

William Sanderson – Potter

William Sanderson was born in Ireland in 1820. From July 1839 until March of 1840 Sanderson partnered with Edward Selby and William Colson in a pottery Poughkeepsie, New York.¹ Colson dropped out of the partnership and Selby and Sanderson ran it until November 1841 when Sanderson sold out.² Sanderson continued potting in New York at least until 1843 when his oldest daughter Celia was born. Soon after, Sanderson moved to Akron, Ohio.³

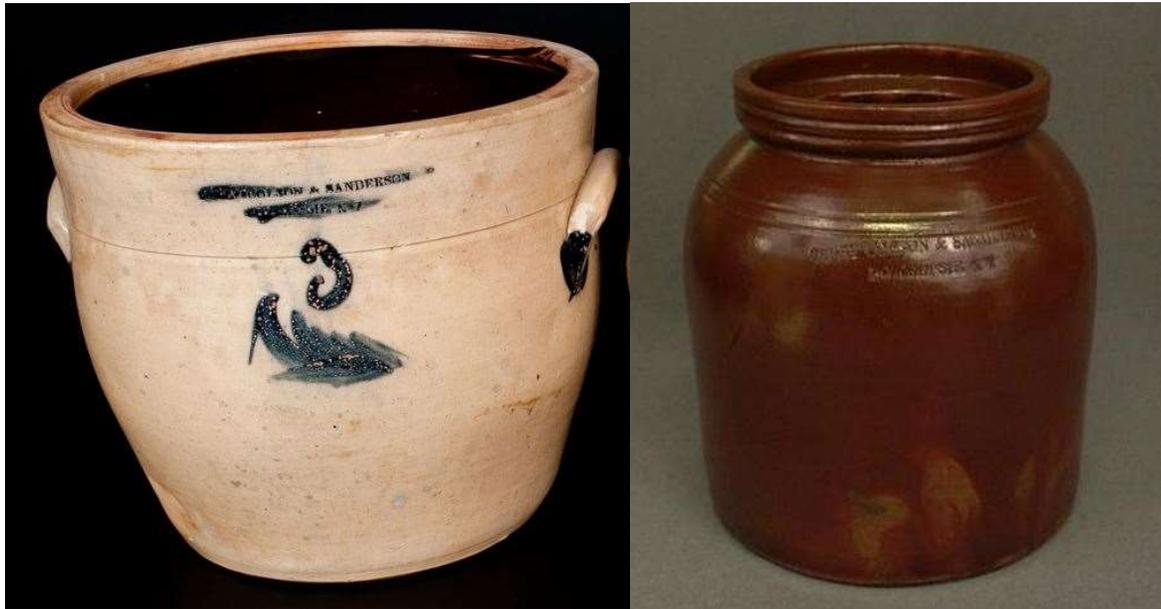


Figure 1 These pieces are stamped "SELBY COLSON & SANDERSON / P'KEEPSIE NY" and date from 1839/40. It is interesting that the decoration on this pot somewhat resembles the fern leaf decoration that appears on some Nathan Clark Pottery from Mt. Morris around the same time. Clark's Mount Morris pottery was managed by George Williams who in 1845 moved to Wisconsin Territory and bought into a pottery there that also used a fern motif.

Potteries in Akron were exporting many thousands of gallons of stoneware to Milwaukee merchants each year.⁴ The *Pioneer History of Wisconsin* says that Sanderson "has supplied this market with stone ware for several years past."⁵ In Akron, Sanderson met Thomas H. Williams, a potter who worked at the I.M. Mead pottery in Mogadore.⁶ Both Sanderson and Williams came to Milwaukee in 1848 and probably collaborated in the startup of a new stoneware manufacturing business.

Sanderson brought his wife Mary and four young children to Milwaukee. He immediately set about building a kiln and warehouse on leased property on the corner of what is now Clybourne Street and Plankinton Avenue. By November 1848, Sanderson finished construction and commenced production of stoneware. He named the pottery the "Milwaukee Stoneware Factory." The newspaper announcement of the opening claims that he had 15 years of experience in the stoneware business, which means he had started potting in 1833 at the age of thirteen. Sanderson sold the pottery just three months later to Williams and James Wardner, which may well have been his plan all along.

After Sanderson sold the pottery, he started another business called the Phoenix Mills in Milwaukee. He continued to operate the Phoenix Mills until he passed away in 1865 at the age of forty-five. He is buried at the Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Stone Ware Factory.

THE UNDERSIGNED having erected a building for the manufacture of Stone Ware, situated on the west side of the river, near Messrs. Ludington & King's Soap and Candle Factory, would respectfully inform the Merchants of Wisconsin, and the public generally, that he is now prepared to fill all orders in that line of business.

Having been engaged in the manufacture of Stone-ware for the last fifteen years; he will warrant his ware to be fully equal to any heretofore sold in this or any other market west of Buffalo. The material from which it is made is the best fire clay, found in the state of Ohio. Particular attention will be paid to packing the ware in wagons for the country. Merchants will find it much to their advantage to purchase an entire load for one pair of horses, which will be about 300 or 350 gallons, the weight of which would be about 4½ pounds to a gallon. Straw and every convenience for packing, constantly on hand and free of charge. The subscriber is fully persuaded that the price, quality and the facilities which he can give will be sufficient inducements for those in want of the article to call and purchase. Orders by mail or otherwise will be thankfully received and promptly attended to. Below will be found a list of the principal articles made at the Factory.

| Jugs. | Butter Pots—covered. | Churns. |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1 Gallon, | 4 Gallons, | 6 Gallons. |
| 2 " " | 4 " " | 4 " " |
| 3 " " | 3 " " | 3 " " |
| ½ " " | 2 " " | |
| ¼ " " | 1 " " | |
| PRESERVE JARS—cov'd. | CREAM POTS. | MILK PANS. |
| 1 Gallon, | 4 Gallons, | 1 Gallon, |
| 2 " " | 3 " " | 2 " " |
| 3 " " | 2 " " | 3 " " |
| 4 " " | 1 " " | |

Stone Tubes assorted; Beer Bottles, Water Jugs, Flower Pots, &c., &c., made to order.

Covers for Butter Pots, 1 gallon extra, for Preserve Jars 2s. 4d. doz. Ware sent to any part of the country, when so ordered.

WILLIAM SANDERSON.

Wanted at the Factory, 500 cords of seasoned white oak wood, for which Cash will be paid on delivery.

0018-411 W. SANDERSON.

Figure 2 November 25, 1848 Milwaukee Sentinel announcement.

¹ Photos from Crocker Farms auction catalogues

² Poughkeepsie Potters and the Plague by George Lukacs

³ U.S. Census for the City of Milwaukee 1850. Based on ages of children and their birth places the location of Sanderson and his family can be inferred.

⁴ Various merchants advertised pottery for sale in classified advertisements in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* before 1848, some specifically naming Ohio as the source.

⁵ Pioneer History of Milwaukee, 1847 by J. S. Buck

⁶ www.madefomclay.org *Thomas H. Williams – Potter and Milwaukee Stoneware Factory*