" house. But her idea of a ranch house and Bruce's idea of a ranch house had no similarity whatsoever. So even as the house was being built, she was experiencing great disappointment about the way it was turning out. I absolutely loved what I saw as it was going up, because I could envision it finished. Elsie was not quite so sure, although by the time it was finished, she had fallen in love with it, too. It just seemed to be made for artists to live in--as if Bruce had us in mind when he designed it.

When I learned of Mrs. Ledbetter's dislike for the house, I called her husband and asked if I could buy it. He declined, but said if I called back in about three years he'd consider it, because he could use it as a tax write-off. Mrs. Ledbetter had apparently been told by her ex-husband of our interest, and a little over three years later, she called and asked if we were still interested. It happened that, in the meantime, oil had been discovered on the ranch we had bought outside of Norman, and we had worked out a nice lease agreement with a major oil

company. So it was well timed, you see.

I asked Mrs. Ledbetter what she wanted for the house, she told me, and I didn't even quibble. I made a substantial down payment, and I had it paid for in a year. And we lived here happily ever after.

DF: Another great Joe Taylor story! And I always love a happy ending! So, Joe, when did you retire from teaching?

JT: It was in 1969. I taught at OU for thirty-seven years. And I loved every bit of it.

DF: What did you do after you retired?

JT: Well, of course Elsie was also retired from her teaching by then. We continued to ranch, and we were free to travel even more, which we did. We traveled quite a bit until she became ill.

DF: I understand you're still ranching?

JT: Yes, I'm still cattle ranching, something I love to do. A number of years ago, we discovered a breed of cattle known as the Limousin, named for a region of France where they were bred, which has considerably less fat in the meat than most other breeds. So we bought some and began raising them for beef, and also sold them for breeding stock. We still raise Limousins at the ranch, although we now have only about

seventy head of them. I have a full crew that lives there to take care of things, but I still go out there almost every day. I still drive the tractor and do some of the mowing, help bail hay, mend fences, and things like that. (Big laugh) And you should see my bulldozer! I love to run that bulldozer! As a result, my ranch has 130 ponds, and I made all but two or three of them myself!

DF: You've most certainly left your own unique mark in the world of fine art. Among Joe Taylor's honors are Phi Beta Kappa, Delta Phi Delta, listings in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, *Who in American Art*, and *Directory of American Scholars*. Your pieces are some of the most recognizable on the entire globe. And speaking for the collectors, as well as your public, from our hearts and our souls, we thank you for all the inspired works you've given us in your long and productive career.

JT: I wouldn't have changed a thing about my career.

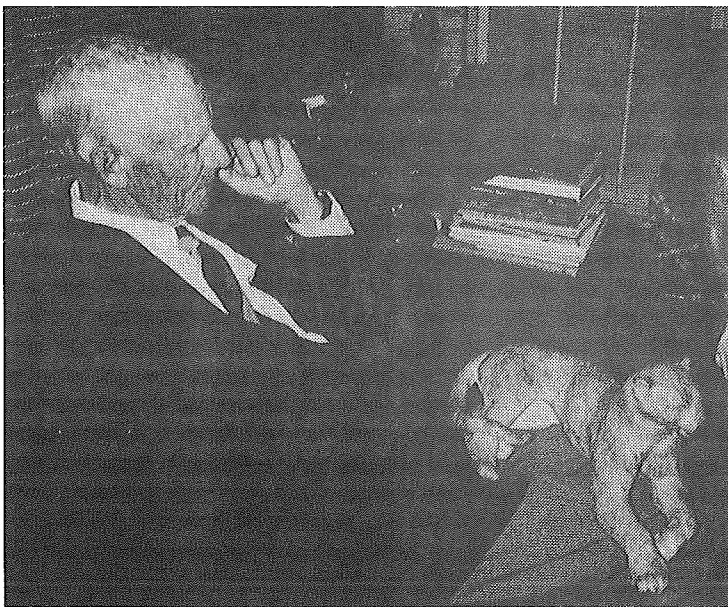
DF: I would expect you to say that, Joe Taylor. But tell me--what will happen to all these works eventually? Please assure us you've taken care of their future.

JT: Well, that's interesting you should ask. It seems the university wants to preserve our house as a historical site in tribute to the architect, Bruce Goff. They also want to keep these remaining pieces of mine for public viewing, and I'm pleased about that, too. So, as I understand it, they're going to let all my art work remain in the house. That's called killing two birds with one stone, you see.

DF: How splendid! The collectors, and future generations of collectors, and the many art lovers who appreciate your work as we do, will one day have the opportunity to come and view all this that we've been talking about. From our hearts, we thank you, Joe. *J*

(Ed. Note: Joe was more than generous with his time and his words. His candidness and his honesty, along with his friendship, are among those things I shall always treasure as his special gifts to me.

With such pleasure I watched him touch certain of his works and speak of them with the affection of their creator, and I sensed an aura of memories that clung to each piece, reminding him of the wheres and the whens of how it came to be. Each sculpture had a history and a story



1995 - Joe Taylor with ceramic reclining ocelot sculpture

to tell, and one seemed better, or often more humorous, than the one before. At one point, he picked up a ceramic reclining ocelot and sat for a time with it in his lap, gently resting his hand on its head and back. It looked like a contented lap cat that knew he belonged there.

And now I can share some of the story with you, the collectors, the many who know and appreciate his genius. Of course we all love those of his pieces that Frankoma reproduced. But if you ever have an opportunity to view some of the major works of Joe Taylor, I would urge you to take advantage of it. In a sizeable collection of those works, you'll come to know and appreciate a Joe Taylor that can only be glimpsed in Frankoma Pottery.

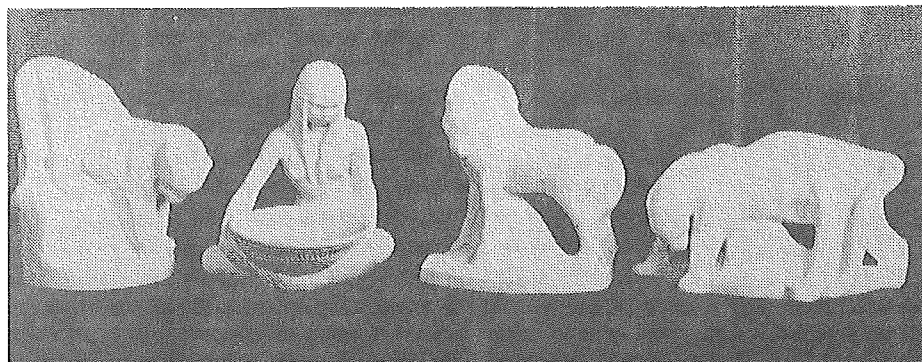
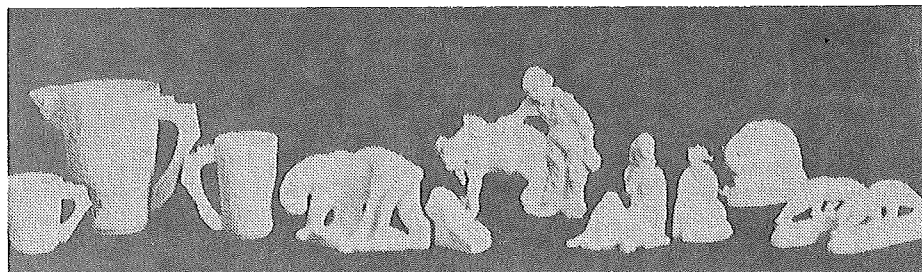
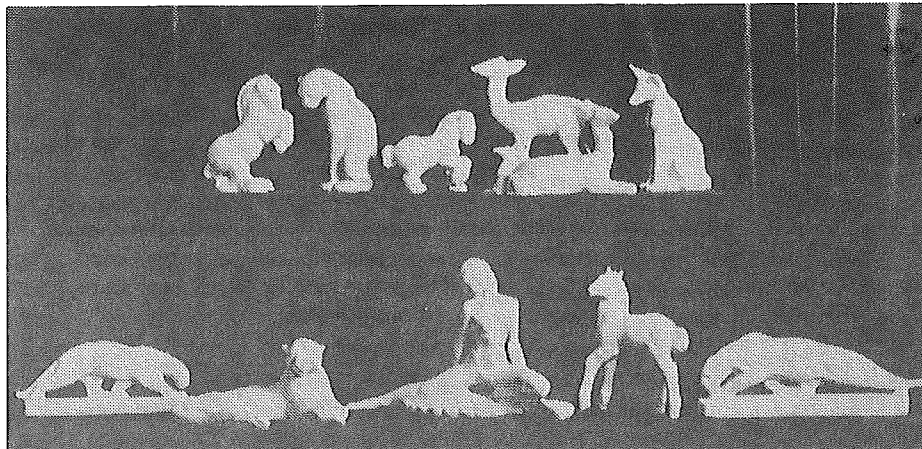
When observing Joe Taylor's works, there are many pieces from which exude an almost overwhelming sense of strength, dynamic power, and movement—not merely frozen in time, but ever in motion—and possessing a living intelligence all their own. From others I cannot help feeling a quiet, cooling calm wash over me as I stand before them. There is one in particular from which I sense this quietude, and I want to match its repose, to lie down beside it to listen, because it surely has something to tell me. In essence, it is almost impossible not to feel a relationship with each of his creatures, in animal or human form, to which he has given life and personality.

The man who created these forms is a gentleman, a gentle man, a man of humor, and one who is quick to smile. But in order to imbue his creatures with such power and intriguing charisma, one knows that he himself must possess all those many layers and depths and facets within himself, because surely he had to first define them in himself before he could implant them into his creations to which he has brought a certain life.

And so when you gaze upon your favorite Taylor work, take the time to let it speak to you as it will—be it graceful, in motion or static, tame or wild, passive or aggressive, aloof, or whimsical. Whatever it says to you, you will know it is the product of an intelligent creator. Know that, first of all, it was mere stone or clay in the master's hands that allowed itself to be made into something of extraordinary beauty, which is something it could not have done for itself.)

PUT YOUR BESS BOOK FORWARD!

We cannot be absolutely sure that Mr. Taylor will make an appearance at our reunion, but we've all got to keep our fingers crossed. On the chance that he can and will be there, we suggest you bring your new Bess book with you. With all those wonderful photos of his Frankoma pieces, perhaps he'll be kind enough to sign one for you, if that's your pleasure.



Joe Taylor Sculptures 1936 Ceramic Creations By Frankoma Catalog

- Row 1: #107 Rearing Clydesdale, #114 Seated Ocelot, #108 Prancing Percheron, #109 Deer Group, #105 Coyote Pup
- Row 2: #104 Walking Ocelot, #116 Reclining Puma, #113 Fan Dancer, #117 Prancing Colt, #103 Charging Tiger
- Row 3: #421 Leopard Book Ends (2 figures), #421A Leopard Book End (with dud end), #425 Seated Figure Book Ends, #426 Sea Horse Book Ends, #424 Walking Ocelot Book Ends
- Row 4: #422 Ocelot Book Ends, #123 Indian Ash Tray, #420 Horse Book Ends, #421 Leopard Book Ends

Pieces not identified in photos are not Joe Taylor pieces.



Grace Lee Frank, 1977

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GRACE LEE!

On September 4th, Grace Lee Frank Smith will celebrate her birthday. If you can calculate which one, promise not to breathe it to anyone, because whatever number you come up with, she says she'll unabashedly deny it.

Since we can't throw her a party and invite you all, we're giving her a "card shower." Grace Lee loves pretty greeting cards. So if you want to wish her a Happy Birthday, send her one to arrive around that date, and maybe we can help her forget what year she's reaching. (Send your cards to her at FFCA headquarters in Sapulpa.)



FFCA Wishes the following Family Members

HAPPY BIRTHDAY !!

August & September

September 4 – Grace Lee Smith
September 9 – Steve Littrell, OK

THE MAGIC OF MUD

By Grace Lee Frank

In the beginning on a special morn,
God took some clay, and man was born,
With a mind to love, create and obey.
Yes, we still have that same right today,
To live our lives in a beautiful way--
It all depends on how we use our clay.

We can build a temple to worship
in
Where we can pray for forgiveness of sin;
We can build big factories with great
expansions,
And for our families, nice big mansions;
We can build a statue of great renown,
Or a simple hut in our own home town.
Again I say--our success today
Depends on us, how we use our clay.

We can design a vase in three
dimension,
And there are other things I'd like to
mention--
Like saucers and cups, pitchers and plates,
And bowls and platters to serve our steaks.
Vessels of dishonor or honor they'll be,
If we work with our minds and hands
diligently.
I'm of the opinion that our success today
Is in the skill we use in modeling our
clay.

We can plant roses with tender care
And have them blooming
everywhere;
Or hyacinths of blue, yellow or pink
To feed our souls and make us think
Of a Heavenly Father so generously kind
Who trusts us with a creative mind
To plant new seeds in early spring
That will give us food, and with it bring
Health and happiness with work and
play--
If we will wisely use our clay.

Mud is magic! Yes, we of this earth
Await the artist to give ideas birth
And create new objects of every kind
To serve the body and soul and mind.
The beauty of creation awaits a new day--
It all depends on how we use our clay.



SHE'S DONE IT AGAIN!

Joniece has designed a most extraordinary commemorative trivet for this year's reunion, folks! And here's a computer-generated copy of it, meaning it's necessarily in black and white, but we're lucky to have this much to show you. So you have to visualize it like this: what's white will be terra cotta (without glaze), and the black you see will be white. It will be produced using that technique called HDI (High Definition Imaging). Grace Lee's poem, *The Magic of Mud*, is printed in its entirety for your reference.

And surprise! Also available at the reunion will be a mug, being made by Frankoma especially for us collectors, and us alone. Gosh! Are they gorgeous! You'll want to take home several, and we're trying to keep the price down so you can do just that--and go home guilt-free! Great for Christmas gifts!

Joniece will also have another new and very *different* angel in production and ready for sale by convention time. It doesn't even have a name yet. But it's quite lovely, holding a small bird in her hand. We know you'll like this one, too!

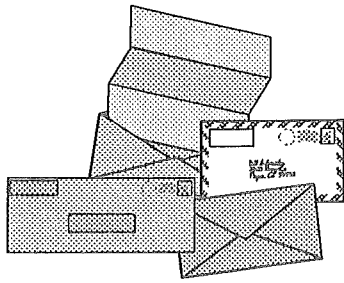


1995 FFCA Reunion Commemorative

IN SYMPATHY

Louise Standridge, sister of Thomas Grogg, and long-time Frankoma collector, passed away on the evening of August 17, after a short illness. Louise was a resident of Moore, OK.

The officers and members of the Frankoma Family Collectors Association offer our sincere sympathy to the Grogg family in their loss.



Dear

Donna...

Thanks for the membership info.

I purchased my first piece of Frankoma last month so I'm very interested to learn about it.

Unfortunately, it's hard to find Frankoma this far west - I don't want to miss a piece due to lack of knowledge!

On Mother's day I'll be "going Pro" with my collecting and opening *Cat House Collectibles* here in Tucson. Thanks again.

Cynthia from AZ

Congrats, Cynthia, on your new biz! Frankoma has cats for your new Cat House. Keep reading your Pot & Puma, and you'll catch on in no time. You can also write FFCA with questions. That's one reason we're here, you know. FYI--CA, CO, NM, and AZ were some of the largest Frankoma states at one time. Just keep looking, you'll find plenty just waiting for you to discover them.



I received your card today in regard to your Frankoma Collectors Club. We would like very much to join your club. Mont and I have been collecting elephants for 22 years, and we have about 6,000 in our collection, but we are very proud of Frankoma's elephant mugs. We have from 1968-1995. We have a beautiful display of them.

Thanks again for sending us your card, and be sure to include us in your club.

Mont & Wanda from TX

You're in, folks, and welcome! According to National Geographic, you have by far the largest herd remaining on Planet Earth!



Thank you for remaining such an active participant in the Frankoma history. I look forward to receiving the 1995 newsletters.

I grew up in El Reno, Oklahoma, and my parents still live there. While I will probably never live in Oklahoma again, I look to my collection of Frankoma as a connection to my upbringing.

P. J. from CO

Frankoma does seem to sorta stick with us who grow up with it, doesn't it? Heavens, P. J.--look what it did to me!



As a former resident of Oklahoma City for 22 years, my vague familiarity with Frankoma has risen to a constant quest here in the East. My husband, who recently passed away, was a born and bred "Okie". We met and married there in the '50's and our 4 children were born there. After moving around the country for many years, we settled in rural Southern Maryland, a summer resort on the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay. In my search for antiques, I began noticing more and more Frankoma appearing on the East Coast and started picking up pieces for the shop, hoping to stimulate interest in something that no one in the area carried. Now my children and friends are on the lookout for pieces and one friend has started collecting. Even though some of the older and rarer pieces are elusive in the East, I keep hoping to find that special bonanza. And by the way, not all pieces make it to the shop!!

I have a special niche in the shop where the pieces are displayed and a short history of Frankoma. It always delights me when a customer is familiar or particularly interested in the pieces. Recently, I had a gentleman by the name of Lee Emory in the shop and although I didn't get to meet him personally, I did enjoy a very nice telephone conversation with him. He in fact, arranged to have the FFCA information sent to me, for which I am grateful. So I am extremely happy to join the FFCA and hopefully, expand my knowledge of Frankoma.

Thank you for the information, newsletter, etc..

Barbara from MD

I remember the call from Lee! He was formerly of Tulsa and knew my father. I'm so happy you're pleased with the material we sent, and we hope the Pot & Puma and Prairie Green Sheet will supply you with info, as well as add pieces to your collection and shop. Happy hunting, Barbara, and write and tell us about some of your finds! And remember you're a member now--you can place ads in the PGS at no charge. Let us know what you're looking for!



We just received our first issue of the FFCA **Pot & Puma**. What a surprise it was, not only to see our friends the Koma Kid and Koma Gal in the Dear Donna section (they introduced us to Frankoma many years ago), but we were shocked to see that the first edition of *Clay in the Master's Hands* was worth \$150! We felt compelled to write and tell you that we are some of the lucky few who have this rare treasure, and would like to share with you how we acquired it.

After learning from the Koma Kid and Koma Gal about the book six or seven years ago, we decided to travel from California to Oklahoma in search of this book and other treasures. After touring the factory and buying many Frankoma pieces, we returned home without the book. Two

weeks after we got home, I was driving less than two miles from our home, and something compelled me to stop at a newly opened craft and book store. I parked the car, went inside, and walked over to the book area. And there it was! Sticking out off the shelf, as if to say, "Here I am! What took you so long to find me?" I expected to pay a lot of money for it, but it was only \$1.50! The lady at the register said she bought a box of books at a storage shed auction and put them all on the shelf for sale!

I wrapped the book in a box and gave it to my husband as a gift and, needless to say, he was very pleased! (We did let the Koma Kid and Koma Gal photocopy it!)

Shortly after finding the book, we got a cat. We thought about several names, until my husband blurted out, "PUMA!"

We are planning on attending the reunion and will bring your first book, and with any kind of luck, you'll autograph it for us!

Jim & Terry from OR

Dear Puma: If Jim and Terry bring you with them to Oklahoma, you can meet our pal Pal. ("Pal & Puma." Hm. Sounds like maybe a newsletter for cat lovers?) Tell your people I said they don't need luck, just a pen with plenty of ink, 'cause by September mine will probably be running low. After all the miles they traveled to find that piece of antiquity, they deserve more than an autograph. Tell them they've just earned a free copy of the second edition for the best letter of the month! Now they can throw away the old one, right?



Enclosed find a check for \$20. Phyllis Bess thought that I might be interested in Frankoma's club. My husband and I are interested and would enjoy the newsletters and any other information the club has for its members.

I shared with Phyllis that my husband and I got interested in Frankoma Pottery because his first name is Frank, and mine is Oma. However, we both use our second names--Bruce and Joan. His name is Frank Bruce, and mine is Oma Joan (JoAnn). So it's a bit unusual!

I have really enjoyed looking for Frankoma treasures this past spring and summer. I would really like to know more about collecting, so I thought it would be great to belong to the club. Anything you have to mail to me would be of interest and greatly appreciated.

Bruce & Joan a.k.a. Frank & Oma from MN

When I first read your letter, I naturally thought you had invented "Frank" and "Oma"--like the "Koma Kid" and "Koma Gal." But those really are your names!! We're tickled to have such uniquely qualified members collecting Frank-Oma--and not Van-Briggle, Red-Wing, or See-Quoia! Say, does Mr. Ripley know about you??

Thanks for all your letters -- we look forward to each new one. Just keep 'em coming cousins!

★★ For Sale ★★

For Sale: Frankoma
Frank Potteries--Unusual #23 round sugar bowl, 3 1/4" H, 5 1/4" W, Verde Green with double Frank Potteries ink stamp marks (See Photo). Small 1 1/2" hairline in glaze at mouth of bowl. Will accept mail or telephone bid.

★★ ANTHONY GERMANO ★★
 820 Kings Croft
 Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
 609-667-7795

For Sale: Frankoma
 Christmas Items, dinnerware, batter pieces, small items and miscellaneous vases. Seventy pieces. Send SASE for complete listing with prices.

★★ MONICA MOSELEY ★★
 129 Lancaster Drive
 Kingsport, TN 37663
 615-239-7627

For Sale: Frankoma
Christmas Plates --1969-1973 \$10 each or best offer. Shipping & handling extra.

★★ LAJUANA JWEID ★★
 2136 Barclay
 Oklahoma City, OK 73120
 405-751-9260

For Sale: Frankoma
Christmas Plates --1965 thru 1986 \$500 for entire collection. Will sell only as a set. Shipping & handling extra.

★★ DOROTHY FOSTER ★★
 11 Edgemer Drive
 Bristow, OK 74010
 918-367-2458

For Sale: Frankoma
Christmas Card -- 1954 Wedding Ring bowl #511. This was the year of Donna's marriage. Perfect condition. \$75 or best offer.

★★ JAN THALBERG ★★
 23 Mountainview Drive
 Weston, CT 06883
 203-227-8175

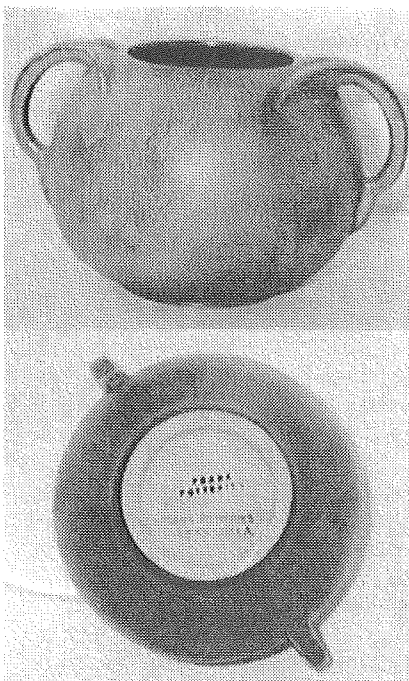
For Sale: Frankoma
 William Haney 1988 Sculpture
SNOWBIRD

Limited Edition of 350
 signed and numbered
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*Come by on your way to Sapulpa
 Reunion -- all are Welcome!*

★★ PAT WARNER ★★
 4900 NW 36th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73122-2326
 405-942-9779

★★ For Sale ★★



Mark #1: Frank Potteries
 Mark #2: Frank Potteries
 Norman, OKLA.

For Sale: Frankoma
Christmas Plates --1968 \$38, 1969 \$27, 1970 \$27, 1971 \$24, 1976 \$24, Della Robia color, Excellent Condition.

★★ CHRISTINE CHIARO ★★
 7165 Templeton Gap Road
 Colorado Springs, CO 80922
 Phone/Fax 719-380-8374

For Sale: Frankoma
Limited Edition Vases, V-1 \$45; V-2, V-4, V-5, V-6 \$40 each; V-10B & C, V-14-2 \$30 each. **Plates:** Wildlife Plates, set \$375. Teenagers of the Bible, set \$125.

Miscellaneous: #138 Circus Horse, Ada, BK \$125. #38 Ram's Head Vase, 6", PG \$35. #53 nautilus, PG \$20. #420 Charger Horse Bookend, single, PG, \$70. Hundreds of Christmas Cards at 40% discount off Cox pricing. Call or write for wants.

★★ STEVE LITRELL ★★
 5632 NW 58th Terrace
 Oklahoma City, OK 73122-7329
 405-722-2941

★★ Wanted ★★

Wanted: Frankoma
 Trivet -- Flag No. FLTR in Medium Blue.

★★ MONICA MOSELEY ★★
 129 Lancaster
 Kingsport, TN 37663
 615-239-7627

Wanted: Frankoma
Christmas Cards -- 1944 #556 mini pitcher and 1952 Donna Frank #557 spiral pitcher. **Miscellaneous** -- #93H Guernsey S&P. #87D Syrup Pitcher, DG.

★★ RAY STOLL ★★
 4618 NW 34th Street
 Oklahoma City, OK 73122-1330
 405-947-8505

Advertising in the Newsletter

Mail ads to FFCA Newsletter, PO Box 32571, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771.

Ad rates are subject to change without notice. You may arrange for advertising space at current rates up to four issues in advance. Members may place one-time ads at yearly rates.

The Newsletter is produced in Pagemaker; all photos are scanned. We prefer that partial-page ads be supplied in the same, or similar format--inquire if in doubt as to compatibility, font availability, etc.

Display Advertising Rates

| AD SIZE | 1X | 4X |
|----------------------------|------|-------|
| Business Card 3 1/2" X 2" | \$15 | \$10 |
| 1/4 page 3 3/4" X 5" | 25 | 20 |
| 1/2 page 7 3/4" X 5" | 40 | 25 |
| Full page 7 3/4" X 10 1/4" | 70 | 48 |
| Page Banners 7 3/4" X 1" | | 18.50 |

Publication Schedule

| ISSUE | CLOSING |
|----------|------------|
| FEBRUARY | January 31 |
| MAY | April 30 |
| AUGUST | July 31 |
| NOVEMBER | October 3 |

Classified Advertising Rates

Members

FOR SALE ADS: 200 words free per issue,
WANTED ADS: 50 words free per issue,
HELP WANTED: 50 words free per issue,
ANNOUNCEMENTS: 25 words free per issue,
 10¢ per word thereafter.

Non-Members

ALL ADS are 20¢ per word

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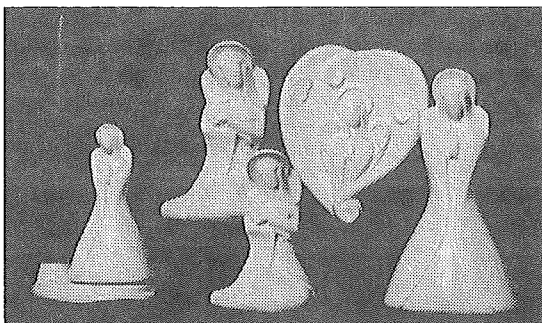
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El Reno, OK 73036
405-262-9366

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Sunday 1:00 to 5:00
Thurs. 10:00 to 8:00

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- #145 6" Angel For All Seasons \$12
- #146 8" Angel For All Seasons \$20
- #147 5" Shepherdess \$12
- #148 7" Shepherdess \$20
- #149 Candle Base (for #145 & #147) \$ 6
- #151 Della Robbia Wall Plaque \$15

Order from Frankoma Pottery ♦ PO Box 789 ♦ Sapulpa, OK 74067
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Mention your FFCA membership number and receive 10% discount
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STATE OF THE REUNION

This year's reunion will officially begin with registration (sign-in) at the Creek County Fairgrounds, just off old Route 66 west of Sapulpa, beginning at 12:00 noon on Thursday, September 21st.

The official welcome and greetings from distinguished guests will begin at 2:00 p.m., we are fortunate to have our Senator Ted Fisher as emcee again this year, as well as State Representatives Betty Boyd and Mike Tyler, Sapulpa Mayor Brian Bingman, and County Commissioner Dana Hudgins. The business meeting, will immediately follow, at which time by-laws, which meet State and Federal requirements for a non-profit association, will be presented for review

and approval, followed by the election of two Trustees to the Board of Directors. Other business may be brought to the floor, either by your Board, or by the members in attendance will follow. The rest of the day will be devoted to fellowship, tours, shopping, and similar activities.

On Friday, the doors will open at 9:00 a.m. for "Show and Sell," shopping at dealers' table. Members only will be allowed for those three hours in the morning, after which the public is invited to enter and buy to their hearts' content.


Concurrently, there will be seminars on such topics as repair/restoration of damaged/broken treasures, identifying unmarked Frankoma, guides to determin-

ing a fair value on Frankoma pieces, and how to display your various collectibles. Tours will also be available at times throughout the day.

Friday evening at 7:00 p.m., we will meet for dinner at Allen Ranch. Saturday morning will be more "Show and Sell." At noon, exhibitor tables will be closed down and the area rearranged for the auction, scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. The reunion will come to a close at the conclusion of the auction.

If you weren't able to register in advance, come anyway, as registrations will be accepted at the door. See you all at the reunion on the 21st!

Ray Stoll, FFCA President



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COME JOIN US!

To Join the Frankoma Family Collectors Association and receive your subscriptions to the *Pot & Puma* and the *Prairie Green Sheet*, fill out the form below and mail it along with your check [\$20] to FFCA Treasurer, Nancy L. Littrell, PO Box 32571, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771. Make Check Payable to: FFCA.

PLEASE ENTER MY/OUR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP [\$20] IN THE FFCA.

 _____
NAME / NAMES

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WHAT TYPE OF FRANKOMA DO YOU COLLECT? [miniature, sculpture, glaze, Ada, S&P, etc.]

PLEASE LIST ANY HOBBY OR SKILLS [photography, computer, writing, editing, publicity, bookkeeping, auctioning, art, etc.] YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO VOLUNTEER.

FFCA PUBLISHES AN ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY. PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PREFERRED LISTING:

- COMPLETE LISTING AS PRESENTED ABOVE. FULL ADDRESS, OMIT PHONE.
 DO NOT LIST MY NAME, ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE. NAME AND CITY ONLY.

DON'T MISS
ANOTHER ISSUE!

JOIN TODAY!

NEXT ISSUE

Pot & Puma

Grace Lee Frank Smith

An interview by Donna Frank

**Frankoma Christmas
Cards**

**NIROGA Trivets &
Special Pieces**

and Much! Much! More!