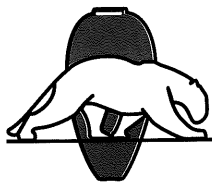


Pot & Puma

Vol. 7, No. 1-2 • Published for Members of the Frankoma Family Collectors Association
WINTER/SPRING 2001





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Frankoma Family Collectors Association is a national educational and social organization formed in 1994 by collectors of Frankoma Pottery, dedicated to the appreciation, preservation and promotion of Frankoma as a collectible. It was granted non-profit corporation status by the State of Oklahoma on January 31, 1995.

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Deborah Oller, President
PO Box 23233
Rochester, NY 14692-3233
585/647-9777
ffca4deb@aol.com

Jim Vance, Vice President
2201 Mississippi Ave.
Joplin, MO 64804-1257
417/781-4240
jashar@joplin.com

Donna Frank, Secretary
1300 Luker Lane
Sapulpa, OK 74066-6024
918/224-6610
ffca4donna@aol.com

Nancy L. Littrell, Treasurer
PO Box 32571
Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771
405/728-3332
ffca4nancy@aol.com

TRUSTEES

Dee Davis, Trustee, 3 Year Term
300 N Creek Street
Dewey, OK 74029-2640
918/534-1395
coolmomdbd@aol.com

Darrel Rogers, Trustee, 2 Year Term
1503 Blueberry Drive
Harrisonville, MO 64701-3417
816/380-1893
bbseren@kc.rr.com@aol.com

Jay Borchert, Trustee, 1 Year Term
RR 1 Box 132
Newfolden, MN 56738-9737
218/449-3841
revjay@wiktel.com

Raymond F. Stoll, Past President
4618 NW 34th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73122-1330
918/224-6610
ffca4ray@aol.com

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Joe Smith, Deputy Treasurer
4751 Addax Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34653-6551
727/375-1044
ffca4joe@aol.com

Steve Littrell, Business Manager
5632 NW 58th Terrace
Oklahoma City, OK 73122-7329
405/722-2941
selittrell@aol.com

WINTER/SPRING 2001 ISSUE. The *Pot & Puma* is published biannually: Winter/Spring and Summer/Fall by the Frankoma Family Collectors Association, 1300 Luker Lane, Sapulpa, OK 74066-6024. First Class postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FFCA, PO Box 32571, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771. Contents copyright 2001 by FFCA.

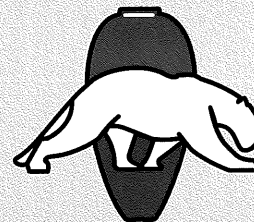
MEMBERSHIP: \$35 (family) per year. Membership includes subscriptions to the *Pot & Puma* and the *Prairie Green Sheet*. Back issues of the *Pot & Puma* are available, \$5 per issue. To order, write FFCA, PO Box 32571, Oklahoma City, OK 73123-0771.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE: *Pot & Puma*, 1300 Luker Lane, Sapulpa, OK 74066-6024.

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EDITORIAL STAFF

CO-EDITORS

Donna Frank
Nancy L. Littrell

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Justin Bell
Jeremy Salda
In-House Graphics

POT & PUMA WRITERS

Suzanne Chiles Buchan,
Donna Frank, Joniece Frank,
Gibb Green, Tammy & Don Hansen,
Henry Johns, Jack Leslie Kish,
Vickie McBain, Kandy Steeples,
Ray & Elaine Stoll

CROSSWORD & WORD SEARCH

Alan Stoltz & Cece Winchester-Stoltz

RESEARCH

Phyllis Bess, Susan N. Cox,
Donna Frank, Joniece Frank,
Gibb Green, Don & Tammy Hansen,
Jack Leslie Kish, Henry Johns,
Steve & Nancy Littrell,
Bob & Vickie McBain
Maxine A. Saddler, Gary Schaum,
Ray & Elaine Stoll, J. C. Taylor

PHOTOGRAPHY

Steve Littrell, OKC, OK

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Suzanne Chiles Buchan,
Donna Frank, Gibb Green,
Tammy & Don Hansen,
Henry Johns, Jack Leslie Kish,
Vickie McBain, Raymond F. Stoll

PHOTOGRAPHY DONORS

Donna & Joniece Frank
Tammy & Don Hansen

NORMA'S CAFÉ PHOTOGRAPHY

Donna Lea
Misty Owl Photography and Design
Riesel, TX

PRINTING

Cowan Printing
Bethany, OK

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"Lady Frankoma"

Her designs and her influence on
John Frank's designs.

A Special Thanks!

The Frankoma Pottery photographed in this issue of Pot & Puma was provided by numerous members of FFCA. These photos are not reproduced to scale; however, the actual size is given whenever possible. We wish to extend our gratitude and thanks to these members for helping us to enrich our issue with these photos.

ON THE COVER: Mr. Frank is seen here at the entrance to his and Grace Lee's home, circa 1971. At bottom left, you can see the fish pond beneath the tile bridge, one of three ponds he built and delighted in taking care of. Photograph from the Frank Family Collection, Sapulpa, OK.

From Your FFCA Board of Directors

DEB OLLER, PRESIDENT • DARREL ROGERS, VICE PRESIDENT • DONNA FRANK, SECRETARY • NANCY LITRELL, TREASURER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Deb Oller

Hello, Frankoma Cousins!

2002 and 2003 have been busy and bumpy years for the Frankoma Family! We lost our wonderful publisher to a national magazine (he was that good!), and the task of finding a new one was not easy. A replacement has finally been hired, and Nancy's job of working closely with him and educating him as to how our publications are laid out and put together is ongoing. And that, friends, is precisely what has crushed our fervent dreams of being caught up by now on our *Pot & Puma* issues! Whoever is writing our scenario clearly has no sense of fair play. We plod on!

It's also been a year of computer glitches. One crash for Donna, two for Nancy, one for Jack Kish. So much of our vast vital information is stored in Nancy's super system, and fortunately a lot of it was backed up—so it could have been a whole lot worse. *Way to go, Nancy!*

ELECTION 2002

This was election year. President Deb Oller, Secretary Donna Frank and Treasurer Nancy Littrell ran unopposed and remain in office. Soon after **Reunion 2002** plans were well in place, Vice President Jim Vance was forced to resign due to health reasons, and he is now undergoing a series of surgeries. (We're thinking of you every day, Jim!) The new Vice President Elect is Darrel Rogers. President Deb Oller appointed Ray Stoll to serve out Jim Vance's term, and ultimately elected a three-year Trustee. Trustee Randy McFarlin, former Head of Security and currently Chair of the **Show & Sell** event, has two more years to serve. Trustee Dee Davis has one

more year to serve. (Dee underwent cancer surgery in the spring—prognosis great!) The newly elected officers took office on January 1, 2003.



FROM THE SECRETARY

Donna Frank

In May, Deb Oller's husband Steve was transferred to Rochester, NY, and she's been flying back and forth, selling their house in Texas, and packing and moving. Yes, New York is a lot of miles away. But as long as there are telephones, computers and aircraft, Deb will be doing her job as FFCA President without missing a beat!

One of the first things the Ollers did in Rochester was visit an antique mall, and there they found lots of Frankoma! They drove over to Niagara, Ontario, and found more Frankoma! People think the best place to find Frankoma is in Oklahoma. Not necessarily true, as we're all learning. It has been said, "**John Frank made enough pottery for us all.**" That may be true, but these days, *isn't it all about who gets there first to claim it?*

REUNION 2003

Reunion 2003 dates are September 25, 26 and 27. Think of a seminar subject you'd like to attend and tell us about it pronto so we can begin planning! We're always looking for new ideas, and we'd like the subjects to come from *you*. After all, these are aimed at educating you collectors—so what would you like to add to your already-vast knowledge of Frankoma Pottery? What have we not covered that you'd like to learn about?

JOHN FRANK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Our dear cousins John and Barbara

Adair are also members of the Peach State Depression Glass Club of Atlanta, GA. Their organization has once again donated \$1500 for one whole scholarship to the *John Frank Memorial Scholarship Awards*. And once again, we applaud their generosity! A plaque of appreciation and gratitude was presented to the Adairs at **Reunion 2002**, which they gave to the club on their return. *Our cup runneth over!*

ARRIVAL OF OUR YOUNGEST MEMBER!

David Ethan Vaughn was born on November 19, 2002, to our good cousins Georgia and David (AR). He weighed in at 6 lbs, 8 oz., with blonde hair and blue eyes. His parents report that he's a sweet and good baby, beautiful and handsome. He'll answer to "**Ethan**," and they'll be proudly showing him off at Reunion 2003 in September. Your nametag will be waiting for you, little cousin Ethan!



FROM THE TREASURER

Nancy L. Littrell

THE IRS COMES CALLING

On August 16, 2002, Nancy received a letter advising that an agent from the IRS would appear, and would she please be ready for an audit of FFCA's books and records. **IRS AUDIT?!** Those very words can strike fear into any sane person—or any well-organized organization! The appointment was set shortly after Reunion 2002.

The agent arrived and asked to see the following: FFCA's governing instruments (Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, etc.); minutes of all Board meetings since the beginning of FFCA; all records of assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements; auditor's

reports; copies of prior and subsequent year returns; copies of any Federal tax returns filed; all pamphlets, brochures and other literature printed by FFCA; and complete correspondence files.

The purpose of the audit was to determine if everything was being done **"in the manner stated and for the purpose set forth in its application for recognition of exemption."** In other words, the audit would determine if the organization would continue to qualify as a 501(c)(7), exempt from Federal income tax.

Day after day the agent showed up and examined and re-examined the records that Nancy has faithfully kept in huge tomes on her office shelves. After many days, the agent left, saying that within six months we would receive a letter either confirming or denying FFCA's current status as a 501(c)(7) non-profit organization. Two and a half months later we had a letter advising that approval had been granted. No problem.

FFCA came out smelling like a summer rose! Thank you, Nancy, for all your diligent work in keeping the records in such perfect order as to move even an IRS agent to give compliments and pats on the back. That rose belongs to you, and no one else!



POT & PUMA JOURNAL

Donna Frank

"HOW COME?"

We hear your cries. **"How come we don't get a Pot & Puma more often?"** We appreciate your responses to the publication, and we're grateful for all the nice things you tell us. So let's try to answer that question with several answers.

Putting a publication together, especially of the quality we've always promised you—and of the quality you've become accustomed to—is not merely a matter of sitting down and writing it and delivering it to a printer. We could do a four-page "fold-over" maybe once a month, if

that's what you'd be happy with. But our hunch is that the cries would likely be louder if we did.

Each article has to be researched for accuracy. The right photos to accompany the articles have to be taken and edited. Even the collecting stories we get from you have to be edited and formatted. We're constantly searching for fresh new subjects to write about that would be of interest to you, the collector, without being redundant or boring. There are **50** pages to be filled!

Nancy and Donna both have full-time jobs keeping FFCA going and running like the business it is. Nancy spends untold hours keeping records, doing financial reports (assisted by Deputy Treasurer Joe Smith), paying bills—and preparing for each Reunion takes months of advance work! Donna does a lot of one-on-one with members (and many non-members from our web site!) every day, responding to a steady stream of letters, phone calls and e-mails with a myriad of questions, mysteries and identifications about Frankoma Pottery (thanks for all your help, Joniece!), sending out information packets, and PR work to bring in prospective members.

If you think FFCA is just about the *Pot & Puma*, think again. We've just barely outlined our jobs for you, but there are dozens of other things that have to be taken care of daily. When we get ready to create a publication for you, none of the above work stops. We have to merely **"fit it in,"** and once it's in the mail, it's a game of **"catch up"** on the things that have been put aside to do it. Our lives would be a whole lot simpler if all we had to do at FFCA was publish a magazine.

Oh yes, and lastly, here's one other huge reason. The price of publishing and mailing a *Pot & Puma* is right around \$7,000. We often have to wait for renewals to arrive and new members to join. Once we publish and mail, funds have to again accumulate for the next issue. We depend on your \$35 renewal once a year, you see, as that pays for getting it into your hands.

WANT TO HELP FFCA? HERE'S HOW!

Folks, nobody can possibly imagine the work that's required to put out one issue—except the people who do it. Want to help? Well, you can! ***You can help by sending us your collecting stories!*** Gosh darn, we do hate to beg. But we know there are lots of great stories out there just waiting to be told. As we've said to you many times before, don't fret that you're not a **"writer."** All you have to do is just write down your story in whatever form you can, and challenge Donna to take it and make a right good story out of it. You can phone it in to her (918-224-6610 any day after 2:00 p.m.), e-mail it, or send it via snail mail. It doesn't matter, as long as you tell us your story. And—you'll get your own byline! You'll be published! And don't forget, you'll even get paid for it. How much? The very same as we get paid—\$0 per story. ***How's that for incentive?!***

We're also looking for ideas for articles! What would you like for us to write about? Got any ideas about subjects you think your fellow collectors would like to read about? What are some of your questions or mysteries that we may be able to solve for you? Give us a subject, and let us run with it! It's ***your publication***, so get busy and lend us a hand. We're good, but with you we're ***better!***

Well—so here comes 2003! Let's all pray that the road that lies ahead of us will have a few less bumps and pot holes in it. But we really must pause and realize that FFCA is still a young pup and growing. And, thanks to all you wonderful collectors out there, ***we're still a family***, and we will not be torn asunder. We're up for any challenge the ***Forces That Be*** can throw at us. We've been tested by the fire, and we've come out of it a bunch of pretty good pots. We're not indestructible, but we're stronger than ever because of all that we've done and won.

So let's raise those glasses! Here's to the best New Year in our history!

Letters to the Editors

Dear Frankoma Family,

Thank you so much for honoring Al at your convention this year. This meant so much to my family and me for you to remember him and his contributions to the collectors of Frankoma. The plaque is beautiful, and we will always cherish it.

Al loved Frankoma and he loved the Frank family. He would have been so proud to be a part of this organization.

Thank you for making him an Honorary Member.
Nell (Mrs. Al) Malone — Oklahoma City, OK



We would like to thank you for the honor received at the awards dinner (2002). All the years I worked at Frankoma, everyone was just like family.

I appreciate all the things the Frank family has done for me over the years. Working at Frankoma made my life more enjoyable.

Thank you,
Opal Bilby — Kellyville, OK



Dear Donna and Joniece,

Thank you for all the hard work that you put into the Frankoma Family Reunion (2002). It was an unforgettable experience meeting you, and a thrill to see your house and the many pieces of pottery and other art that you and your parents made and collected over the years. It was worth the trip to Oklahoma just to visit the house, which is a work of art by itself.

Your generosity in opening your house freely to so many visitors made it possible for us to see many rare Frankoma pieces. In the fifteen years that we have been collecting Frankoma in Michigan, those rare pieces have just been pictures in books for us. Thanks to both of you, we were able to see special pieces like the Gannet, the Coati Mundi, and so many others.

We also enjoyed Joniece's talk on "What Makes a Second." One of the things that make Frankoma so satisfying to collect is that it was, and is, largely a handmade product, with lots of individual character and variations. It is good to be reminded that many of the "imperfections" that people either cherish or dislike are a natural result of the fact that real people were involved in every step of the process. To hold a piece of Frankoma is to come into contact with everyone who helped to make it.

As we continue to collect Frankoma, both old and new, we will always remember meeting you. The Wolf Family sculpture has a place of pride on our mantle and will remind us of you each day.

Thank you again for making the Reunion possible and for doing so much to make the weekend a richer experience.

God's richest blessings on your work,
Don and Joyce Drife — Troy, MI



Dear Frankoma Family,

Bev and I had a wonderful time in Sapulpa (at Reunion 2002). We deeply appreciate the hard work of Joniece and Donna in getting their home ready, and for making all the Commemoratives and Centerpieces.

Joniece's seminar was really great, full of inside manufacturing information that will keep my mind percolating for months. As always, we loved seeing all our Frankoma cousins.

Gibb and Beverly Green — Windsor, CO



BE A FRIEND INDEED!

In September (2002) I received this e-mail that I'd like to share with you and see if we can help this lovely lady living in Arkansas. She writes . . .

Dear Donna,

My name is Sherry Faulkner, and I'm the granddaughter of **Nick Douvas** whom you wrote about in your book, "*Clay in the Master's Hand*," which I so enjoyed reading! He was the owner and chef at the **Lorraine Hotel Coffee Shop**, and the first person your father met when he stopped in Sapulpa in 1938 with car trouble.

I am writing regarding what I believe is a very old Frankoma Juice Set that we have had in our family for many, many years. Unfortunately, there are only three cups, and there should be four. I'm sure it started out with four, and one must have been broken along the way.

Do you know if Frankoma possibly has a replacement cup to go with the set? And if not, is there anything you can tell me about this set, such as what is the pattern, color, age, etc., so that I can try to locate one? I'm attaching photos for you to see. The cups are stamped **FRANKOMA**, and the pitcher is stamped only with "93."

On a personal note, Pop (my grandfather) passed away in 1977, and my grandmother in 1996. They semi-retired to Vinita, OK where they operated a motel, until they sold it and "really" retired in the early 1970's. I still have Pop's Frankoma coffee mug he used every day of his adult life. It now has a crack in it, but it sits safely on a display shelf in my dining room. It is one of the cups from the Lorraine Hotel Coffee Shop in Sapulpa.

Thank you in advance for any help you may be able to provide.

We would love to hear from you! Please send us your letters and/or e-mail to the following:

Letters to the Editors
1300 Luker Lane
Sapulpa, OK 74066-6024
ffca4donna@aol.com



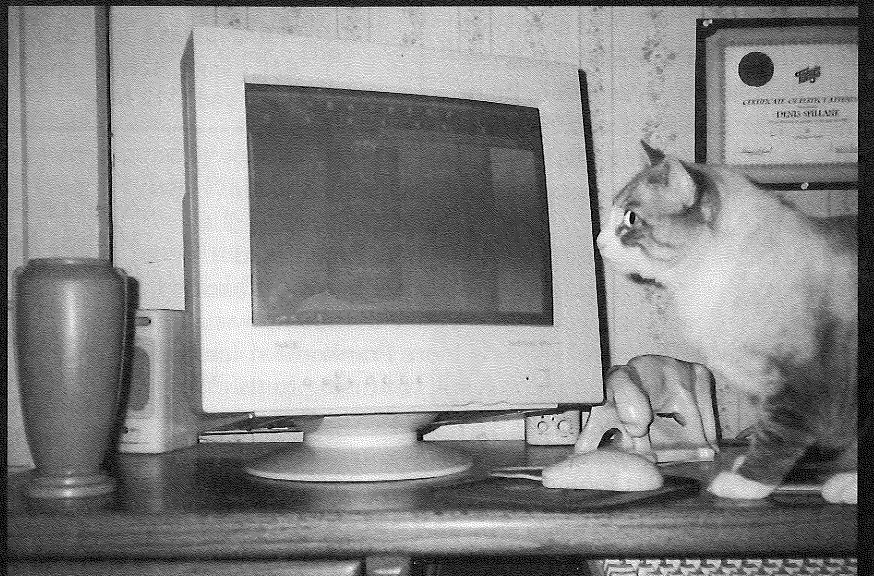
Every once in a while someone—or a relative of someone—who was significant in our history turns up and reconnects us with some of our fondest memories. And this is a wonderful example.

The photo Sherry sent was of the #93 Guernsey Pitcher with three #90C Juice Tumblers. The color is Silver Sage. The glaze is gorgeous, and after all these years, they're in pristine condition. No, she's not ready to part with them, and from our phone conversation, my hunch is she'll never be. She's only looking to complete her set.

Can't we help Sherry out here? Somewhere out there in Frankomaland there must be a collector who's as sentimental as Sherry, has a #90C in Silver Sage, and is willing to sell it to her. If you're that person, call or write or e-mail me right away, and I'll get you connected. This will make her so happy!

FRANKOMA FUNNIES

*I want that blue vase!
I really really want
that blue vase! RATS
— sniped again by
that crazy guy in
Houston!!!*



What Qualifies as a “Collection?”

Vickie McBain
LeGrand, IA

Last August, while my husband Bob and I were “tiquing” in Kansas City, I overheard a lady talking to a customer. She said something so profound—**“One piece is unique, two is a pair, but three or more is a collection.”** That started me thinking about how Mom, Bob, and I started collecting Frankoma. Boy, do we have a collection!

It all started when Mom received a coffee carafe with matching warmer from a friend as a thank-you gift. This clicked with Mom that she had seen Frankoma while growing up in Oklahoma. So in 1984 she started seeing pieces of Frankoma at auctions, and she would buy them. As a team, we also started hitting flea markets and found more pieces. I sniffed them out, while Mom forked over the money. We had no idea about prices or clay colors. If we liked it, it came home with us.

One day we stopped at a shop where we heard the usual, “Looking for anything in particular?” We said, “Yes, Frankoma.” The clerk said, “Have you seen the black pieces we have?” Both our chins hit the floor. BLACK?!? We had seen only the familiar Prairie Green. This really opened our eyes. Were there other colors besides green? We’d better start researching this!

I found *Schroeder’s Antique Guide*, which led us to Phyllis and Tom Bess’s book. Mom called and ordered it. I also heard about interlibrary loans where I requested Susan Cox’s book. I really hated to see her books go back after three weeks, but it helped us realize that there was a great big world out there with lots more Frankoma colors and items. But the clay color was still confusing to us. We now realized that we overpaid on a few pieces that were late Sapulpa pink clay, not Ada clay. However, these books helped us start looking for those familiar shapes and colors.

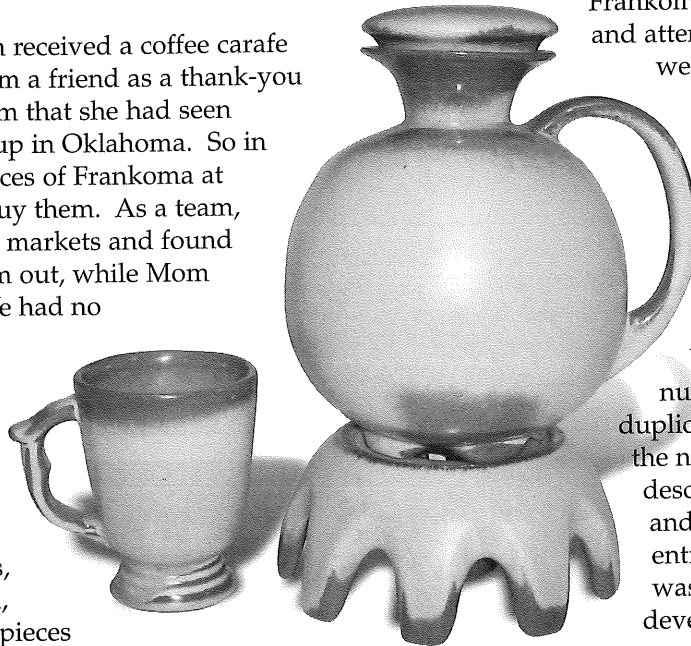
In the summer of 1994, we were on vacation in Texas and Oklahoma. Bob thought we should stop at the factory

in Sapulpa, since it was close to the Interstate. The factory was open, and we caught a tour. They suggested a shop downtown that also sold older Frankoma. This was the most advantageous meeting of our whole lives. We met Tom Grogg who was talking to Donna Frank about a little get-together of people who also collected

Frankoma. Mom and I were able to return and attend this auspicious meeting, where we witnessed and took part in the very beginnings of the Frankoma Family!

Meanwhile, back at the home front, I decided to start a listing of the Frankoma items we had begun collecting. And this is where Bob came to the rescue—he’s the computer whiz. Then we began noticing that there were numbers missing, and some duplicates. Needless to say, I wanted all the numbers listed, and their descriptions. I pored over every book, and Bob questioned some of my entries. (Bob won’t admit it, but this was where he became a fanatic!) We developed our own inventory, which

has since grown into what we publish today. (*A Reference Guide to Frankoma Pottery, A Reference Guide to Frankoma Pottery, Revised, and the latter on diskette in Microsoft Word 6.0 format.*)



FRANKOMA 82S SET

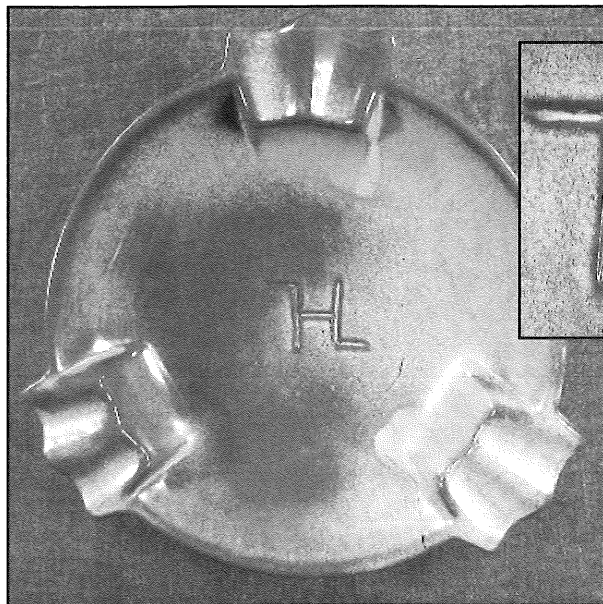
82C Carafe, 82W Warmer,
and C-12 Mug

A LOT OF THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE that fateful carafe of Mom’s. Between Mom, Bob, and me, we’ve attended all the Reunions but one. Mom has now retired, so Bob and I buy the Frankoma. We lost a dear friend with Tom’s passing. And I’m very pleased that Mom was able to meet Grace Lee before she passed away, another great loss.

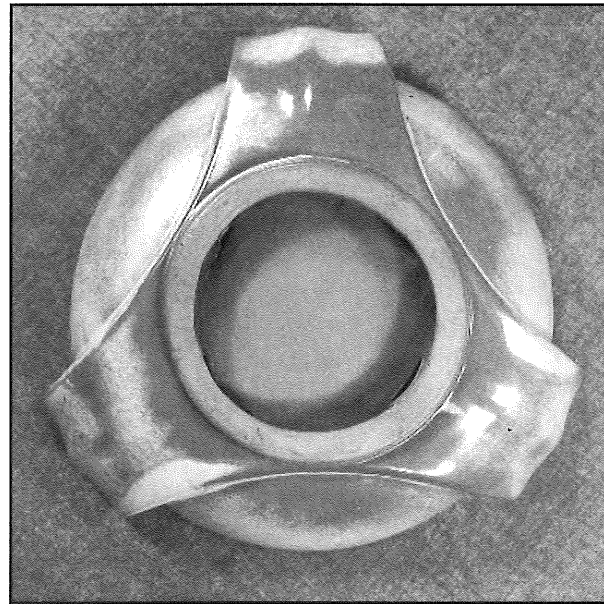
We’ve had our bargains, and we’ve also overpaid, but we figure they’ve all evened out in the long run. We now have close to 3,000 pieces of Frankoma Pottery, with so many memories attached. If **“three is a collection,”** I guess we can consider ours a **“collection plus a few zeros on the end.”**

Those Cattle Brands Are Genuine!

Suzanne Chiles Buchan
Idaho Falls, ID



7HL BRAND



FRANKOMA SPECIAL 7HL CATTLE BRAND ASHTRAY For T. Jack Foster Ranch in Coalgate, OK Circa 1936-1938

*Note: These could have been the very first #458's made. Being hollow means they were cast (decades before the existence of presses), and almost everything made at that time that had a hollow bottom, including the sculptures, were felted on bottom.

We joined the Frankoma Family in February of 2001, and I will be continuing our membership. Hopefully we won't always be the only members in Idaho. I know there are many Frankoma collectors here, as there are several who often out-bid me at our local auctions!

Our family has had Frankoma in our home for as long as I can remember. My most cherished pieces are some ashtrays that were custom made with the family cattle brand in the bottom—7HL. I believe that my great uncle T. Jack Foster ordered them from Mr. Frank when he was still living in Norman.

The design is like the #458 Ashtray, but they're hollow with felt bottoms.* I'm sure they were from the original

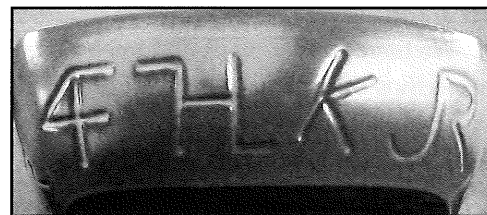
molds. My grandfather and father, Fred and Tom Chiles, had a cattle ranch near Coalgate, Oklahoma (east of Ada), and 7HL was the brand they used. The brand was hand incised in the bottom bowl of the ashtrays.

I discovered, quite by accident, that the #94P Wagon Wheel Platter also has the 7HL brand on the end! I have been able to pick up a few of these during the last year or so. I would have two more, but they don't ship well unless they're very well padded. Sadly, twice they have arrived in a multitude of pieces.

My brother who lives in Sacramento, California, is also a Frankoma collector. We had a great time at Christmas this year, as both of us had picked up special pieces to give to each other. I

even parted with one of my platters (since it was his grandfather too!)

I'm sure that all the cattle brands that Mr. Frank put on the Wagon Wheel Platters and Bakers were not just made up, but he did his homework and used genuine, registered brands!



94P Wagon Wheel Platter with 7HL Brand

Note: The one exception is the 4F beside the 7HL brand on the 94P. That was Mr. Frank's playful invention that represents **the 4 Franks.**

One More Snail Tale . . .

Henry Johns
Lawrence, KS



I have no idea why Karen and I started collecting #31 Snail Bud Vases. I seem to recall it came about after a conversation with several cousins at the reunion about two years ago.

Ray Stoll was there, as was Gibb Green, and it was pointed out that the #31 was introduced very early in the Frankoma line and did not leave until the early 1990's. With about 60 years of production, it could conceivably have been produced in every single Frankoma glaze! Karen liked the idea of having one in every color, so we were off and running.

We have hunted high and low. With a thermos of coffee and a flashlight, we have trudged through antique malls, junk shops, flea markets, web sites, and of course the *Prairie Green Sheet*.

As you all must know, sometimes the hunt can be as good as the find. At a small shop in Branson, MO, we found several minis and #31's in various colors. Then in the back corner of a small, dark, second-floor room, shining

like the Grail itself, was a #31 in Sunflower Yellow (my personal favorite glaze) on the very reddest of Sapulpa clays! Sunflower was only produced from 1958-1960, so to find anything in Sunflower is exciting for me.

Gary Schaum lists 57-58 different names for colors. We have 26 different colors of Snail Vases. That number would increase if we counted the different appearance of glazes on different clays. After all, Desert Gold, Prairie Green, and other rutile glazes look a lot different on Ada clay than on Sapulpa clay. Any way you slice it, we're halfway to having all the colors. It's a real challenge! I'm sure there are plenty of Snail Bud Vases out there for every cousin to do the same if they wanted to.

ONE OF THE NEATEST SNAILS we've run into was an after-market effort by a Maryland studio artist. It's an Onyx Black Snail on Sapulpa clay with beautiful dogwood flowers painted down one side. The lesson, boys and girls, is that there's no end to what was done with Frankoma Pottery!

Our current colors include Ivory, Dove Grey, Royal Blue, Blue Grey Jade, Fawn, Onyx Black, Matte Yellow, Indian Blue, Dusty Rose, Clay Blue, Sorghum, Prairie Green, Desert Gold, Red Bud, Turquoise, Terra Cotta Rose, Brown Satin, Woodland Moss, Sunflower, Peach Glow, White Sand, Flame, Coffee, Robin Egg Blue, Autumn Yellow and Peach. So if you'd like to add to our little group, please feel free.

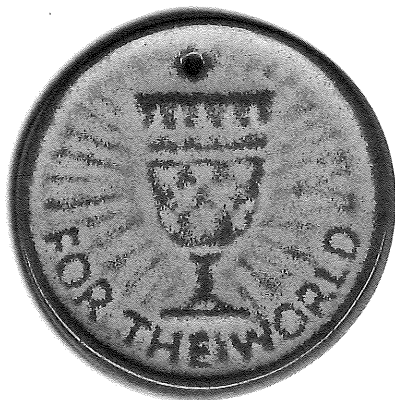


#31 SNAIL BUD VASE
Circa 1955-1970, 5-7/8" tall
Onyx Black, brick red clay
Values \$30 - \$35
Recent eBay Values
\$50 - \$65

More Frankoma Medallions

Gibb Green
Windsor, CO

No doubt about it. John and Grace Lee and Frankoma Pottery made some wonderful advertising products. Among the most interesting to me, as a minister of the Gospel, are the "Presbyterian" "For the World" Token and the "Christ Is the Answer" Medallion.



"PRESBYTERIAN" TOKEN

THE "PRESBYTERIAN" "FOR THE WORLD" Token is just under 2" in diameter, and the front is glazed in Prairie Green. It is in brick red clay, made in 1967 before the rutile change. It was designed by John Frank and made for the National Meeting of the Presbyterian Women's event held in Tulsa. Approximately 16,000 were made and distributed. On the obverse of the piece is the phrase "For The World" with the eucharistic cup, and on the reverse is the statement "Dare To Be No Longer Strangers" with a loaf of bread. The reverse is unglazed. It is drilled above the cup so it can be worn as a necklace piece. I display mine on a tiny easel. Obviously the purpose of the Medallion was to underscore the event's theme of worldwide sisterhood by communion in Christ.

"CHRIST IS THE ANSWER"

THE "CHRIST IS THE ANSWER" MEDALLION was intended to be placed on the front door of your house. It came with a backing of double-faced foam adhesive tape. Once again, I show mine on a small easel. It was made in the late 1960's and early 1970's for Larry Jones Ministries in Oklahoma City. When someone made a donation to the ministry, their free gift was this Medallion. It is glazed in Flame and is a beautiful piece. Besides the inscription, the front also bears the "Ichthus" or fish symbol of early Christendom, supposedly used as a secret code by Christians who gathered on the sly to avoid persecution in the catacombs beneath Rome. It is just under 3" in diameter and nearly 1/4" thick.

Both are hard to find, despite their fairly recent vintage. They are wonderful accent pieces in any Frankoma collection. I value each one in the \$30 - \$40 range.



"PRESBYTERIAN" TOKEN

1967

"For The World"

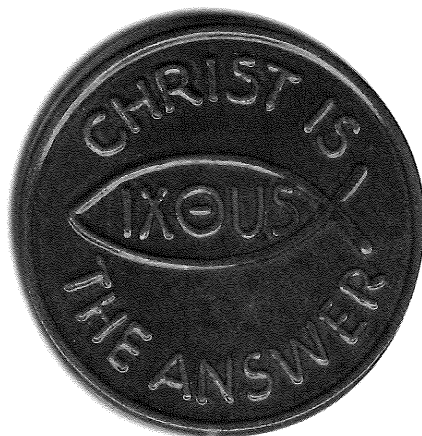
Prairie Green, 2" diameter

BACK READS

"Dare To Be No Longer Strangers"

Unglazed brick red clay

Value \$30 - \$40



"CHRIST IS THE ANSWER"

Circa late 1960's to early 1970's

Flame Glaze, brick red clay,

2-7/8" diameter

Value \$30 - \$40

ADVERTISING, SCHMADVERTISING!

We all love it and hate it at the same time. We watch the Super Bowl as much for the ads as we do for the football. Advertising is commercial free speech, and it is the revenue producer that sells products and pays for the news and entertainment in our media. It was, and still is, a key revenue producer for Frankoma Pottery. Their media is not television, or radio, or even newsprint, but rather clay. With clay, Frankoma has made everything from dog food spoons to trivets to coasters to coffee mugs to jewelry to medallions, all for ad purposes. The last one is where

we hang our hats for this issue of the *Pot & Puma*.

**“OKLAHOMA
SEMI-CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION”
MEDALLION**

THE LARGEST AND POSSIBLY THE MOST beautiful of the medallions was executed on brick red clay for the Oklahoma semi-centennial celebration in 1957. It is 4-1/8" in diameter and is 1/4" thick. I have seen it only in Prairie Green. It came with a metal bracket that encircled the piece for hanging on the wall. It portrays Native American symbols, the oil industry and Will Rogers, and his most famous quote on the front. On the unglazed back is "Oklahoma Home of the Red Man, 46th State, Oil Capital of the World", also listing the state bird, flower and tree. Its stock number was OK-2 with FRANKOMA below that. These are

quite hard to find and very well designed and are a charming wall piece. I place its value in the \$45 - \$50 range.

**“ELECT JOHN FRANK”
TOKEN**

IN 1962 JOHN FRANK RAN FOR THE STATE legislature in Oklahoma to represent the Sapulpa area. Typically, he was a bit early. He ran as a Republican. The GOP did not really get a foothold in Oklahoma until the 1980's. In recent years, the elephant crew has dominated statewide races, but not in the 1960's. He lost, but an unglazed medallion was given out as a campaign piece. It was brick red clay, 1-3/4" in diameter and 1/8" thick. The front has a right-face cameo of Mr. Frank with the adjectives "Honest, Fair, Capable." There was also the request to "Elect John Frank" with the word "Representative" and the date "1962." On the reverse are the statements "Oklahomans Deserve

Outstanding Leadership" and "For Statesmanship Vote Republican." There is also an outline of the state of Oklahoma with the word's "One Frank" inside its borders. Great piece, great novelty for the Frankoma and Frank collectors. They are not easy to find. I value them, quite frankly, in the \$25 - \$30 range.

**“GREATER SAPULPA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE” TOKEN**

A 2-1/4" DIAMETER MEDALLION OR TOKEN was struck in clay in 1981 for the 50th Anniversary of the Greater Sapulpa Area Chamber of Commerce. (With a name like that, I'm convinced that Jenks, Mounds and Tulsa are all suburbs of Sapulpa!) Unglazed, its clay is the pink version of the early 1980's. The concentric circle obverse has the chamber logo in the middle with the organization's name around the outside. On the back are two statements, "Fifty Years of Progress,

**FRANKOMA OK-2
“OKLAHOMA SEMI-CENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION”**

1957
Prairie Green, 4-1/8" diameter
BACK READS
"Home of Red Man"
"Oil Capital of the World"
Unglazed brick red clay
Value \$45 - \$50



“ELECT JOHN FRANK” TOKEN

1962
1-3/4" diameter
Unglazed brick red clay

BACK READS
"ONE FRANK"

"For Statesmanship Vote Republican"
"Oklahoma Deserves Outstanding Leadership"
Value \$25 - \$30



**"GREATER SAPULPA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE"**

1981

Unglazed Sapulpa pink clay
2-1/4" diameter

BACK READS

"Fifty Years Of Progress 1931-1981"

"We've Only Just Begun"

Value \$5 - \$7

BOTTOM PHOTO

The "N" is backwards in this example

Value \$10 - \$12



1931-1981" and "We've Only Just Begun." On a few, the "N" in "ONLY" is backwards, making it an error piece worth collecting. The token came in a plastic bag with a light green description tag. I feel the regular piece is worth \$5 to \$7, and the error piece should bring \$10-\$12.

"SMILEY" MEDALLION?

HERE'S AN ODDBALL PIECE MADE SOMETIME IN the mid 1960's. Is it a smiley face with triangular eyes? At first we thought it might be. Someone turned it a bit and said no, it's a gobbling Pac-Man. The medallion is 2-1/4" in diameter and about 3/8" thick. The reverse is blank and unglazed, but glazed on front, with no words on either side. It took Joniece to give us an educated guess. It was a company logo for (she believes) Southwest Packaging in Tulsa, the people who used to make Frankoma's shipping boxes (no longer in business). Give the piece another short turn, and it's an arrow pointing in the direction of "southwest" (about 7:30). Clever! On their signs and letterhead, only the background was printed, leaving an arrow that isn't really there. You can see here that the arrow has been lowered (carved out) so that the background remains raised. The two I've seen are in Woodland Moss and Peach Glow. So few of these were made that they're next to impossible to find. Chances are, if you did find one, a seller wouldn't know what he had either, so



"LOGO"



"PAC MAN"



"SMILEY FACE"

LOGO MEDALLION

Circa 1965-1970

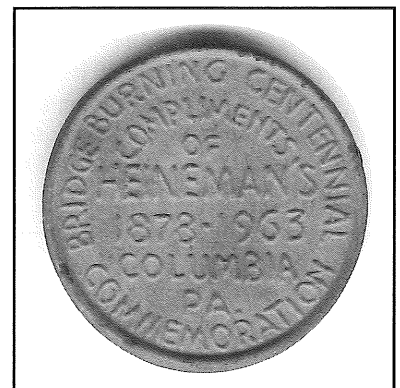
Woodland Moss, 2-1/4" diameter

Value \$15 - \$20

you might get it for a song. My estimated value would be around \$15-20.

**"BURNING BRIDGE"
MEDALLION**

A MUNICIPALITY IN PENNSYLVANIA HAD Frankoma make an unglazed medallion for its 1963 Civil War centennial. It is, of course, on brick red clay. The front shows a burning railroad bridge with the words "Columbia Civil War Centennial, 1863-1963." On the reverse are several phrases: "Bridge Burning Centennial Commemoration," "Compliments of Heineman's 1878-1963," and "Columbia PA." These are very rare, and ought to command a price of \$35-\$40.



**"COLUMBIA CIVIL WAR
CENTENNIAL
1863-1963"**

1963

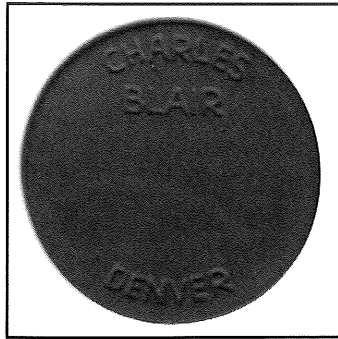
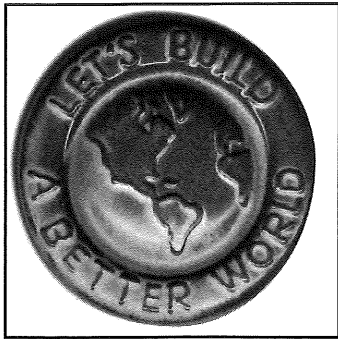
Unglazed brick red clay, 2" diameter

BACK READS

"Compliments of Heineman's
1878-1963 • Columbia, PA."

"Bridge Burning Centennial
Commemoration"

Value \$35 - \$40



"LET'S BUILD A BETTER WORLD"

June 1973
Prairie Green, 3" diameter

BACK READS

"Charles Blair, Denver"
Unglazed brick red clay
Value \$7 - \$10

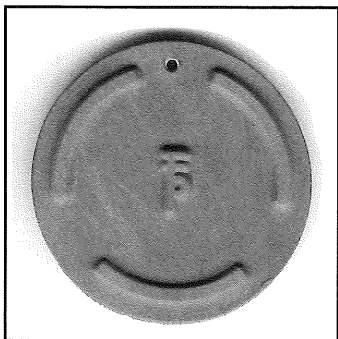


"SMILE - LOOK UP - TRUST"

July 1973
Prairie Green, 3" diameter

BACK READS

"Charles Blair, Denver"
Unglazed brick red clay
Value \$7 - \$10



"FEED THE CHILDREN"

1996
White Sand, 2-5/8" diameter

BACK READS

F over P mark, Unglazed
Value \$4 - \$5

**"LET'S BUILD A BETTER WORLD"
"SMILE - LOOK UP - TRUST"
MEDALLIONS**

LET'S GET RELIGIOUS. DENVER PASTOR Charles Blair of Calvary Temple, in the city's posh Cherry Creek neighborhood, had two medallions made to help promote his ministries in 1973. Both were 3" in diameter and on brick red clay. The first is 3/16" thick and has a globe on the front with the words "Let's Build a Better World." The reverse simply states "Charles Blair, Denver." The second one says "Smile - Look Up - Trust" on the front. The same message is on the back as on the first medallion. Pastor Blair has been accused of all kinds of financial chicanery. He has, in recent years, revived himself, paid off most of the old debts and is rebuilding his church. Of more interest to me, is that Blair spent his early school years near my hometown of Windsor, CO.

2,500 of the "Let's Build a Better World" were ordered in Prairie Green in June, 1973. A month later an order was placed for the same quantity of "Smile - Look Up -Trust," but only 2,269 were produced. Then in October of that year, an additional 2,707 of the "Smile" tokens were made.

The tokens are probably worth \$7-\$10 each, maybe less in Windsor and Denver.

"FEED THE CHILDREN" MEDALLION

LET'S MOVE TO OKLAHOMA CITY for a moment. A medallion was made for Larry Jones Ministries, with the phrase "Feed The Children" on the front with a modern art version of a child holding upward a presumably empty bowl. Done in HDI (High Density Imaging) and glazed in White Sand, it is 2-5/8" in diameter, 1/4" thick and has the F over P logo on the unglazed back. A hole was drilled so it could be worn as a heavy necklace, or hung on the wall. 10,000 were produced by Frankoma Industries in 1995. I put its value at \$4-\$5.

"1 FRANK" TOKEN

WE ARE NOW LEAVING THE CLAY WORLD to talk about some first cousin medallions struck in metal. The first was an aluminum token made for Frankoma as a giveaway in the late 1930's. It is a perfect 7/8" octagon, about 1/16" thick. On the front is a representation of the #135 Indian Mask, two ordinal "1's" on either side and the word "Frank." The back tells us that One Frank is "Redeemable in Frankoma Premium Pottery." Yup, a genuine trade token. When a pottery purchase was made, the buyer received one or more tokens to promote future business for Frankoma from that person. These are hard to find and very collectible. I put their value in the \$25-\$30 range.

"HENRY BELLMON" MEDAL

BACK TO POLITICS. ON JANUARY 14, 1963, Henry Bellmon was sworn in as the first ever Republican governor of the

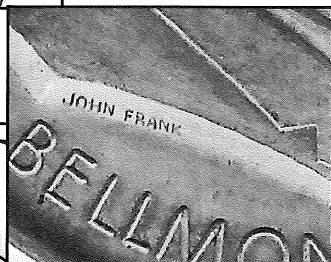


"1 FRANK" TOKEN

Circa late 1930's
Aluminum Token,
7/8" Octagon

BACK READS

"Redeemable in Frankoma
Premium Pottery"
Value \$25 - \$30



"HENRY BELLMON" MEDAL

January 14, 1963
"Oklahoma's First Republican Governor"
Bronze, 2-1/2" diameter

BACK READS

"Agriculture • Fuel • Water • Power • Labor • Industry 1907-1963"
Value \$100 - \$125

great state of Oklahoma. Even though John Frank lost his own race the same year, he had to be in a celebratory mood to have a GOP gov. Struck in bronze, 2-1/2" in diameter and 1/4" thick, the medallion features a right-face profile of Bellmon. On the reverse is a six-faceted design of the lifeblood of Oklahoma, with words and art of agriculture, fuel, water, power, industry and labor. The



MEDALLION FRONT

KEY CHAIN BACK



"NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR" MEDALLION

1964-1965

"Man's Achievements in an Expanding Universe"

Bronze, 2-5/8" diameter

MEDALLION BACK READS

"Oklahoma At the World's Fair
1964-1965"

Value \$30 - \$35

KEYCHAIN BACK READS

"Oklahoma At the World's Fair
1964-1965"

Value \$20 - \$25

reverse design by Mr. Frank is an extraordinary work of art. One was struck in sterling silver for Mr. Bellmon and 500 were made for collectors in bronze by the Medallic Art Company of New York. The Bellmon medal is scarce. I believe its value to be \$100-\$125.

(P.S. Can you find John Frank's signature on the Bellmon Medal?)

KEY CHAIN AND MEDALLION

A KEY CHAIN MEDALLION WAS STRUCK FOR the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. On the front is a world globe with the wording "Man's Achievements in an Expanding Universe" and "New York World's Fair 1964-1965." The reverse is Mr. Frank's glorious design on the back of the Bellmon medallion with the phrase "Oklahoma at the World's Fair, 1964-1965." While not made by or for Frankoma, Mr. Frank did give the fair permission to use his design for Oklahoma's commemoration. Its value is about \$20-\$25.

FELLOW FRANKOMANIACS, AS YOU STROLL through those antique malls and shows, the flea markets and such ilk, don't miss those flat, tabletop cases. *The medallions and tokens of the Frankoma world await!*

What in the World Is It?

by
Joniece Frank
Sapulpa, OK

Another Variation of the Serva-Tray?

*DON & TAMMY OF WICHITA, KS
WRITE...*

Here is an interesting item Tammy and I found at an antique mall near Sapulpa, OK. It is a very large bowl, measuring 12-1/2" in diameter and 4-1/2" deep. Unlike a conventional bowl, it is completely rounded on the bottom and cannot stand on its own, so it would have to sit on a stand. The stand shown here was not with it when we bought it, but we found this beautiful wrought iron stand with a round opening that fits it nicely. It is glazed on both top and bottom. There are three small "dimples" on the bottom where, we're guessing, it sat on some type of fixture while it was being fired, and possibly where it may have sat on its original stand. It is Desert Gold on the deep red clay. If it were not for the three indentions around the edge with lines running toward the center, it could almost be a 5FC Plainsman Chop Plate that was made into a bowl shape. But of course the Plainsman has four indentations.



Joniece: I agree with you—this is a puzzlement. I vaguely remember carving the indentations on the sides of a piece similar to this one. I also faintly remember a discussion on how a piece like this would have to be produced. It would have to be pressed, and it would have to sit on feet that would then be ground off after firing (those three spots were not made by a tripod). However, after studying the photos, I'm quite sure that the



BOWL
12-1/2" diameter X 4-1/2" deep
Desert Gold, brick red clay
No mark

piece I worked on was a Gracetone item, something like the smaller #102.

I've pretty much eliminated the idea that it was ever produced by Frankoma Pottery during my tenure there (or Dad's). The entire concept would not have been anything that my staff and I would have considered producing. The reasons that we would not have accepted such a design—aside from a myriad of production hazards—are too numerous to go into at this time.

Charles Taylor, once plant manager (post-1991), had a little studio at his home, and I know he used clay from Frankoma Industries. But it may have been one of his experiments at the plant, because this piece would have to be made on one of the big hydraulic presses. And of course he had access to the glazes.

I vividly recall the nightmares we had getting the 5N's (all the sizes!) to come out well enough to sell as firsts. There were always stacks and stacks of warped ones on the seconds shelves! That's why they had to be discontinued. After our experiences with the larger bowls, we would never

have attempted to produce something like this. Also, our clay would never have stood up to that thick a bottom. At the very least—the results would have been very serious cases of "black coring."

Having said all that, I'm also sure that Mother would never have asked Dad to design and produce something like this that was so inconsistent with all our design theories and production principles.

As to where this originated, your guess is every bit as good as mine.

Frankoma “Canned Ham”?!?

GAIL OF MISSION, KS WRITES...

Late last year I purchased a very unusual piece on eBay and have not seen or read anything about it.

Perhaps you are familiar with the old “canned hams” and the ham-shaped tin can they came in. It had a wind-off stripe activated by a “key” attached to the can for opening. This piece is the exact shape and depth of that old tin ham can. The clay is a beautiful rose color, not Ada, and not nearly the red that came later than the 1950’s.

The most curious thing about this piece is the Frankoma mark on the bottom. It is written right to left, all letters backwards as in a mirror image, and it most certainly has been incised by hand very gracefully and distinctly. Even though I have been very careful with it, the piece has sustained a small 1/4” oval chip at the very apex of the narrow end of the “ham” shape.

I paid \$10 for it and would like to find out what kind of piece this really is. Perhaps it was something that was never marketed. It has no number on the bottom.

❖ ❖ ❖

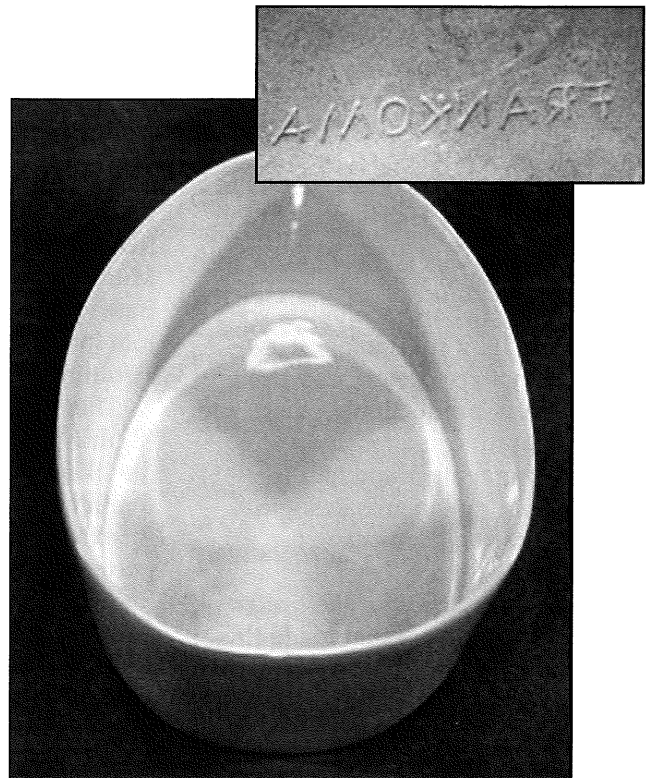
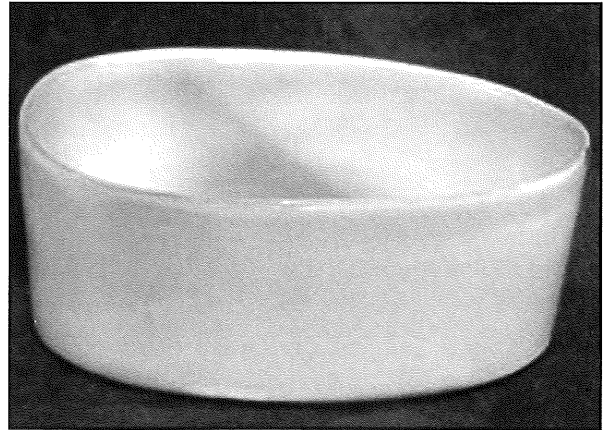
Good guess, Gail! It was a special for Petty’s Fine Foods in Tulsa, located in Utica Square, to hold hams for gift baskets. Petty’s Fine Foods is sort of the “Neiman-Marcus” of food markets in the Tulsa area. This piece was produced for them about 1988 or 1989.

Those that turned out perfect (“firsts”) were delivered to Petty’s carrying a green decal on the front of the small end of the bowl with Petty’s special “P” logo. It was always (pre-1991) Frankoma’s strict policy never to sell seconds of a piece that had been made as a special for a company. However, there was no infringement here, as it was only Petty’s if it had their special logo decal—it was not incised into the clay. None of the seconds had the “P” decals on them, and it was quite within Frankoma’s rights to sell the seconds. Only the firsts carried the “P” decal, and without the “P” it didn’t matter.

When a master mold is made, the lettering is put in forward—so that the production molds made from that master are in reverse—so that the pieces made from that production mold will have the name correctly frontward. When a moldmaker absent-mindedly reverses it in the master, all the finished pieces will also have it backward. Often no one notices it until it’s in production, and by that time, hundreds may have been made.

In the late 1980’s, Frankoma was struggling to recover from the fire, and funds were awfully thin. Rather than destroy all that had been made, the decision was made to let it go that way, and no one complained.

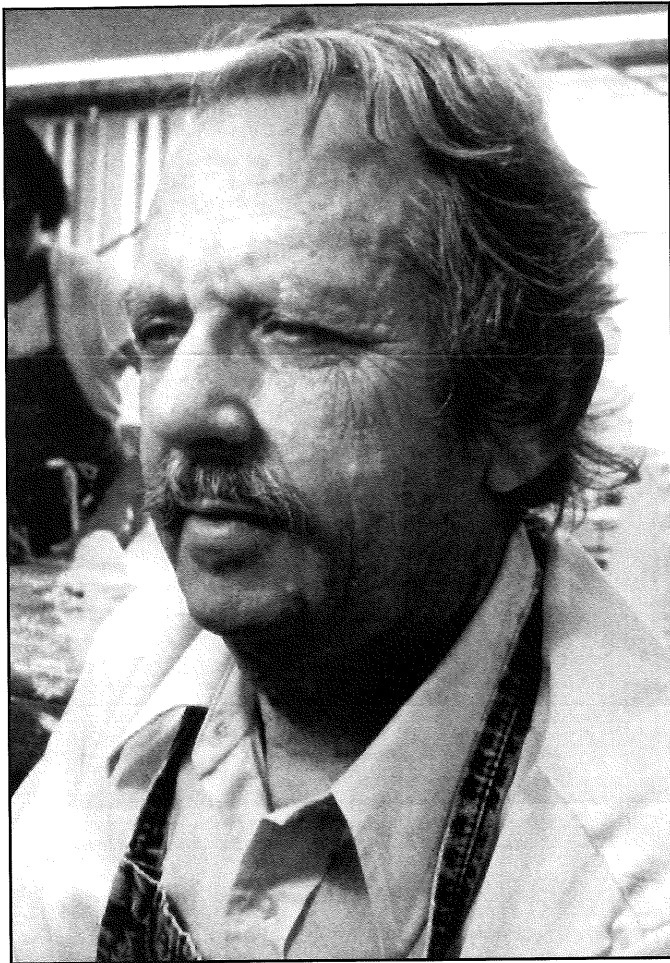
Thanks for sharing with all your Frankoma cousins this unusual item!



PETTY’S FINE FOODS SPECIAL

Circa 1988-1989, Sapulpa clay, White Sand
Value \$25 - \$30

This example does not bear the special Petty’s green “P” decal. After the order was filled, the very few leftovers were glazed in other colors and sold in the Frankoma showroom.



Raymond Lutz Murray

PART III

Jack Leslie Kish
Sherman Oaks, CA

RAYMOND LUTZ MURRAY

1912-1997

Ceramic Designer, Master Mold Maker, Jobber and Craftsman

EARLY IN MY EDUCATION in the field of Archaeology at the University of Texas at Austin, I became intrigued with the conclusions that archaeologists were able to reach by studying pottery. Based on pottery design, clay content, composition, production method, and the comparative juxtaposition of pottery fragments found on the "living" floor of an archaeological site, experts could postulate the following:

- The date range for the pottery and the culture that made the item;
- the origin of the clay shows trade both near and far;
- the main sources of food of the maker;
- the level of education, type of religion, and government of the maker's society/group/culture;
- and even whether the maker was left or right handed.

The list of viable conclusions that pottery evidence provides can be amazing, exciting and endless!

Given my continued interest in pottery, I thought it would be worth looking at Frankoma Pottery and Ray Murray's contributions in the field of pottery from a related perspective. Join me, and we'll indulge in a bit of sleuthing.

There are numerous pottery items (figurines, vases, utilitarian items and the like) in the Frankoma collection that have yet to be identified by artist. By examining and comparing various pottery items that Ray Murray was known to have designed, to Frankoma Pottery items where the artist is not known, perhaps en route we can shed some new light on identifying the artist—or at the very least encourage collectors to consider the possibilities.

Given the loss of historical files in the plant fire on November 10, 1938, we may never know the artist of those items. But—the loss of those files should not keep us from looking for answers.

It is important for the reader to note that I have based my discussion

here on the evidence and information from references, interviews, articles, books and first-hand information that are available, and to which I have access. Should evidence come to light that was not previously known to me, and that evidence helps to identify, or dispute, the claim that Ray Murray was the designer of a particular pottery item, I would enthusiastically welcome the information! After all, the whole purpose of this discussion is to bring current and accurate information to you, the collector/reader.

RULES OF THE GAME

MY OBJECTIVE IN THIS LAST INSTALLMENT is to try to determine if any conclusions can be made from comparing works attributed to Ray Murray. But before we begin to do a comparison, we must first determine what criteria to use. This list of criteria will help focus the search for fact-based identifiable design, historical, or manufacture

characteristics that may determine the designer.

After spending some time looking at the information on Ray Murray, Frankoma Pottery and other pottery companies (Bauer Pottery, specifically) for whom Ray worked, I have determined that I will look at the following criteria to make comparisons. Some of the criteria used will be obvious, others less so. They include:

1. **Establishing a date range.** When was Ray Murray available and associated with Frankoma Potteries?
2. **Determining the material** (clay type, glazes, etc.) available during the established date range;
3. **Establishing the marks and method of manufacture** (wheel, molded, slip cast, etc.) **the artist used;**
4. **Identifying the Frankoma items that are confirmed as being made by Ray Murray;**
5. **Identifying Frankoma items that fall within the established date range and have no artist assigned;**
6. **Determining subject matter typical of the artist,** and whether they can be used to identify his work:
 - a. **Art sculpture** (figurines and the like).
 - b. **Utilitarian** (service items, dinnerware, vases, jars, etc.).
7. **Comparing style;** consider:
 - a. **Design elements and repeated detail.** Are those elements:
 - 1) **Organic:** possessing aesthetic characteristics like those of a naturally occurring organism or phenomenon;
 - 2) **Geometric:** possess aesthetic characteristics apparently due to human intervention.
 - a. **Related technique**
 - b. **Copying**
 - 1) **Own work** (identical to original or modified from original);
 - 2) **Work of other artists** (identical to original or modified from original).
8. **Collecting evidence that identifies the artist:**

- a. **Production records** (if available);
 - 1) **Files**
 - 2) **Catalogues**
- b. **Statements made by other artists,**
- c. **References/statements by collectors/authors,**
- d. **Statements made by the artist himself.**

NOW THAT WE HAVE LISTED THE CRITERIA, let's take a closer look. We'll begin by outlining the first five criteria. This will help to establish a point of reference and build a base for this discussion. Most readers will consider these criteria the most obvious.

We know that Ray first met John Frank as a student at the University of Oklahoma in late 1933 or in early 1934, and we also know that Ray left Frankoma Potteries in 1937. We can extend the date range to 1938, because we have verifiable evidence that at least one item Ray designed for Frankoma, namely the 142 Indian Chief, referenced in the first installment, was first issued in 1938 after Ray had left Frankoma. **So, any pottery item we wish to attribute to Ray must fall within the four-year period from 1934 (to be safe) to 1938.**

AVAILABLE GLAZES, NORMAN

IT IS A GIVEN THAT ALL POTTERY originally designed while associated with Frankoma and attributed to Ray Murray, for this date range, would have been made from Ada clay, since John Frank did not begin to use Sapulpa (brick red) clay until 1954. **In addition, the following were the only glazes available during this same period:**

Maple Brown	1933-35
Verde Green	1933-36
Pompeian Bronze	1933-38
Desert Gold (early)	1933-38
Eggshell	1933-38
Royal Blue	1933-42
Silver Sage	1933-42
Blue Grey Jade	1933-42
Osage Brown	1933-42
Onyx Black	1933-SA

Patina/Verde Bronze/ Prairie Green	1933-2000
Mocha Brown	1934-35
Dove Grey	1934-38
Gunmetal	1934-38
Cherokee Red	1934-42
Ivory	1934-42
Fawn	1934-42
Old Gold	1934-42
Jade Green	1934-38

This is not to say that we don't find Ray Murray designs in later glazes or clays, as some of Ray's designs continued to remain in production long after Ray moved on. Again, we can refer to the 142 Indian Chief as the best example of this. Since the Indian Chief was produced from 1938-SA, it can be found in most every glaze and clay type available throughout its production period.

The use of glazes with select pottery items can help to support attributing those items to a specific artist. If, for instance, a pottery item was issued only in a particular glaze or can be found only in particular glazes, we can use that association to lend support to determining the designer. The date range of the glaze, the period of production of the item and the availability of the artist, as facts used together, can determine whether the artist could have made the object in question. Manufacture marks can also be used in a similar way to add evidence connecting an artist to a pottery item.

During Ray's tenure with Frankoma Potteries the following marks were used to identify the manufacture:

Frank Potteries (black ink)	1933-34
Frankoma (w/round "O"), black ink or incised	1934-35
Pot & Puma Mark (incised)	1936-38

As far as the method of manufacture, we can assume that Ray learned how to use a potter's wheel and "throw" a pot from John Frank when Ray was a student. I have made this assumption based on the fact that learning how to use a potter's wheel is generally a standard part of an art college's curriculum for an art student. However, that said, Ray's

production method of choice was either molding, or slip casting his designs (I have not seen any mention of any thrown pots in the Frankoma Pottery line that are attributed to Ray Murray.)

WHAT WE DO KNOW

AFTER REVIEWING NUMEROUS BOOKS AND references on Frankoma, I have identified the following Frankoma items as attributed to Ray based on the opinions of experts in the field.

118	Gannet	1935-38
119	Buffalo	1934-35
133	Oriental Woman	1936-38
134	Oriental Man	1936-38
140*	Hippo	circa 1935
142	Indian Chief	1938-SA
145*	Hound Dog**	1934-35

* Number given by Gary Schaum as reference

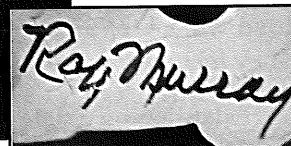
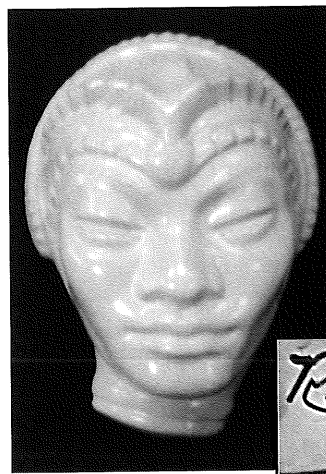
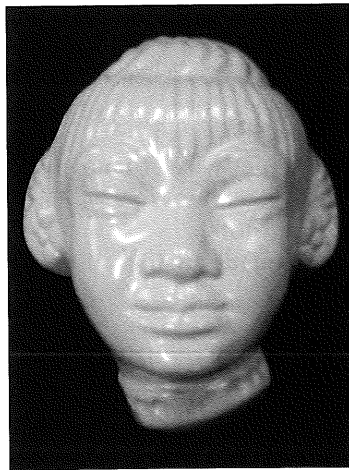
** This piece was reissued by Gracetone 1959-1967.

Of this short list, only the 133/134 Oriental Woman and Man, the 140 Hippo, the 142 Indian Chief and the 145 Hound Dog can be confirmed with any degree of certainty as having been made by Ray Murray.

Every reference that refers to the 142 Indian Chief attributes its design to Ray Murray. In interviews conducted by Bauer Pottery expert Jack Chipman, Ray himself confirms he designed the 142 Indian Chief. Likewise, he also takes credit for designing the 133/134 Oriental Woman and Man.

In a letter dated July 1, 1996 and addressed to FFCA, Ray Murray mentions his interest in trading a number of Frankoma items for Bauer Pottery items. In a later correspondence to FFCA (Donna Frank, specifically), he thanks them for their help in locating someone interested in trading. In that letter, Ray reveals, "The Oriental Masks in question were ones that I (Ray) did as the first test of a new mold."

Jack Chipman was lucky enough to trade a Bauer Aladdin Teapot (Gloss Pastel Kitchenware) that Ray designed for the pair of 133/134 Oriental Masks that were referred to

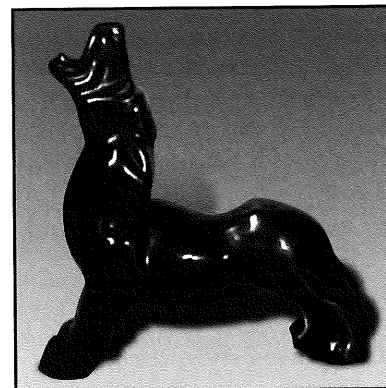


FRANKOMA "FIRST CASTS"
#133 5" ORIENTAL WOMAN
#134 5-5/8" ORIENTAL MAN
 Circa 1936-1938, Ada clay, Ivory
 Designed by Ray Murray
ORIENTAL WOMAN (BACK)
 Ray Murray Signature

Note: The sizes of the above "First Casts" Oriental Woman and Man are slightly larger than later ones. Also, sometime later, curved necks became straight.



PHOTO BY PHYLLIS BESS



FRANKOMA
#145* HOUND DOG
 Circa 1934-1935, Ada clay
 5-1/2" Tall
 Designed by Ray Murray
 * Number given by Gary Schaum as reference

FRANKOMA
#142 INDIAN CHIEF
 Circa 1938-SA, 8" Tall
 Designed by Ray Murray

in the letter just mentioned above, which were apparently "firsts casts."

Both the Frankoma Hippo and the Hound Dog (re-issued by Gracetone 1959-67) have only recently appeared in print as being attributed to Ray Murray (Gary Schaum; "Collector's Guide to Frankoma Pottery," 1997). I've no doubt that the evidence is clear, as Gary is very conscientious about his research and his facts and has confirmed that all Frankoma items that appear in his book that are attributed to Ray Murray are accurate as far as he can establish. I will come back shortly to the Hippo to add to the evidence for this claim.

THE # 118 GANNET

FOR THE MOMENT, I WOULD LIKE TO TURN to two Frankoma figurines of note. Both share a measure of confusion or doubt as to their designer. The first is the 118 Gannet. In an article published in the *American Clay Exchange*, Vol. 1 No. 4, May 1981, Susan N. Cox speaks of two Frankoma Pottery pieces that were to be put in the Ross C. Purdy Museum/The American Ceramic Society for viewing. The two items were the 426 Seahorse Bookend and the 118 Gannet, which she incorrectly identified as a "pelican." In the article she also claimed that John Frank designed both pieces. In her book, "Frankoma Pottery, Value Guide & More, 1933 to Present," 1993, Susan correctly identifies the piece as a Gannet, and no longer attributes the piece to John Frank, but she does not list the designer. The Gannet is referenced in an earlier publication

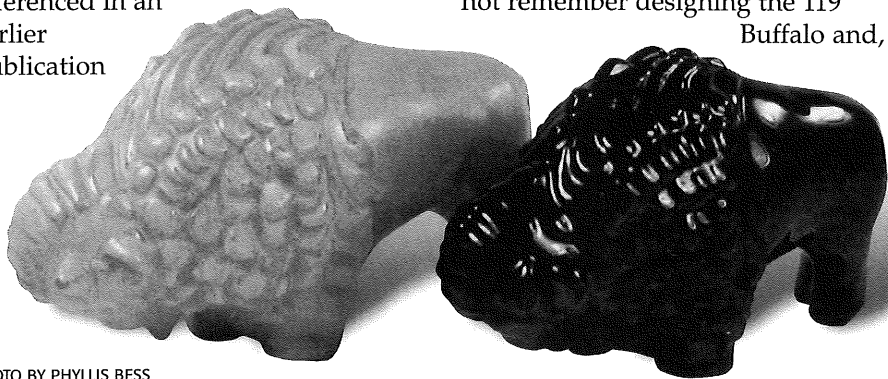


PHOTO BY PHYLLIS BESS

FRANKOMA #119 BUFFALO (LARGE & SMALL VERSIONS)
 Circa 1934-1935, 4" Tall Circa 1934-1938, 3-1/2"
 Attributed to Ray Murray

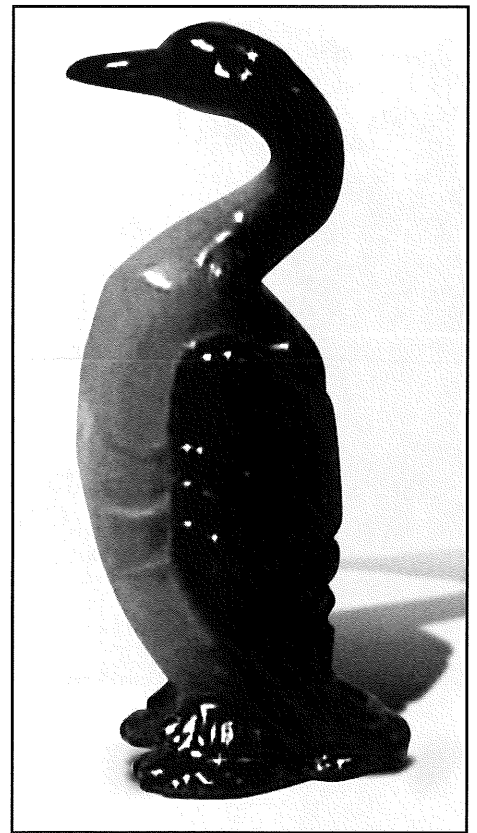
by Tom and Phyllis Bess, "Frankoma Treasures" (1983) and in a later reference guide by Gary Schaum, "Collector's Guide to Frankoma Pottery 1933 through 1990." Both references indicate that Ray Murray was the designer of the Gannet.

The 118 Gannet was offered in only two glazes—Dove Grey and a combination of Dove Grey and Onyx Black. Both glazes were available during Ray's tenure with Frankoma. Susan N. Cox's article, it seems, is the only instance that the 118 Gannet is attributed to John Frank. Therefore, I believe, as would most experts, that Ray Murray was the designer. In the case of the 118 Gannet, I feel Susan N. Cox simply made an error when she first wrote about this exceptional item.

THE # 119 BUFFALO

NOW LET'S MOVE ON TO ANOTHER NOTED Frankoma figurine. Most collectors would say that the 119 Buffalo is one of Frankoma's signature pieces. In every reference guide on Frankoma the 119 Buffalo has always been attributed to Ray Murray. For some time now there has been an undercurrent of conversation between Frankoma experts acknowledging the possibility that Ray Murray may not be the designer of the 119 Buffalo.

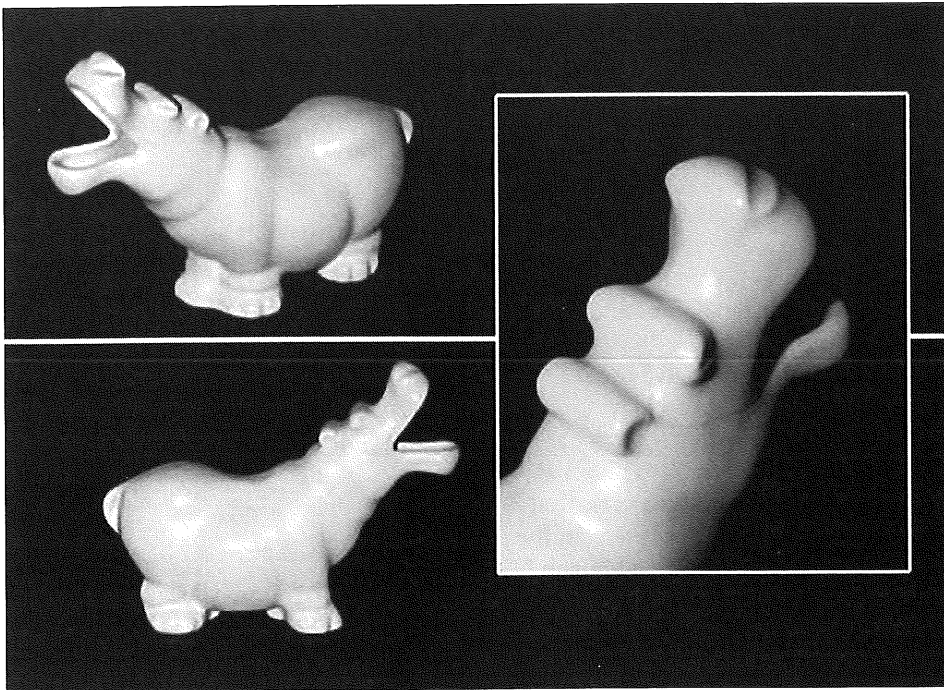
The main reason for this suggestion comes from Ray Murray himself. Just a year or two before Ray's passing, a few collectors had conversations with Ray. It was during those conversations that Ray can be quoted as saying that he did not remember designing the 119 Buffalo and,



FRANKOMA #118 GANNET
 Circa 1935-1938, Ada clay, 9" Tall
 Dove Grey and Onyx Black
 Reported to be designed
 by Ray Murray

when pressed emphatically, he denied being the artist. During similar conversations, Jack Chipman (Bauer expert), the last person to interview Ray before he passed away in 1997, openly asked Ray about several items he was reported to have designed (mostly Bauer, Chipman's interest). Ray again denied designing the 119 Buffalo. However, Chipman was persistent with his inquiry, whereupon Ray finally admitted that he might have just forgotten he designed the 119 Buffalo: "... after all, that was nearly sixty years ago ... I've forgotten that I've designed many pottery items ... I never really considered my work that memorable."

So what do we, the Frankoma enthusiasts, do with this information? In my opinion, we leave things as they stand. There is no evidence to suggest that another Frankoma artist (John Frank or Joseph Taylor in particular) claimed the 119 Buffalo as their creation. We simply take Ray's



BAUER HIPPO
 From Cal-art Production Line
 Circa 1937-1941?
 3-1/4" Tall, 4" Long
 Designed by Ray Murray

admission of denial/doubt at face value, and continue to attribute the 119 Buffalo to him—until additional evidence to the contrary comes to light.

However, there are other ways to shore up claims about a designer and his designs. For instance, it is common knowledge that Ray was connected to, and possibly the designer of, a number of Bauer miniature animals.

I was even lucky enough to add to the evidence, after having discovered two more Bauer animals that were present in Ray Murray's Grandson's collection of items, previously owned and created by Ray Murray, the Alligator and the Ibex (see last issue of the *Pot & Puma*, Vol. 6, No. 3-4). Interestingly enough, Ray also designed a miniature Hippo for Bauer, although an article by Jack Chipman (*Bauer Quarterly*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, Spring 1997) states that Ray was uncertain as to whether or not he made the 140 Hippo. But if you compare the Bauer Hippo to the Frankoma 140 Hippo attributed to Ray; you can see an unmistakable similarity.

This cross comparison does two things. First, it associates two pottery items purported to be designed by Ray Murray; and secondly, it establishes good evidence to support that Ray was the designer of both. Both items were made during the time Ray Murray worked for both pottery companies, respectively, and Ray was the only artist associated with both pottery companies, and with both Hippos. Evidence not 100% definitive—but it certainly lends support to the claim.

MORE POSSIBILITIES?

HAVING LOOKED AT POTTERY PIECES THAT Ray has been directly associated with as the designer, I now would like to turn to pottery pieces in the Frankoma line that have not been identified by artist, as far as I have been able to determine.

The following is a compiled list of Frankoma Pottery pieces that fit the general identification criteria listed above:



FRANKOMA #140* HIPPO
 Circa 1935
 Ada clay, Ivory
 4-7/8" Tall, 6" Long
 Attributed to Ray Murray
 * Number given by Gary Schaum as reference

18A/B Creamer & Sugar	1934-42
30 Bowl, Square	1934-42
31 Snail Bud Vase	1934-92
33/33A Creamer & Sugar	1936-38
36 Spire Vase	1936-42
37 Round Vase w/hdls.	1936
39 4"/40 7" Flat Vases	1936-38
41 Stepped hdls. Vase	1936-38
42/42A Creamer & Sugar	1936-42
43 Crocus Vase	1934-82
44 Salt & Pepper	1936-38
45 Modern Salt & Pepper	1936-38
45H Modern Salt & Pepper	1936-42
46 Sugar/Grease w/lid	1938
74 Ram's Head Vase	1934-38
76 12" Spire, Mantle Vase	1936-49
86 Rfg. w/stopper Jug	1936-60
87 Iced Tea Pitcher	1936-38
139 Camel	circa 1935
200 11" Tab Hdls. Flower Bowl	1936-42
201 9" Tab Hdls. Flower Bowl	1936-42
202 11" Carved Flower Bowl	1936-66
303 Single Candleholder	1936-38
304 Double Candleholder	1936-76
305 Spiral Candleholder	circa 1936
306 Candelabrum	1934-42
307 Candleholder	1934-35
308 Monk Candleholder	1934-36
400 Flower Frog	1936-38
404 Fish Frog	1935-38

Of these 31 pieces (Creamer/Sugar and Salt /Pepper sets count as one item), I would like to concentrate on ten of the pieces (those marked in **bold** above) that (1) meet the criteria we have set forth, and (2) have direct and available cross-reference examples for comparison. I will discuss each in numerical order. The list includes Frankoma items: 31, 36, 39, 40, 42/42A, 43, 200, 201, 202 and 404.

SNAIL VS. KNOT

THE FIRST OBJECT OF INTEREST, AND ONE that has been in Frankoma's product line for 58 years, is the Frankoma 31 Snail Bud Vase. It was originally made available in 1934 and continued to be available to the public until 1992. The designer of this popular

vase was never identified in any reference publication, and little or no details about this vase can be found today.

Having said that, I suspect that Ray Murray designed this enduring little Bud Vase. I base my suspicions specifically on the comparison of the 31 Snail Bud Vase to a vase available as a part of the Bauer Cal-art line designed, and clearly attributed to, Ray Murray. A relatively rare 6-3/4" vase called the "Knot" Vase was available in the Bauer product line in

1938. Though the bases of each are different, the function and general design concepts are nearly identical.

There is no doubt that Ray designed the Knot Vase, and the 31 Snail Bud Vase fits the general criteria for the production period, as the vase was introduced during the time that Ray was a student of John Frank, or that he was working for Frankoma. The success of the 31 Snail Bud Vase is obvious from the amount of time it was available to the public. It would not be surprising, therefore, that Ray



FRANKOMA
#31 SNAIL BUD VASE
Circa 1934-1992, 6" Tall

BAUER KNOT VASE
Cal-art Line
Circa 1938-1941?, 6-3/4" Tall

thought to capitalize on the vase's success by modifying his own design once Bauer Potteries hired him.

Curiously, Jack Chipman in his book, *Collector's Encyclopedia of Bauer Pottery Identification and Values*, 1998, similarly compares the two vases, and even attributes the 31 Snail Bud Vase to Ray: "Note: Bud Vase (Knot Vase) is similar to one (Snail Vase) originally produced at Frankoma by designer Ray Murray."

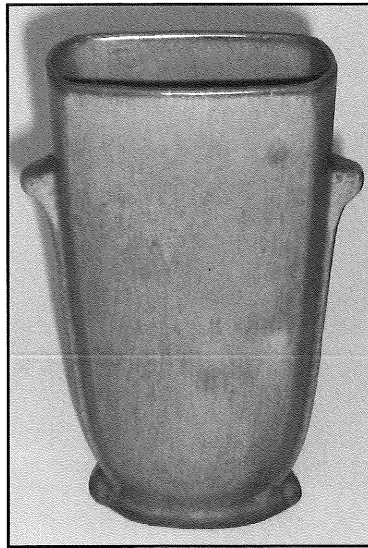
Does the resemblance of these two vases and the fact that the criteria used here helps to support the comparison prove that Ray Murray was the designer of the Frankoma 31 Snail Bud Vase? No, not exactly—but it does suggest the possibility. My educated guess says that Ray was the designer of the 31 Snail Bud Vase, and I would like to think that other experts, and you, would agree.

VASES AND BOWLS

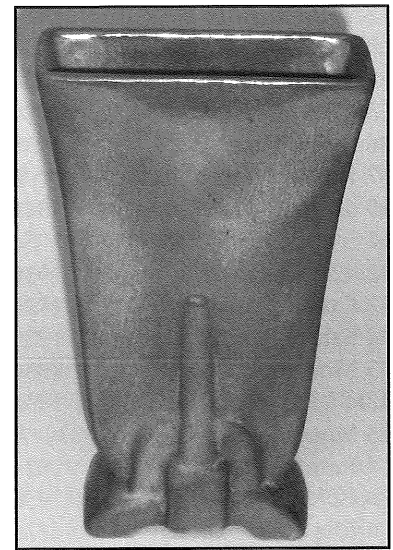
THE NEXT GROUP OF POTTERY ITEMS UP for discussion is the 36 Flat Spire Vase (6-1/2") and two similar vases, Flat Vases 40 (6") and 39 (4"). All three vases were available to the public in 1936, with the production of Flat Vases ending in 1938. The 36 Flat Spire Vase continued to be available to the public for an additional four years, and was removed from production in 1942.

Again, I have chosen to draw on a comparison to pottery items that Ray created as a part of the Cal-art production line for Bauer in 1938.

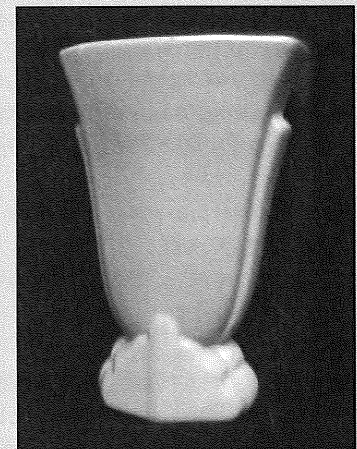
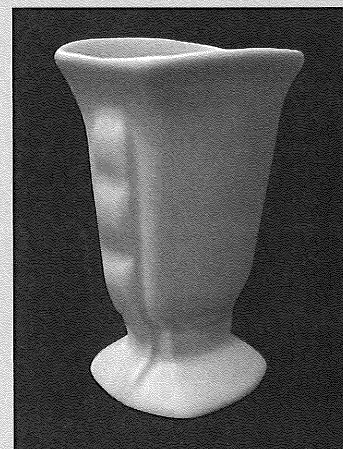
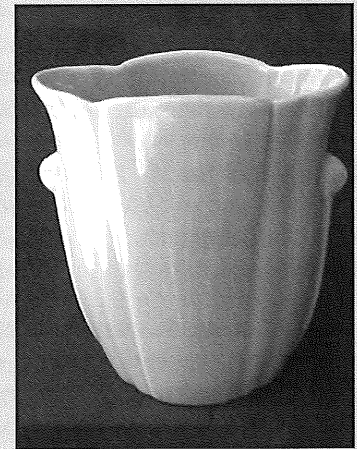
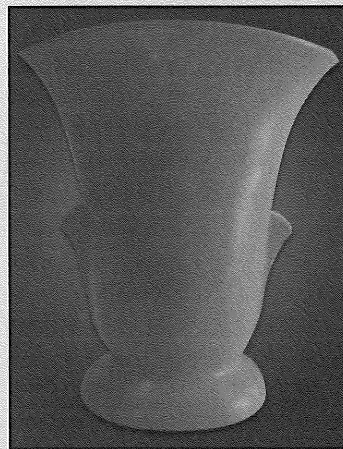
At 25 years of age, Ray Murray enjoyed a modicum of notoriety as a moldmaker within his first year of working for Bauer Potteries. Under the direction of Jim Bockman, Ray was allowed the freedom to apply his recognized talent for making molds to a project that was given to him early on in his short career with Bauer—the "Cal-art" Pottery line. Incidentally, the suggestion here is that Ray brought with him a measure of skill from his association with Frankoma and, by extension, suggests that he had developed a certain degree of skill for making molds from John Frank before Bauer Potteries hired him. This would also suggest



FRANKOMA
#40 6" FLAT VASE
#39 4" FLAT VASE
 Circa 1936-1938, Ada clay



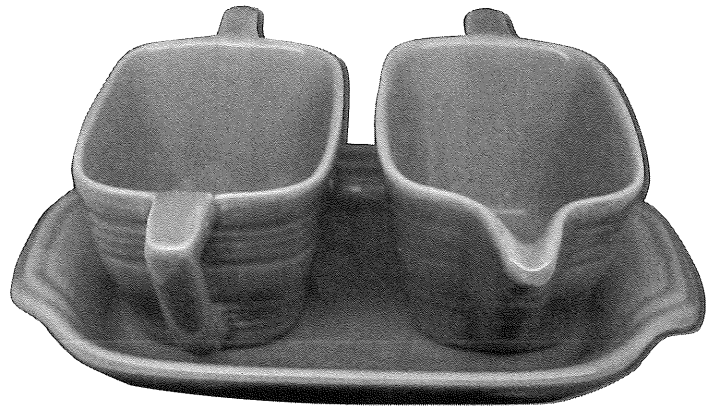
FRANKOMA
#36 FLAT SPIRE VASE
 Circa 1936-1942
 Ada clay, 6-1/2" Tall



BAUER VASES
 From Cal-art Production Line
 Circa 1938
 Designed by Ray Murray



FRANKOMA
#42/42A CREAMER & SUGAR
 Circa 1936-1942, Ada clay



BAUER POTTERY
MONTEREY LINE CREAMER & SUGAR WITH UNDERPLATE
 Circa 1937
 Designed by Ray Murray

that Ray was responsible for designing more than just the few pottery items for Frankoma. How would he have developed the skill otherwise?

As a part of the Cal-art production line, the four vases (out of more than 100) pictured on the previous page were designed by Ray Murray and released to the public in 1938. If you compare the Frankoma 36/40 Flat Vases (pictured previous page top) to the Cal-art vase pictured upper left (adjacent), you can see obvious similarities. Likewise, you can see similar design elements between the Frankoma 36 Flat Spire Vase and the Cal-art Vase pictured (previous page lower right). Interestingly enough, there is only a year of separation (at the most) from

the time Ray leaves Frankoma to the introduction of the Cal-art vases pictured here. This is seemingly not enough time for the design elements to be a passing memory. Were these design elements used to create the vases for Frankoma and then again for Bauer?

IS THIS COMPARISON DEFINITIVE?

No, but it does suggest two possible conclusions. One, Ray copied the design elements from the 40 Flat and 36 Flat Spire Vases (designer unknown), or he modified his own design. All other evaluating criteria considered here seem to fit. Even so, I cannot be 100% definitive. Do I believe Ray designed the 40 Flat and 36 Flat Spire Vases? Well, yes, it's possible!

In Ray Murray's long career in the arts, much of his work was used for utilitarian purpose. As a matter of fact, much of his initial pottery designs while working for Bauer Potteries were dedicated to dinnerware and the like. Ray designed numerous serving pieces that included creamer/sugars, salt/peppers, pitchers, casseroles, teapots, etc.

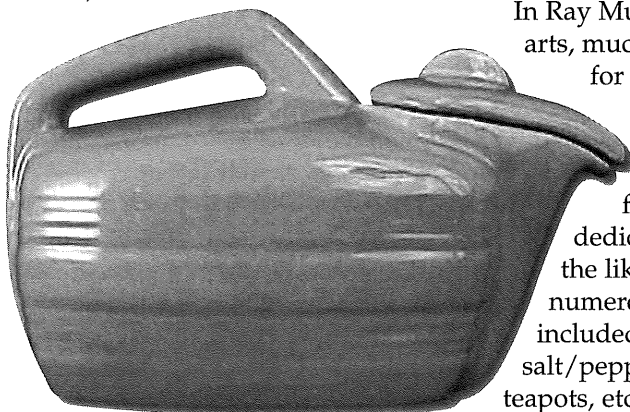
Perhaps the best example of that was GPK (Gloss Pastel Kitchenware). I suspect that Ray also contributed to the design of utilitarian pottery items offered by Frankoma Pottery. Again,

it would be reasonable to make this assumption, based on the fact that there is a degree of maturity that we collectors can see in the pottery designs introduced at Bauer after being with this pottery company only a short time (less than a year). It would seem he had to have developed some of his moldmaking abilities during his time with Frankoma.

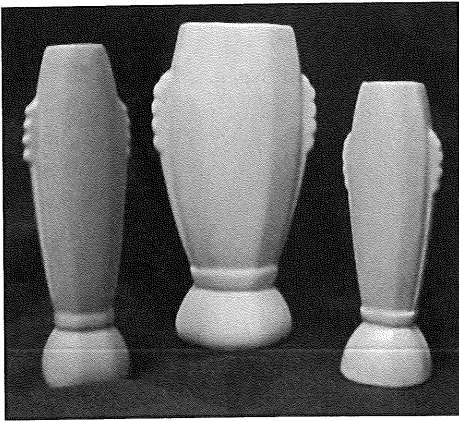
By way of example, and for this discussion, I'd like us to take a look at the 42 Creamer and 42A Sugar (1936-1942) issued by Frankoma.

As an early assignment for Bauer, Ray Murray was asked to design additional serving pieces for the Monterey tableware line that Louis Ipsen (Bauer Potteries modeler) introduced. Based on a number of designed items, both designers contributed about 50% of the designs for the Monterey line. Ipsen designing the more rudimentary pieces like plates, cups, and bowls, while Ray designed the (more complex) "oval" serving items and what is considered one of the more stunning pieces, the refrigerator beverage dispenser.

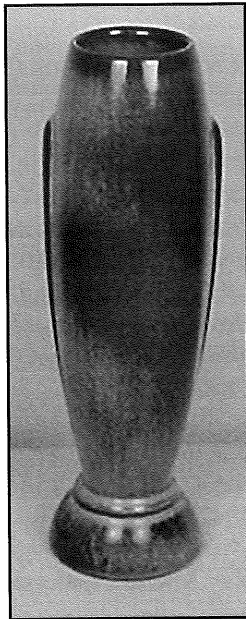
In addition to the beverage dispenser, Ray designed the creamer and sugar with tray for the Monterey line. If you compare those pieces to the Frankoma 42 Creamer and 42A Sugar, you will again see a similarity. Both the size and shape are nearly



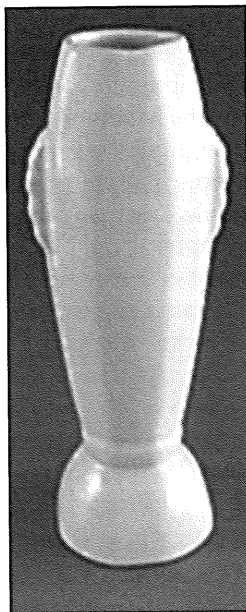
BAUER POTTERY
 Monterey Refrigerator
 Beverage Dispenser
 Circa 1938
 Designed by Ray Murray



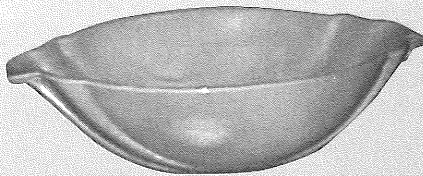
BAUER POTTERY
Crocus Vase of various sizes
from Cal-art Line



FRANKOMA
#43 CROCUS
VASE
Circa 1934-1982,
8" Tall



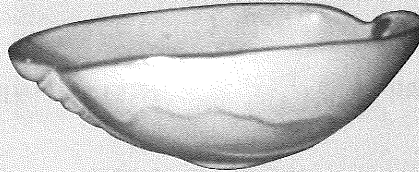
BAUER
POTTERY
CROCUS VASE
Cal-art Line
Circa 1938-1941?



FRANKOMA #201 FLOWER BOWL
Circa 1936-1991



BAUER POTTERY BOWL
Cal-art Line
Circa 1938-1941?
Designed by Ray Murray



FRANKOMA #202 FLOWER BOWL
Circa 1936-1966



BAUER POTTERY BOWL
Cal-art Line
Circa 1938-1941?
Designed by Ray Murray

identical. The styling of the Monterey creamer and sugar certainly shows the skill that Ray Murray was able to apply to his craft. Similarly, the Frankoma 42 Creamer and 42A Sugar show that same level of skill. Using the criteria that form the basis for this comparison, can we attribute them to Ray? No, not with 100% certainty. Is it possible, using the criteria and from a stylistic standpoint, to suggest that Ray may have designed them? Yes—or quite possibly he copied the design elements when he created the Monterey creamer and sugar. No one, however, can ever be certain.

ART DECO IN STYLE

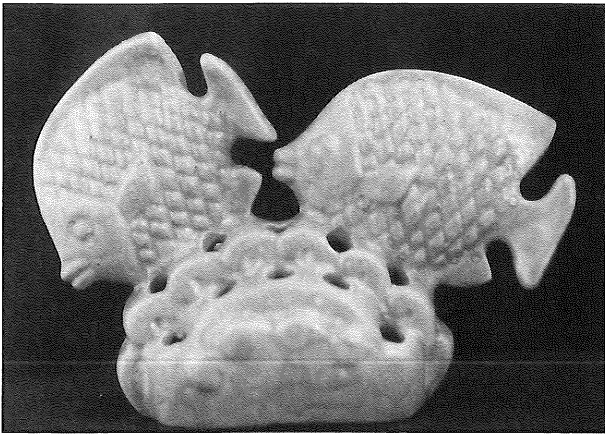
NEXT, LET US TAKE A LOOK AT ANOTHER Frankoma Pottery item of long standing. The Frankoma 43 Crocus Vase had been in production and available to the public from 1934 to 1982. Like the 31 Snail Bud Vase, it too enjoyed a successful public demand. And, like the 31 Snail Bud Vase, the Frankoma 43 Crocus Vase can also be compared to similar vases produced by Ray Murray. He took the basic crocus design and produced several different sizes of the same vase. In comparison, the Bauer

examples vary in proportion, to a degree, but the basic design mirrors that of the Frankoma 43 Crocus Vase. If you place the Frankoma 43 Crocus Vase next to a Bauer example of comparable size, it is difficult to imagine that the design for both is not from the same artist.

I am convinced that Ray Murray designed the 43 Crocus Vase for Frankoma. It seems to be too coincidental for the design to be so close and the appearance of both so comparatively timely.

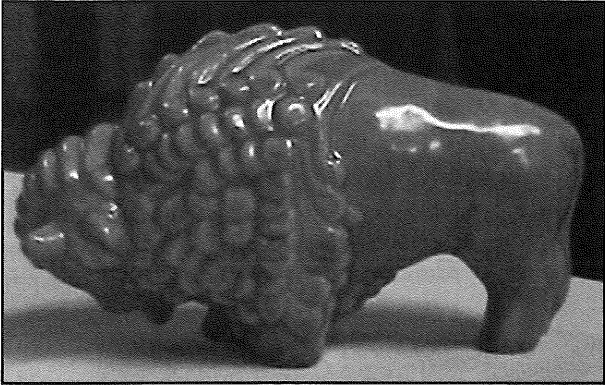
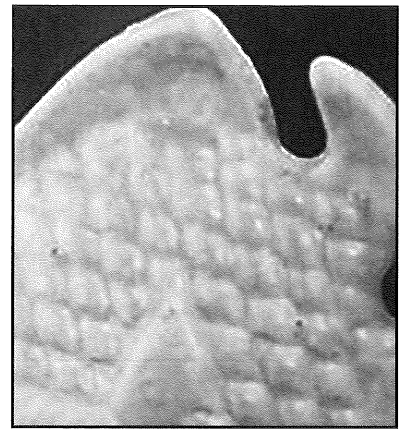
Not all pottery comparisons, in my modest opinion, are as persuasive, but there still is value in our taking a look at them. For the reader's consideration, I would like to compare two Frankoma Flower Bowls, 201 and 202, to Bauer Bowls of similar design and utilitarian use.

Again, I return to Bauer's Cal-art line for comparison. Ray Murray is credited for designing several bowls for this line, all of which show "art deco" characteristics that were in vogue at the time. In particular, I find the Frankoma 202 Flower Bowl and the Bauer Flower Bowl in the photo here (bottom image) comparatively similar. Could this perhaps suggest that the same hand made them? Can we say, with conviction, that Ray



**FRANKOMA
#404 FISH FLOWER FROG**

Circa 1934-1938
Ada clay, 4-1/2" Tall
Jade Green
(Detail right)



**FRANKOMA
#119 BUFFALO**

Circa 1934-1935
Ada clay
3-1/2" to 4" Tall
Attributed to
Ray Murray
(Detail right)



made the 201 and 202 Flower Bowls for Frankoma? No, but it does deserve some consideration, don't you agree?

Up to this point, we have looked at pottery items that Ray Murray was **known** to have designed for Frankoma, and I have also compared pottery pieces that Ray designed for Bauer Potteries to Frankoma Pottery pieces that show similar design elements and meet specific criteria—hoping to show a connection to Ray as the artist and designer

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A LOOK at a pottery figurine offered by Frankoma and accredited to Ray Murray and compare that to another Frankoma Pottery figurine where the artist is not known.

A Frankoma figurine I would like to own, and hope to find one day, is the Frankoma 404 Fish Flower Frog. Frankoma made this amazing piece available to the public in 1934, and it stayed in production only until 1938.

When I first saw this piece, I was struck by how it compared to another Frankoma figurine, because of the design and texture of it. As a matter

of fact, I identified it as a Frankoma figurine based solely on comparison and my familiarity with the Frankoma 119 Buffalo—even before I confirmed that the 404 Fish Flower Frog was issued by Frankoma! The thought occurred to me at the time that the 119 Buffalo and the 404 Fish Flower Frog were made by the same person.

If we compare the texture and styling of scales on the 404 Fish Frog to the texture and styling of the fur/hide of the 119 Buffalo, we cannot help but see a similarity.

Obviously, it will be nearly impossible to prove that Ray Murray was the designer of the 404 Fish Flower Frog—given that I'm comparing the design elements of the 404 Fish Flower Frog to similar design elements of the 119 Buffalo—and where, based on his own admission and understandably faulty memory, there is some doubt that Ray designed the 119 Buffalo.

I would suggest, however (I know I'm going out on a limb here), that whoever designed the 119 Buffalo also designed the 404 Fish Flower Frog. Can I be definitive? Of course I can't, but given the similar design elements and the fact that both figurines meet

the criteria that forms the basis for this discussion—I would say it is entirely possible.

One of the more difficult challenges that archaeologists face, when little or no details are known about the artifacts or the fragments they find, is to try to make sense of them by putting them in the context of the information and details they do have. In a similar way, I have looked at unattributed Frankoma pottery pieces, and have tried to show that there are relationships that can be drawn—with Ray Murray in particular—simply by carefully considering what evidence is available.

I know that archaeology, as a scientific, educated endeavor, can never be 100% accurate. I also know that, as Frankoma enthusiasts, we are limited by the lack of corroborative records. We will probably never know for sure who designed every piece of Frankoma.

In any case, my interest in writing this last installment on Ray Murray was to share my observations—and **encourage others to do the same!**

Joniece's 'Believe it or Not'



"WHY DID YOU STOP MAKING THAT?"

One of the questions most often asked of me is, "Why did you stop making that?"

The obvious answer with regard to some of the earlier pieces is that the molds and/or master molds were destroyed in the fire of November 10, 1938. The fire was so destructive that, to my knowledge, absolutely nothing was saved. Plaster of Paris, or potter's plaster (or whatever you wish to call this gypsum derivative), when subjected to high heat, simply crumbles and becomes a fine whiteish sand. And all the king's horses and all the king's men...etc.

Since the showroom was in a separate building from the plant in 1938, all items in that location were of course untouched. Molds were then made from those very pieces in the showroom—when the item warranted continued production. But you'll remember that when you make a mold from a finished piece, the object is reduced by 8-10%. The experienced collector can immediately spot some of Joe Taylor's sculptures that were produced before and after that fire because of their size. The Indian Bowl Maker is a good example of a piece still available today. (See P&P Summer/Fall 1999 issue.)

The last pre-WWII catalog was printed in 1942. In that catalog, at the beginning of 1942, most of the items therein were sculpture and other decorative items. Many of Daddy's beautiful designs shown in this

catalog were produced for forty or more years, and they remained popular because of the quality of the designs. Others, however, had to go by the wayside to prepare for the new demands and needs of the consumer.

From the 1942 catalog to the 1948 catalog (some believe it's a 1947, but no one can be absolutely sure), the tone of Frankoma Pottery changed dramatically. During the war years, decorative and sculptured items produced to bring art into the home became much less important to the consumer. When the war ended, new households were being set up all over the country.

So during the WWII years, Frankoma took its first step into a "tabletop" line with the introduction of the Wagon Wheel and Plainsman dinnerware patterns. Veterans were looking for homes to set up new households, and this was of course uppermost in those young people's minds. Creating dinnerware that was practical, and still artistically designed, at a price almost anyone could afford, became the backbone of Frankoma Pottery.

In this article, we're going to dissect a few of the items that you all seek, rare because they were not in line for a very long time. And may I remind you that my comments are sometimes only my opinion, but most of the time I can back it up with sales figures and/or production reports—or "I was in the meeting and in on the decision." (Remember also that what I can comment on is pre-April, 1991; I cannot speak of anything after that time.)

LOOK 'EM UP!

IF YOU'RE UNSURE OF YOUR STOCK numbers and want to identify any of the pieces I'm talking about, look them up in Schaum's purple (latest edition) book. The stock number index in the back includes page numbers of the photos. Or you may own McBain's "Frankoma Reference Guide" CD, also an excellent source for identification.

Some of those designs in the 1942 catalog that I want to bring to your attention are: the 218 Swirl Bowl, 208 Bowl, 201 Bowl, 35 Large Mint Bowl, the beginning of the Mayan-Aztec design, the Pitcher and Mug set referred to in the 1942 catalog (previously 82 and 82M, later changed to 7D and 7M), the 458 Ashtray, and the 80 Pitcher, many of which were produced until my departure from Frankoma in 1991.

Other items that were in line for many, many years were the 59 Canteen, the 43 Crocus Vase, the 31 Bud Vase, 304 Double Candleholders, 93 Juice (Guernsey) Pitcher, 96 Pitcher (forerunner to the 4D Lazybones Pitcher), 190 Acorn Wall Vase, 507 Mini Boot, 53 Nautilus Shell Vase, and also in this catalog were first shown a limited number of items of the new Wagon Wheel Dinnerware.

We won't get into the sculpture items that are loved and cherished by all. Over the years, because John and Grace Lee were artists first, some sculpture items were brought back, discontinued, and brought back again. The best known ones are the 113 Fan Dancer, the 114 and 116 Seated and Reclining Pumas, 123 Indian Bowl

Maker, and the 142 Indian Chief.

THE NATURE OF CLAY

MANY OF THE PIECES THAT DAD tried to make created problems because of the nature of our clay, whether Ada or Sapulpa. The "nature" of clay is many-faceted. Our clay had to be screened through a very fine filter (900-1000 holes per square inch) to eliminate any large pieces of sand, rock, little particles of bone or small insects that got caught in God's creation of the clay. This screening process had to be done in order to create a nice surface texture so that the Fan Dancer, for instance, would not look like it was made of cement. The fine, smooth surface of the clay was necessary in creating sculpture, fine dinnerware and beautiful floral containers.

However, it also gave the clay its limitations as to size. When you remove the sand from the clay, you take away its strength and weaken it. Many clay companies screen their clay into almost face powder consistency for purity, then add grog (ground-up particles of already-fired clay) to give it back the strength needed for larger containers—which also cuts down on warping.

The 77 and 77A Fireside Vase and Pitcher are good examples of Daddy's artistic design abilities. They're elegant and classic. Anyone who owns a pair loves them. And as you've probably noticed, the 77A Pitcher has represented Frankoma by just its outline many times over the years in literature and photographs. But, like many other items that we'll discuss, they were so large that (1) they were a problem during drying because, due to their weight, they would tilt and wilt, and (2) that vast amount of smooth, glazed surface gave way to every teeny tiny little pinhole in all the wrong places—an eyesore—which could make it a second, or often worse, we'd have to destroy it.

There were also a lot of other production problems, much too large a subject to discuss at this time. A large percent of these two particular pieces were lost, so it was not

profitable to continue making them. (I remind you again that Frankoma was not our hobby, but we depended on it to put food on our table and send Donna and me to school!)

BIGGER, NOT BETTER

DAD WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO make larger and larger items that demanded more than our clay could successfully achieve, try as it did. Some of these items were the 5N 5-qt. Bowl, the 78 and 78A Fireside Vase and Pitcher, and that huge 219 Centerpiece Bowl. Another fine example is the 80 Pitcher. As popular as it was, we never made a dime on that piece! But the piece completed a set of dinnerware, a nice 2-qt. Pitcher,

and normally we sold it with six tumblers. There were many other pieces that, if we just broke even, were kept them in line as a "companion" piece, and they did sell other pieces.

In 1953, Lazybones was presented as a dinnerware set, and Dad got all caught up in "bones and joints" and their interesting shapes.

Look at the 4N Serving Bowl. Freeform, yes, but look at it closely and you'll find a modified joint of some sort. At that same time, he designed the #15 12" Vase. Many of you have asked me why that item did not stay in line. And the simplest answer is—it didn't sell.

The reason it didn't sell, in my opinion, it was just too tall for roses,



#78 AND #78A 19" DECORATIVE VASE & PITCHER

Circa 1958 – 1964

Sapulpa clay

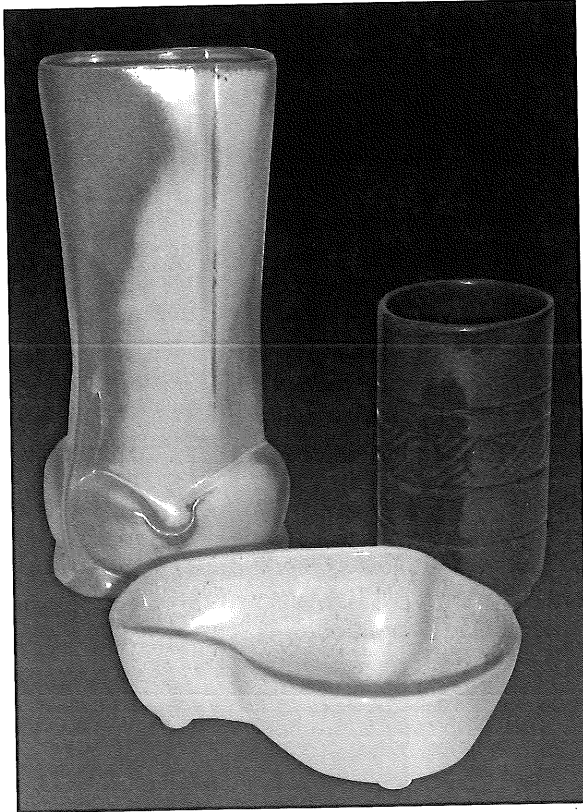
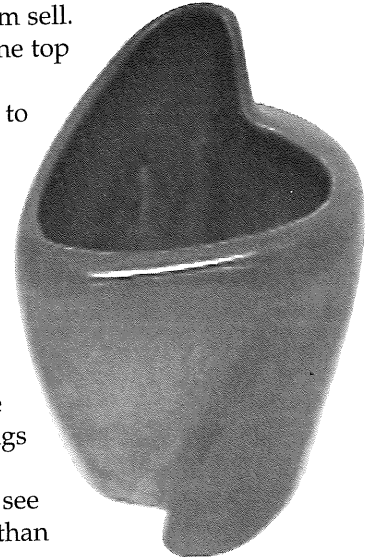
Value \$65 - \$85 each

FREEFORMS

BY 1955-1956, FREEFORM OBJECTS and modern art were a part of our lives. And Dad did design some outstanding pieces. However, people did not use their God-given imagination and creativity. Only when Mother did flower arrangements in those pieces at the Frankoma showroom could people fall in love with the container.

Some of those items were also fantastic and unusual serving bowls for the table. Like the 211 Crescent Bowl, the 232 Triangle Freeform Bowl, the 233 Round Bowl, the 231 Abalone Shell Bowl. We did everything to make this item sell. Dad had me even texture the top of it one time, hoping that people would take a liking to it, to no avail.

The best example of a beautiful vase for floral arrangements to inspire the arranger of the flowers to the ultimate is the 58 Flowerabrum. Talk about a challenge! Another is the 6 Vase. The piece itself is lovely, it brings your eye into a circle, but only the floral artist could see its potential. It was more than "something to hold ivy."



BACK LEFT
#15 LAZYPONES VASE
 1953
 Ada clay, 12-1/4" Tall
 Value \$45 - \$65

BACK RIGHT
#51 VASE
 circa 1936 - 1942
 Ada clay, 7" Tall
 Value \$85 - \$125

FRONT
#4N LAZYPONES BOWL
 circa 1956 - present
 Ada clay, 7" Tall, 24-oz
 Value \$12 - \$15

and the overall "bone vase" (more obviously bone than any of the Lazybones dinnerware items) was not conducive to the delicate nature of the rose or other flowers. Gladiolas are just about the only things that would fit in it, and were bold enough to be compatible with the design. It was priced at \$3.50. All flowers showed their beauty in the simple 51 Cylinder Vase, and the customer could have it only \$1.50.

While we're on large-sized pieces, the answer to our question about why certain items were discontinued is not all that complicated. There was first of all serious difficulty in production—more seconds than firsts. Other reasons were that they were often "single" pieces, not part of an "ensemble," the price, and where in your home would you place these very large items? Most people could have one or two large decorative vases in their home—the beautiful and costly—but not many. Such items as the 215 Cornucopia, the 72 Large Round Jar, the 66 17" Vase, and the 230 Large Swan all fall into this too-large, too-expensive category.

JUST IMAGINE!

NOW, PUT YOUR THINKING CAPS on for a moment here, and imagine green beans,

asparagus, or another green vegetable in the 232, the F29 Drapery Vase for dips—or creamed potatoes in the 233—and a melon and grape salad in the 217. We had a great smorgasbord in Tulsa once that used all of our larger pieces, including the 215 Large Cornucopia, the 227 Large Leaf, 211 Crescent Bowl and the two largest flower pots in the "A" series nestled in chipped ice, for their buffet table, to name a few. Talk about outstanding! And appetizing!

Back in the late 1980's, two young men from Oklahoma went to the Charles Beard Gourmet Cooking event in New York and used Frankoma exclusively for their serving containers, which included of course the 227 Leaf and the Chop Plate, among several others.

#6 FREEFORM VASE

Circa 1950 - 1976
 Ada clay, 7" Tall
 Value \$35 - \$50

ART VS. BUSINESS

IT'S DIFFICULT FOR AN ARTIST TO be creative and yet think about the production limitations. By that, I mean Daddy was asked many times, "Where do you get your ideas?" He said, "From everything you set your eyes on." This he proved with the Lazybones dinnerware pattern, as well as the 7 Egg Vase. But sometimes those ideas that

sprang from his creative nature created unbelievable production problems! Dad's answer was, "**Boys (talking to his top production supervisors), figure out a way to make it work, and make it profitable!**"

Now, the "**profitable**" part was normally secondary in Dad's mind. But when I took over the plant in 1970 and saw that the ink on the financial statement was far more red than black—I made the decision to put Frankoma in the black. To do that, I started by looking at the size of the molds, the number of pieces of a mold, the height of the piece to fit the kiln shelves and ware trucks, and the possible shipping problems (amount of wrap it used, double boxing, etc.). And I went on from there.

In achieving the "**black ink**" on the financial page, and considering all of the factors to create a piece for profitability, very well could have dulled my senses for a time to outstanding design possibilities. To this day, I cannot look at a piece—be it bronze, some of the composition materials now available, or fine china—without looking at how a mold would be pulled from it.

But, as I said, Daddy's orders to his staff were, "**Just make it work.**" To emphasize Daddy's desire for more creative freedom, I must say that this is the reason he purchased Synar (which later became Gracetone), because he wanted to develop a stoneware pottery. Stoneware usually (but not always) has more sand and/or grog in the clay body, thus allowing him that freedom he sought. He wanted to create larger, more dramatic pieces. However, as you know, this did not come to fruition for a number of reasons.

WHAT'S IT USED FOR?

AS I REFERRED TO BRIEFLY concerning bowls and vases that could be used for serving food, in so many people's minds, if they didn't have a particular function—no matter how gracefully and beautifully it was designed—it simply did not have a place in their life. A good example of this is the lovely shallow 820 15" Fish Plate. Of course, many of you know this was originally designed as a bird bath, but the birds didn't like to land on a glazed surface because they slid down into the water before they were ready to scrub up. It did not say "**roast**" in the middle of it, or "**turkey**," or "**hors d'oeuvres**," and it did not have the Wagon Wheel or the Mayan-Aztec design on it. So even though people *oohed* and *aahed* over it, they didn't buy it.

Another item is the 25 13" Jar w/Lid, an excellent example of the artist at work, not the businessman! It was too deep for reaching down to the bottom for a cookie, and too tall for baked beans, and it didn't say on it what it was for. It didn't have a designated purpose!

Of course, bookends went out of line when people no



#58 FLOWERABRUM

1942

Ada clay, 12" Long

Value \$100 - \$125

longer used bookends. And as always there are exceptions to the rule.

Example, the 433 Boot Bookends.

Boots are always found on a good looking cowboy.

Ashtrays disappeared as people quit smoking. And why, oh why, did we ever stop making the Serva-Trays? Very simple. Wrought iron became too expensive, postage rates went up, and the amount of box it took to ship the stands became prohibitive. We tried some other types of metals for the stands, but nothing worked like that good old genuine wrought iron.

THE "WORD"

THE LATE SHERWOOD EMORY, one of Frankoma's top salesmen, wanted "**COOKIES**" on the side of certain items, and that's why the 25F had two lids—one said "**FLOUR**" to go with the Canister Set, and the other said "**COOKIES**" for those who didn't otherwise know what to put in it. And that's also the reason that the Canisters very soon thereafter had no words on the top. It didn't really work.

Another item comes to mind that I've been asked about a lot, and that's the 94FC Wagon Wheel Lazy Susan. The reasons it didn't last is that it warped unmercifully, it wasn't deep enough to please the customer, and there were those who were concerned about how they could get six different items in those six sections. It was simply too many.

And then the popular 818 Suzette had its production problems. It was very difficult to glaze due to a tendency to overspray, and glaze puddled in the bottom of the sections. If too little glaze was applied, in an effort to keep from overspraying, it was glaze-bare. It was also prone to deep fire checks. However, the 818 was deep enough, and it had only four sections, plus the center. But that glazing problem created far too many seconds. It became a "**no profit**" item, but it completed the whole ensemble of the dinnerware set. Therefore, we kept it in line. Although we did not sell a lot of them, it was available to the customer.

BOTTOM LINE

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION that started this whole discussion are really simple enough. Either it wasn't profitable, or people didn't buy it. And if people didn't buy it, we could leave it in the oven for days, and it never would become tender and edible. We just couldn't eat it.

The Frankoma Crucifix

Tammy Hansen, Wichita, KS

MADALENE CHURCH CRUCIFIX BY FATHER JOHN WALCH

Produced by Frankoma Pottery

1996

Unglazed Terra Cotta, rough cut white oak cross

18" tall by 12-3/8" wide

Madalene Church commissioned 500 for their 50th Anniversary

Originally Sold for \$75

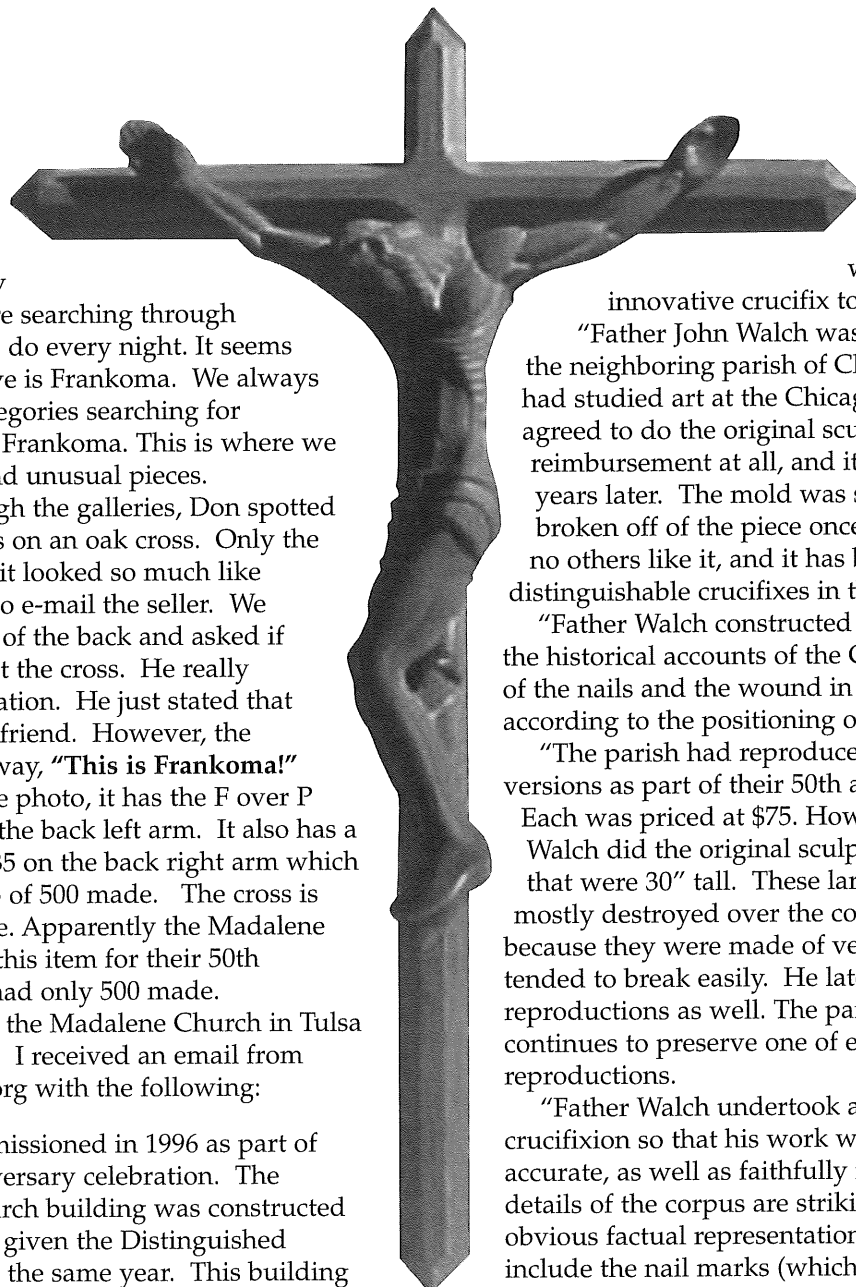
Here is a piece of Frankoma I have only seen once and now own. My husband Don and I were searching through the eBay auctions as we do every night. It seems like the only life we have is Frankoma. We always look through all the categories searching for something *not* listed as Frankoma. This is where we find most of our rare and unusual pieces.

While looking through the galleries, Don spotted a clay depiction of Jesus on an oak cross. Only the front was pictured, but it looked so much like Frankoma we decided to e-mail the seller. We asked him for a picture of the back and asked if he knew anything about the cross. He really didn't have any information. He just stated that he had gotten it from a friend. However, the pictures told us right away, "**This is Frankoma!**"

As you can see in the photo, it has the F over P (Frankoma Pottery) on the back left arm. It also has a number ink stamped 335 on the back right arm which I later learned was #335 of 500 made. The cross is 18" tall by 12-3/8" wide. Apparently the Madalene Church commissioned this item for their 50th Anniversary and they had only 500 made.

I decided to write to the Madalene Church in Tulsa for further information. I received an email from Father Dan Mueggenborg with the following:

"The crucifix was commissioned in 1996 as part of our parish's 50th Anniversary celebration. The Madalene's current church building was constructed earlier in 1954 and was given the Distinguished Design for Architecture the same year. This building



was quite innovative for it's time, and the founding pastor wanted an equally

innovative crucifix to fit its avant-garde style. "Father John Walch was an Associate Pastor at the neighboring parish of Christ the King, and he had studied art at the Chicago Art Institute. He agreed to do the original sculpture for no reimbursement at all, and it was completed two years later. The mold was so large that it had to be broken off of the piece once it was cast. There are no others like it, and it has become one the most distinguishable crucifixes in the state.

"Father Walch constructed his sculpture based on the historical accounts of the Crucifixion. The placing of the nails and the wound in the side were made according to the positioning on the Shroud of Turin.

"The parish had reproduced 500 of these smaller versions as part of their 50th anniversary celebration. Each was priced at \$75. However, when Father Walch did the original sculpture, he made 30 copies that were 30" tall. These large copies have been mostly destroyed over the course of the past 40 years because they were made of very brittle plaster and tended to break easily. He later made 12 bronze 30" reproductions as well. The parish of the Madalene continues to preserve one of each of these larger reproductions.

"Father Walch undertook a detailed study of the crucifixion so that his work would be historically accurate, as well as faithfully representative. The details of the corpus are striking. Some of these more obvious factual representations of the crucifixion include the nail marks (which are placed in the wrist



FATHER JOHN WALCH'S 1956 CRUCIFIX

18' tall by 12-3/8' wide
 Madalene Church in Tulsa, OK

rather than the palms of the hands), and the positioning of the feet (which are nailed one on top of the other). The Shroud of Turin was used as another source of information, such as details as to the location of the wound in the side, and the positioning of the left foot on top of the right foot.

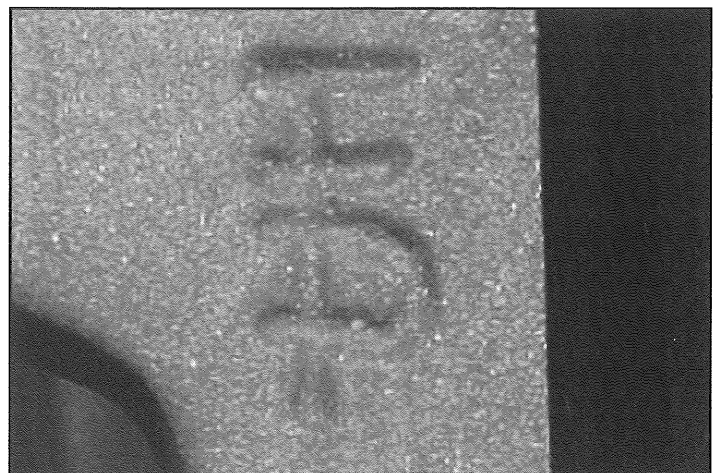
"Theological symbolism is also evident in Father Walch's work. The accompanying brochure states, "The vacated abdomen and exposed rib cage are more than artistic expression. They represent the extent to which Christ went in 'emptying' himself for the salvation of the world. This process is referred to as the 'kenosis' (self-emptying) of Jesus and is a favorite theme of Pauline hymns in the New Testament."

The gentleman who made the wooden crosses is Sapulpan Lionel Bilby, husband of Opal Bilby, a Frankoma press worker of 34 years. Apparently there are more than 500 Frankoma crucifixes out there. According to Mr. Bilby, he made 500 crosses for the original order in 1996. However, subsequent smaller orders followed. They were all made of white oak, to scale, 18" X 12-3/8" X .85" thick. (The large original sculpture at Magdalene Church measures a huge 18' X 12-3/8'.) According to the church's wishes, the wooden crosses were neither sanded nor oiled, simply rough cut.

From all the information we've been able to gather, there may have been a total of about 550-600 produced.



INK STAMPED #335
 on back right arm indicates
 Crucifix was #335 of 500.



THE F OVER P MARK
 (Frankoma Pottery)
 on the back left arm

“Who Built That House?”

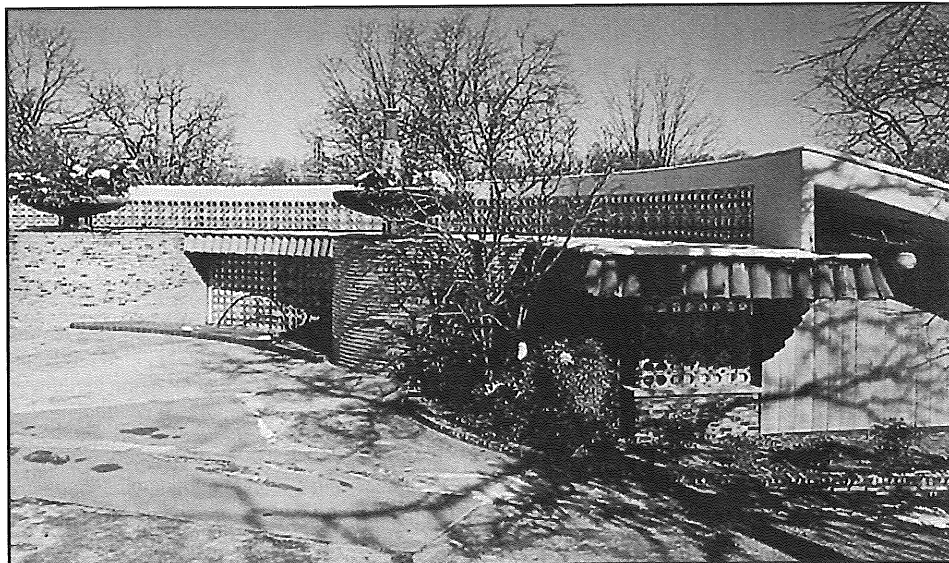
Donna Frank
Sapulpa, OK

When you visit the Frank home at reunion time, we answer that question many times, and we often get some blank faces in response. “Who?” Never mind who built it, the question is, “Who designed it?” Contractors and construction men built it, Bruce Goff designed it.

But, make no mistake about it, Goff was guided by John and Grace Lee Frank. They dictated certain features they wished for, turned the ideas over to the master, and they were always thrilled with what he came up with to fill those wants and wishes, always far beyond what they could have envisioned.

When the house was far enough along that the Franks could move in and begin living there, much of it was still unfinished. Dad laid every rock of the terracing himself, and it took several years to complete—along with the rock wall garden, the fish pond at the street, along with all the landscaping with plants and trees. The Frank home was the first to be built in that area, and the street remained unpaved and muddy for a long time until other homes began to appear along the street. The city then took notice and paved it.

It should be noted that not all of the Frank home features seen today were in Goff’s renderings. For instance, the garage was formerly a beautifully integrated carport, but after Dad’s passing, it was rebuilt into a lockable garage. There were originally three fishponds—the one at the street near the driveway entrance, one that was part of the rock wall garden, and one beneath the tile bridge at the front door. When Dad



JOHN AND GRACE LEE FRANK HOME

Mr. Frank was actively involved in building their Bruce Goff “Frankoma House” in Sapulpa. “He laid a lot of the bricks himself,” Grace Lee said.

“Only one man could have designed this house—Bruce Goff. And I believe that only one man could have built it—John Frank.”

was gone, Mother could not take care of them and had the first two planted, and the third was simply drained.

But that doesn’t explain who Bruce Goff was, nor does it depict the legacy of work he left to the world. Perhaps no 20th Century American architect was as fearless as he was. Frank Lloyd Wright recognized his talent and advised him to avoid studying at an architecture school, as “the real Bruce Goff” would surely be compromised or lost. So he remained unschooled in the classic sense. However, he became so proficient in his art, that years later he was appointed head of the Architecture Department at the University of Oklahoma.



John and Grace Lee wanted a house that would reflect the landscape and also their work as ceramic designers.

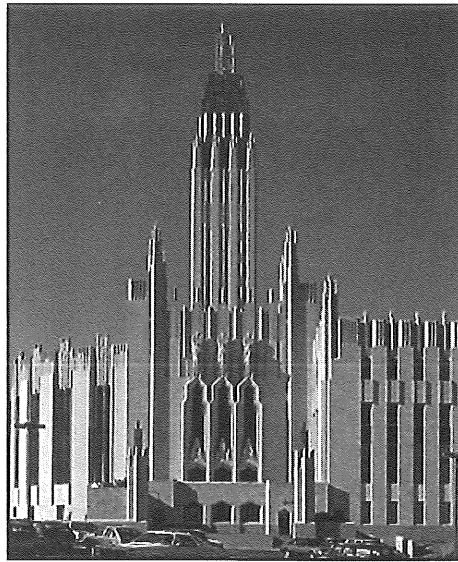
SO TALENTED IN DESIGN, HE WAS considered a child prodigy and was apprenticed to a Tulsa architecture firm when he was but twelve years old. Before he was twenty, he was involved in the design of the most spectacular modernist church to this day, Tulsa's Boston Avenue Methodist Church. In tandem with Miss Adah Robinson, it is believed that Goff certainly influenced its design, and was responsible for many (if not all) of the renderings that led to the building now regarded as an Art Deco icon—predating the Chrysler Building in New York and the Emerald City in "The Wizard of Oz."

There will forever be controversy as to which one of them actually designed it, and we may never know for sure. From study of this magnificent structure, we find some features that are undebatably the work of Goff, and some are not. We're generous enough to believe they did it together.

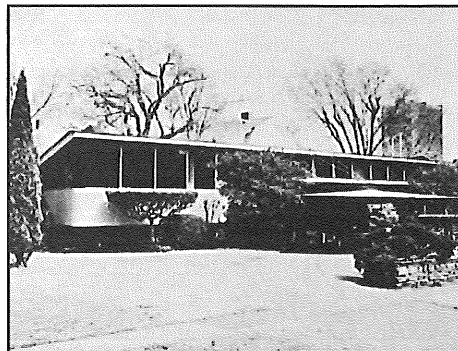
GOFF WOULD SOON TIRE OF THIS STYLISTIC design in favor of a more "international modernism." His structures of the mid-1930's are spare and simple, but his drawings of them were elegant graphic statements that went beyond practical design necessity. To Goff, architecture was as much about drawing as it was about music, sculpture and dance. It also was not about learned formulas to be applied to any commission he accepted, but treated as a divine art form.

In 1934 he moved to Chicago and began teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts, while he also worked for architect Alfonso Lannelli. Throughout his career, he taught his students that the act of creation is always paramount over the study of construction, and those students would forever remember him as their most inspiring mentor.

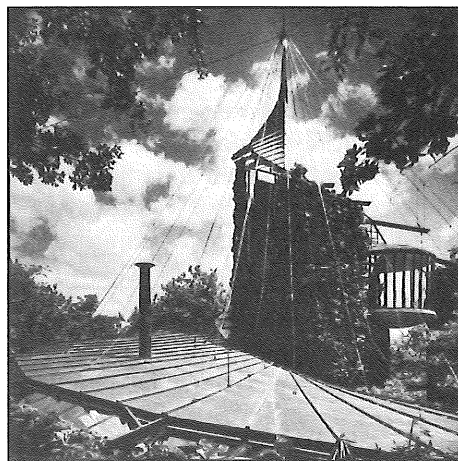
In World War II, Goff served as a Seabee, allowing him to travel to California, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. Building materials were scarce. But his use of simple military materials created barracks, chapels and mess halls. He found the purely utilitarian supplies liberating,



**BOSTON AVENUE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
Tulsa, OK
Constructed 1924-1929



LEDBETTER-TAYLOR HOUSE
Norman, OK
Built 1947



THE BAVINGER HOUSE
Norman, OK
Constructed 1950-1955

fabricating Quonset huts into exercises in geometry beyond the usual bare bones of the structures.

WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER, GOFF'S WORK evolved into total expressionism. His use of the materials at hand in the military inspired his use of native stone on a property for serpentine walls holding glass cullets for truly natural lighting. He rotated the arches of Quonset huts into spiral forms, and suspended floating rooms from steel cables.

No longer concerned with the conventional, Goff explored the use of any and all materials for structural or decorative effect. As with the Ledbetter home in Norman, Oklahoma (later owned by Joe and Elsie Taylor), thick glass dime store ashtrays were embedded into walls and doors, allowing points of light to refract into rainbows in the interior.

Chandeliers were replaced by cellophane strips, and rows of soft white goose feathers enabled ceilings to ripple in waves as the homeowner walked through his house. The feathers created not just a stunningly beautiful effect, they also acted as added insulation and soundproofing.

During the pre-building period of the Frank house, I was privileged to go with my parents to Norman on one of their visits to Bruce Goff for a design conference. We went to his "office," which was in a far corner of a huge curved activities room below the old stadium. That's where the Architecture Department was housed at that time, beneath the stands. He had created his office space in that corner by partitioning two sides with mere folding screens. About 6-7" from the ceiling, he had strung a web of colored string, and the space between the web of string and the ceiling was filled with tumbleweeds, which he had spray painted in many colors.

IT WAS BEAUTIFUL AND INTERESTING, YES. But it also had another surprising purpose. With no solid walls around that small space, and no door (one entered at the corner between the two screens), it was totally sound proof. The layer of tumbleweeds absorbed



BRUCE GOFF AT WORK IN HIS PRICE TOWER STUDIO, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, in 1962 with his cat, Chiaroscuro. Notice Frankoma C-Thru Tiles on the shelf above the cat

all of the sounds so that no one could hear from outside, and when inside no one could hear any sounds from outside the office. As we walked through the room on our way out, we had to smile, listening to the almost deafening sounds of our footsteps bouncing loudly back and forth, echoing from wall to wall. It was then that we understood what good old southwestern tumbleweeds were made for.

Although a very few of his designs reportedly led to not-so-wonderful results, like any great artist, Bruce Goff was simply not afraid to be bad. His legacy is just now being understood as architectural expressionism has gained newfound star appeal in the work of many renowned architects, which include a number of his former students spread from coast to coast.

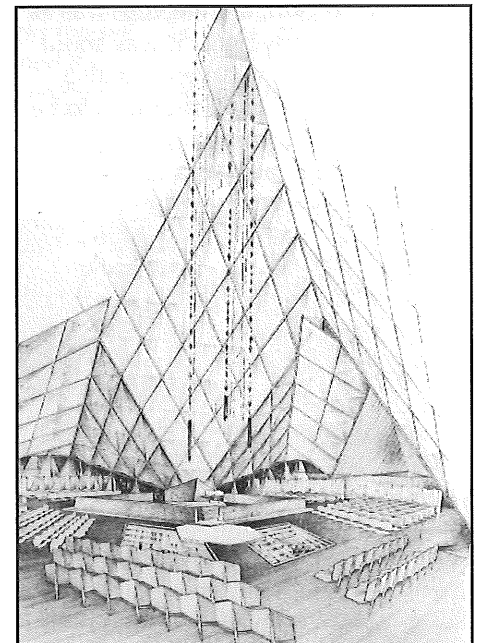
Most especially, Bruce Goff was known for designing homes that were unique to those who would live there. What else would you feature in a house designed for potters? Pottery, of course. And colored tile designed by the potters and the architect together, then produced and hand-glazed by the potters themselves.

A HOUSE FOR A UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR OF oil painting who needs a quiet space, with good light, away from the main house? For the Bavingers of Norman, he built a spiral house with the work studio at the very top of the spiral. The owners also loved to grow exotic plants, so at the ground floor, there was not only an array of flora, there was a banana tree growing up through the center. Goff also designed a revolving house so that one could choose which part of the house to let in the sunlight. It staggers our imagination—but it never did his. He had a mind as big as the universe, and he was not reluctant to use it.

We're honored that our parents had such foresight to choose the very best to dream up their dream home, and pass it along to us. We always welcome the collectors to visit us each September at our Open House. Should we lock our doors and not share the beauty of a house built for pottery and art lovers? We don't think so.

The Art Institute of Chicago now holds the Goff archives and promotes him as an important 20th Century forerunner of today's New Modernism.

Bruce Goff lived from 1904 to 1982. Eighteen years after his passing, his ashes were buried at a special ceremony on October 7, 2000, in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery. His ashes were interred in a Frankoma Robin Egg Blue container. (See *Pot & Puma Summer/Fall 1999, Page 37.*)



One of Goff's presentation drawings for Crystal Chapel and Student Religious Center and Recreational Building, University of Oklahoma (never built) Norman, Oklahoma

German Film Crew Comes to Sapulpa!

Donna Frank
Sapulpa, OK

In the spring of 2002, we were contacted by Filmmaker Heinz Emigholz from Berlin, asking if he and his team could visit us and film our house (designed for John and Grace Lee Frank in 1956). Heinz Emigholz is known for his films since the mid-seventies (see www.pym.de) and is currently working on a documentary film project on all of the Bruce Goff houses in the U.S. Heinz Emigholz has held the Chair of Film at The University of Art in Berlin since 1993. How could we say no?

So the day of their arrival came, and these gracious three quickly became almost part of our family. The three-person film crew consisted of Heinz, Ueli Etter (an artist from Switzerland), and May Rigler (a filmmaker from Berlin) who now lives in Los Angeles. Their planned half-day to photograph extended to a day and a half.

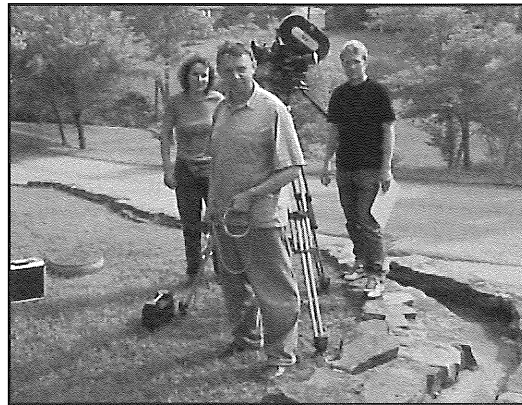
Rather than my telling more of the story, here are excerpts from May's e-mail to all the home owners after they returned to Berlin:

"I JUST RETURNED FROM VISITING HEINZ in Berlin, and I'm so very happy about the results I saw there! I was very excited to see for the first time the 35mm prints on Heinz' editing table. The buildings look just beautiful on film! Heinz was able to capture the unique character of each house, from the early years of Bruce Goff's work beginning in 1922, to his last building in the 1980's. Now that we see for the first time all the buildings in chronological order, the wide range of his ideas and their development becomes truly fascinating.

"In retrospect, we traveled over 9,000 miles in 40 days, across 11 states, all in the mission to film every existing house built by Bruce Goff. We even documented the sad ruins of

Shin'enKan (in Bartlesville, OK). Altogether we filmed 68 buildings from California to Kentucky and from Illinois to Mississippi. And just imagine—during all that shooting, we didn't break a thing!

"When we began work on this project, the only facts we could find about the houses built by Goff were in the archives, and those were only street addresses. In most cases we



didn't even know the names of the home owners. Therefore, the letters we had sent to the "current residents" often got returned, or we didn't get any response. But mostly we found very friendly people calling us back to invite us to film their houses. In some cases we were adventurous enough to just take the risk and drive for 400 miles, not knowing what to expect.

"Did the house owners in that little town in Oklahoma ever get our letter? Does the house still exist? Will anybody be home? Will they let us film their house? Every time we arrived at a place not knowing who the owners were, we just knocked at the door, looking like salesmen, and all of a sudden we found ourselves surrounded by the spontaneous hospitality of Mid-Western people. It was wonderful!

"We are so very fortunate to have seen and experienced all these unique

gems by Goff hidden all over the country. All the hard work of schlepping, not a single day off, and sleeping in identical Motel 6's every night didn't worry us because of you—all the wonderful people we met. We experienced such a welcoming atmosphere and cooperation from all the house owners. We came to know that "Bruce Goff home owners" are indeed very special people! It would be worth doing a documentary on just all of you—you who really care about preserving Bruce Goff's legacy. Without your passionate commitment, most of the houses would certainly not be the same.

"HEINZ IS WORKING ON THE EDITING EVERY day. He says it makes him very happy to escape back to all those places he likes so much. The task is to cut the three hours down to feature length. It's not so easy, considering that all the footage

looks so great!

"We are hoping to have the premier of the film in February of 2003 at the Berlin Film Festival. We will keep you informed about screenings in the U.S. We also want to remind you that we will have the film available on DVD, as well as VHS, once it's completed. In any case, we will keep you updated as to our progress and when it will be available.

"Thank you all for your big support in making this film possible. We are very excited to be able to present you with the film next year. We hope to see all of you again and our wish is that all of you live happily in your beautiful houses!"

*Best wishes from May.
Heinz and Ueli also
send their greetings.*

Frankoma as an Artist's Canvas

Article & Photography

by

Ray & Elaine Stoll
Oklahoma City, OK



CHRISTINE SIMPSON

BETTY SEIDEL STUDIO

Elaine and I became interested in Frankoma Pottery items that had been hand-painted and, for the most part, re-fired after being painted when we came across four C-13 Coffee Cups that had been decorated with a traditional Norwegian design while we were shopping at Connie's in Joplin, MO in the early 1990's. We noted that the designs, while similar, were slightly different on each of the cups. At the time, we couldn't find any references concerning such items and we thought perhaps this was just a one-time thing.

One of the more unusual items we have found was a

BETTY SEIDEL STUDIO

Circa 1942, California

Painted over glaze

Frankoma 50 Tall Round Vase

Ivory, Ada clay, Frankoma Mark

Value \$100 - \$150





CHRISTINE SIMPSON

Circa 1970's, Sulphur, OK
 Re-fired after Painting
 Frankoma 5T
 Plainsman Teapot
 and 5CC Demitasse Cup
 Desert Gold, Pink Sapulpa
 clay
 Value \$75 - \$85/set



#50 Vase in Ivory glaze, which was hand-painted on top of the glaze and not re-fired. This vase dates from ca. 1942, and was marked Betty Seidel Studio on the bottom. Through the years, small amounts of the paint have come off, but it is still an attractive piece.

K. WETTERBERG CO. AND E. STANLEY

While on a visit with Gibb Green in Windsor, CO, we visited one of the Antique Malls he had placed items in and found the #190 Acorn Wall Pocket decorated with Pine Cones by artist Kay Wetterberg (deceased ca 1980). Gibb related that she used to sit on her porch, painting these items. When I spotted several other items on eBay that had pine cones on them, I acquired a pair of 5H Salt and Peppers, only to discover that they had been painted by one E. Staley!

CHRISTINE SIMPSON

One day while on the trail of the "Wild Frankoma" in the southern Oklahoma town of Sulphur, we discovered a Plainsman 5T Coffee Pot with six 5CC Cups that had been decorated with rural scenes. It was also signed by the artist, Christine Simpson, who we were told had lived in that area. Again, Desert Gold glazed Frankoma had been used as the backing for the artwork.

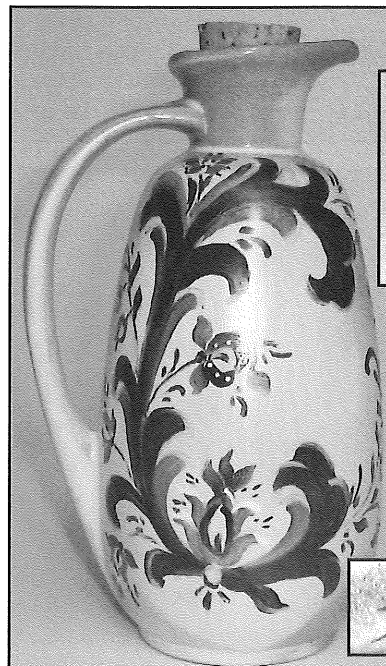
MIKULIK

During the period 1960 to 1971, a person named Mikulik ordered pieces from Frankoma for the express purpose of decorating them. One of the more common



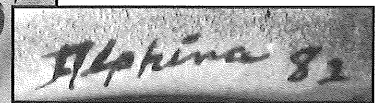
ALPHINA MAHLE

Circa 1980's, Mentor, MN
 Re-fired after Painting
 Frankoma 4Y Spoon Rest
 Desert Gold, pink Sapulpa clay
 Value \$15 - \$20



ALPHINA MAHLE

Circa 1980's, Mentor, MN
 Re-fired after Painting
 Frankoma 835 24-oz Honey Pitcher
 Desert Gold, pink Sapulpa clay
 Value \$35 - \$45



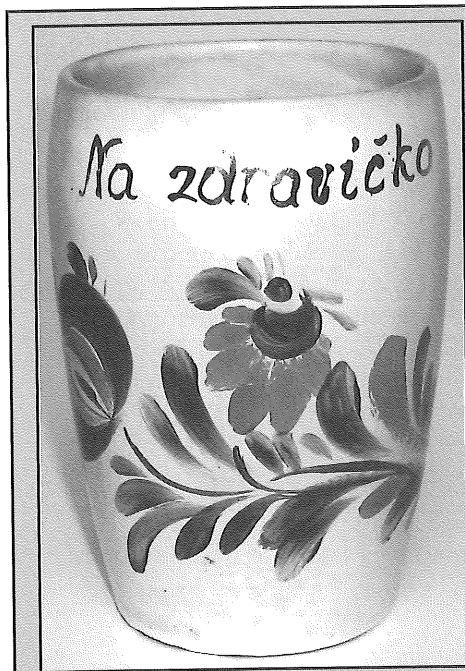
items was the #97D Stein, which he decorated with a floral design and the Slavic term for "To Your Health" in Gold around the top just below the rim. Many of these had "Hand Painted by Mikulik" in the clay on the bottom. These were done on White Sand glaze as were a pair of 5H Salt and Peppers also by Mikulik.

ALPHINA MAHLE

A while back, we had found an

interesting 4Y Spoon Rest which had been painted with a floral design along with a German Language table prayer/grace. This was both signed and on the back labeled as "Created by Alphina Mahle, Mentor, Minn." I learned that Alphina was well known in Minnesota and that she had painted a number of different Frankoma pieces with the floral designs, all quite similar, and with one exception, on Desert Gold glaze.

I started watching eBay for more of these items and found a Prairie Green 4Y with the same German prayer on it and another Desert Gold 4Y with a Norwegian prayer on it. We have since found Plainsman Plates, large and small, an 831 Honey Jug, a pair of 26H Salt and Peppers and several cups. All of these items appear to have been re-fired after being painted. Many of Alphina's items were dated in the 1980's, and all were signed.



"Na zdravicko"
"To Your Health"



MIKULIK

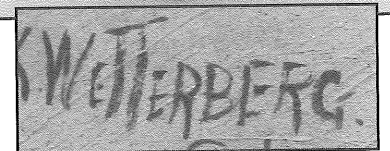
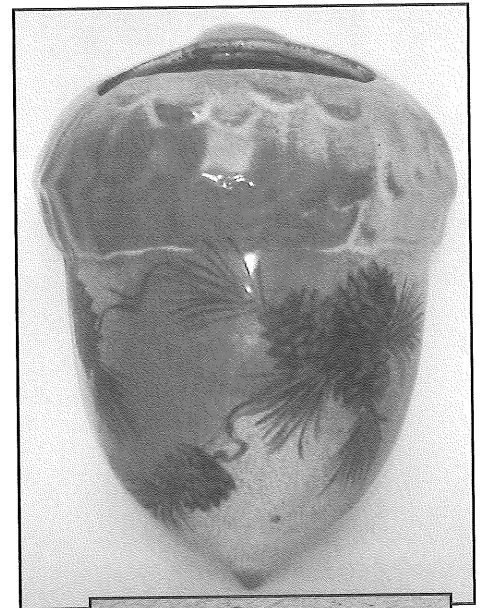
Circa 1950-1961
Re-fired after Painting
Frankoma 5M Plainsman 16-oz Mug
White Sand, brick red clay
Value \$35 - \$45

DIRT FARMER'S DELFT

This piece was acquired several years ago, primarily because it had my name on it! In doing the photography for this article, we discovered the artist's name - R. Tohey - in an area we had thought was grass.

UNKONWN ARTISTS

I have several other hand painted items, e.g., a BP Individual Bean Pot with a top that apparently means it was made to contain some kind of herbal medicine, being labeled as



K. WETTERBERG, CO

Circa 1950-1955, Colorado
Re-fired after Painting
Frankoma 190 Acorn Wall Pocket
Desert Gold, Ada clay
Value \$90 - \$100



NO ARTIST
1969 CHRISTMAS PLATE
"Laid in a Manger"
Designed by John Frank
Painted over glaze
No signature indicating artist
Value \$25-\$35



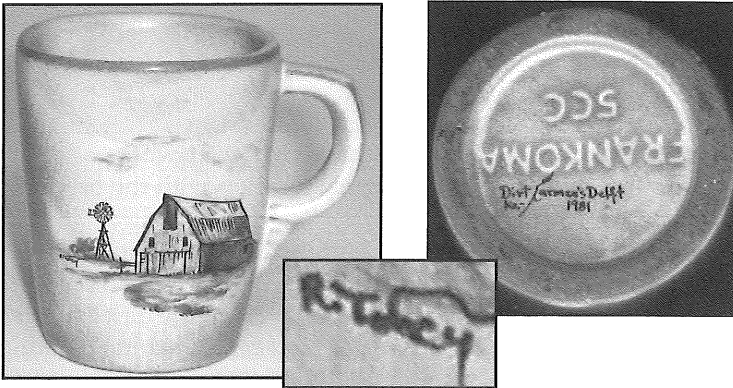
NO ARTIST
1970 CHRISTMAS PLATE
"King of Kings"
Designed by John Frank
Painted over glaze
No signature indicating artist
Value \$25-\$35

such, along with a Biblical quotation.

Two Christmas Plates that were completely over-painted in tempera paint and a Gracetone #231 Madonna that was colored with ceramic stains.

We've also seen several other very pretty examples, such as the 31 Snail Vase pictured in this issue (see Page 8), and a 43 Crocus Vase decorated with what appeared to be irises.

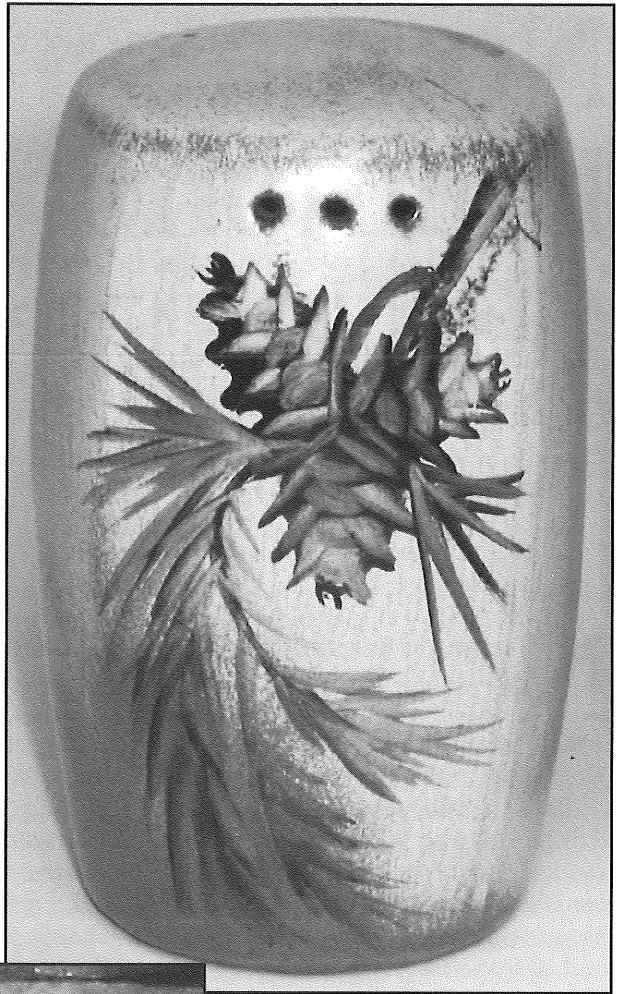
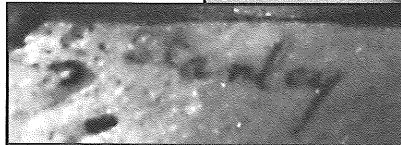
While not "Pure Frankoma," as has been suggested by several noted Frankomaphiles, these hand-painted items are certainly worthy of being added to any comprehensive Frankoma collection. They are not as exotic as the Silver Overlay pieces, which are also after-market additions, but most of them are quite attractive.



DIRT FARMER'S DELFT

Artist – R. Tohey
1981, KS

Re-fired after Painting
Frankoma 5CC Demitasse Cup
Desert Gold, Sapulpa clay
Other side says Ray! In script
Value \$25 - \$30



E. STANLEY

Circa 1952-1955
Re-fired after Painting
Frankoma 5H
Plainsman S&P
Desert Gold, Ada clay
Value \$35 - \$40/pair



UNKNOWN ARTISTS

LEFT

Circa 1960's
Painted over glaze
Frankoma BP Custard Dish w/Lid
White Sand, brick red clay
Value \$20 - \$25

RIGHT

Circa 1970's
Re-fired after Painting
Frankoma C13 Coffee Cup
Desert Gold, pink Sapulpa clay
Value \$12 - \$15 each

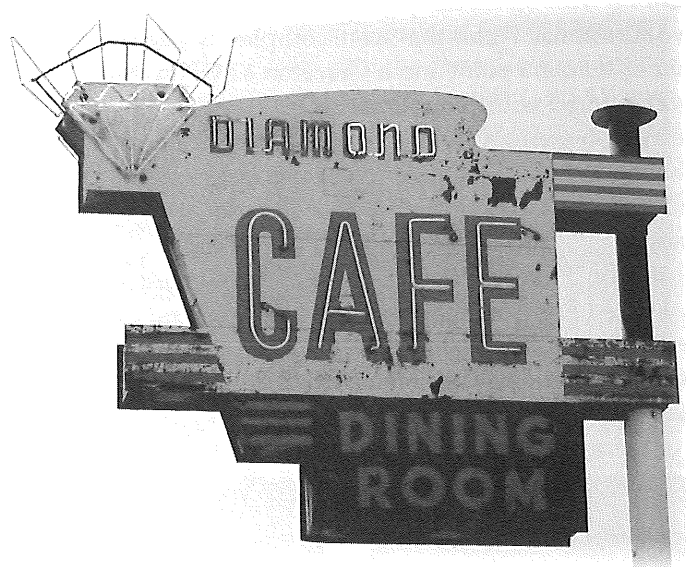


**UNKOWN ARTIST
GRACETONE 231
MADONNA**

Circa 1959-1962
Signed on bottom "SIMS"
Colored by ceramic stain
Value \$250-\$300

Norma's Diamond 66 Café

Donna Frank
Sapulpa, OK



Norma and Bob Hall opened Norma's Diamond 66 Café in 1950, and it was in continuous operation until her sudden passing on Thanksgiving day in 2000. Perhaps some of you collectors have stopped at Norma's for a bite to eat during some of the reunions.

Back in 1950, it was part of a full-service filling station that Norma and Bob began operating as newlyweds. Bob ran a U-Haul rental and auto detail business from the converted service station, while Norma ran the restaurant almost single-handedly. And while times changed, to the end, she operated it as she always had—pleasing customers with her home cooking and greeting Route 66 travelers from around the world. It was a favorite stop for more than just the locals.

In 1950, you could get a steak for a buck, and the Diamond Special for a quarter more. Hamburgers were a quarter, and even in the 1960's you could still get a burger, fries and a Coke for sixty cents. Those were the days. And on special occasions, even in the 1990's, she offered her coffee for a nickel a cup.

In 1999, author Michael Wallace and his wife traveled the original highway from Chicago to California, gathering information for his book, *"Route 66: The Mother Road."* (Norma's Café is featured on Page 110.) Shortly after the book was published, the Wallaces returned for a book signing.

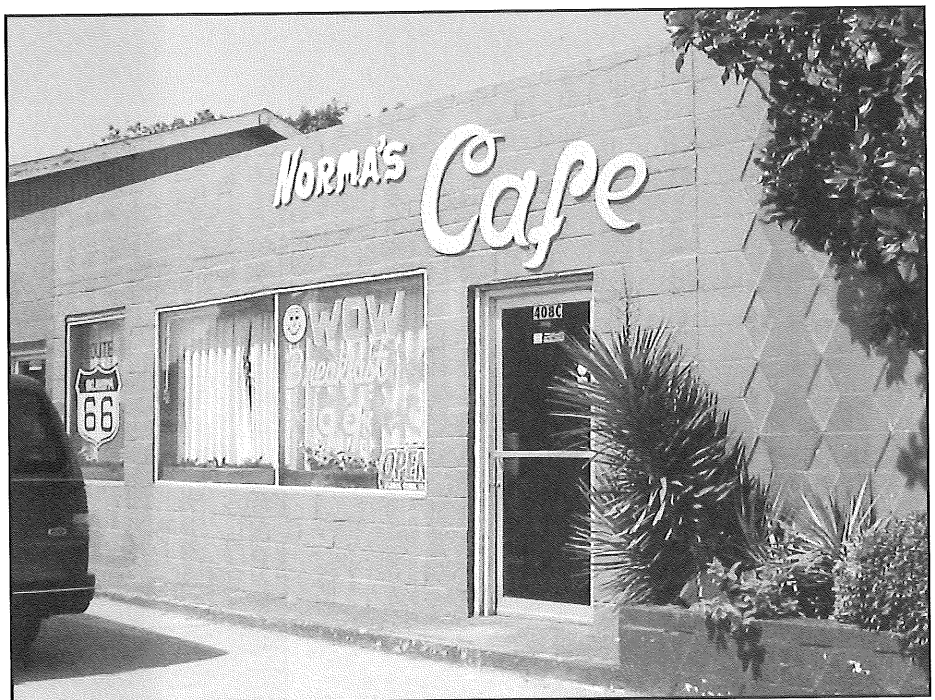
Well-known Sapulpa historian Jim Hubbard, who ate breakfast there almost every morning since its opening, says Norma's was one of the five restaurants 50 years or older in continuous operation on the original route in Oklahoma. The others are Beverly's Pancake Corner in Oklahoma City, 1922; Clanton's Café, Vinita, 1927; Cal's Coutry Cooking, Erick, 1946; and the Anchor Inn, Bristow,

1950. All of those, however, have changed owners. Norma's remained at its original location with the original owners.

In his book, Wallace also highlighted other Sapulpa points of interest along Route 66, including Frankoma Pottery and the Liberty Glass Plant. From the day Norma opened her café, she served her food on Frankoma Wagon Wheel dinnerware. And how did that come about?

Mr. Frank hired Norma when she was a young girl, and she worked for Frankoma Pottery for a long while. She never lost her love for Frankoma, and the Wagon Wheel dishes were her favorites. So when she left Frankoma and opened her café, it was simply the natural thing to do—serve her home-cooked food on native ware. How appropriate for a food stop along Route 66 in Oklahoma!

Since the café carried Norma's name, Bob rather liked taking a back seat to all the fuss. But he couldn't always





Marian Clark on the left and Norma with her famous silver hair.

escape. In some circles he was even known as "Mr. Norma," a name given him one day when he was greeting arriving members of a German car club.

"You're Mr. Norma," one of the lady members exclaimed. "I've seen you in the (Route 66) videos!"

NORMA HAD HELP IN THE CAFÉ FROM HER SON Jon, and also from her grandchildren, Adam and Amanda. Governors from several states have visited, as well as country music entertainers Roy Clark and Buck Owens. Even The King himself sidled into the café one evening. "Elvis Presley sat right over there with his bodyguard," she told many a visitor, pointing to a corner table.

It was not uncommon for the Diamond Truck Stop (as it was known before the Turner Turnpike opened) to have 50 or 60 truckers a day stop for fuel and food. As many as 65 trucking companies had accounts with them. One of the favorite dishes among the truckers, as well as many local patrons, was Norma's "Red Top"—a 94XL with the bottom half filled with fresh-cut beef and vegetables, then topped with homemade chili.

According to their grandson Adam Hall, "It was g-o-o-d stuff! It was everybody's favorite during

A view of the counter with Norma's son on the left, granddaughter on the right and the back of the head of "Mr. Norma."



cold weather. You couldn't find that anywhere else!"

The trucks eventually kept to the turnpike, as did many travelers. The service station closed after 36 years, and fast food restaurants became a threat to cafes like Norma's. But her door remained open.

NORMA ALWAYS KEPT HER RECIPES A SECRET, especially for the lemon and coconut cream pies. Many tried to talk her out of them, or buy them. But those recipes were safe in her head. "I told many a customer who begged for my pie recipes that if I gave them away, they'd have no reason to come back." And she was often heard to say, "I won't use one of those microwaves!"

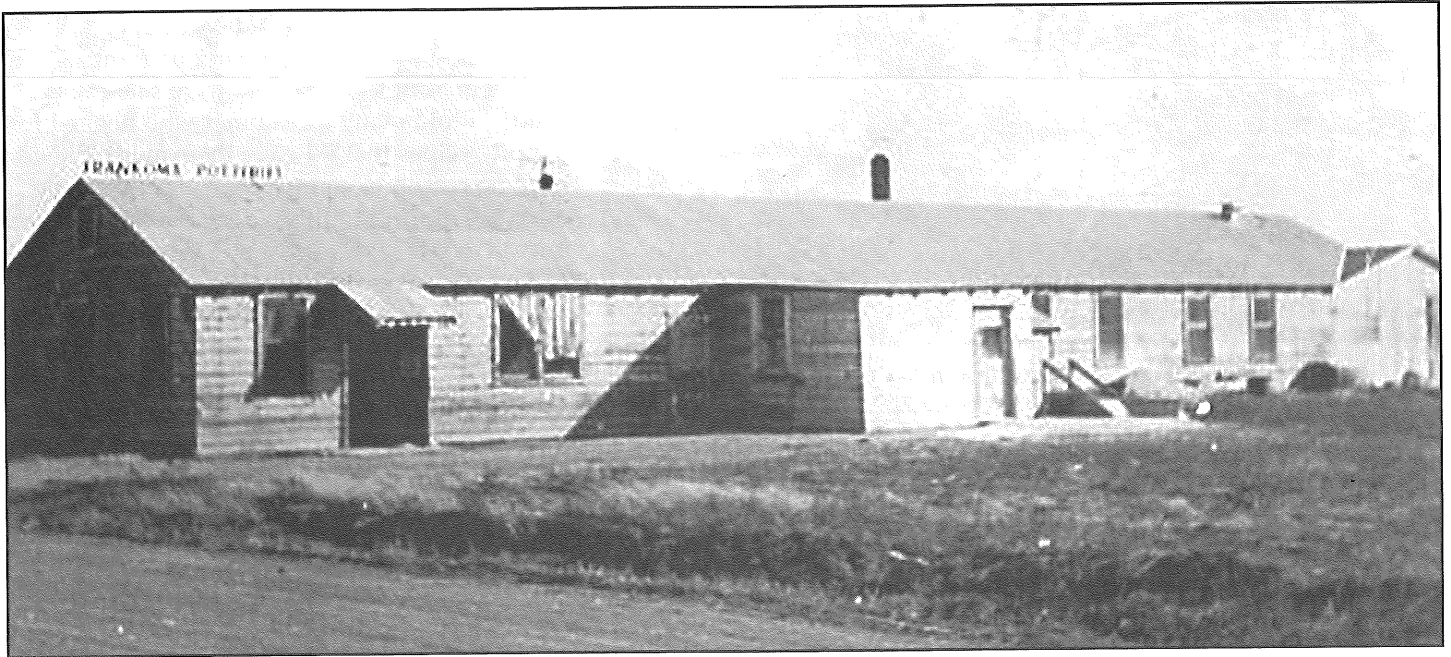
Norma was included in three Route 66 Movies and five Route 66 books, including: "Route 66, the Mother Road"; "The Route 66 Traveler's Guide"; "Oklahoma, the Cruiser's Companion"; "The Route 66 Cookbook"; and "The Main Street of America Cookbook."

We miss Norma's Diamond 66 Café. But most of all we'll forever miss Norma. And we so miss being able to wave at her as we went by on our way into town. Whether she saw us or not, we always waved.

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What a Gift!

Donna Frank
Sapulpa, OK



FRANKOMA POTTERIES, INC.

222 East Hayes Street, Norman, OK

The plant consisted of two one-story frame buildings measuring 25' X 125' and 25' X 75'.

Photo taken by Ernest Rittle in February 1938.

Photo from the Don and Tammy Hansen Frankoma Photo Collection.

At Reunion 2002, Don and Tammy Hansen (KS) presented us with a beautifully framed gift, for the museum, saying they were photos of the “old plant.” Joniece and I blinked and tried to relate to them. We reluctantly shook our heads and said we didn’t believe it was the old plant. It simply wasn’t at all familiar to us as the place we had grown up. The sign on the building said “Frankoma Potteries,” but we still gazed at it in disbelief and doubt.

Don and Tammy continued to insist that it was what they said it was. Finally it dawned on us that these photos of the “old plant” were of the Norman plant—which explained why we didn’t recognize it. When those pictures were taken, I was too young to remember, and Joniece wasn’t even an idea yet.

We didn’t dream that a photo of the Norman plant even existed! How did it survive? Where had it been hiding, and how in the world was it discovered? Tammy explained to us how and where she found it. **Here’s her story . . .**

“As DON AND I SAID IN ANOTHER ARTICLE in this issue, we spend a lot of time at the computer searching in a lot of strange places for Frankoma, places that most people don’t normally know to look. Now and then our search is rewarded with an unusual find. But this time the treasure hunt yielded something incredible and historically unique!

“In a broad search through one search engine, I entered my subject, and close to 6,000 hits came up! I began the long process of elimination. After 658 hits, I came upon one labeled, “Original Documentation of the Frankoma Plant.” They were asking \$98 for the package. So I emailed the seller and asked for some proof. Our interest was piqued, and I called Gibb Green to tell him what I had found and asked him to look at it. Gibb thought it seemed genuine.

“The five-page document was written by a Mr. Ernest Rittle (if we’ve read the signature correctly), an Oklahoma City gentleman whose title was “Manager, Industrial Division” (most likely the precursor to the Commerce and Industry Department of the State of Oklahoma). It was an evaluation of John Frank and Frankoma Potteries, Inc. and stated that the company was looking for a new location. It



FRANKOMA POTTERIES GIFT SHOP AND OFFICE

Norman, OK

Photo taken by Ernest Rittle in February 1938.

Photo from the Don and Tammy Hansen Frankoma Photo Collection

was dated February 14, 1938.

THIS WAS A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT THAT included the history of Frankoma, description of the plant and the products produced, sources of raw materials, the manufacturing process, assets and liabilities, references from Norman businessmen, and so on.

"It was reported that, although the product was attractive and had good sales possibilities, Frank himself was a rather poor businessman. He was offered operating capital to get the business on its feet, if only he would turn over the management of the company to a management firm who could run it profitably. Mr. Frank repeatedly refused.

"At the end, Mr. Rittle concluded that this was not a business he would recommend, and he discouraged any further efforts of the department to attract this business to Oklahoma City."

WHAT A PITY THEY WERE RIGHT.

John Frank was never successful beyond being chosen "Outstanding Small Businessman in America" only 33 years later.

NEWS



GOFF IN THE DESERT ARCHITECTURAL AS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

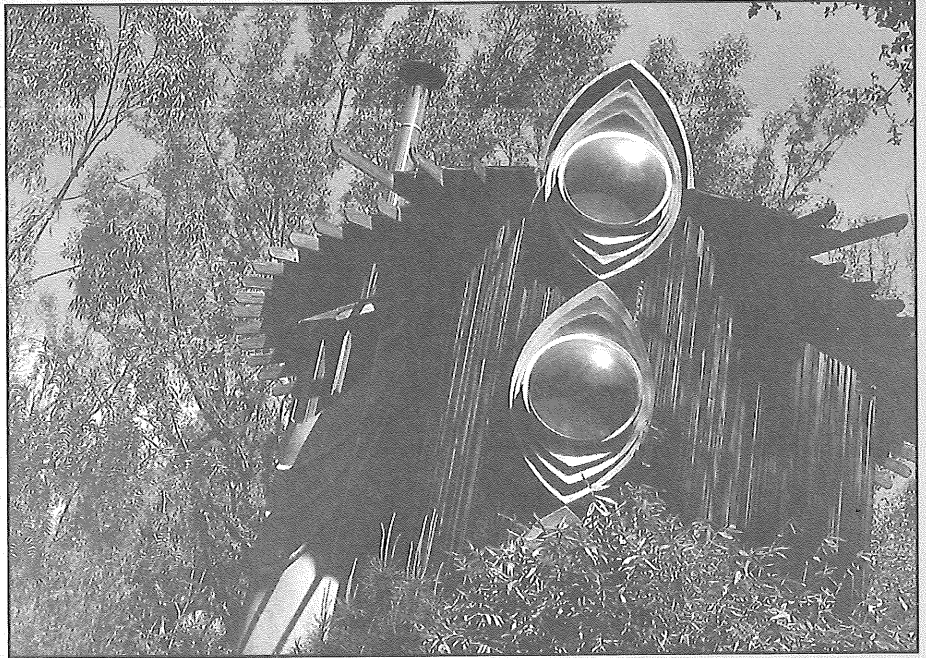
A film by Heinz Emigholz, 35mm, color, Dolby Digital, 110 minutes, premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival February 6-16, 2003.

The film shows 62 buildings – from small petrol stations to representative museums – designed by the American architect **Bruce Goff** (1904-1982). As such, it is the first comprehensive filmic catalogue of nearly all his surviving creations.

Bruce Goff is the great unknown of an original American form of architecture. His constructions and designs run contrary to the ideals of the by contrast well-known International Style movement. Bruce Goff's work sparked legendary controversies during his lifetime.

Nearly all his buildings stood like a shock in the landscape, paving the way for new, as yet unimaginable avenues in architecture. **Heinz Emigholz's** filmic photographs are an open-minded look at the spaces Bruce Goff created. **Shooting took place on 40 days** in April and May 2002 during a 9,200-mile journey across the United States.

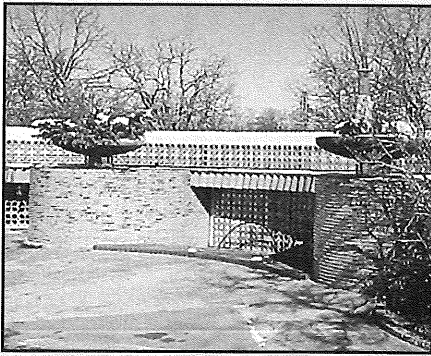
Use this link to view selected



Al Struckus House,
1979
Los Angeles, CA



Gryder House,
1960
Ocean Springs, CA



John & Grace Lee Frank House,
1956
Sapulpa, OK

movie clips of Heinz's film including one of the Frank home on day 24. <http://www.bruce-goff-film.com/en/tagebuch.html>. May will keep us updated on screening dates and locations in the U.S. *It played to nothing but full houses!*

OUR DARYL IS COMING HOME!

Daryl Flanders, our much-missed auction personality, came home for a few days not long ago to be with his wife Dianne and two sons, and his mom and dad Dan and Reba in Okemah, OK. He had some fun for a change, helping his son ready his animals for a big stock show. Now, there's a change of pace! We'll bet he even loved tromping through all that scented barnyard stuff. As you know, Uncle Sam has been keeping him busy for almost two years, buzzing about the globe keeping America safe from predators. Then he returned to Tinker AFB (OKC) to await orders.

Update as of March 28—Daryl and his unit have been demobilized, which means he's home at last! We sure hope this means we'll be laughing with him at Reunion 2003. What a guy!

"LITTLE FIREFLY" IS FLYING!

Our cousin Larry Schultz (NC), the gentleman who composed the music to Grace Lee's poem, reports that this opus was featured in a choral music session at the national gathering of the American Choral Directors Association held in New York City in February, giving it unprecedented exposure to choral directors nationwide. This is the most prestigious choral gathering in the United States. The Capital City Girls Choir in Raleigh, NC will also be performing it in their next concert, and they've invited the composer (Larry) to join them for a rehearsal and the concert. *Congratulations, Larry!*

IN MEMORY OF OUR FRIENDS

PETER E. DELANGE

February 12, 1946 — April 21, 2003

DOROTHY (MRS. TED) STEEPLES

June 18, 1915 — February 23, 2003

GLYNDA SUE HILL FEEZOR

February 14, 1951 — December 14, 2002

PATTY SUE DAVIDSON WALKER

March 17, 1950 — December 13, 2002

FRANKLIN JAMES "JIM" SHIVERDECKER

May 24, 1932 — December 13, 2002

Our sincere wishes, sympathy and prayers go out to the families of these good and faithful members of our Frankoma Family. They will always be missed.



**FAMILY REUNION
2003
AND
JOHN FRANK MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP
DINNER & AUCTION**

September 25th, 26th, 27st

Freddie's Pavilion

1425 New Sapulpa Road, (Route 66) • Sapulpa, OK

SEE YOU AT THE REUNION!

FFCA 2002 COMMEMORATIVE

Limited Edition of 300



Covered Wagon Wall Pocket
4-1/2" Tall, 5-1/4" Wide

*Designed by Joniece Frank
Exclusively for FFCA*

BACK READS
Designed by Joniece Frank
Glazed & Fired by FRANK X 2
Cast by Frankoma
© FFCA

view online
[www.frankoma.org/2002 Commemorative.htm](http://www.frankoma.org/2002%20Commemorative.htm)

In a few weeks, they'll be available for you in Bronze Green, Terra Turquoise, Old Ivory and Gun Metal—to match the Commemoratives 2000 and 2001—and of course there will be those made in special colors that will go up for auction!

This is the third in a series of three Wall Pockets, for three consecutive Reunions, all designed by artist Joniece Frank. This darling little Covered Wagon Wall Pockets will be produced in a Limited Edition of only 300. As before, these items will be cast by Frankoma, then finished, glazed and fired by FRANK X 2.

Prices will remain the same as always—\$40 each, \$100 for three, and only \$130 for the entire set of four. Don't miss this chance to take home (or order) the whole set in all four colors!

If you cannot attend **Reunion 2002**, get your orders in **early!** However, please be patient, as they will not be shipped until October.

Thanks again, Joniece, for creating for us another unique and special commemorative to take home with pride and enjoy!

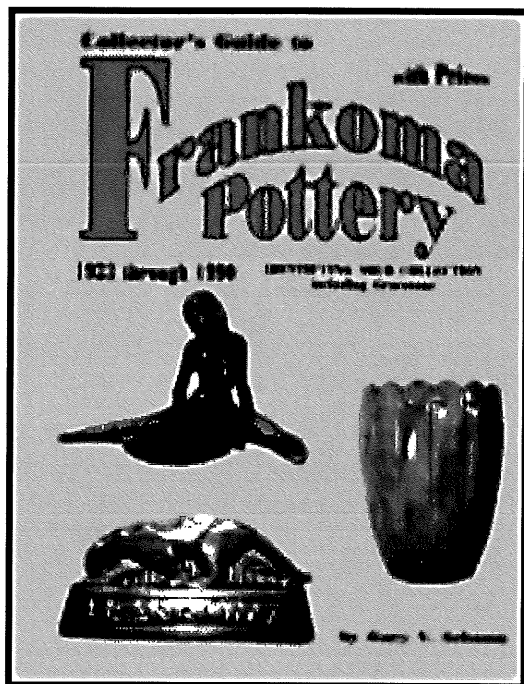
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Schaum's Book Updated

— NOW AVAILABLE! —



What a Second Edition! Gary Schaum's **Collector's Guide to Frankoma Pottery, 1933 Through 1990** (also includes Gracetone Pottery) is now updated and expanded!

The cover is now a pleasant purple to distinguish it from the first edition. There are 12 more pages of catalog reprints to cover items not previously included. Due to changing values since the 1997 edition, Gary has completely updated the Values Guide section.

In addition, beside each item in the Values Guide at the back of the book (stock numbers listed in numerical order) page numbers have been added to help us more quickly reference by photo.

The price remains the same, just \$29.95. This is the perfect companion to take with you when shopping for your collection. If an uneducated seller is asking too much, you can show that person the "authorized" value, and chances are the price will come down for you. If they're asking too little, you can check to see how much of a bargain you're really getting.

This new edition can be ordered directly from the author, PO Box 303, Mounds, OK 74047-0303. Please include \$4 for shipping. All orders shipped via Priority Mail. (OK residents add 5% tax.)

No serious Frankoma collector will want to be without this valuable new book!



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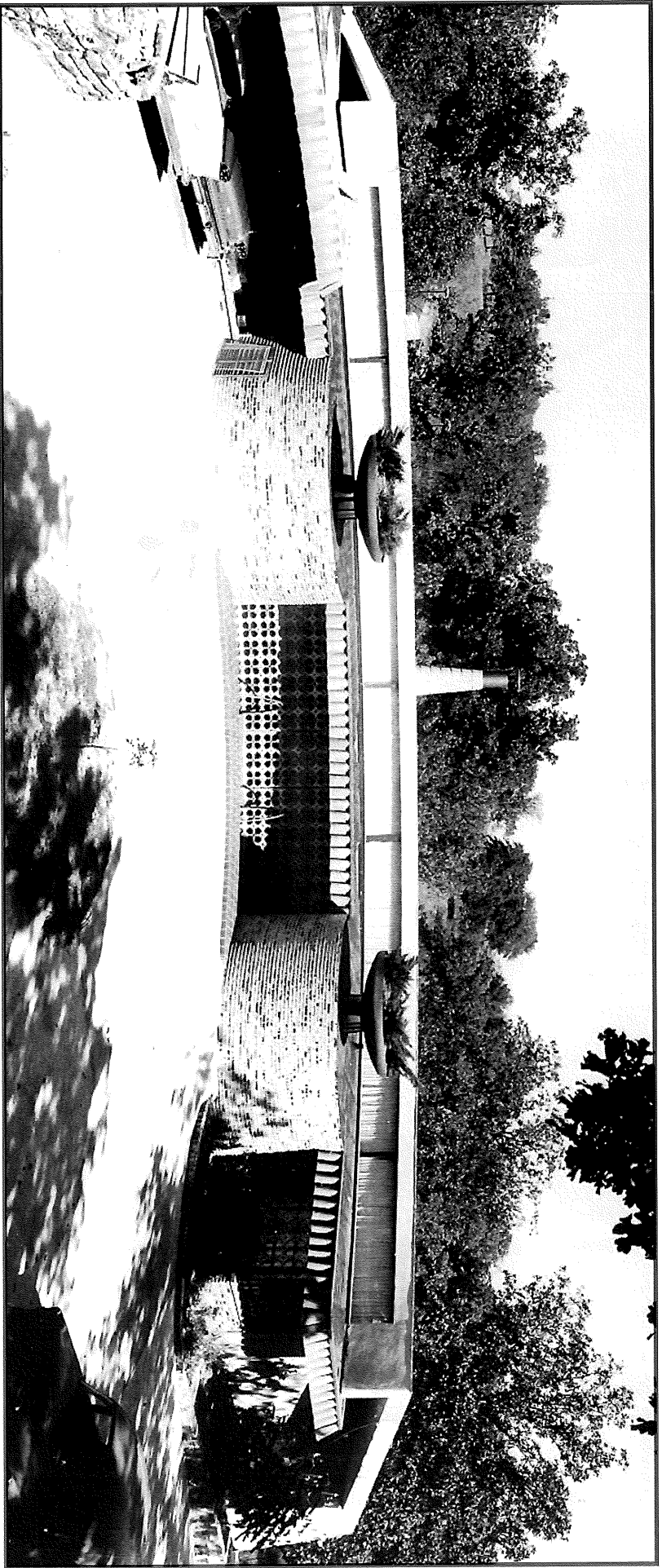
By Joniece & Donna Frank

1300 Luker Lane

Sapulpa, OK 74066-6024

918-224-6610

frankxtwo@aol.com



**JOHN AND GRACE LEE FRANK HOME
1300 Luker Lane, Sapulpa, OK
Photograph circa 1958 -1959**

Mr. Frank was actively involved in building their Bruce Goff "Frankoma House" in Sapulpa. "He laid a lot of the bricks himself," Grace Lee said. "Only one man could have designed this house—Bruce Goff. And I believe that only one man could have built it—John Frank.

This photo shows the house soon after it was completed, with the carport as an integral part of Goff's design which, after Mr. Frank's passing was made into a lockable garage for Mrs. Frank's peace of mind. Mr. Frank had visions of a huge magnolia tree in the center of the round driveway. Sadly, the baby tree was not strong enough to survive the harsh Oklahoma winters, anymore than did the flowering desert yuccas in the center of the planters, nor the three fish ponds he took such pride in. Time changes everything. When this photo was taken, it was the first and only house in that area.