

Westmoore Pottery

THE BEGINNING 1977



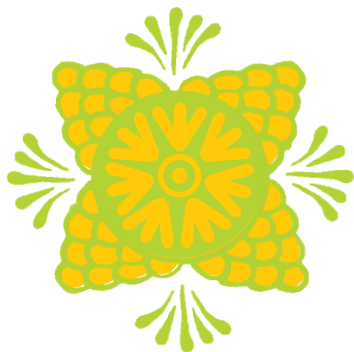
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PATRICIA GREENE PALMER

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Westmoore Pottery: The Beginning 1977 by Patricia Greene Palmer
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Photograph reprinted with permission of *Country Living* magazine
Back Cover: David and Mary Farrell, early in their career
Photograph courtesy of Westmoore Pottery

PREFACE

In November of this year (2007), Westmoore Pottery will celebrate its 30th anniversary. During these thirty years the Farrells have established themselves among the premier potters in the country and have carved a niche in recreating the Moravian pottery tradition. They specialize in creating historically accurate pottery of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and have provided pottery for countless historical sites and museums and props for over twelve movies. In addition to their career as potters, they built their own house, which appeared as a cover story feature in *Country Living* magazine, and their current shop. David Farrell is also an accomplished sculptor.

As the Farrells celebrate thirty years in the pottery business, it is worth a look back at how this remarkable couple came to establish Westmoore Pottery in 1977.



WESTMOORE POTTERY

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David Farrell's Formative Years

David R. Farrell was born to Cynthia and Thomas Farrell on February 15, 1951, in Suffern, New York. It is not surprising that he became a potter and sculptor; he comes from an artistic family. His maternal grandmother, aunt, uncle, and mother were artists, and his Alsatian ancestors made decorated ceramic stoves.

David's first work in clay was sculptural. As a child, he began in ceramics by making clay figures of people and animals; he, his brother, and a friend spent six years building a little clay city populated with these clay figures. Dave's father, while commuting to his teaching job in New Jersey, often stopped at a road cut with a large clay exposure and gathered clay for David. By the time he was a teenager, David was selling his clay sculptures at Todd Gallery in nearby Paramus, New Jersey (Farrell, C.)

Upon entering State University of New York at Plattsburg, David expanded his work with clay to include wheelwork and pots. He had entered college planning to be a dentist and then switched to the study of education. However, one pottery class taken as a side interest got him hooked. Pottery skills came easily to David. Fairly quickly, art classes, especially pottery, had pulled him away from education. In 1974, David received his B.A. from SUNY in Plattsburg, NY, where he

took four semesters of ceramics. Later he spent an additional semester studying ceramics, this time at the University of Vermont.

In 1975, George Scatchard of Scatchard Stoneware in Underhill, Vermont, employed David as an all-round assistant. While there, David made pots, trimmed feet on pots, loaded kilns, and did anything else needed. He enjoyed the experience and learned a great deal from George (Farrell, D.)

While in college, David had heard of Jugtown Pottery and of Jugtown's neighbor, potter Melvin Owen, from one of his instructors, Bill Klock. This inspired Dave to come to Seagrove, NC, in 1976, and work for five months at Jugtown Pottery. After this apprenticeship, he returned to Beekmantown, NY, and worked with Klock for a year.

In addition to his studies and apprenticeships, David toured potteries in Europe. He spent three weeks visiting British potteries in 1976 and two weeks touring Swiss potteries in 1977.

In the spring of 1977, Dave returned to Jugtown Pottery as a journeyman. He planned to return to New York and open a pottery called "Beaver Brook". After meeting Mary, who was apprenticing at Jugtown at that time, he decided to stay in North Carolina and establish a pottery with her. The pottery that he made and marked "Beaver Brook" with the intention of going back north became part of the inventory that was sold in the first year or two that Westmoore Pottery was in business. Because few were so marked, Beaver Brook pieces have become highly collectible (Palmer 2).



FIGURE 1. Mary Livingstone's first cup and saucer, made for her father at age ten. Diameter of saucer $2\frac{3}{4}$ "; Cup 2" high, diameter at bottom 2", diameter at top 3". This little cup was hand built with coils and slabs (not wheel made). Redware with clear glaze, decorated with underglazes of green and blue. (Collection of Dan Livingstone)

Mary Livingstone Farrell's Formative Years

Mary Lisa Livingstone was a New Year's baby. She was born on January 1, 1955, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the second daughter of Daniel and Bertha Ross Livingstone. When Mary was two, her family moved to Durham, NC, where her father taught in the Zoology Department of Duke University.

As a child of four Mary showed a keen interest in clay. Most children love to play in mud, but Mary enjoyed not only playing in mud, she liked to make forms, mainly little animals, out of red mud from a little clay pit behind her house (Livingstone). When Mary was about ten, her mother enrolled her in a ceramics class offered by the city of Durham. Instead of casting forms in molds as most of the other class members were doing, she insisted upon making free-form pieces. It was here that she made her first cup and saucer (Figure 1). It was also here that she had her first work fired in a kiln.

As a child Mary often accompanied her mother to the Seagrove and Sanford potteries, and Mary was already saying, "When I grow up I'm going to be a master potter." On one occasion while visiting the potter Ben Owen, she had her picture made with him (Figure 2).

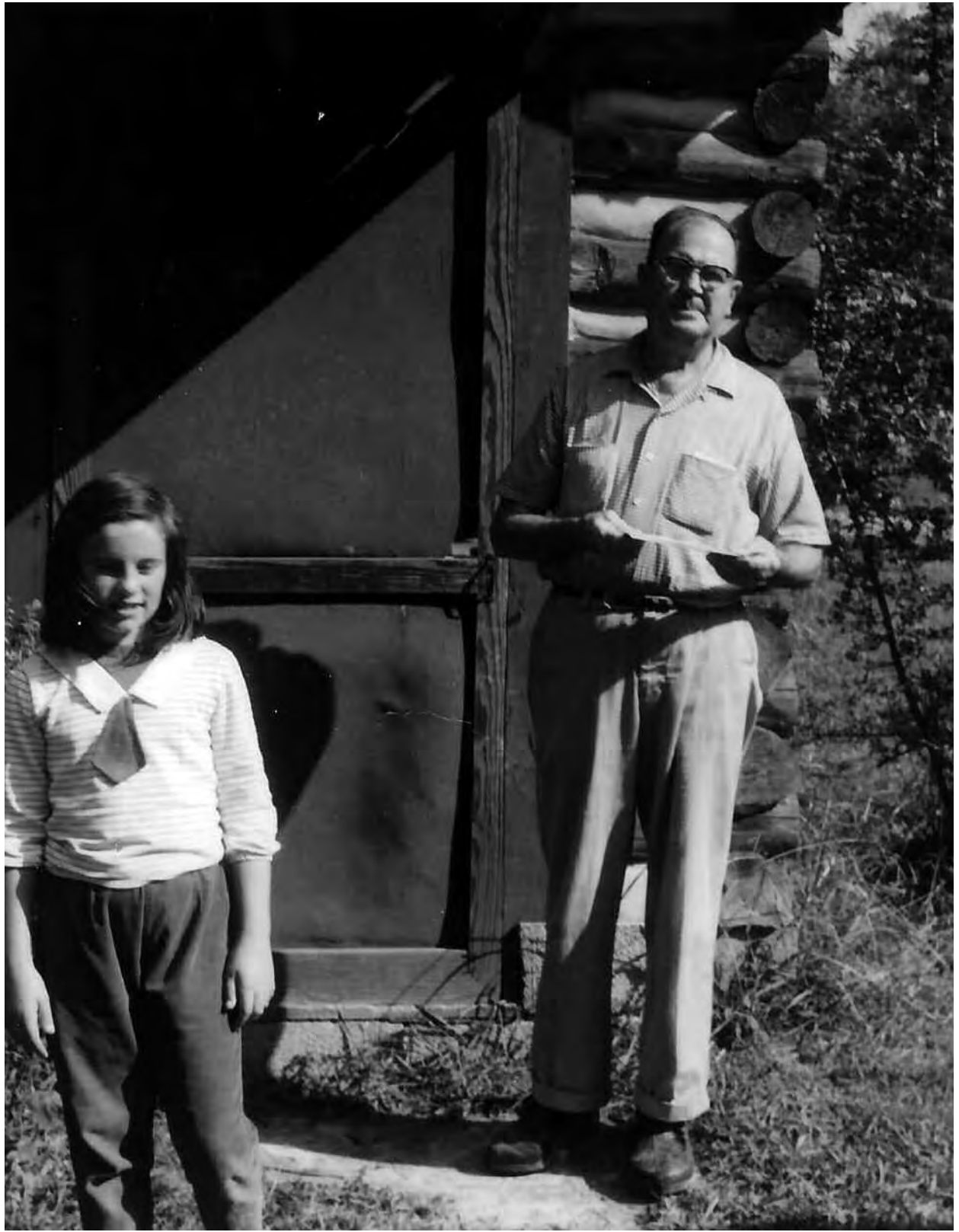


FIGURE 2. Mary Livingstone at age nine with master potter Ben Owen. (Photograph courtesy of Bertha Livingstone)



FIGURE 5. Examples of the four stoneware glazes developed by David Farrell while serving as journeyman at Jugtown Pottery. Clockwise: Covered bean pot in dark brown; pitcher in white; mug in Beaver Brook Blue with inside dark brown; candle saucer in olive green. These four glazes have been discontinued. (Collection of the author)



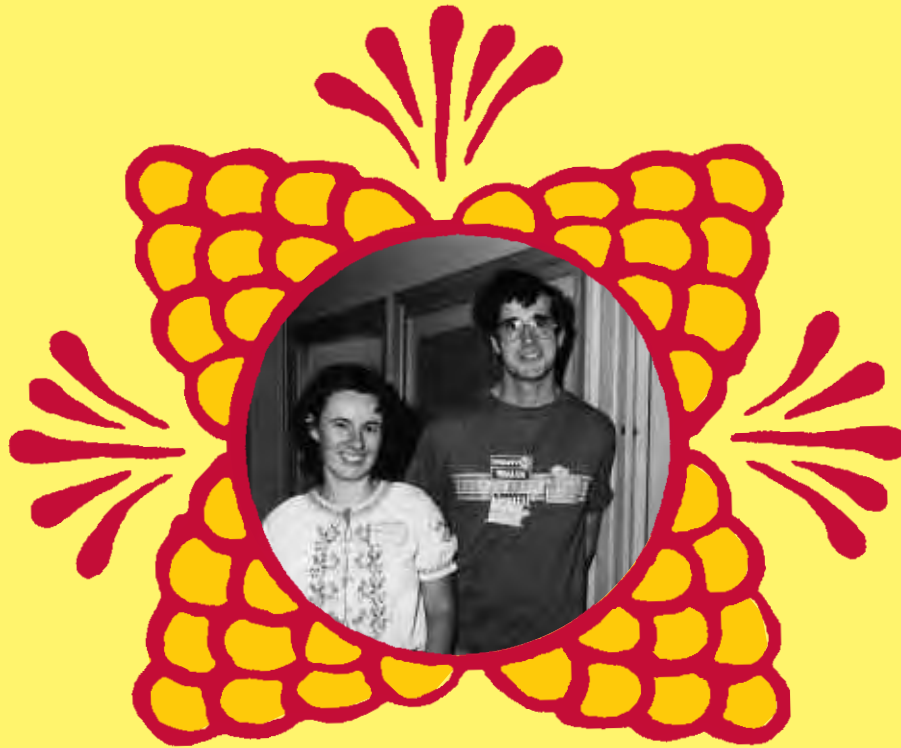
match his Aunt Dorothy's wallpaper in the dining room of her Massachusetts home; she had commissioned him to make her a set of dinnerware to match her wallpaper. Consequently, that glaze is known today as Beaver Brook Blue.

The shapes were inspired and influenced by ones at Jugtown, as well as early English shapes. The pottery produced during this period was marked "Beaver Brook" on the bottom, either hand-printed or stamped with a hand-made stamp. After meeting Mary and finding her to be "a most compatible friend and romantic interest," David gave up the notion of a Beaver Brook Pottery up North (Farrell, D.)

In the meantime, David had accumulated a few hundred pieces of pottery marked "Beaver Brook." Initially the bulk of their inventory sold at Westmoore Pottery consisted of these pieces (lidded pots, mugs, soup bowls, canisters, crocks) that Dave had made while at Jugtown. This rare mark is highly sought after by collectors of Westmoore Pottery, as is the Beaver Brook Blue glaze that was discontinued in the late 1980s.


Cathy Morris and Janice Williams of Raleigh recall that upon visiting Ben and Lucille Owen in the fall of 1977, the Owens sent them over to see the work of the new potters who had just opened their shop next door. While looking over the various pieces, one of them noticed that although the shop was named Westmoore Pottery, there were pots marked Beaver Brook. Mary explained that it wasn't going to be called Beaver Brook and that Westmoore was the correct name (so named because it was in the western part of Moore County). Both being historians, they thought they should purchase one of these Beaver Brook pieces sensing that someday it might be valuable. Consequently, today they are the proud owners of pots with the rare backmark that are indeed collectible (Figures 6 and 7). (Morris; Williams, J.)

FIGURE 6. Left: Westmoore Pottery stoneware ramekin with lid in rare Beaver Brook Blue glaze. Diameter at top 4½", 4½" tall, diameter at bottom 3½". Circa 1977 by David Farrell. BEAVER BROOK mark inscribed on bottom. Westmoore has discontinued this ramekin as well as the Beaver Brook Blue glaze. (Collection of Cathy and Ed Morris) Right: Westmoore Pottery sugar bowl with lid. Redware with clear glaze. Diameter at top 3½", 4½" tall, diameter at bottom 2¾". Circa 1977 by David Farrell. BEAVER BROOK mark inscribed on bottom. (Collection of Janice Williams)



*David and Mary Farrell of Westmoore Pottery in the early 1980s.
(Photograph courtesy of Westmoore Pottery.)*

David Farrell and Mary Livingstone met while working at Jugtown Pottery, Seagrove, NC. In November 1977, they opened Westmoore Pottery. They married in 1978, and over the last thirty years have become recognized among the country's premier craftsmen and artists with their pottery. This year marks the 30th anniversary of Westmoore Pottery.



PATRICIA GREENE PALMER has collected Westmoore Pottery since its beginning. She is currently writing a book on the history of Westmoore Pottery, from which this booklet is an excerpt.