



Cleater Meaders shaping a pitcher (02:52)

C. Meaders: People often wonder why does potter take, drags, his hands over the bottom like this. See, when you pull it you kind of stretch that a little bit and all you're doing is setting them pores back in it; otherwise the bottom cracks out on it. And it's just a matter of working the clay, always try to pull the clay and always kind of leave the top smaller than the bottom, that way you always have control of it. This clay is real pliable; it can do just practically anything you want to with it. Like I say, without any ingredients added to it, it's just that pliable and plastic to work with. Shrinks a little more than other clay but we'll have to compensate that on maybe the day when someone wants a different size. I pull most all of mine with my hand all together and using my knuckle off my finger, my forefinger, as number one and I apply more pressure on the outside than I do on the inside. More or less just support the inside with the outside hand and gradually bring it up. Like I said, kind of put more pressure with the outside hand, it makes it, the bottom always a little wider than the top, then again that's about the only way you can keep control of anything. I use probably about three times, by the time I pull it three times, I've got the clay pretty well even all the way through. Along about this time now, when you pull the clay straight up and got it even all the way through, now is the time the potter has to make up his mind of what you're going to make. Another thing on pulling the clay is after the first pull, the less water you use one the clay is what, the thinner you can pull it.

C. Mack: The less water?

C. Meaders: The less water. The more water in or the less water you use, you've got to slow the rpm of your wheel down and the less water you use, the thinner you can pull it. I've got a little too much clay here; I didn't measure for the regular sized pitcher I've been making but it doesn't matter, they'll all sell.

Lanier Meaders on being hassled (01:41)

C. Mack: So how many pitchers are you doing now?

Q.L. Meaders: I'd say about one hundred and fifty I'm firing.

C. Mack: How many, how long does that take you to do that?

Q.L. Meaders: Oh I make anywhere from twenty to thirty a day of course that don't mean that they're finished.

C. Mack: Yeah, but that's setting out as green ware right?

Q.L. Meaders: Yeah, I could make fifty a day if I wanted to. You know I've been hassled here until the pottery is to the point I'm here now, I'll be hassled no more.

C. Mack: Sure, there's no point in doing that.

Q.L. Meaders: People come in and they want one damn piece or something and that changes the whole setup that one has set out.

C. Mack: Even one special piece?

Q.L. Meaders: One special piece does not make any difference after it's finished, it's just like all of the rest of them.

C. Mack: Yeah.

Q.L. Meaders: You can't tell the difference.

C. Mack: What you'd rather do is what, do a straight line of, do your fifty pitchers and then do your fifty of this or that and so forth and just keep going in a straight production?

Q.L. Meaders: That's right or maybe one hundred of them.

C. Mack: That's because you have the rhythm of doing it, right?

Q.L. Meaders: That's right.

C. Mack: Sure.

Q.L. Meaders: I really don't care anymore whether I do anything at all; I'd rather just be out of it than in it.

C. Mack: But you can't, you're an institution.

Edwin Meaders on variety of ware produced (02:30)

C. Mack: What sort of pottery do you mainly make now? I noticed in the kiln you have some vase shapes, bowl shapes with the typical Meaders grape motif on it.

E.T. Meaders: Well...

C. Mack: And then you had some pitchers in there right?

E.T. Meaders: I've got pitchers with grapes on them and I've got, I believe they call them canisters, straight up jars with lids, and it's got the grapes on it. And I've got a pot that, it had a lid and it had grapes on it. And then I have pitchers that don't have no designs on them, just a plain old time milk pitcher.

C. Mack: Mmm hmm, it's probably like the type I saw down at Lanier's.

E.T. Meaders: Yeah, and I've got some little jugs like old small, but they look like the big jugs.

C. Mack: The old syrup type, yeah. Syrup or whiskey jug, whatever it was used for.

E.T. Meaders: That's what they used with the syrup.

C. Mack: And this rooster you have too, that's a nice idea. Now that you got from, that idea came from your mother, didn't it?

E.T. Meaders: That come from my mama, she'd been making these for a long time. She'd make them. People had been asking her, she quit making them, back when they quit down there. And she's just still getting older, on and on, and people asking her and she'd tell them she wasn't making them. So she got after me to start trying that and I started last year making them and people took to them.

C. Mack: Now Lanier doesn't do anything like that form what I've seen.

E.T. Meaders: Well, he makes them face jugs...

C. Mack: Yeah, he makes the face jugs, but doesn't make any of the roosters, he doesn't make the sort of things that your mother... I saw one piece with the grapes down there that he had done several years ago.

E.T. Meaders: Yeah, well he quit that and went to just a style of his own.

C. Mack: Yeah, so you'd say that you really have a different, even though your glaze is sometimes similar to Lanier's, the style is different though.

E.T. Meaders: Yeah, it's a, well it's about on the same line but just a little off, just enough so it won't be exactly like his pieces.

C. Mack: Yeah.

Lanier Meaders on making a living (01:26)

C. Mack: The Meaders are the only family in this county now turning up pottery at all, aren't they?

Q.L. Meaders: This one?

C. Mack: Yeah, I mean the (not sure) season, that whole crowd, is gone. They're all gone.

Q.L. Meaders: Yeah, just all gone. This is the only place left of this whole, in this whole area.

C. Mack: What used to be a major pottery producing area.

Q.L. Meaders: This is all that's left of it.

C. Mack: Do you have any feeling about that yourself, being sort of the, being one of the last people who is preserving what used to be a thriving industry?

Q.L. Meaders: Well, all the feelings that I have about it is cashing in...

C. Mack: How do you feel about people that come around and ask questions like I'm asking? (Laughs)

Q.L. Meaders: I figure you're trying to make a living (laughs).

C. Mack: Good for you, I've also thought about it too.

Q.L. Meaders: Well everybody has got their own calling, (laughs), and if you don't follow it, it'll be lost.

C. Mack: True enough, true enough.

Arie Meaders discussing her decorative ware (05:36)

C. Mack: Now you, yourself, now you started, you started working in the shop about 1945.

A.W. Meaders: Yeah.

C. Mack: When did you start getting the idea about doing something other than churns, jugs, and pitchers?

A.W. Meaders: Well, I just don't know hardly what gave me the idea but I could just see that it was something else that could be made besides jugs, pitchers, and churns. But it seemed to me like I just wanted to do something myself and I just went at it.

C. Mack: Were you turning yourself?

A.W. Meaders: Yeah, I turned myself, I couldn't get him, he couldn't turn the pieces I wanted you know. Seemed like I couldn't get it over to him what I did want.

C. Mack: Now, now were you turning regular pieces in the shop as well, I mean were both you and your husband turning the same sort of things?

A.W. Meaders: No, we weren't turning the same sort of things. He would turn pitchers and churns, and jugs. Now I commence decorating his jugs and churns and pitchers way before we got in to making the other stuff. I decorated five gallon churns and six gallon churns with jug... with grapes and leaves on them and sold them things for five dollars a piece. And I should have had twenty-five or thirty for them.

C. Mack: Well five dollars was good money then.

A.W. Meaders: Then it was. I thought it was pretty fair, yes. And I decorated his jugs and all such stuff as that and then I decided we'd make something else besides that.

C. Mack: What did he think about that?

A.W. Meaders: Well, he kind of came over and decided that there's a little bit more money in that than there was in what he was doing and actually he was getting to where he couldn't hardly turn a big churn no way. The time had come when his turning days was just about over too like they were almost for me. He kind of had gotten in bad health.

C. Mack: And then you wanted other pieces, you were seeing the decorations in your mind on other pieces.

A.W. Meaders: Yes, I could just see things and imagine them.

C. Mack: So then you started turning those special pieces yourself, and what gave you the idea about the forms you would be turning, had you seen things in magazines or?

A.W. Meaders: Oh yes, and I'd go places and see different shapes of things you know, and get an idea from that. Of course I couldn't make nothing just exactly like what I had seen.

C. Mack: Right, right.

A.W. Meaders: But I could fashion from them.

C. Mack: Now, what size pieces were you turning?

A.W. Meaders: Well, now that piece right over there with the red flowers on it was about the biggest.

C. Mack: So you started turning them, where about that size? That size of that pitcher...

A.W. Meaders: Yes, that's about as large as I could get.

C. Mack: That one is about ten inches high.

A.W. Meaders: And I was sixty years old the day I went into the shop and put my hands in the clay to try to get, and got it on the wheel to try to make a piece. I couldn't make, couldn't bring it up, I couldn't get it into my head how to bring it up. But I said if I'd keep turning into flat things and turn it up a little bit more and a little bit more, until I finally it to where I could and I found out what it took and I watched my husband. It was strange how he's do, he'd bring it up from the bottom, this way, and he would shape the top of it and he'd leave that and he's go back down there and bring it up then. And he'd bring it out into a bull's-eye shape and make a pitcher. And I watched him and I just got on to how he done it. Now he does seem like he couldn't tell me anything about how to do it but the one thing he told me about how to do it, and that was cutting it off the wheel. I'd always just stopped my wheel and I'd just run my wire under it, just straight across. I'd have trouble with it cracking on the bottom. So one day he told me, he said, "I can tell you what's making yours still crack, it's the way you cut it off the wheel." He keeps his wheel going and he sets his wire down and he puts his wire down in it and just goes around, you know, the piece goes around and just cuts it off.

C. Mack: Just cuts right off.

A.W. Meaders: All the same and don't pull it in the middle. So I got to doing like he did and I got less cracks in the bottom (laughs). That's how come here with a lot of stuff that I have here in the house and that stuff there that's up on exhibit now, it's cracked in the bottom.

C. Mack: So that was the stuff that couldn't get sold, that you kept?

A.W. Meaders: So I just brought it to the house and kept it.

C. Mack: Now you use the grapes and I see you've painted on some of these pieces too.

A.W. Meaders: Well, I painted on some, now some of the big pieces that's up there, I painted that, all of that on there I painted it.

C. Mack: And then you made roosters and other animals?

A.W. Meaders: Yes, I made owls and...

C. Mack: I saw one of your owls up there and what about that, the duck too?

A.W. Meaders: Yes, I made the duck and this is the...

C. Mack: Now this is one of yours?

A.W. Meaders: I like that. And I made the chickens and I made, I made three different kinds of chickens. I made one chicken and I brought one of them to the house and it was pretty good sized, and I set it out in the flower yard there, and I couldn't keep my old rooster out of that flower yard to save my neck. He just stayed in it and he's walk around that rooster and he'd look at it...

C. Mack: Oh that's yours? (Laughs)

A.W. Meaders: That rooster. So I had to take that thing out of the yard.

C. Mack: That was a pretty good compliment!

A.W. Meaders: Yes! (Laughs)