

The Handcraft Shop

November 2

Dear Prof Binns

It has been a long, long time since I reported progress to you and I feel ashamed that I have not written before but there has not been very much to tell you about and I have been extremely busy so I have let letter writing be postponed. I have taken it for granted that my father would let you know something of how I was getting on from time to time so that you would not forget me entirely.

As far as visible results are concerned, my summers work has amounted to very little. It has been impossible with the kiln we have had to turn out any first class work in glazing. We have produced some saleable pieces but nothing very creditable. A larger part of my time and energy this summer has been spent in teaching and helping the patients and in this I have had very good success. Working with nervous invalids is not an ideal occupation and it has not been easy to get along smoothly with them all but I have had pretty good luck so far. Of course my work with patients, although valuable in a way, does not show up in the material results of my work and I think that before the new kiln came the doctors were beginning to think that they had made a bad bargain and that I could not turn our product enough to make myself worth while. The new kiln has changed things. I have had excellent success with it from the start. The glazes work to perfection and I have already produced some really first class things. The doctors are very much pleased with the work and I think the prospects are good for a successful winter of pottery making. I am very glad to have things coming this way. I want them at last for I have had plenty of the discouraging side of the game this summer.

The glazes are nearly gone and I would like more as soon as you can possibly send them. We shall probably use quite a large quantity of glaze this winter and I have been wondering if you could make any reductions in the price considering the amount we shall use. 80 c per 1000 g is rather expensive glazing. Would it be possible for me to grind glazes here by hand and get good results? If so, through how fine lawns should they be lawned?

The glazes I want now are –

420 med. Green	4 qts.
420 Slate	4 qts.
420 Willow Gr.	2 qts.
420 Cool gr	2 qts.
420 Black	2 qts.
406 dk. Blue	2 qts.
406 Leopard	2 qts.

420 Tan	1 qt.
420 plain no color	1 qt.
420 plain dry	2000 grams
406 plain dry	1000 grams
420 dark green	2 qts.

I would also like the following colors mixed with 406 base.

Base	no.	gl.	Cu.	Fe.	Co.	Mn.	Ni.
W. Lead 770	5	1530	35	15			
Whiting 125	8	1530	40	25	5		
Spar 415	10	1530		35		15	
Cal. Kaolin <u>220</u>	12	1530	35		10		15
1530	11	1530	Fe35	Aut. 15			

The numbers are from a series of experiments I made last year. Please write them on the labels of the cans. Please give us as low a price on these as you can and send them as soon as possible by express for I need some of them right away. I am afraid this will mean considerable trouble for you but it will help me out greatly and I shall appreciate it.

Another thing we need is clay. We are at present using two kinds – a common red clay which vitrifies at 04 and takes the glazes finely, and a stoneware clay which is a very good clay to work with but is undesirable on account of the number of small pebbles it contains. It needs a higher fire than I want to give it. When fired at 04 the glaze crazes badly and in order to overcome this I think the biscuit should be fired at cone 4 or higher which is higher than I can fire it. I have tried at several of the potteries near here to get satisfactory clays but so far have not found what I want. Could you let me have a quantity of no 2 body – perhaps four or five hundred pounds of brown and two hundred pounds of white? If so, what would be the price? I would like very much to use the no 2 body if you could supply it.

I shall want to do some work with bright glazes and am not satisfied with the one we have been using. Can you send me the formulae and batch weights of two or three good raw glazes for 04 and 2 – some that I could grind and lawn by hand? I would also like to have the formulae and batch of 420 and the various colors. Another thing I want (my wants are neither small nor few) is a series of good underglaze colors – blues, greens, grays and browns. You have some good colors I remember. Can you send me some or tell me how to make them or where to procure some equally as good?

I am asking a great many things of you but I haven't bothered you before in some time and I know you will be glad to help me out. I am hoping to make quite a success of the work here this winter and believe I can do it with your help if all goes well.

The shop is in rather an unsettled condition at present. The management is changing and I think the change will make a great improvement. Miss Luther is no longer in charge but is going to Providence where she has a position in another hospital. Under the new system there will be one person at the head of this whole shop with different people in charge of the various departments. I am to have entire charge of the pottery dept. both teaching and producing. I have two people working with me who are not patients but workers turning out a saleable product. I have to superintend these people, teach the patients and make pottery myself so I shall have my hands full.

I judge from reading the "Alfred Monthly" and the "Sun" that the S. S. is prospering and I am glad. Wish I could be there but it is lots of fun to be doing things here. Thanking you in advance for your trouble.

Yours sincerely Arthur E Baggs