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**Collection 469**  
**Thomas Maddock and Sons**  
**(1853-1967)**

**By Ananya Girish**  
**January 2021**

**History**

Thomas Maddock was born in 1818 into a family of potters in Staffordshire, England. He arrived with his first wife, Honor Bossom, in New York in 1847 with their two sons, one of whom died in childhood. The surviving son, John, went on to found his own pottery company in Trenton. Having worked as a pottery apprentice in England, Thomas Maddock and his partner William Leigh set up the first china decorating company in New York City. In 1851, Honor Maddock died and in 1852, Thomas was remarried to Isabella Smith. They had three sons: Charles S., Archibald M., and Harry S. Maddock.

For most of the 19th century, indoor plumbing and toilets were a luxury that could not be afforded by the common man. In 1873, there were no manufacturers of sanitaryware in the United States at all; every toilet came from England. Thomas Maddock was determined to find a way to produce toilets made of earthenware at a price people could afford. Through a lot of trial and error, he figured out the exact proportions of ingredients needed to produce both the earthenware and the glaze. Despite many technical difficulties with kiln temperature and times, Maddock was finally able to produce a sellable product in 1873. For the next two decades, as refinements were made to the toilet and sales rapidly of sanitaryware, Thomas Maddock and his sons began establishing themselves as one of the more powerful pottery firms.

The famous firm was originally named Millington & Astbury, and was renamed Millington, Astbury & Maddock in 1873 once Thomas Maddock joined. The company produced toilet sets which included wash basins, pitchers, chamber pots and slop jars, mugs and toothbrush holders, dinnerware, and other pottery utensils. The next year, Richard Millington left the partnership and the company was named Astbury & Maddock. After the departure of Astbury, the company was renamed Thomas Maddock & Sons, under the ownership of Thomas Maddock and his sons John, Charles S., Archibald M., and Harry S. They used the year 1859, the date of the old Millington & Astbury Company, as their own date of establishment. Thomas Maddock pioneered the now universal method of fastening brass couplings to earthenware, which he patented on June 29, 1880,

expanding the production of the company from toilets (called water closets at the time) to include other plumbing fixtures as well.

The company expanded several times, acquiring City Pottery, the South Trenton Works, the Glasgow Pottery, and the Trenton China Company which became the Maddock Pottery Company in 1893, producing the more artistic pottery on the market. In 1888, Thomas Maddock bought the Lamberton Works, renaming it Maddock's Lamberton Works, where they produced high quality domestic and commercial china dinnerware that was sold to restaurants, railroad companies and hotels all across the country. Thomas Maddock died in 1899 and his sons renamed the company Thomas Maddock's Sons Company in 1902. At the time of his death, the sanitaryware industry in Trenton accounted for 86% of the nation's output.

The family's companies thrived until the 1920s when labor unrest followed by a devastating strike, and then the rise of plumbing conglomerates created a marketplace that changed too fast for the Maddocks to keep up with. Thomas Maddock's Sons were forced to sell to American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation (now known as American Standard) in 1929. Ultimately, while Trenton is remembered for its intricately decorated, high quality pottery, it was the sanitaryware industry that drove the city's economy for over fifty years thanks to the innovation of Thomas Maddock and his family.

### **Scope and Content Notes**

This collection consists of journals, letters, business documents, land holdings, photographs, genealogical records, biographical histories, and newspaper clippings pertaining to the Thomas Maddock and Sons pottery company or the Maddock Family. The collection spans at least three generations, and includes significant birth, death, and wedding dates not only of the family, but also of key business partners. The Thomas Maddock and Sons collection is contained within four document boxes and one flat box. The various binders and notebooks that were donated are also included in these boxes.

The collection is divided into five series: I. Family History; II. Business and Organization; III. Newspaper Clippings; IV. Publications; and V. Photos. It is important to note that there is significant overlap between the content of these series, since any clippings or photographs found lodged in journals were left how they were found.

The Thomas Maddock and Sons collection is significant in bringing together the family and company history of the Maddock family, that played a key role in the commerce and society of Trenton for over fifty years. Subjects of interest to researchers include pottery, industry in Trenton, unionization, business relationships with the U.S.S.R., and genealogy of the Maddocks.

### **Series Description**

#### **Series I. Family History**

This first series contains journal entries from various members of the Maddock family, genealogical records (including dates of birth, death, and marriage), personal correspondence, biographical accounts about Thomas Maddock, and some general documents related to the Maddocks. There are two groups of binders in this series, one containing mostly genealogical information and the other containing mostly journal entries. Three of these journals are thought to have belonged to Charles Maddock, while one contains letters and other memorabilia from Robert (Bob) Maddock's visit to

Mexico. There are three binders containing parts of correspondence relating to genealogy of the Maddock, Middleton, and Henderson families, parts of journal entries, obituaries and death announcements of family members, lists of family members with their addresses, songs, and Maddock family birthdays and weddings by month (until 1935). There is also a biography of Charles Smith Jr. and genealogy of the Maddock family from the family bible, and a memorial card for Archibald Middleton Maddock with his picture. There is a printed season's greetings card from Mr. and Mrs. Raymond E. Kuser.

Of note in this series is the will of Thomas Maddock in one of the biographical black binders, and descriptions of various family activities and gatherings, including Christmas of 1930 in the General Information folder.

### **Series II. Business and Organization**

This series contains information pertaining to the operations at Thomas Maddock and Sons, including financial records and statements, financial assessments, energy studies, correspondence between business partners, property ownership, patents, personnel, and general information about the company. The series contains a black binder containing agreements and correspondence, death notices of key business partners, awards, Thomas Maddock's property ownership, and a letter from the Law Offices of Edwin H. Brown. The series also contains a black book titled "Maddock Report: A Study of the Generation vs the Purchase of Power for The Thomas Maddock's Sons Company Trenton, New Jersey" from 1924 by F.C. Carstarphen, a consulting engineer with the Manufacturers Selling Company in Trenton.

Correspondence of note includes a letter addressed to Charles Maddock going over the history of a pitcher that was in his possession. In another letter addressed to him from L. G. Khvostovsky of the Technical Bureau of the United Industries of U.S.S.R., he was offered a position as a permanent consultant-engineer in the production of sanitary ware in the United Glass & Porcelain industry of the U.S.S.R. Additionally, a letter to Thomas Maddock from Richard Millington ending the co-partnership of the Millington, Astbury, and Maddock firm is present.

Among the financial papers are included a sheet from a ledger showing money paid out on the widow Middleton's account from October 1846 to May 1847, a booklet containing an examination of the books and accounts of Thomas Maddock's Sons Company by Miller, Franklin, Basset, and Company, and a certificate indicating that W. E. S. Dyer was the owner of 250 shares of capital stock of Maddock-Dyer Process Co. This series also contains a ledger containing financial information about the running of the company and some pieces of relevant correspondence.

Thomas Maddock's patent for a "Flushing Device for Water Closet Bowls" is also included.

### **Series III. Newspaper Clippings**

This series includes two subseries: clippings about members of the Maddock family and personal matters, and clippings about Thomas Maddock and Sons and the pottery industry in Trenton. Among the business-related clippings is an envelope from Charles Maddock containing clippings pertaining to the Ushers Union.

The folder of family and personal clippings also includes birth announcements and wedding announcements that were sent to people, and obituaries found in newspapers.

This series also includes a folder in a flat box, containing newspaper clippings about both the Maddocks as individuals and about the company.

#### **Series IV. Publications**

This series includes publications by the Thomas Maddock and Sons company, mostly their catalogs through the years, and publications about the pottery industry in Trenton with some highlights about the influence of Thomas Maddock and Sons.

The first subseries includes eight catalogs of various toilet fixtures and vitreous china plumbing fixtures from the company. These catalogs range in publication year from 1883-1924.

#### **Series V. Photographs**

This final series contains photographs and images. It has been divided into photos of people, including Maddock family members, factory workers, and some newspaper clippings, and scanned images of medallions that were awarded either to individuals or to the Thomas Maddock and Sons Company as a whole. There are two photos of a house that came from "Peg Sullivan's scrapbook". The series also contains a set of glass Lantern Slides that are in the flat box.

#### **Provenance**

Acc. #2020.020; Gift of John Maddock via Trenton Museum Society.

#### **Restrictions**

None

#### **See also**

Coll. 355 Thomas Maddock's Sons Company

Coll. 356 Carwin Corp.

#### **Container List**

##### **Box/ Folder/ Folder Title**

Series I. Family History

1 / 1 / General

1 / 2 / Correspondence

1 / 3 / Maddock House Documents

1 / - / Charles Maddock's Journal Book 1 (with a copy) and 2

1 / 4 / Journal from July - October 1922

1 / 5 / Journal Entries

1 / 6 / Journal Entries and Clippings

1 / - / Journal from Bob's Trip to Mexico, Nov.-Dec. 1932

2 / 1 / Charles Smith Jr. Biography, part of Thomas Maddock biography

2 / 2 / Genealogy of the Family of Maddock from the Family Bible

3 / - / Binders containing genealogical information and important dates

Series II. Business and Organization

2 / - / Binder

2 / - / Maddock Report: A Study of the Generation vs the Purchase of Power for The Thomas Maddock's Sons Company Trenton, New Jersey

3 / 1 / Correspondence

3 / 2 / Personnel

3 / 3 / Financial Papers  
5 / 1 / Financial Records Ledger  
3 / 4 / Dissolution  
3 / 5 / Patents  
3 / 6 / General  
Series III. Newspaper Clippings  
3 / 7 / Clippings - Business, Industry  
3 / 8 / Clippings - Individuals, Family  
5 / 2 / Assorted Clippings  
Series IV. Publications  
3 / 9 / Publications about the Pottery Industry  
3 / 10 / Catalogs of wares from Thomas Maddock and Sons  
3 / - / Catalogs of wares from Thomas Maddock and Sons  
4 / - / Pottery: Artistry of the Pottery Industry; Vitreous China: Plumbing Fixtures, Sanitary Pottery  
(catalog K)  
Series V. Photos  
3 / 11 / Photos of People  
3 / 12 / Scanned Medallions  
5 / - / Glass Lantern Slides