

Southern Pines  
 Welcomes  
 The New Season  
 To The Sandhills

# THE PILOT

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SPECIAL ISSUE Southern Pines, N. C. November 1949 SPECIAL ISSUE

## The Potter Reigns Supreme Among the Native Craftsmen of Upper Moore County

### Jugtown Pottery Of Jacques Busbee Still Beautifies Nation's Homes

By JANE HALL

The cheerful sound of a clock ticking and the steady hum of late summer insects were the only sounds that broke the peaceful silence in the log house of Juliana Busbee and the late Jacques Busbee at "Jugtown" in Moore County.

Sunlight filtering through bright orange curtains in the living room laid a soft glow over the dark brown of calfskin-bound volumes and antique walnut furniture.

Some yards away in the shop, Potterer Ben Owen turned the potter's wheel and, with skilled, deft fingers transformed shapeless masses of wet clay into vases, cups and saucers, and plates, placing the finished sun-colored products on long boards to dry before firing them in the kiln just below the shop.

The Busbees and Jugtown are synonymous, and the bright orange color and the country peacefulness are their trademarks. In itself "Jugtown" is a phenomena—it is a dream that became a reality. It has been more than 30 years now since Jacques Busbee—Raleigh artist, hobbyist, and man of many interests—set out to track down the origin of a bright orange deep pie plate that excited his interest.

#### Staffordshire Origin

His search led him to what was then known as the "dark corner" of Moore County. There, he found a community of potters, some of whom were descendants of those who had come over from Staffordshire, England, about 1740. But the pottery industry in the area, which was then vaguely called Jugtown, was in a moribund state—the coming of State prohibition in 1908 had knocked out one of the potters' principal items of business, the making of jugs for whiskey distillers. Hence, many of them had abandoned their ancient trade.

Jacques Busbee believed that an injection of art into the country potter would bring a new and interesting industry to North Carolina. He thought, too, that he could help the potters with his art knowledge and contacts with the outer world and act as sort of a liaison agent for them. In 1917, he settled in the Jugtown area and began transforming his

belief into the reality of the present "Jugtown." The name "Jugtown Ware" was registered, local potters were obtained, and the industry was launched.

Everything about this area of Moore county (the northern end) aroused the Busbees' interest. By mule and wagon in the early days they traveled over almost impassable roads collecting old pottery, old furniture made in the area, and local history, legends, and speech forms.

"When we built here, we decided to go back beyond the 'age elegance,' back to a simpler day, to a time when men made things with their hands not only to fill their needs but for the pleasure of creating something," she continued.

#### House That Jacques Built

"With local labor, we built a log house, which is both warmer in winter and cooler in summer than any type of wood house. For the most part, we furnished it with items made in this area 100 and 200 years ago."

The house rises out of the Moore County earth, blending into the trunks of the trees that surround it. The bright orange motif runs through the house, lending a cheerful sparkle to the interior. The orange curtains actually are lining for quilts and came in that color.

Woven cloth in faded designs made in the neighborhood 200 years ago, decorated the living room walls. Blue Chinese ginger jars, bearing a plum-branch design in white, ornament the big brick fireplace. The walnut table, desk and chest all were made in this section. The rows of bookshelves are lined with books, calfskin volumes mingled with those of recent publication.

The dull sheen of walnut highlights the kitchen. All the furniture in the kitchen, except the chairs, were made within calling distance of the cabin before 1800. Dominating the kitchen is an enormous fireplace, originally used for cooking. Corner cupboards flank the fireplace, the one on the right containing luster ware and other antique items.

#### Basket Of China—\$5

"Some years ago," Mrs. Busbee related, "an old man in the neighborhood, a friend of ours, came to us and said: 'I've got an old basket of chiny I bought for 15 cents at an auction sale when I was a boy 13. Ain't never looked in it, but I'll sell it to you for \$5.'"

"We were game and bought it. After the purchase was completed, we opened the basket and found ourselves the owners of some priceless pink luster cup and saucers."

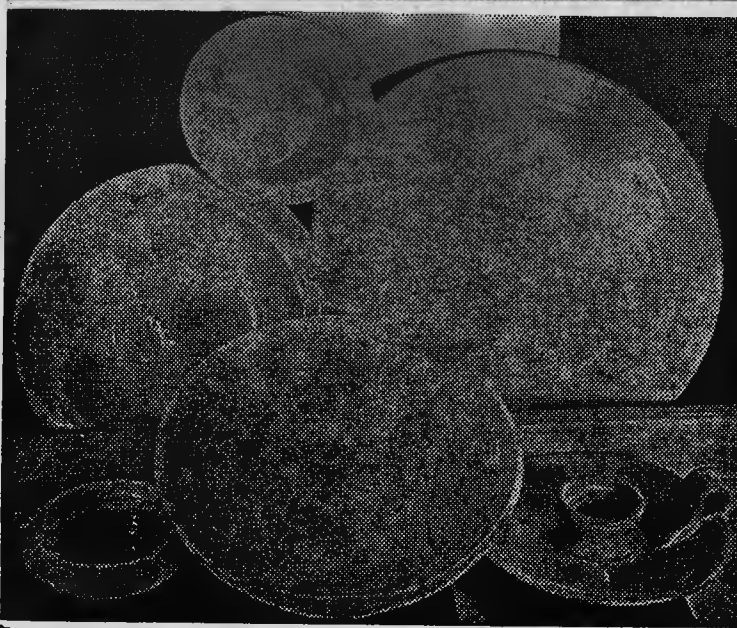
Friendly and hospitable. Julia Busbee, also a Raleigh native, is as sharp as a tack. She not only maintains her interest in pottery, Jugtown, and the arts, but she is keenly aware of what's going on in the State. The truth is she almost took this interview away from her interviewer with questions about what Governor Scott was going to do next, and what had happened to whom among

### An Old Moore County Home Radiates Old-Time Hospitality At Jugtown



A view of the kitchen from the hall door of the Jacques Busbee cabin in upper Moore County. The vast fireplace was originally used for cooking, and all the furniture in the room, except the chairs, was made within calling distance of the cabin, before 1800. On the mantel stand a pair of candlesticks of Jugtown pottery. (Photo by R. W. Stephens, courtesy Raleigh News and Observer)

### Native Crafts And Native Comforts Create An Aura of Early Days



The walnut table was made before 1800. Standing in the hall of the Busbee cabin, it is an invitation to "set a while and rest yourself," by the blazing lightwood fire. The vase in the picture is a Jugtown product, typical of those which, together with the specimens shown in the adjoining pictures, were exhibited by their owner, Mrs. Jacques Busbee, at the antique show of the Raleigh Junior Woman's Club in October.

her friends and acquaintances. The 20th century, however, is encroaching on this section of Moore county, a fact of which she is sadly aware. "I have no telephone," she said. "Until two years ago we had no electricity, and until a few years ago, we had no roads of any consequence. Now," she chuckled, "it looks as if Governor Scott is going to hard-

surface our roads and extend telephone lines into this area. I'll probably have to get a telephone in self-defense."

Getting in touch with Mrs. Busbee with something more than the speed of the pony express still poses something of a problem, even though the effort is more than worth it. It is impossible to

Mr. Crawford's team—Mr. Fownes, Louis De Lone and Col. John W. Faulconer.

Donald Parson's team—Edwin S. Blodgett, J. C. Musser and Robinson Cook.

Three sections of eight boards were played, Mr. Crawford's side winning in what the expert declared was a close match.

Members of the Wolves club enjoyed a number of sessions at bridge with John F. Crawford, Philadelphia, who for the past two years has accomplished the best competitive record in the game. Mr. Crawford was guest of William C. Fownes, Jr., at his Knollwood home, and the highlight of the visit was a team match played Saturday night.

### Bridge Expert Is Wolves Club Visitor

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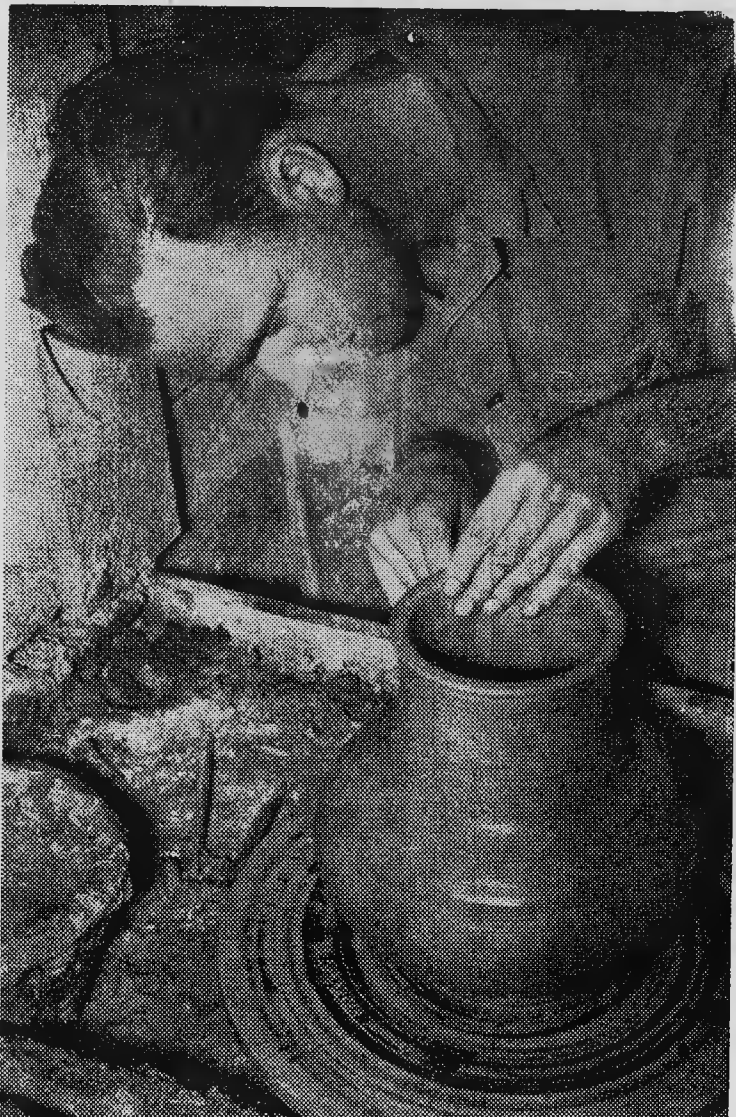
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### Frederick Ryans Buy Home In Sandhills

The Newton Marshall home in Pinehurst, located opposite the Berkshire hotel on Azalea and Magnolia roads, has been sold to Frederick B. Ryan of New York City.

Mr. and Mrs. Ryan have been season visitors in Pinehurst for a number of years. He is a member of the Tin Whistles club and she is a member of the Silver Foils.

### The Wheel Turns, The Pot Grows ...



Dean of Jugtown potters, Ben Owens, turns a vase on his kick-wheel. The old wheel is of the same primitive type used "way back when," and the skill of the potter has passed down, in this family, from father to son.

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