

The American Ceramic Society

Columbus, Ohio,

July 26, 1929.

Sorry I have been so slow in getting this letter out to the committee. I will send you the results if any.

A.E.B.

Dr. Chas. F. Binns,

N. Y. State School of Clayworking and

Ceramics

Alfred, N.Y.

My dear Dr. Binns:

ORTON MEMORIAL LABORATORY

The purpose of this letter is to recall to your consideration the matter of recommendations regarding the decorative medallions which are to occupy prominent places on three exterior walls of the Orton memorial Laboratory in Columbus. Professor Binns, the chairman of your committee, has suggested that I, being located in Columbus, might serve the committee as a sort of resident secretary to keep in touch with the job and with General Orton.

The response to the first letters sent out was not of sufficiently definite character to furnish any basis of recommendation to General Orton. The building being already under construction was of course, not held back. It is now nearing completion. The large medallions on the front symbolizing Greece and Egypt have been successfully completed by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company and are in place. The ten smaller medallions on the side walls have been bricked in temporarily awaiting the final decision as to what they shall contain. General Orton is still anxious to have an advisory opinion from the committee appointed for that purpose.

The problems concerning which you are asked to offer suggestions are these:

1. On each of two sides of the building are already in place five terra cotta panels complete except for a 24 inch medallion in the center of each panel. What famous men, countries, processes or products shall these medallions commemorate? How shall the thus honored be symbolized – by name, portrait, representation of typical work or, as one member of the committee has suggested, by actual product of differing types such as terra cotta, brick, porcelain, etc.?
2. General Orton suggests as a possibility one or perhaps two bronze tablets on the front of the building; these honor rolls to contain the names of eminent American contributors to ceramics with provision for occasional additions to the list. Is such an honor roll favored by

the committee? Should it be limited to those no longer living as several have suggested or should there be no limitation other than outstanding achievement in the ceramic field? In either case what names should be included in this roll of honor?

I am sending two snapshots, one showing the building from the front with the two large medallions in place, the other showing the position on the wide walls of five of the ten 24 inch medallions which are yet to be decided upon.

You no doubt have copies of the correspondence which has been exchanged. However, in order to briefly sum up the ideas presented so far, I will try to condense them here. Mr. Rhead's interesting idea of friezes or panels depicting primitive and later industrial processes seems to be ruled out by the fact that the architectural scheme in its essentials is already complete. It is still possible to symbolize processes in the small medallions but the space is so limited that adequate treatment would be difficult.

Mr. Minton suggests countries symbolized by typical contributions to ceramics, - Greece represented by a characteristic red and black vase; Egypt by brick; Assyria by its historical tablets of burned clay; China by the potter's wheel; Italy by terra cotta; Germany by Dresden figures. He also suggests two bronze tablets, one to contain American, the other foreign names.

Mr. Burt suggests for the five south wall medallions, Della Robbia, Palissy, Boettger, Wedgwood and some famous Chinese potter. For the north wall he proposes panels of distinctive types of product. Brick, old red terra cotta, polychrome terracotta, tile, porcelain. In Mr. Burt's opinion, place on the honor roll should be rigidly confined to those no longer living.

Mr. Langebeck's selections for one group of five medallions are Louis Poterat, J. F. Boettcher or Boettger, Josiah Wedgwood, Joseph Aspden, Curt Schott (?). For the second group he suggests an Aztec aborigine, David Spinner, John G. Low, Walter S. Lenox, Louis Tiffany (?). Mr. Langebeck also favors excluding the living from the roll of honor. He says "I would not inflict the living with monumental honors. It stigmatizes them with lacking the saving grace of humor.

This sketchily covers the correspondence that has been brought to my attention. Several committee members have not offered their suggestions. May I ask that you will each carefully think the matter over and fill out the question blank which you will find enclosed, mailing it to me at room 230, Lord Hall, Columbus, Ohio?

Very truly yours,

Arthur E. Baggs

AEB LL

The Medallions-

Shall they represent _____ persons _____ countries

Processes _____ products _____?

Shall they consist of _____ symbols _____ names _____ portraits

Or combinations of these _____?

What are your specific recommendations for the subjects of the five medallions on the south wall (the more conspicuous side?)

What are your suggestions for the north wall's medallions?

The honor roll-

Do you favor the bronze "roll of honor" tablet? Yes ___ No ___

Do you favor two tablets, one for American, one for foreign names? Yes ___ No ___

Should the names of living persons be excluded from this roll? Yes ___ No ___

Should such a roll be limited to Americans? Yes ___ No ___

Whom do you suggest as worthy of places on this list?

Please state as fully as possible any ideas regarding the matter not covered in the above answers.