



ROSEVILLE LEGEND

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“Only Made and Sold By O. O. Brown”

By James L. Murphy

One of the most attractive and rarest pieces of Roseville cooking ware is a lidded cooking crock in speckled light blue glaze, with embossed flowers on the sides and lid. There is also something of a mystery in terms of whether **O. O. Brown** actually manufactured these, although they clearly were made in Roseville.

Made in a set of eight, as proclaimed in large molded letters on the base, only two or three of these—all the same size, 9 ½ inches in diameter and 3 inches high—have been seen in my 25 years of collecting Ohio pottery.

Family historian **Carole (Mrs. Robert) Williams** has provided considerable information on **Orvil Odell Brown** (1873-1951), who definitely came from a pottery family. Born in *Clay Township*, Muskingum County, **Ora**, as he was also known, was the son of **George Washington Brown** and **Caroline Pemberton**. **George Washington Brown** owned and operated an early pottery about a mile southeast of Roseville, near **Ebenezer Church**. Unfortunately, this



Above, this lidded cooking crock has a speckled light blue glaze with embossed flowers. It is 9 1/2 " in diameter and 3" tall. [Photo provided by James L. Murphy.]

stoneware pottery site was destroyed several years ago by an Ohio Division of Natural Resources mine reclamation project. This **G. W. Brown** was known as “*Little Wash*” to distinguish him from his uncle of the same name, who had married his wife’s sister.

In 1894 **O. O. Brown** married **Minnie B. Lowry**, daughter of Roseville cookingware potter **Lyman Lowry** (1833-1914), and the **Browns** are listed in the 1900 census on

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Cherry Street, next to **Curtis Lowry**, **Ora** working for a pottery as was the case in 1910, when they were living on Main Street. Very likely, **Ora** was employed at the nearby **Lyman Lowry Pottery**, operated as the **Lyman Brothers Pottery** from 1901 to 1913, and later the **C. W. Lowry Pottery**, but it is possible that he worked at the pottery of **Lyman's** brother, **William B. Lowry**, later run by **William's** son, **Frederick S. Lowry**. In any case, by 1912, when **Ora's** father died, he was living in Ford City, Pennsylvania, very likely working at the **Pennsylvania China Company**, better known earlier as the **Ford China Company**, a hotel ware manufacturer. By 1920 (and still in 1930) he and his family were back in Roseville, living on Franklin Avenue, both **Ora** and son **Robert Lowry Brown** (1895-1964) employed as potters. Robert would later operate the **Mohawk Pottery**, a manufactory of novelty items.

The only available clue as to when **O. O. Brown's** beautiful blue cooking ware was manufactured is a listing for **O. O. Brown and Company**, Roseville, in a 1923-1925 *Merchants Credit Guide*. Presumably his foray into cookingware sales was relatively brief, partly explaining why examples are so rare and why a complete set of the eight will probably never be seen. **Orvil Odell Brown** died July 5, 1951 and is buried in Roseville Cemetery, as is his wife, **Minnie**, who died July 16, 1966.

As a sidelight on the **James Lewis** field jug described in the *Summer, 2005, Roseville Legend*, **Carole Williams** has also provided information identifying the potter "**Dick Brown**" as **Richard F.**



Above, the bottom of lidded cooking crock reads on the outer ring "Made and Sold by O.O. Brown Only." On the inner ring it reads "Set of Eight Roseville Ohio." [Photo provided by James L. Murphy].

Brown (1870-1940), the brother of **O. O. Brown** and nephew of **James** and **Catherine Lewis**, **Catherine Pemberton Lewis** being the older sister of **Richard F. Brown's** mother, **Caroline Pemberton Brown**. The field jug was very likely a presentation piece to his uncle **James Lewis** and made around 1890-1900. Brown is listed as a Roseville pottery in 1900 but by 1910 was listed as "a traveling stoneware salesman."

References

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