

Pottery

Past & Present



Copyright 1930 by
Mayer China Company
Beaver Falls, Pa.

Pottery—

Past and Present



MAYER CHINA COMPANY

Manufacturers of Vitrified Hotel China

BEAVER FALLS, PA.

FOREWORD

In the following pages an attempt is made to sketch very briefly the history of pottery from the earliest known beginnings to the latest developments as represented in the thoroughly modernized plant of the Mayer China Company.

While the sketch is brief, every effort has been made to insure accuracy, and it is our hope that the result will prove of interest to the reader. To all those interested in the latest methods employed in the manufacture of china an invitation is extended to visit the pottery of the Mayer China Co. in Beaver Falls, Pa.



POTTERY OLDER THAN HISTORY



Who, upon examining a beautiful piece of china, does not pause for a moment to admire it and wonder how such a remarkable work of art came into being?

The making of modern pottery combines science and art to an unusual degree. The chemistry of ingredients and colors, the science of heat and heat control, and mechanical precision in many processes, are blended with human craftsmanship, artistry and manual skill to produce the beauty which plays so great a part in making the meal an enjoyable ceremony and not simply the satisfaction of human need.

Yet pottery-making is among the oldest human arts, antedating authentic history, and probably also the oldest prehistoric remains which have been preserved. It undoubtedly was the earliest art except cooking which employed the use of fire, and was common to all races who ever emerged from a state of primitive savagery.

For wherever plastic mud was found it was as natural for childhood races to shape it with the hands as it is for the children of our own time to make mud pies. The rest may have been accident—the trinket formed in an idle moment and abandoned, found days later dried by the sun's hot rays and firm to handle and to use as a container. Perhaps another accident dropped the dish into the camp-fire, from which it emerged baked hard and, though porous, capable of being used as a temporary container of liquids.

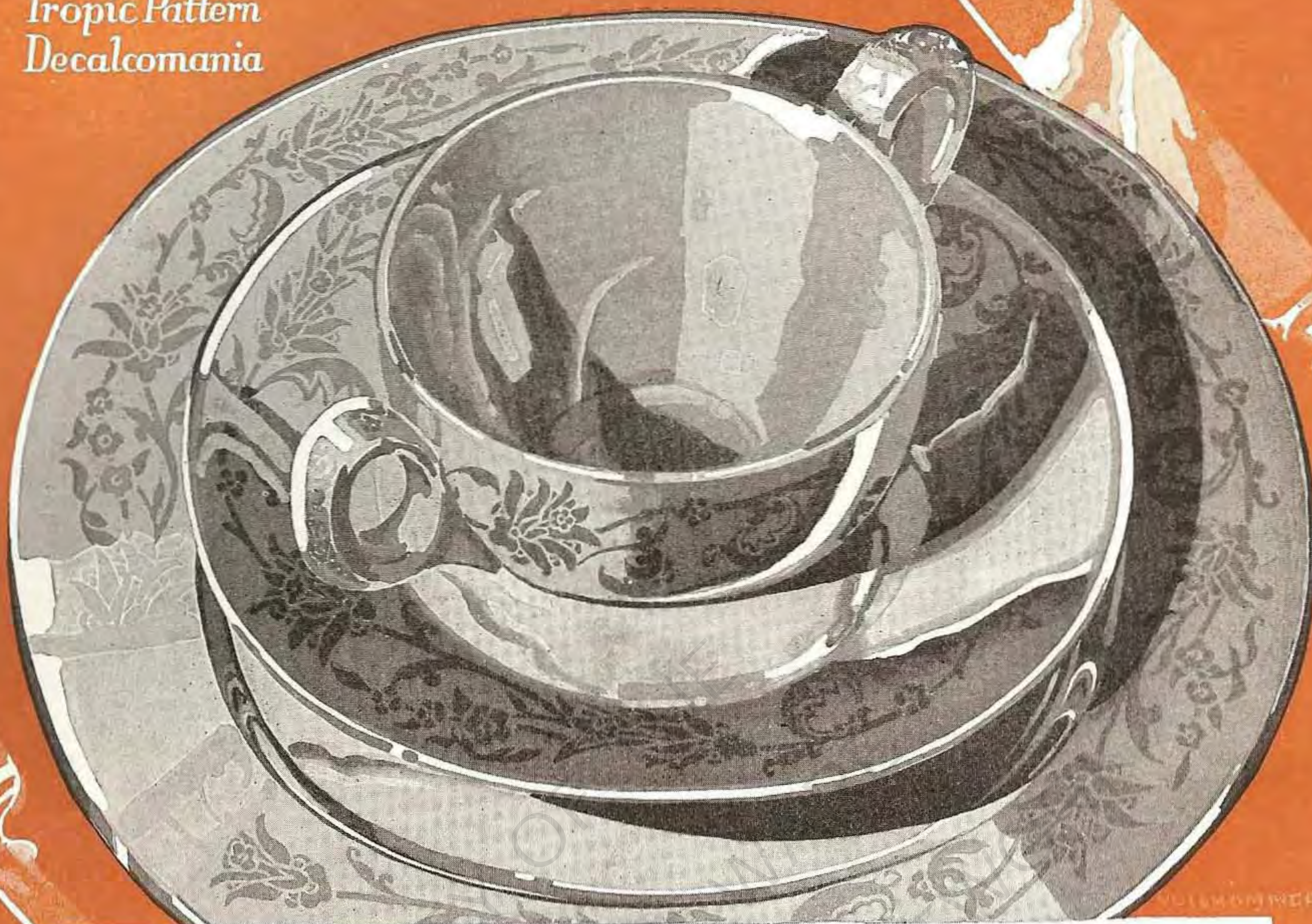
All this is pure speculation, for such crude beginnings as are described must naturally have perished if they ever existed. The earliest recovered fragments of pottery, however, indicate a more fully developed art than could have arisen except from a comparatively long process of improvement by the trial and error method.

So pottery has evolved with man and as we find improvement in his condition, it has always been reflected in the works of his hands.

Some are prone to believe that the potter's wheel is as old as pottery but this is hardly the case, as pottery was made many years before its introduction.



*Tropic Pattern
Decalcomania*



BEAUTY that LASTS

THE BEAUTY that arouses admiration for Mayer China is not a fragile beauty. Mayer China is famous for its strength and toughness as well as for its flawless perfection, pleasing shapes and artistic decorations.

Scientific testing and uniform blending of ingredients • highly skilled workmen, trained from generation to generation in the Mayer plant • the latest improved tunnel kilns in the world • all combine to produce a ware of the highest quality and lowest annual cost to you.

Let us know your requirements. We will gladly furnish free samples, and quote prices through your most convenient jobber.

MAYER CHINA COMPANY " " " " BEAVER FALLS, PA.
VITRIFIED HOTEL WARE EXCLUSIVELY

COSTS LESS PER GUEST SERVED

MAYER CHINA



The primitive races formed their first ware by making their crude clay into a ball and scooping out the center and smoothing the sides and it was in this manner that the necessary utensils were made. A little later some improvement was made by weaving a basket work frame and building clay around it in order to obtain the desired shape. A still further advancement was made when coils of clay rope were used to make the desired shapes.

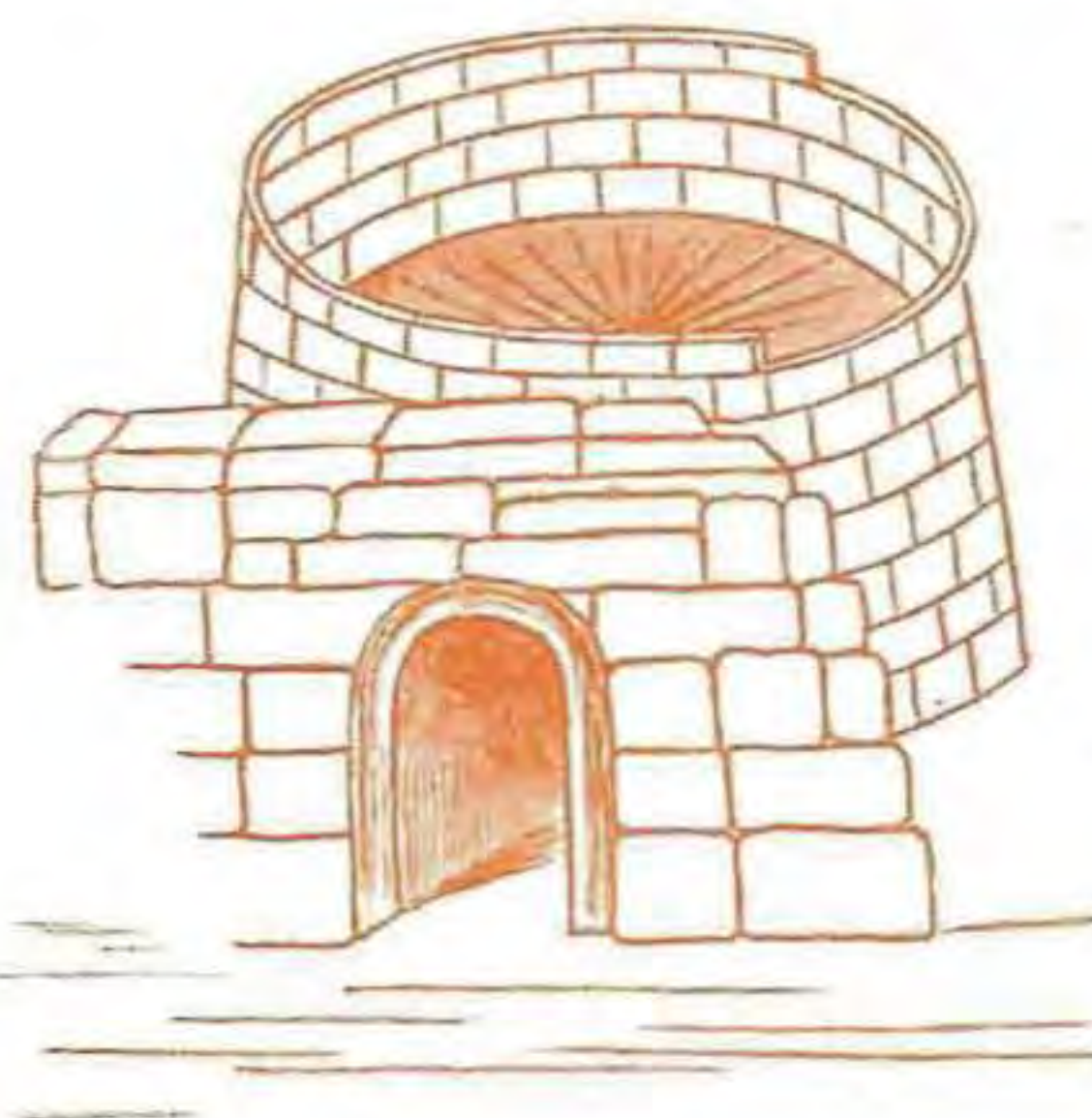
Later some clay worker started to build his clay pots on a round stone, one side of which was flat. He would then sit down working his vessel over the stone, which was revolved on its flat side. As time went on, improvements were made and as a result of this development, we find the first crude potter's wheel turned by hand. At the time of the Christian Era, a long spindle was attached with tread wheel at its base so that the wheel could be turned by foot power, thus allowing the potter to use both hands for his work. During the 17th century it was turned by a cord running in a groove on the circumference of the wheel, while in the 19th century, it was driven by steam, and later, in our own generation, by electricity.

The same evolution took place with regard to hardening the ware. At first the primitive tribes probably placed their vessels in the sun to be hardened by the heat of the tropic sun but a little later it was discovered that by heating them in an open fire they became very much more serviceable, and as a result the first rude kiln was constructed. From this time on, gradual improvements in the construction have taken place through the upright and muffle periodic kilns to the present tunnel kilns which today are revolutionizing the pottery industry.

EARLY EGYPTIAN POTTERY

Now, let us trace briefly through the ages of authentic history the development of pottery. Recently, there have been tombs opened in upper Egypt dating back to the Memphite Period or about 5000 B. C. in which were found well-developed pottery of the unglazed type and a little later during the first dynasty or about 4000 B. C. were found well-shaped objects made of tender silicious materials but covered with very fine turquoise glazes made of copper.

During the Theban period probably about a thousand years later in a tomb is found a frieze



A RECORD for DELIVERY

all in the Day's Work for us



October 10, 1929

El Paso Hotel Supply Company
116 South Oregon Street
El Paso, Texas

Attention of Mr. Willard Whipple

Dear Mr. Whipple:

There is only one kind of guest we like better than a pleased guest - and that is a pleased guest who tells the world about it!

For this reason I thought you would like to know how well pleased we are with the service you obtained for us on our last order for china.

When this order was placed on September 12th, I asked you to try to get the china to us by October 21st in time for the West Texas Chamber of Commerce Convention. Today, October 10th, only 29 days after we placed the order, you have made complete delivery.

This unusual service is very much appreciated, and we hope you will tell your factory, the Mayer China Company, of it. We think they did a splendid job, decorating 846 dozens of ware in one shipment, on time, and by freight at that. Service like this means something, and we are grateful for it.

With kindest personal regards,

Very sincerely,
Hotel Paso del Norte
By: *M. J. Dwyer*

NO OVER IN EL PASO. ASK FOR IT.



PH:ER

EV

*"Costs Less
per
Guest Served"*

10,152 pieces of china, with special decoration, ordered in El Paso on September 12th, delivery requested October 21st. The ware is manufactured and decorated in Beaver Falls, Pa., shipped 1827 miles by freight, and arrives in El Paso with eleven days to spare.

A rush order doesn't mean rushed work with Mayer China Company. The best china made can be had from America's most modern tunnel kilns in about half the time required by other potteries. Let us know your requirements and your jobber.

MAYER CHINA COMPANY, BEAVER FALLS, PA.

MAYER CHINA
VITRIFIED HOTEL WARE EXCLUSIVELY.



which portrays scenes from the lives of the potters of that day, so it must be conceded that the craft was well organized and established at that time.

During the twelfth dynasty the typical Egyptian pointed vase came into vogue while in the 18th dynasty or about 1400 B. C., we find numerous examples of well-formed articles with polychrome glazes consisting of blue, violet, purple, red, green, and yellow, made by means of the mineral oxides.

POTTERY OF CLASSIC GREECE

While much of this development had been taking place in Egypt, the Greek Empire had been slowly coming to the fore and as early as 2500 B. C. the Grecians had a highly developed process of manufacture probably influenced by the earlier art in Egypt. There are references by Homer to the potters turning their ware by hand on a rudely constructed wheel as early as 1500 B. C.

There have been collected the trade marks and names of over 100 potters of the eighth century B. C. in Greece.

There were in Greece during the fifth century B. C., records of a potters' guild or brotherhood being formed for the purpose of the division of the different kinds of work, the more simple being left to the slaves.

In another century as a result of the specialization and division of labor, the art became more refined and we have found fine specimens of stamped or stenciled patterns which were the forerunners of our present printed patterns.

During the first century B. C. a substantial variety of a so-called porcelain ware was made which had beautiful brilliant glazes where lead was used as an ingredient for the first time.

THE WORK OF THE ROMANS

While culture and the art of pottery making was flourishing in Greece, development on the Italian Peninsula had been steadily going forward under the influence of Greece and some very fine specimens of Etruscan and Umbrian wares are today still existent, made perhaps as early as 1000 B. C. A little farther to the South was developing one of the greatest empires that the world has ever known. Under the auspices of this Roman Empire advancement still continued and while their product was less artistic than the Greek, it had merits of its own.



MAYER QUALITY *actually* COSTS YOU LESS



CORDOVA PATTERN
DECALCOMANIA

The uniform high quality and beauty of Mayer China--its tough, long wearing, vitrified body and smooth permanent glaze--are made possible at a surprisingly low price because Mayer China is produced in the most modern tunnel kiln pottery in America.

The Cordova Pattern is a brilliant, sparkling and colorful copyright decoration which will add to the charm of any menu. It is one of many new Mayer patterns. Drop a line to let us know your jobber and we will arrange for you to see the beautiful Mayer line without obligation.

MAYER CHINA COMPANY
BEAVER FALLS, PENNSYLVANIA

MAYER CHINA COSTS LESS PER GUEST SERVED



On the works of these old Romans are found many potters' marks and on some are both the name of the master and the slave who was instrumental in its production. In about 100 B. C., Cornelius was a prominent potter who operated with forty slaves. The Romans, as well as spreading their Empire, spread far and wide the art of potting, establishing potteries in the valleys of the Loire and the Rhine, at Arles and Orange.

Pliny mentions the famous Samian ware and refers to Cumae and Mutina as the pottery centers of Italy.

THE AGE OF OMAR

From the time of the fall of the Roman Empire until the rise of the Persian civilization in the 12th Century, development in all lines of human endeavor was very greatly retarded and this was very strongly reflected in the potter's art. With the rise, however, of the Persians dawned another golden era and while they preserved some of the Roman ideas they developed new ones of their own, making enormous strides towards our present day accomplishments. This art entered very largely into the life and poetry of the people of that day, as was so aptly expressed by the famous lines of the great Persian poet of the day, Omar Khayyam—

“For in the market-place one dusk of day
I watched the potter thumping his wet clay
And with its all obliterated tongue
It murmur'd—‘Gently, brother, gently, pray!’ ”

One of their marked improvements was to improvise new shapes adaptable to clay ware manufacture in order to show their beautiful glazes and designs of which they were perfect masters. An innovation was during this period introduced in the form of scratching or scoring the ware to confine the flow of their glazes. These glazes were of a fritted soda base and for the first time we find the use of oxide of tin to whiten it.

There was produced at this time the famous Gombroon ware which was of a soft and delicate texture that was quite translucent having a soft lead glaze. They also employed alloyed gold to produce luster ware as well as silver to give it an iridescent appearance. At Ispan, which was then a pottery center, a large number of Chinese potters were imported who imparted a sort of



This Modern **ROSELLE**
will appeal to Your Diners
as Strongly as to You



A NEW MAYER decalcomania decoration in rich and restrained colors, distinctive and appealing; on a background of gleaming white, uniformly flawless, and proof against crazing; with a body so tough in resisting wear and careless handling that it has earned the verdict, "Costs less per guest served."

Through a jobber in your locality we will be glad to show you the Roselle and many other striking Mayer patterns from America's most modern tunnel-kiln plant. Or write us direct. The new Mayer catalog is yours for the asking.

MAYER CHINA COMPANY

BEAVER FALLS

PENNSYLVANIA

VITRIFIED HOTEL WARE EXCLUSIVELY

MAYER CHINA



a Perso-Chinese style quite different from that formerly produced. The introduction of this, however, marked the decline of the Persian art.

EUROPEAN POTTERY

Advancement, however, continued to grow throughout Europe and at Malaga in Spain there were a number of notable potteries between the 12th and 15th centuries.

The luster wares made in Valencia between 1405 and 1517 were famed and no finer examples of ceramic tiles can be found than those of the Alhambra.

Holland contributed its share to the general development in Europe, as at Delft between 1600 and 1800 was made the famous blue printed ware bearing this name.

Germany developed what we know as the continental hard porcelain, while France produced beautiful ware made at potteries in Rouen, St. Cloud and Sevres.

POTTERY MAKING IN ENGLAND

The potters of England did not lag behind in this advancing age and popularized many of the well-established types and introduced the use of the printing press into the pottery industry and hence were able to produce very fine effects at considerably less cost than formerly.

Through the untiring effort of a long line of skilled potters they brought out the most beautiful of all ceramic products, bone china.

These great artisans were numerous; among them was Josiah Wedgwood who produced the Jasper ware of that day.

About 1721 in Darbyshire, England, there came into prominence a potter by the name of John Meir, the family name later being changed to Mayer. After several generations there came in this same family another Joseph Mayer, who with his two brothers Thomas and John, started operating the Dale Hall Works in Burslem in 1836. Here they continued to operate for many years, making wares of the highest types.





THE MAYERS COME TO AMERICA

Until the last quarter of the 18th century the art in America had lagged far behind that of the Mother country but at that time, very marked advances were made. In 1881 there came to America two sons of Joseph Mayer, Joseph and Ernest Mayer, who for many years carried on the arts of their forefathers and built a name that stands preeminent where the art of potting is discussed.

For a time these two brothers carried on an importing business in New York in order to determine the kind of ware for which the demand was greatest. In 1881 they went to Beaver Falls and purchased a small plant and after thoroughly remodeling it and building some new kilns, they entered into the manufacture of so-called iron stone china. About this time there started a very heavy demand for luster ware and as a result this small plant was run principally on luster band and sprig ware, for which they became well known throughout the trade.

Over a period of years the plant steadily increased in size and the product improved until one of the best grades of semi-porcelain earthenware was manufactured. On this refined body were placed beautiful underglaze decorations in many difficult colors and in a comparatively short time Mayer China stood preeminent in the trade. In 1896 a disastrous fire leveled the whole plant to the ground, but undaunted by this reverse, the Mayer brothers at once rebuilt the pottery on a much larger and more efficient plan.

HOTEL WARE EXCLUSIVELY

The stimulus of this larger and new plant caused the Mayer brothers to search for a more refined product and after exhaustive tests and experiments, decided to take up the manufacture of Vitrified Hotel China.

In the making of this new product, many new obstacles were encountered, such as keeping the ware straight during the firing process. To solve this problem, they invented and patented a sanding machine which mechanically embeds the ware in sand, thus eliminating very greatly, serious losses that occur in the first burning stages.





Another difficulty encountered with this new product, which was confined exclusively to underglaze decorated ware, was the proper matching of the colors and to overcome this a fully equipped color making plant was installed, thus doing away with the uncertainty of using bought colors that often did not prove uniform. With this new color plant, more beautiful and delicate colors were developed, which gave this vitrified china a character of its own.

New types of ware dryers had to be perfected to handle this new product as well as many other innovations in order to reach the high quality that was attained.

From time to time, new buildings were added, always of fireproof construction with automatic sprinklers, in order to prevent such a catastrophe as once occurred to the old plant.

A few years ago, a new type of combination down draft kiln was perfected for burning of china. As soon as this was a proven success, the Mayer China Company built two of these new kilns and converted old kilns into this more modern type.

THE TUNNEL KILNS

Then the most revolutionary type of kiln was perfected for burning of glost ware and as soon as its worth and merits were established, it was constructed by this company, and put into successful operation, improving very materially the product. This kiln consists of a long tunnel through which is laid a track and on which are run insulated cars containing the china. There are at various places along the kiln fire boxes which gradually heat the ware to the maturing point, then permit it to slowly cool before coming out the other end.

The great advantage of this new type of kiln is that it insures absolutely equal and perfectly controlled heat treatment without overfiring part of the ware and underfiring the balance as was the case in the old style discarded periodic kilns.

With this type of kiln, delicate colors such as pink, purple and violet shades formerly impossible, can be produced.

It is safe to say that the advance made possible by this new method is the most important in the history of pottery for several hundred years.

In the last few years a demand for many and bright colors





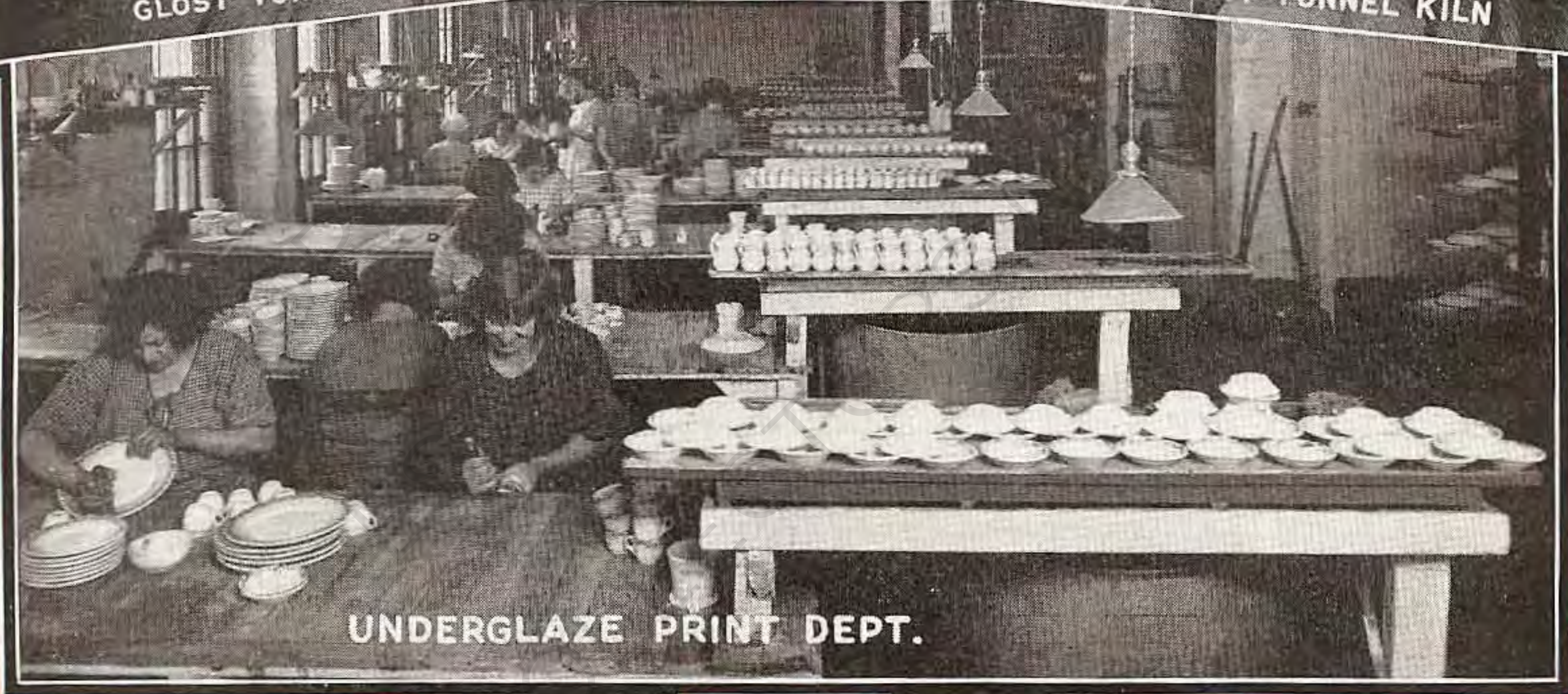
LINING DEPT.



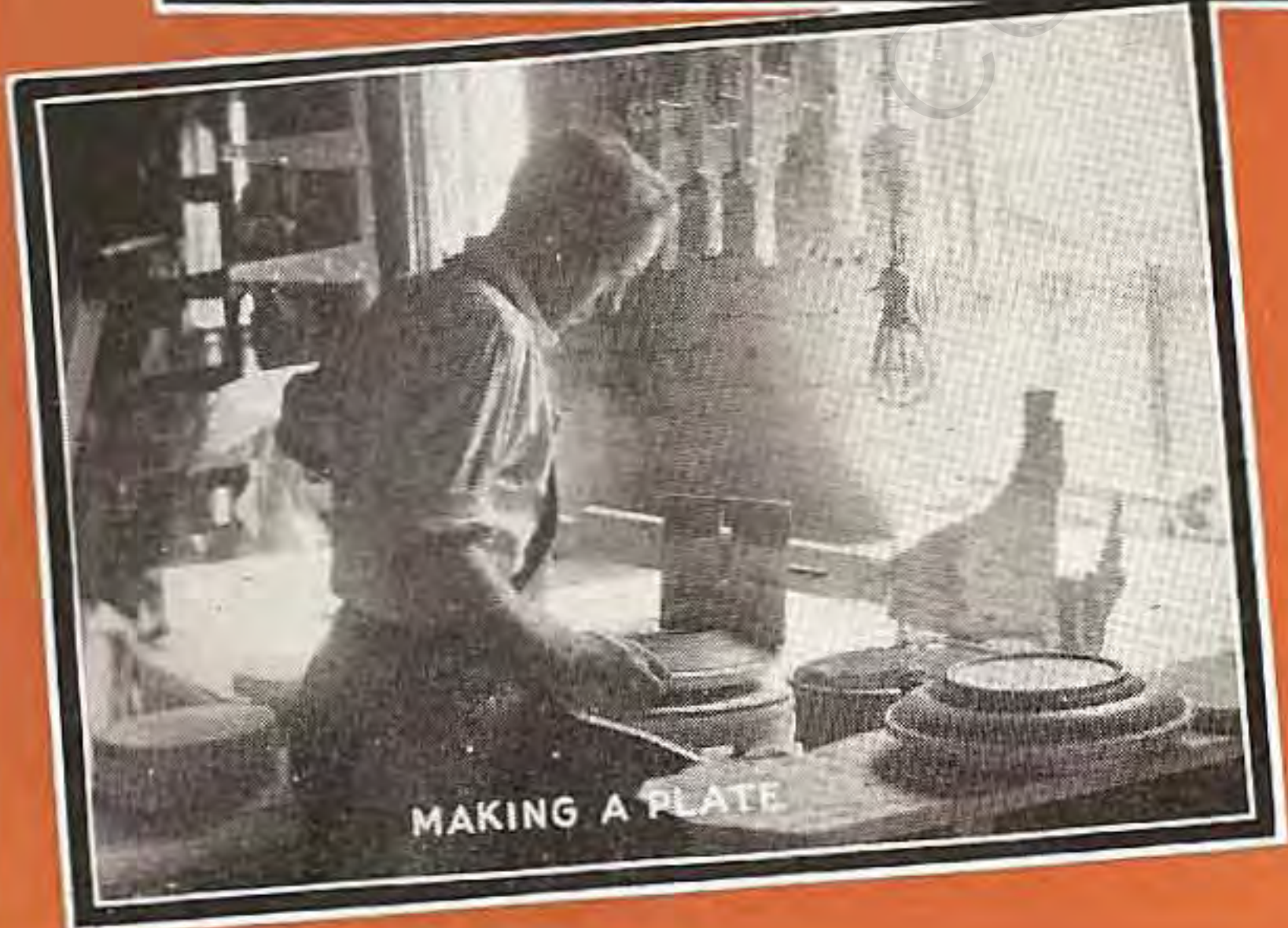
GLOST TUNNEL KILN



DRAWING BISCUIT TUNNEL KILN



UNDERGLAZE PRINT DEPT.



MAKING A PLATE



A LOADED KILN CAR

in all lines of merchandise has swept the country and realizing that the trend extended to china, this company entered into the spirit of the times and has created many beautiful multi-color lithographic transfer patterns in shades to match any color schemes; in fact, the Creative Art Department has been enlarged and kept very busily working on this type of decoration. A great many patterns in these beautiful colors are made in color harmonies and designs that have been most favorably commented on by those who know commercial art.

The success of the Glost Tunnel Kiln led to experiments embodying the same principles in the initial firing. As soon as the Biscuit Tunnel Kiln was a demonstrated success, this company contracted for its installation, and since the fall of 1929 Mayer China has been made entirely by the Tunnel Kiln process. The advantages of the Biscuit Tunnel Kiln have even exceeded expectations. Not only is the ware of a higher uniform quality than has ever been possible in oven kiln production, but the time required for completion of special orders has been cut in half, thus making it possible to meet delivery dates which by previous methods have been entirely out of question.



THIS BOOK is presented with the compliments of
MAYER CHINA COMPANY
BEAVER FALLS : PENNSYLVANIA

MANUFACTURERS OF VITRIFIED HOTEL CHINA

Serving Hotels, Clubs, Restaurants, Dining Cars, Steamships and Institutions with complete Table Service, in the finest Vitrified China. A representative is located in your community. We will be glad to furnish complete information upon request to our office.

PROPERTY OF THE
RESTAURANT WARE
COLLECTORS NETWORK