Track 32 (02:43):

Billy Joe Craven: In prior years, in this area I've known as many of five potteries being in Guilford and all the potteries seem to do the same thing that their forefather had done. They did it this way because grandpa had done it this way, or because my daddy had done it this way. I came up with some ideas to produce pottery by making the work a lot more mechanical. We have over a period of ten years, done a lot of experimenting and failure and learning, and we have mechanized our pottery here to the point of everything being mechanically handled except the actual making of the pottery on the potters' wheel.

C. Mack: So all the drudgeries…

B.J. Craven: Yeah, all of the… (Laughs)

C. Mack: All creative drudgeries are mechanized.

B.J. Craven: That's right. Our clay is fed into bin with a front end loader and from there it's mechanically handled all the way through to the potters' hand. And then after the pottery is made, it's on racks that have wheels and it's very easy to manipulate into the kiln area.

C. Mack: Now I know it's, you were pointing out the last phase of the drying is actually a turbo-dry.

B.J. Craven: Yes, we're using a heat extractor off of our kiln and we're drying our pottery in approximately seventy-two hours, from the time it's made to the time it's ready to go into the kiln.

C. Mack: That new kiln of yours really impressed me too.

B.J. Craven: Our kiln is a natural gas updraft kiln and it's called an envelope, meaning that it has two beds and the kiln itself moves over the ware, from one bed to the other. This allows you to load and unload one kiln while another kiln is being fired and the efficiency of the kiln is about ninety-five percent I think, because it's totally insulated with fiber materials and we're using a close burner method to fire that gives us a close

and uniform and even firing. We've got about twenty degrees variation in the kiln, that's pretty hard to create in a kiln that size.