

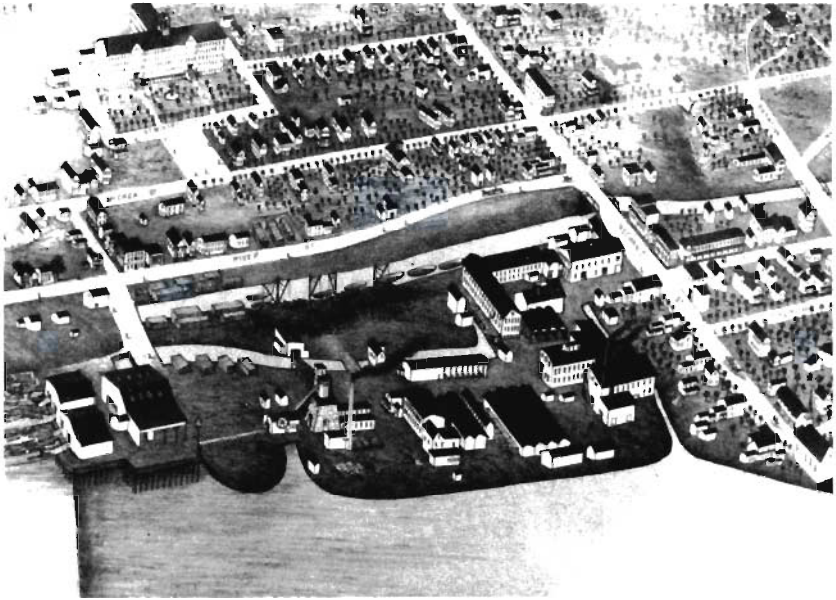
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# A Survey of the Pottery Industry of Fort Edward and Sandy Hill

by *Warren F. Broderick*

**F**ort Edward in the upper Hudson Valley was one of the nation's major centers of stoneware manufacture in the latter half of the 19th century. For a number of years three large mechanized stoneware potteries were in operation at Fort Edward, supplying their products to much of the Northeastern United States. Earthenware was manufactured there as well, and also at adjacent Sandy Hill to the north, also located in Washington County. In 1880, for instance, five distinct potteries were in operation in these communities.

The village of Fort Edward (incorporated 1849) is located in the town of Fort Edward, while the village of Sandy Hill (incorporated in 1810 and renamed Hudson Falls at a later date) is located in the town of Kingsbury. Both villages are located on the east bank of the Hudson River a short distance southeast of the city of Glens Falls and are bisected by the Champlain Canal. Fort Edward had a population of 1,565 in 1860 and Sandy Hill had 1,260 residents. In 1872 Fort Edward had grown to a population of 3,492 and Sandy Hill to 2,347 residents—this population growth reflects their commercial and industrial development during this period. While these two villages were never populous, the close proximity of the Hudson River, Champlain Canal, railroads and highways, and the availability of earthenware clay, wood for burning in the kilns, and cheap water power, made them ideal locations for potteries.



*Detail from Bird's Eye View of Fort Edward, New York, 1875, published by H. H. Bailey & Co., shows a mill complex along the Hudson River and the Feeder Canal, where the Satterlee & Mory and Underwood (later Haxton, Ottman & Co.) potteries were located. From the Fort Edward Historical Association.*

With the exception of an early earthenware pottery at Sandy Hill, these potteries were quite late when compared with those in other communities in the Hudson Valley, being in operation between the years 1858 and 1942. By 1858 Otto Lewis had given up all interest in the Galesville pottery and moved to Fort Edward, where with financial backing from a silent partner, he purchased a structure on Mill Street for \$2,000 and converted it into Fort Edward's first pottery.<sup>1</sup> By a deed dated April 1, 1858, Lewis purchased the former furnace building at the foot of Mill Street from George Wing, along with a right of way to use power from a "hydraulic [mill] race." Lewis agreed to insure the premises and to "tear down and remove all of the chimney and buildings west of the furnace building."<sup>2</sup> This large complex of buildings included a grist mill, iron foundry, blast furnace and lumber mill, and was situated between the river and a feeder canal. This impressive industrial complex is best illustrated in the *New Topographical Atlas of Washington County* (1866), and in *Birds Eye View of Fort Edward, New York, 1875*, published by H. H. Bailey & Co. in the collection of the Fort Edward Historical Association.

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In a detailed agreement dated Feb. 1, 1859, Lyman Cox agreed for \$80 a year to furnish power to Otto Lewis and George Satterlee from a wheel in his machine shop “sufficient to run . . . 5 lathes in the pottery [and for] grinding all the clay.” This power was to be used “for the turning or making of stoneware and for no other purpose, . . . ten hours per day (Sundays excepted).” The agreement also provided a room “for the purpose of grinding such clay and storing the clay therein.”<sup>3</sup> This new business venture is described in an article in *The Fort Edward Ledger* of May 28, 1858:

Mr. Lewis, of Galesville, is now erecting works, in the furnace building next to the paper mill, for the manufacture of Stone Ware, on an extensive scale. The workmen are busily engaged in putting up the Oven, which, when completed, if we mistake not, will be the largest in the State. The facilities for obtaining materials, by canal or railroad, and the abundant supply of fuel almost at the door, renders the location well adapted to the manufacture of wares of that description. Mr. L. is an enterprising, business man, and as his Wares already have a high reputation for finish and durability, will, without doubt, meet with handsome returns for the capital invested in the enterprise.

Lewis’s pottery began operating in September 1858. In February 1859 Lewis took George Satterlee (1820-1900) as his partner, and the following September, A. J. Russell bought out Lewis’s interest in the works. In the 1860 Census, Lewis is shown living alone in Fort Edward and is called a “potter.” One stoneware jug has been located marked “OTTO V. LEWIS/FORT EDWARD, N.Y.,” which must date from this period.<sup>4</sup> How much longer Otto Lewis remained in Fort Edward is uncertain and the rest of his life remains a total mystery. It is unfortunate that such a talented and versatile craftsman as Otto V. Lewis should vanish into total obscurity before he was even 50 years old.

**T**hough Lewis was out of the picture, George Satterlee continued in the pottery business. Indeed his daughter, Margaret, married Andrew J. Russell (ca. 1833-1912), a lumber dealer originally from Warrensburg, who went into business with Satterlee.

The pottery of Satterlee & Russell prospered and grew rapidly. The industrial schedule of the 1860 Census indicated the firm owned \$8,000 in real and personal property, had 400 tons of clay valued at \$1,600, 800 cords of wood valued at \$1,200, 75,000 pieces of stoneware valued at \$25,000 and employed 14 workers. *The Fort Edward*

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*Ledger* of May 18, 1860, stated that the pottery “employs 16 men, and 3 teams in its sale.” The article mentioned that the firm imported clay from New Jersey on its own boats, using about 400 tons a year. “At present one kiln is burned weekly; this uses up annually, over 800 cords of mill wood.” The editor was informed that orders “are largely in advance of their present capacity for filling” and that “having commenced by making a superior article, it is probable that enlargement will be a matter of necessity.” In fact, the firm constructed a loading house and a new kiln later that year.<sup>5</sup> The same editor commented on Aug. 31 that Satterlee & Russell “have a valuable and increasing trade, due to their enterprise.” There are two Satterlee & Russell illustrated price lists, dated 1860 and 1861, in the Wausau collection of the Smithsonian Institution.

The pottery of Satterlee & Russell (“among the most enterprising business men of this place”) is described in some detail in the July 6, 1860, *Ledger*:

... The stock used in New Jersey and Rhode island clay [“Rhode Island” may be an error; the editor may have meant “Long Island” or “Staten Island.”]. ... This is a fine clay and perfectly free from all gravelly substances. It is transported in canal boats directed from the clay banks to the clay mill, an underground apartment adjoining the Pottery, where it is moistened and ground in a mill peculiar to the business, very much like a pepper mill on a large scale. It is then carried to the work-shop and kneaded like dough, till it arrives at a proper consistency, when it is taken by the turners, who place it on a wheel head, turned by machinery, and as it swiftly revolves the plastic material assumes any desired shape by the action of the hands of the workmen; after being turned and “finished,” the articles are transferred to the top of ranges, where they are thoroughly dried, and then glazed inside with a clay liquid made from another variety of clay, found only in the vicinity of Albany.

The ornaments and makers’ names are now placed on each separate article; this is a very nice operation and very lucrative to successful operatives. The ware is now ready for burning; the kiln is a structure some twelve feet square and seven feet high, built of fire brick, and is stocked full of ware; the heat is so intense that common red brick have been entirely consumed; when is at its greatest heat, common salt is thrown in, in suitable quantities which forms the outside glazing; about forty-eight hours are necessary for a good “burn.” After cooling, the contents are taken out and placed in the packing room, from which they go to the pottery vans, used to transport the ware to dealers. The trade of Northern New York is controlled almost exclusively by this house. Their manufactures need no recommendation, they speak for themselves.

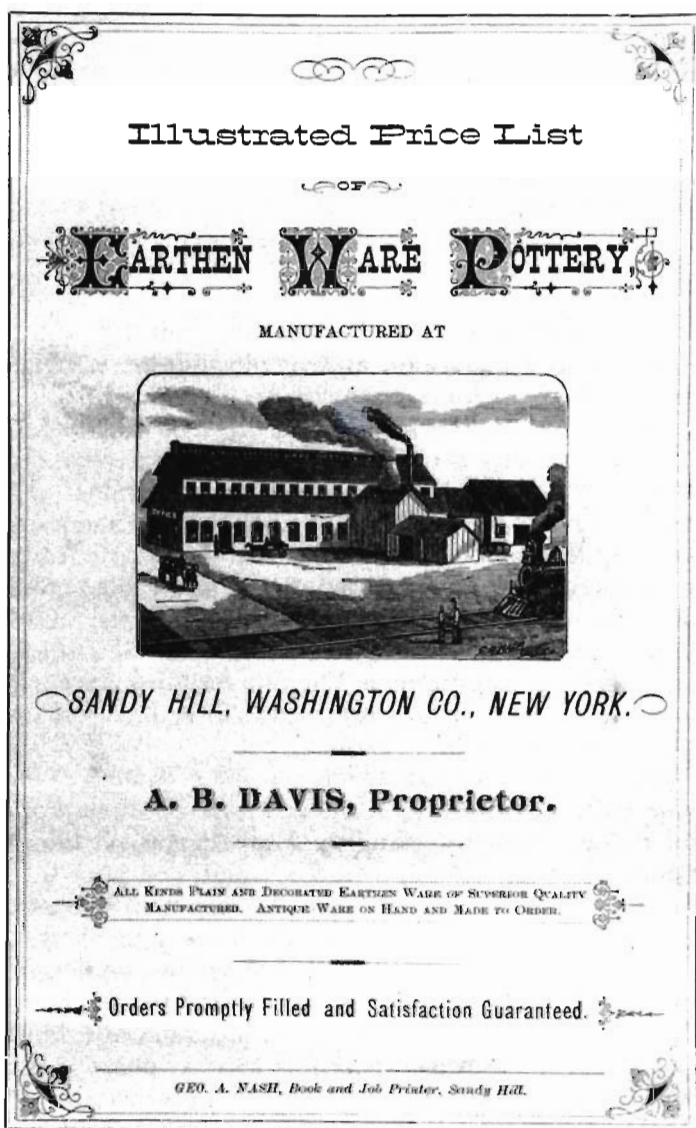
A notice in *The Ledger* dated March 28, 1862, announced the dissolution of the partnership of Satterlee & Russell and creation of the

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new firm of Satterlee & Mory. The new partner was Michael Mory (1827-1895), a local merchant who was also in the apothecary and grocery business. Ware produced by the new firm was marked either "SATTERLEE & MORY/FORT EDWARD, NY" or "NEW YORK STONEWARE CO./FORT EDWARD, NY," while the former firm marked its ware "FORT EDWARD POTTERY CO./FORT EDWARD, NY." The new firm reaffirmed its rights to hydraulic power from the mill race by signing a new agreement with machine shop owner Lyman Cox.<sup>6</sup> According to a Dun correspondent, Satterlee & Mory were "'tip top' bus. men."

**W**hile the business had been established with the expectations of supplying only Fort Edward and vicinity, markets sprang up in New York and other major cities to which wares could be shipped by boat or rail. The industrial schedule of the 1865 Census indicates that \$5,000 in capital was invested, 400 tons of clay were on hand valued at \$2,500, 700 cords of wood were on hand valued at \$1,400 and 12 men were employed. In May 1866 the works caught fire. The fire "spread quickly among the dry firewood which lay in huge piles around the premises" and destroyed the pottery, valued at \$10,000. Insurance covered \$2,700 of the loss.<sup>8</sup> The works "were rebuilt on a larger scale and so constructed as to embody all the essential features of a first class establishment. The new building was completed and the manufacture of pottery resumed in forty days from the time the old one was consumed."<sup>9</sup>

An illustrated price list dated "186\_" in the collection of the New York State Historical Association shows a wide assortment of stoneware, including so-called Rockingham Ware teapots, pitchers, "fancy flower pot vases" and spittoons. An 1880 illustrated price list in the Wausau collection of the Smithsonian also lists Rockingham glazed "cuspedores [sic], gallon beer bottles, soap dishes and vinegar measures." It should be noted that this product was not true Rockingham (with a yelloware clay base) as had been manufactured at Bennington, Vt., and by Otto Lewis at Greenwich and Mechanicville, but rather stoneware bearing a lustrous streaked dark brown glaze. This brown (manganese) glazed stoneware was always and erroneously referred to as "Rockingham" produced by the Northeastern stoneware potteries, such as those at West Troy, Lansingburgh, and Burlington, Vt., as well as Fort Edward, which produced this ware. Shards of this kind of pottery, as well as a spittoon and a small vase (in the author's collection) were excavated at the site of the Satterlee & Mory pottery, now a Scott Paper Co. property, in 1971. This so-called Rockingham



Cover of "Illustrated Price List" of pottery made at the Davis Pottery of Sandy Hill. Smithsonian Institution No. 90-16581.

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Ware is also the title of a short article which appeared in *The Fort Edward Ledger* on Nov. 28, 1862:

Messrs. Satterlee & Mory have at all times a full supply of each of the kinds of ware, made by thorough workmen and finished in a style that cannot be surpassed.— The firm are bound to have each article that goes from this establishment the best of its kind. All who call upon, or trade with Messrs. Satterlee & Mory, will find them in respect to their business as well as the common courtesies of life, gentlemen in the full sense of the word.

The industrial schedule for 1875 shows that the firm owned \$10,000 in real estate and \$2,000 in tools and machinery; had 700 tons of clay valued at \$3,850, 1,400 cords of wood valued at \$2,800, hay and straw worth \$400, and sundries worth \$200. Its stoneware was valued at \$58,000. It employed two kilns, steam power, 15 men and 15 horses. J. S. Bulkeley described the operation in some detail in 1877:

... this firm burned on an average over one hundred kilns a year. The works are generally run the year round, giving employment to about fifteen hands. The goods are shipped mostly by railroad, wagons being used only when customers cannot be reached by rail. This concern ships largely to Boston and the surrounding country, New York City and points along the southern coast, and also make monthly shipments to California. Five power wheels and one "kick wheel" are operated in this establishment, the power being obtained from the machine shop of John Osgood & Son adjacent. They use from seven to eight boat loads of clay during the year and burn about fifteen hundred cords of wood during the same period of time. Their kilns each have a capacity of about \$700 worth of ware, and when the works are being run to their full capacity, they are used alternately, one being burned while the other is made ready. Aside from the extensive business conducted by the proprietors of this establishment, they have on more than one occasion, each of them, been called to positions of trust and honor in the gift of people. Mr Satterlee has been Supervisor of the Town one year and served two terms as Superintendent of section 2 of the Champlain Canal. He has also served one year as President of the Village and was again honored with the nomination last spring and being chosen by a large majority of the votes of the citizens, is presiding over the interests of the Village at the present time, while Mr. Morey [sic] has served three terms as Supervisor of the Town.

The firm evidently maintained a good relationship with county officials as well, for in December 1879 each member of the Board of Supervisors "was presented with a batter pitcher" as a Christmas present from Saterlee & Mory.<sup>10</sup>

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In 1880, when the Census industrial schedule indicates the two men had invested \$15,000 in capital, their furnaces were rebuilt. The signatures of some of this firm's workmen, namely "Frank S. Craft, W[arren] Cook, M. Lezott, G[eorge] McNeal, Wm. F. Craft and George Prouty" are, along with the firm name "Satterlee & Mory, Proprietors," incised on a jug in the Grande collection. Bill Grande also owns a stoneware "leach" (a large jug perforated with seep holes for escaping lye, used in the manufacture of soap) signed by its maker, Wm. F Crafts.<sup>11</sup>

Satterlee & Mory ran into financial difficulties in the 1880's, which led to the closing of their pottery in 1891. They were apparently bankrupt; the county sheriff held a sale of their remaining inventory of stoneware, along with their molds, tools and machinery. The Hilfinger brothers, who ran another pottery, were among the buyers at this sale. Frank S. Kraft, one of the Satterlee workmen, was awarded a judgment in County Supreme Court for a balance of \$323.68 still owed him for work as a "turner" at the pottery between 1886 and 1891.<sup>12</sup>

**A**nother pottery was established in 1865 a short distance west of the pottery of Satterlee & Mory. The new venture was begun by J.A. & C.W. Underwood in a building that had served as the sash and blind factory of Thayer & Holton, between the Feeder Canal and the Hudson River, east of the blast furnace and west of a paper mill. The Underwoods also manufactured broom handles in this factory as indicated by their entry in the *New York State Business Directory* for 1867. Relatively few stoneware vessels are located dating from this partnership and bearing the mark "J.A. & C.W. UNDERWOOD/FORT EDWARD, N.Y." An 1866 illustrated Underwood billhead is in the Leder collection.







In 1867 the Underwoods sold the business to Andrew K. Haxstun (1823-1890) and William R. Ottman (1820-1917). The land and structures ("buildings, kilns, fixtures and machinery") were conveyed from George Bradley and David Underwood to Haxstun, Ottman and financial partner Asahel Wing for \$1,500 by deed dated Oct. 22, 1867.<sup>13</sup> The Dun correspondent remarked that the firm was "well calculated to succeed—their pottery is in good condition & well stocked."<sup>14</sup> An illustrated price list (in the Bouck collection) of Haxstun and Ottman dated "186\_" lists a wide variety of stoneware and so-called Rockingham Ware for sale. This firm became known, probably because of its location, as the "Hudson River Pottery" and marked its wares



Fort Edward, N. Y., *May 14* 1872.

*W. W. Haxstun*

**Bought of HAXSTUN, OTTMAN & CO.,**  
Manufacturers and Dealers in Every Description of Stone and Rockingham Ware.

SIK.		RET'L.	DOL.	CTS.	SIK.		RET'L.	DOL.	CTS.
<b>JUGS.</b>					<b>Butter Pots Covered.</b>				
	Doz. 5 GALLON,	\$13 00	\$1	30		Doz. 6 GALLON,	\$16 00	\$1	80
	" 4 "	11 00	1	10		" 5 "	14 00	1	50
	" 3 "	8 00	90			" 4 "	12 00	1	25
	" 2 "	6 00	65			" 3 "	9 50	1	00
	" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50			" 2 "	7 00	75	
	" 1 "	3 50	40			" 1 1/2 "	5 50	60	
	" 1/2 "	2 50	30			" 1 "	4 50	50	
	" 1/4 "	1 50	20			" 1/2 "	3 50	35	
	" 1/8 "	1 00	12			" 1/4 "	2 50	28	
<b>Melassae Jugs.</b>					<b>Butter Pots Without Covers.</b>				
	Doz. 2 GALLON,	6 50	75			5 Doz. 6 GALLON,	14 00	1	50
	" 1 "	4 00	50			" 5 "	12 00	1	25
	" 1/2 "	2 75	35			" 4 "	10 00	1	00
<b>Open Cream Pails.</b>						" 3 "	8 00	90	
	Doz. 6 GALLON,	14 00	1	50		" 2 "	6 00	63	
	" 5 "	12 00	1	25		" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50	
	" 4 "	10 00	1	00		" 1 "	3 50	38	
	" 3 "	8 00	90			" 1/2 "	2 50	28	
	" 2 "	6 00	63		<b>Covered Cake Pots.</b>				
	" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50			Doz. 5 GALLON,	14 00	1	50
	" 1 "	3 50	38			" 4 "	12 00	1	25
<b>Covered Cream Pots.</b>						" 3 "	9 50	1	00
	Doz. 6 GALLON,	16 00	1	70		" 2 "	7 00	75	
	" 5 "	14 00	1	50		" 1 1/2 "	5 50	60	
	" 4 "	12 00	1	25		" 1 "	4 50	50	
	" 3 "	9 00	1	00	<b>Pancake Pitchers.</b>				
	" 2 "	7 00	75			Doz. 2 GALLON,	7 00	75	
	" 1 1/2 "	5 50	60			" 1 1/2 "	5 00	55	
	" 1 "	4 50	50			" 1 "	4 50	50	
	" 1/2 "	3 50	38			" 1/2 "	2 75	35	
<b>Pitchers.</b>					<b>Flower Pots.</b>				
	Doz. 2 GALLON,	6 00	63			Doz. 4 GALLON,	10 00	1	00
	" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50			" 3 "	8 00	90	
	" 1 "	3 50	38			" 2 "	6 00	65	
	" 1/2 "	2 50	28			" 1 1/2 "	4 75	50	
	" 1/4 "	1 50	18			" 1 "	3 50	38	
<b>Churns With Covers.</b>						" 1/2 "	3 00	30	
	Doz. 6 GALLON,	16 00	1	75		" 1/4 "	2 50	28	
	" 5 "	14 00	1	50		" 1/8 "	1 75	20	
	" 4 "	12 00	1	25	<b>Mixing Bowls.</b>				
	" 3 "	10 00	1	00		Doz. 1 GALLON,	4 00	50	
	" 2 "	8 00	90			" 1/2 "	3 00	40	
<b>Covered Preserved Jars.</b>					<b>Stove Tubes.</b>				
	Doz. 6 GALLON,	14 00	1	50		Doz. 1st Size,	6 50	75	
	" 5 "	12 00	1	25		" 2nd "	5 00	60	
	" 4 "	10 00	1	00		" 3rd "	3 50	38	
	" 3 "	8 00	90		<b>Water Mugs.</b>				
	" 2 "	6 00	65			Per Gallon,	40		
	" 1 1/2 "	5 25	55		<b>BAR SPIRITONS, doz.</b>				
	" 1 "	4 00	40			9 00			
	" 1/2 "	2 75	30		<b>Rockingham Ware.</b>				
	" 1/4 "	1 75	20			Tea Pots, doz. 1st size,	7 50	65	
<b>Tomato or Fruit Jars.</b>						" 2d "	6 50	55	
	(with covers furnished.)	3 00	30			Doz. 1 1/2 Gal Pitchers,	10 00	1 00	
	Doz. 1/2 GALLON,	2 00	20			" "	9 00	75	
	" "					" "	7 50	65	
	" "					" "	6 00	50	
<b>Fudding Pots.</b>					<b>Vases.</b>				
	Doz. 2 GALLON,	6 00	55			Doz. 1 Gal. fancy flower vases,	9 00	1 00	
	" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50			" "	6 00	65	
	" 1 "	3 50	40			" 1/2 " hanging do.	9 00	1 00	
	" 1/2 "	3 00	45			" 1/4 " do.	6 00	65	
	" 1/4 "	2 50	30			" 1/8 " do.	4 50	50	
<b>Bean Pots.</b>						<b>Spiritons, Doz. 1st Size,</b>	10 00	1 00	
	Doz. 2 GALLON,	6 00	65			" 2d "	8 50	75	
	" 1 1/2 "	4 50	50			" 3d "	7 00	60	
	" 1 "	3 50	40			" 4th "	5 00	50	
	" 1/2 "	2 50	28			<b>Chambers.</b>			
						Doz. 1st Size,	3 50	38	
						" 2d "	2 50	28	
						" 1/2 gal beer bottle,	1 25	15	

120  
15 1/2  
108  
48

120  
13 1/2

8 40  
2 0  
2 10

2 20

1 20  
5 2 1/2

All Claims for Breakage must be reported to this Office within Ten Days after delivery of goods, or not allowed.

Price list and order form from the pottery of Haxstun, Ottman & Co., Fort Edward. From the collection of Bill Bouck.

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“HAXSTUN, OTTMAN & CO./FORT EDWARD, NY” and “HUDSON RIVER POTTERY/FORT EDWARD, NY.” An 1873 broadside price list in the Leder collection calls the firm the “Hudson River Stoneware Pottery.”

In 1872 Andrew Haxstun withdrew from the partnership and was replaced by Gilbert Ottman, and the firm became known as “OTTMAN BROS./FORT EDWARD, NY.” In 1879 George S. Guy (1834-1906) became another partner, but he dropped out in 1883. In 1886 Frank B. Hall is listed as a partner in the firm. The Dun correspondent stated these men were “all of good standing in the community.”<sup>15</sup> The industrial schedule for the 1875 Census states that the firm owned real estate worth \$20,000, tools and machinery worth \$1,000; had \$1,300 worth of clay and \$2,400 worth of wood on hand, as well as stoneware valued at \$63,000; it employed 16 men and five boys. By 1880 the Census schedule indicated the partnership had invested \$50,000 in capital and the pottery had three kilns in operation. While the business seemed to prosper, it closed forever in 1888-1889. The mark used between 1879 and 1889 was “OTTMAN BROS. & CO./FORT EDWARD, NY.”

In 1874 Andrew K. Haxstun purchased land along the Champlain Canal on the east side of Broadway at the intersection of the Argyle Road (the present Route 197), in the southern part of the village.<sup>16</sup> The following year he erected a three-story structure, 100 feet by 50 feet, with storage sheds on one side. This pottery, of massive wooden-frame construction, stood until it was demolished in 1954. Haxstun’s firm, which soon became another major producer of stoneware, was known both as “Haxstun and Company” and the “Fort Edward Stoneware Company.” In 1875 the Census industrial schedule indicated that Haxstun and Company owned real estate worth \$10,000, tools and machinery worth \$4,500; had 300 tons of clay valued at \$2,100 and two kilns. It employed 12 men and three boys. No water power was available at this location, so only steam and horsepower were used. The 1880 Census indicated that Haxstun had invested \$20,000 capital in this venture. Their marks were “HAXSTUN & CO./FORT EDWARD, NY” and “FORT EDWARD STONEWARE CO./FORT EDWARD, NY.”

In 1879 Haxstun took Joseph E. King (1820-1913), the prominent principal of the Fort Edward Collegiate Institute, as a partner. Haxstun withdrew in 1882 and the firm became known as “G.S. Guy and Company,” the partners being Joseph King, George S. Guy and William H. Tilford (1829-1894). Haxstun finally sold the land to King on Oct. 7, 1888.<sup>17</sup> The firm remained in business until 1892, when both

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the property and the business were sold to the Hilfinger Brothers for \$2,300.<sup>18</sup>

By the 1880's business was beginning to suffer at all three Fort Edward stoneware potteries. Competition from large Midwestern potteries was a contributing factor, and people increasingly used less expensive and lighter-weight glass and metal containers in their households. To attempt to stem the tide, the owners of the three potteries banded together on Feb. 23, 1883, to form the "Fort Edward Stoneware Association." According to *The Sandy Hill Herald* of March 1, the purpose of the association was to "largely reduce the expenses of putting the goods on the market" by price fixing, apportioning sales and pooling their resources for sales and distribution. Each pottery was run independently and the individual owners were responsible for paying their own debts. At this time the three potteries had a total of more than 70 employees and over \$83,000 capital invested, and held wares totaling about \$115,000. In spite of the association's efforts, only one of the three potteries would survive another decade.<sup>19</sup> The association itself disbanded in 1888 because the "terms of association as to time has expired by limitation" and subsequently "each concern will go for themselves as in former years."<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that on two 1886 billheads of the association in the Leder collection, the name of the Ottman Bros. firm is crossed out in ink, possibly indicating that their firm was not involved in the association at that time.

The third pottery only survived because of the diligence of the Hilfinger family. The Hilfingers were involved in pottery manufacture in Fort Edward for nearly a century. The family patriarch, John Hilfinger (1826-1888), a native of Schroenninger Kingdom, Wurttemberg, Germany, first appeared in West Troy in 1853, where a "John Heffinger" is recorded in *The West Troy Advocate* of June 15 as having married Rosalie Goche five days earlier. He worked in Bennington between 1855 and Oct. 5, 1864, when he enlisted in the Army in Troy. John Hilfinger's apparent second wife, Margaret (1832-1912), was a daughter of the potter Conrad Mertz (Metz) who worked for a number of years in Bennington for the Norton potteries. John served in Virginia in the 89th N.Y. Volunteers as a private and left military service on Aug. 3, 1865. Upon his enlistment he was described as being 38 years old, 5 feet 8 inches tall, with blue eyes, brown hair, a fair complexion, and being a "Painter" by occupation.<sup>21</sup> After the war John worked for the F.B. Norton & Co. pottery in Worcester, Mass., until he moved to Fort Edward by 1868. He returned

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to West Troy in 1870 and again to Fort Edward in 1875, where the family would remain for the rest of their lives. John Hilfinger, according to strong family tradition, is known to have been a decorator, and is credited with many of the attractive cobalt floral and bird decorations found on stoneware manufactured at these four locations. (In the 1866 Worcester City *Directory* his occupation is given as “stone ware painter.”) His presence may, in fact, account for the marked similarity between some decorations on vessels produced at these different pottery centers. Four sons of John Hilfinger: Theodore (1855-1918), Rupert (1857-1904), Alexander (1859-1935, who apprenticed at Keene, N.H., and Portland, Maine) and Frederick (1868-1951) worked in the family pottery. Theodore was not actually a practical potter, but handled the sales and delivery of the wares. In addition, Rupert Hilfinger’s son Howard (born 1896), worked at the pottery from 1905 until its closing in 1942, and played an active role in its management after World War I.

John and Rupert Hilfinger opened a small earthenware pottery behind their home at 99 East Street in Fort Edward in 1884, using local clay from flats just behind their pottery, and produced mostly ornamental flower pots, vases, urns and other “greenhouse ware” at the beginning. Their house still stands (renumbered 121 East Street), but the pottery at this location burned in the early 1890’s. An advertisement in the *Glens Falls Directory for the Year 1886* calls the operation “RUPERT HILFINGER, Manufacturer of Green House Earthenware.”<sup>22</sup> The advertisement in the 1888-90 edition of *Kirwin’s Glens Falls, Sandy Hill & Fort Edward Directory* reads: “EARTHENWARE MANUFACTURING, HILFINGER BROS., PROP’S, makers of Fancy, Flower, & Greenhouse Pots, Garden & Antique Vases a Specialty.”<sup>23</sup>

In October 1892 the Hilfingers purchased the former Haxstun & Co. pottery on south Broadway from Joseph King and converted this into a large pottery for the manufacture of both stoneware and earthenware.<sup>24</sup> They rebuilt the kilns to make them burn more efficiently. As mentioned earlier, they obtained some of the tools and molds that had belonged to Satterlee & Mory at a sheriff’s bankruptcy sale and now used earthenware clay from the Marion Street clay beds. In 1896 the firm had 20 “hands” and by 1909 only 10 “hands,” according to Sanborn fire insurance atlases.

**T**his fairly detailed description of the operation of the Hilfinger pottery has two sources: an anonymous article in the files of the Crandall Library in Glens Falls and the detailed recollections of

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Howard Hilfinger. The clay was first hauled by wagon from the Marion Street clay beds, then ground, and mixed with fish oil; then it was rolled into sheets like carpet or stored in blocks in the basement of the pottery until it was needed. It was brought to the first floor by means of an elevator.

Each jar was shaped by hand at the potter's wheel. After the shaping, the piece was placed on a drying rack. As soon as it was dry the edges were smoothed with sandpaper and a hole pierced in the bottom if it was to be a flower pot. Then the jars were stacked, awaiting the time when enough jars of the same size had been made for baking in the kiln. The inside of the kiln could accommodate a stack of ware some 20 feet in height. Sometimes a period of three months would pass before enough jars of the same size were made to fill an oven. When flower pots alone were fired, as many as 150,000 could be burned in one firing.

The pottery was made in a three-story building constructed of large beams and heavy timbers. A dome shaped kiln was in the front part of the main building, its base extending from the cellar up through the first floor and about three feet into the second floor. The chimney flues were located at the bottom of the kiln to keep much of the heat from rising to the top of the kiln and causing the ware to burn unevenly. The floor of the kiln was made of brick, with openings in a number of places, permitting a draft to circulate upward. Peepholes were made in the top, each hole covered by a brick to allow the potter a way of making frequent checks on the precious ware, at white-hot heat. Before the fires were lighted, the doorway was sealed with 18-inch-long fire brick and cemented tight so no heat could escape; a draft of cold air could cause the pots to crack.

The 10 fire boxes had to be heated gradually. For that reason only two fires were started in the boxes the first day. On the next day, the next two fires were lighted, six fires on the third day and two fires the final day. Fresh soft coal was added every hour at first, then every two hours. However, before the coal was added a stoneware block covering the fire was lifted by a pulley; the bed of coals was shaken and loosened. The precious load in the kiln was never left unattended. For the 70 hours required to bake a load of jars in the kiln, a potter was in continuous attendance. Burning the ware took less time in winter if there was a strong draft. Each shaking of the 10 fires took about a half-hour. The batch had to be cooled slowly. It took two days after the fires were extinguished for the ware to cool sufficiently to break open the sealed door and examine the finished ware.

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The finished jars were stored in bins or stalls on the south side of the building in a lean-to in front of which was a packing house where crates were made for packing the jars in straw. The straw was stored in a loft above the packing room and forked down when needed. It was in the packing shed that the pots jugs, jars, spittoons and churns were carefully crated in straw for shipment not only locally by wagon but also to many part of the world. The Hilfingers also made drain tile piping varying from two to 12 inches in diameter.

An undated (post-1892) fully illustrated catalogue owned by the Fort Edward Historical Association, titled "FORT EDWARD POTTERY, HILFINGER BROS., PROPS.," lists the following earthenware vessels manufactured by their pottery:

mixing bowls, pudding pots, pitchers, batter pails, chambers, bean pots, hotel spittoons, bar room cuspidors, painted cuspidors, vases, hanging vases, fancy flower pots, calla lily pots, lawn vases with reservoirs, glazed flower pots and glazed hanging vases.

The catalogue also lists stoneware made by the Hilfingers "from the best New Jersey clay and . . . stronger and better made than any of the stoneware that comes from the western states." The catalogue illustrates stoneware "butter pots [crock], covered cake pots, covered preserve jars, churns, water kegs, beer bottles, jugs [and] molasses jars." This catalogue seems to indicate that the stoneware was decorated, but no stoneware has been indentified to date that can clearly be attributed to the Hilfinger pottery, and there is no indication when the firm ceased to manufacture stoneware. This catalogue does document that the firm manufactured stoneware as well as earthenware for a few years. According to Howard Hilfinger, stoneware production ceased in 1905, but a stock of stoneware remained on hand for sale for the next few years. The kiln used to burn stoneware was probably torn down at this time in order to make additional room for the earthenware production.

This catalogue also indicates that the Hilfingers produced some glazed earthenware, although most marked or documented Hilfinger vessels are unglazed and have an orange-red appearance. These early vessels were occasionally marked either "HAND MADE/BY/A. HILFINGER/FORT EDWARD, N.Y." (either impressed into or in a black ink stamp on the base) or with the impressed mark "FORT EDWARD, NY." Hilfinger pieces can be found in the collections of the Fort Edward Historical Association, the New York State Historical Association and the New York State Museum. Few marked

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vessels exist because ware was marked only upon a special request of a customer.

Through their ingenuity and their ability to produce inexpensively priced earthenware, the Hilfinger brothers managed to operate a successful business well into the 20th century. After World War I, Fred, Alex and Howard Hilfinger decided to concentrate their efforts on mass production of flower pots. Handmade, wheel-turned pieces, such as vases, urns and bird baths, were still produced on a special order basis or for personal use. An undated newspaper clipping in the files of the Fort Edward Historical Association states that Fred Hilfinger had invented and patented a machine which could produce 5,000 flower pots a day, and that this machine was soon to be used by a major New Jersey flower-pot manufacturer. Both Fred and Howard, in fact, invented these machines as well as the molds needed for the machine to press the flower pots. The machines were also sold to large flower-pot manufactories in Alberta, Canada. At the height of their operation, six machines pressing different size flower pots were at work simultaneously in the Hilfinger pottery.

Frederick and Alexander Hilfinger often exhibited their skills at the potter's wheel at fairs and exhibitions, including the Washington County Fair and the Fort Edward Centennial Celebration. Alex also taught courses in pottery at Glens Falls, Rutland and Syracuse before his death in 1935. Their potter's wheel is now owned by the New York State Historical Association.

Fred and Howard Hilfinger closed the family pottery in 1942. The pottery building needed expensive roof repairs, and the remaining uncle and nephew decided the capital investment was too great. Howard passed up an offer by a local entrepreneur to open a new, improved pottery located near the Marion Street clay beds. The pottery stood until 1954. When the structure was razed, broken jugs and jars as well as molds for flower pots were found in the building, and the cellar was still partly filled with clay. This brought a sad end to one of the few major 19th century pottery buildings which survived well into the current century.

The first pottery known to have operated in the village of Sandy Hill (now Hudson Falls) was owned by a Charles Rood. Relatively little is known about the early 19th century pottery. According to Crisfield Johnson's *History of Washington County*, along the west side of Main Street at the Public Square in 1811 was found "the small house of Mr. Rood, with a pottery nearby, where he made jugs and earthen milk pans."<sup>25</sup> Charles Rood appears in the 1800, 1810, 1820 and 1825 Censuses for the town of Kingsbury, and on two town jury



*Earthenware vase from the Halm Art pottery, Sandy Hill, one of the first "art potteries" in the United States. Painted decoration was applied after firing. From the New York State Museum.*



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lists filed with the County Clerk. The 1815 jury list calls Rood a “mechanic” while an 1823 jury list calls him a “potter.” In 1818 Rood purchased part of lot 49 in Kingsbury for \$500. In 1824 Charles and his wife, Dorcas, sold the corner of lot 35 for \$150, and in 1828 sold their remaining holding in Kingsbury for \$750.<sup>26</sup> Rood appears to have left the community by 1830 and cannot be located thereafter. It is not known where Rood lived before moving to Kingsbury, and no vessels attributed to Rood have ever been identified.

**T**he next pottery to be established in Sandy Hill was the “Halm Art Pottery,” which opened in November 1877. The proprietor was George R. Halm, an artist “recently employed on *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated*,” who relocated himself in Fort Edward in October of that year.<sup>27</sup> The newspaper notice continued that “it is his intention in concert with his father [George J. Halm], to build up a manufactory . . . devoted to art pottery.” This marked the founding of one of the first art potteries in the United States. Very little is known about the father and son themselves. A Nov. 1 article in *The Sandy Hill Herald*, under the headline “A NEW ENTERPRISE: HALM ART POTTERY COMPANY FORMED,” states that “Messrs. Halm” are “experts at the business, having had years of experience in Europe.” The elder Halm may have been the same George Halm who worked as a potter in Rochester in 1844-1845. In addition, an otherwise unidentified person or persons named Halm were involved in the firm of “Brewer and Halm” in Havana (Montour Falls) in 1853 and in the firm of “Halm and VanKleeck” in Bath (Greenbush) in 1861.<sup>28</sup>

A stock company was formed, “consisting of seven citizens of this village, together with the Messrs. Halm.” George R. Halm was elected president, W.H. Kincaid, secretary and treasurer, and George J. Halm, general manager.<sup>29</sup> “The goods to be manufactured will consist of the useful and ornamental, such has never been made on this side of the Atlantic, and it looks as though there will be a ready demand for them,” *The Herald* story of Nov. 1 said. We “believe there is the germ there to build up an important branch on industry in our place. The number of hands to be employed at the start will be small, but it is not extravagant to say, if everything goes prosperously, several hundred skilled mechanics will be engaged at no distant day.”

A brick building, 40 by 80 feet, with two extensions of 40 by 25 feet, formerly used as Cornell’s machine shop and owned by a local merchant, Abraham B. Davis (born ca. 1830), was renovated for the

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Halm Art Pottery. The structure is labeled "Machine Shop, A.B. Davis" on the 1875 Map of Sandy Hill and Fort Edward by D. W. Beers in the New York State Library. Assessment rolls of the village of Sandy Hill between 1878 and 1883 refer to this property as "pottery" owned by A.B. Davis. "Mills and ovens" needed to be constructed, but the "fine steam engine . . . on the premises" would supply the power. This building stands on John Street west of the railroad tracks at "Baker's Falls." Crisfield Johnson added that "their plan of operation contemplates the manufacture of purely artistic ware . . . in which industry they expect to employ about fifty hands. At present, in the fourth month of operation, they are producing about one thousand pieces per week."<sup>30</sup>

The Halms were apparently well versed in the history of pottery as well as in its production. In February 1878 George R. Halm delivered a lecture before the Reform Club. "He sketched the history of pottery from the earliest ages down to the present time, and elucidated the subject by drawing on a black board, after which, models in clay were made on the platform, by a practical potter."<sup>31</sup> *The Herald* of Nov. 15, 1877, featured a long article on "ART POTTERY" written by the Halms. The article described the differences between types of pottery (which the writers classified as "terra-cotta, earthenware, Majolica, stoneware and porcelain & china") and listed ingredients traditionally used in each. The article then devoted some space to "the rage for art forms from the antique for decorative purposes, . . . the reproduction of vases based on the purest outlines of early Greek, Etruscan, Carthaginian, Roman, Egyptian and Japanese potters." The Halm Art Pottery announced that it was "organized to furnish these forms as perfect as the originals, and attempt to do their share toward educating the artistic taste of the people."

The Halm Art Pottery showed great promise at first. Its boatload of clay arrived from New Jersey in November.<sup>32</sup> The pottery was closed for a week in January for repairs to the engine, but by February it was in "successful operation. . . several hundred pieces were successfully burned for the first time."<sup>33</sup> Jennie Young wrote in her 1878 work *The Ceramic Art* that while few art potteries in the United States produced works of distinction, an exception was the Halm Art Pottery, whose works were "gradually drawing away from the commonplace, and may be expected, sooner or later, to possess an artistic individuality."<sup>34</sup>

But while the pottery initially gave reason for success, the firm soon ran into financial difficulty. *The Sandy Hill Herald* of Feb. 23, 1878, announced that the "Art Pottery Company's pottery was sold

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under the Sheriff's hammer to satisfy Dr. Clark's claim, and was bought in by Wm. A. Kincaid, for the amount of the judgement, \$1,040.68. The pottery will recommence operation at once." The following May 21 a correspondent noted in the Dun credit ledgers that the firm was "reported failed" and "reported sold on a judgt."<sup>35</sup> The pottery continued to operate, for *The Herald* noted on April 18 that "the Art Pottery has produced several specimens of painting in vitriable colors (commonly called Majolica.) They are burned in the pieces and last as long as the plates, cups, etc." While the pottery continued to function, the Halms moved away in 1879; George R. Halm and his wife, Elizabeth, selling their house in Fort Edward.<sup>36</sup>

A.B. Davis continued to operate the pottery after the departure of the Halms. Davis is listed in the 1879-80 *The Glens Falls, Sandy Hill & Fort Edward Directory*<sup>37</sup> as "dry goods, groceries, etc., also manufacturer of earthenware pottery." The industrial schedule for the 1880 Census states that \$8,000 of capital had been invested, that the pottery employed 16 men and three youths, operated 11 months out of the last year (June 1879-May 1880), had materials valued at \$1,000 and products valued at \$10,000, and that it used one boiler, one engine and 10 horses for power. In the same Census, Albert Nickolds, John Bush, Edwward McGuire, William Starrett and Patrick Tearney are listed as potters residing in Sandy Hill.

*The Herald* reported on Oct. 7, 1880, that a fire destroyed the pottery, nothing remaining "but the brick walls." The loss was estimated at \$6,000 and was partly covered by insurance. *The Herald* reported on Oct. 20 that Davis "is rapidly rebuilding his pottery and expects to have things in working order soon." The firm continued to produce earthenware pottery; a *Herald* article on Aug. 31, 1882, stated that it "was being run with a full set of hands and the proprietor finds it almost impossible to supply his rapidly increasing orders." Another piece in the same newspaper the following Jan. 4 stated that the operation was "under the superintendence of Harry Smith" and was "working twelve men, and preparing for the spring trade." Harry Smith is listed as "boss potter" in the 1881 *Directory of Warren & Washington Counties*<sup>38</sup>. On Nov. 18, 1882, the Dun correspondent remarked that Davis was "an honest, industrious, economical man & not likely to sink into debt beyond [his] ability to pay."<sup>39</sup>

An undated (ca. 1880) "Illustrated Price List" for Davis's "Earthen Ware Pottery" in the Wausau collection of the Smithsonian Institution shows an illustration of the pottery building, with a second story and additions that have since been removed. The price list advertises "all kinds plain and decorated earthenware of superior quality

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manufactured” including “antique ware on hand and made to order.” The forms include vases, flower pots, “Roman flower pots,” “bracket pots,” “curved flower pots,” calla lily pots, cuspadores, “poney cuspadores,” poultry fountains, waste paper jars and umbrella stands. Ware was available for sale either undecorated, with a “rosewood finish-gold striping” or “decorated.” They also sold plain florists’ pots and saucers and wire hangers for hanging pots and vases.

An article in *The Herald* on Feb. 1 stated that A.B. Davis was leaving Fort Edward to join his brother Augustus Davis in Baltimore “in the production and sale of electric light machines.” The pottery business was sold to Francis B. Davis of Fort Edward and the sale was to “make no difference in the management of the concern. Mr. Harry Smith will retain his position as manager and all the old hands will be employed.” The Dun correspondent noted on Feb. 10 that Francis B. Davis was now “sole proprietor of the Ornamental Pottery Manufactory at Sandy Hill” and that he “carries out the pottery business in the name of A. B. Davis & Son for the time on account of their reputation.”<sup>40</sup> Despite his “honest and truthful” reputation, Francis B. Davis was considered “sailing close to the wind,” and by September 1883 the Davis pottery had ceased operation and was up for sale. By the following January the Allen brothers lumber firm had purchased the building, torn down a portion and rebuilt the rest to suit their purposes.<sup>41</sup> The building, as renovated, appears on the 1884 Sanborn fire insurance map of Sandy Hill as “Allen Bros., General Storage” and is numbered “15” on the 1886 panoramic view of Sandy Hill by the Burleigh Litho. Co. The structure is used today for offices by the Sandy Hill Corp.

A few articles of pottery produced at this location have been identified. The Halm Art Pottery used a circular stamp impressed in the base of some of their work reading “HALM ART POTTERY CO./SANDY HILL, N.Y.” Examples of Halm’s work can be found in the collections of the New York State Museum, the Smithsonian Institution and the Fort Edward Historical Association. A lathe-turned vase with four decalomania roses is illustrated in Paul Evans’s *Art Pottery of the United States*.<sup>42</sup> These vessels consist of carefully turned, unglazed vases made from a dark reddish earthenware and are distinct in both clay body and sophisticated workmanship from those produced by the Hilfinger brothers in Fort Edward. The vase in the State Museum’s collection has some decoration painted after it was fired. An earthenware vase in the New York Museum’s collection has some decoration painted after it was fired. An earthenware vase in the New York State Museum’s collection, molded and also painted

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in an attractive birch-bark motif, bears the pencil inscription on the bottom "1881 Sandy Hill, N.Y.," suggesting it was made at the Davis Pottery. This vessel does, however, more closely resemble those attributed to the Hillside Pottery described below. The New York State Museum also owns an earthenware spittoon, a vase and a poultry feeder attributed to the Davis Pottery.

**Y**et another short-lived earthenware pottery operated in the town of Fort Edward (north of the village of Fort Edward and south of the village of Sandy Hill) between 1879 and 1883. Known as the "Hillside Pottery," it was located on a road then known as Ransom Street (now known as Smith Street), running east of Burgoyne Avenue, east of the Union Cemetery, and on the hillside above the Champlain Canal. The location originally appeared on D.W. Beers 1875 Map of Sandy Hill and Fort Edward as "Brick Yard—Ransom & . . ." A brickyard was operated at this location from as early as 1875 to 1883 by James Ransom (1820-1902) of Sandy Hill. This is referred to in the *History of Washington County* (1878) as the "Hillside Brick-Kiln." Later, in August 1879, the Hillside Pottery was established there, as well by the firm of "Davis & Co." or "Davis, Foster & Co." The partners were James Ransom, Alexis Davis (son of Abraham B. Davis) and Fred Foster M.D. An article in *The Washington County Post* on Aug. 22, 1879, stated that the pottery "starts with three wheels. Their kiln is underway." The same newspaper noted on Sep. 12 that they "burnt their first kiln. The prospects of the firm are flattering." The Dun correspondent noted that Ransom was a "pretty likely man & strictly honest," but that his real estate was mortgaged and his assets were "pretty well tied up." The Dun correspondent also stated that the Hilfinger brothers had no capital to invest in the venture.<sup>43</sup>

In a short period of time Ransom's new partners in the Hillside Pottery became Rupert and Alexander Hilfinger. Their "STEAM BRICK YARD and Earthenware Pottery" is advertised in the 1879-80 *Glens Falls, Sandy Hill & Fort Edward Directory*. The advertisement states that the firm manufactures

first quality hard brick, also all kinds of Plain and Decorated Earthenware of superior quality, such as Scalloped Flower Pots, Hanging Vases, Lawn Vases, Bulged Flower Pots, Poultry Fountains, Bell Curved Flower Pots, Saucer Pots, Cuspadores, Bar Room Spittoons, Italian Flower Pots, Waste Paper Jars, Calla Lily Pots, Umbrella Stands, Florists' Ware, Saucers, Milk Pans, Bean Pots and Strawberry and Plant Protectors. ANTIQUE WARE on hand, and made to order from designs.

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The industrial schedule for the 1880 Census states that the firm used horsepower and employed 13 men in the operation. While this schedule called it the “Stoneware pottery” of James Ransom, there is no evidence that any stoneware was ever manufactured there. Fire struck the Hillside Pottery at 2 P.M. on Friday, Feb. 28, 1881, causing \$6,000 to \$8,000 damage. Insurance covered \$3,500.

The only one in the place was Alex Hilfinger, who was molding in the lower department. Before he was aware of the existence of the fire, the upper story was ablaze; when discovered nothing could be done to save the place, as the fire got a good start and water was scarce. The fire communicated from the chimney, as large quantities of smoke and sparks were seen to issue from the same before the flames broke out, by men who were working on the railroad culvert, a quarter of a mile distant. The place was filled with manufactured goods for the spring trade . . .<sup>44</sup>

The Dun ledgers indicated on April 5, 1882, that Ransom “has had several fires & lost something.” According to *The Sandy Hill Commercial Advertiser* of April 2, the firm contemplated rebuilding the pottery as soon as possible.

The pottery was apparently rebuilt, for the 1881-82 *Directory of Warren & Washington Counties* lists James Ransom as operating a “pottery,” while Kirwin & Williams’s *Glens Falls, Fort Edward & Sandy Hill Directory* for 1883 lists “James Ransom, earthenware manufacturer, on road from Burgoyne Ave. to Champlain Canal, house at Sandy Hill.” It is doubtful that the pottery operated as late as 1884, the year that the Hilfingers established their own pottery on East Street in Fort Edward. The Dun correspondent wrote on July 27, 1883, that Ransom had “made some poor brick & could not sell them” and on Nov. 17, 1884, stated that Ransom was “out of business.”

Alice Loughlin of Fort Edward has studied shards of pottery and pieces of clay found at this site, and used them to identify pieces of earthenware said to have been manufactured here. Some of these originate at the Hillside Pottery, she says. A number of these articles are not in the collection of the New York State Museum. Earthenware from the Hillside Pottery is not as orange in color, but is more finely crafted than Hilfinger earthenware, and is not as dark in clay body nor as finely crafted as Halm Art Pottery or Davis Pottery vessels. None of these pieces is marked, but a couple have “Hillside Pottery” written in pencil on their bases. They include a very attractive, circular, hanging match holder in the collection of the Fort Edward Historical Association, as well as a miniature churn, a miniature shoe, vases, spittoons, match holders (one in the shape of an

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animal's head) and a large umbrella stand with applied colored decorations. Identification and attribution of unmarked earthenware manufactured at the Hillside, Halm Art, Davis and Hilfinger potteries is, of course, subject to conjecture, and is a difficult task at best.

## Notes

1. Warren F. Broderick & William C. Ketchum Jr., "The Potters and Potteries of Greenwich and Galesville," *Hudson Valley Regional Review* (6:1), March 1989, pp. 67-68.
2. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 40, p. 63.
3. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 54, p. 411.
4. William C. Ketchum Jr., *Potters and Potteries of New York State, 1650-1900* (Syracuse, 1988) p. 248.
5. *Fort Edward Ledger*, Oct. 26, 1860.
6. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds vol. 51, pp. 344-346.
7. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 612, p. 110 (Archives and Manuscripts, Baker Library, Harvard Univ. School of Business Administration, Boston).
8. *Sandy Hill Herald*, May 11, 1866.
9. J. S. Bulkeley, *The Leading Industrial Pursuits of Glens Falls, Sandy Hill & Fort Edward* (Ballston [Spa], 1877), pp. 38-39.
10. *Sandy Hill Commercial Advertiser*, Dec. 17, 1879.
11. *Stoneware Collector's Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1985, pp. 19-21.
12. Judgment Rolls, Supreme Court, Washington County Clerk's Office.
13. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 66, p. 5.
14. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 612, p. 86.
15. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 613, p. 500.
16. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 76, p. 304.
17. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 92, p. 671.
18. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 112, p. 265.
19. Ketchum, *Potters and Potteries*, p. 250.
20. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 615, p. 88.
21. Division of Military & Naval Affairs, Abstracts of Civil War Muster Molls, Vol. 15, p. 667, New York State Archives & Records Administration.
22. Glens Falls, 1885, p. 215.
23. p. 165.
24. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 112, p. 265.
25. Crisfield Johnson, *History of Washington County, NY* (Phila.: 1878), p. 425.
26. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds vols. O p. 289, P page 294, Y p. 87.
27. *Sandy Hill Herald*, Oct. 4, 1877.
28. Ketchum, *Potters and Potteries of New York State*, pp. 193, 325.
29. *Washington County Post*, Nov. 23, 1877.
30. Johnson, *History of Washington County, NY*, p. 427.
31. *Sandy Hill Herald*, May 28, 1878.
32. *Washington County Post*, Nov. 23, 1877.
33. *Sandy Hill Herald*, Feb. 7, 1878.

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34. Jennie Young, *The Ceramic Art* . . . (NY: 1878), pp. 467-468.
  35. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 614, p. 719.
  36. Washington County Clerk, Book of Deeds, Vol. 85, p. 463.
  37. Sandy Hill, 1879.
  38. Hudson, 1881.
  39. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 614, p. 203.
  40. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 615, p. 21.
  41. *Sandy Hill Herald*, Sept. 1, 1883, Jan. 10, 1884.
  42. Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, revised ed. (NY: 1987), p. 127.
  43. R.G. Dun & Co., Credit Ledgers, New York State, Vol. 614, p. 862.
  44. *Sandy Hill Herald*, Feb. 3, 1881.

## APPENDIX A

The following description of the large mechanized pottery operation is taken from J. S. Bulkeley's, *The Leading Industrial Pursuits of Glens Falls, Sandy Hill & Fort Edward* (Ballston [Spa], NY: 1877). The only known copy of this rare publication is in the collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society, which was kind enough to reproduce the work so that it could be used in this research.

### **The Manufacture of Pottery**

It might be supposed by the uninitiated that the manufacture of what is known as common pottery ware, was a simple process entirely devoid of interest to the spectator, but a review of the three potteries located at Fort Edward, would soon dispel the illusion, by revealing the fact that the work executed there involves the employment not only of the very best quality of material, but of workmen of the most consummate skill. Nor is it true, as many would infer, that potteries, like brick-yards, are located adjacent to clay banks for convenience in procuring clay. On the contrary they are in many instances located hundreds of miles from the clay mines, for while clay is an indispensable requisite in the manufacture of pottery, there are other materials to be employed, which are quite as essential for the proper prosecution of the business. We refer more particularly to the large amount of fuel required to heat the kilns in which the pottery is burned. The best material for this purpose is found to be wood, and as the numerous saw mills at Fort Edward and vicinity furnish refuse lumber in large abundance, it can be purchased at a comparably small figure—hence one important reason for locating potteries at



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this place. Clay, being of less bulk and cheaper to transport, is therefore brought to the wood.

The best quality of potter's clay is found at South Amboy, N.J., where it exists in almost inexhaustible abundance, and is extracted from the beds which lie several feet below the surface, by a peculiar system of mining, a full description of which would not prove uninteresting in this connection, did space permit. A small stream called Chesquack's Creek flows through this clay district and is navigable about six miles from its mouth. Boats are run up a desirable distance by the incoming tide and returned with the tide as it goes out. The boats thus loaded are sent out to the various potteries, and at Fort Edward they are unloaded at the doors of the manufactories. It is placed in cellars which are capable of holding a year's supply or more, which at Fort Edward varies from 700 to 1,000 gross tons for each pottery. It is then prepared by a process of grinding and screening, which rids it of all the impurities, consisting in the main of sulphur stone. The peculiarity of this stone is that when exposed to a certain heat it expands to several times its original size, causing serious damage to the ware. A small piece of this treacherous substance, no larger than the head of a pin, if not screened from the clay will oftentimes in expanding render an earthen vessel unmarketable.

After being properly prepared and tempered, the clay is passed to the turners to be moulded into whatever shape may be desirable. The turners occupy "cribs" located side by side, in which are wheels or circular tables, so constructed as to revolve in a horizontal direction. The amount of clay required for any particular kind of vessel is determined by weight—each turner being provided with a pair of scales for that purpose. The clay is then packed by hand into a cylindrical form preparatory to being turned. It is then placed upon the revolving table; the operator wets his hands, and while the spectator stands wondering how the plastic substance is to be transformed into an article of household utility, one hand goes down into the center of the soft body, and the other presses the periphery. The hand in the center is pressed outwardly, and the rapidly revolving mass commences and continues to rise rapidly between the opposing forces, until the semblance of the vessel desired appears, the height and width of which are regulated by a gauge constructed above the table by which the turner is enabled to make all vessels of a particular size or capacity to conform to one uniform size. A wire is then passed underneath the vessel, separating it from the table. It is then placed upon "bats" made of plaster of paris, where it remains until dry enough to handle without injuring its shape. It is then finished at the bot-

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tom, handles are applied, and the jar or whatever it may be, is returned to the wheel and properly smoothed by the turner.

It next goes to a long drying stove on which it remains about twelve hours or until thoroughly dried. A new set of hands now have charge of it. When in proper condition, it is submitted to an inside glazing. This is done by inverting the vessel over a force pump, which injects the glazing fluid into the inside, forming an even coating. The fluid is made from a clay obtained from near Albany which is called "slip clay." It is at once absorbed by the dry condition of the vessel and when exposed to the heat produced the dark glossy coating which is always observable on the inside of pottery-ware. An experienced operator now takes the vessel in hand and paints or ornaments it, after which it is placed in the kiln to be burned. And here again we find the experience of a skilled hand an indispensable requisite; for not only must the ware be properly packed in the kiln, but during the burning process it needs the care of a constant attendant.

An ordinary kiln is capable of holding about \$700 worth of ware. The process of burning occupies about forty hours, during which time the fire are constantly fed by an attendant, who must necessarily understand his business or be guided by one who does. Just as the fires are drawn and when the heat is most intense—the pottery assuming what is termed a "white heat," the "salting" process is begun. To accomplish this, several "salt holes" are constructed in the top of the kiln close to the sides. With a long handled iron spoon the salt is then introduced into the enclosure containing the pottery and directly above it. By a sudden jerk the salt is scattered and instantly melts, forming a sort of fume which being heavier than the heated air, settles down upon the ware, forming the outside coating or gloss.

The operator commences at one side of the kiln and moves around taking each hole in its order, until the operation is complete. Near these salt holes are placed, in an accessible position upon the top-most tier of ware, small vessels of clay resembling old-fashioned ink stands and which are termed "samples." When the attendant desires to know the condition of the burning ware, he passes around the kiln and by means of a hook, takes one out from each hole. From these samples he is enabled to know how the kiln is progressing, and should one portion be found to be burning faster than another, he regulates the fires accordingly.

After the fires are drawn, the ware is allowed about forty hours in which to cool. It is then removed, packed and shipped according to orders to dealers all over the country.

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## APPENDIX B

The following represents a list of potters who worked in Fort Edward, other than the proprietors of the potteries. The years listed after each name indicate which year(s) the potter was found in a Census or directory. 1860, 1865, 1875 and 1880 are Census entries, while the other years represent directories studied in the Crandall Library, Glens Falls.

Bates, William	1866 <sup>1</sup>
Carter, David	1880/1879-80, 1881-82 1891-92, 1893-94 (born in Canada)
Cook, Warren	1879-80, 1881-82, 1883, 1886, 1890, 1891-92, 1893-94
Dalton, Richard C.	1879-80 (worked in Worcester, Mass. 1856-60)
Deavey, Michael	1875/1883, 1888-89 (born in Ireland)
Dewey, Charles	1881-82
Eldridge, Jay	1886
Farrar, George W.	1860 (worked in Galesville 1852-57, in Troy 1861-62, died at Fort Stephens, Va. in 1864)
Fiedler, James	1875 (born in Canada)
Godfrey, George	1875/1886, 1888-89, 1890 (born in Vermont)
Goodrich, John	1886
Gregg, James	1860, 1861 <sup>2</sup>
Halen, G.G.	1875 (born in Germany)
Hall, David	1880/1883, 1886, 1890
Hopkins, John	1880 (born in England)
Kraft, Frank	1880/1879-80, 1883, 1888-89, 1890, 1891-92 (son of Wm. N.F. Kraft)
Kraft, William N.F.	1865, 1875, 1880/1879-80, 1881-82, 1883, 1886, 1888-89, 1891-92, 1893-94 (born in Maryland, worked in Athens 1853-1859, Worcester, Mass. 1859-1862)
Lemme, Jason	1880/1890, 1891-92, 1893-94, 1895-96
Lennon, Richard	1883
Lowe, William H.	1879-80
McNeal, George	1865, 1880/1879-80, 1881-82 (called "turner"), 1883, 1888-89, 1893-94, 1895-96
Montgomery, Lewis	1880/1879-80, 1883
Mory, Carlos	1888-89, 1891-92 (son of Michael Mory)
Nelson, John	1888-89

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Olwill, Dennis	1880/1879-80, 1883, 1890 (sometimes spelled "Alwill")
Perry, John	1875 (born in Canada)
Prouty, George	1860, 1865, 1875, 1880/1879-80, 1881-82 (called a "turner"), 1883, 1886 (previously worked in Greenwich)
Scoville, Charles P.	1879-80, 1881-82
Simmons, William	1879-80, 1883
Smith, James	1881-82, 1883, 1888-89
Smith, Nathaniel	1860, 1875, 1880/1883
Smith, William E.	1860, 1880/1879-80, 1883, 1886 (from Massachusetts)
Sutherland, Lewis W.	1880/1879-80, 1888-89, 1890 (sometimes called "Wilson" or "L.W.") (in Athens, 1855, in Worcester, Mass. 1863-1866)
Thornton, Francis	1865, 1875 (from Greene County)
Tilford, Herbert	1886
Van Loon, Albert	1865, 1880 (called "stoneware burner")/1879-80, 1881-82, 1883 (called "kiln burner"), 1886 (called "foreman"), 1888-89, 1890, 1891-92, 1893-94, 1895-96 (from Athens, Greene County; worked in Bennington, Vt. 1855-1858, in Worcester, Mass. 1859-1862)
Van Loon, Frank	1880 1886 (son of Albert Van Loon)
Walters, Benjamin	1875 (born in Dutchess County, stepson of G.G. Halen)

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<sup>1</sup>*The Bennington Banner* of May 3, 1866, states that William Bates left the pottery of E. & L. Norton and took a new job at Fort Edward. He returned to Bennington, however, by 1870.

<sup>2</sup>On April 24, 1861, Decius Clark, then of Peoria, Ill., wrote a letter to James Gregg, a former Bennington potter, then living at Fort Edward. (John Spargo, *The Potters and Potteries of Bennington* (Boston: 1926) pp. 152-3.

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## APPENDIX C

A copy of the rare booklet *Constitution and By-Laws of the Journeyman Potters' Union* (Glens Falls: 1871) has recently been discovered in the files of the Bennington Museum. A meeting of the journeyman potters to form the union was held in Fort Edward April 5, 1871, and on May 3 the potters adopted a constitution and set of bylaws. The object of the union was to "prevent a reduction in the present prices of turning stoneware." It seems that "for thirty years previous to 1864" manufacturers discounted workers' pay 10 percent to reduce wholesale prices. Despite the fact that this practice had ceased in 1864, by 1871 "some of the present manufacturers" proposed "to return to the system of discounting," to which the potters strongly objected.

The booklet continues that stoneware manufacturers were not paying wages any higher than they had 40 years beforehand, and recommended they increase wholesale prices rather than "depriving the actual producer of the article." The union set a uniform wage schedule to be followed in all potteries, as follows:

All 6 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	\$1.50 per dozen
All 5 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	\$1.25 per dozen
All 4 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	87½¢ per dozen
All 3 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	68¾¢ per dozen
All 2 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	50¢ per dozen
All 1½ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	37½¢ per dozen
All 1 gallon ware, not otherwise classified	31¼¢ per dozen
All ¾ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	27¢ per dozen
All ½ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	22¢ per dozen
All ¼ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	15¢ per dozen
All ⅛ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	12½¢ per dozen
All ⅙ gallon ware, not otherwise classified	9¢ per dozen
All 4 gallon churns	\$1.00 per dozen
All 3 gallon churns	75¢ per dozen
All jar covers	6¼¢ per dozen
All churn covers	18¾¢ per dozen
All water kegs	4¢ per gallon

No member of the union was to turn stoneware for less than the union rate, and if any manufacturer "shall exact, demand or try to impose anything on any members of this Union" it was the stated duty of all union members "to at once stop work, or strike, until the difficulty is settled to the satisfaction of the Union."

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It is not known how long the union survived, but it is doubtful it lasted well into the 1880's, when the leading Fort Edward potteries all experienced major financial problems. It is known that the union served potters working elsewhere, for Fred Godfrey and Charles Kimball who worked at Bennington were original members. The only other known members were the union's president, W. M. F. Craft, and its secretary, George Prouty. They held its first annual convention at 35 Green Street in Albany on May 1, 1872. Regardless of how long or how well the Journeyman Potters' Union survived, its existence clearly demonstrates the solidarity that existed in the potting trade in light of the growing financial problems affecting the industry after the Civil War.