

B'ham Studio Scene Of Craft Experiment

By KAY REED

The southeastern corner of Michigan is generally considered the birthplace of mass production, and the home of the assembly line.

Yet, only a few yards removed from the rumble of the giant trucks on U. S. 10, stands a compact one-story building, a small Birmingham residents, yet housing highly mechanized economy.

THIS EXPERIMENT. Foster Ceramics is an attempt to return to the almost vanished art of the skilled hand-craftsman. In this instance the craft is the ancient art of the potter, who creates his own designs, and uses his idealistic conceptions to their completion and sale.

Foster Ceramics is the dream-true of John A. Foster and his wife, Edith, who at present conducts a class in ceramics at the Community House. Foster, formerly an industrial ceramics engineer at Ford Motor Company, saw what began as a hobby grow into the small building, set among the trees just north of Birmingham on Woodward.

Here is the small artists' studio.

To this end he has instituted the age-old apprentice system in his studio.

Students are taken fresh from classwork to work under the 'master craftsman', and trained to eventually open their own shops. This is the system that worked so well in the latter part of the Middle Ages and which produced the works of art that we know now.

The second question underlying the experiment, the provision of fitting into our present-day economy the integrated process and the individual creation, is as yet unsolved.

Foster stated that he hopes to find the answer in the United States, to match the current trend abroad where a surge of interest in skilled handcraft is prevailing notably in England, Scandinavia and the Far East.

He is one of thirty invited to address the First International Conference of Handcraft Pottery, to be held in England next August, at which time Foster hopes to have presented that there is a place for the hand-craftsman in our economy and that the United States, although still on the 'school level' can support a market for handmade, functional ware.

TOWARD THIS END Foster and his apprentices, Helen Boose, Robert Freeman, Thomas Brun and Robert Diebold, have under-

taken the creation of a complete set of entirely hand-made, related, open-stock dinner-ware. This set of one hundred pieces is titled "Festival", and is the result of months of experimentation with designs, materials and colors.

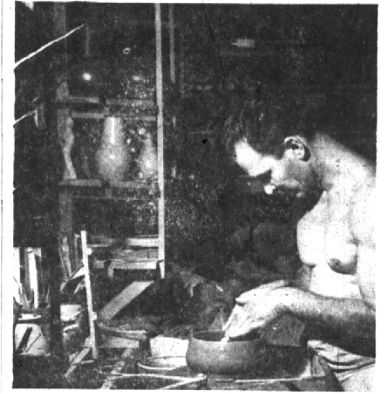
The final selection was a brown and black high-fired stone ware, with a Spratle fish motif which the Fosters feel strikes the medium between contemporary and traditional appeal. It is designed to bridge the gap between formal china-ware and crude earthen-ware.

This set, unique in construction, is entirely handmade. All open shapes are thrown on the wheel, and all coloring is achieved by brushing or dipping. The operation is completed by a single firing. Consequently the set is directed, by reason of its cost, to a limited group.

Finished pieces are on exhibit at the Little Gallery in Birmingham and the Austin Wynne Shop in Detroit, as well as at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The Fosters are leaving for New York shortly to determine what marketing process would be best adapted to this original type of handcraftsmanship.

Meanwhile, earnest young men and women continue to bend over the rapidly turning wheels, working and shaping the pieces they hope will open the way for a return to their art.



THOMAS BRUN BENDS OVER WHEEL
Local shop returns to apprentice system



"FESTIVAL"
Complete set of dinnerware is entirely handmade

News About GIRL SCOUTS

The board members of the Birmingham Girl Scout Council met at the Community House on October 12 with Mrs. James Abbott presiding. Reports on the Training Sessions for New Leaders revealed that this year Birmingham will have 70 troops, the largest amount ever, and that there will be the required number of trained leaders to work with them.

Mrs. L. D. Gilliam, Camping Chairman, announced that there will be a "Painting Bee" on Saturday, October 27, at the Girl Scout Cabin in Spruicade Park. The cabin requires redecorating, and Mrs. Gilliam is seeking volunteers from the fathers of Girl Scouts. Troop 6, Adams School, will serve lunch to the painters, and this project promises to be fun as well as helpful to the Camping Committee.

Four members of the Birmingham Girl Scout Council attended the National Girl Scout Convention held in Boston this week. They are Mediam Lee D. Hanson, Berrien Ketchum, Robert Reinhardt and John St. Clair.

TROOP 6, ADAMS SCHOOL. The leader of this troop, Mrs. V. Mickelson, reports that the Intermediate Girl Scouts are planning an overnight trip to Highland, Michigan, over the school holiday this week.

TROOP 11, FRANKLIN SCHOOL. Accompanied by their mascot, an Irish Setter, the Girl Scouts in this troop arrived at the Girl Scout Cabin at Spruicade Park last Friday afternoon and left late Saturday afternoon. They cooked three meals outdoors and spent the night in the cabin. For entertainment they square-danced and had group singing. The treasures were popcorn and supplies. Mrs. H. F. Bates and Mrs. Frank Harrison are leaders of the troop and were with the Scouts on this camping trip.

TROOP 19, PIERCE BALDWIN. The Intermediate Girl Scouts in this troop will visit Greenfield Village on Thursday, October 18, and will be accompanied by Mrs. C. J. Swartz, Mrs. Leslie Borchert,

Mrs. Harry Gerston and Mrs. O. Henry Friedman. This troop is also planning an overnight at the Girl Scout Cabin at Spruicade Park.

LVW Plans Talks On World Affairs

The Birmingham League of Women Voters has announced that this month, instead of a general meeting, there will be a series of unit meetings, dealing with World Affairs and the United Nations, commencing U. N. Day, October 24.

The unit meetings are arranged by neighborhoods, and will take place from October 22 through October 30.

HOSTESSES INCLUDE the Mediames John R. Vander Root, Duncan Hamner, Peter Lomnis, Harvey B. Greene, Angus McLeay, A. G. Hulbert, Brooks Marshall, Everett Wells, and Genevieve Maxwell.

Future plans of the League include a series of unit meetings in November, dealing with "Inflation and Economics" leading up to the Institute on inflation on November 27.

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