

ISAAC BROOME: OTT AND BREWER'S CERAMIC ARTIST

by

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated first to my loving husband D-rew Randolph, who has supported me as I completed my graduate work. He has read and edited countless graduate school papers with good grace and humor. His support has been essential in tackling and completing this thesis. I also would like to dedicate this work to my family, my parents especially, who have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams. My family is the backbone of my life and I don't know where I would be without them. Thank you guys!



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.....	PAFA
National Potters' Association.....	NPA

## ABSTRACT

### ISAAC BROOME: OTT AND BREWER'S CERAMIC ARTIST

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American ceramics created before the Centennial celebration of 1876 were largely unsophisticated and liberally copied the ceramic manufacturers of Europe. The American public yearned for European-made goods because potteries in the United States had the reputation of crafting crude unsophisticated wares not fit for American dining tables. Ceramic makers saw the Centennial as an opportunity to change the minds of the American public and the rest of the world; they wished to show the creative force and the skill that could be found in American ceramic firms. In preparation for the Centennial many firms, like Ott and Brewer, hired talented artists to design the company's display. Isaac Broome, a marble sculptor educated at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts was the perfect person to achieve this. This paper argues that the Centennial encouraged American makers to step out from behind the shadow of European achievements. American potters wished to impress at the Centennial not only for national pride, but to provide themselves with economic opportunities imperative to their success. Isaac



Broome was essential to not only the success of Ott and Brewer's exhibition display, but also in helping to plant the seeds of change that would blossom into a thriving industry. He did this by positioning his country as the inheritor of a Western tradition, as the next step in the progression of European art. In his display, American subjects became high art, their imagery merged with old tropes to create a hybrid of concepts that an American audience would find affirming, and thus encourage them to buy American. Broome was successful and his pieces caught the attention of a national and international audience. The American ceramic industry, over the last quarter of the nineteenth century would thrive and grow.

## INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century saw the United States shake off the shackles of colonial oppression and become a dynamic powerhouse of manufacture. American producers in many fields operated under the heavy burden of years of prejudice against their native wares at home and abroad. The Philadelphia Centennial, a world's fair meant to celebrate the first one hundred years of American independence, was specifically designed to counteract these opinions and to propel America to greater prosperity. World's fairs were seen as a way to show off a nation's native goods to millions of people in a short span of time. They were about finding new markets for manufactured goods and making the need to invest in native goods an imperative. This was true for the American ceramic industry, which in the years prior to the Centennial were discounted at home as well as abroad. Prejudices were changed by the efforts of ceramic companies that decided to step out from behind the shadows of famous European makers and to forge their own path with determination and a strong belief that once the public knew about what was possible from American manufacturers they would buy 'home-made' goods to adorn their tables.

The Philadelphia Centennial was an awakening for the ceramic industry in the United States. Many ceramic companies that had previously only produced utilitarian wares strove to make a more artistic statement by peppering their displays with pieces meant to show the world their prowess. After the fair, the quality of American products

increased, new companies were formed, and Americans began to seriously compete in the pottery world. In preparation for the Centennial, groups such as the National Potters' Association and publications like the *Crockery and Glass Journal* encouraged members and readers not to follow the forms, styles, and decoration of ceramic ware produced by the factories of Europe, but instead to forge their own path and to create truly American works for the fair. The answer, for many of these companies, was the hiring of a sculptor to create an innovative direction for their designs. Isaac Broome came to Ott and Brewer, a New Jersey based ceramic firm, in 1875 to create an artistic path for the company that could be used as currency on the world stage and thus encourage the American public to patronize American companies. He achieved these goals through his works that positioned the United States as the inheritor of a Western artistic tradition in which American symbols, folk heroes, and pastimes were the logical conclusions of the progression of Western art. American symbols were nestled within the cocoon of traditional European-centric art and this familiarity would encourage American consumers to patronize native companies.

Broome's work at Ott and Brewer established the company as a leader in the American ceramic market. The works he created for display at the Philadelphia Centennial were a perfect combination of sculpture and ceramics, which it could be argued, could only come from an artist who was classically trained in marble sculpture. Broome was an influential thinker, a professor at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, he was the kind of artist that Ott and Brewer desperately needed. Visionary John Hart Brewer recognized this in Broome and invited him to be the chief designer and

modeler for their collection to be displayed at the 1876 Centennial. The work and life of Isaac Broome and his influential partnership with Brewer made a substantial and important contribution to American ceramics by showing that American themes and symbols were worthwhile subjects and that American ceramists were capable of creativity and innovation in their wares. Broome was perfectly positioned to deliver this promise; his unorthodox background and his fertile mind brought Ott and Brewer prominence and recognition and illustrated the bright promise of American ceramics as a whole.

Broome did not effect this change overnight; he began it by showing domestic and international audiences alike that great things could be expected from American ceramic makers. Broome developed a bold use of American themes to set his pieces apart and to specifically target an American audience who found their own interests reflected back in his work. Broome proved that he could use the language of classic Western symbols to create masterful pieces. Together these somewhat traditional and new objects won fame for Ott and Brewer and helped to prove to a larger society that America had the natural resources and the talent necessary to compete with foreign manufacturers. This fight to claim a piece of the American market for fine ceramics was an ongoing struggle for the rest of the century, but Broome's leadership was one the seeds that would affect great change in the coming years.

All of Broome's major works and some of his minor creations for the Ott and Brewer Philadelphia Centennial display are discussed in this paper. In addition, all of his known pieces produced for Ott and Brewer are included in an Appendix at the end of this

thesis. This will help the reader understand just how prolific and successful Broome was. It is important to understand the background, education, and influence on Broome's life to comprehend how he executed his pieces; therefore, I have included a thorough discussion of his time before Ott and Brewer engaged him. The layout of this thesis is as follows: Chapter one includes a brief description on the state of ceramics during the colonial period as well as in the first half of the nineteenth century. This is juxtaposed next to Broome's training and accomplishments in marble work through 1860. Chapter two discusses the effects that industrialization and the Civil War had on the industry as well as the importance of ceramic centers like Trenton, New Jersey. The development of the company Ott and Brewer and the National Potters' Association are also discussed in detail. This chapter ends with the hiring of Broome in 1875 in preparation for the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876. Chapter three looks at the ideas behind the Philadelphia Centennial, the execution of it, and details the location and specifics of the ceramic exhibitors at the fair. Ott and Brewer's preparation and the problems that Broome encountered are detailed. In addition, their works with non-American themes are discussed in this section. Chapter four looks into Broome's American themed pieces and the impact they had on those who observed them. Finally, chapter five considers the aftermath of the Philadelphia Centennial, the awards given, and what these awards meant for the American ceramic industry as a whole. Broome's next steps are briefly discussed and most importantly his impact on what came next for the industry.

Throughout the paper, Broome's life is presented in the context of what was happening around him in the ceramic world. This is done to better understand his

motives and the actions of the world around him. Although there is more work to be done on Broome, this thesis is a first attempt.

## CHAPTER ONE: FINDING A PLACE IN THE WORLD: THE EARLY AMERICAN CERAMIC INDUSTRY AND ISAAC BROOME

The United States' colonial past created discordance in the minds of Americans and European consumers for fine finished goods from American factories. For many years after independence from Great Britain, the fashionable public in the United States continued to purchase their ceramic goods from Europe and Asia, leaving American potters with no demand for finer goods and thus no incentive to create them. Some efforts were made to produce fine white ware in America, but until the 1850s these efforts were largely unsuccessful.<sup>1</sup> To complicate things further, many Americans desired to emulate the fashionable practices of Europe. Many wealthy community leaders ignored local production and continued to buy fine goods from England and Europe.<sup>2</sup> Due to the fact that the wealthy and upper middle classes bought their ceramics from Europe and Asia, there was no demand for a high-end ceramic product made in the United States. Any attempt to create a high-end ware largely copied foreign styles, and some makers even forged foreign marks to sell their wares to the American public. The values of class and status were so closely associated with European and Asian goods in the popular imagination that American products had virtually no sales potential in the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information please see Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Elaine Levin, *The History of American Ceramics, 1607 to the Present: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1988), 15. and from John Michael Vlach, "Slave Potters," *Ceramics Monthly* 26 no. 7 (September 1978): 66-69. This was especially true in the southern states, whose plantation owners wished to distance themselves materially from their slaves and poorer neighbors who relied on local goods and thus bought European goods.

marketplace. Thus, due to the lack of consumer demand, the infrastructure that would support professional factories producing fine wares was not invested in for a very long time. American manufacturers continued to lag behind the kilns of Europe, which only further fueled the notion that American goods were inadequate.

Many American potters in the nineteenth century sought to change these impressions through the production of fine and artistic ceramic wares and through the writing of books on American wares. In his groundbreaking 1893 treatise *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States*, Edwin Atlee Barber opened by stating that “foreign writers would have the world believe that the United States can boast of no ceramic history,” this “unreasonable prejudice which has heretofore existed against all American productions” would be disabused with his work.<sup>3</sup> Barber, writing at the close of the nineteenth century, still felt the keen sting of decades of bias against American ceramic goods. His book was the first major work detailing ceramic production in the United States, which speaks volumes. American ceramics were considered by the world to be largely utilitarian, and unlike their European and Asian counterparts, whose wares could be displayed and mounted as art, American ceramics were relegated to the likes of kitchen containers and used to furnish the tables of the less economically fortunate.

Due to this lack of development American products could in no way compete with the already established factories of Europe, and this, according to Elaine Levin, a noted ceramics scholar and author of *History of Ceramics: 1607 to the Present*, gave

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<sup>3</sup> Edwin Atlee Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States: An Historical Review of American Ceramic Art with a New Introduction and Bibliography* (1893; reprint, with an introduction by G.L. Freeman, New York: Century House Americana, 1971), 1-2.



American producers and consumers an ‘inferiority complex’ about their own goods that was not ameliorated until the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial when American goods were seen to hold their own against European and Asian wares.<sup>4</sup> The American potters of the nineteenth century were playing catch up to foreign manufacturers; they strove to do anything to entice the public to buy their wares. They were so far behind their European rivals, that anything that was continental and popular was copied; there was no incentive to forge an original American style. To complicate things further, fresh waves of immigrants from over-populated pottery regions, like Staffordshire in England, aligned American makers to often out-dated European styles. Potters from Europe immigrated to America and continued to produce the same style of wares that they had in their native lands. This only compounded the idea that American ceramics were not original and could not compete with European counterparts. This was an ingrained prejudice that would begin to lessen with events like the Philadelphia Centennial, which invited the world to take a second look at American-made goods.

The man who would become a key player in the struggle of American ceramics to establish itself, Isaac Broome, was born to Canadian parents, Isaac and Annie Broome, in Valcartier, Canada on May 16, 1835. He came to America with his parents in the late 1830s and grew up in Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup> Broome, who was gifted artistically, did not gravitate towards ceramics as his first expression of artistic talent, but he instead started with woodcarving and marble sculpting. Broome’s formal artistic education began in

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<sup>4</sup> Levin, *History of American Ceramics, 1607 to the Present: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms*, 10.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Charles George Douglas Roberts and Arthur L. Tunnell, *Canadian Who’s Who* (London: The Musson Book Company, Limited, 1910), 27.

earnest in 1851 when he began to study these subjects with the well-known Philadelphia sculptor Hugh Cannon.<sup>6</sup> Though little is known of Cannon's early life, by 1837 he was listed as a "marble mason" in the Philadelphia City Directory.<sup>7</sup> Sculpting, unlike painting, was not considered to be a high-minded profession in the nineteenth century and many sculptors, including Cannon, thought of themselves as craftsmen and not as artists.<sup>8</sup> They were trained to do marble work in furniture carving shops, in foundries, and in marble cutting yards of various cities.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, many of these craftsmen did not list themselves as 'sculptors' in city directories, but as 'carvers,' 'masons,' and 'ornamental workers.'<sup>10</sup> Their work was typically left unsigned, creating the difficulty of identification. Cannon began to enter his pieces into local exhibitions, including the Annual Exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. This exhibition, one that Broome would later submit several works to, was held every year since 1807 and was instrumental in promoting contemporary artists.<sup>11</sup> In an article about the Academy by Stephen May, May states that by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Academy was a "focal point of Philadelphia's cultural life and a major force on the American art scene, mounting important exhibitions and quality annual shows, with increased attendance and

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<sup>6</sup> Isaac Broome to Harrison S. Morris, February 25, 1900, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Susan James-Gadzinski et al., *American Sculpture in the Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts* (Philadelphia: Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1997), 39. James-Gadzinski states that Cannon is often described as Irish, but that she found a death certificate of Cannon's in the Philadelphia City archives which states that he was born in Philadelphia.

<sup>8</sup> Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Philadelphia, Three Centuries of American Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1976), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Hain et al., *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1805-2005: 200 Years of Excellence* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2005), 14.

a thriving school.”<sup>12</sup> There are few major artists from this time period who did not exhibit at the PAFA each year. Cannon’s pieces were displayed at the exhibition in 1851 and in 1855. Two of his most skillful works, *Self-Portrait* (Fig 1) and *Henry Clay* (Fig 2) are below.

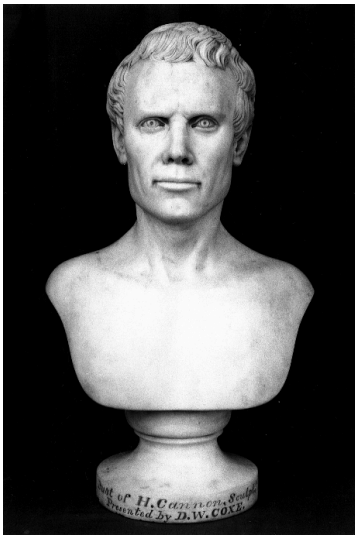


Figure 1: *Self-Portrait*, Hugh Cannon, Marble, ca. 1845, The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Jeff Richmond-Moll, E-mail message to author, January 7, 2013.

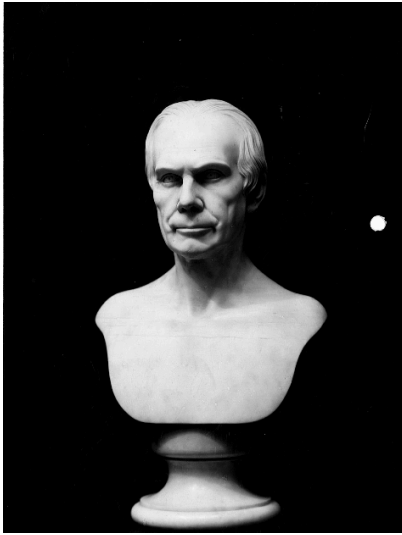


Figure 2: *Henry Clay*, Hugh Cannon, Marble, ca. 1850, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>14</sup>

These neoclassical busts clearly show Cannon's skill in marble. Cannon chose to sculpt American subjects in a classical Western tradition; this illustrates the mindset that American figures, like Henry Clay, were worthy of being memorialized in this classical tradition. The communication of American subjects as an extension of a Western art tradition was prevalent in Cannon's work and would play prominently in Broome's as well. Thus, as Cannon began to have his works exhibited and as he gained a devoted patron, Daniel W. Coxe, his listing in the 1846 Philadelphia directory changed from "carver" to "sculptor."<sup>15</sup> This transformation of Cannon's fortunes from a lowly craftsman to an artist happened just before Broome joined him as an apprentice. With this change in his fortunes, Cannon was able to have an artist's workshop with pupils to

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<sup>14</sup> *Henry Clay*, e-mail message to author, January 7, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Philadelphia: Three Centuries of American Art*, 32.

help execute his work and to teach them the art of sculpting. It is in this atmosphere that Broome first artistic foray began.

Isaac Broome grew up as a neighbor of Hugh Cannon and as a child played with Cannon's children.<sup>16</sup> Broome came to Cannon's studio in 1851 to study woodcarving and marble sculpting. In a letter to Mr. Harrison S. Morris dated February 25, 1900, Broome states that he remembered Cannon as a:

Grand-looking man, such as would impress anyone as a physically and mentally perfect being. His associates were the literate actors, artists, and the prominent physicians of that time...He was a noble, broad minded intellectual man, from whom I imbibed many noble impressions. I loved the man and I believe that he loved me. This feeling kept me in touch with him for perhaps ten years, say, about the time the Civil War broke out.<sup>17</sup>

It is evident from this reminiscence that Broome had a warm relationship with his first instructor, an instructor whose influence radiated throughout Broome's life. In the same letter Broome states that "long before I went to Rome, he advised me to do so by all means and laid great stress on his own disadvantages because of the lack of that opportunity."<sup>18</sup> Broome believed that had Cannon had the opportunity to travel in Europe, if he had lived in "later times [he] would have had a notable career."<sup>19</sup> Isaac Broome took note of the superior qualities of his teacher and of how the lack of opportunity affected Cannon and Broome resolved in his own studies and career to seize every opportunity.

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<sup>16</sup> Isaac Broome to Harrison S. Morris, February 25, 1900, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Isaac Broome worked in Cannon's studio for the first half of the 1850s before venturing out on his own. Broome came to Washington D.C. in 1855, probably drawn by multiple building projects in the Capitol city. The 1850s found the United States Capitol building undergoing a massive expansion in which the current House and Senate wings were added to the cramped building. With these large additions came an abundance of sculpture work, which attracted skilled artisans to the city. Broome wrote to Captain Montgomery Meigs, the man in charge of the Capitol expansion project, on July 29, 1856 proposing to do some sculpture work on the Senate pediment. Broome states that he would like to work on the "tree belonging to the group of the pioneer for two hundred and seventy-five dollars."<sup>20</sup> The tree Broome is most likely referring to, is the tree being chopped down in Thomas Crawford's *Progress of Civilization* pediment completed in 1863 (Fig. 3).



Figure 3: *Progress of Civilization*, Thomas Crawford, Marble, ca. 1863, The United States Capitol Building.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Isaac Broome to Montgomery Meigs, July 29, 1856, U.S. Capitol Archives, Washington D.C.

<sup>21</sup> Architect of the Capitol, "Progress of Civilization Pediment," Accessed May 1, 2013, <http://www.aoc.gov/capitol-hill/other-sculpture/progress-civilization-pediment>.



Figure 4: Detail of *Pioneer* from *Progress of Civilization*, Thomas Crawford, Marble, ca. 1863, The United States Capitol Building.

What work Broome actually accomplished before he left Washington is lost to history. It is evident that Broome was back in Philadelphia by August 5, 1856 when he wrote to Captain Montgomery Meigs asking for overdue wages of fifty-one dollars.<sup>22</sup> Broome states in the same letter that he knows it is “not your business Captain, but if you would use your influence you would greatly oblige.” In a letter to Mr. Brooks, the time keeper at the Capitol, dated September 16, 1856, Broome states that he did not have time to “call [for his wages] before I left Washington,” and is therefore sending a letter to fetch them.<sup>23</sup> Broome seems to have trouble receiving payment and several letters are exchanged before he finally got satisfaction on September 26, 1856. Broome states in a letter confirming his receipt of the payment for his work “as a stone cutter on the Senate

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<sup>22</sup> Isaac Broome to Meigs, August 5, 1856, U.S. Capitol Archives, Washington D.C.

<sup>23</sup> Isaac Broome to Mr. Brooks, September 16, 1856, U.S. Capitol Archives, Washington D.C.

side of the U.S. Capitol, between the 1 and the 6th of August, 1856.”<sup>24</sup> It is interesting that Broome refers to himself as a ‘stone cutter’ and not as a sculptor. This is again the idea of an ‘artist’ and a ‘craftsmen’ as two completely different people.<sup>25</sup>

It is difficult to determine what work Broome completed on the Capitol building. These five letters are the only indicators the Capitol archives have that Broome worked on the Capitol at all. If Broome was only working at the Capitol complex for five days, it is hard to imagine the impact Broome could have had with only five days of work. However, countless newspaper reports and written articles about Broome state that among his many achievements, working on Crawford’s pediment on the Senate side of the United States Capitol was one of them.<sup>26</sup> It is also unlikely that Broome would be on such friendly terms with Captain Meigs if he were only his employer for less than a week. More research must be done in this vein to determine the extent of Broome’s role in the carvings at the Capitol building. This writer, however, suspects that Broome contributed substantially more than what is presently known.

During his time in Washington, Broome made many influential friends and became well known among the artists and patrons of the city.<sup>27</sup> Broome completed his apprenticeship and his time in Washington was his first foray into the artistic world, the first time he put his name on pieces.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps these formative years in Washington

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<sup>24</sup> Isaac Broome to Meigs, September 29, 1856. U.S. Capitol Archives, Washington D.C.

<sup>25</sup> Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Philadelphia, Three Centuries of American Art*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Many sources state that Broome worked at the Capitol building 1855-1856. This was a time of expansion at the site and many skilled workmen were needed. It would make sense that Broome would quickly be connected with this project.

<sup>27</sup> Roberts, *The Canadian Who’s Who*, 27. Broome met and married his wife, Victoria Broome (Nee Myers) while in Washington D.C. They were married February 9, 1856.

<sup>28</sup> Broome completed the Corcoran Mausoleum in Georgetown cemetery during his time in D.C.



illustrated to Broome that he needed to polish his artistic skills to compete in the artistic world. Thus, he decided to heed the advice of his teacher, Hugh Cannon, and go to Europe to learn from the masters and the classical past.<sup>29</sup>

After briefly returning from Washington to Philadelphia in 1856, Broome and his wife Victoria went abroad. There are no first-hand accounts of their trip and we are left with second-hand information reported in newspapers of the time to partially construct the trip. The Broomes visited England, France, Italy, and according to a *Trenton Times* article published on Broome's death in 1922, lived in London, Paris, Florence, and Rome.<sup>30</sup> Broome collected artwork for wealthy patrons while abroad and opened studios in several cities.<sup>31</sup> One of the works Broome completed from this period of Pope Pius IX is now only available in a parian bust Broome would later complete for the ceramic company Ott and Brewer (Fig. 5).

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<sup>29</sup> Isaac Broome Research File, Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. Before embarking on his European trip Isaac Broome became an American citizen on October 11, 1858, Newark Museum Object File

<sup>30</sup> "Funeral Monday for Prof. Broome," *The Trenton Times* (May 5, 1922), Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



Figure 5: *Pope Pius IX*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca 1875, Collection of Noreen and Robert Cunningham.<sup>32</sup>

This extant bust shows Pope Pius IX (1792-1878) arrayed in the garments of the church. The pope wears a skullcap, clergyman's collar, and a brocade of papal symbols.<sup>33</sup> The back of the bust is impressed on his left shoulder: Ott & Brewer/Trenton, N.J. On the right shoulder two lines state BROOME. Fecit/ROMA, 1858.<sup>34</sup> This bust of Pope Pius IX was designed during Broome's time in Rome in 1858. Since Broome had yet to work in ceramics in the 1850s, this work must have originally been conceived of as a marble bust of the pope. Broome took his original design in marble and transformed it into

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<sup>32</sup> *Pope Pius IX*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, ca. 1875, Parian, Noreen and Robert Cunningham Collection.

<sup>33</sup> New Jersey State Museum, "Catalogue Sheet," The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

parian, thus blurring the line between the intrinsically artistic medium of marble and the more utilitarian ceramic.

While abroad, Broome had the opportunity to study more than just fine art. Numerous newspaper articles from the time state that in addition to the artistic masters Broome studied Etruscan. There were several collections of Etruscan vases that Broome possibly could have studied. Regardless of which collections he observed, Broome saw ancient ceramics in a museum setting where ceramic vessels were displayed as art. Presumably, Broome's examination of these vessels piqued his interest in this medium, an interest that he would largely pursue the rest of his life.

Broome returned from Europe in 1858 and enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Despite years of studying the classics in Europe, Broome must have felt that he needed formal training and he enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. The traditional artistic curriculum the Academy offered would give Broome the grooming he needed to move in high artistic circles and it is this training that would take Ott and Brewer's ceramics beyond mere decorative ware, to artistic ware. Isaac Broome enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1858. He is listed in the class rosters for the Antique Class in 1858 to 1859 and the Life Class from 1859 to 1860.<sup>35</sup> According to a printed announcement from 1856, the Life Class met for six months; evening classes met three times a week and were devoted to live sketches, with a female model present on Wednesdays and a male on Mondays and Fridays.<sup>36</sup> In addition, all

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<sup>35</sup> Jeff Richmond-Moll, e-mail message to author, October 19, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, "Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Distribution of Studies for Each Evening through the six months beginning October 1, and ending with the close of March," Pennsylvania Academy of Art Archives, 1856.

students were required to attend twenty lectures on ‘artistic anatomy’ throughout the year. The school also had a “Cabinet of Materials of Costume” of which a school flier states, contained “ceramic wares, ornamented metals, arms and armor.”<sup>37</sup> It is intriguing that the Academy had a small collection of goods that were considered to be more craft-related and that this hoard included ceramics. The Antiques class studied from the Academy’s collection of antique casts, which it had collected since its inception in 1805. The founders, in their “Statement of Purpose” proclaimed that the Academy wished to “promote the cultivation of the fine arts, in the United States of America, by introducing correct and elegant copies, from works of the first Masters, in sculpture and painting,” in an attempt to “enlighten and invigorate the talents of our Countrymen.”<sup>38</sup> During this period casts were considered to be extremely desirable in their own right. The ability to examine casts of original masterpieces was a suitable alternative to a grand tour of Europe. In fact, it was this cache of art that first began the Academy’s annual exhibitions in 1807.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Broome and his fellow students had access to casts of masterpieces. Throughout his life, Broome desired his work to be as accurate and true to the original as possible; this desire for the genuine is felt especially in his busts of historic and current figures.

Broome excelled at the Academy and exhibited in several of their annual exhibitions. Broome first exhibited in 1855, before he enrolled in the institution, and then again in 1858. From the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art’s exhibition records, it

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Hain et al., *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1805-2005: 200 Years of Excellence*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 14.

is evident that after 1858 Broome had several patrons purchasing his marble works. In the 1855 exhibition, his two entries were entitled *Memory* and *Bust of a Gentleman*, both were owned by him.<sup>40</sup> By 1858, Broome had made influential friends in Washington D.C., worked for American patrons while abroad, and it is evident that he had a small following within the art community.<sup>41</sup> Of the three pieces he exhibited in 1858, Broome's patrons already purchased all three of them. Broome continued to submit new marble pieces to the annual exhibition until 1863, however his pieces continued in the exhibition until 1870, with the same pieces submitted multiple years in a row.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately most of Broome's marble works are lost to us and there are only a few that have been positively identified as his work.<sup>43</sup>

The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts possesses a marble bust of Benjamin Franklin by Broome (Fig. 6).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Hastings Falk et al., *The Annual Exhibition Record of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1807-1814 Vol. 1*, Editor Peter Hastings Falk (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1988), 37.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 37-38.

<sup>43</sup> James-Gadzinski et al, *American Sculpture in the Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts*, 83. It is possible that there are Broome pieces that have yet to be positively identified as his work. In an e-mail with the Mr. Richmond-Moll dated January 22, 2013, he sent the author pictures of two pieces by Broome: *Mrs. Francis Peters Bust* and *Head of a Baby*. Both were deaccessioned by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. They were auctioned off through Samuel T. Freeman's auction house in Philadelphia in the 1950s. More information can be found in: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Permanent Collection of Works of Art*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1900), 105.

<sup>44</sup> "Benjamin Franklin," Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Accessed May 3, 2013, <http://www.pafa.org/museum/The-Collection-Greenfield-American-Art-Resource/Tour-the-Collection/Category/Collection-Detail/985/let--B/mkey--6161/nameid--852/>. As Susan James-Gadzinski notes in *American Sculpture in the Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art*, 83. The original source for this piece is unknown.



Figure 6: *Benjamin Franklin*, Isaac Broome, Marble, ca. 1857-58, The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

This demi-bust shows an older, heavily lined Franklin with shoulder-length curling hair and draped clothing. Broome's skill in marble and his ability to make his medium expressive and life-like is evident in this work. This 1858 piece is a precursor to Broome's parian bust of Franklin that would be completed for Ott and Brewer in the 1870s.

The Philadelphia Museum of Fine Art preserves Broome's *Bust of a Youth*, which was produced by Broome in 1860 (Fig. 7).<sup>45</sup> This neoclassic *Bust of a Youth* shows Broome's mastery of the marble medium at the conclusion of his time as a student at the Academy. The perfectly modeled features and the artistically messy hair, neoclassic dress, and the 1860s preference for naturalism is of its time and is splendidly done.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "Bust of a Youth," Philadelphia Museum of Art, Accessed May 3, 2013, <http://www.phillamuseum.org/collections/permanent/300111.html?mulR=14437/1>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. The Philadelphia Museum of Art's website suggests that this bust shows the influence of famous American sculptor Randolph Rogers.



Figure 7: *Bust of a Youth*, Isaac Broome, Marble Bust, ca. 1860, Philadelphia Museum of Fine Art.

Isaac Broome's artistic promise was evident to the staff at the PAFA, and after two years of study, in 1860, Broome began to teach at the Academy. He was the director of the Life and the Antique class by 1860 and was elected as an Academician at the young age of 26, filling the place that had belonged to Rembrandt Peale.<sup>47</sup>

Academicians, the artistic heart of the Academy, were essential in choosing professors and staging exhibitions for the Academy.<sup>48</sup> For Broome to be chosen to fill the place of a notable artist as Rembrandt Peale, in an elite group of peers, and at such a young age, is a testament to his skill and prowess in the artistic world. Broome was affiliated with the

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<sup>47</sup> "His life devoted to Art Productions," (N.P., N.D.), Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. The exact date of Broome's election as an Academician is from an e-mail with Archives Coordinator, Jeff Richmond-Moll, October 22, 2012. Broome was elected as an Academician on June 7, 1861.

<sup>48</sup> Hain, et al., *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1805-2005: 200 Years of Excellence*, 14-15.

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts as an Academician for the rest of his life.<sup>49</sup>

Broome's time at the Academy not only gave him the polish that comes with formal training, but it also gave him the credentials of teacher and administrator in one of the first art schools in the nation. This pedigree would appeal to companies like Ott and Brewer, who over a decade later would hire Professor Broome to direct their art department.

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<sup>49</sup> Isaac Broome to Edward H. Coates, February 5, 1905, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Broome states that he appreciated the "invitation to [the] Centennial dinner of the Academy... I will certainly be pleased to celebrate my 45th year as an academician."



## CHAPTER TWO: THE SEEDS OF CHANGE: AMERICAN CERAMICS PRIOR TO THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

Prior to the Civil War, ceramic production in the United States consisted almost entirely of earthenware and stoneware. These enterprises were typically small scale and made wares that were mostly utilitarian.<sup>50</sup> Historian John Stratton in his dissertation *Factors in the Development of the American Pottery Industry* states that Americans dominated the field of coarser ceramics because foreign manufactories found it too expensive to transport such wares to the United States.<sup>51</sup> European companies monopolized the market of whiteware in America; most Americans imported their fine table goods from Europe or from Asia.<sup>52</sup> With the outbreak of the Civil War the importation of fine ceramic goods dwindled in the States and caused many Americans to wonder why native factories could not provide them with these higher-end goods.<sup>53</sup> After the war there was a fundamental change amongst American ceramic manufacturers with the introduction of advanced industrial techniques into their factories.<sup>54</sup> Larger factories and ambitious investors wished to see Americans tackle the foreign monopoly on fine ceramic goods.

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<sup>50</sup> Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States: An Historical Review of American Ceramic Art*, 53.

<sup>51</sup> Herman John Stratton, *Factors in the Development of the American Pottery Industry, 1860-1929* (Chicago: Unpublished Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1929), 5.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>54</sup> Levin, *The History of American Ceramics, 1607 to the Present: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms*, 44.

This growing consciousness was magnified when Americans began to see their wares compared to those of Europe through the venue of world's fairs. The 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition in London was the first world's fair, and it changed the perception of competition among manufactories and among countries. Fairs allowed the critics and purchasers of the world's arts to see every country's goods side by side. In addition, world's fairs employed a team of international judges to award prizes and to applaud or condemn each country's offerings. World's fairs were a substantial impetus in the advancement of the arts because of the innate competitive nature of the countries exhibiting.<sup>55</sup> American producers felt that the way to propel their goods forward was to have a world's fair.

The 1853 Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York City was a perfect opportunity for Americans to see their products and to compare them to goods produced in other countries.<sup>56</sup> While some American companies earned praise for their skill, most were characterized as imitations of European designs. One of the British Commissioners at the 1853 Crystal Palace exhibition, George Wallis, sympathized with American producers in his report to Queen Victoria, stating that any originality in design would be the "first efforts of a people, however ingenious, whose experience in many of those branches of

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<sup>55</sup> The 1851 Crystal Palace Fair showed the world that English ceramics were not as developed as their continental counterparts. After that fair, the English created design schools and made the reformation of taste and skill in their country a top priority. By the 1867 Exhibition in Paris they were back on top and winning awards. For more information see: "U.S. at the Vienna Exposition," *The Crockery and Glass Journal* Vol. 1 No. 9 (n.d.): 5; Richard C. McCormick, *Report of the Commissioner-General* (N.P., 1877), 177.; and United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition 1876: Reports and Awards Group II*, ed. Francis A. Walker (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), 6.

<sup>56</sup> This fair is largely seen as a failure due to its financial management. It was a private venture not backed by the United States government. For more information see James D. McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* (1876; with an introduction by John Francis Marion, Philadelphia: The National Publishing Company, 1875), 57 and Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 24.

manufacture which in Europe have claimed the exclusive attention of skilled artizans [sic] for ages, does not date so far back as a single generation.”<sup>57</sup> Wallis recognized that American manufacturers were just beginning their journey to design independence and seems to give them encouragement for even trying. Regardless, the 1853 exhibition showed American manufacturers that they had a long way to go before their goods could be competitive with their foreign counterparts.

The shortcomings of the American ceramic industry were largely self-made. America had a plethora of raw resources to aid ceramic production, including a superb stash of kaolin, the key ingredient in the production of porcelain and a large supply of wood and coal to fuel their kilns. After the Civil War, Americans began to take better advantage of these natural resources due to a fundamental shift in thinking that came with industrialization. In 1860 the United States primarily produced earthenware bodies, tableware was purchased from European factories and native production of tableware was practically nonexistent.<sup>58</sup> This shift was partially due to the fact that during the Civil War importation of European goods was drastically reduced and the need for a native market of high-end ceramic goods seemed glaring.<sup>59</sup> As the *Merchant's Journal* notes, the 1860s for American ceramic production was when the pottery industry was “born, or to say the least, to have had real and vigorous life given it.”<sup>60</sup> There was a change with

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<sup>57</sup> George Wallis, *New York Industrial Exhibition: Special Report of Mr. George Wallis; Presented to Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, 1854* (London: T. Harrison, 1854), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Stratton, *Factors in the Development of the American Pottery Industry, 1860-1929*, 5.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 7. Total imports for 1860 were \$4,138,838. “From the outbreak of the war until 1867 maximum imports for any year were less than two and a half million.”

<sup>60</sup> “The Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant's Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer, “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26. The article connects this change partially with the passing of the 1861 tariff.

many factories founded solely to produce whiteware and many already established factories shifting their production to this higher-end ceramic body.<sup>61</sup> The American ceramic industry was ready to produce a variety of wares that could compete on an international stage

Ceramic centers started to develop around resource-rich areas with clay deposits such as Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton was ideally located on the east coast between the major markets of New York City and Philadelphia. In addition, the Delaware and Raritan Canal and the Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company, one of the first of its kind, provided an uninterrupted lifeline to both cities.<sup>62</sup> Keeping these factors in mind, Charles Hattersely in discussing the ideal location for his pottery stated that in addition to its perfect location Trenton “[abounded] with fine clays and convenience for the collection of all other materials, such as coal, kaolin, flint, sand feldspar, bone, etc., by canal or railroad.”<sup>63</sup> Many other potters felt the way Hattersley did, Trenton, in 1852 had only one potter with a single kiln, by 1868 there were fifteen potteries operating fifty kilns and this number would only increase as the century wore on.<sup>64</sup> In fact, Trenton’s domination was so complete that many would nickname it the “Staffordshire of America.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Stratton, *Factors in the Development of the American Pottery Industry, 1860-1929*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> David J. Goldberg, “Preliminary Notes on the Pioneer Potters and Potteries of Trenton, N.J.: The First Thirty Years - 1852-1882 (And Beyond),” (Unpublished Manuscripts: Smithsonian Museum of American History, 1983), 12-13.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>64</sup> Loman and Petula Eng, *Collecting American Belleek* (Atglen, Pa: Schiffer Publications, 2003), 7.

<sup>65</sup> “Centennial Sketches: New Jersey Ceramics,” *Camden Daily Post*, September 7, 1876, Found in John Hart Brewer, “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library.

One of the key companies of the New Jersey ceramic potteries was the firm that was known as The Etruria Pottery Works or more popularly, Ott and Brewer. Bloor, Ott, and Booth was founded in 1863 by William Bloor, Joseph Ott, and Thomas Booth.<sup>66</sup> Staffordshire trained William Bloor came to Trenton from East Liverpool, Ohio in 1854 and brought with him an extensive knowledge of the pottery field, particularly of whiteware.<sup>67</sup> Bloor was associated with many different firms throughout his career including Speeler, Taylor, and Bloor who experimented with porcelain and parian in the 1850s and the firm of East Liverpool Porcelain Works among others.<sup>68</sup> The other two gentlemen were financial backers to the firm, Joseph Ott owned a livery stable with William P. Brewer, John Hart Brewer's father, and Thomas Booth owned a stationary shop.<sup>69</sup> The three men opened the Etruria Works, named for Wedgwood's famous Etruria Works in England, in 1863 (Fig. 8).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States*, 215. Though the name of Ott and Brewer was not in use until 1871 when Bloor left the company making Joseph Ott and John Hart Brewer the sole owners.

<sup>67</sup> R. W. Norton Art Gallery, *The American Porcelain Tradition: 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries. A Loan Exhibition from the New Jersey State Museum, May 28 to June 25, 1872* (Shreveport, LA: C. Young, 1972), 12-13.

<sup>68</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 28.

<sup>69</sup> Goldberg, "Preliminary Notes on The Pioneer Potters and Potteries of Trenton, NJ: The First Thirty Years - 1852-1882 (And Beyond)", 42. and Harry J. Podmore, "Trenton in Bygone Days" (n.p., n. d.) Newark Museum Archives.

<sup>70</sup> Harry J. Podmore, "Old Pottery Landmark Passes at Trenton," *Ceramic Age* 19 (June 1932): 271, Newark Museum Object File.

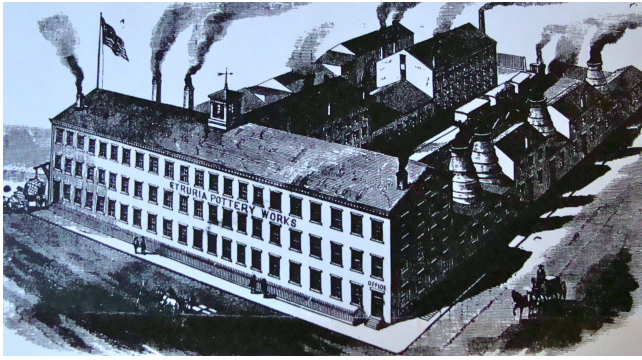


Figure 8: *The Etruria Pottery Works*, ca. 1880, *The Crockery and Glassware Reporter*.<sup>71</sup>

Booth retired in 1864 and sold his interest in the pottery briefly to Garrett Burroughs who, being too ill to continue in the business, sold it to John Hart Brewer in 1865.<sup>72</sup>

Brewer, born in 1844, was the twenty-one year old nephew of Joseph Ott. Prior to his time at the company, Brewer served in the Union army from August 1861 to 1864 on the U. S. S. Huntsville.<sup>73</sup> Brewer's first six years at the company of Bloor, Ott, and Brewer were an apprenticeship in which he learned under the experienced Bloor.<sup>74</sup> Brewer's arrival in the company brought a fresh vitality to it that would shape the course of its development.

Until the Centennial, the company of Bloor, Ott, and Brewer was known for its hotel and sanitary ware made of white granite and cream-colored earthenware.<sup>75</sup> The company started to experiment with some parian ware in the 1860s, a material that would

<sup>71</sup> "Etruria Pottery Company," *The Pottery and Glassware Reporter*, vol. 3 no.1 (April 29, 1880), 13.

<sup>72</sup> Eng and Eng, *Collecting American Belleek*, 94. and "History," Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection. New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Goldberg, "Preliminary Notes on the Pioneer Potters and Potteries of Trenton, NJ.: The First Thirty Years - 1852-1882 (And Beyond)," 42. Bloor would leave the company in 1871, which allowed Brewer to step into as the artistic lead in the company.

<sup>75</sup> Jennie Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of the History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878), 462.

later be used by Broome. Parian was a type of porcelain that resembled marble due to its high levels of feldspar and was often used to create “statuary” for the middle class.<sup>76</sup> It originated in England and was first produced in the United States by the Bennington factory in Vermont in the 1840s.<sup>77</sup> Parian became popular due to its inexpensive nature and ability to imitate expensive marble and plaster-model reproduction sculptures favored by the wealthy for a fraction of the cost.<sup>78</sup> It was seen as a new and exciting product that could make a statement in the American market.

A Bust of Ulysses S. Grant, modeled as commander of the Union Army in military dress, was probably produced at the firm in the later half of the 1860s (Fig. 9).<sup>79</sup>

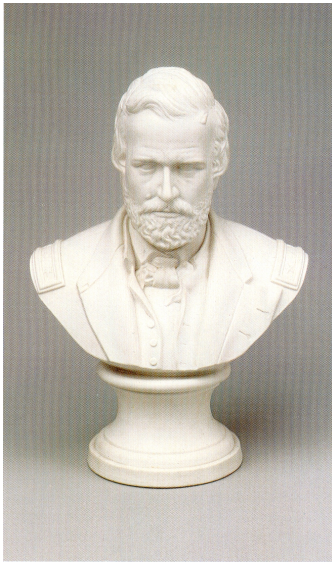


Figure 9: *Grant*, Bloor, Ott, and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1865, New Jersey State Museum.

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<sup>76</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 29-31.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 30-31.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Copeland, *Parian: Copeland's Statuary Porcelain* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007), 21.

<sup>79</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 35. In her end notes Frelinghuysen alludes to the fact that several of the partners from the Etruria pottery had names beginning with the letter B, so we can not be positive which B. O. & B alludes to, though Frelinghuysen feels that the period of Bloor, Ott, and Brewer 1865-1871 is most likely.

This ambitious piece, in the new and fashionable medium of parian, illustrates the skill of Bloor and Brewer and it is a first glimmer of the company's later artistic choices. This stoic bust is comparable to Broome's 1876 bust of a then President Grant in civilian clothing created for the Centennial celebration (Fig. 10).

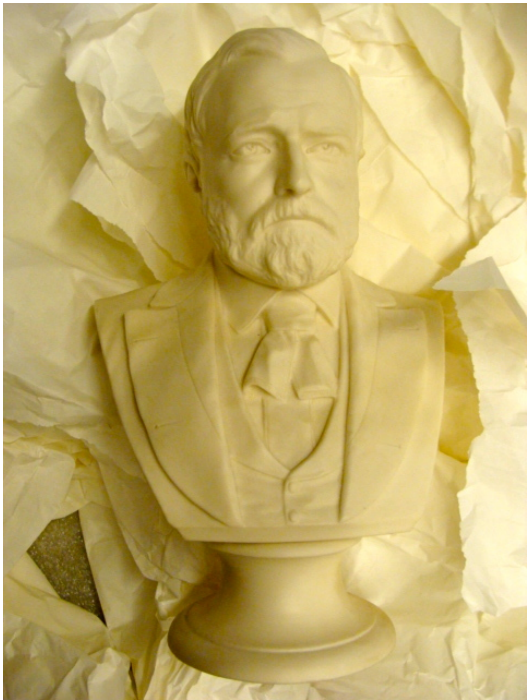


Figure 10: *Grant*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Newark State Museum.

Broome's bust shows a more expressive and life-like Grant than the earlier parian bust (Fig 9). In addition to this being a testament to Broome's skill, it also shows that the medium of parian was better mastered by the time Broome was working with it. The reissuing of the same American figure when he changed leadership roles from general to President was worthy of a parian update. This helps to illustrate the appeal of parian in



adapting to an ever-changing world, this modification of Grant's role in society would never have been done with marble. The company of Ott and Brewer was responsive and it is evident that keeping American subjects at the forefront of their production was one of the artistic goals of their company.

Despite glimmers of an independent and dynamic ceramic production in the United States, the potters of America needed direction and a national organization to promote their interests. John Hart Brewer was a champion of the American potter, a role he would play throughout his entire life.<sup>80</sup> Brewer had experience in organizing and he, along with fellow potters John F. Thompson and C. Hilson, in 1874, called for the creation of the National Potters' Association (NPA). From the Association's first meeting in 1875, their opening statement reads:

In our opinion the time has arrived when it is necessary for those engaged in the production of what is commonly called Pottery, of all grades, to unite for mutual protection; therefore, be it resolved that in organizing this National Potters' Association of America, we hope to produce a greater interest than ever before in the development of this ancient art in this country.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to their primary goal, the organization's purpose was to let Americans know that their native ceramic products were comparable to foreign ones and that it was a citizen's patriotic duty to "use American goods in preference to foreign, thereby enabling American potters to continue to improve the quality and increase the quantity of goods

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<sup>80</sup> "Ott and Brewer (1871-1892)," Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. Brewer originally was president of the Trenton Potters' Association before starting the United States Potters' Association. He would later go into politics, serving first in the State Assembly and later in the House of Representatives. His fight for a protective tariff would dominate his political career.

<sup>81</sup> United States Potters' Association, *Proceedings*, January 13 and 14, 1875, 7 (Trenton, NJ: Murphey & Bechtel, 1875-1942). Microform by Ohio Historical Society, 1987, Accessed Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

made in this country.”<sup>82</sup> They wished to break old prejudices that led to low demand and thus low investment in American wares.

The NPA wanted to promote the interests of potters in the United States and to elevate world opinions on their wares.<sup>83</sup> The Centennial was seen as an essential venue to promote the interests of American potters. A Centennial Committee was created, headed by T.C. Smith of Union Porcelain Works to “procure space for a combined exhibition of American Pottery,” and to ensure that members were obtaining the space and exhibition materials necessary to ensure a successful showing.<sup>84</sup> The potters wished to “make a fine display at the U.S. Centennial Exhibition...and thereby exhibit to the world at large the extent and perfection to which the ceramic art has been carried by American manufacturers.”<sup>85</sup> To affect this successful showing they wished to produce original work that would illustrate their prowess and gain respect in the international community. The potters stated that:

We should not in the future, as we have done in the past, copy all, or nearly all, of our patterns from foreign manufacturers. We believe we have sufficient talent in this country to originate new designs, more elegant and suitable to the wants of the American people and that such procedure on our part will the sooner enable us to give to our products the stamp of a national product and a distinct character, thus showing to consumers that they are and have been using large quantities of American goods, sold to them as English and French ware.<sup>86</sup>

To help raise the standard of American goods Brewer suggested that a committee be appointed to award a cash prize of one hundred dollars to the “most meritorious design of

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>83</sup> The association met every year until 1952 when they were disbanded.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 12.

pottery ware for exhibition at the Centennial fair.”<sup>87</sup> The commitment of the NPA to produce original wares would be worth the extra effort.

The American potter’s initiative in the creation of an association for common promotion was timely and was lauded by the press of the day. New publications, like the *Crockery and Glass Journal* enthusiastically reported the NPA meeting in its entirety. The Journal first commented on how far this American industry had come in the past few years, stating that “instead of factories only producing the commonest kinds of delft, many of them are now able to so successfully vie with foreign potteries that one member of the [NPA] convention yesterday acknowledged that he had manufactured imitation French ware and sold it to regular dealers as the genuine foreign article.”<sup>88</sup> This sort of action, once so common, the paper declared, would not need to happen in future dealings. The *Crockery and Glass Journal* went on to declare that “there does not appear to be any reason why, in a very short time, American ware should not be deemed by the world as fine, artistic, and perfect as that produced in the factories of Europe.”<sup>89</sup> The NPA, whose association would be known as a “power in this country and abroad” were now, in the paper’s opinion, a force upon the international stage.<sup>90</sup> The NPA’s first testing ground would undoubtedly be the Philadelphia Centennial.

There was more riding on a fine showing at the Centennial Exhibition than just obtaining the respect of foreign manufacturers. The *Crockery and Glass Journal* states:

If the Potters’ Association carries out its intention of making a grand display of American ware at the Centennial Exhibition if the manufactures will only exert

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>“American Pottery,” *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 1 no. 5 (January 23, 1875), 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> “The Convention of Potters,” *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 1 no. 4 (January, 16, 1875), 4.

themselves to the utmost to adhere to the resolutions they yesterday adopted, the Legislatures will doubtless aid their endeavors and native industry by so regulating the tariff upon foreign pottery that our home market will be able to successfully compete with those of Europe.<sup>91</sup>

The *Crockery and Glass Journal* recognized that to level the playing field the American potters needed a protective tariff, which would allow them to not be undercut by foreign manufactories. A tariff would allow American ceramic companies to expand their market in fine goods while being protected by American law, which would allow them to flourish. A tariff would be a major factor in getting the American public to choose American made wares over European.

To prepare their display for the Centennial, the ceramic producers of the NPA not only created a Centennial Committee, but also made a commitment to produce original wares for the exhibition. In many cases, this meant overhauling their existing production to create something novel. In response, several potteries cultivated new talent to help create an artistic line of wares for the Centennial. For Ott and Brewer, this meant the hiring of an extremely gifted and somewhat unconventional pottery man, like Professor Isaac Broome (Fig. 11).

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<sup>91</sup> "American Pottery," *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 1 no. 5 (January 23, 1875), 4.



Figure 11: *David Gilmour Blythe and Isaac Broome in Front of J.J. Gillespie's Gallery*, David Gilmour Blythe, Watercolor, ca. 1865, Russell Burke Fine Arts.<sup>92</sup>

Broome, shown on the right above, was not idle since his appointment as Academician and teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1860.<sup>93</sup> Inspired by his trip to Europe and study of Etruscan ceramics, he largely ceased his marble work and transitioned into the production of ceramic goods in the 1860s. Though not all of Broome's movements are traceable during this decade he did start a terra-cotta business in Pittsburgh in 1866. Broome was engaged in the making of "terra cotta vases,

<sup>92</sup> Chambers, Bruce W., "The World of David Gilmour Blythe," *National Collection of Fine Arts*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1980.

<sup>93</sup> Broome also painted portraits and continued to make marble sculptures. In 1866 Broome entered a contest to design a memorial statue in Pennsylvania's Sewickley Cemetery. The statue, entitled *Fame*, is there to this day. For more information on this, please see: Sewickley Valley Historical Society, "Sewickley Fame Sculpture," Accessed May 14, 2013, <http://www.sewickleyhistory.org/sewickley-history/sewickley-landmarks/8-sewickley-fame-sculpture.html>.

fountains, and architectural elements” in Pittsburgh and then in Brooklyn in 1871.<sup>94</sup> His Brooklyn factory was closed due to its close proximity to New York City, whose board of health felt that the firing of kilns was a danger to nearby buildings.<sup>95</sup> It is interesting that Broome turned from marble sculpting to the making of decorative outdoor ceramics a few years after being made an Academician at the PAFA. He was the type of person who constantly tried new things and gave himself fresh challenges. He also probably understood that ceramics were a growing industry in the United States and felt that he could do more in crafting this burgeoning trade than in the field of sculpture. Broome had seen how dependent his first teacher Hugh Cannon was on patrons to produce his artwork. Perhaps Broome’s turn from marble work to ceramics had something to do with the steady nature of the ceramic field where Broome could still exercise his creative training with the security of a guaranteed paycheck. Broome would occasionally return to sculpture over the years, but the field of ceramics would dominate his creative output for the rest of his life.

At the invitation of Brewer, Broome began working at Ott and Brewer in 1875.<sup>96</sup> Broome, seemingly an unlikely choice at first, to shape Ott and Brewer’s Centennial display was chosen over other qualified individuals steeped in the ceramic business due

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<sup>94</sup> “Ott and Brewer (1871-1892),” Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton and in Harry J. Podmore, “Trenton in Bygone Days,” *Trenton Sunday Times-Advertiser*, November 15, 1959, Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

<sup>95</sup> James Mitchell, “Ott and Brewer: Etruria in America,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 7 (1972): 4.

<sup>96</sup> There is discrepancy regarding the date in which Broome began working at Ott and Brewer. Some texts refer to an 1873 date while others 1875. After examining countless sources, including period newspapers, 1875 seems to be the most likely date. Many nineteenth-century newspaper articles and period publications including: Jennie Young, *The Ceramic Art*, 464.; Edwin Atlee Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States*, 220.; “Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant’s Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens & Library, 26. All mention 1875 as Broome’s start date. In addition, the NPA was formed in 1875, and their resolution to produce original wares prompted Ott and Brewer to hire Broome.

to his unique background. The newspaper articles of the day give us some insight to how Ott and Brewer found Broome. William T. Morris in his article “Tribute to Isaac Broome” mentions the fact that Brewer “discovered [Broome] in New York and brought him to Trenton to help make the display that Brewer wanted for the Centennial exhibition.”<sup>97</sup> Another article mentions the fact that “Ott & Brewer...knew of Professor Broome’s skill and obtained his services, principally for the modeling of their vases and figures, which won high awards at the Centennial and Paris Expositions.”<sup>98</sup> Isaac Broome seems to have been known to Ott and Brewer, perhaps through his terra cotta exploits in Pittsburgh and New York, and Brewer specifically enticed Broome to come to Trenton. Morris goes on to say that “Wedgwood in his day discovered Flaxman just as Brewer in his day discovered Broome, both marking an epoch in pottery manufacture, one in England and the other in America.”<sup>99</sup> This generous statement illustrates Broome’s importance to the Ott and Brewer Company, that it was his coming to Trenton that ignited the spark that created such original and gifted wares.

Broome’s extensive training as a sculptor and experience made him an obvious artistic choice for the Hart Brewer Company’s Centennial display. Broome was a classically trained sculptor who had not only the benefit of being affiliated with one of the most prestigious art schools in the United States, The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, but was someone who had gone on a ‘grand tour’ in Europe. Due to his training, Broome’s design vocabulary was traditionally Western. He wished to position the United

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<sup>97</sup> William T. Morris, “Tribute to Isaac Broome,” (n.p., n.d.), Newark Museum Collections, Newark New Jersey.

<sup>98</sup> “Former Trenton Boys Who Have Made Good Elsewhere,” (January 11, 1914). Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

<sup>99</sup> Morris, “Tribute to Isaac Broome,” (n.p., n.d.), Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

States as the inheritor of these grand artistic traditions, to have the United States be seen as the next step in the evolution of art. He had seen and done things that most pottery men could not boast of and this was why Brewer wished to have the services of a sculptor as his chief designer and modeler. Ott and Brewer needed a fresh outlook and wished to produce wares that could be considered art that could attract attention. The mere choice of Broome as chief designer was something different and must have made the critics pay attention to the wares of Ott and Brewer. Broome came to the firm in 1875 full of ideas for an artistic line of primarily parian ware that would make critics and consumers alike take notice of the firm of Ott and Brewer. Brewer and Broome both had their sites set on the Centennial Exposition of 1876.



### CHAPTER THREE: INNOVATION AND EXHIBITION: OTT AND BREWER AT THE PHILADELPHIA CENTENNIAL

World's fairs were born from the innate desire to achieve, to illustrate to the world what a particular country was capable of. Being a young country, the United States sought to find a way to distinguish itself among the foreign powers. Just as classical architecture was utilized in the construction of United States government buildings to add a feeling of permanence and innate rightness, thereby designating Americans as heirs of the ancient world, the organizers of the 1876 Centennial hoped that the grand scale of the fair would allow the world to feel that America was a competitor in the market of high quality goods. They also wished for Americans to feel proud of their native productions. Thus, by having a world's fair to show the world how competitive American producers now were, it forced many companies to become competitive by rethinking how they conducted business. The failed 1853 Crystal Palace exhibition in New York City showed the American Centennial organizers what they needed to accomplish to make the Philadelphia Centennial a grand and successful enterprise. Therefore the organizers had private and government backing and those in charge made sure there was a wide consensus and commitment to perfection before the fair even began.

The idea for the Centennial was born out of an 1864 speech at the Smithsonian Institution delivered by John L. Campbell, a professor at Wabash College in Indiana.<sup>100</sup> Due to the fact that the fair was proposed during the Civil War, not much came of the suggestion until 1870 when several congressmen and the Franklin Institute got behind the idea.<sup>101</sup> They wished to commemorate the progress America had made in the one hundred years since the American Revolution. Congress stated that America's one-hundredth birthday was going to be remembered by holding an international exhibition of "natural resources of the country and their development, and of its progress in those arts which benefit mankind, in comparison with those of older nations."<sup>102</sup> Rydell, a noted world's fair historian and author of *All the World's a Fair*, states that the fair was "brought to fruition by the efforts of businessmen and politicians interested in promoting the stability and further economic growth of the country."<sup>103</sup> Though the fair was discussed in high-minded terms, the leaders of the country saw it as a perfect opportunity to promote American industry, including the burgeoning ceramic industry.

Philadelphia was seen as the ideal location for the fair since it was at one time the Capitol of the country and where the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were crafted.<sup>104</sup> The grounds of the fair were located on the 2,740 acres of Fairmount

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<sup>100</sup> Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition* (1876; reprint, with an introduction by John Francis Marion, Philadelphia: The National Publishing Company, 1975), 65. The official name for the Centennial was: The International Exhibition of Arts, Manufacturers, and Products of the Soil and Mine.

<sup>103</sup> Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*, 19-20.

<sup>104</sup> McCabe, *Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, 7.

Park in Philadelphia.<sup>105</sup> The Centennial displays were divided between five main buildings and various state buildings with the ceramics exhibitors located in the main exhibition space (Fig. 12).<sup>106</sup>



Figure 12: *Main Building*, ca. 1876, Library of Congress Prints and Drawings Reading Room, Washington D.C.

The massive main building was parallelogram in shape and the largest in the world at that time, covering 21.47 acres.<sup>107</sup> Exhibition space was organized off of a central nave, which was 120 feet in width and 1,832 feet in length with smaller avenues and aisles branching off of the main walkway.<sup>108</sup> American ceramics were displayed on the south side of the hall on the eastern half of the main building.<sup>109</sup> There was a wide variety of ceramics displayed from earthenware to fine porcelains with at least a third of the objects on display being American displays. McCabe, a period travel writer, felt that the visitor

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>106</sup> International Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, 1876, “Main Exhibition Building,” 1876, Prints and Photographs Division, Lot 7981, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

<sup>107</sup> McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, 117.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 124.

could not “fail to be impressed by the fertility of resource, the original genius for decorative effects, and the evident liberality of expenditure displayed.... produced by the kaleidoscopic mingling of diverse colors and forms, and found in it a faithful reflex of our composite American life.”<sup>110</sup> The breadth of exhibits showed that American companies truly committed to making an impressive display at the Centennial exhibition.

The NPA understood that the Centennial was their best opportunity to make their case to the world. Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen in her book *American Porcelain, 1770-1920* states that when the exhibition opened in the spring of 1876 the “first great showing of native ceramics at any international or national exhibition [was] of surprising magnitude,” with “all major centers (New York, Trenton, Philadelphia, and East Liverpool)” being represented.<sup>111</sup> However, the first order of business for all of these companies was to prepare. All goods to be exhibited were to be at the Centennial site by January 1, 1876 so they could be properly organized and displayed before the May 11 opening day.<sup>112</sup> This gave Ott and Brewer and Broome, a short period of time to produce all of the wares needed for the exhibition.

With six months before the fair, Broome not only had to design the bulk of Ott and Brewer’s Centennial display, but he also had to work out the technical problems that came with the use of parian.<sup>113</sup> The problems were numerous, as one newspaper points out:

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>111</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 38.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>113</sup> “Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant’s Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26. Broome’s services were engaged “six months previous to

In this short space of time was overcome all the experimental difficulties incidental to [parian's] manufacture...the adaptation of the body to glaze, and to fire, and to color the same, the proper method of casting and propping the figures for firing, along with scores of other difficulties were surmounted, so that when the exhibition opened the firm had ready for the critical gaze of the nations a great variety of parian goods.<sup>114</sup>

There is no indication that Broome had ever worked with parian previous to his time at Ott and Brewer, and therefore his obvious mastery of the medium is only a further testament to his prodigious skill. The type of parian product that Ott and Brewer hoped to achieve was not being made in America and therefore the company had to surmount obstacles inherent in its production with little guidance. The firm not only had to determine the correct recipe for parian slip but also the best way to fire these goods. Broome, who had never modeled in parian before had to adjust his work based on different rates of shrinkage, which is inherent in the use of parian, something he never had to do with marble. Broome, a creative force in the company, an inventor.<sup>115</sup> He designed a new type of kiln, which according to Jennie Young in her 1878 treatise, *The Ceramic Art*, had an “equal distribution and perfect regulation of the heat [were] the features which comment it to attention” (Fig. 13).<sup>116</sup> This kiln was specifically meant for parian and designed to fit its unique needs. Young goes on to say that the kiln was “built after [Broome's] plans and under his personal direction for firing the works turned out of

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the opening of the exhibition, with the view of modeling and producing in parian, vases, busts, and statuettes.”

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Broome would later patent many of his inventions: “Tile-Dressing Machine” Patent No. 509,868 December 5, 1893; “Tile-Decorating Apparatus” Patent No. 532,636, January 15, 1895; “Rotary Press” Patent No. 899,691; “Vehicle-Rim” Patent No. 950,127, February 22, 1910; “Tire” Patent No. 1,066,791, July 8, 1913.

<sup>116</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of the History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain*, 79.

his studio.”<sup>117</sup> It is safe to state that all of the parian works executed for the Centennial by Ott and Brewer were fired in a kiln designed by Broome.

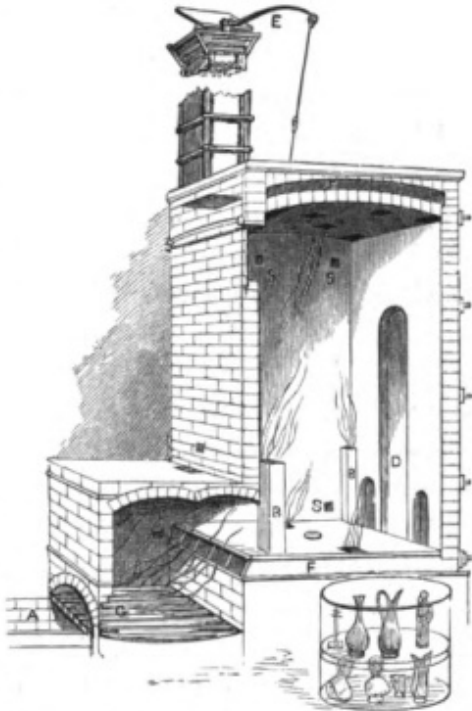


Fig. 29. — Broome's Improved Porcelain or Parian Kiln. A, ash-pit; G, grate; F F, flues; B B, bags for the flames; D, door for filling the kiln; E, damper, or draught regulator; S S S, spy-holes for watching, or trials while burning.

Figure 13: *Kiln Drawing*, Isaac Broome, ca. 1875, *Ceramic Art*.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to his kiln, Broome also invented a multi-color lithographic process for the company, which was some of the first lithographic printing on pottery in America.<sup>119</sup> Two examples were exhibited at the 1876 Centennial and are available to be

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 465.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Mitchell, “Ott & Brewer: Etruria in America,” 221.

studied at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton. A *Chinese Plate* (Fig. 14) and *George and Martha Washington Pitcher* (Fig. 15) both illustrate this lithographic method developed by Broome.<sup>120</sup>



Figure 14: *Chinese Plate* and detail, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, White Granite, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



Fig. 15 *George and Martha Washington Pitcher*, Ott and Brewer, Ivory Porcelain, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

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<sup>120</sup> “Chinese Servant Design Plate,” and George and Martha Washington Pitcher,” Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

The *Chinese Plate* is an earthenware plate with a gold glazed rim and a lithographic print designed by Broome in the center. The plate's design shows a Chinoiserie scene with a Chinese man holding a sun umbrella and a tray. The plate has two paper labels on the bottom which read "W.G. by O&B / Lithographic Print / Drawing by Broome / 1876."<sup>121</sup> The piece shows an interest in oriental subjects, which would become incredibly popular after the Centennial. The *Pitcher* is an ivory porcelain piece meant for the Centennial and is the first to use Broome's lithographic transfer process (Fig 15).<sup>122</sup> The piece includes the label "Ivory Porcelain/ By Brewer / For Centennial 1876 / decorated by Lithographic / Process / First Used in / N.J. for pottery."<sup>123</sup> The company was obviously proud of their new process that they made sure it was documented on the bottom of the piece they showcased at the fair. The *Pitcher* itself is decorated in a gold lithographic print with a bust of George Washington on one side and Martha Washington on the other and is an echo of the monumental *George and Martha Washington Tea Set* mentioned later in this paper (Fig. 37). Both of these pieces represent other mediums the company produced in addition to their parian pieces. The creative direction for the Centennial used American themes and Western tropes, which placed American ceramics at the forefront of a now obvious evolution of Western art.

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<sup>121</sup> "Chinese Servant Design Plate," Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum Archives, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>122</sup> "George and Martha Washington Pitcher," Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.



The *Pitcher's* body is ivory porcelain, which was Ott and Brewer's answer to the popular Irish Belleek body.<sup>124</sup> Ivory porcelain was an entirely ornamental ware whose quality depended on the "skill of the man at the casting bench as on the medium" itself.<sup>125</sup> Ivory porcelain was used for several pieces in Ott and Brewer's display at the Centennial exposition and was an important step in the evolution of American ceramics. American companies produced no successfully glazed porcelain before Ott and Brewer's ivory porcelain and it illustrates that Ott and Brewer were not afraid to experiment and try new things.<sup>126</sup> Throughout their history they continually pushed to create desirable wares, even if this meant discarding what had worked in the past.

Though there are no pictures known that illustrate what Ott and Brewer's display looked like for the Centennial, a picture of James Carr's New York City Pottery display gives one a good idea of how their wares were arranged (Fig. 16).

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<sup>124</sup> "History," Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. Belleek was a thin porcelain ware originally produced in Belleek, Ireland. It usually has a nacreous luster to it. Ott and Brewer would later go on to devote their artistic output to the production of true Belleek, becoming the first American company to achieve this ware.

<sup>125</sup> "History," Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>126</sup> "Day Book Folder," Ott and Brewer Company Papers, 1869-ca. 1890, Winterthur Garden and Library, Winterthur, Delaware.



Figure 16: James Carr's Centennial Display, ca. 1876, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.

From this illustration, there seems to be no obvious order or separation between the pottery's major artistic pieces and their more utilitarian or hotel wares. Stacks of plates and pitchers of varying sizes are next to portrait busts. There are very few labels, with only a few of the more artistic pieces given names. James Carr, second vice president of the NPA was also inspired to hire a sculptor, W.H. Edge to prepare some pieces for the New York City Pottery's display at the Centennial.<sup>127</sup> Edge seems to have restricted himself to portrait busts, with his most notable being Christ, George Washington, Andrew Jackson, and Ulysses S. Grant, all of whom can be seen in the picture above.<sup>128</sup> Though Carr's exhibit did strive to showcase objects other than utilitarian wares, portrait

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<sup>127</sup> J.G. Stradling, "American Ceramics and the Philadelphia Centennial," *Antiques* 110 no. 1 (July, 1876), 2.

<sup>128</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 40.

busts and some majolica pieces were the only artistic-type wares attempted. A later picture of Ott and Brewer's parian objects at the American Institute Fair from 1877 gives one another idea of how their objects might have been displayed at the Centennial (Fig. 17).



Figure 17: Parian Objects in Ott and Brewer's display at the American Institute Fair, New York City. Photograph, ca. 1877. Collection of Edith Shields Kersey, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.<sup>129</sup>

While this photograph only shows the artistic pieces designed by Broome and not the firm's hotel wares displayed, we know that they did display such wares alongside these artistic ones for they are mentioned in the judge's *Report*.<sup>130</sup> Like Carr's New York City Pottery display, Ott and Brewer's parian wares are arranged with little order in this

<sup>129</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 42.

<sup>130</sup> A full description is in the judge's reports, discussed in chapter five.

picture and appear jumbled and chaotic. Despite this, it is obvious that Ott and Brewer's artistic wares made an impression on the imaginations of those present.

Broome used American heroes, themes, and, symbols liberally in his Centennial display to create a dialogue that would speak to Americans. This not only helped his objects stand out, but also encouraged Americans to buy American goods with themes that related directly to their lives. Though not all of his pieces utilize American elements, they all illustrate the skill of their designer who took ideas that were popular in the larger Western world, ideas that would appeal to a mass audience, and made them his own. Many Americans wished to own objects that were part of a larger Western heritage, these design elements and characters had mass appeal to Americans as well as to Europeans. These were still artistic wares, but instead of being manufactured by European companies, Broome executed these pieces in his own way. He made an impression by using his talents to render these ideas in a new way for the Centennial.

Broome's material of choice for the Centennial Exhibition was parian and all of the landmark pieces he produced were in this medium. As already discussed, parian was a ceramic body that imitated marble sculpture and Broome used it in several ways. The most conventional way was through the seemingly traditional portrait bust. Broome was experienced in making portrait busts, having made quite a few in marble in the 1850s. Broome sculpted several traditional figures, like the bust of *Pope Pius IX* discussed earlier (Fig. 5) and the busts of *Jesus and Mary* below (Fig. 18).



Figure 18: *Jesus and Mary*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Noreen and Robert Cunningham Collection.<sup>131</sup>

The figures' downcast eyes and martyr-like stance mark them as traditional subjects that would appeal to almost every social strata present at the fair. Many companies made portrait busts of Jesus, as mentioned earlier in James Carr's New York City Pottery display. Jesus was a common subject, which illustrates his mass appeal.

Broome's bust of William Shakespeare was another work that would have been popular among a wide group of potential patrons (Fig. 19).<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Jesus and Mary* Busts, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1878, Noreen and Robert Cunningham Collection.

<sup>132</sup> Shakespeare, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Noreen and Robert Cunningham Collection. Like many of Broome's work, the *Shakespeare* bust came in different tinted parian colors.



Figure 19: *Shakespeare*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Noreen and Robert Cunningham.

This bust of Shakespeare depicts the bard wearing a buttoned shirt or jacket secured at the top with a tassel with resplendent facial hair. The bust is inscribed at the front with “Shakespeare” and on the back identifies the bust as a Broome piece completed in 1876 and declares that this likeness of Shakespeare is “From the Stratford Bust” (Fig. 20).<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Shakespeare’s Funerary Monument*, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-Upon-Avon, ca. 1616, England. This work is commonly called the Stratford Bust.





Figure 20: *Shakespeare's Funerary Monument*, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, ca. 1616, England.

The Stafford bust is Shakespeare's Funerary Monument located in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon in England and is supposedly one the oldest and best depictions of Shakespeare in existence.<sup>134</sup> This monument shows a half-length figure of the bard arrayed in different clothing than Broome's bust. What is remarkably similar are the heads of both pieces, which have same styling of the head and facial hair. Broome's bust is given a more quizzical look with its closed mouth and expressive eyes than the Staffordshire's gaping mouth. Despite this, it is obvious that Broome's bust took its inspiration from this piece. In a letter to Shakespeare enthusiast, J. Parker Norris dated

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<sup>134</sup> Erin Blake, e-mail message to author, March 15, 2013. Blake, who works at the Folger Shakespeare Library, mentioned that the Stratford bust and the Droeshout engraving from the title page of the First Folio are accepted as authentic likenesses of Shakespeare. Erin Blake provided the author with this image.

April 21, 1877; Broome states that the small bust of Shakespeare is the one he modeled “last summer,” in 1876.<sup>135</sup> This means that if the Shakespeare bust was shown at the Centennial, it was a later addition to Ott and Brewer’s display. In discussing his aim with the piece Broome stated:

A very strange desire has possessed me for a long time to reproduce the Stratford bust with such modifications as might be made with reference to the study of the mask and correcting some artistic defects existing in the Stratford bust. A bust of this kind well executed and in porcelain I think would be well received.<sup>136</sup>

Broome did not want to make any random depiction of Shakespeare in his parian rendering of the great writer, he wished to recreate, in as accurate a manner as possible how the bard actually looked. This insistence on perfection of depiction shows professor Broome’s roots as an academic artist who valued authenticity in the pieces he created. In reality, a faithful reproduction from the Stratford bust would be a selling point for the average consumer, thus it was written proudly on the back of Broome’s Shakespeare bust. Why would the consumer buy another depiction of Shakespeare that might not be as accurate when Ott and Brewer had the real thing? Broome’s Shakespeare bust shows his love of realism and his dedication to the medium of parian to deliver his artistic creations to the masses.

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<sup>135</sup> Isaac Broome, *Autograph letters signed from Isaac Broome to Joseph Parker Norris* [manuscript], April 21, 1877, (The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.). An earlier correspondence, dated November 13, 1876, suggests that Broome originally wished to make a larger bust similar to the Stratford bust. Broome states that he would like to “produce a life-sized bust which shall be substantially a reproduction of the Stratford bust without certain artistic defects...which I think are apparent. This I will reproduce in a colored porcelain body.” In later letters Broome states that he still wishes to make the full-figured bust mentioned earlier.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.



The traditional and not so traditional portrait busts that Broome created all appealed to a mass market. The medium of parian implied that the figures cast would be affordable and therefore needed to have mass appeal. These were not one-of-a-kind portrait busts or even one of a few, as marble would be, after their premier at the Centennial, these pieces were produced again and again, making their way into many different homes. In a letter from Broome to Messieurs Ott & Brewer, dated March 5, 1877, Broome states that in the latest batch of slip they produced two *Christ & Madonna* busts, two *Lincoln* busts, one *Cleopatra* bust, and one *Washington* bust among others.<sup>137</sup> The sculpture department that Broome headed was a massive organization that churned out pieces to appeal to the average buyer, which were then sold at retailers like Theo B. Starr in New York.<sup>138</sup> Ott and Brewer's Centennial pieces were incredibly popular and many people wished to purchase them. A period circular from Ott and Brewer states that among other things, they made "parian busts of public men made to order, now in stock, cabinet busts of Grant, Lincoln, and Washington, also 3/4 life bust of Our Savior."<sup>139</sup> Broome was designing pieces with mass appeal and these traditionally popular western subjects certainly fit the bill.

A controversial, though popular addition to Ott and Brewer's Centennial display is a group of eight modeled heads, entitled the *Eight Races of Man*, found at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton (Fig. 21).<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Isaac Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer, March 5, 1877, Trenton City Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>138</sup> "The Fine Arts in Pottery" *The Merchant's Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer's "Scraps," Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26.

<sup>139</sup> "To Dealers in Crockery," Ott and Brewer Circular, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>140</sup> "His Life Devoted to Art Production," No Publication Information, Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. The *Eight Races of Man* is to be found in the New Jersey State Museum Trenton, New Jersey.



Figure 21: *Eight Races of Man*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

This grouping shows Broome's nod to the international flavor of the fair and was specifically designed to appeal to a multicultural audience, or at least, to a Western one. This grouping today consists of eight modeled heads of men with their races described as China, Moslem, African, Arab, American Indian, Eskimo, American, and an Ape.<sup>141</sup> The Ape head is probably included in reference to Darwin, who published his *Origin of the Species* in 1859. This set is mentioned in the newspaper article entitled "American Pottery at the Centennial" which states that these heads were apart of a larger figure that would have been positioned as a finial or decoration on the ceramic bodies. The author states that the *Dinner Set of all Nations* begins with the monkey and ends with the Caucasian; each character is depicted with characteristic actions and traits. The "Negro with crocodile and shield, the Mongolian with fans and dragon, the Esquimaux with walrus and dogs, the Turk with young elephant heads forming the handles and figures of

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<sup>141</sup> "Eight Races of Man," Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

tigers on the side, the Caucasian with books and cannon and law.”<sup>142</sup> Though the article does not mention all eight figures, one gets the general idea. It is reminiscent of what Union Porcelain Works, another Centennial exhibitor and fellow member of the NPA, exhibited at the fair (Fig. 22).



Figure 22: *Tete-a-tete set*, Karl Muller for Union Porcelain Works, Porcelain, ca. 1876 Brooklyn Museum.<sup>143</sup>

The finials and handle for this 1876 tea set were supposed to cleverly convey what each piece was intended for. The tea would go into the largest container with the head of an Asian male as its finial, the sugar held in the vessel with the black sugarcane

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<sup>142</sup> “American Pottery at the Centennial: A Magnificent Display - No Foreign Competition - They Lead the World, A Description of the Exhibit,” *The Daily Emporium*, May 13, 1876, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 24.

<sup>143</sup> *Tête-à-tête set*, Karl Muller for Union Porcelain Works, Porcelain, ca. 1876, Brooklyn Museum.

picker and the milk or cream with the goat handled vessel. These types of pieces are not considered to be in good taste today, they illustrate the idea of scientific racism espoused by many scientists and anthropologists of the nineteenth century. The theory used superficial physical characteristics to divide humans into races and it assigned value judgments based upon these characteristics. This dangerous Western ideology held that ‘inferiority’ among races stemmed from evolution and it was used to justify imperialism.<sup>144</sup> The *Dinner Set of All Nations* follows in this vein and shows not only a curiosity about the non-western world but an affirmation of the West’s high position in it.

Ott and Brewer were aware of these seemingly scientific facts and this piece is completely consistent with what other leading ceramic companies were producing. Union Porcelain Works, headed by Thomas C. Smith, was one of the leading members of the NPA and he hired Karl Muller, a German sculptor, specifically to model his displays for the Centennial exhibition. Muller, like Isaac Broome, would strive to incorporate American themes into his pieces. Though the *Dinner Set of All Nations* is not specifically American, it does place Americans or Europeans as the most evolved and celebrated of the races of the world, continuing the idea that the United States was the natural evolution of Western civilization.

For the Centennial fair many companies created exhibition pieces, or landmark designs meant to help the company stand out and to garner them praise and awards.

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<sup>144</sup> There is much written about the subject of Scientific Racism. For additional information see: Josiah Clark Nott, *Indigenous Races of the Earth*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co; 1857).; Josiah Clark Nott, *Types of Mankind*, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1854).; Ernst Haeckel, J. Arthur Thomson, and August Weismann, *Evolution in Modern Thought*, (New York: Boni and Liveright, inc., 1917). Electronic Copy from Hathi Trust Digital Library.; Rutledge M. Dennis, “Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and Metaphysics of Race,” *Journal of Negro Education*, 64: 243-52.

Many of Broome's exhibition pieces illustrated his mastery of the elements of classicism while giving each creation his own touch. The extremely popular Broome creation entitled the *Pastoral Vase*, named for its rustic scene and decoration, perched on its faun head bracket was a popular addition to the Ott and Brewer display (Fig. 23).<sup>145</sup>



Figure 23: *Pastoral Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This vase's shape was inspired by classical and Etruscan ceramic examples and the decoration itself depicts a vignette celebrating Bacchus, the god of wine. At the base of the piece a dancing female youth rhythmically sways to the playing of another seated youth. Young in *The Ceramic Art* suggests that the female figure might be that of Flora or Proserpina.<sup>146</sup> Dancing goats joyfully prancing to the music surround the human figures. Above their heads a pattern of arabesques separate the scene below from the intricate foliage above. These arabesques are situated at an angle which is unusual, as a

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<sup>145</sup> The *Pastoral Vase* was made in several different colors including a sky blue and white. In addition to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's piece, they can also be found at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia and in the Trenton City Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>146</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art*, 466.

period paper notes, the pattern does not “proceed horizontally, as is customary, but diagonally; an original idea.”<sup>147</sup> Broome combines the expected symbols of Bacchanal imagery with his own slight twist on the traditional arabesque, claiming the piece as his own and declaring that it is not a compete copy of anything that has been attempted before. Above this arabesque pattern and covering the neck of the piece are grape leaves and vines with goat head handles embedded in the foliage on each side of the piece. This decoration is consistent with the Bacchus theme of the vase. The piece is complete when it is mounted on its faun bracket (Fig. 24).<sup>148</sup>



Figure 24: *Faun Head Bracket*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, *The Ceramic Art*.

The bracket depicts a faun playing an instrument and the combination of vase and bracket helps the relief imagery on the vase jump out at the viewer. J.G. Stradling in his landmark article entitled “American Ceramics at the Philadelphia Centennial,” states that

<sup>147</sup> “Pottery: The American Staffordshire: Trenton and Its Earthenware manufactories - Industrial Art,” October 18, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 24.

<sup>148</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art recently acquired a *Faun Head Bracket*.

according to family tradition, Broome's youngest daughter Annie was the model for the faun.<sup>149</sup> Regardless the combination of the joyous Bacchanal scene combined with Broome's obvious mastery of the theme and execution of the piece mark it as an important step in the development of American ceramics.

One of the stars of Broome's Ott and Brewer Centennial display was the monumental *Cleopatra* bust. The *Cleopatra* bust, illustrated here in two of its parian colors, was an attempt to create a heroic, or life-sized bust of the great ruler Cleopatra herself (Fig. 25).<sup>150</sup>



Figure 25: *Cleopatra*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

In a letter written by Broome to colleague J. Parker Norris, dated April 21, 1877, Broome revealed that the *Cleopatra* bust was not present for the opening of the Centennial

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<sup>149</sup> Stradling, "American Ceramics at the Philadelphia Centennial," 149.

<sup>150</sup> *Cleopatra*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

Exhibition. He stated that he had always wished to produce a large bust of Cleopatra, but never had the chance “until last summer when I seized an opportune period after my work was executed for the Centennial exposition to produce this work.”<sup>151</sup> From this letter and other period statements it would seem that the blue and gold parian Cleopatra piece traditionally thought to have been shown at the Centennial celebration was not executed until after the fair’s opening date of May 11. A paper from October 1876 implies that Ott and Brewer’s successful Centennial display will be gaining the company of a “life-sized bust of *Cleopatra* and busts of *Shakespeare*, *Franklin*, and other distinguished men, besides copies of many celebrated antique statues, are now being modeled by Mr. Broome.”<sup>152</sup> The markings on the back of the Cleopatra bust read “Ott & Brewer/Manufacturers. Trenton, N.J. / Broome. Sculptor/1876.”<sup>153</sup> So the piece was obviously made in 1876, but not as early as is originally thought. The piece arrived after the judges took each company’s display into consideration and perhaps explains why Ott and Brewer included the *Cleopatra* bust in their 1878 Paris Exhibition display, because it was not judged at the Centennial exhibition.

In his letter Broome goes on to describe his thought process behind the conception of the *Cleopatra* piece:

I know not how much is due to my conception of the work - indeed I think very little, for my aim was to ignore myself and to free the work if possible from individualism - to render only the character truthfully with all belongings to it in the way of costume and a certain amount of symbolism to suggest the grand old

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<sup>151</sup> Isaac Broome to J. Parker Norris, April 21, 1877, Folger Shakespeare Library.

<sup>152</sup> “The Great Exhibition: The American Display of Ceramics and Glassware & c., in the Main Building,” (n.p., October 1876), Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library. Stradling notes that though this article was published on November 10, 1876, it actually dates from an earlier date. Stradling, “American Ceramics at the Philadelphia Centennial,” 156.

<sup>153</sup> “Cleopatra,” Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.



civilization and the sufficiently...of its abstract thought. The costume is as truthful as the infallible stone records of that muse...The structure of the skull - jaw and the muscles are given with all the care I am capable of, and I have drawn heavily on Dr. Morton - Moth & Ghiddon - Lepsius and Rosillini & C. for the actual facts. The nose only have I idealized for according to the portraits of the Temple of Philae the nose was a little flat. I believe for without egotism I can say this is the only instance where an ideal historical subject has been treated strictly without aaeological and ethnoloegical rules - it was really painful to see this subject treated, as it was at our Centennial ex. Indeed it seemed as though the artists had no reason but to exhibit some vague idea, which disturbed their brain.<sup>154</sup>

Broome's main aim was to remove his own prejudices about how Cleopatra should look and to create a historically accurate piece. He mentions the famous nineteenth-century Egyptologists and doctors to illustrate that his *Cleopatra* bust was a well-researched and executed piece. As with the subject of Shakespeare, Broome mentions the fact that at the Centennial he saw artists executing the subject of Cleopatra with 'vague' ideas about how the subject should look and this was 'painful' for him because he had spent such a long time thinking and studying the subject. Scholar Matthew Arnold in his influential book *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869, states that American culture was too "narrow and suggested that the young country should comb the past accomplishments of humanity in order to sift out the very best for emulation and inspiration."<sup>155</sup> While it is obvious that Broome was doing just this with his *Cleopatra* bust, he did not wish to blindly copy Egyptian symbols, but to accurately extract the essence from this period and bring it into

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<sup>154</sup> Isaac Broome. *Autograph Letters signed from Isaac Broome to Joseph Parker Norris* [Manuscript], April 21, 1877 (The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.) The people mentioned are most likely: "Dr. Morton" is Dr. Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) - American doctor and natural scientist, he examined the skulls of mummies to prove that there was not a single creation story that the bible touted. "Lepsius" is Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884), a Prussian Egyptologist who worked with "Rosellini" or Ippolito Rosellini (1800-1843) to continue Champollion's Egyptian studies, and the Temple of Philae, located in Egypt, is a series of temples.

<sup>155</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, quoted in Bernadette M. Sigler et al., *The Sphinx and the Lotus: The Egyptian Movement in American Decorative Arts, 1865-1935*, (Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 1990), 2.

his works. Through his letter to Norris, Broome shows his characteristic thorough artistry that permeates every single one of the pieces he crafted for the fair.

Despite Broome's best intentions and careful study, the *Cleopatra* bust is not a completely accurate interpretation of Egyptian costume or statuary but more of a blend of Egyptian, Greek, and Victorian ideas and themes. Broome modeled his Egyptian queen on a nineteenth-century woman, Mary Thompson, and therefore gave the bust a more modest and Victorian "mono-boob" instead of shaping each breast individually.<sup>156</sup> The New Jersey State Museum's report "Unglazed Blue Porcelain Bust of Cleopatra" goes into minute detail on the accuracy of the *Cleopatra* Bust, the most important elements are discussed here. To begin with, the headdress on Broome's piece is a reinterpretation of the Vulture headdress, which is described as a "crown worn by queens of Egypt for at east 1500 years...it was a favorite crown of Nefertari, Rameses II's sister and chief wife, who wore a gold one with the unusual vulture head, and claws in back grasping the shen (hieroglyph for circle of eternity)" (Fig. 26)<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> "Unglazed Blue Porcelain Bust of 'Cleopatra,'" Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, 1. and "Cleopatra Bust for Art School," (n.p., n.d.), The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. Reveals that Mary Thompson's married name was Mrs. Howell Stull - Interestingly and inaccurately, this article states that the *Cleopatra* Bust was made in 1873.

<sup>157</sup> "Unglazed Blue Porcelain Bust of 'Cleopatra,'" Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, 1. Picture from: Walters Art Museum, "Queen with Vulture Headdress," Accessed May 26, 2013, <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/17529/sculptors-model-queen-with-vulture-headdress/>



Figure 26: *Queen with Vulture Headdress*, Egyptian, Limestone, ca. 145-51 BCE, Walters Art Museum.

Broome chose to replace the vulture head with a rearing cobra and its claws with a “three-lobed figure holding the Shen, which can clearly be seen by viewing the back of the piece below (Fig. 27).<sup>158</sup>



Figure 27: *Cleopatra*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, recast at Lenox, Parian, ca. 1914, Rago Auction House.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid and Blouin Art Sales, “Cleopatra,” Accessed March 20, 2013, <http://artsalesindex.artinfo.com/asi/lots/4257181>.

Perhaps Broome felt that the rearing cobra would appear to be more appropriate for such a strong female ruler. The *Cleopatra* bust also showcases a magnificent necklace that has some differences between accurate Egyptian accessories and Broome's interpretation of them (Fig. 28).<sup>159</sup>



Figure 28: *Cleopatra* Detail, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

The bust wears a wide bib necklace featuring cylinders and two rows of squares arranged in varying patterns and while this appears to an Egyptian design, the small X incised in each of the squares is a Greek motif.<sup>160</sup> Beneath of rows of shapes are alternating lotus blossom and buds, which was a characteristic Egyptian motif symbolizing creation.<sup>161</sup> Hanging off the necklace are two common Egyptian symbols, the Ankh, symbol of eternal life, and in the center, the Winged Sun Disk (Fig 29).<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Cleopatra*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

<sup>160</sup> "Unglazed Blue Porcelain Bust of 'Cleopatra,'" Unpublished Paper, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey, 2.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Samuel Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity: With their Finluecnce on the Opinions of Modern Christendom*. (London: J.R. Smith, 1863).

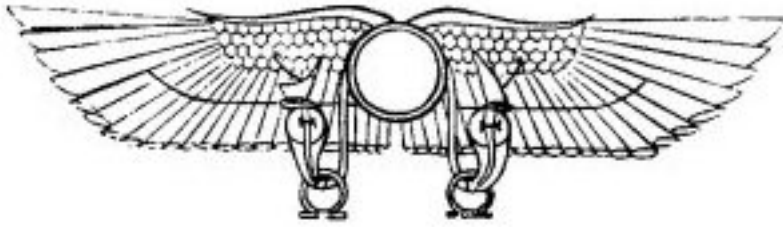


Figure 29: *The Winged Sun Disk*, “Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity” By Samuel Sharpe.

The Winged Sun Disk is usually pictured with its wings straight to the sides as depicted, however Broome’s are drooping down (Fig. 28). The Disk is also usually rendered with two Uraeus, or snakes, on each side, but Broome’s only has one to the viewer’s right.

Beneath the figure’s bust is another, more accurate interpretation of the Egyptian Winged Disk featuring the disk with two Uraeuses on each side (Fig. 30).



Figure 30: *Cleopatra* Detail, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

Regardless of its accuracy, this bust was incredibly successful, winning praise from critics and fairgoers alike. The *Merchant’s Journal* commented that Broome’s *Cleopatra* bust was one of the most “beautiful busts in Parian ever produced, the most elaborate in ornament and the largest ever made in this material,” and that “this work alone should

create a world-wide reputation for the artist, Mr. Broome, and the firm producing it.”<sup>163</sup> Harry J. Podmore in his article “Veteran Trenton Artist Produces Wonderful Work in Clay and Oil” declared that the bust was “without rival for medals at two international expositions and with other works surpassed the efforts of every nation and gave our city a world wide reputation.”<sup>164</sup> While this praise may be a bit extravagant, it is obvious that the *Cleopatra* bust was masterfully executed. Barbara Whitemorse in her article “Tiles made by Isaac Broome, Sculptor and Genius,” states that the *Cleopatra* bust represents “an idealized woman and a study of the detailing is an education in Egyptian motifs.”<sup>165</sup> Broome’s heroic bust illustrates a successful attempt by an American ceramic company to step beyond what is comfortable or common and to produce an object that shows their complete competence in an artistic medium.

This was not a piece that was only manufactured for exhibitions, it was a parian piece that was meant to be reproduced multiple times. Broome, in his letter to Norris, states that he wishes Norris to see the *Cleopatra* bust before purchasing it and that the “price with pedestal mounted complete will be about \$250. That will pay me a working price without having anything to do with dealers.”<sup>166</sup> Broome continued to make and sell multiple copies of almost all of his designs through 1877. In Broome’s letter to Ott and

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<sup>163</sup> “The Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant’s Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26.

<sup>164</sup> Harry J. Podmore, “Veteran Trenton Artist Produces Wonderful Work in Clay and Oil,” *Sunday Times Advertiser*, December 26, 191\_, Vertical File, The Trenton Public Library.

<sup>165</sup> Barbara White Morse, “Tiles made by Isaac Broome, Sculptor and Genius,” *The Spinning Wheel* (January, February 1973): 19.

<sup>166</sup> Isaac Broome, *Autograph Letters Signed From Isaac Broome to Joseph Parker Norris [manuscript]*, April 21, 1877, (The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.).

Brewer, Broome notes that he made another *Cleopatra* bust on February 22, 1877.<sup>167</sup>

While the *Cleopatra* bust was probably not as common a purchase as a smaller figure like *Shakespeare* or *George Washington* for the average consumer, multiple busts were made of this piece. The *Cleopatra* bust was probably a piece that needed to be specially requested, as Norris did in his letter to Broome. The original *Cleopatra* bust was kept by Broome, and as a period paper notes, “embellishes the parlor of the home of Professor Broome.”<sup>168</sup> Later in his life, Broome worked for Lenox and produced several of his Centennial-era Ott and Brewer designs for this company, including the *Cleopatra* bust.

Broome’s Centennial creations mark him as an artist and show his prodigious skill in the field of ceramics. It is interesting to note that Broome inscribed his name and the date each piece was modeled prominently on the back of not only the *Cleopatra* bust, but of every object he produced for the Ott and Brewer Centennial display. This shows that unlike other companies, who only stamped their name on the bottom of their pieces, Broome saw himself as an artist who, like a sculptor, had artistic license. Ott and Brewer allowed him to do this reinforcing the fact that they agreed with his assessment of himself. Broome’s name was part of the marketing appeal to buyers and would help those pieces sell. Broome display pieces positioned Ott and Brewer as the inheritors of a Western tradition; his display pieces with American themes only propelled the idea further. These pieces truly showed the ingenuity and creative talent that America was

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<sup>167</sup> Isaac Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer, The Trenton City Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>168</sup> Harry J. Podmore, “Veteran Trenton Artist Produces Wonderful Work in Clay and Oil,” *Sunday Times Advertiser*, December 26, 191\_, Vertical File, The Trenton Public Library.

capable of and it is through these pieces that Broome truly made his mark and claimed the attention of critics and patrons alike.



#### CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIOTIC MESSAGES: AMERICAN ICONOGRAPHY IN OTT AND BREWER'S DISPLAY.

The Philadelphia Centennial was warmly embraced by not only the United States government and American and foreign manufacturers, but also by the American public who came out in droves to celebrate America's one hundred years. The patriotic themes present in many displays were meant not only as a celebration of the one hundred years of American independence but were also an elaborate plea for patronage. Though Broome designed pieces that did not specifically apply to ideas of American independence, he rendered people and used themes that enforced Western ideals and tied the customers who purchased them to a wider Western dialogue. Broome captured the interest of a public by furnishing them with people, themes, and ideas that made sense together and exhibited artistry that American themes did not often find. Ott and Brewer's exhibition pieces with American themes were truly the stars of their exhibition and are mentioned the most in historic newspaper accounts of the fair.

Ott and Brewer chose to elevate many classic American subjects that were well esteemed and easily recognizable. Popular figures, like George Washington appear time and time again on Ott and Brewer's decorative ware, especially those wares meant for the Centennial celebration (Fig. 31).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Broome's *George Washington* bust must have been a very sought after form for many buyers. This bust appears in multiple collections: New Jersey State Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Newark Museum, and in multiple private collections.



Figure 31: *George Washington*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This bust of *George Washington* is a typical depiction of the late President, showing him with an eighteenth-century lace ascot and his hair tied back in a long peruke.

“Washington” is inscribed on the bottom front of the bust and on the back. His stoic and calm gaze is indicative of artistic depictions of Washington. Broome’s parian creations tend to champion realism, this is due to not only Broome’s skill but also to the nature of parian itself, which casts extremely well. This can also be seen in Broome’s bust of *Benjamin Franklin* pictured below (Fig. 32).<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> This piece can also be found at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The New Jersey State Museum, and in a private collection. There seems to be different versions of Broome’s busts, those made for Ott and Brewer and those made when Broome worked with the Lenox Company at the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, the bust of *Franklin* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 32) is similar to the New Jersey State Museum’s version of Franklin with the difference that the New Jersey State Museum’s version is more heavily lined.



Figure 32: *Benjamin Franklin*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Franklin is depicted as an older man wearing a fur-collared coat and lace ascot. The modeling shows the great care in which Broome executed this work. *Benjamin Franklin's* bust, like *George Washington's*, is inscribed on the lower front of the statue and on the back "Broome Sc 1876" along with an impression "Ott & Brewer/ Trenton, N.J."<sup>171</sup> These two statues, Washington and Franklin would be made multiple times and in tinted parian as well.

Broome's contemporary busts are some of his most interesting because he immortalizes figures in parian who would never have had a statue of them made in

<sup>171</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Bust of Benjamin Franklin," Accessed March 10, 2012, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/10000491?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=Broome%2c+Isaac&pos=4>.

marble. The year 1876 was an election year and Broome made parian busts of the leading Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates as well as James G. Blaine, who competed with Hayes for the 1876 Republican nomination. The two candidates would fight until the nominating convention in June where Hayes was chosen over Blaine due to his less controversial past (Fig. 33 & 34).<sup>172</sup>

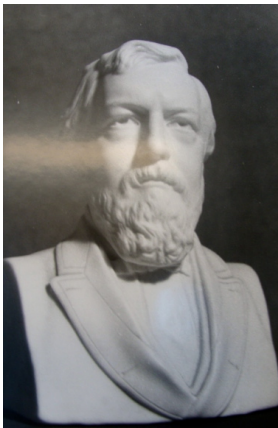


Figure 33: *James Blaine*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



Figure 34: *Rutherford B. Hayes*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

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<sup>172</sup> Michael F. Holt, *By One vote: The Disputed Presidential Election of 1876* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008): 70.

Regardless of future political outcomes, Broome created these parian busts depicting some of the leading politicians of the day. Both busts show the men in suit, vest, and tie with prominent beards and serious expressions. They look incredibly similar, though the *Hayes* bust is executed with blue-tinted parian; similar busts in pure white were also produced. As mentioned earlier, Broome made many busts and chose to tint some of them in blues, greens, and in browns.

It seems that Broome made busts of not only the two leading competitors for the Republican nomination, but also of William A. Wheeler, who would become Vice President under Rutherford B. Hayes, as well as the Thomas A. Hendricks, the Vice Presidential candidate for the opposing Democratic ticket under Samuel J. Tilden (Fig. 35 and 36).<sup>173</sup>



Figure 35: *William A. Wheeler*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Private Collection.

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<sup>173</sup> William A. Wheeler, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Noreen and Robert Cunningham and Thomas A. Hendricks, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Noreen and Robert Cunningham.



Figure 36: *Thomas A. Hendricks*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Private Collection.

These two busts, both located in a private collection show the two opposing Vice Presidential candidates for the 1876 election. Like the previous two busts, these are sober and flattering depictions of the leading politicians of the day. They are rendered in formal dress with worldly expressions that convey the gravity of their responsibilities. It is highly likely that there also were other busts produced in relation to the 1876 election.

A picture of the Ott and Brewer display at the American Institute Fair in 1877 gives the viewer a clue of other works that were produced (Fig. 17).<sup>174</sup> At the bottom center of this photograph are four small portrait busts of political players in the 1876 election year. From left to right the busts of Hayes, Wheeler, Hendricks, and what appears to be the bust of Samuel J. Tilden, who was the Democratic Party's Presidential candidate who lost the Presidency in one of the most highly contested elections in American history.

Logically, the bust of that James Blaine (Fig. 33) would not be included in this photograph as he did not procure the Republican nomination and therefore, there would

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<sup>174</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 42.

be much less of a market for his likeness in 1877. In all likelihood, Blaine was only exhibited at the Centennial because the Republican nomination was not clinched and people would wish to express their allegiance between the Hayes and Blaine, the two contenders for the Republican nomination for President.

Due to these bust's small size and the affordable nature of Parian, it is very probable that all four of these busts were meant to be bought by supporters of either candidate. They were to be displayed in the home to show allegiance as one would wear a campaign button today. This is something that could never have been done with marble sculpture and Broome capitalizes on the nature of parian to achieve this new phenomenon. These were also figures that would mainly appeal to an American audience and not necessarily to foreign buyers at the fair. These busts used American themes and were specifically designed to encourage American patronage. Ott and Brewer wished to prompt Americans into buying pieces that represented current American events and values from American manufacturers.

While Broome's sculpted busts are a wonderful representation of his artistic skill, Ott and Brewer truly hoped to set their company apart by Broome's original and exciting exhibition pieces. Many companies used busts as an 'art' component of their Centennial displays, Ott and Brewer wished to do more. Many of these pieces used American themes to commemorate not only what had come before, but to execute patriotic ideas in a new, fresh, and 'modern' way. They also wished to celebrate the future of the country and not only just its past. Broome was not going to copy the over used ideas of European sculptors and ceramic makers, he wanted to craft pieces that had not been tried before.

This was Ott and Brewer's strategy to get American pottery noticed and to garner the respect they desired on the national and international stage. The first piece that should be discussed in relation to this idea is the *George and Martha Washington Tea Set* (Fig. 37).



Figure 37: *George and Martha Washington Tea Set*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

This set includes a tea pot, cream pitcher, sugar bowl, waste bowl, three cups and their saucers though, like most of Ott and Brewer's parian pieces, this was not a one-of-a-kind set so more cups were probably included. There is at least one other known *George and Martha Washington Tea Set* and it is housed at the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey.<sup>175</sup> This parian set is classic in inspiration, all of the vessels are in a kylix shape, a form that was popular among Greek pottery makers and is known for its traits of a

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<sup>175</sup> The Newark Museum's *George and Martha Washington Tea Set* is glazed unlike the one at the New Jersey State Museum.



vessel's wide shallow form raised on a footed stem, some with double handles.<sup>176</sup>

Broome had probably seen this form in person while studying Etruscan ceramics at the British Museum and in Rome.<sup>177</sup> The group's teapot, creamer, sugar bowl, and cups all displaying a square handle that would be popular with the aesthetic movement later on in the century. The primary decoration on the body of all the pieces shows stylized bluebells with leaves and stems.<sup>178</sup> On the sides of the major pieces of the set are medallions showing the profiles of George Washington on one side and his wife Martha on the other. (Fig. 38 & 39).



Figure 38: Detail: George Washington from *George and Martha Washington Tea Set*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

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<sup>176</sup> George Savage and Harold Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000): 172.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 172. According to *The Illustrated Dictionary of Ceramics*, there was an Etruscan form of the Kylix, known as the Eye Kylix, decorated with two sets of eyes.

<sup>178</sup> "George and Martha Washington Tea Set," Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.



Figure 39: Detail: Martha Washington from *George and Martha Washington Tea Set*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

These traditional cameo-inspired portraits show the President and First Lady in eighteenth-century dress stoically gazing forward. The George Washington Medallion is remarkably similar to Broome's *George Washington* bust discussed earlier, depicting the President in the same dress and long peruke. This highlights the fact that the depiction of the President was common as to become a trope, a caricature of the President himself. This tea set was highly praised and is mentioned in Edwin Atlee Barber's 1893 *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States* as "particularly noteworthy."<sup>179</sup> It was also different than other contemporary tea sets, like Ott and Brewer's the *Dinner Set of All Nations* and Union Porcelain Works' *Tête-à-tête Set*, this piece stands out among the crowd for its use of Greek and Asian design elements with American figures. It shows that American subjects, gracefully executed, can form the main design element on a piece.

Celebrating the legacy of George Washington was not a new and revolutionary idea. In fact, many companies included George Washington's likeness on their goods to

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<sup>179</sup> Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States: An Historical Review of American Ceramic Art*, 222.

sell products and to add a sense of festiveness to their display.<sup>180</sup> In order to raise money for the Women's Pavilion at the Centennial Fair, Mary Louise McLaughlin and fellow china painters staged a Centennial Tea Party, painting the likeness of George and Martha Washington onto the sides of teacups for sale.<sup>181</sup> There is a difference between what other groups' use of American subjects and what Broome conceived of for his display. Broome was not using George Washington's likeness just to sell goods for Ott and Brewer; he was taking Washington's likeness and giving its presence on his works meaning through a well-conceived original idea. He was not just using American themes to sell something; these themes combined with Broome's years of classical training, were used to make a larger argument about the standing America deserved in the artistic world.

Other pieces took a retrospective look at the change one hundred years had wrought in America. The *Fashion Vases* were a pair of parian vases specifically designed by Broome to celebrate the century of change a centennial brings. Together the vases compare the fashions of 1776 with those of 1876, thereby celebrating the century that links the two fashions (Fig. 40).<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Using George Washington's likeness to sell goods was not a new idea and was done by multiple companies for the entirety of the nineteenth century.

<sup>181</sup> Levin, *The History of American Ceramics, 1607 to the Present: From Pipkins and Bean Pots to Contemporary Forms*, 52.

<sup>182</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of The History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain*, 465.



Figure 40: *Fashion Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, *The Ceramic Art*.

These vases were unlike any other piece made to celebrate the Centennial at the Philadelphia exposition. This original body design showcases two figures on each side, which are modeled in relief and framed by stylized borders.<sup>183</sup> Each vase depicts a man on one side with a woman on the opposite and the figures are paired by time period. One vase shows the 1776 fashion while the other illustrates the fashion of 1876. A period advertisement affirms this by showing each side of the vases and confirming their perspective pairings (Fig. 41).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States: An Historical Review of American Ceramic Art*, 222.

<sup>184</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 34.

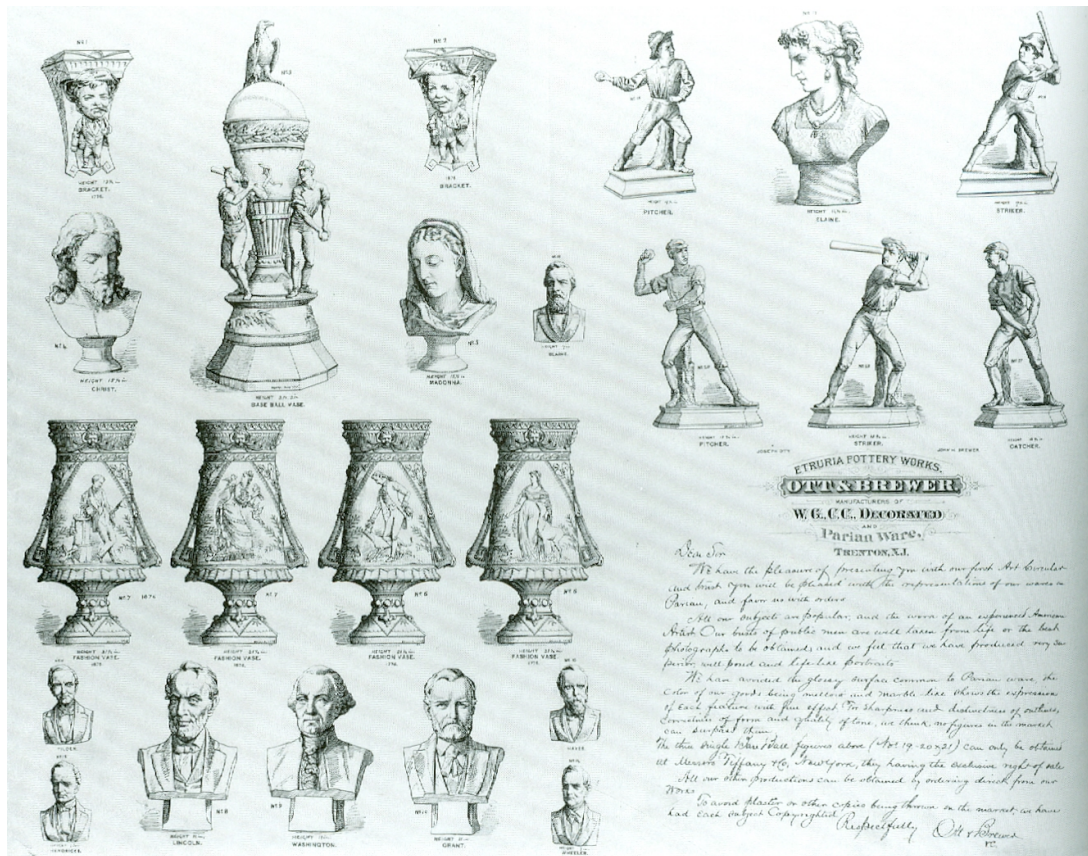


Figure 41: Broadside, Ott and Brewer, Trenton, New Jersey, ca. 1876, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.

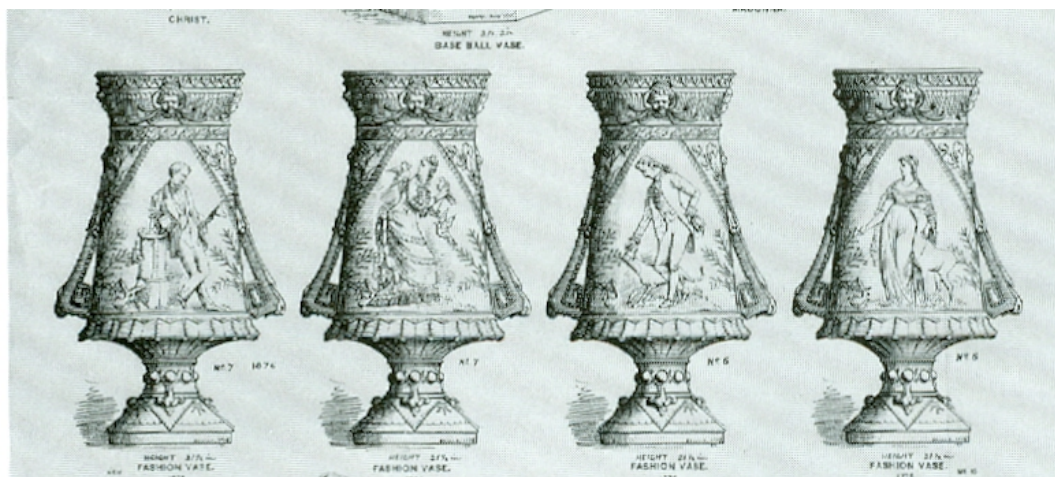


Figure 42: Detail of Broadside, Ott and Brewer, Trenton, New Jersey, ca. 1876, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.



The whereabouts of the *Fashion Vases* are currently unknown, if they exist at all, but four plaques containing the figures depicted on the vases allow for study in greater detail. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has two *Plaques* showing the fashions of a Man in 1776 and a Woman in 1876 (Fig. 43 & 45) while a private collection holds the woman plaque from 1776 (Fig. 44).



Figure 43: *Plaque*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>185</sup>

The man in the dress of 1776 is depicted in a slight profile in a characteristic eighteenth-century styled clothing, complete with breeches, waistcoat, and tailcoat. His hair appears to be styled in a peruke, similar to an earlier discussed depiction of George Washington. The man bends down companionably to pat the head of the dog at his feet.

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<sup>185</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Plaque," Accessed April 12, 2013, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/10024247?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=Broome%2c+Isaac&pos=3>.



Figure 44: *Plaque*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Stephen Thorn<sup>186</sup>



Figure 45: *Plaque*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>187</sup>

The woman from 1776 is dressed in what is supposed to be the fashion from that period, but truly resembles the fashion from around 1800 (Fig. 46).<sup>188</sup>

<sup>186</sup> “Plaque,” Collection of Stephen Thorn.

<sup>187</sup> The Metropolitan Museum of Art, “Plaque,” Accessed April 12, 2013, <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/10024248?rpp=20&pg=1&ft=Broome%2c+Isaac&pos=1>.



Figure 46: *Woman in White*, Circle of Jaques-Louis David, ca. 1798, The National Gallery of Art.

The classical column-like figure created by clinging muslin dresses that hint at the body underneath, are characteristic of this period. The 1776 *Fashion Plaque*'s stylized posture is reminiscent of classic sculpture with the body being arranged in a contrapposto position, therefore marking this figure about twenty-five years later than what is suggested by the title. Like her male counterpart, she is engaged with an animal by cradling the head of a faun by her side. The woman in 1876 'modern' dress is depicted in a slight profile as well to show off the bustle and detailing on her skirt. Three birds, one captured in her hand and the other two flying around her, accompany her in the scene. There is a slight inscription, "Broome 1876," by the hem of her dress.<sup>189</sup>

After careful study, the final male figure on the *Fashion Vases* from 1876 appears to be a parian tile found in the New Jersey State Museum (Fig. 47 and 48).<sup>190</sup>

<sup>188</sup> The National Gallery of Art, "Portrait of a Young Woman in White," Accessed April 14, 2013, <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/art-object-page.46593.html>.

<sup>189</sup> "Plaque," Object File, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

<sup>190</sup> Plaque of Fulton, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.



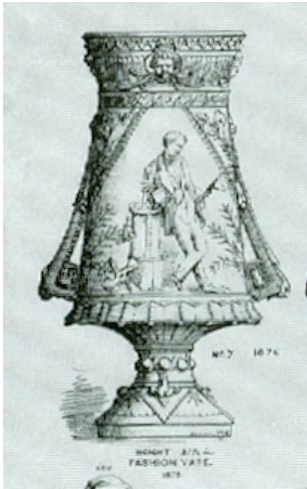


Figure 47: Detail of Broadside Advertisement, Ott and Brewer, ca. 1876, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.



Figure 48: *Plaque of Robert Fulton*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

Though this figure, identified as Robert Fulton by the name etched on the propeller in the scene, is depicted in the reverse on the sketch in the advertisement, this appears to be an identical match. It is interesting that Broome chose to depict Robert Fulton, the inventor

of the steam ship, on his *Fashion Vase* when the other three figures are not identified as actual people. This could possibly be the reason why this plaque was not identified as belonging to the *Fashion Vase* until now. As the New Jersey State Museum object file notes, this depiction of Robert Fulton (1765-1815) as a “late Victorian dandy wearing a mustache that Fulton never had,” leaning on machinery identified in the New Jersey object file as a “typical American mill-engine” that Fulton did not use is slightly comical.<sup>191</sup> Fulton is utilized as the epitome of the nineteenth century, his character reads a paper entitled “Science” and leans against his supposed invention, which symbolized how far America had evolved over the preceding one hundred years. This depiction of the modern Western male as particularly evolved is reminiscent of the *Dinner Set of All Nations* discussed earlier in this work. The idea of the ‘current’ period as compounding everything that came before was a popular idea that Broome plays with throughout his work for the Centennial display.

Finally, it appears that the *Fashion Vases* came with wall brackets specifically designed to go with the theme of the piece, similar to the *Faun Head* bracket for the *Pastoral Vase* (Fig. 24). If one looks closely at the broadside pictured previously (Fig. 41), two wall brackets of figures with over-large heads garbed in the dress of 1776 and 1876 are notable (Fig. 49).

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<sup>191</sup> “Plaque of Fulton,” Object Files, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

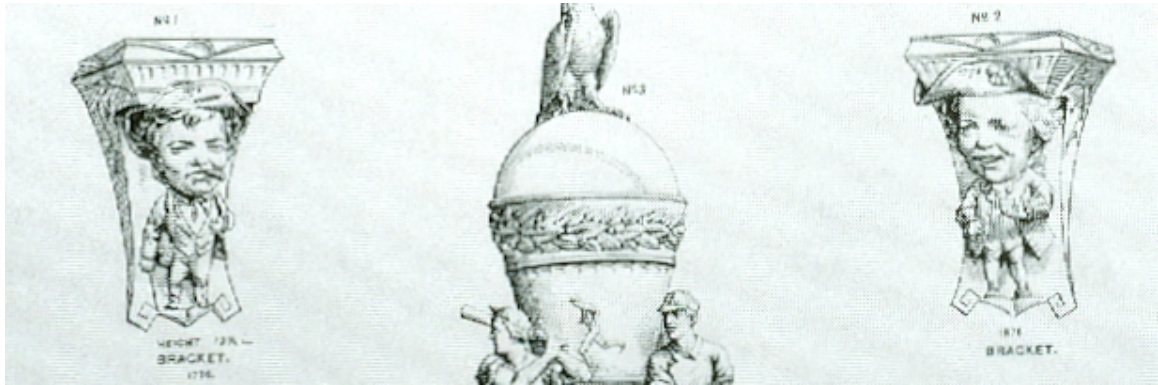


Figure 49: Broadside Detail, Ott and Brewer, Ca. 1876, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*.

These figures are even labeled with their perspective dates, 1776 and 1876, in this broadside advertisement underneath their illustrations. Though not pictured in the 1877 photograph from the American Institute Fair, with the *Fashion Vases*, as the *Faun Head* brackets are, it seems likely that this was their designated use (Fig. 37).

The crowning glory of the Ott and Brewer Centennial display was Broome's seminal Centennial object, the *Baseball Vase*, which combines classical and American subject matter to create a piece that is still discussed today (Fig. 50).<sup>192</sup> This timely object celebrates the completely American sport of baseball just as the National League was founded in 1876.<sup>193</sup> While the idea for the piece originates with Brewer, it was designed and modeled by Broome.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>192</sup> *Baseball Vase*, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>193</sup> Harold Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 260.

<sup>194</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of The History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain*, 465.



Figure 50: *Baseball Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

The vase consists of an octagon-shaped base, which creates a platform for the ice-cream cone shape rising out of it.<sup>195</sup> Standing at the base of the cone are three baseball players,

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<sup>195</sup> As J.G. Stradling points out in his article, “American Ceramics and the Philadelphia Centennial,” the ice-cream cone was a twentieth-century invention, so if there is any connection, “the ice-cream cone copied the *Baseball Vase*.”

one batting, one pitching, and one catching. According to family history, these figures were modeled on Broome's only son Roebling Broome.<sup>196</sup> The three players are wearing period uniforms and their clothing and bodies show remarkable detail. This detail comes not only from the medium's ability to mold extremely well in its plaster-of-Paris mold but also of Broome's skill as a sculptor, no detail was too small for it to be portrayed in these modeled figures. This can truly be seen in the three identical models that were manufactured and sold on their own (Fig. 51, 52, & 53).<sup>197</sup>



Figure 51: *Pitcher*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Mint Museum Randolph.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Stradling, "American Ceramics at the Philadelphia Centennial," 149. In period articles, the authors mention that the *Baseball Players* were modeled on a famous Trenton player, "Vanhorn," catcher of Trenton's baseball team. This is mentioned in "His Life Devoted to Art Production," No Publication Information, Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey; "American Pottery at the Centennial: A Magnificent Display," *The Daily Emporium* May 13, 1876, Found in John Hart Brewer's "Scraps," Winterthur Gardens and Library. So this claim might be a little dubious.

<sup>197</sup> Cathy Viksjo, "Linking Art and Baseball," *Times* Sunday May 8, 1994, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. These figures were sold exclusively at Tiffany and Co., for twenty-five dollars apiece.

<sup>198</sup> *Pitcher*, The Mint Museum Randolph, Charlotte, North Carolina.



Figure 52: *Catcher*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Private Collection.<sup>199</sup>



Figure 53: *Batter*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Potteries of Trenton Society, "Art Revealed by Industry: Painters, Sculptors, and Designers Create Trenton's Ceramics," Accessed April 14, 2013, <http://www.potteriesoftrentonsociety.org/events/painters.html>.

<sup>200</sup> *Batter*, The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

From the pictures above, especially the one of the *Batter*, one can see the stitching on the players' clothing, the bulges of each muscle, and the veins in their hands and arms. This remarkable attention to detail makes these figures seem life-like; it is as if they are playing a game of baseball right in front of the viewer's eyes. Young, in *The Ceramic Art*, states that the figures "[embody] a thoroughly American ideal of physical beauty, embodying muscular activity rather than ponderous strength."<sup>201</sup> Multiple single baseball figures were created that almost were 'spin-offs' of the *Baseball Vase* is a testament to its immense popularity. It was truly a touchstone that struck a vein of feeling in the American public.

Continuing up the body of the *Baseball Vase*, behind the three figures is a mound-like platform, reminiscent of a pitcher's mound, which leads up to the base of the cone. The first half of the cone is decorated with baseball bats standing on their handles bound with a belt, which is meant to evoke the classic imagery of bound fascies. This whimsical nod to the classic again illustrates Broome's mastery of it and his ability to manipulate expectations to achieve his artistic ends. Above the bound bats is a frieze showing three baseball players in relief, mirroring the larger figures below, they are running, catching, and throwing. Above the relief scene is another classical element of a laurel wreath band, which evokes the laurel crowns marking the winner of the first Olympic games. Above the cone rests half a sphere, which upon closer inspection is half a baseball itself and on top of this ball perches an American eagle. This eagle was modeled from life after an

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<sup>201</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of the History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain*, 465.

eagle that was on display at the Arsenal in Central Park.<sup>202</sup> William T. Morris, who was an assistant to Broome in his modeling shop at the Ott and Brewer factory, remembered Broome at work, and said that Broome was “very careful and painstaking in obtaining true material to build up his creation.”<sup>203</sup> As an example, Morris recalled the day when Broome “returned and unwrapped the clay model [of his eagle] and invited my criticism and how pleased he was at my reply that I knew little about eagles, but it does look savage.” Broome’s eagle, drawn from life, sits proud and stern atop his monumental *Baseball Vase*.

The *Baseball Vase* is reminiscent of the House of Representative’s *Mace*, or their ceremonial representation, the current one was made in 1842 (Fig. 54).<sup>204</sup> Broome obviously had seen this object since he lived in Washington D.C. and worked at the United States Capitol Building where the House of Representatives met. The *Mace* is similar to the *Baseball Vase* in the fact that the body of the *Mace* consists of the traditional bound fasces, a symbol of authority in ancient Rome. This is echoed in the bound baseball bats in Broome’s piece.

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<sup>202</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal* (n.d.), Object File, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Today the Arsenal is situated at 830 5th Ave Ny, Ny. It still has a zoo as it did in the nineteenth century.

<sup>203</sup> Morris, “Tribute to Isaac Broome,” (n.p., n.d.), Newark Museum Collection, Newark, New Jersey.

<sup>204</sup> United States House of Representatives, “The Mace,” Accessed April 23, 2013, <http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/House-Chamber/Mace/>. The Mace is one of the oldest symbols of the House of Representatives. There have been three maces in our country’s history, the current one has been in use since 1841.



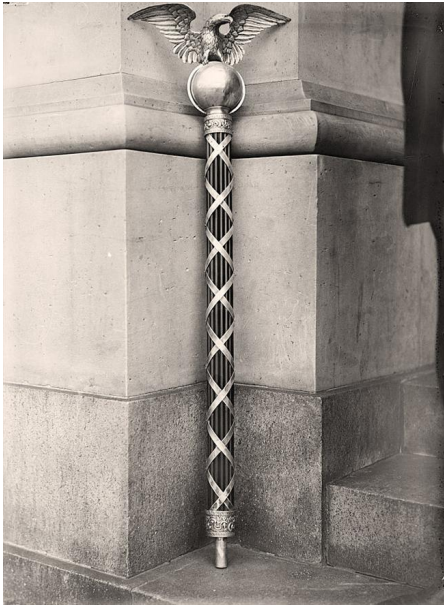


Figure 54: *Mace* of the House of Representatives, Ebony and Silver, ca. 1842, House of Representatives, Washington D.C.

The *Mace* is topped by a silver globe, which Broome's piece evokes with the half baseball, and both pieces are topped by an eagle. Though the *Mace*'s eagle, with wings spread wide, is different than the stoic Broome eagle, both pieces use the eagle, a powerful American symbol, to claim the piece as truly American. One celebrates the authority and power of one half of the Legislative branch while the other the pure Americanness of the game baseball itself.

The *Baseball Vase* is a combination of classical imagery with the American pastime of baseball, and poses the heroic and serious players, modeled and in relief on the vase itself, as the Olympians of the modern world. The American bald eagle on the top of the vase cements the connection between this new sport and pure American ideals the Centennial celebrates. This vase is a tour-de-force of symbolism and successfully

succeeds in capturing the American imagination and was so effective because it celebrated what is unique to America through the tropes of Western artistic expression. Young in *The Ceramic Art* declares that the vases are “the work of a genuine artist, who has surrounded a general design of great merit with many finely executed and suggestive details.”<sup>205</sup> No other company had anything like this at the Centennial and Ott and Brewer’s success with the vases is a testimony to the idea that American companies alone knew exactly what Americans would want in their ceramic pieces. This is a statement piece that took what was consequential to Americans at the time and celebrated it; the *Baseball Vase* was taken seriously by an international community as art. As J.G. Stradling notes, one of the pair was moved to the Art Gallery in the Centennial in June 1876, where it became “the only American ceramic sculpture in the Art Gallery.”<sup>206</sup> The 1876 publication of the *Official Catalogue of the Art Gallery* lists Broome’s *Baseball Vase* as being displayed in gallery 44 alongside oil paintings by Charles Wilson Peale, Thomas Sully, and sculpture by William Rush among others.<sup>207</sup> Broome’s piece was not just moved to the art gallery as a nice honor for the company, its publication in the catalogue along with the other works exhibited there, truly illustrate that the *Baseball Vase* earned its place in the art gallery through its excellent execution and appealing themes.

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<sup>205</sup> Young, *The Ceramic Art: A Compendium of the History and Manufacture of Pottery and Porcelain*, 465.

<sup>206</sup> Stradling, “American Ceramics at the Philadelphia Centennial,” 149, Originally from *Crockery and Glass Journal* Vol. 3 no 24 (June 15, 1876): 14.

<sup>207</sup> United States Centennial Commission. *International Exhibition, 1876. Official Catalogue Part II: Art Gallery, Annexes, and Outdoor Works of Art. Department IV - Art 6th edition*. Philadelphia: John R. Nagle and Company, 1876, 50.

The *Baseball Vase's* presence in the art gallery collection at the Centennial fair was a major accomplishment for the firm of Ott and Brewer and for American ceramic companies in general. Out of all the American ceramic manufacturers, this was an honor only extended to the firm of Ott and Brewer and showed that their piece was considered superior enough to contend with high art. The skill that Broome exhibited in having his piece singled out and the praise it received did wonders to the reputation of American ceramics as a whole. Period papers shout the accomplishment of Broome and his famous design. An article entitled "Trenton Pottery at the Centennial" declares that the *Baseball Vases* "[displays] an artistic taste and ability of very high order...we would suggest to the Commission that they be given a place in the art gallery. There is nothing there, among the smaller designs, superior to them."<sup>208</sup> This suggestion was of course followed.

Another article states that:

A clever imitation of any of the works of the masters will always give a reputation to an artist. But here in the group of baseball players, we have a work conceived, the materials collected, and the undertaking flowed through its various stages to perfection, for the work as regards its artistic merit, is above criticism. And it is our national game that furnishes the subject...the credit of the conception and completion of the group...belongs to Mr. Isaac Broome, of Brooklyn, N.Y. who, by the way, is a thorough artist, whose productions will become celebrated.<sup>209</sup>

Any mention of Broome's name in print from the time of the Centennial to the present day includes mention of the *Baseball Vase* as one of his major life accomplishments. It cannot be underestimated how important these pieces were to the American imagination and in the creation of a national identity in the field of ceramics.

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<sup>208</sup> "Trenton Pottery at the Centennial," (n.p., n.d.) Found in John Hart Brewer's "Scraps," Winterthur Gardens and Library.

<sup>209</sup> "The American Potteries at the Centennial," *The Daily Emporium*, May 13, 1876, Found in John Hart Brewer's "Scraps," Winterthur Gardens and Library.

After the fair, Brewer kept both of the *Baseball Vases* in his possession. Though the vases were advertised and potentially could have been purchased by a private collector, as seen in the broadside advertisement (Fig. 41), the smaller players (Fig. 51, 52, and 53) were the more popular versions and circulated widely, possibly because they were a touchstone into the feelings of the original piece without having to display such a large and cumbersome object. Another line of baseball players was created under the title of *Happy Hours*, which was a miniature version of the *Baseball Vase* (Fig. 55).



Figure 55: *Happy Hours*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



Fig. 56 *Happy Hours* Detail, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1870s, New Jersey State Museum.

The child players in the *Happy Hours* piece were also executed in single figures just as the more mature players are in the *Baseball Vase* (Fig. 57).



Figure 57: *Happy Hours Pitcher*, Parian, ca. 1876, Manistee, Michigan, Smithsonian Database.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Smithsonian Institution, "Happy Hours," Accessed April 26, 2013.  
[http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record\\_ID:siris\\_ari\\_305838](http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:siris_ari_305838).

The variety of these baseball players in different sizes and designs shows the popularity of the design and the idea itself. Broome truly struck a cord when he designed the *Baseball Vase*.

In 1887 Brewer gave one of his *Baseball Vases* to the Detroit Wolverines team after they captured the National League Pennant.<sup>211</sup> The league was new, having formed two years previously.<sup>212</sup> The only mention of this gift is in the *Crockery and Glass Journal's* June 9, 1887 paper in which they state that Mr. Young, President of the Detroit league wrote in regard to Brewer's generous gift that:

In behalf of our organization, which you propose to favor, and which I have the honor to represent, I consider it both a duty and a pleasure to return you their thanks for the substantial interest you take in our contests. I have no doubt that the club that is so fortunate as to receive the vase will be very proud of it and value it highly.<sup>213</sup>

The significance of one of the highly praised *Baseball Vases* becoming a trophy illustrates that it embodied an American essence that was highly valued. While it was considered to be high art by the judges and critics at the fair, it also proved it was an American symbol by its new function as a trophy. While the vase that Brewer kept would later be donated to the New Jersey State Museum in the Brewer Collection, the Detroit trophy vase would be kept at the Detroit Institute of Arts and is currently located in the Detroit Historical Museum.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Timothy Wieland, "Baseball Vase Offers Unique Look at Sports Heritage," *DAC News* vol. 87 no 4 (April 2002): 38. and "Here's the Pitch, Made of Porcelain," *New York Times* (April 9, 1989), The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>212</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 167.

<sup>213</sup> *The Crockery and Glass Journal* (June 9, 1887), Object File, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New Jersey.

<sup>214</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 168.

## CHAPTER FIVE: HOPES FOR THE FUTURE: THE AFTERMATH OF THE PHILADELPHIA CENTENNIAL

The Philadelphia Centennial was an undeniable success that helped to change opinions on the talents and resources of American producers. People flocked to the fair, on its opening day, May 10, 186,672 visitors flooded the Centennial fairgrounds.<sup>215</sup> Ten million people, or one-fifth the population of the United States, would visit the fair before it closed in November of that year.<sup>216</sup> The Pennsylvania Railroad laid down countless miles of new track and the city of Philadelphia built six new hotels to accommodate the Centennial crowds.<sup>217</sup> The Centennial attendance was greater than any other world's fair before it, and as the *Journal of the Society of Arts* pointed out, this shows that international exhibitions had a "very important part to perform in advancing commercial prosperity and the general interests of civilisation [sic]."<sup>218</sup> This mass influx of visitors to the fair meant that the products shown there, the prizes given to these products, and the press generated to describe the exhibits, was broadcasted to the world and carried great weight. The Centennial was a grand celebration that showed the promise of American producers to the American public.

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<sup>215</sup> Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 10.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> McCabe, *The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition*, 91-95.

<sup>218</sup> "The Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia" *Journal of the Society of Arts* (December 22, 1876): 84-94., 92 Smithsonian Reel 49, No. 7 #289.

In judging the displays at the exhibition, the system of awards needed to seem impartial, with each decision growing from a consensus of national and international experts. Therefore, half of the judges at the fair were Americans and the other half were foreigners and both groups were known for their “qualifications and character, and [were considered to be] experts in departments to which they will be respectively assigned.”<sup>219</sup> The guidelines for judging, laid out by the secretary of the fair, John L. Campbell, state that reports and awards “shall be based upon merit,” with the elements of merit including “originality, invention, discovery, utility, quality, skill, workmanship, fitness for purposes intended, adaptation to public wants, economy, and cost.”<sup>220</sup>

The Centennial’s awards system was different from previous world’s fairs. Instead of a panel of judges awarding medals, the Centennial’s system “substituted the written opinion of a judge.”<sup>221</sup> Reports were composed by individual judges and then sent to the Centennial Commission for consideration. Francis Walker, Chief of the Bureau of Awards, stated that the report mattered more than the medal because the report “answers the question which Socrates used to ask of his antagonists in debate when they declared a thing to be good - good for what? The medal simply declared that an article is good; the report tells what it is good for, and how.”<sup>222</sup>

Once all of the judges’ reports were considered, the Centennial Commission would dole out the awards. Each of the awards consisted of a “special report of the

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<sup>219</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition 1876: Reports and Awards Group I*, ed. Francis Walker (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1877), iii.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, iii.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, v.

<sup>222</sup> John Mass. *The Glorious Enterprise: The Centennial Exhibition of 1876 and H.J. Schwarzmann, Architect-in-Chief* (Watskins Glen, NY: Institute for the Study of University History Through Arts and Artifacts, by the American Life Foundation, 1973), 115.



judges on the subject of the award, together with a diploma and a uniform bronze medal.”<sup>223</sup> This meant that pieces were not ranked within a given category, but that every item recognized was of more or less equal merit. This let the judge’s report stand out and differentiate those who had done well from those who had excelled. Interestingly, in their reports the judges were advised to write on the progress in a given category over the past one hundred years.<sup>224</sup> The Centennial was a celebration of America’s first one hundred years and this was probably included as a condition of the reports to highlight specifically how far American producers had come over that time period.

The Centennial judges, especially judge Hector Tyndale shows surprise in his written report at how far American ceramic companies had advanced in a short amount of time.

The American contributions of pottery will be found noticed in some detail, not alone from their importance as a manufacturing industry, but also from the sudden and remarkable development to which they have attained. The porcelain exhibited is also specially noticed, illustrating, as it does, the first-rate character of the natural materials to be found in the United States, and the laudable desire to utilize and to do justice to such materials on the part of the manufacturers. It has therefore been thought well to preface the account of the American exhibition with a statement in detail of the position of the industry, especially of its more important seat at Trenton, N.J. and to give statistics as complete as could be obtained in the time of the work being done by the energetic men who are gradually making their city of Trenton the Staffordshire of America.<sup>225</sup>

Judge Hector Tyndale, in his written report, recognizes the tremendous effort that American ceramic companies exerted to make their showing at the fair a success. The efforts of the NPA, the leadership of ceramic makers like Brewer, and the artistic talent

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<sup>223</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition, 1876: Reports and Awards Group I*, ix.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition, 1876: Reports and Awards Group II*, 11-12.

of people like Broome demanded that the judges of the ceramics department take a second look at the quality and artistic merit of the American ware. Tyndale stated that the American display “is one altogether unlooked for and surprising in its magnitude, even to those acquainted with the immense advance made within the last ten years by the potters of the United States.”<sup>226</sup> Their excellent showing proved that America had the resources necessary to produce top-quality porcelain that could successfully compete with any European product. This was not universally known before the exhibition and the superior nature of the products from Trenton, New Jersey, caused Tyndale to look at this city as the “seat” of the ceramic world and the “Staffordshire of America,” a title that the Trenton potters were actively pursuing.

In the written report Ott and Brewer’s display was described and Broome’s work mentioned as deserving merit.

White and decorated table and toilet-wares; some forms new, body and glaze good...Services painted in colors with views of the Exhibition Buildings; Parian figures, vases, busts, plaques in relief, and toilet-wares. Some of these are commendable for design, especially the plaques, modeled by Broome, which show graceful conceptions of figures.<sup>227</sup>

It’s evident from this description that Ott and Brewer’s display contained more than just parian ware, the firm also displayed the table and toilet-ware it was known for before the exhibition. What is significant was the fact that in the written report, Broome is mentioned by name. The descriptions of most other ceramic companies are about half the length Ott and Brewer received in the report and these other write-ups do not single out any one person by name. Broome is mentioned again in the section of Tyndale’s

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 100.

“Reports on Awards” for Group II. Tyndale writes that the company was to be “commended for good quality of body and glaze of ‘granite’ ware, figures in parian modeled by Mr. Broome, new designs of toilet wares, [and] general attention to design.”<sup>228</sup> The mention of Brome each time the judges wrote about the company shows his importance to Ott and Brewer’s display, his work was an integral reason they achieved an award.

The NPA, in their January 1877, meeting trumpeted the success of the Centennial for American ceramic companies. They felt that their efforts to encourage their members to produce memorable wares to re-make America’s ceramic image had worked. Brewer, secretary of the NPA, wrote in their annual publication *Proceedings* that:

One thing is certain: no potter need hereafter sail under false colors, but proudly choose his own trade-mark of American design. Henceforth, housekeepers will ask for American crockery like that which they have seen and greatly admired at the Centennial Exhibition. Dealers in the country now know where to go and purchase their wares direct; and a great market has thus been opened for cash trade, and a change given to dispose of your seconds and thirds at better rates than those gained at the auction rooms. It was a great task to answer the many questions in reference to the various wares displayed, and difficult to make some people believe that all this ware was made in this country.<sup>229</sup>

This jubilant statement on the success of the NPA at the Centennial echoes what the many judges and critics stated about the American displays. There was certainly a feeling expressed often in the press and by the American potters themselves, that the Centennial broke the ice, that American works could now be appreciated by home-grown and international audiences alike. Brewer goes on to say that “no industry had made

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>229</sup> United States Potters’ Association, *Proceedings* (Trenton, NJ: Murphey & Bechtel, January 16, 1877) Microform by Ohio Historical Society, 1987, Accessed Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., 18.

more rapid strides than American pottery, comparatively a new one in [America] and it will henceforth rank favorably with other manufacturing industries.”<sup>230</sup> Though Brewer claims that the Centennial was the turning point for American wares, the Centennial was not a completely unified showing of artistic prowess and skill. There was still more work to be done in American ceramic houses.

It is evident that change was not universal and that many ceramic producers either copied popular European styles or imitated them heavily. Judge Tyndale remarks that many wares, with a few exceptions, were “made with a view to popular sales, being copied or adapted generally from the French or English.”<sup>231</sup> Despite the efforts of the NPA, not all of the presenters were able to concoct an original display for the fair. Truthfully, this was to be expected, especially since the American public wished to imitate Europeans and would desire European-inspired goods for their homes. This lack of originality caused many critics to be harsh on American presenters who, when compared to their well-developed European counterparts, often came up short. One writer found the American display “credible on the whole, but [it] does not compare with the display made by either of the leading European Nations, or by China or Japan.”<sup>232</sup> Other critics cited that the Centennial display overall was a “mediocre collection or goods,” in comparison with the “brilliant artistic efforts of the Europeans and Oriental potteries whose works were shown there in such profusion.”<sup>233</sup> The author goes on to say that “thirteen years [have] wrought a great change in the potters’ art as practiced in

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> United States Centennial Commission, *International Exhibition 1876: Reports and Awards Group II*, 97.

<sup>232</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 43.

<sup>233</sup> “A Fine Exhibit: Trenton Potteries at the Philadelphia Exhibition,” (n.p., October 30, 1889), Trenton Public Library.

Trenton,” calling it a “revolution equal to a century of European progress in the same branch of industry.”<sup>234</sup> As Frelinghuysen states in *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, that despite some harsh criticism, “the benefits of the Centennial far outweighed the detriments,” the fair “served as the goal that potters had striven to reach, surpassing their own limitations and creating the most original porcelains ever made in America in the attempt.”<sup>235</sup> This means that companies like Ott and Brewer who went out of their way to make an original display at the Centennial stood out all the more. For Broome’s display, Ott and Brewer were written about favorably in the judge’s reports, awarded a medal, and even had one of their pieces moved to the art gallery. This recognition and praise illustrates the fact that Broome did something right when he designed the Ott and Brewer display. It also proved to other companies that when creativity and originality were combined, they would be rewarded.

The Centennial exhibition was viewed largely as a success for American ceramic companies whose large showing garnered them considerable press. The *Merchant’s Journal* declared that through the exhibition Europeans learned that “America is a formidable rival of her transatlantic cousins, and in the decoration and useful arts [in America] is on the upward path to fame.”<sup>236</sup> In giving an example of what was so wonderful about American ceramics the article described Ott and Brewer’s display. The *Merchant’s Journal* stated that a “variety of new designs in tea and toilet wares, parian statuary and basso-relief vases in the same material, that the friends of art in America

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 43.

<sup>236</sup> “The Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant’s Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, page 26.

could but notice in it the certain precursor of a new departure for the potters of the United States.”<sup>237</sup> They also singled out all of Broome’s major pieces and conclude by saying that “this work alone should create a world-wide reputation for the artist, Mr. Broome, and the firm producing it.”<sup>238</sup> Broome’s work for the Centennial was recognized again and again as one of the factors that made the American display a success.

Broome’s work for the Centennial is often hailed as the first glimpse of American creativity and artistry in ceramics. Garth Clark and Margie Hughto in their introduction to *A Century of Ceramics in the United States*, declare that in Broome’s *Baseball Vase* they can see the “seeds of an American aesthetic,” which draw from an “indigenous experience to create an original.”<sup>239</sup> His works, especially his *Baseball Vase* is one of the first examples of an American designer taking inspiration from American subjects, not just using these themes to sell teacups, as the Centennial Tea Parties had done, but creating designs around which American themes were integral. These pieces stuck with the popular imagination and spoke to consumers who, after such an enthusiastic Centennial showing, wished to buy more objects associated with Ott and Brewer’s exhibition.

The Centennial’s success was the desire it produced for Americans to buy American-made products they had seen at the fair. The *Merchant’s Journal* states that many people experienced an “absorbing desire to possess specimens of the works there shown,” and that the “desire has spread all over the land and through all classes of society

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Garth Clark, *A Century of Ceramics in the United States, 1878-1878: A Study of its Development* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), 2.

for ceramics.”<sup>240</sup> From an 1877 letter written by Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer, Broome’s workshop at the company was still churning out an amazing amount of ceramics each week. He writes that on February 15 thirteen pieces were cast, February 22: twelve pieces, and on February 29th: nine pieces.<sup>241</sup> It is obvious that Ott and Brewer were selling a great number of Centennial works after the Centennial. As a further example of this public demand, famous works and pictures from the fair were made into Stereograph cards, or photographs that appeared 3-D when viewed through a hand-held device, which enabled the viewer to relive the highlights of the Centennial fair as if they were there themselves. Some of Broome’s pieces were made into these cards (Fig. 58).<sup>242</sup>

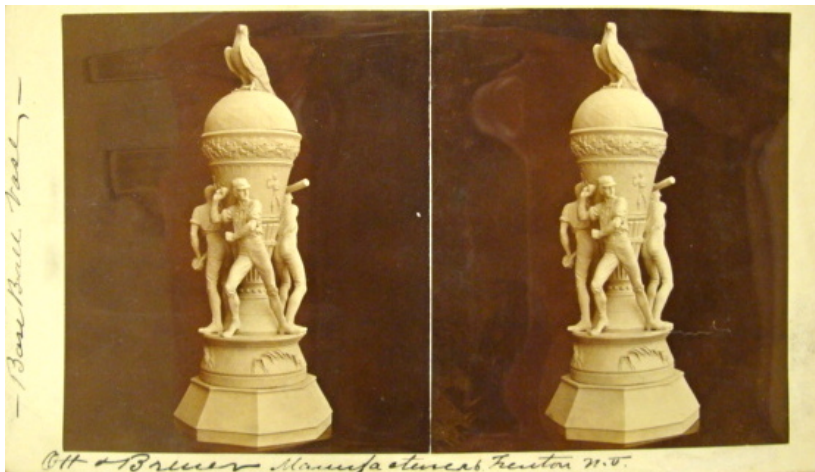


Figure 58: *Baseball Vase* Stereograph Card, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Pine Bros. Photographers, Trenton, New Jersey, albumen, ca. 1876, Library of Congress.

<sup>240</sup> “The Fine Arts in Pottery,” *The Merchant’s Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26. and in “Bric-A-Brac,” *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 5 no. 14 (October 12, 1876): 12. also echoes the desire to own goods from the Centennial. The article states that “the desire to purchase something from the exhibition is universal and extends through all classes.”

<sup>241</sup> Isaac Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer, Letter March 5, 1877, Trenton City Museum.

<sup>242</sup> *Baseball Vase*, Stereographs of Ott & Brewer Ceramic Designs, Trenton, New Jersey: Pine Bros., 1876, Library of Congress Prints and Drawings Reading Room, Washington D.C.

This *Baseball Vase* stereograph card is one example of several different cards of Broome's work showing the busts of *Jesus*, *Biddle* - the Governor of New Jersey, a grouping of *Grant*, *Washington*, and *Lincoln*, and a grouping of the three baseball figurines, the *Catcher*, *Pitcher*, and *Batter* all made into stereograph cards. These cards, presumably of some of Broome's most popular subjects, were available for the public to purchase and view in their homes. Every one of these pieces, besides *Jesus*, was an American subject. Broome's pieces touched a cord, they were a good representation of what being an American was all about and therefore people wished to own them. The *Merchant's Journal* names Ott and Brewer as "pioneers in art pottery, all Americans having a just pride and patriotism will accord to Messrs. Ott & Brewer high praise for their enterprise and success."<sup>243</sup> They certainly did.

Broome was a critical part of this success. In a 1922 obituary for Broome, the author professes that "Trenton owes much to the famed professor, whose work was largely responsible for placing this city before the world as a center of ceramic art."<sup>244</sup> Another claimed that Broome had the "reputation as the foremost modeler of exclusive pottery shapes in the eastern center of ceramic art."<sup>245</sup> Broome, who was called a "sculptor of rare artistic ability" by Barber, was respected and garnered a grand reputation from his Centennial designs that he held onto his entire life.<sup>246</sup> Broome, his

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<sup>243</sup> "The Fine Arts in Pottery," *Merchant's Journal*, December 8, 1877, Found in John Hart Brewer's "Scraps," Winterthur Gardens and Library, 26.

<sup>244</sup> "Funeral Monday for Prof. Broome," *The Trenton Times*, May 5, 1922, Trenton Public Library, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>245</sup> "Isaac Broome dies at 87, won Fame as Ceramic Artist," *Trenton State Gazette*, May 5, 1922, Trenton Public Library, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>246</sup> Barber, *Pottery and Porcelain of the United States: An Historical Review of American Ceramic Art with a New Introduction and Bibliography*, 370.



displays, and his success at the Philadelphia exhibition matter because of what came next. If others had not built on what Broome did, his innovative display would not matter as much as it does. His use of American themes and originality in design showed others what could be accomplished with ingenuity. It was the spark and the inkling of greatness that could be had in American ceramics which he showed to the world and which others seized upon.

Many foreign manufacturers felt that the Centennial was their first glimpse at the powerhouse American ceramics could become if they continued down the artistic path they were set on. Mr. Campbell, a British Minton factory worker who visited the exhibition in 1876, stated that it was “one of the finest exhibitions he had ever seen,” that he “went to it with an anxious spirit to see if they in Stoke would have to shut up very soon.” To his surprise, “the American productions, in potting and general appearance were quite equal to much of what they saw in England, and if English potters wished to maintain their laurels they must not be satisfied without doing their work in the very best manner possible...with regard to their own particular manufacture (Messrs. Mintons) it would be some time before the Americans would arrive at the same excellence and proficiency they had attained.”<sup>247</sup> While it was recognized that there was more work to be done for the American ceramic industry to seriously compete with the European one, there is a nervous tone of expectancy in foreign manufacturers that regards the American potters as the proverbial sleeping giant. Writing two years later, the *Crockery and Glass Journal* stated that:

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<sup>247</sup> “Presentation to Mr. C.M. Campell M.P. and Miss Campbell,” (n.d., n.p.), Found in John Hart Brewer’s “Scraps,” Winterthur Gardens and Library, 9.

The British have lost their supremacy in the common and ordinary classes of goods, the Centennial display having convinced the whole country that Trenton leads the world in these wares. At the same time, however, the Centennial cultivated a taste for more delicate and artistic goods and the demand for them has been sedulously encouraged by our foreign rivals and has made rapid growth. We must now successfully compete for this demand or lose standing in the industry and sink back to the third rate position of mere manufacturers of common goods the demand for which is steadily diminishing.<sup>248</sup>

After the Centennial there was a feeling that the American public was primed by the exhibition and now ready to consume a new class of goods. While it was recognized that American ceramic makers had begun to overtake the plainer wares, there was still more to be done.

The Philadelphia Centennial, like Ott and Brewer's display, was a success because it enlivened the imagination of the artist and awakened consumers to the potential in their own backyard. The undeniable appeal of original ideas seen at the fair inspired others to create. People like Hugh Robertson and Louise McGlaughlin went to the Philadelphia Centennial and came out intrigued and motivated to produce a new type of ware that would eventually become their own.<sup>249</sup> What came next in American ceramics can be directly linked to inspiration that many of these artists had at the fair. Frelinghuysen states that ceramics "gathered from all over the world and shown in one place were a source of fresh inspiration for American artists and craftsmen, and there emerged from the country's birthday party an unmistakable American style."<sup>250</sup> Art pottery dominated the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with many companies taking a note out of Ott and Brewer's playbook and creating an art line in addition to their more

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<sup>248</sup> "Trenton's Pottery Industry," *Crockery and Glass Journal*, vol. 9 no 12 (March 20, 1879): 19.

<sup>249</sup> Frelinghuysen, *American Porcelain, 1770-1920*, 43 and 58.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

utilitarian one. The idea of the “artist-potter,” as Broome was, emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as an artist who experimented with ceramic bodies, glazes, and forms.<sup>251</sup> This would lead American potters to create new exciting pieces that would allow them to carve out more of a share of Europe’s high-end market.

For Ott and Brewer, this meant creating the first American Belleek in 1883.<sup>252</sup> Brewer was inspired by the rich white display of Irish Belleek at the Centennial fair, his continued quest for a whiter more perfect ceramic body and the next new thing continued and the company stopped making the parian sculptures that won them fame in order to pursue a Belleek line.<sup>253</sup> In a letter from Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer dated March 5, 1877 Broome sends the owners a list of “articles made since your firm decided to quit manufacturing in the department of sculpture.”<sup>254</sup> Shortly after the Centennial, Ott and Brewer began to pivot to a new challenge. Presumably, they continued to produce their successful line of parian pieces until the new Belleek body could be worked out, but they would not need the full-time services of Broome any longer. Ott and Brewer would be able to use Broome’s moulds to continue to create parian designs until they were ready with their new Belleek forms.

Broome continued to affect the American ceramic industry after his time at Ott and Brewer, most importantly as the New Jersey Commissioner to the 1878 Paris Exhibition. Broome was chosen by Governor McClellan as New Jersey’s representation at the fair because of the superiority of his display for Ott and Brewer and his unique

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>252</sup> Loman and Petula Eng. *Collecting, American Belleek*, 8.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Isaac Broome to Messrs. Ott and Brewer, March 5, 1877, Trenton City Museum, Trenton, New Jersey.

position of being a well-educated professor and a ceramic artist.<sup>255</sup> Broome was to not only judge works at the Paris Exposition, but he was to make a report on the ceramic industry of Europe and most importantly, to bring home a library for Trenton's potters. It was felt that if the potters had their own library to learn from and to be inspired by, they would produce their own designs and no longer be dependent upon European ones. While Ott and Brewer's entry to the Paris Exposition, *Cleopatra*, won a bronze medal, Broome's report was of paramount importance.<sup>256</sup> His role as commissioner was to advise and instruct the Trenton potters how best to carve out a market for their goods and in doing this he continued to be a major influence in the American ceramic industry.

After returning from Paris, Broome addressed fellow potters and discussed the state of American ceramics and what needed to happen to improve. He stated that:

We have in some respects surpassed our foreign competitors, especially in improvements in machinery, but we have not done enough. Before the potters of the United States can attain the summit of their ambition and really claim the supremacy they aim at, they must not only become more national and marked in their style of goods, but much also ...their designers and designs from their own country... We have no doubt that this will be done in the course of time.<sup>257</sup>

Broome continued to advocate the use of "national" themes and subjects to set American ceramics apart. The Centennial, he felt, was but the first step in garnering the respect and

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<sup>255</sup> There was some displeasure with Broome's appointment as Commissioner. It was felt that after he returned from Paris he would go back to Ott and Brewer's employment, which would give the company an unfair advantage. *The Crockery and Glass Journal* clarified this point by stating that "Since the expiration of his duties as Special Commissioner to Paris from New Jersey, Mr. Broome has given his entire attention to improving the styles of American wares, and his services are at the disposal of all who may desire them." *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 9 no. 20 (May 15, 1879): 16.

<sup>256</sup> Countless sources have declared that Broome's *Cleopatra* Bust received a gold medal at the 1878 Paris Exposition. However, after a discussion with J. G. Stradling, who informed me that he believed Ott and Brewer received a bronze medal for this piece, I went back and looked at the original publications from the Paris Exposition. Stradling was correct, Broome's *Cleopatra* received a bronze medal, please see: Richard C. McCormick, *Report of the Commissioner-General* (Washington D.C., 1880), 126.

<sup>257</sup> "Our potters," *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 9, no. 4 (January 23, 1879): 14.

market for American-made goods, but more effort had to be exerted. Broome went on to say that the “genius of our youth is untrammelled and may produce as much originality in the ceramic art as in other industries: all depends on the start we now take as to the direction of taste and superiority of manufacture.”<sup>258</sup> Many agreed with Broome, the *Crockery and Glass Journal* lamented that “if our potters are wise they will pay earnest heed to the timely counsel given them by Mr. Broome in his lecture...what few timid efforts have been made in artistic ceramics in this city and in the production of a higher class of goods have been attended by extraordinary and brilliant success.” This success had “clearly proven that with the proper effort Trenton may become as celebrated for the production of fine and artistic pottery, as she now is for that of white ware.”<sup>259</sup>

American ceramics would continue an uphill climb for the rest of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The output and fame of ceramic centers like Trenton increased under a firm desire to compete with European wares. Broome had a lasting impact on the ceramics of New Jersey and of America. He took the ideals of the NPA to heart and used the Ott and Brewer Centennial display to show what Americans were capable of. Broome was perfectly positioned to show the promise of American ceramics; his unorthodox background and his fertile mind brought Ott and Brewer prominence and recognition and illustrated the bright promise of American ceramics as a whole.

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<sup>258</sup> Isaac Broome, “Ceramics at the Paris Exhibition,” *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 9 no. 19 (May 8, 1879): 20.

<sup>259</sup> “Trenton’s Opportunity,” *The Crockery and Glass Journal* vol. 9 no. 20 (May 15, 1879): 19.

## CONCLUSION

The Centennial Exhibition was an essential milestone in the development of American ceramics, an event that allowed the American people and foreign manufacturers to appreciate American ceramics as more than just utilitarian wares. Before the fair, many critics felt that the United States was not capable of producing original fine wares that could compete with the European rivals. This prejudice stemmed from a cultural tendency to dismiss American-made goods and to relegate them to crude wares not fit to outfit the dinner table. Many American companies regarded the Centennial as an opportunity to change this impression. The newly formed National Potters' Association encouraged manufacturers to branch out and to go beyond the copying of European wares and to produce original wares of their own. Ott and Brewer chose Isaac Broome, a professor trained in marble sculpting, to be the creative force behind their display for the Centennial (Fig. 59).

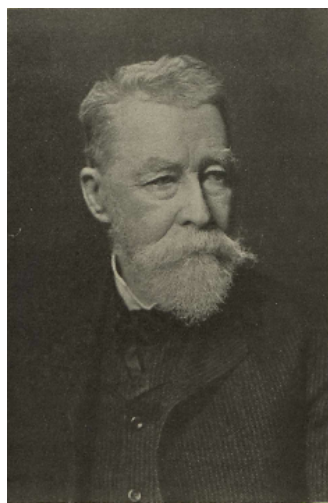


Figure 59: Isaac Broome, Photograph, ca. 1910, *The Crockery and Glass Journal*.<sup>260</sup>

Broome had an essential role in the awakening of the world to the potential in American ceramics. His skill in porcelain was undeniable and a background infused with classic training allowed him to bridge the gap between art and utility goods for Ott and Brewer's display. He was an artist-potter and he used American themes as art, not just as a marketing tool. He elevated American symbols in this way and allowed the world to feel the might of American manufacturing. He was recognized for his work by name and lauded in the press for his Centennial display. After the Centennial he had the honor of being named by Governor McClellan as New Jersey's representation at the 1878 Paris Exposition, which shows his standing and perception in the community. He worked tirelessly throughout his life to improve the lot of American ceramic manufacturers by holding not only himself to a high standard, but by continuing to make wares that were creative, innovative, and original.

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<sup>260</sup> "Trenton's Foremost Modeler," *The Crockery and Glass Journal* (December 22, 1910): 72,25; American Periodicals, 116.

Though Broome would occasionally dabble in marble sculpture he largely continued to work in ceramics the rest of his life. His later career testifies to what the reader already knows about Broome, that he was interested in many media and felt that he could contribute to American art in many different ways. After his time at Ott and Brewer he briefly had his own pottery studio, creating a line he called Jupiter Ware, which was described as “well vitrified porcelain with underglaze being thoroughly incorporated in a single firing.”<sup>261</sup> The 1880s found Broome engaged in tile work. Decorative tiles became hugely popular after the Centennial; they were used to decorate every aspect of the Victorian home and its furnishings.<sup>262</sup> Broome designed for companies like Trent Tile Co., Beaver Falls Art Tile Co in Pennsylvania, and helped to establish Providential Tile Works in Trenton in 1885.<sup>263</sup> In the late 1880s he became involved with the Ruskin Co-operative Association, a socialist commune in Tennessee City, Tennessee. Broome was noted in a newspaper article as the commune’s “landscape painter.”<sup>264</sup> Broome would publish his book *Last Days of the Ruskin Cooperative Association* on the commune in 1902.

The last twenty years of Broome’s life found him as industrious as ever. In 1907 he began to work as a “technical expert” at the Lenox Pottery in Trenton.<sup>265</sup> Lenox

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<sup>261</sup> White, “Tiles Made by Isaac Broome, Sculptor and Genius,” *The Spinning Wheel* (January/February 1973): 19.

<sup>262</sup> Frances Lichten, *The Decorative Art of Victoria’s Era* (New York: Scribner, 1950), 232.

<sup>263</sup> White, “Tiles Made by Isaac Broome, Sculptor and Genius,” *The Spinning Wheel*, 19. and “Timeline,” The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. NJ. (Trent Tile Co. was originally known as the Harris Manufacturing Company.)

<sup>264</sup> “Ruskin Colony to Move,” *The Semi-Weekly Cedar Falls Gazette*, (September 5, 1899), Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey. Broome wrote his two books *The Ruskin Cooperative*, and *The Brother*, which both relate to his time at the commune.

<sup>265</sup> Harry J. Podmore, “Broome Won Fame in Ceramics,” *The Sunday Times Advertiser* (November 15, 1959), The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.



originally worked at Ott and Brewer, first as a bookkeeper and later as the company's Art Director, he revered Broome as a mentor and continued a relationship with him after Broome left the company.<sup>266</sup> While at Lenox pottery, Broome not only revived many of his 1876 Ott and Brewer creations using their original moulds, he also created at least two new parian busts, one of Lenox in 1907 and one of John. A. Roebling in 1909.<sup>267</sup> It is startling that thirty years after these parian objects premiered for the 1876 Centennial they were popular enough to be modeled and sold again. A quarter of a century later, Broome's pieces still captured the imagination of an eager public who first found their ideals expressed through his art. Much had changed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, yet Broome's art appeared relevant to the contemporary American living in the twentieth century. Broome worked until the last six months of his life. He is quoted in several newspapers as cheerfully stating that he wished to "wear out rather than to rust out, for life is too short, interesting, and beautiful to go through it with eyes closed and hands folded."<sup>268</sup> He certainly lived this way. Isaac Broome died in the home of his daughter, Mrs. Kersey, in Trenton, New Jersey on May 5, 1922 at the age of 87.

There is more work to be done in connection with the influence of the Philadelphia Centennial on American ceramics. Much more to be said about the effects of dynamic potters, like Broome, who stepped out of their comfort zones to affect

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<sup>266</sup> "Ott and Brewer Object File," The Brewer Collection, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. Mrs. Kersey, Broome's daughter, states that she remembers Lenox as being a bookkeeper at Ott and Brewer. Ellen Denker et al., *Lenox China: Celebrating a Century of Quality 1889-1989* (Trenton: New Jersey State Museum, 1989), 14. Broome would be a pallbearer at Lenox's funeral: "Walter S. Lenox Borne to Grave," (January 11, 1920, n.p.), Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

<sup>267</sup> Morse, "Tiles made by Isaac Broome, Sculptor and Genius," 22 - need citation for Lenox

<sup>268</sup> "Professor Broome is 86 Years Today," *Trenton Evening Times*, Trenton Public Library, Trenton, New Jersey.

change. There is also more to be written on the influential and long life of Broome. This thesis could easily be expanded to take into deeper consideration Broome's time as a New Jersey State Commissioner, the report he made to Governor McClellan, and the books and materials he brought back to America after his time in Europe. His ceramic tile work and his influence in this industry, as a designer, is important and intriguing as well. His time at Lenox and the revival of his Ott and Brewer pieces in the early twentieth century deserves to be fully explored. Isaac Broome was an intriguing artist, a Renaissance man, who affected change, his entire life and brought home the potential of American ceramics to the world.

APPENDIX :  
KNOWN ISAAC BROOME PIECES FOR OTT AND BREWER

- *Barrie's Lion*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.



- *The Baseball Vases*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum and Detroit Historical Society.
- *Baseball Batter w/out Bat*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.
- *Baseball Catcher*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876.
- *Baseball Pitcher*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876
- *Boy with Lute*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



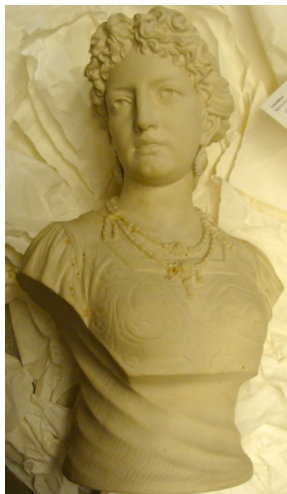
- Bust of *Apollo Belvidere*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, The Ellarslie Mansion.



- Bust of *James Blaine*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, 1876, New Jersey State Museum.
- *Bust of Child*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, 1876, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.



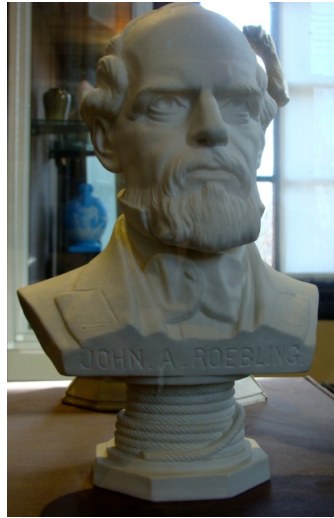
- Bust of *Jesus Christ*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *Elaine*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Newark Museum.



- Bust of *Cleopatra*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.
- Bust of *Clytie*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Newark Museum.



- Bust of *Benjamin Franklin*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.
- Bust of *Ulysses S. Grant*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum, Ellarslie House, and Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *Rutherford B. Hayes*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum
- Bust of *Thomas A. Hendricks*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *Walter Scott Lenox*, Isaac Broome for Lenox Company, Parian, ca. 1907, Newark Museum and The Ellarslie Mansion.
- Bust of *Abraham Lincoln*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Newark Museum.
- Bust of *Mary*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *Pope Pius IX*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum and Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *John Augustus Roebling*, Isaac Broome for Lenox, Parian, ca. 1909, Newark Museum.



- Bust of *Shakespeare*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum, Newark Museum, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- Bust of *Charles Sumner*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.
- Bust of *George Washington*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum, Newark Museum, Noreen and Robert Cunningham.
- Bust of *William A. Wheeler*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, ca. 1876, Collection of Robert and Noreen Cunningham.
- *Chinese Servant Design Plate*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Earthenware, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.
- *Column Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Ivory Porcelain, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



- *Egg Head Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum, The Ellarslie Mansion, and The Collection of Stephen Thorn.



- *Fashion Plaques (1776 Man and 1876 Woman)*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- *Fashion Plaque (1776 woman)*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Collection of Stephen Thorn.



- *Fashion Vases*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.
- *Fashion Vases Stands*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.
- *Pastoral Vase Stand*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.
- *Forced Prayer*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



- *Figure of a Satyr*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.



- *George and Martha Washington Tea Set*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum and Newark Museum.
- *Happy Hours*, Isaac Broome from Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Location Unknown.



- *Heads Representing the Races of Man*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State of Museum.
- *Pastoral Vase*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, Ellarslie House, High Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- *Plaque of Fulton*, Isaac Broome for Ott and Brewer, Parian, ca. 1876, New Jersey State Museum.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Molly Reynolds Randolph grew up in Nashville, Tennessee; she graduated with a degree in Anthropology and Sociology from Centre College in Danville, Kentucky in 2008. After graduating she moved to Washington D.C. with her now husband and worked at the United States Capitol Visitor Center as a Tour Guide. While working at the Capitol, Molly enrolled in the Smithsonian Institution – George Mason University History of Decorative Arts Masters Program. During her time as a student she had the opportunity to spend a year at the Smithsonian’s American History museum as a Fellow. In her second year she completed a Curatorial Fellowship at the Fashion Museum in Bath, England where she worked with the museum’s twentieth-century hat collection as well as their collection of eighteenth-century waistcoats. Molly has a passion for the decorative arts, especially ceramics, and she plans to contribute and grow in this field for a long time to come.