

## Redware Potters in Union County

Redware potters were responsible for making many of the containers used in every household in central PA for storage and serving food from the late 1700s throughout the 1800s.

Red clay is abundant in Pennsylvania, with each source having particular properties that gave the clay its color: from yellow to orange, red and brown. The clay would be worked into various forms, glazed, sometimes decorated, and fired in kilns. Most of the pottery made locally was sold locally to households in the potter's town.

The first known potter in Mifflinburg was Christian Brown, who came from Berks County in 1794. His shop, at Market and 5th Street, was in operation until some time after 1816. Besides Brown, potters Jacob and Joseph Kimple, and Abraham Mench worked at the shop.

James Eilert set up a pottery shop at Market and 4th Street in 1826. Eilert's pottery employed James Neiman, Henry Mathias and John Gotshall, and operated until the 1860s.

John Wolf started his shop on Chestnut Street, between 5th and 6th in 1842, and sold the business to Samuel Getgan in 1849 who continued to make pottery until 1863.

In Lewisburg, in 1796, John Leisinring opened a pottery shop on South Second and St. George streets. Philip Lester of Berks County briefly took over in 1814, after which the kiln remained inactive until John Snyder took over in 1835, the Hugh, Robert and Montgomery Hunter from 1849-1855.

Redware pottery production in New Berlin began in 1799. Peter Berger was the first potter on record, then Adam Maize and his sons Jacob, John, William and Emmanuel. Also in New Berlin were Philip Seebold and Adam Specht. In 1868, Jacob Maize's shop was at Front and Hazel streets, and James Neiman had a shop on Front Street between Cherry and Hazel streets. Neiman's pottery operated until 1887.

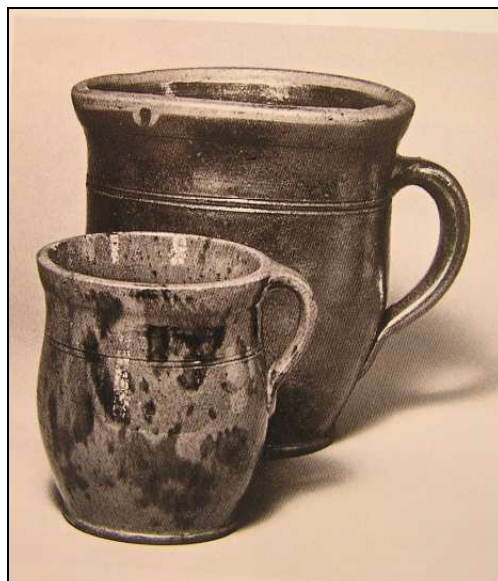
Among the many products that potters made were storage jars, apple butter and sausage crocks, and large sauerkraut crocks. Muffin, cake and pudding molds - fluted

and plain - and casseroles were used to bake food. Porringers - over-large cups for serving porridge and stews - egg cups and small salt bowls, milk and syrup pitchers, cups, and plates graced the tables of our ancestors. Utilitarian objects such as roof tiles, door knobs, banks, flower pots and birdhouses, candle holders and oil lamps were also made of red clay.

Examples of early redware can sometimes be found at local farm auctions and antiques shops, and represent a great way to remember the past.



Making Apple Butter



Apple Butter Crocks