



May program speaker Bob Treichler and wife Nancy. Bob gave a terrific talk on Northeast Ohio Stoneware. They are holding his newly published book on the subject. Anyone interested in purchasing his book can reach Bob at [rtreichl@kent.edu](mailto:rtreichl@kent.edu)

## STONEWARE UPDATE

Chapman, Upson & Wright reconsidered.

There are several known pieces of stoneware that acknowledge the partnership of Chapman, Upson and Wright, and these pieces are sometimes distinguished by bold cobalt signatures in Spencerian script. Perhaps the most spectacular is the one that appears as photos 9 and 10 (p. 55) in "A History of Northeast Ohio Stoneware" (2011). When that book appeared, there was speculation about the indicated "manufacturers" and their relationship to the agent, J. Park Alexander, who was advertising their ware (in Detroit). The first two names in the partnership seemed to be those of known potters from the Middlebury area. Edgar Chapman was well-documented for 30 years as a Middlebury potter in both census and tax records.

Similarly, Daniel A. Upson, the son of a prominent Tallmadge family, was recorded as the owner of a small pottery on then Water Street (now Case Ave). However, it was the name, "Wright", that posed the most vexing problem of identification. Initial speculation suggested that the name represented a business partnership involving an uncle of Daniel Upson. That family did have a long history of investment in local business ventures, and Mrs. J. P. Alexander was a Wright (the niece of the possible investor). However, there was one other prospect. A father and son by the name of Wright also lived in the Chapman household. The 63 year-old father, J. C. Wright, listed his occupation as carpenter, while the son (initially interpreted from the census as "A. O.") claimed to be a potter. However, the son seemed an unlikely prospect as a business partner because of his age (30) and his lack of any tax record (no listing of personal property or real estate tax). Further, no other census record or city directory listing for A. O. Wright was found. It seemed as if he might have been learning the trade while living at the Chapman residence. Although the connection between the Wrights and Chapmans is not fully known, it appears they were related by marriage (Edgar Chapman's brother was married to J.C. Wright's sister)

However, some new information has been found that aids in clarifying this three-person combination of names. More recently, another piece of stoneware has come to light, and although it is initially unassuming (see photo), it did reveal some meaningful clarification. When the piece was turned over some incised signatures were found on the bottom (see photo). The names of the appropriate Chapman and Upson were there, but Wright's name was shown as the top-most signature and found to be "O.O. Wright". Fortunately, with that clarification a fairly complete record of O. (Oliver) O. Wright's lifetime proved to be available. In 1850, he was 10 years old and at that time, his parents, J.C. (Chester) and Nancy were living in the same residence as the William A. Chapman family. The head of this household was the widow, Salona Wright, W. C. Wright's mother and apparently, the mother-in-law of

William Chapman. By 1860, the William Chapman family had moved to Michigan, and W. C. Wright's household included only his son and his widowed mother. W. C. was serving as the Tallmadge postmaster, but his wife, Nancy, was not listed as living in the house (probably deceased), and son,, Oliver claimed to be employed as a carriage maker. That seemed a reasonable vocational choice because at that time there were several carriage shops in Tallmadge.

With the beginning of the Civil War a year later, Oliver enlisted in the Union army (Aug. 1861) and served in Company H of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry. That unit participated in many Civil War battles including the Northern Virginia campaign, Charlottesville and Gettysburg where their valor is commemorated by a monument at Culp's Hill. Oliver was mustered out in Mar 1864 when the unit was disbanded. By 1870, Oliver Wright and his father, W. C., were living at the Edgar Chapman home. It is presumed that Edgar Chapman was related to (probably a brother of) William Chapman, and the Edgar Chapman family had a history of including many other individuals and families in their home. It was during this time that he incised his name on the stoneware churn in the photo. In 1874, Oliver married Margaret Pero, the daughter of French immigrants who had a farm just east of Mogadore. By 1880, they had three children and had moved to Akron where he listed himself as a carpenter. The Oliver Wright family owned a residence on E. Buchtel Ave. where they lived until after the turn of the century. However, Oliver had health problems, probably related to his military service because as early as 1879 he had applied for and received a pension (of \$25 monthly by 1914). Sometime between 1900 and 1910, the family moved to Oakland CA, and in November of 1914, Oliver was admitted to The Disabled Soldier's Home at Sawtelle, CA. He was diagnosed as having defective hearing, chronic congestion, an inguinal hernia and a slightly enlarged heart, but he spent only a little less than two months there. He returned to his home in Oakland where in 1920, the last year of his life, he still reported his occupation to the census taker as "carpenter".

Late that year, his wife, Margaret, applied for and subsequently received Civil War Veterans widow's benefits.

So what of Oliver Wright as a stoneware potter? He seems to have gotten his name included on several great pieces, but his tenure as a potter was certainly brief, as was the tax record of the partnership (once, in 1869). In nearly every other census and city directory listing, Oliver claimed the same profession as his father, that of carpenter. However, it is also interesting to speculate as to why the name of U. S. Grant was included in the inscriptions on



the bottom of the piece that gave Oliver's name top billing (on all others he was last).



When it is remembered that U. S. Grant was first inaugurated as president in the year 1869, we may have an instance of a Civil War veteran paying a congratulatory tribute to his former commanding general.

William Chapman. By 1860, the William Chapman family had moved to Michigan, and W. C. Wright's household included only his son and his widowed mother. W. C. was serving as the Tallmadge postmaster, but his wife, Nancy, was not listed as living in the house (probably deceased), and son,, Oliver claimed to be employed as a carriage maker. That seemed a reasonable vocational choice because at that time there were several carriage shops in Tallmadge.

With the beginning of the Civil War a year later, Oliver enlisted in the Union army (Aug. 1861) and served in Company H of the 29<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry. That unit participated in many Civil War battles including the Northern Virginia campaign, Charlottesville and Gettysburg where their valor is commemorated by a monument at Culp's Hill. Oliver was mustered out in Mar 1864 when the unit was disbanded. By 1870, Oliver Wright and his father, W. C., were living at the Edgar Chapman home. It is presumed that Edgar Chapman was related to (probably a brother of) William Chapman, and the Edgar Chapman family had a history of including many other individuals and families in their home. It was during this time that he incised his name on the stoneware churn in the photo. In 1874, Oliver married Margaret Pero, the daughter of French immigrants who had a farm just east of Mogadore. By 1880, they had three children and had moved to Akron where he listed himself as a carpenter. The Oliver Wright family owned a residence on E. Buchtel Ave. where they lived until after the turn of the century. However, Oliver had health problems, probably related to his military service because as early as 1879 he had applied for and received a pension (of \$25 monthly by 1914). Sometime between 1900 and 1910, the family moved to Oakland CA, and in November of 1914, Oliver was admitted to The Disabled Soldier's Home at Sawtelle, CA. He was diagnosed as having defective hearing, chronic congestion, an inguinal hernia and a slightly enlarged heart, but he spent only a little less than two months there. He returned to his home in Oakland where in 1920, the last year of his life, he still reported his occupation to the census taker as "carpenter".

Late that year, his wife, Margaret, applied for and subsequently received Civil War Veterans widow's benefits.



So what of Oliver Wright as a stoneware potter? He seems to have gotten his name included on several great pieces, but his tenure as a potter was certainly brief, as was the tax record of the partnership (once, in 1869). In nearly every other census and city directory listing, Oliver claimed the same profession as his father, that of carpenter. However, it is also interesting to speculate as to why the name of U. S. Grant was included in the inscriptions on

the bottom of the piece that gave Oliver's name top billing (on all others he was last).



When it is remembered that U. S. Grant was first inaugurated as president in the year 1869, we may have an instance of a Civil War veteran paying a congratulatory tribute to his former commanding general.