

For Jim Moses Pottery Is A Way of Life

By Sherry Matthews

Concentration, patience and a desire to create, are all part of what makes an artist tick, especially a potter.

Jim Moses, Hoke County's resident potter, has all these qualities and many more that make his work stand out from the rest.

Sitting behind his potter's wheel, Moses kneads a piece of clay and throws it on the wheel. This is the beginning of a creation, planned and molded by Moses.

Moses is a "self-taught" potter who has been "throwing clay" for the last three years.

"I just love the feel of the clay working beneath my fingers," Moses said.

Moses, who has lived in Hoke County for the last 10 years, was a paratrooper at Fort Bragg until an unopened parachute left him disabled.

Left with a broken back and an unfinished career, Moses was "at a loss" until pottery peaked his interest.

"I tried gardening and working with wood, but it just didn't hold my attention," Moses said.

"When I saw a potter at Fort

Bragg throwing clay I decided I wanted to learn," Moses added.

According to his wife, Moses spent many hours working with the clay, "trying to get it right."

"It took some time, but I did it. Now, I'm hooked," Moses said.

Moses now works every day, perfecting his art.

Plates, pitchers, pots and mugs line his shelves, all symbols of the time and effort he has put forth.

"I'm a perfectionist," Moses said.

"If my work does not meet my high expectations, I will not sell or

even give it away," Moses added.

Another thing Moses says he won't do is design a lot of the same items.

"I won't sacrifice quantity for quality," Moses said.

According to Moses, doing the same pieces over and over "gets boring", and shows up in the work.

"I don't mind selling my pieces if they are good, but it is not my main goal," Moses said.

Moses does sell his "perfected" work and has exhibited his creations several times in Cumberland County.

At his first show, Moses walked away with first and third prize in the amateur pottery division.

"It was a good feeling," Moses said.

Moses appears to enjoy his work and readily admits that a "potter" is both his profession and his hobby.

"It's my profession because I make money from my work. It's my hobby because I enjoy doing it," Moses said.

"This type of work is fulfilling, rewarding and exciting," Moses said.

Although at times, the work gets "frustrating", it never gets boring," Moses added.

"It is great therapy," Moses said.

From a rounded clump of clay to a delicately constructed pitcher takes a lot of time, but Moses says it is worth it.

"When everything is complete and I open that kiln for the first time, it's just like Christmas," Moses said, a smile lighting up his face.

"It tries my patience at times, but oh, how I love it," Moses said.



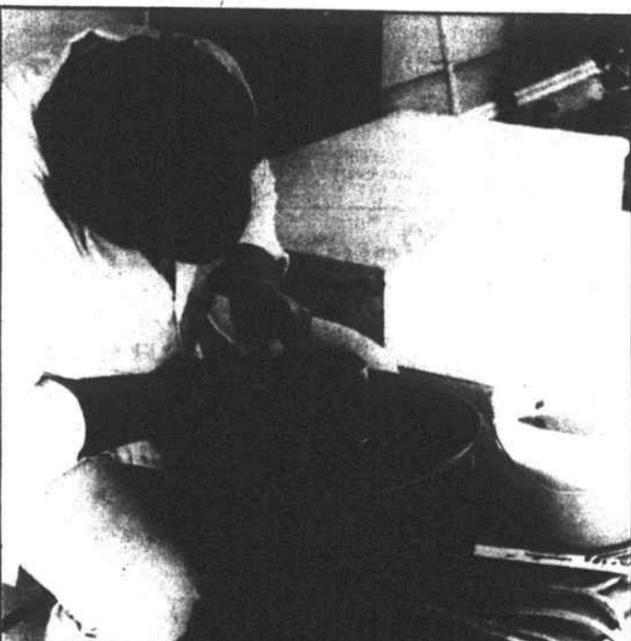
Preparing to create

Jim Moses, seated at his "pride and joy" (the potter's wheel), gets ready to knead the clay as his first steps in preparing one of his many creations. Measuring out the amount of clay and keeping the clay "watered" as he molds is a must for a "perfect work of art", Moses said.



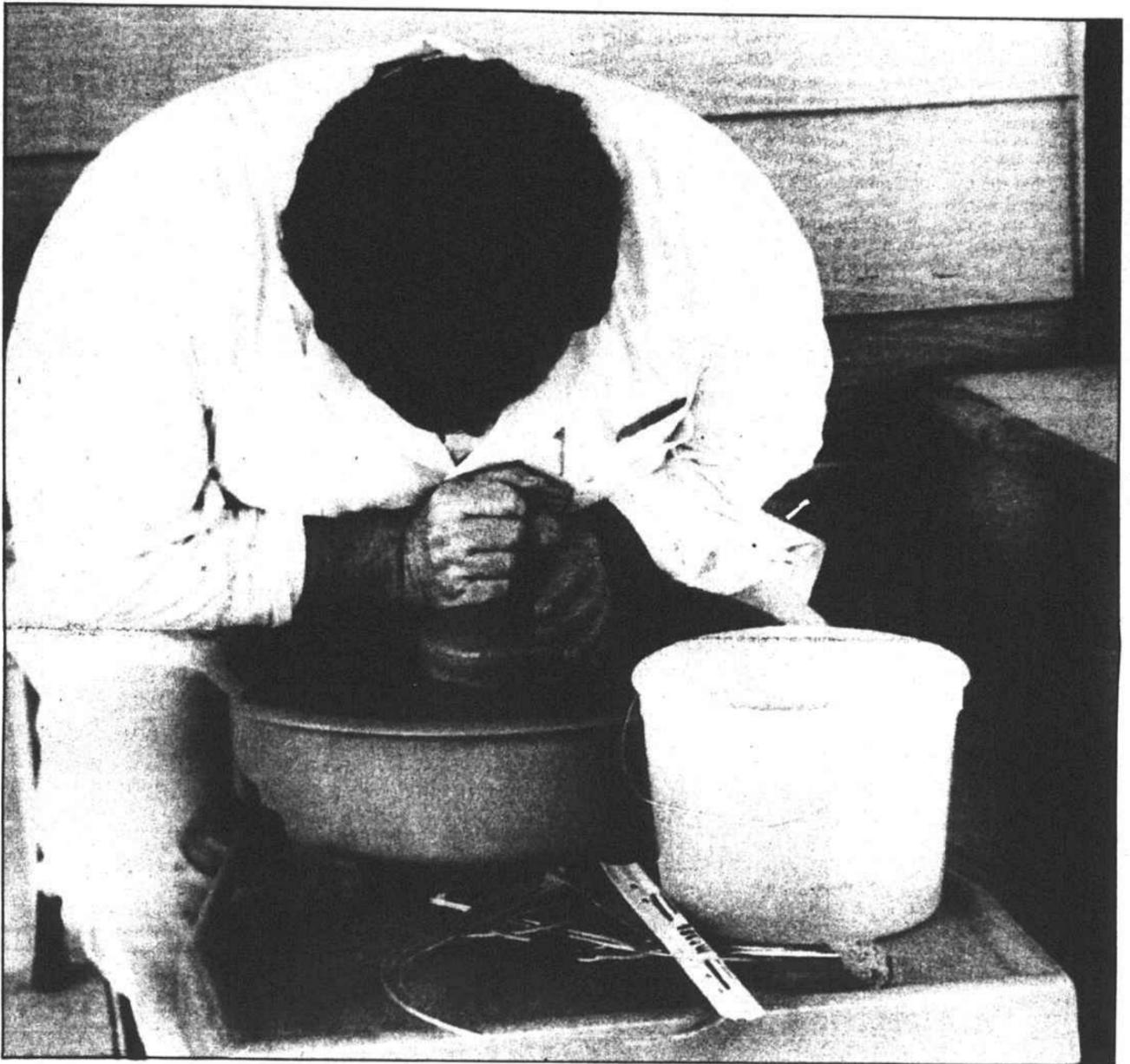
Shaping up

The once semi-oval lump of clay begins to shape up as Moses masterfully places an indenture into the wet clay.



Almost there

After several minutes of molding, shaping, feeling and re-constructing, Moses prepares to measure the length and width of the soon to be completed work of clay!



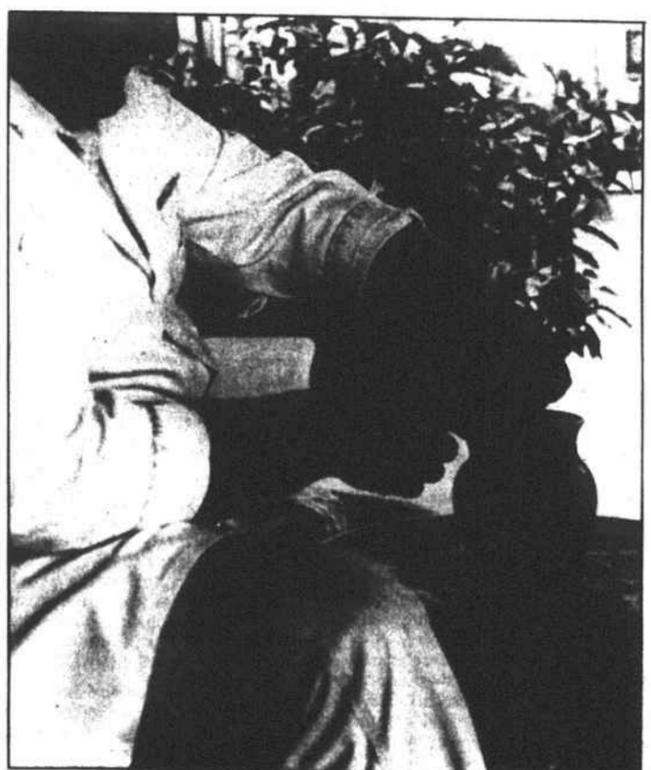
Getting the feel of it!

Moses gets very involved with his work as he feels the shape of the clay and prepares to shape it to suit the piece he is getting ready to create.



Perfectionist at work

Like a surgeon preparing for a vital operation, Moses delicately performs the minor surgeries needed to get his clay creation into perfect form.



Nearing completion

Moses shapes and molds the clay one last time and presto a pitcher is formed before your eyes. Once the pitcher is removed from the potter's wheel it must dry, be glazed and placed in a kiln where it will be "fired." Once removed from the kiln, another creation has been formed, adding the Moses' growing collection.