

The Winslow Pottery in Portland, Maine

By M. LELYN BRANIN

THE earliest stoneware pottery in Maine was probably that established in Portland by Martin Crafts of Whately, Massachusetts. Crafts went to Portland late in 1833 and began turning out stoneware soon after his arrival. About a year later he was joined by another Whately potter, Eleazer Orcutt, who before going to Portland had worked as a potter in Troy, New York. Crafts and Orcutt formed a partnership, and in February, 1835 they purchased a plot of land with buildings on the westerly side of Green Street (now Forest Avenue), formerly a distillery, to which they moved the pottery-making equipment. Operating under the name Orcutt & Crafts, the pottery turned out a large quantity of common stoneware of good quality. However, the partnership lasted only a little more than two years, when Orcutt sold his interest to Crafts and the latter disposed of the pottery, including land and buildings, to his uncle, Caleb Crafts, and William Fives of Portland. Martin then left Portland and went to Nashua, New Hampshire.

Caleb Crafts, who probably had the major interest in the business, also had worked as a potter in Troy, New York, before going to Portland. He was born in Whately and received his training as a potter there. Caleb Crafts and William Fives continued to operate the pottery for a few years until mounting financial difficulties forced them to give up the business. Caleb then went to Nashua to join Martin Crafts in the manufacture of stoneware. The factory was finally sold by the city in 1843 for back taxes.

The factory was purchased by the Ocean Insurance Company, holder of the mortgage, and apparently rented to Thomas Seal, Jr. (no deed of purchase has been found) who, in association with William Fives, continued to operate it as a pottery. Seal probably looked after the financial aspect of the business and Fives turned out the pottery. Listed under Fives' name in the 1844 Portland directory is the following entry, "Thomas Seal & Co., stone ware factory, green, h. 24 brattle," indicating Fives was associated with the pottery and living at 24 Brattle Street. Seal's listing in the directory for the same year read, "Seal, Thomas jr., stoneware factory, green, at William Fives'," which shows that the pottery was on Green Street and that Seal was boarding or rooming at the same address as Fives. In 1846, Fives was living at 86 Green Street and Seal "at green street house," possibly a boarding house. The reference may have been to the house at 86 Green Street.

Two other names were mentioned in connection with the stoneware factory that year, Levi Clough, whose address was given as "at green at house," possibly the same place as Seal, and William Calhoun whose address was 17 Brattle Street. Their relationship to the factory is reflected in an advertisement that appeared on page 101 of the 1846 directory: "CLOUGH, CALHOUN & CO./ NO. 98, GREEN STREET,/ DEERING'S BRIDGE/ Manufacture and keep for sale, every variety of/ STONE WARE, which they will sell at the low-/ est cash prices." Since

Thomas Seal, Jr.'s name is not included in the directories after 1846, it is assumed he sold his interest in the business sometime during the year to Clough and Calhoun, who changed the operating name to Clough, Calhoun & Company. This advertisement places the location of the pottery in 1846 at 98 Green Street, which was on the westerly side of Green near Portland Street.

Portland directories during the 1840s carried a summary of important happenings since publication of the previous edition. An entry in the 1847-1848 directory, under date of May 29, 1847, read, "The contents of the grocery store of John Winslow & Co. just over Deering's Bridge, nearly destroyed by fire, and the store somewhat injured." Another item about John Winslow, under date of September 1, 1847, appeared in an advertisement in the *Portland Tri-Weekly Argus* on January 24, 1848:

Notice.

The subscribers have this day formed a Co-
partnership in business, under the firm of/
CLOUGH, CALHOUN & CO., for the pur-
pose of Manufacturing STONE WARE, near/
the northerly end of Deering's Bridge in West-
brook. Having been at great expense in procu-
ring a new Kiln of the most approved style,
trust that we can furnish as GOOD WARE/
and at as low prices as can be bought at any
oth-
er factory./ All communications and
orders addressed to/ Clough, Calhoun & Co.,
Portland, shall be/ promptly attended to.

LEVI CLOUGH
WM. CALHOUN
J. T. WINSLOW

Portland, September 1, 1847

This notice is of particular interest in that the insertion date shows that John T. Winslow, following destruction of his grocery store by fire on May 29, first entered the stoneware pottery business on September 1, 1847, by joining the firm

of Clough, Calhoun & Company. It also clarifies another point about which definite information has been lacking and that is the approximate date the pottery was moved from the Green Street location in Portland, on the southerly side of Deering's Bridge, to a new location in Westbrook on the northerly side of the bridge.

The "copartnership" of Levi Clough, William Calhoun, and John T. Winslow lasted but a short time, as is seen from a notice which appeared in the *Portland Tri-Weekly Argus* on Monday, January 31, 1848, and on at least two succeeding Mondays:

Copartnership Dissolved.

The business connection between the sub-
scribers, under the firm of CLOUGH, CAL-
HOUN & CO., was on the 27th of October,
1847,/ dissolved, releasing Wm. Calhoun from
all lia-/
bilities of the Company; and on the
22nd day of Jan-/
uary, the Copartnership of
the two remaining/
subscribers, under the firm
of WINSLOW &/ CLOUGH, was, by mutual
consent, dissolved-/
and all persons indebted to
either of the above/
named Companies, are
hereby requested to make/
payment to
JOHN T. WINSLOW, who is/
duly authorized
to settle the same. All bills,/ notes or accounts,
due either of said firms/
will be paid by the
said JOHN T. WINSLOW.

LEVI CLOUGH
WM. CALHOUN
J. T. WINSLOW

Westbrook, Jan. 22, 1848

The customers of the above firms, and the/
public are respectfully informed that the/
Stone Ware Business,/ in all its branches, (with
such improvements in/
material and workman-
ship, as will make all/
articles manufactured
by the subscriber, equal,/ to say the least, to
any other Manufactory in/
New England,) will be continued by the subscriber, at his
Factory in Westbrook, north end/
of Deering's
Bridge. J. T. WINSLOW

Jan. 26.

William Calhoun may have with-

drawn from the business due to ill health, for the Portland tax records of 1848 noted after his name "dead." The two remaining partners operated the business as a partnership for approximately three months, from October 27, 1847, to January 22, 1848, under the name

the last time in 1847-1848, although it appeared in the 1849 Portland tax book. The 1850-1851 directory contained the following entry, "Fives, Abby, widow, bds 86 Green." At the time of his death sometime during 1849-1850, William Fives had been connected with the stone-



FIG. 1. STONEWARE CROCK, LIGHT BROWN GLAZE OUTSIDE AND ALBANY GLAZE INSIDE, TWO MOLD MARKS VISIBLE, MEASURING ABOUT 7 INCHES HIGH BY 8 INCHES WIDE, AND MARKED ON THE UNDERSIDE J. T. WINSLOW/ PORTLAND ME. PROBABLY MADE DURING THE 1850S OR EARLY 1860S

Winslow & Clough. On the latter date, Winslow acquired full ownership of the business and the stoneware manufactory henceforth was operated under the style J. T. Winslow. The Winslow business has remained at this location for more than one hundred years and is still owned by members of the family.

Fives' name was associated in the directory with the stoneware factory for

ware pottery business in Portland for more than ten years.

In addition to Fives, two other potters may have been employed by Clough, Calhoun & Company. Thomas Duce, listed in the 1847-1848 directory as "potter, at 86 Green," indicates he was living at the same address as Fives. The other potter, James Denning, listed as "potter, 375 Congress," was living at

375 Congress and possibly employed at the stoneware factory.

After acquiring ownership of the pottery, John Winslow soon began to enlarge the physical plant, introduce mechanical methods to lower production costs, and to broaden the variety of products manufactured to include industrial wares such as fire brick and drain pipe. However, from known examples of stoneware made during the first ten or fifteen years of his ownership, it appears these changes were not made at the expense of quality for the types of wares produced. A stoneware crock (Fig. 1) seen at Falmouth, Maine, with two mold marks distinguishable on the sides and probably made during the 1850s or early 1860s, was attractive in appearance and of good quality. It was approximately seven inches high by eight inches wide (not measured), light brown in color outside with Albany glaze inside, and with two lotus-leaf handles. On the underside of the base it bore the impressed mark J. T. WINSLOW/ PORTLAND ME. A foot-warmer with a medium brown glaze and simple relief decoration, similar to the one pictured by Lura W. Watkins in her *Early New England Potters and Their Wares*, is owned by the New Hampshire Historical Society. It bears an impressed mark similar to that above and was probably made about the same period.

At least two potters were employed by Winslow during 1850-1851; John H. Giles, identified with the pottery in the 1850-1851 directory, and Moses A. Aliff, listed as "stoneware maker, Deering's bridge village." Except for 1856, Aliff's name appeared in every issue of the directory (published every three years prior to 1870) from 1850 to 1858-1859,

and Giles' name appeared in 1850-1851 and 1856.

The Winslow pottery seems to have grown rapidly during the 1850s. The 1856 Portland directory contained the names of fourteen potters, half of whom are presumed to have been employed by Winslow, since the address in each case is Westbrook Point. Included, in addition to John T. Winslow, were John H. Gay (1856-1869), James Hiland (1856), James Jones (1856), James Leard (1856-1859), Daniel Vankleek (1856), and Francis Winslow (1856). John Gay's address was Westbrook Point in 1856, but from 1858 to 1869 it was 13 Brattle Street, opposite the redware pottery of Benjamin Dodge. According to Wiggins' *History of Aroostook County, Maine*, Francis Winslow moved to Mapleton, Aroostook County, in 1860.

About this time the Ballards, Alfred K. and O. L., were looking for a suitable place to establish a stoneware pottery. Having tried Gardiner, Maine, for a year or so (*Maine Register and Business Directory*, 1855), they went to Portland in 1855 and set up a pottery at 100 Green Street, near Portland Street. Both Alfred K. and O. L. Ballard boarded close by, at 71 Green. The 1856 directory described Ballard & Brothers as "Manufacturers and Wholesale Dealers in Stone Ware of every description, which they offer to the trade on the most reasonable terms." A nonresident real estate tax of \$9.10 was assessed against them by the city in 1855, and a poll tax of \$1.60 was charged against Alfred K. Ballard the same year. After a year or two they moved to Burlington, Vermont, where they founded a pottery that later became well known.

Of the fourteen potters whose names

appeared in the 1856 directory, seven were associated with the Winslow pottery, as mentioned. The remaining seven consisted of the two Ballards, the redware potter Benjamin Dodge, and four others: Francis O. J. Bodge (1856), John H. Giles (1850-1851, 1856), John Swett (1856, 1866-1879), and Wendall P. Vankleek (1856). One or more of them may have been connected with the Ballard enterprise, or, for that matter, with Winslow or Dodge. Aside from Giles, who had been employed at the Winslow pottery in 1850-1851, available records do not enable one to associate these men with a particular pottery.

Potters employed at the Winslow pottery in 1858-1859 were Kendall Bailey (1858-1859), Moses Aliff (1850-1853, 1858-1859), and James Leard (1856-1859). Possibly John Gay and John Swett also were with Winslow at this time, but evidence is lacking. Another person who was listed as a potter in the 1858-1859 directory was Ansyl Neal, 5 Peach Street, who was probably serving as an apprentice with either Dodge or Winslow.

During the 1860s, men employed in Portland as potters included Edward F. Boothby (1869), Andrew Colton (1869-1871, 1875), Richard Dalton (1869), Benjamin Dodge, Edward P. Furlong (1866-1867), John H. Gay (1856-1869), John M. Jones (1863-1864), James Miller (1866-1869), Franklin Paine (1863-1864), William Paine (1869), Alonzo F. Sanborn (1866-1871), John Swett (1856, 1866-1879), and Charles Winslow (1863-1864, 1869). Of these, Boothby, Colton, Dalton, Furlong, F. Paine, W. Paine, Sanborn, and C. Winslow had

Westbrook addresses and presumably were employed at the Winslow pottery, but the place of employment of the other four—Gay, Jones, Miller, and Swett—is uncertain. Charles Winslow was associated with the Winslow pottery, but probably not as a potter. In the 1869 directory he was listed as “stoneware manufacturer.” Benjamin Dodge owned the redware pottery on Potters Lane.

Members of the Winslow family as early as 1823 owned land in the area of Westbrook to which the pottery was moved in 1847, as shown by Daniel Winslow’s deed (CCR 202-371*) of January 30, 1848. Daniel Winslow, David Winslow, and James N. Winslow were land owners in the area in 1848, but John T. Winslow apparently did not hold any land there until March 1856, when he acquired from David Winslow (CCR 269-565) “a certain piece of land situate in Westbrook . . . beginning at the southwest corner of land owned by Thomas Leonard on a cross road leading from County road to Back Cove water; . . .” John Winslow obtained a \$2,860 mortgage (CCR 275-76) on this property from Jonathan Fogg in October of the same year.

The first mention of anything connected with the pottery is found in a deed (CCR 289-151) dated September 6, 1858, in which John T. Winslow, now referred to as “manufacturer,” purchased from David Winslow “a certain piece of land in Westbrook beginning at a stake standing in the Northeast corner of a lot of land situated on the South side of a street leading from County road near Deering’s Bridge to Back Cove creek formerly owned and now occupied

* Cumberland County Registry of Deeds. Book and page number given.

by Stephen P. Sandbourn; thence North sixty degrees East by said street one hundred and twenty feet more or less to a stake standing near the Easterly corner of John T. Winslow's stone ware store house; . . ." The same day this deed was executed, John Winslow gave a mortgage deed (CCR 288-267) on the property to Samuel Jordan for \$1,000, and a second mortgage deed (CCR 288-269) for \$700 to James N. Winslow.

The Winslow pottery is first mentioned by name in a deed (CCR 290-91) dated September 27, 1858, by which William P. Fessenden conveyed to John Winslow land in Westbrook "commencing at a point made by the intersection of the Northerly line of a way leading from the County Road to Back Cove on which said Winslow's Pottery is situated. . . ."

The last piece of land acquired by John Winslow in the area of the pottery was that obtained from Harriet Deering and others on September 27, 1858, and described in the deed (CCR 291-115) as "a certain lot of land and flats . . . commencing at a point made by the intersection of the Northerly line of a way leading from the county Road to Back Cove on which said Winslow's Pottery is situated with the Easterly line of said Pottery lot owned by said Winslow, thence running Northeasterly in the same course with said Northerly line of said way into the flats forty feet adjoining said John P. Winslow's Pottery lot, . . ." The grantors were given a \$300 mortgage (CCR 291-113) on the property, which was foreclosed on March 5, 1864 (CCR 327-27), and later deeded to James N. Winslow by assignment (CCR 352-305) on August 21, 1867.

A major reorganization of the business occurred during the period 1864-1868

when James N. Winslow acquired ownership of all of these properties. On January 13, 1864, John T. Winslow for \$500 conveyed to James N. Winslow (CCR 323-539) the land he had purchased from David Winslow on September 6, 1858. James N. agreed to absorb the two mortgages against the property, one for \$700 held by himself and the other for \$1,000 held by Samuel Jordan. About two months later, on January 26, John Winslow for \$4,000 sold James N. (CCR 323-540) the land conveyed to him in March 1856 by David Winslow, subject to a \$2,860 mortgage held by Jonathan Fogg, and also the property acquired from Harriet Deering and others in September 1858, there being a \$300 mortgage against it held by the grantors. Jonathan Fogg assigned his mortgage to James N. Winslow (CCR 322-475) on February 6, 1864, and the acquisition of these properties was complete on August 21, 1867, when James N. obtained the mortgage of Harriet Deering and others.

Having acquired title to all of the properties, including the mortgages against them, James N. Winslow in 1867 formed a corporation known as the Portland Stone Ware Company with capital stock of \$100,000. James N. Winslow was treasurer of the new corporation and John T. Winslow superintendent. On May 28, 1868, James N. transferred to the corporation title to the property (CCR 361-253) on which Jonathan Fogg held a mortgage and also the property obtained from Harriet Deering and others. On September 26, 1868, two more parcels of land (CCR 361-638) in this area were conveyed to the Portland Stone Ware Company by James N. Winslow. The company promptly opened an office at 40 Plum

Street in Portland and began advertising on a broader scale.

In giving brief descriptions of some of the principal industries of Portland in 1869 the *Portland Directory and Reference Book* described the Portland Stone Ware Company as "located near the north end of Deering Bridge (Fig. 2), which manufactures every description of Pottery and Stone Ware, Drain and Sewer Pipe, &c., equal to the best. J. T. Winslow, Superintendent." An advertisement on page 372 of the same edition included small illustrations of a decorated jug, a decorated crock with lid, and two pieces of drain pipe.

Some idea of the operation of the pottery and types of wares manufactured in 1868 can be gleaned from the account in Atwell's *Portland Business Directory* of 1868:

The works . . . occupy nearly two acres of ground, and are said to be the most extensive of the kind in the United States. They contain every modern improvement, with the advantages of machinery in aid of skilled labor, for production of goods of the highest excellence and at the lowest possible ratio of expense. The clay used is obtained in New Jersey, and produces wares unequaled for strength, solidity and durability. The company manufacture everything capable of being molded from clay, from a beer bottle or soap dish to a ten gallon butter crock, or a twenty gallon water keg. In baking, the ware is subjected to a heat of double the intensity requisite to flux iron, requiring great skill, care, and a practiced eye on the part of the burner. After being allowed to cool, it is coated inside and outside with an enamel glaze, impervious alike to the action of fluids, acids or gases. The company also manufacture drain tile and vitrified iron stone, sewer and drain pipe,—articles of great utility and extensive sale.

During the 1870s and 1880s the factory was greatly enlarged in size and became one of the leading industries of

Portland. By 1873 it utilized steam for power, with an aggregate of twenty horsepower; used 2,000 tons of clay, valued at \$1,400; employed 40 men, with weekly wages averaging \$11 to \$12; operated eleven months of the year; had an annual payroll of \$24,000; and produced stoneware, drainpipes, and firebrick valued at \$120,000. About eighty percent of the pipe was sold in Boston, but Maine was the principal market for the stoneware. The clay was imported from New Jersey (*The Wealth and Industry of Maine*, 1873).

Two years later, in 1875, according to Elwell's *The Successful Business Houses of Portland*, the works occupied an area of four acres, employed 70 men, had a monthly payroll of \$3,000, and the company was constructing a number of dwelling houses for its employees. The value of the capital stock had been increased to \$150,000, new machinery had been added to manufacture firebrick and draintile, the kilns had been rebuilt on "an improved plan," and a four-story building measuring 50 by 100 feet had been completed. A year or so later, another building measuring about fifty feet square was added to house a new kiln, "one of the largest ever built in this country." The company by this time had a wharf on Back Cove, and another wharf with 200 feet of frontage and a storehouse for coal and clay, with rail connections, on the opposite shore. There was also a sales office at 50 Kilby Street and a wharf at 400 Federal Street in Boston.

Raw materials were brought in and finished products shipped out from these wharves in the company's own vessels. About 400 tons of clay from New Jersey, and 150 tons of coal, were brought in each month. The company was manu-

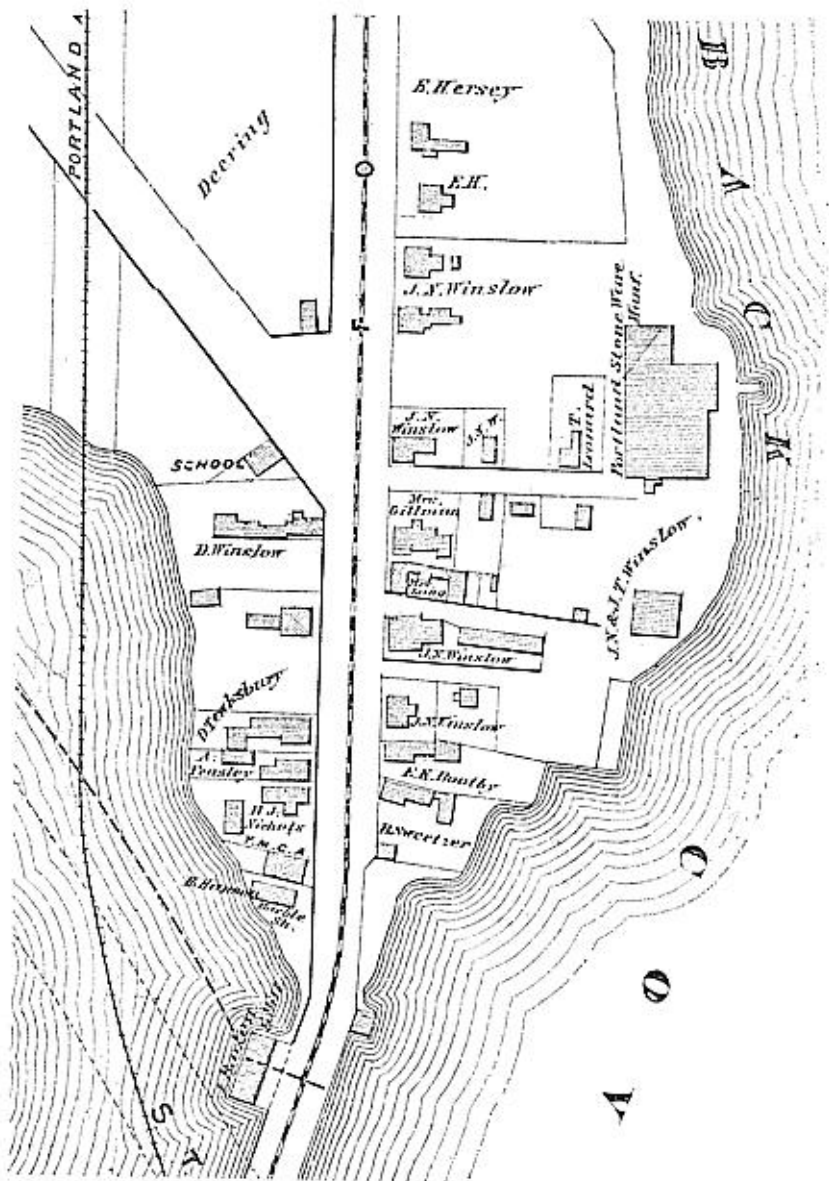


FIG. 2. MAP OF WESTBROOK POINT AREA IN 1871 SHOWING LOCATION OF THE PORTLAND STONE WARE COMPANY ALONG BACK COVE. RAILROAD TRACKS ON LEFT ARE THE PORTLAND & ROCHESTER RAILROAD. FOREST AVENUE EXTENDS UP THE CENTER
 From F. W. Beers' Cumberland County Atlas, 1871.

facturing and stocking "all kinds" of stoneware and clay goods, including firebrick, garden vases and statuary, chimney tops, ventilating flues, drainpipe, fireclay, etc. It also kept for sale white sea sand for marble workers, ground firebrick, kaolin, ground fireclay, fire sand, and other products. About \$2,000 worth of stoneware was made each month, as well as 40,000 feet of drainpipe and 30,000 firebricks. Officers of the company in 1873 were Charles E. Jose, president, James N. Winslow, treasurer, and John T. Winslow, superintendent. In 1881 Edward B. Winslow (b. 1846), son of John T. Winslow, succeeded his father as superintendent, and he served as executive head of the company from 1884 until the end of the century.

By the 1880s the Portland Stone Ware Company had become a large industrial complex supplying a wide variety of products to the New England area and elsewhere.

In 1886 the factory was destroyed by fire, but immediately rebuilt. Two new four-story buildings, each 175 by 66 feet, were erected and twenty-six kilns were constructed, "forming the largest and best-equipped sewer pipe and fire brick works in New England," with more than 250 employees.* Although many of the operations had become highly mechanized, the number of men employed each year as "potter" continued to increase, reaching a maximum of thirty in 1888, at least seventeen of whom were with the Portland Stone Ware Company. After 1888 the number dropped precipitously, as shown by the following table:

Number of men listed as "potter" in Portland directories, 1881-1892

1881	11	1887	25
1882	22	1888	30
1883	15	1889	24
1884	14	1890	14
1885	20	1891	4
1886	22	1892	1

This rapid decline after 1888 was probably due to two factors: dissolution of the Lamson and Swasey partnership, with cessation of virtually all of their pottery-making activities; and the changing pattern of products and production methods at the Portland Stone Ware Company. The emphasis now was on industrial wares produced by mechanical methods. Handcrafting of pottery had virtually ceased, and after 1891 many employees previously listed as potters were included in the city directories as tile makers, clay workers, pipe finishers, kiln tenders, or given other specialized titles.

The name Winslow & Company came into use for the Portland Stone Ware Company about 1882, probably to get away from the more restrictive nature of the business as suggested by the older name. However, the name Portland Stone Ware Company continued to be used in the advertising, along with the new name, until after the turn of the century. The name Winslow & Company has survived to the present time, but many changes have taken place in the business over the years.

More than one hundred persons were listed as "potter" in Portland directories during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most of them prior to 1875 were employed at the Winslow pottery, but after that date some were associated with the Lamson and Swasey enterprise.

* *Industries and Wealth of the Principal Points in Maine*, American Publishing and Engraving Company, New York, 1893.

Many undoubtedly were apprentices who, for one reason or another, lasted only a year or two. The period of apprenticeship was long, the remuneration small, and prospects for the future not especially bright. Accordingly, there was a constant turnover among the apprentice potters.

At least two attempts were made to establish new earthenware potteries in Portland during the last two decades of the century, one by the Dirigo Pottery Company in the 1880s and another by the Portland Pottery Company* in the 1890s. Both were abortive and survived only a few years.

* The Portland Pottery Company is listed in the city directories in 1892-1896 and 1900, operating at several different locations during this period.

Since this study has been concerned with potters and pottery making as a craft, the history of the Portland Stone Ware Company has been given only brief and cursory treatment. For more detailed information, the reader is referred to one or more of the several published accounts referred to above.

Many sources of information have been consulted. In addition to those mentioned in the text, I am especially indebted to the Maine Historical Society and the Portland and Exeter Public Libraries and their staffs for use of their facilities. Thanks also are due Mr. A. Holman Wilson of Falmouth Foreside for information he has given me and for permitting me to photograph the Winslow water bottle.

*Checklist of Winslow Deeds Cited
From the Cumberland County Registry of Deeds
(The location in each case is Westbrook)*

<i>CCR No.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Grantor</i>	<i>Grantee</i>
202-371	Jan. 1848	Daniel Winslow	David Winslow
275-76 (M)	Oct. 1856	John T. Winslow	Jonathan Fogg
269-565	Mar. 1856	David Winslow	John T. Winslow
288-267 (M)	Sept. 1858	John T. Winslow	Samuel Jordan
288-269 (M)	Sept. 1858	John T. Winslow	James N. Winslow
289-151	Sept. 1858	David Winslow	John T. Winslow
290-91	Sept. 1858	Wm. Fessenden	John T. Winslow
291-113 (M)	Oct. 1858	John T. Winslow	H. Deering et al.
291-115	Sept. 1858	H. Deering et al.	John T. Winslow
323-539	Jan. 1864	John T. Winslow	James N. Winslow
323-540	Jan. 1864	John T. Winslow	James N. Winslow
322-475	Feb. 1864	Jonathan Fogg	James N. Winslow
327-27 (F)	Mar. 1864	H. Deering et al.	John T. Winslow
352-305	Aug. 1867	H. Deering et al.	James N. Winslow
361-253	May 1868	James N. Winslow	Portland Stone Ware Co.
361-638	Sept. 1868	James N. Winslow	Portland Stone Ware Co.

(M) = Mortgage

(F) = Foreclosure