

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Van Briggie Pottery Company

other name/site number Van Briggie Memorial Pottery; Van Briggie Memorial Building; 5EP614

**2. Location**

street & number 1125 Glen Avenue/231 W. Uintah Street N/A not for publication

city or town Colorado Springs N/A vicinity

state Colorado code CO county El Paso code 041 zip code 80905

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date \_\_\_\_\_

Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

**Current Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/education-related

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN  
MOVEMENTS/Bungalow/Craftsman

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**foundation** STONE

**walls** BRICK  
CERAMIC TILE

**roof** ASPHALT

**other** CERAMIC TILE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

- ART \_\_\_\_\_
- INDUSTRY \_\_\_\_\_
- ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_
- SOCIAL HISTORY \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1908-1968 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Date**

- 1908 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1912 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1935 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Van Briggle, Anne Gregory \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

van den Arend, Nicolaas (architect) \_\_\_\_\_

Wright, Thomas J. (builder) \_\_\_\_\_

Riddle, Frank (engineer) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum and Colorado College, \_\_\_\_\_

Tutt Library, Special Collections, Colorado Springs, CO \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1. 1/3 5/1/4/8/6/2 4/3/0/0/0/1/6  
Zone Easting Northing (NAD 27)

2. / //// ////  
Zone Easting Northing

3. / //// ////  
Zone Easting Northing

4. / //// ////  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The UTM's were derived by OAHF from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHF) by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and were provided to the preparers of this nomination by OAHF.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, historians (prepared for the owner)

organization Front Range Research Associates, Inc. date 5 March 2009

street & number 3635 West 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue (www.frhistory.com) telephone 303-477-7597

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80211

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs:** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

name/title The Colorado College

street & number 14 E. Cache La Poudre Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Colorado Springs state CO zip code 80903

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. 7 Page 1

Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

## Narrative Description<sup>1</sup>

The century-old Van Briggle Pottery Company building is located southeast of the intersection of West Uintah Street and Glen Avenue in Colorado Springs, Colorado (See Photographs 1, 2, and 28).<sup>2</sup> From 1908 to 1968, the building operated as a pottery factory producing thousands of ceramic art and architectural pieces. The building faces south and is situated a short distance from the west bank of Monument Creek, adjacent to National Register-listed Monument Valley Park, a narrow designed landscape traversing the central part of the city presented to the citizens of Colorado Springs in 1907 by its founder, William Jackson Palmer. The pottery company site, intended to impress visitors and inspire workers, provides fine views of the park, creek, and mountain range to the west. Today, the property is owned by Colorado College, whose historic campus lies to the east; its Facilities Services Department occupies the pottery building. The building has projecting wings at each end of the façade that flank a central area originally planned for an open garden to artistically display pottery and now landscaped with sidewalks, plantings, and paved parking.<sup>3</sup> A tall red brick wall extends from the northwest corner of the building to the north, enclosing at the northwest corner a small rear courtyard landscaped with grass, bushes, and a pear tree. The college utilizes a large, fenced, asphalt-paved equipment yard with storage sheds north of the building. Across Glen Avenue to the west are a few small dwellings and another maintenance building associated with the college.

The pottery building originally housed the salesroom, administrative offices, studios, kilns, workshops, and other functional rooms of the manufacturer and was designed to display the wares produced inside. Designed by Dutch architect Nicolaas van den Arend in a picturesque manner displaying Flemish farmhouse and Arts and Crafts influences, the building provides an overall impression of solidity, bright colors, and varied shapes and textures.<sup>4</sup> The distinctive building served as an advertisement for the company and its image appeared on its promotional materials and letterhead. The walls are composed of red brick with many blackened headers, laid in Flemish bond with white mortar, and enlivened with thousands of polychrome Van Briggle tiles and terra cotta ornaments placed to display their architectural use in decorative panels, chimney caps, window features, and even a sculptural cat and a gargoyle.<sup>5</sup> As the company's engineer noted, "To break the monotony a great many highly colored matt [sic] glaze tiles are used, ranging from turquoise to green, yellow and plum colors; also glazed terra cotta, as well as the natural colors."<sup>6</sup> Three types of tiles are found on the exterior of the building: "machine pressed, hand-glazed, single color tiles; hand-pressed and decorated polychrome tiles, in which the glaze is applied onto pressed designs that serve as troughs

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<sup>1</sup> The description of ornamental tiles and terra cotta in this narrative makes extensive use of information contained in Molly Wingate and Linda Crissey, *The Van Briggle Pottery Building: A Walking Tour* (Colorado Springs: Woman's Educational Society, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> At some unidentified date after the pottery opened, people also began referring to it as the "Van Briggle Memorial Pottery" and the "Van Briggle Memorial Building."

<sup>3</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 May 1907, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolaas is the spelling van den Arend used on official papers and is on his death certificate, although many publications over the years have spelled his name "Nicholas."

<sup>5</sup> Flemish bond features header and stretcher bricks laid alternately in each course, with each header centered with the stretchers above and below it. N. Frank Frazier, who studied the building's tile, found more than 5,500 tiles, both machine-pressed and handmade using red and white clays.

<sup>6</sup> Frank H. Riddle, "The New Pottery and Art Terra Cotta Plant of the Van Briggle Pottery Company at Colorado Springs, Colo.," *Transactions of the American Ceramic Society* 10(1908): 67.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

to contain the different pigments; and the most dramatic of the three--the molded, hand colored three-dimensional tiles."<sup>7</sup> Most of the tile installations have designs representing flowers or foliage, but there are also tiles representing people, animals, and objects.<sup>8</sup> The slightly projecting, raised foundation is composed of roughly-quarried, randomly-coursed pink rhyolite, and the roof is clad with composition roofing shingles. The roof has multiple gables and dormers with decorative tile faces and tiny shingled dormers. Five projecting square brick chimneys have flower-shaped tile insets and foliate terra cotta caps. Rising above the roof are two massive, bottle-shaped brick kiln smokestacks that have foliate terra cotta ornaments in high relief and tiles featuring the pottery company's logo, a conjoined AA enframed by a square designed by the founders that represents the first letters of their first names (See Figure H8). Variations of the conjoined AA design are found on tiles throughout the building.

### Front (South)

#### *East Wing*

The building's broad, clipped gable roof center wing is flanked at each end by gabled roof wings projecting to the south. The eastern wing originally contained two studios (including that of Anne Van Briggle), an etching room, the laboratory, a greenware room, a dryer, a damp box, and an inset porch. The asymmetrical gable flares toward the west, while the east is lower and has two stepped shoulders with wave-like terra cotta caps (See Photograph 3). There is a battered brick buttress with a slanted top at the southeast corner. The gable end has a smaller, overlapping gable with two square flat arch four-light windows with gauged brick lintels, rock-faced stone sills, and vertical board shutters; there is a similar window on the west wall. Near the apex of the gable is an arched, polychromatic tile panel with stylized flowers in a boat-like vase above a projecting tile sill. The pottery company used this image as an example of its work in early advertising, including its 1913 catalog. At the top of the gable is a slanting panel of tiles laid in a coursed shingle pattern and topped by a brick pedestal with a polychromatic foliate terra cotta capital in front of a projecting, central, tapered brick chimney with a conjoined AA tile below a foliate terra cotta cap.

Sitting on top of the pedestal is a glazed ceramic black cat (See Photograph 4). Designed by Anne Gregory or Emma Kinkead in 1907, the original cat was removed by vandals in 1970 and never recovered. Colorado College commissioned artist Larry Terrafranca, who worked on the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., and Italian fountain sculptures at the Broadmoor Hotel, to create a replica cat based on photographs of the original, and the new sculpture was placed on the building in 2005. West of the overlapping gable, the taller gable end has a flat arch door with diamond-shaped panels (added in the 1920s) and a segmental arch four-over-four-light window with stone sill. There is a flat arch four-light window with shutters and a stone sill on the upper gable end.

The west wall of the east wing, sheltered by widely overhanging eaves with shaped rafter tails, has polychromatic tile panels with flowers resembling bleeding hearts flanking two six-light windows with vertical board shutters with decorative trefoil cutouts, a shared stone sill, and a brick pier between the windows ornamented with polychromatic tiles (See Photograph 5). The flanking tile panels display

<sup>7</sup> Sandra Knauf, "The Van Briggle Connection," *Colorado Homes and Lifestyles*, March/April 1992, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Richard D. Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles: Their Art, Craft, and Commerce, Part I," *Journal of the American Pottery Association* 23(March/April 2007): 21.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

the two-colorway technique, in which tiles employ the same design but utilize the colors differently, which is found in several locations on the building. There is an inset porch with a tile floor and wood posts with brackets atop roughly-quarried blocks of stone at the entrance. Each wall facing the porch has an entrance with a segmental relieving arch above the lintel, with the west wall having a vertical board door flanked by six-light sidelights. There are large installations of tile under the sidelights that include polychromatic columns of flowers and leaves set in areas of field tile. There are also expanses of tile on the north wall facing the porch, as well as a vertical floriate tile panel. North of the porch are two six-over-six-light windows (one partially covered with a louvered vent) flanked by tile panels (one with bleeding hearts and one with plain tiles at the south end). Part of this section of the building has walls with orange sand brick atop a stone foundation, marking the original extent of the porch. There are two small, shingled, shed roof dormers on the roof, as well as a tall metal pipe chimney at the north end.

On the north, the east wing has a hipped roof brick bay projecting to the west that intersects the central wing of the building. The south wall of the bay has paired segmental arch six-over-six-light windows. A horizontal tile band with Roman numerals representing "1907" extends along the brick wall west of the windows and is partially obscured by a 1920s addition to the front of the central wing. Above the tile band, the brick wall is ornamented with a gargoyle below a rectangular opening. A tall brick chimney with flower-shaped tile insets and a foliate terra cotta cap is visible behind this.

### *Central Wing*

The central wing has a 1920s shed roof addition on the front extending to an inset entrance area toward the west (See Photograph 7). The addition has textured stucco walls, overhanging eaves with shaped rafter tails, and stucco on the foundation. The east wall of the addition has a large two-light window with stucco sill. At the east and west ends, the south wall has polychromatic T-shaped installations of tile ornamented with a flower and leaf motif. There is an entrance sheltered by a projecting, arched, metal frame fabric canopy. The entrance has a paneled and glazed door flanked by paneled and glazed sidelights. Further west are four sets of triple, flat arch, eight-light windows. Between each set of windows is a square polychrome tile panel ornamented with a conjoined AA and flowers. Just west of the addition is a slightly set back, shed roof bay with a wide overhang sheltering an entrance with a paneled and glazed door. On the roof of the central wing are two broad gabled dormers with bands of four inset six-light windows divided by glazed columns with capitals and surmounted by recessed lunettes (See Photograph 8). Flanking each band of windows is a polychrome conjoined AA tile panel. The upper gable faces are clad with tile, including two narrow vertical panels with floral designs flanking a wider central panel with a floral design.

Aligned above the dormers at the crest of the roof are the bottle-shaped kiln smokestacks, featuring red brick on the lower part, glazed green brick at the top, conjoined AA tiles, vertical strips of terra cotta with high relief foliate ornaments alternating with plain tiles, and heavily decorated terra cotta caps with high relief floral ornaments. The smokestacks originally marked the location of the two large kilns inside the central wing.

### *West Wing*

The west wing of the façade was the original location of the salesroom, offices, ware room, biscuit room, and packing and grinding room (See Photograph 10). At the north end of the wing is an east-

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facing gabled dormer with a window framed by shutters and a tile face. Further south is a hipped roof projecting bay with an angled corner with a wide plate glass window and a stone sill. Tile panels ornamented with flowers and a variation of the conjoined AA theme flank the window. There is a shed roof porch south of the bay that has wood posts with curved brackets atop blocks of red stone. The porch, which marks the location of the original exit from the pottery salesroom, displays a tile floor with a stone border. A plate glass window and a door face the porch. The walls facing the porch feature lavish polychromatic displays of tile, including Art Nouveau-style floral representations. South of the porch is a band of four multi-light leaded glass windows divided by slender square terra cotta columns with floriate ornament supporting a projecting terra cotta lintel and with a shared, sloping terra cotta sill. A segmental relieving arch is above the lintel. There are large vertical panels of tile with flowers and leaves flanking the windows. Two small shed roof shingled dormers with louvers are on the roof.

The south wall of the west wing has overlapping projections, including a tall, narrow, rectangular projection with a gabled parapet in front of a shorter, broader, gabled roof projection (See Photograph 11). The taller projection displays three examples of tile installations relating to the passage of time: a horizontal band of tile with the date of the building, stars, a sun, and a crescent moon; a large sundial set to Mountain Standard Time with Roman numerals, zodiac signs, and the words "tempus fugit" ("time flies"); and a tile panel with a crowing rooster and sunbeams on the parapet (See Photograph 12). The parapet has stepped shoulders with wave-like terra cotta caps. The broader gable behind this has a small segmental arch window with a stone sill on each side, and a tall rectangular chimney with flower-shaped tiles and a foliate terra cotta cap projects from the center of the gable end (See Photograph 13).

### West

The west wall of the west wing displays a band of four windows like that of the east wall (See Photograph 14). There is a segmental relieving arch above the lintel. Flanking the window are vertical tile panels painted with vines and flowers growing from pots. There is a small shingled dormer with diamond-shaped panels and a tall pointed roof above the band of windows. Further north is a small six-light segmental arch window with a stone sill. A slightly projecting gabled bay further north has two central deeply inset six-light windows divided by an attached terra cotta column and a terra cotta surround resembling stone (See Photograph 15). A band of terra cotta ornament with a sunrise and leaf motif above the windows is surmounted by a band of tile with letters in relief reading "Van Briggle Pottery Co." The central part of the gable face is clad with tile that includes a conjoined AA ornament panel, vertical panels painted with flowers in tall vases, and, at the apex, a field of blossoms. A small four-light window with vertical board shutters is also present. North of this bay is a flat arch four-over-four-light window with a stone sill.

There is a projecting red brick bay north of this with a concrete foundation and a flat roof with stone coping (See Photograph 16). Although not part of the original building, this component was present in a 1920s photograph. The south wall has a paneled door and a flat arch plate glass window. The west wall has three large flat arch sash and transom casement windows with projecting brick sills. Between the first two windows at the south, and north of the third window, are vertical tile installations. Further north is a slightly inset panel with floral tiles topped by conjoined AA tiles at the outer edges. At the center of the panel a 1970 plaque lists the Colorado College Physical Plant

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benefactors. Extending from the northwest corner of this is a freestanding brick wall with stone coping and projecting piers topped by terra cotta ball finials.<sup>9</sup>

### Rear

#### *Addition and West Wing*

At the northwest corner, the building and the brick wall along Glen Avenue form a grassy courtyard, with bushes, a tree, and a curving concrete sidewalk. The rear of the building at the west end has the slightly projecting blank brick wall of the 1920s flat roof addition. Further east is the north wall of the west wing of the original building (See Photograph 17). There is an off-center entrance on the main wall and a shed roof brick projection with overhanging eaves with shaped rafter tails and a stone foundation; the west wall of the projection is blank and the north wall has an entrance at the west end. The gable face above has an inset four-light window with wood shutters with diamond-shaped panels and a stone sill. Above the window is a triangular panel of tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern, while rectangular tile panels depicting tall plants flank the windows. A conjoined AA tile panel sits below the window. On the east is a shed roof extension with wide paired one-over-one-light windows.

#### *Central Wing and Addition*

The west wing intersects the west wall of the clipped gable roof center wing (See Photograph 18). A large eight-part panel of multi-light windows at the top of the west wall provided illumination and ventilation to the interior of the factory (See Photograph 19). The panel is composed of eight twelve-light windows with a shared sandstone sill. Conjoined AA tile panels flank the windows. Below the windows a sixty-nine-tile panel with the name of the company in an Arts and Crafts font with a row of tiles below features an Art Nouveau-style floral vine. The panel is topped by a narrow band of tiles. North of the window area a forty-tile decorative panel depicts a kiln with smoke wafting from its top and the year "1907" in intertwined numerals (See Photograph 20). The remainder of the wall has no tile panels and no openings; the foundation is stone.

The pottery company added a projecting one-story, trapezoidal-shaped flat roof addition to the rear of central wing at the west end in 1967 (See Photograph 21). The addition has slightly overhanging eaves with a wide fascia and metal coping. Two-light sliding windows with stone sills are located on the west and east walls. The north wall of the addition has an entrance at the west end and two large three-part plate glass windows with stone sills; tile panels forming a conjoined AA are located at each end near the top of the wall. The east end of the main wing has a vehicle entrance with an overhead metal garage door; a flat arch pedestrian entrance with a slab door is located to the east.

On the north, the central wing of the building mirrors the south side in its inclusion of two large tile and brick gabled roof dormers with four six-light windows separated by columns (See Photographs 21 and 22 and the description of south wall features). There are tall brick chimneys with flower-shaped tiles, decorative terra cotta chimney caps, and metal corners with cross-ties at the east and west ends. The bottle-shaped kiln smokestacks (described above) are visible above the dormers.

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<sup>9</sup> This wall may be a remaining part of a section of the building demolished in 1969; in appearance it resembles the wall Nicolaas van den Arend drew on his perspective view of the property (See Figure H6).

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### *Northeast Corner*

At the northeast corner is a projecting one-story original section of the building that housed the clay bins. This part of the building has a flat roof with stone coping; the west wall is clad with brick, laid in Flemish bond on the upper portion and on the lower wall common bond (with every seventh course headers). The north wall is brick laid in common bond and has double doors (each with a narrow rectangular light) at the west end and conjoined AA tile panels.

### **East Wall**

The east wall of the former clay bin room is composed of painted brick with a stucco lower wall. Originally, a wing with a casting room and other facilities adjoined on the east. The wing was damaged in a 1935 flood. The existing wall has (from north to south) a door, a short window, a door, and double doors. Visible behind this, the east wall of the central part of the building has a clipped gable roof and a panel of multi-light windows. Similar to the bank of windows on the west, this panel has seven twelve-light windows. The lower north window has been replaced by a metal louvered panel.

At the north end, the east wing has a hipped roof with an overhang sheltering an entrance. The brick wing atop a rhyolite foundation then steps out slightly. From north to south, the first story features four tall six-over-six-light windows, two short single-light windows, and two tall six-over-six-light windows; all of the windows have segmental arches and projecting rock faced stone sills. The upper story has a 1950s long shed roof dormer with stucco walls and four sets of paired flat arch one-over-one-light windows framed by wood shutters with diamond-shaped panels (See Photograph 23).

### **Interior**

#### *Salesroom*

The salesroom at the south end of the west wing provided visitors and prospective customers with an opportunity to see and purchase pieces of art pottery and view installations of various Van Briggle architectural products that could be used in their homes or other buildings. The salesroom contains a tile fireplace designed by Anne Van Briggle, a tile floor, decorative tile wall panels, and Van Briggle light fixtures. The fireplace at the south end of the room occupies an inglenook entered through a segmental brick archway and displays wood paneling and built-in seating (See Photograph 24). The sides of the firebox are lined with terra cotta bricks decorated with a foliate design; the brick arched firebox opening mirrors the shape of the Van Briggle conjoined AA motif. Above is a narrow mantel clad with tiles bearing Art Nouveau-style flowers with field tiles above and below. Flanking the fireplace are full-height piers with rounded edges, clad with tiles of tall Art Nouveau floral designs toward the bottom and three courses of tiles with blossoms at the base.

Projecting painted wood beams form a grid on the ceiling. At each intersection of the beams is an opaque, tulip-shaped Van Briggle light fixture (four total). The east, west, and south walls of the room outside the fireplace niche are painted brick and decorated with panels of tile in a floral design: the south wall has four-tile panels of pansies flanking the niche opening, while the north and south ends of the east and west walls have nine-tile panels bearing columbine designs (See Photograph 25). The floor consists of field tiles with a central panel of the conjoined AA design repeated four times.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

Panels of floral motifs and more conjoined AA tiles are symmetrically arranged around the center panel (See Photograph 26).

### *Studio*

Anne Van Briggle's studio at the south end of the east wing contains a second tile fireplace of her design on its south wall (See Photograph 27). The slightly projecting rectangular fireplace has a low flat arch firebox opening. The fireplace is clad with field tiles and has a narrow mantel supported and ornamented by a band of contrasting tiles with Arts and Crafts flowers. Above is a tile panel with a floral arch and a flower in a pot flanked by columns. The front of the firebox is trimmed with narrow tiles bearing a floral design.

### **Alterations**

During its century of use, the Van Briggle Pottery Company building has undergone changes related to varied and expanded functions, as well as alterations resulting from acts of nature. In the 1920s, a door was added to the south wall of the east wing, the shed roof stucco addition on front was completed following a fire, a trapezoidal addition to the west wall near the north end was finished, and a flat roof addition at the north end of the west wing was added. At some point, the pottery company also shortened the inset porch on the east wing. In 1935, Monument Creek overran its banks, damaging the casting and molding wing on the east and flooding the entire building. The east side was remodeled several times after the flood. A lunchroom dormer was added in the 1950s, replacing a gabled roof dormer on the east wing.<sup>10</sup> A 1967 trapezoidal addition to the north wall was completed by the company.

After acquiring the building in 1968, Colorado College spent two years rehabilitating it, including removing the kilns and installing a steel framework to support the kiln smokestacks. The college removed the original clay bin room at the north end of the east wing and the damaged casting and molding wing on the east. It also removed later additions at the northwest corner and the center of the north wall. James L. Crossey, Physical Plant Director, described the removed additions as "three of the most incongruous, poorly built additions."<sup>11</sup> A false front on the 1960s trapezoidal addition was removed. The main entrance to the building moved several times during the years of operation of the pottery. The college created a new main entrance, replacing a window at the intersection of the west wing and the 1920s front addition. A window was replaced on the angled bay of the west wing.<sup>12</sup> Brick from the kilns was used to close up some doorways and a small cellar was filled in. In 1970, a plaque was added on the west wall to commemorate the benefactors of the rehabilitation.

A 1965 storage addition on the south wall of the 1920s front addition was removed in 1990. Lightning strikes destroyed tiles on the kiln chimneys several times during the building's history. In 2001, Colorado College restored the chimneys, replacing terra cotta tiles and conjoined AA tiles missing for over fifty years. Replica tiles cast from molds of original tiles utilized Cathedral Stone Products Jahn casting mortar from Sweden. In 2005, a replica of the black cat stolen in 1970 was placed on the pedestal intended for that purpose.

<sup>10</sup> Wingate and Crissey, *The Van Briggle Pottery Building*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Colorado College Magazine*, Spring 1971.

<sup>12</sup> George Eckhardt, Assistant Director, Colorado College Facilities Services, Interview by Laurie and Tom Simmons, 24 September 2008.

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## Statement of Significance

### *Criterion C*

The 1908 Van Briggle Pottery Company is significant under Criterion C, in the area of **Architecture**, as a remarkable expression of early twentieth century pottery factory architecture, as an excellent example of the work of Colorado Springs architect Nicolaas van den Arend, and as a building displaying high artistic values exhibited in thousands of art tiles and terra cotta architectural features adorning its walls, the picturesque qualities of its construction, and its relationship to the setting. In designing its plant, the Van Briggle Pottery Company consciously sought to differentiate itself from other manufacturing facilities, to create a visually stimulating building that would attract visitors, to provide a canvas for the display of its art tiles and architectural terra cotta products, to incorporate beauty that would inspire its workers, and to acknowledge and incorporate the natural setting. The success of achieving these goals was recognized at the time of the building's completion and continues to be acknowledged today. The building is being nominated at the national level of significance for its representation of early twentieth century pottery factory architecture and for its high artistic values. Its representation of the work of Nicolaas van den Arend has a state level of significance. The period of significance in the area of **Architecture** for both levels of significance is 1908.

To distinguish the building from the common factory appearance of most other potteries of the day, the architect produced a design with Arts and Crafts movement qualities that was reminiscent of the Flemish farmhouses of his native land and also reflected Artus Van Briggle's ancestry. These influences are displayed in the long, low, ground-hugging building with a stone foundation; multiple and varied gables; small porches; small-pane windows and shutters with cut out decorative designs; and Flemish bond brickwork. As judged by architectural historian Robert Winter, "The factory's Dutch allusions became simply a backdrop for Anne's dazzling tiles, interposed in unexpected places—chimney caps, for example—and with a flamboyance that even Henry Mercer [of the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works] could not match."<sup>13</sup> These decorative components of the Van Briggle building reflect the Arts and Crafts disdain of mass-produced goods and preference for handcraftsmanship, while the brick walls and stone foundation display a desired solidity and connection to nature. Elements that convey the farmhouse theme also represent popular features of Craftsman style architecture, including the variety of construction materials, multiple dormers and gables, multilight windows, and wide eave overhangs with exposed shaped rafter tails. The natural setting, including Monument Valley Creek to the east, Monument Valley Park to the south, and views of the mountain range to the west, was a primary factor in the design and orientation of the building, which the company considered important and inspiring for its artists and other workers.

Van Briggle planned to attract visitors, especially tourists, with its remarkable architecture, as well as using it as a vehicle for displaying its wares. One of the most notable aspects of the architecture and that which displays its high artistic values is the inclusion of more than five thousand tiles and terra cotta architectural components on the exterior. An early brochure of the company succinctly summarized the building as "a work of art to house an art industry." In 2007, tile scholar Richard Mohr judged the building to be "one of America's four or five most important art tile installations,"

<sup>13</sup> Robert Winter and Alexander Vertikoff, *Craftsman Style* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 2004), 200.

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comparing it in significance to the New York City subway system; the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad station in Scranton, Pennsylvania; and Catalina Island, California.<sup>14</sup> N. Frank Frazier thoroughly studied the building's tile and observed, "The finest example of these [Van Briggle] tiles can be found at the Van Briggle Memorial Pottery on the corner of Uintah and Glen Avenue in Colorado Springs."<sup>15</sup> Joseph A. Taylor, president of the Tile Heritage Foundation, aptly characterizes this aspect of the building's significance:

To the best of our knowledge, the elaborate use of decorative tiles and architectural terra cotta on the Van Briggle Memorial Building is unique in the United States not only because of the sheer number of decorative tiles and tile panels involved but because of the intentionality of their use. All of the ceramic elements were specifically chosen and integrated into the building's design; none were appended to the building as an afterthought.<sup>16</sup>

The building is an important representative of the work of Nicolaas van den Arend, who practiced architecture in the Netherlands and Germany before moving to Colorado Springs. As recorded by his contemporaries, van den Arend desired to create architecture that matched the beauty of the city's setting and climate, believing that incorporation of colorful tiles into his designs was highly desirable. All of his identified work in the city utilized Van Briggle tiles in some manner, including his only other National Register-listed commission, the Colorado Springs Y.W.C.A. Building (1913). The Van Briggle Pottery Company is the most fully embellished example of van den Arend's work, is the only manufacturing facility he designed in the city, and is unlike any of his other buildings in style.

### *Criterion A*

Van Briggle Pottery Company is significant at a national level under Criterion A, in the area of **Art**, for its association with the art pottery movement of the early twentieth century. The period of significance in **Art** extends from the completion of the building in 1908 to 1912, when Anne Van Briggle ended her association with the company.

Van Briggle Pottery Company's importance is reflected in recognition bestowed at national and international exhibitions, where it garnered one of the highest tallies of awards in the country during the early twentieth century. Significance is also reflected in the coverage the company received in influential art journals during its early history. The company's combination of Art Nouveau designs and matte glazes was "very avant-garde for its time," according to Van Briggle scholar, Bob Morris.<sup>17</sup> As Arts and Crafts historians Pamela McClary and Robert Rust judge, "It is perfection of the dull, matte glaze, as opposed to the high gloss of most pottery of the time, that gave Van Briggle a lasting place in American art pottery history. Although others had achieved a similar effect, Van Briggle produced a reliable and consistent finish in a variety of colors."<sup>18</sup> This importance is also seen in the pottery's widespread desirability among collectors today. Art tile scholar Richard D. Mohr calls Van

<sup>14</sup> Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles: Part I," 21.

<sup>15</sup> N. Frank Frazier, "The Uncovered Treasure of Van Briggle Tiles," *Kiva* 6(Spring 2002): 28.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph A. Taylor, President, Tile Heritage Foundation, email to Laurie Simmons, Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 4 December 2008.

<sup>17</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 12 December 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Pamela McClary and Robert Rust, "Van Briggle in the World of Late Nineteenth Century Arts and Crafts," *Kiva* 6(Spring 2002): 23.

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Briggle landscape tiles “among America’s greatest tiles.”<sup>19</sup> Van Briggle sold thousands of pieces of affordable art pottery, as well as important museum-quality pieces highly sought by collectors and acquired by art institutions across the country.<sup>20</sup>

The Van Briggle Pottery Company also is significant under Criterion A at a national level in the area of **Industry**, with a period of significance starting in 1908 and concluding in 1968. This period begins with the completion of the building and extends to the year in which Van Briggle ceased operations at the site and sold the facility to Colorado College. The building meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance for its association with one of the best-recognized, most awarded, and longest-lived art pottery manufacturers in the country.

As an industrial concern, Van Briggle Pottery’s operating dates extended from 1900 to 2008, making it one of the most enduring manufacturers of art pottery in the nation.<sup>21</sup> For sixty years, from 1908-1968, the company operated this manufactory, which also functioned as a major tourist attraction, at times the only art pottery in the country open to the public.<sup>22</sup> The business continuously drew thousands of visitors from across the country who learned about pottery production and purchased wares in its showroom. Van Briggle served as a national leader in the expansion of the industry, becoming the only manufacturer of art tiles between Chicago and Los Angeles when the building opened. The company’s history in this building is representative of important trends in the art pottery industry nationwide. The building is tied to Van Briggle’s early efforts to expand its offerings and maintain economic viability in a state-of-the-art facility that continued to serve the firm as it weathered changes in public tastes, challenging economic circumstances, and competition from factories at home and abroad.

### *Criterion B*

The Van Briggle Pottery Company is significant at the national level under Criterion B in the field of **Art** and at the state level in the field of **Social History**, for its association with artist and businesswoman Anne Van Briggle. The period of significance for both fields is 1908-12, extending from the completion of the building to Anne Van Briggle’s departure from the company.

Anne Van Briggle secured financing and the site for the building, planned the architecture with the architect and engineer, designed and fabricated most of the ornamental elements on the interior and exterior, and headed the company when the building opened. She enabled the Van Briggle Pottery Company to survive when the 1904 death of Artus Van Briggle placed its future in doubt. Anne Van Briggle devoted herself to continuing the company’s operation, expanding its product line, and preserving her husband’s memory. She is an important representative of early twentieth century businesswomen who founded and led commercial enterprises. In addition, she is recognized as a

<sup>19</sup> Richard D. Mohr, “Van Briggle Tiles: Their Art, Craft, and Commerce, Part II,” *Journal of the American Pottery Association* 23(May/June 2007)3: 6.

<sup>20</sup> Museums with Van Briggle pieces in their collections include such institutions as the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, the Richmond Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum, and the Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, Alfred, New York.

<sup>21</sup> In November 2008, the owners of the company sold their building and placed the pottery’s machinery and supplies in storage. The company hopes to acquire a new building and resume operations.

<sup>22</sup> Van Briggle Pottery Company, Company Brochure, undated, Eckhardt Collection.

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master potter whose ceramics received notice in important art journals and awards at exhibitions. Anne trained a generation of young people who worked at the pottery and carried on the Van Briggle legacy by utilizing many of the designs, colors, and glazes she and her husband developed. The wares crafted by the company under her leadership are among the most collectible today. Mohr asserts the art tiles Anne produced are among the finest of the era and concludes, "As the unsurpassed quality of the Van Briggle tiles becomes better known, Anne Van Briggle will come to be seen as a master of design on a par with Artus."<sup>23</sup> After leaving the pottery company in 1912, she returned to painting, teaching classes, and participating in several important art organizations in Colorado. Her name appears in a number of artist reference works published in the late twentieth century, including *Artists of the American West: A Biographical Dictionary* (1985), *Dictionary of Women Artists* (1985), *An Encyclopedia of Women Artists of the American West* (1998), and *Who Was Who in American Art* (1999).

### Comparables for Evaluating National and State Levels of Significance

#### *National Comparables for the Van Briggle Building*

In assessing the Van Briggle Pottery Company building for national level of significance, Joseph A. Taylor, President of the Tile Heritage Foundation, observes that the exteriors of most other late nineteenth century and early twentieth century American potteries were not lavishly ornamented in the manner of the Van Briggle building, being "incidental in importance in comparison to what was produced inside." The facilities of such leading companies as Grueby in South Boston and the Rookwood Pottery in Cincinnati lacked exterior ceramic embellishments, while Pewabic Pottery in Detroit only featured tiles on its chimney top. Taylor identifies four buildings associated with American potteries that are somewhat comparable to the Van Briggle building (See following page).<sup>24</sup>

The Van Briggle Pottery possesses certain characteristics that set it apart from the comparables. First, the extent of exterior ornamentation is significantly greater than that of the Moravian, American Terra Cotta, or Continental Faience buildings. Second, while the Celadon building displays a high level of ornamentation, it is dwarfed by the scale of the Van Briggle building. Third, the Van Briggle Pottery was purpose-built as a factory that incorporated lavish tile ornamentation and a display room; by contrast, the Celadon building was only an office and display room, not a factory, while Continental Faience took over an existing building and added decorative tiles. Finally, the Van Briggle Pottery displays a high level of historic physical integrity, and, in sharp contrast to the American Terra Cotta factory, is well maintained. Unlike the Van Briggle Pottery, the Celadon building is not in its original location.

<sup>23</sup> Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles," 11.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, email to Simmons, 4 December 2008. The information and images for the discussion of the national comparables were derived from: Moravian Pottery and Tile Works, National Historic Landmark, Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, website [www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/delaware/mor.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/delaware/mor.htm), accessed 4 December 2008; The Celadon Terra Cotta Co., Special Collections and Archives, Herrick Memorial Library, Alfred University, Alfred, New York; Council of Independent Colleges, Historic Campus Architecture Project, Terra Cotta, website [puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz](http://puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz), accessed 4 December 2008. Lawson Aircraft/Continental Tile and Faience Building, Milwaukee County Historical Society, website [www.milwaukee-countyhistsoc.org](http://www.milwaukee-countyhistsoc.org), accessed 4 December 2008; Illinois State Historic Preservation Office, American Terra Cotta Corp., Terra Cotta, Illinois, property information report, HARGIS, reference number 305387, website [gis.hpa.state.il.us/hargis](http://gis.hpa.state.il.us/hargis), accessed 4 December 2008.

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## Profiles of Comparable Resources



*Moravian Pottery and Tile Works (1912), Doylestown, Pennsylvania.* The Moravian Pottery and Tile Works was built by Henry Chapman Mercer in 1911-12. The large (120'X100') Mission Revival style factory is composed of largely unornamented reinforced concrete in a U-shape that has been likened to a medieval cloister. Decorative tiles are set in exterior and interior walls, but the exterior ornamentation appears to be centered on the tall chimneys and tower roofs. Tiles are still manufactured in the building which is owned by Bucks County. The building was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985.



*Celadon Terra Cotta Company (1892), Alfred, New York.* This very small building was erected in 1892 as an office and "three-dimensional catalog" of the products of the Celadon Terra Cotta Company. The exterior is extensively ornamented with tiles including bas-relief heads, fruit, and geometric designs. The building was considered so unusual that a replica was displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. After the nearby factory was destroyed by fire in 1909, the building was used for other purposes. The building, which has been moved from its original location, was listed in the National Register at the local level of significance in 1972.



*Continental Faience and Tile Company (1916; 1928), South Milwaukee, Wisconsin.* This building was erected in 1916 to house an airplane factory. The Continental Faience and Tile Company occupied the building in about 1928 and added decorative tile in the vestibule, manager's office, and showroom. The interior has been described as "a sophisticated, finely detailed and vibrantly colored three-dimensional advertising brochure for their products." The extensive use of tile and/or terra cotta decoration appears to have been limited to the interior of the building. The ornamentation was not part of the building's original design. The building was listed in the National Register in 2001 at the local level of significance.



*American Terra Cotta and Ceramic Company (c. 1881), Terra Cotta, Illinois.* American Terra Cotta and Ceramic Company reportedly installed large decorative ceramic panels on the exterior walls of the firm's display room near the factory. A survey examined the building in 1973 and found that the resource was in fair to deteriorated condition. The surveyor noted that "some of the original brick bldg [sic] and furnaces remain as does some of the terra cotta decoration." The resource is not listed on the National Register and its current condition is unknown.

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### *Other Colorado Potteries*

The Van Briggle Pottery is the longest-lived and best known producer of art pottery in Colorado. While some pottery manufacturing began in the Golden area in the late 1860s, examples in the state of art potteries (as contrasted with china for domestic household or industrial applications) are fairly rare. In the mid-1920s, U.S. Census data showed only four pottery establishments of any kind in Colorado. One of the earliest potteries was the F.J. White and Son Pottery of Denver, founded in 1893 and operated until the mid-1950s. The company originally manufactured household ceramics but by 1909 was producing art pottery, including vases, lamp bases, jardinières, and swirled clay items. Pieces were fired on a kiln associated with White's dwelling, and wares were often sold in the front yard. Output appears to have been low. The Denver China and Pottery Company, founded by William A. Long of Steubenville, Ohio, operated during 1901-05. The short-lived enterprise produced the Lonhuda Faience and Denura lines and featured underglaze decorations and some Art Nouveau motifs. P.H. Genter established the Broadmoor Art Pottery and Tile Company in Colorado Springs in 1934. The firm crafted bowls, vases, lamps, novelty items, plates, planters, and other shapes in a variety of glazes. In 1937, the pottery moved to Denver, where late in the year production included two hundred different shapes and reached one thousand pieces per day. The firm did not endure, however, closing in April 1939.<sup>25</sup>

The Herold Pottery Company of Golden (1910) was funded by brewer Adolph Coors, Sr., who persuaded John J. Herold to head the company. Herold worked for the Owens and Roseville potteries in Ohio before coming to Denver in 1908 for his health. The pottery produced fireproof china for cooking. When Herold left in 1912, Coors took over operation of the pottery, which was renamed Coors Porcelain in 1920. In addition to manufacturing porcelain for chemical and industrial uses and sparkplugs, the plant produced "high-quality glazed ceramics for home use," including the Rosebud, Mello-tone, and Open Window lines. Production focused on essential military items during World War II; household production resumed for a few years after the war and then ended.<sup>26</sup>

### **Historic Context**

#### **Artus and Anne Van Briggle and the Founding of Van Briggle Pottery Company**

The founder of one of the nation's longest-lived, most highly acclaimed art pottery companies, Artus Van Briggle, was born on 21 March 1869 in Felicity, Ohio (See Figure H1). His family tree reportedly included sixteenth century Flemish painters Pieter and Jan Brughel, and the young Van Briggle displayed artistic talents at an early age. At seventeen, he moved to Cincinnati to work and study, finding a position painting faces on china dolls at the Arnold Fairyland Doll Store, and on weekends and evenings he attended classes at the Cincinnati Art School under the instruction of American master Frank Duvenek. Following a brief stint as an apprentice at the Avon Pottery Company under founder Karl Langenbeck, in 1887 the young artist became a decorator at the prestigious Rookwood Pottery, where he showed promise in hand-painted design. The American art pottery movement had originated in Cincinnati in the 1870s, when local women began painting flowers on factory-made

<sup>25</sup> Profiles of Colorado potteries, <http://oldtymecollectiblespottery.com>, accessed on 1 December 2008; Tolbert R. Ingram, comp. and ed., *Year Book of the State of Colorado, 1930* (Denver: State Board of Immigration, 1930), 161-63.

<sup>26</sup> Golden Pioneer Museum, *Golden, Colorado*, Images of America Series (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 54; "Coors Ceramics Celebrates 75 Years," *Businesswire*, 10 October 1995.

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china, and it evolved into a national industry producing ceramics designed by professional artists. Rookwood, founded by Maria Longworth Storer, was one of the oldest and most respected of the art pottery companies. The studio employed highly skilled decorators and throwers, including many from the Cincinnati Art School. As Van Briggle's wife later noted, "his original ideas helped to tide Rookwood over a summer of financial crises." While in Cincinnati, he also finished a highly-praised painting of his grandmother that was selected for exhibition at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and Columbian Exposition.<sup>27</sup>

Maria Longworth Storer recognized Van Briggle's exceptional ability and arranged for him to further his education in Paris at the Julian School of Art under Jean Paul Laurens and Benjamin Constant during 1893-96.<sup>28</sup> During this time, he became an officer of the American Art Association, received prizes and high honors for his drawings and portraits, and was introduced to new ideas and artistic movements.<sup>29</sup> In Paris Van Briggle learned about Art Nouveau, a decorative style that strongly influenced European art and architecture during the period 1890-1914. Followers sought to raise the quality of decorative arts to the level of fine arts. The most important source of inspiration for Art Nouveau artists was nature, which they incorporated into products intended for ornament and for practical use. Flowing lines, abstract figures, and conventionalized natural forms characterized the style.<sup>30</sup> Additional inspiration for the young artist came from displays at the Louvre and the Sevres factory, where he first encountered old Chinese and Japanese porcelain and pottery and became interested in recreating their purity of color and luminous matte glazes, whose formulas were believed lost.<sup>31</sup>

Returning to Paris after spending the summer of 1894 in Italy, Van Briggle met Anne Lawrence Gregory, an accomplished student of painting at the Colarossi Academy of Art (See Figure H2). Born in Plattsburgh, New York, on 11 July 1868, she had studied landscape painting in that state with Charles Melville Dewey. Anne also enrolled at the Victoria Lyceum in Berlin, where she specialized in oil and water colors and did clay modeling. Contemporaries described her as a tall woman with light brown hair and gray eyes, who was very open-minded, had a good sense of humor, and disliked

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<sup>27</sup> Scott H. Nelson, Lois K. Crouch, Euphemia B. Demmin, and Robert Wyman Newton, *A Collector's Guide to Van Briggle Pottery* (Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986), 1-5; Roberta McIntyre, "100 Years of Van Briggle Pottery," *Kiva* 6(Spring 2002)2: 18; Richard Sasicki and Josie Fania, *The Collector's Encyclopedia of Van Briggle Art Pottery: An Identification and Value Guide* (Paducah, Kentucky: Collector Books, 1993), 8; David and Sharon Swint, *The Story Behind the Clay: A Comprehensive Guide to Commissioned Van Briggle Specialty Pieces* (Colorado Springs: Pikes Peak Publishing Co., 2005), 6; Paul S. Donhauser, *History of American Ceramics: The Studio Potter* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1978), 13,15, and 17; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7; Dorothy McGraw Bogue, *The Van Briggle Story* (Colorado Springs: Dentan-Berkeland Printing Co., 1968), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 5; Gilbert McClurg, "Brush and Pencil in Early Colorado Springs," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 December 1924.

<sup>29</sup> B.E. Sutton letter to Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Nelson, 1947, Lois Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 3, Starsmore Center for Local History, Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum [hereafter cited as Crouch Collection].

<sup>30</sup> McClary and Rust, "Van Briggle in the World," 22.

<sup>31</sup> *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Supplement I (New York: James T. White & Co., 1910), 242; "Van Briggle Pottery Company Incorporated," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 20 April 1902, 9; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7; Van Briggle Pottery Co., "Van Briggle Pottery," undated, Eckhardt Van Briggle Collection, George Eckhardt, Colorado Springs [hereafter cited as Eckhardt Collection]; Woman's Educational Society of Colorado College, "The Van Briggle Memorial Building," tour pamphlet, undated, Eckhardt Collection.

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the restrictions of the Victorian age.<sup>32</sup> In 1895, she and Van Briggles became engaged. In 1896, both returned to the United States, Anne to her aunt's home in Pennsylvania, where she taught high school French, German, and art to coal miners' children, and Artus to Ohio.<sup>33</sup>

As Anne later reported, Van Briggles returned to Cincinnati "with a very much enlarged horizon and many ideas in regard to the artistic development of pottery in America."<sup>34</sup> At Rookwood, where he worked several days a week, he advanced to a position as a leading decorator. During his free time, he developed a specialty in portrait painting, exhibiting in a number of large cities and becoming prominent in the local art scene.<sup>35</sup> In addition, he began experimenting to recreate the matte glazes he had seen in Paris in his own studio, benefiting from the use of a small gas kiln provided by Maria Longworth Storer.<sup>36</sup> He adopted Art Nouveau themes in his own work, employing decorations with figural representations that flowed into the shapes of pottery. By the spring of 1898 he succeeded in perfecting a good matte glaze employed on a piece crafted for his patroness that featured a flowing woman's figure ornamenting a vase. However, as Anne later recalled, the new glaze was "very coldly received by the Rookwood management, and Van Briggles was looking about for a way to carry out his ideas when he fell ill . . . ."<sup>37</sup>

Van Briggles's declining health brought an abrupt end to his career in Cincinnati.<sup>38</sup> He suffered from tuberculosis, and like thousands of other victims of the disease, received advice that Colorado's dry and sunny climate might improve his lungs. The reputation of Colorado Springs as a receptive center of art and culture where some of his fellow Parisian students lived likely influenced Van Briggles's decision to relocate there. After arriving in the city with a few implements of his craft on 21 March 1899, the artist initially recuperated in the home of a friend's family and then moved southeast of Colorado Springs to the Chico Basin Ranch.<sup>39</sup> Members of the William Holmes family who owned the ranch recalled he played ragtime music on their old piano, always wore a hat, enjoyed practical jokes, and searched for suitable clay for his work.<sup>40</sup> Colorado Springs friend B.E. Sutton described Van Briggles at that time as "a tall man, freckled, long arms and legs, red bristly hair, musical voice, soft

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<sup>32</sup> Lois Crouch, "Anne Gregory Notes," Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7; Agnes Holmes, Interview by Lois Crouch, 20 May 1968, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 12; Anne Lawrence Gregory, Passport Application, 7 June 1894, retrieved from Ancestry.com on 7 December 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Florence N. Levy, ed., *American Art Annual*, 1905-06, vol. V (New York: American Art Annual, Inc., 1905), 432; Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 30; Alice Shinn, "Anne Ritter: An Appreciation," Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7 [hereafter cited as Shinn, "Anne Ritter"].

<sup>34</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>35</sup> *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Supplement I, 242; McClurg, "Brush and Pencil," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 December 1924.

<sup>36</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Alice Shinn noted "overwork" made him an invalid, while Manly and Eleanor Ormes attributed his contracting tuberculosis to overwork and bad living conditions in Paris. See Shinn, "Anne Ritter" and Manly D. and Eleanor R. Ormes, *The Book of Colorado Springs* (Colorado Springs: Dentan Printing Co., 1933), 345.

<sup>39</sup> Lois Crouch, Artus Van Briggles, Chronology, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 6; Woman's Educational Society of Colorado College, "The Van Briggles Memorial Building."

<sup>40</sup> W.C. Holmes, Interview by Lois Crouch, January and February 1973, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 12.

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eyes—everyone liked Van.”<sup>41</sup> In Colorado Springs, his artistic talents, European education, and likable manner quickly led to friendships with members of the art community and the city’s social elite.

Returning to the city in the fall, Van Briggle sought a way to continue his experiments with local clays and matte glazes. Fortuitously, his efforts captured the interest of Professor William Strieby, head of the Chemistry and Metallurgy Department at Colorado College and himself a student of ceramics.<sup>42</sup> Strieby provided assistance in obtaining materials, offered professional advice, collaborated on ceramic tests, and allocated the artist laboratory space and an assayer’s muffle in the basement laboratory of the college’s first building.<sup>43</sup> Together the two men spent endless hours perfecting the elements Van Briggle sought in pottery. Strieby’s son, Maurice, recalled “seeing this kiln in action many times, with father peeking through the port holes at the temperature gauges. . . . This was where success was first achieved with the ‘Matte’ glaze, and with many of the colors. . . .”<sup>44</sup> Colorado Springs historians Manly and Eleanor Ormes, who were friends of Van Briggle, indicated that the artist “produced his first beautiful piece,” using the college facility. Local residents were described as justly proud: “Great was the elation and enthusiasm over that piece. The art lovers of Colorado Springs were excited.”<sup>45</sup>

Van Briggle also had a strong connection to the Colorado College through its art department. He convinced noted Swiss artist and his friend in Paris, Louis J. Soutter (1871-1942), to come to the city to head the department, with Van Briggle serving as its art critic.<sup>46</sup> In February 1900, an exhibition associated with the formal opening of the college’s fine arts building, Perkins Hall, included the exhibit of Van Briggle’s “My Grandmother” painting formerly displayed at the Columbian Exposition.<sup>47</sup> After Soutter’s sudden departure due to illness in February 1903, Artus became head of the art department at Colorado College. However, he was not well and soon gave up his classes to devote all the attention that his health would allow to his pottery.<sup>48</sup>

Van Briggle’s health remained precarious. Returning to recuperate at the Chico Basin Ranch in the summer of 1900, he worked on new designs.<sup>49</sup> A photograph by Agnes Holmes records him crafting a chalice (“Toast Cup”) outdoors at the ranch.<sup>50</sup> During that summer, Anne Gregory moved to Colorado Springs to join Artus and serve as Supervisor of Art at Colorado Springs High School, where her friend, Alice Shinn, taught drawing. Shinn later commented, “I am sure no Art teaching in a high school ever equaled the two years she gave her pupils. The results showed it and they adored her.”<sup>51</sup> When not in the classroom, Anne devoted herself to becoming an active partner in her

<sup>41</sup> B.E. Sutton letter to Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Nelson, undated, Crouch Collection box 14, file folder 4.

<sup>42</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>43</sup> McClurg, “Brush and Pencil,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 December 1924; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> McIntyre, “100 Years,” 19.

<sup>45</sup> Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 345.

<sup>46</sup> *Colorado College Nugget*, 1904, Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.

<sup>47</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 7 December 1924.

<sup>48</sup> Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 338-39; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 6 February 1903, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Sasicki and Fania, *The Collector’s Encyclopedia*, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Van Briggle produced the Toast Cup into the 1920s. Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 95; Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, “100 Years of Van Briggle Pottery from the Colorado Springs Museum,” Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College, Colorado Springs.

<sup>51</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

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fiancée's experiments, pottery design, and business affairs<sup>52</sup> (See Figure H3). Together, the couple created the well-known logo consisting of a conjoined AA within a square that continues to identify Van Briggle pottery (See Figure H7). In the same year, Maria Storer informed Van Briggle that examples of his pottery included in Rookwood's exhibit at the Paris Salon received much praise.<sup>53</sup>

Maria Longworth Storer continued to play an important role, second only to Anne, in encouraging and supporting the artist's work.<sup>54</sup> In 1901, Van Briggle produced a few pieces of pottery using local clays and the new glazes on his small kiln shipped from Cincinnati.<sup>55</sup> Storer was pleased with the results and advanced funds to enable him to establish a small-scale pottery with workrooms and a showroom at 617 North Nevada Avenue.<sup>56</sup> Assisted by former Rookwood employee Harry Bangs and a young apprentice, as well as Anne in her spare time, Van Briggle began to produce his first pieces for market. He combined the native clays with Art Nouveau shapes to create works in colors inspired by those found in Colorado's landscape and sky and finished with his distinctive matte glaze. In August, Van Briggle invited friends to the workshop, where they impressed their initials into small pieces that were fired and returned as gifts.<sup>57</sup>

In October 1901, before any pieces were available for sale, one of the country's respected art journals, *Brush and Pencil*, contained a long illustrated article about the pottery. The writer, George D. Galloway, observed, "The finished Van Briggle vase, graceful in shape, fascinating in decoration, and lovely in finish, stands by itself without even an imitation in the world of pottery."<sup>58</sup> Such journals played an important role in evaluating and publicizing arts and crafts at the time. As Richard Mohr observes, "The attention that the inauguration of the vases garnered is perhaps unparalleled in the history of American ceramics, stupendous."<sup>59</sup>

Long hours of effort and the addition of a new kiln resulted in the production of three hundred pieces displayed for the Christmas market on 6 and 7 December 1901. Local citizens, supporters, friends, and artists enthusiastically viewed the work, which marked the first public exhibition of Van Briggle pottery in Colorado Springs. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* noted that the potter planned to send pieces for display in Paris, Madrid, and New York. Manly and Eleanor Ormes reported William Jackson Palmer and others in Colorado Springs used their influence to acquire recognition for Van Briggle.<sup>60</sup>

On 20 April 1902, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* announced the formation of "the most important corporation organized in this city for many years." With capitalization of \$50,000, Van Briggle Pottery

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Sasicki and Fania, *The Collector's Encyclopedia*, 9.

<sup>54</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 45.

<sup>55</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>56</sup> B.E. Sutton indicated that William Jackson Palmer also signed the note making it possible for Van Briggle to acquire the property. B.E. Sutton letter to Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Nelson, 1947, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 3; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7; McClurg, "Brush and Pencil," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 December 1924; Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 345.

<sup>57</sup> Sasicki and Fania, *The Collector's Encyclopedia*, 10; Swint and Swint, *The Story*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> The article is reproduced in Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 133-141; *Brush and Pencil*, 9(October 1901)1.

<sup>59</sup> Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles: Part II," 8.

<sup>60</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 December 1901; McIntyre, "100 Years," 33; Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 345.

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Company was “backed by the largest capitalists in Colorado Springs and will occupy not only an important place in the art and industrial aspect of this city’s growth, but it will give to this city a standing which the famous Rookwood potteries have given to Cincinnati the world over.” All of the shares of stock in the company were given to Artus Van Briggle in exchange for his contribution of all the machinery and supplies at the 617 North Nevada Avenue plant, as well as “his secrets, formulas, etc., which enables him to produce his ware.” Van Briggle wrote the secrets down and they were deposited at the First National Bank and held in escrow for ten years, following which they reverted to the company. He also agreed to transfer 250 shares of stock to the company for treasury purposes. Large investors in the business included William Jackson Palmer, Winfield Scott Stratton, Maria Longworth Storer, T.J. Fisher, Clarence P. Dodge, C. Sharpless Pastorius, Professor William Stieby, and Asaheal Sutton.<sup>61</sup> Maria Longworth Storer received commendation as one of Van Briggle’s strongest supporters: “Her patronage will go a long way toward establishing the world-wide reputation for the Van Briggle ware which is already enjoyed by that which she discovered [Rookwood].”<sup>62</sup>

Subscribers to the stock received assurances that the company would remain in Colorado Springs. The five directors of the corporation included: Artus Van Briggle, president; Thomas J. Fisher, vice president; Asaheal Sutton, treasurer; Henry Russell Wray, secretary; and Clarence P. Dodge. The *Gazette* proclaimed incorporation of the company would allow production on a much larger scale and would “make Colorado Springs the home of one of the most distinctive art works in the world.” Artus Van Briggle was described as “one of America’s finest modelers in clay.”<sup>63</sup>

The year also marked an important turning point in the personal lives of Artus and Anne. Just before sunset on 12 June 1902, the couple married in an area Helen Hunt Jackson designated “My Garden,” on the mesa of Cheyenne Mountain. The small wedding party included several prominent Colorado Springs people who were friends of the Van Briggles and investors in the pottery company.<sup>64</sup> In describing the ceremony, the *Gazette* referred to the marriage of “two well-known artists,” and remarked that “Mr. Van Briggle manufactures a rare pottery that promises to bring him fame as the ware is already becoming known in Europe as well as in this country.”<sup>65</sup> After the wedding, the couple traveled to Denver, where Artus spent a month in the Oakes Sanitarium seeking better health.<sup>66</sup> In future years, the couple spent time in Tucson for this reason during the winter months.

As Artus was ill much of the time during their marriage, Anne assumed steadily increasing responsibility for their business and took over much of the designing.<sup>67</sup> A relative lived with the Van Briggles to assist in their home, and all of Anne’s “time was given to her husband and his work.”<sup>68</sup> Alice Shinn recalled the widely-held hopes that art and health would prevail: “What visions we all had for the artistic future of Colorado Springs. Not only for the success of the Pottery but as a place where many arts and crafts would flourish, the workers to be found among the many semi-invalids.

<sup>61</sup> McIntyre, “100 Years,” 33.

<sup>62</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 20 April 1902.

<sup>63</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 20 April 1902.

<sup>64</sup> Manly D. Ormes officiated at the ceremony. *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 13 June 1902; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 31.

<sup>65</sup> *Denver Republican*, 15 June 1902; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 31-32.

<sup>66</sup> *Colorado Springs Evening Telegraph*, 16 July 1902.

<sup>67</sup> Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 345; McIntyre, “100 Years,” 34.

<sup>68</sup> J. Emma McCormick Obituary, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 24 September 1982; Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

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We pictured an Art Colony working out of doors.”<sup>69</sup> In August 1902, the company began shipping its pieces to large cities and items were sold at several Colorado locations.<sup>70</sup> The pottery offered visitors tours of the operation with explanations of how art pottery was produced.<sup>71</sup>

Van Briggle’s vases received extensive recognition and wide acclaim during 1902 and 1903 as a result of displays at exhibitions, mentions in books, and articles printed in popular magazines and art journals. William Percival Jervis’s 1902 *Encyclopedia of Ceramics* noted “a small pottery” at Colorado Springs, where Artus Van Briggle “produces works with a beautiful dead glaze and with ornament in low relief modeled directly on the ‘green’ clay, and the glaze or glazes then blended on.”<sup>72</sup> *Der moderne Stil*, a Stuttgart decorative arts journal, published a description of the company’s work with illustrations in 1902.<sup>73</sup> In 1903 and 1904, Van Briggle sent some of its best work to the Paris Salon, considered the most exclusive exhibition in the world, where it won two gold, one silver, and twelve bronze medals and received substantial praise for surpassing the work of European manufacturers.<sup>74</sup> As Paul S. Donhauser observed in his *History of American Ceramics*, “Van Briggle became nationally and internationally recognized as one of America’s outstanding studio-potters for his distinctive Art Nouveau designs and use of soft, velvety glazes that were a closely guarded secret for several decades.”<sup>75</sup> Among his most famous creations were a “Loreli” vase that included the sculpture of a woman blended around the top and “Despondency,” a vase with a male figure along the rim.<sup>76</sup>

By 1903, the pottery employed twelve workers and its machinery included a three-foot gas-fired kiln and a ten-foot coal-fired kiln at the expanded North Nevada Avenue plant.<sup>77</sup> The company defended its production of limited edition pieces rather than individual specimens: “We believe it better art to bring out a limited edition of a beautiful and carefully thought out design, varying in each piece the color and glaze effect, than to seek and execute hastily a new design for each piece.”<sup>78</sup> Although some criticized limited edition products as lacking unique design, it appeared to be the only financially viable way to increase quantities while maintaining standards. As Ormes and Ormes observed, “Pieces of the utmost perfection of finish only were allowed to exist. Every other was broken and thrown on the dump.”<sup>79</sup>

*The Craftsman*, one of the leading journals promoting the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States, applauded Van Briggle’s achievements in an article about the company in September 1903.<sup>80</sup> A critic writing about American art pottery for *Keramic Studio* enthused, “The Van Briggle Pottery is

<sup>69</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

<sup>70</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 17.

<sup>71</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 22 December 1902.

<sup>72</sup> William Percival Jervis, comp., *The Encyclopedia of Ceramics* (New York: N.p., 1902), 579.

<sup>73</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 8 August 1902.

<sup>74</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7; McIntyre, “100 Years,” 33; Swint and Swint, *The Story*, 16; Bogue, *Van Briggle Story*, 24.

<sup>75</sup> Donhauser, *History of American Ceramics*, 39.

<sup>76</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 95 and 97.

<sup>77</sup> McIntyre, “100 Years,” 33.

<sup>78</sup> Van Briggle Pottery Co., Brochure, c. 1903, Van Briggle Collection, Ephemera folder, Starsmore Center for Local History, Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, Colorado Springs, Colorado [hereafter cited as Starsmore Center].

<sup>79</sup> Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 345.

<sup>80</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 25 December 1903; Mohr, “Van Briggle Tile, Part II,” 8-9.

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perhaps the most important of the new work. . . . The pottery has been running for a little over two years, and already has gained quite a reputation among lovers of ceramic art."<sup>81</sup> Popular magazines devoted to home design and furnishings also praised the company. In October 1903, *House and Garden* contained an article with photographs of the couple and their art pottery.

Alice Shinn summarized the difficulties the Van Briggles confronted establishing the pottery company and those Anne faced as her husband's health deteriorated:

The history of the founding of the Van Briggles Pottery against the odds of poor health, insufficient money, and untrained helpers is well known, but only a few intimate friends knew how almost overwhelming the struggle. The Van Briggles were working day and often half the night and the kilns were turning out beautiful pottery. To make it in quantity to pay expenses, that was the problem. Two years of strenuous work and anxiety about money and we all saw Mr. Van Briggles' health was failing. Mrs. Van Briggles then assumed the burden of the whole responsibility of running the Pottery.<sup>82</sup>

Artus and Anne Van Briggles gathered examples of their "best and most innovative" works in preparation for exhibition at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair and Louisiana Purchase Exposition. El Paso County Commissioners asked Colorado Springs citizens to provide funds for the cost of shipping the products and local residents also paid for an exhibit pergola.<sup>83</sup> At the fair, Van Briggles pottery received two gold, one silver, and two bronze medals; as the company was a first time exhibitor it could not compete for the grand prize.<sup>84</sup> The American public first became generally aware of the Colorado Springs pottery company at the St. Louis event.<sup>85</sup>

During the winter of 1903-04, the couple again spent months in Tucson hoping to improve Artus's health. Instead, his condition rapidly deteriorated, and they returned to Colorado Springs in March 1904.<sup>86</sup> Artus Van Briggles' battle with tuberculosis ended with his death there on 4 July 1904 at the age of thirty-five. His wife, Harry Bangs, and employee Frank Riddle created death mask of the artist the night he died, and a private funeral took place at the couple's home.<sup>87</sup> At the St. Louis Exposition, the large cabinet displaying Van Briggles pottery was draped in black. When the collection returned to Colorado, the El Paso County Commissioners acquired and donated unsold pieces to the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, which still maintains the largest public collection of Van Briggles pottery in the world, with more than six hundred items.<sup>88</sup>

### **Anne Van Briggles' Leadership of the Pottery Results in the Design and Construction of a New Building**

Anne Van Briggles led the pottery company after her husband's death, producing pieces based on previous designs and new ones of her own. She toiled in every aspect of the business, from the

<sup>81</sup> *Keramic Studio*, 5(June 1903): 36.

<sup>82</sup> Shinn, "Anne Ritter."

<sup>83</sup> Swint and Swint, *The Story*, 17; "World's Fair Van Briggles Vase Returns to Museum," Special Collections, Colorado College Tutt Library, Colorado Springs.

<sup>84</sup> Lois Crouch notes, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 5; McIntyre, "100 Years," 34.

<sup>85</sup> Van Briggles Art Pottery Co., Brochure, undated, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 9.

<sup>86</sup> B.E. Sutton letter to Mr. and Mrs. A.S. Nelson, 1947, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 3.

<sup>87</sup> Swint and Swint, *The Story*, 18.

<sup>88</sup> Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, "100 Years of Van Briggles Pottery."

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administrative duties to firing the kilns and mixing the glazes.<sup>89</sup> In the fall of 1904, the board of directors of the company reorganized, with Anne as president.<sup>90</sup> Other officials included T.J. Fisher, vice president, H.G. Lunt, secretary, Asaheal Sutton, treasurer, and Lyle E. Dix, general manager.<sup>91</sup> German immigrant Ambrose Schlegel (1857-1931), worked for Van Briggles beginning in 1903 and became head potter after Artus died; he remained in that position until shortly before his own death in 1931.<sup>92</sup> Art historian Roberta McIntyre notes, "Of the 900 patterns attributed to the Van Briggles between 1900 and 1912, it is believed that Anne created over half."<sup>93</sup>

The pottery continued to receive acclaim and awards, and collectors purchased its finest specimens. At the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exhibition in Portland, Oregon, the next important exhibition after Artus died, Van Briggles pottery received a gold medal in overall competition.<sup>94</sup> The pottery called 1905 "the first year of its great fame."<sup>95</sup> Despite continued recognition and achievements, the company required increased revenues to remain viable. By August 1905, it reduced the price of its pottery pieces by half.<sup>96</sup> In March 1906, Van Briggles advertised the sale of a limited number of "slightly defective pieces at greatly reduced prices."<sup>97</sup>

Production of larger quantities of ceramics and diversification of inventory appeared essential. However, the existing pottery facility had only "the crudest kind of equipment," and its capacity was very limited.<sup>98</sup> Since tile orders seemed promising, Van Briggles pinned its hopes partially on that market. Tiles for interior design and exterior architecture were popular and relatively inexpensive to produce. Richard Mohr indicated the company successfully manufactured tiles beginning in 1907 and observed, "Elite architects in Colorado Springs began using Van Briggles tiles as soon as they went into production."<sup>99</sup>

A 1907 article by Marcus Benjamin in *Glass and Pottery World* characterized Van Briggles as an outstanding art pottery.<sup>100</sup> The company entered pieces in the Boston Arts and Crafts Society's Tenth Anniversary Exhibition in the same year. The Society, which provided recognition for important craftsmen and offered a retail outlet for their wares, bestowed on the Van Briggles exhibit its highest award, and Anne received the prestigious degree of "Master" from the organization.<sup>101</sup>

Encouraged by continued recognition and with the support of her friends and associates in Colorado Springs, Anne began planning a new pottery plant that would provide up-to-date facilities for

<sup>89</sup> McClurg, "Brush and Pencil," *Colorado Springs Gazette*.

<sup>90</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 32.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>92</sup> Ambrose Schlegel Obituary, *Colorado Springs Evening Telegraph*, 28 December 1931.

<sup>93</sup> McIntyre, "100 Years," 35.

<sup>94</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 November 1905.

<sup>95</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 20 December 1905.

<sup>96</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 12 August 1905.

<sup>97</sup> The sale of seconds became an annual event, based on an ad in the *Gazette* in 1909. *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 8 March 1906 and 28 April 1909.

<sup>98</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Mohr, "Van Briggles Tiles: Part I," 19 and 23.

<sup>100</sup> Benjamin Marcus, "American Art Pottery," *Glass and Pottery World*, 1907.

<sup>101</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 34.

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increased production, as well as a place to appropriately advertise and display Van Briggle wares.<sup>102</sup> Further expansion of the original plant could not occur, as it already filled its lot in a residential neighborhood and the “enormous volume” of smoke from its operations was not desirable or appropriate in an area of homes and families. In addition, the existing kiln was inefficient, requiring two men to maintain its coal-fired furnace.<sup>103</sup>

In May 1907, the *Gazette* announced Van Briggle would erect a big factory enabling it to manufacture tile on a large scale (See Figure H5). The “large and handsome” building would adjoin Monument Valley Park and be “composed largely of tile material with terra cotta, and special efforts are being made to have the design be [of] such artistic beauty that the building will be an additional point of interest for visitors in this city.”<sup>104</sup> As Alice Shinn noted, the building would also advertise the company’s products and demonstrate their architectural use: “Finally in the building of the new Pottery the architect glorified a common brick building with tiles from the Pottery.”<sup>105</sup> The company also planned to take advantage of the city’s large tourist trade by providing tours of the building and offering for sale souvenirs of the experience.<sup>106</sup> The original projected cost of the new pottery was \$25,000; the final sum expended was more than twice that amount, excluding the ornaments produced by Van Briggle. Manly and Eleanor Ormes placed the total at \$100,000, an enormous sum at the time.<sup>107</sup>

### *Architect Nicolaas Van den Arend and Builder Thomas J. Wright*

Nicolaas van den Arend designed the building, working closely with Anne Van Briggle and engineer Frank Riddle. Born in The Hague, Holland, in 1870, van den Arend studied architecture at Leiden University in the Netherlands, and in Paris, Italy, and New York.<sup>108</sup> In the Empire State, he met Lillie Belt McGrath, whom he married in 1893 before returning to Holland. The van den Arends had two sons, Frederik and Hood Dulaney.<sup>109</sup> Nicholaas worked several years in The Hague and the couple then moved to Cologne, Germany, where he continued to practice architecture for six years. Between 1897 and 1900 van den Arend, in collaboration with Louis Schreiber, designed at least six substantial masonry houses in central Cologne.<sup>110</sup>

In about 1901, the van den Arends returned to New York, where Nicolaas established an architectural practice. However, in 1904, Lillie contracted tuberculosis and the family moved to Colorado Springs in search of a cure.<sup>111</sup> Nicolaas and Lillie were active in the social and cultural circles of the city that supported the Van Briggles, and the architect frequently lectured at Colorado College and other

<sup>102</sup> Frank Riddle letter to John Fetler, 3 February 1950, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 1; *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 24 December 1953, 1.

<sup>103</sup> Riddle, “The New Pottery,” 73.

<sup>104</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 May 1907, 1.

<sup>105</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

<sup>106</sup> Mohr, “Van Briggle Tiles: Part II,” 9.

<sup>107</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 7 May 1907, 1; Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 346.

<sup>108</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>109</sup> Dave van den Arend email to Laurie Simmons, 25 May 2004; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 10 February 1910 and 4 October 1910.

<sup>110</sup> Dr. Wolfram Hagspiel, Cologne, Germany, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 18 December 2008.

<sup>111</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 34.

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public venues on topics such as city planning and styles of architecture. In 1910, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* described him as “a prominent architect of this city.”<sup>112</sup> In addition to the Van Briggles Pottery, Colorado Springs designs of van den Arend include the Sunny Rest Sanatorium (1911), Young Women’s Christian Association (1913), Sharp House (1913), Hamlin House (c. 1918, now owned by Colorado College), and Marksheffel Garage (1914). All of the buildings included Van Briggles tiles on the exterior, interior, or both. In 1912, he was a co-designer of the first Colorado Springs municipal flag and also became a naturalized American citizen. Ormes and Ormes called van den Arend one of the “outstanding architects of Colorado Springs up to the end of the first quarter-century.”<sup>113</sup>

The architect’s great grandson, Dave van den Arend, reported that eventually Nicolaas “was frustrated with people dictating to him what he should be designing and not allowing him any artistic license in his work.” Alice Shinn, concurred with this assessment of van den Arend’s frustration, indicating “. . . the architect had little encouragement and he went away saying ‘Americans are afraid of color.’”<sup>114</sup> The family moved from Colorado Springs about 1918. By 1920, the van den Arends were living in Buncombe County, North Carolina (near Asheville), where Nicolaas took up farming and built a family home in Fairview. Dave van den Arend notes, “He became a ‘gentleman farmer’ and built a quite lovely home on a piece of property there and raised laying hens, had an apple orchard and a vineyard.” The 1930 Census listed his occupation as “farm manager.” Nicolaas van den Arend died in Fairview, North Carolina, on 2 February 1940.<sup>115</sup> Lillie van den Arend sold the North Carolina property and moved to Philadelphia, where she died several years later.<sup>116</sup>

Thomas J. Wright served as contractor for the Van Briggles Pottery and also collaborated with van den Arend on the YWCA building. Wright, born in 1850 in Pennsylvania, was working in Colorado Springs as a carpenter by 1900. He was still living in the city and employed as a contractor in 1920.<sup>117</sup>

### *Location and Design*

William Jackson Palmer, ever conscious of the desirability of separating industrial operations from the residential sections of his community, provided a site for the pottery at the edge of the new park he was developing for the city, Monument Valley Park.<sup>118</sup> As Frank Riddle explained:

The building itself was designed with a view of having not only a properly built factory but also having the exterior, salesroom, etc., very beautiful and attractive, and decorated entirely with the products of the plant. . . . The style of architecture enables the builders and architects of the locality to see what beautiful effects can be produced by the use of clay wares, and at the same time shows just what can be produced at this particular plant.”<sup>119</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 4 October 1910, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 222, 253, 311, and 350.

<sup>114</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

<sup>115</sup> Nicolaas van den Arend Death Certificate, 2 February 1940, retrieved from Ancestry.com on 4 December 2008.

<sup>116</sup> Elissa Arnesen, Pikes Peak Library District, Special Collections, Email to Tim Scanlon, 22 April 2004; Dave van den Arend, email to Laurie Simmons, 25 May 2004; Deborah Cotner, email to Laurie Simmons, 28 May 2004.

<sup>117</sup> U.S. Census, Census of Population, manuscript returns, El Paso County, Colorado, 1900-1930.

<sup>118</sup> Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, “100 Years of Van Briggles Pottery.”

<sup>119</sup> Riddle, “The New Pottery,” 67.

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The use of a large number of colorful tiles and glazed terra cotta resulted in a visually stimulating design, which Riddle noted might seem peculiar to people living in other climates, “but Colorado is a bright sunshiny place, and all the color schemes are arranged with a view of the surroundings.”<sup>120</sup> Special measures were taken to minimize the smoke from the plant.

Construction began in the summer of 1907. Alice Shinn described one inspiration for the building: “We pictured Colorado Springs like a jewel, in its wonderful setting, sparkling with mosaics of colored tiles.”<sup>121</sup> Thirty-five to forty workmen toiled on the pottery, which took about eighteen months to complete. Anne and her assistant, Emma Kinkead (1890-1982), designed the tiles and other decorative features at the old Nevada Avenue factory. Kinkead, a student of Anne’s during high school, began assisting at the pottery on weekends and during summers. She served as a finisher, removing seams from the wet pottery and smoothing blemishes before beginning to design her own pieces. After Anne retired, Emma was the company’s only designer for several years, creating lamps, bookends, and other novelty items popular during the 1910s. She married another employee, Alex Gress, and left the pottery in the mid-1910s.<sup>122</sup>

Almost all of the construction materials used, with the exception of a few specialty items imported from abroad, were from Colorado.<sup>123</sup> The building was divided into three departments: manufacturing, art, and executive (including the office, salesroom, a warehouse, and a packing room). The design placed these departments in a logical location in relation to each other.<sup>124</sup> The exterior effectively displayed the tiles that the company hoped would increase its profitability.<sup>125</sup>

Producing the tiles and terra cotta for the new building constituted much of the output of the pottery plant for about a year. Anne is credited with the design of the fireplaces installed in the studio and salesroom, works that stimulated a demand for such features in a number of Colorado Springs homes. The company began moving into the building by February 1908, but its formal opening did not occur until December.<sup>126</sup> When finished, the Van Briggle plant reportedly was the only art pottery operation between Illinois and California and the only manufacturer of polychrome terra cotta work in Colorado.<sup>127</sup>

### *“Unusual and Beautiful”: Frank Riddle’s Description of the New Building*

Frank H. Riddle (1883-1979), a student of Anne’s who worked at the pottery during 1902-04, had left the city to obtain a degree in ceramic engineering at Ohio State University. He returned to the pottery as engineer for the new building, designing the kilns and supervising construction and installation of the equipment<sup>128</sup> (See Figure H6). The Van Briggle board invited Riddle to become Superintendent of the Pottery in 1908. He supervised the technical and mechanical aspects of the plant until August

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

<sup>122</sup> Emma Kinkead Gress McCormick, Interview by Lois Crouch, Notes, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 12; Kinkead Obituary, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 2 November 1982; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 41.

<sup>123</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908.

<sup>124</sup> Riddle, “The New Pottery,” 75.

<sup>125</sup> One recent visitor to the lavishly-ornamented building remarked: “This was their website!”

<sup>126</sup> N. Frank Frazier, “The Uncovered Treasure,” 28.

<sup>127</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 37.

<sup>128</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

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1910, when he became a ceramic engineer with the American Sewer Pipe Company in Akron, Ohio. He later served as vice president and general manager of the Champion Spark Plug Company in Detroit.<sup>129</sup>

Riddle described the new plant and the manufacturing process in an article published in the February 1908 *Transactions of the American Ceramic Society*. The two bottle-shaped kilns were thirty-six-feet high, with the west one twenty feet in diameter and the other somewhat smaller. The kilns were heated with local lignite and bituminous coal from the Florence, Colorado, field. Despite improvement over the design of the earlier plant's kilns, a ten degree variation in the 2250 degree temperature needed to successfully produce the matte glaze could ruin the products. Due to the time required for loading, heating, cooling, and unloading, the kilns could be fired only every two weeks. The electrical needs of the entire plant amounted to just 37.5 horsepower.<sup>130</sup>

Riddle noted that the thousands of tourists attracted to the city each year who came looking for "the unusual and the beautiful and wishing to obtain souvenirs representing the place" influenced the artistic design of the building. He judged that people came expecting to spend some money for such a reminder of their trip and that a visit to the plant and view of the manufacture of its products made such items more interesting and desired. Riddle described the Van Briggle building's location as convenient for townspeople, who represented an important part of its customer base, and near the main line of two railroads, offering easily access for a spur, if the need arose. He opined,

A collection of dirty, smoky, tumbled-down buildings, or even the usual factory building down on a railroad or on the outskirts of a city is neither unusual or beautiful, and is the last place to attract people. To overcome this defect and to make a place easily accessible this plant was located in a beautiful park very close to the business portion of town, and also where it could be seen from one of the main drives taken by the sight-seeing public.<sup>131</sup>

The location also resulted from consideration of the needs of the artists who worked within the building, as its site in Monument Valley Park provided "an unsurpassed view of Pikes Peak and the Front Range [that] would be a constant inspiration for those actively engaged in carrying on this great work." As the *Gazette* observed, the building was designed as a beautiful work of art because artists "love to be surrounded by beautiful and harmonious things"<sup>132</sup> (See Figure H7). A conscious effort was made to provide those who worked at and visited the plant with a building that reminded them of "those higher manifestations of a living art of which the Van Briggle product has come to be representative."<sup>133</sup>

Expanded production while maintaining quality was also cited as a factor in the planning of the new building and machinery: "The plant was designed with a view of making as wide a range of products

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<sup>129</sup> Frank Riddle, letter to John Fetler, 3 February 1950, Lois Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 1; Frank Riddle Obituary, [*Colorado Springs Gazette*], 13 July 1979, Van Briggle Collection, Ephemera folder, Starsmore Center; Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 40.

<sup>130</sup> Nelson, et al, *A Collector's Guide*, 38; Riddle, "The New Pottery," 66.

<sup>131</sup> Riddle, "The New Pottery," 66.

<sup>132</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>133</sup> Van Briggle Pottery Co., Brochure, undated, Eckhardt Collection.

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as possible, and these in rather small quantities.”<sup>134</sup> Raw materials for the products came from clay deposits within five miles of the plant. Light buff clay went into items such as pottery, buff tile, and terra cotta, while red clay was used for flower pots, dry-press floor tile, dark red terra cotta, and other offerings.<sup>135</sup>

### *A Splendidly-Equipped Plant: The New Building Opens*

In September 1908, the pottery initiated full operations. Anne Van Briggles, who had married mining engineer Etienne Ritter in July, had charge of the “artistic” functions of the plant, while Frank Riddle as manager supervised the business and technical parts of the manufacturing.<sup>136</sup> The *Gazette* provided a preview of the new building:

The interior of the display rooms and studios is of stained woodwork, and is very beautiful and artistic, there being two handsome mantel pieces, all in the Van Briggles tile and relief effects. In the construction of the new buildings, the prevailing idea has been to show what effects can be produced both in interior and exterior decoration by the use of the Van Briggles products. The entire plant represents the highest type of interior and exterior building ornamentation.<sup>137</sup>

To celebrate the completion of the “splendidly-equipped plant” the pottery held an opening reception on 3 December 1908. Colorado Springs founder William Jackson Palmer received the finest piece from the first firing of the kilns, a pinecone bowl created by Emma Kinkead intended for his residence, Glen Eyrie. Anne Van Briggles Ritter, assisted by several prominent Colorado Springs women, received the guests, and architect Nicolaas van den Arend pointed out “the various artistic features of the new structure.” Visitors viewed clay throwing by company potters, examined exhibits of the finest products, and participated in tours of the building and grounds. Six hundred people reportedly attended the event.<sup>138</sup>

The building received notice in *Glass and Pottery World* in April 1908:

The architect, Mr. Van den Arend, prepared plans worthy of his high reputation in both Europe and America. The result is a striking piece of architecture showing the artistic uses of gables and bringing out many features of modern decoration in polychrome tile terra cotta work. The kiln tops, spaces between the windows and other vantage points are used to display effective color treatments. In the interior, the mantel pieces are fine specimens of Van Briggles relief work. Tiles and smaller terra cotta ornamental pieces will form about one-half of the company’s output . . . . The window caps are in matte glaze tiles and the columns between windows are finished with a brilliant iridescent glaze. A dozen gables show a wide assortment of colors, but all designed with restful effect to the eye. A sun dial of glazed ware is also a decorative feature.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Riddle, “The New Pottery, 67.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>136</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 3 December 1908, 7.

<sup>137</sup> Quoted in Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 37.

<sup>138</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 4 December 1908; Nelson, et al, *A Collector’s Guide*, 39.

<sup>139</sup> *Glass and Pottery World*, 16(April 1908)4: 15-16.

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*Clay-Worker* praised Anne Van Briggle for her courage and abilities in undertaking the construction of the factory and continuing the legacy of her late husband, commenting that the new building would “long be one of the show places of Colorado.” The local newspaper boasted that the Van Briggle Pottery would result in the world’s recognition of Colorado art products. A review of the Arts and Crafts movement in the *New York Times* in December described the pottery’s pieces as showing “no compromise in the superb quality of its surface. . . . This surface and the refinement of the forms constitute the special merits of this beautiful ware which establishes a standard of character difficult to surpass.”<sup>140</sup>

The hoped-for tourist trade materialized, as visitors were attracted by the unusual architecture and free tours of the building. In 1908, Frank Riddle listed the products of the company: matte glaze art pottery; small pieces of glazed terra cotta for mantels, chimney tops, interior decorations, and repress tile for the same work; dry-press tile for hearths; and flower pots and garden decorations (See Figure H9). The firm continued to tout the “rare texture of its glazes.”<sup>141</sup>

Although Richard Mohr has shown that the company initially failed to successfully advertise its tile, the products were less expensive than those sold by firms such as Rookwood and became popular in Colorado Springs, even for use in some modest houses. About forty buildings with Van Briggle tiles have been documented in the city. Architectural tiles for fireplaces were the best seller, and complete fireplaces with mantels were offered. Spaces such as bathrooms and kitchens, as well as exterior walls and garden features were logical settings for tile. In 1910, the business changed its name to Van Briggle Pottery and Tile Company to reflect the new emphasis.

A company catalog described Van Briggle’s salesroom as functioning to display artistic specimens and to show clients and architects how Van Briggle faience could be used to its best advantage (See Figure H12). “The walls are of brick with tile inserts in which Colorado wildflowers are used as the scheme of decoration. The floor is a combination of unglazed tile with a design of inlaid glazed tile producing an interesting effect.”<sup>142</sup>

Van Briggle historian Lois Crouch found that the pottery suffered from “crushing financial problems” after moving to the new building.<sup>143</sup> Its difficulties were no doubt exacerbated by the Panic of 1907, a national economic crisis that resulted in the failure of banks, railroads, and other businesses. Mohr indicates Van Briggle’s income declined in 1908 because it had pushed production the previous year to help pay for the new building. He observes that with Van Briggle as the only producer of art tiles between Chicago and Los Angeles, no regional market existed for its products. In addition, the firm did not have the income to purchase necessary advertising. Crouch observed that “They [Van Briggle] planned to make a lot of money [in tile]. They had the artist right there, so the tiles became very artistic. I’ve counted over 500 different patterns in tile, most of them fireplaces.” While popular in the Pikes Peak region, a broader market for the tile failed to emerge. National magazines and journals did not provide as much publicity for the company’s tiles as they had for its vases. Mohr concluded, “it appears that Van Briggle was unable to reproduce with tiles the phenomenal early success it had

<sup>140</sup> *Clay-Worker*, 49(June 1908)6: 795; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, Annual Number, 16 February 2008, 18; *New York Times*, 6 December 1908.

<sup>141</sup> Van Briggle Pottery Co., “Van Briggle Pottery,” c. 1908-10, Van Briggle Collection, Ephemera file folder, Starsmore Center.

<sup>142</sup> Van Briggle Pottery Co., “Van Briggle Pottery,” c. 1908-10, Van Briggle Collection, Ephemera file folder Starsmore Center.

<sup>143</sup> Lois Crouch, “Anne Gregory Notes,” Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7.

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in distributing vases nationally.” In addition, the enormous expense of the new building was well beyond the company’s means; by 1910 Van Briggle Pottery was bankrupt.<sup>144</sup>

### *Anne Van Briggle Ritter’s Departure*

After her husband’s death, Anne Van Briggle’s friends worried about her bearing the weight of the company’s financial struggle and were relieved when she met Etienne Ritter, a Swiss mining engineer well known and respected in Colorado. The couple married in July 1908 at her home on North Nevada Avenue. Ritter encouraged Anne to end her long and exhausting hours at the pottery and concentrate on her original passion, painting. Although she continued to serve for a period as an officer and had limited involvement in the operation of the pottery, her formal association with the company appears to have ended in 1912.<sup>145</sup>

After leaving the firm, Anne Ritter maintained little connection with the pottery. Crouch indicated the artist may have designed one piece for the new owners, “perhaps Siren of the Sea.”<sup>146</sup> She continued her participation in the city’s art world, becoming a member of the Colorado Springs Academy of Fine Arts, the Colorado Springs Art Society, and the Broadmoor Art Academy. In 1916, she taught classes for the Colorado College Art Department. In addition, she cared for an orphaned niece and nephew, as well as her aging mother.<sup>147</sup> In November 1923, Etienne Ritter’s business interests necessitated a move to Denver, where she focused on painting until her death in 1929 at age 61.<sup>148</sup> An obituary described Anne as “one of the best known painters of the West and creator of many of the fine Van Briggle pottery designs . . . .”<sup>149</sup> Alice Shinn eulogized her friend as “steel true, blade straight,” someone who “knew that ‘Life was not a goblet to be drained but a measure to be filled,’ and that was the life she lived.”<sup>150</sup>

### **The Pottery After the Van Briggles**

Edwin DeForest (“Ned”) Curtis leased the pottery plant in 1912 after Anne Van Briggle’s departure (See Figures H10 and H11). The early 1910s saw a decline in the demand for expensive art pottery, and the operation’s financial difficulties continued. Horace G. Lunt and George A. Krause of the Colorado Springs Company purchased the property for \$63,609 at a sheriff’s auction on 29 July 1913. They resold the facility to Curtis for \$25,000 in September 1913. Curtis, who had a background in metallurgy, introduced mine tailings from Cripple Creek gold mines into the clay, reduced production costs, and manufactured specialty items and novelties for local businesses to produce additional revenue.<sup>151</sup>

A circa 1913 brochure issued by the company indicated all glazed commercial work employed the matte glaze that made the pottery famous. Products included plain glazed tiles for architectural use in features such as mantels and floors, decorated tiles for mantel inserts and exterior ornamentation,

<sup>144</sup> Mohr, “Van Briggle Tiles: Part I,” 9 and 21.

<sup>145</sup> McIntyre, “100 Years,” 36.

<sup>146</sup> Lois Crouch, “Anne Gregory Notes,” Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7.

<sup>147</sup> Lois Crouch, “Anne Gregory Notes,” Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7.

<sup>148</sup> Van Briggle Chronology, Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7.

<sup>149</sup> “Mrs. Ritter Dies at Home in Denver,” Newspaper clipping in Crouch Collection, box 14, file folder 7.

<sup>150</sup> Shinn, “Anne Ritter.”

<sup>151</sup> Swint and Swint, *The Story Behind the Clay*, 23.

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roof tile, semi-vitreous tile for floors, architectural terra cotta, enameled brick, perforated tile, complete mantels, art pottery, garden pottery and furniture, decorative electrical fixtures, wall fountains, and advertising novelties.<sup>152</sup> Tile's significant role in the product line was reflected in the 1914 decision to rename the firm the Van Briggle Tile and Pottery Company. Van Briggle ceased major production of tile about 1920, although some special orders were completed later.<sup>153</sup>

In 1915, Curtis sold the company to Charles Lansing, who actively tried to build up the pottery's business. He added employees, increased production, and engaged a team of traveling salesmen to market Van Briggle products. The pottery also manufactured specialty items for Colorado College during this period. Active in the local business community, Lansing served as president of the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce.<sup>154</sup>

Another challenge for the company came in June 1919 when fire destroyed the central part of the building and resulted in interior damage in the kiln and workroom area, although the east and west wings with the offices and salesroom were saved. A newspaper article described much of the interior as "a black, charred ruin," and the damage estimate rose to \$50,000. The owner rebuilt the ruined part of the building "along the same lines as the old, so that its traditional appearance was not lost." Manufacturing continued during the reconstruction.<sup>155</sup>

I.F. Lewis of Springfield, Missouri, acquired the company and brought his brother, J.H. Lewis, into the business. The Lewis brothers updated and expanded the facility and brought stability to its production and finances. However, one history of the company indicated that the new owners "virtually eliminated all artistic aspects of the pottery by turning it into a strictly for-profit venture." The Lewises initiated the Van Briggle School of Design that trained young artists and gave them an opportunity to design art pottery. In 1928, Van Briggle stopped selling its wares through agents and only offered them for purchase at the factory<sup>156</sup> (See Figure H13).

Financial stringencies during the Great Depression reduced demand for art pottery across the nation. In 1930, new articles of incorporation were approved and the company's name changed to the Van Briggle Art Pottery Company. The authorized capital stock under the filing was \$150,000 and included common stock without par value and \$10 per share preferred stock which paid a 7 percent dividend. The Lewis brothers and W.C. Hoe served as the incorporators and first directors. Manly and Eleanor Ormes opined in 1933 that Van Briggle survived by "catering to the tourist trade."<sup>157</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Van Briggle Pottery and Tile Co., "Van Briggle Tile, Terra Cotta and Faience, Colorado Springs," c. 1913.

<sup>153</sup> Archaeological investigations associated with the digging of a trench for a fiber optic cable in 2000 concluded that tile production extended into the 1915-20 period. The company apparently turned out tile in small quantities in later years. North and West Junior High Schools in Colorado Springs, erected in 1924, display Van Briggle tile surrounds for drinking fountains. N. Frank Frazier, "Arts and Crafts Archaeology—Van Briggle Tiles"; Jim Whitfield, "Van Briggle Pottery: An Artistic Approach to Tile Manufacturing," *Flashpoint 2* (April-June 1989):6 (Crouch quote); Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles: Part II," 8; George Eckhardt, Colorado Springs, Telephone Interview by Laurie and Tom Simmons, 8 December 2008.

<sup>154</sup> Swint and Swint, *The Story Behind the Clay*, 24-25.

<sup>155</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 25 June 1919 and 20 April 1920, 1.

<sup>156</sup> Swint and Swint, *The Story Behind the Clay*, 25; Mohr, "Van Briggle Tiles: Part II," 15.

<sup>157</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 24 December 1953, 1; Van Briggle Art Pottery Company, articles of incorporation, filed 26 November 1930, in the files of the Colorado Secretary of State, Denver, Colorado; Ormes and Ormes, *Book of Colorado Springs*, 118.

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A flood of Monument Creek in 1935 destroyed part of the eastern wall of the building as well as company records, many of the original pottery molds, and an original brick wall on the east (See Figure H14). The *Gazette* reported, "the force of the torrent down Monument Creek was demonstrated by the fact that it rose over the six-foot brick wall around the Van Briggle Pottery . . . finally crushing it in and flooding the entire pottery to a depth of four or five feet."<sup>158</sup> Despite this major setback, the company recovered and remained successful. The 1941 WPA *Guide to Colorado* reported that the pottery drew 50,000 visitors yearly. While his brother J.H. Lewis remained in Colorado Springs, I.F. Lewis left the city in 1944, although he maintained his ownership interest in the company until 1950.<sup>159</sup>

After World War II, increased production from factories in Europe and Japan competed with American potteries (See Figure H15). Despite this fact, Van Briggle operations expanded, and the company added two Quonset huts (no longer present) from Colorado College to the grounds for storage. The pottery updated older glazes and added new glazes and designs. In 1953, proposed construction of a freeway (today's Interstate 25) through Colorado Springs threatened the 1908 building, and J.H. Lewis decided to move the business to another location in the city. Although the final freeway plans avoided the site, the company purchased the former Colorado Midland Railway roundhouse at 21<sup>st</sup> and Cimarron streets for its use. After renovations, the new facility opened in 1955. Despite being somewhat smaller in size, that building had a busier location near other tourist attractions. Van Briggle maintained both the old and new facilities for pottery production. The company utilized eye-catching signage, brochures, advertising, free tours, and "throwing-on-the-wheel" demonstrations to attract visitors who purchased merchandise (See Figure H16). In 1968, when Van Briggle installed new gas-powered kilns in the 21<sup>st</sup> Street location, the kilns in the 1908 building became obsolete.<sup>160</sup>

In 1968, J.H. Lewis sold the 1908 building for \$150,000 to Colorado College, which planned to use it as the home for its Physical Plant Department (now the Facilities Services Department). Some people suggested that the building should be razed and replaced with new construction more suited to the needs of the institution. Instead, utilizing a number of sizable donations, the college spent two years rehabilitating the building by preserving and restoring important interior features and as much of the exterior as possible while creating a functional space. The college restored the brick walls and stone foundation, and undertook a project to support the smokestacks with a massive steel structure that allowed removal of the kilns below. In 1970, the rehabilitated building housed offices, carpentry and plumbing shops, and the vehicle maintenance and repair garage. The college has continued its stewardship of the building, replacing damaged components and restoring historic features.<sup>161</sup>

Longtime Van Briggle employee Kenneth Stevenson acquired the pottery company in 1969. Stevenson died in 1990, and his wife, Bertha, and son, Craig, inherited the operation, producing

<sup>158</sup> In the early 1990s, when the window benches of the inglenook in the showroom were restored, they still contained sand from the flood. George Eckhardt, Assistant Director, Colorado College Facilities Services, Interview by Tom and Laurie Simmons, 24 September 2008; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 25 June 1919.

<sup>159</sup> Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Colorado* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987; orig. published New York: Hastings House, 1941), 121.

<sup>160</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 24 December 1953, 1; *Pikes Peak Journal*, 6 November 1987; Swint and Swint, *The Story Behind the Clay*, 26-27.

<sup>161</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 8 December 1968; Wingate and Crissey, *The Van Briggle Pottery Building*, 5; *Colorado College Magazine*, Spring 1971.

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pottery in the roundhouse. The firm offered designs originated by Artus and Anne Van Briggle along with those of later artists, most of which received a signature matte glaze created by the founder. As one 2004 article observed, “while most American art-pottery studios vanished long ago, Van Briggle endures.” In November 2008, the Stevensons sold the 21<sup>st</sup> Street property and suspended operations. Machinery, fixtures, molds, and wares were placed in storage awaiting the acquisition of a new location for the pottery. Van Briggle pottery has become increasingly collectible, with the products of the first twenty years of the factory’s operation the most sought-after. At the 1908 pottery plant, Colorado College continues to honor the legacy of Van Briggle through its careful preservation and use of the building.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 4 December 2004, business-22; Craig Stevenson, “Continuing the Legacy of Van Briggle Art,” *Kiva* 6(Spring 2002)2: 32; Peter Fish, “Feat of Clay,” *Sunset*, April 2004.

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## Geographic Information

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is shown to scale on the included Sketch Map on page 41. The entire Facilities Services parcel consists of the northerly 61 feet, more or less of Lot 3 and that portion of Lots 4 and 5 lying east of Glen Avenue in Harrison's Subdivision to Colorado Springs, except that portion deeded to the City of Colorado Springs for Monument Valley Park and additional right of way. The boundary of the nominated area begins at the southwest corner of said parcel and proceeds northwesterly for approximately 147 feet; thence due east for approximately 166 feet (passing approximately 8 feet north of northmost part of the pottery building) to the intersection with the eastern chainlink boundary fence; thence south approximately 125 feet along the fence; thence south approximately 20 feet along the east edge of the parking area to the intersection with the south boundary line of the parcel; and thence west along the south boundary line of the parcel to the point of beginning.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated area includes the building and adjacent land that was associated with the building and used during the period of significance.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

### Photograph Log: Current

#### Common Photographic Label Information:

Resource Name: Van Briggle Pottery Company  
Location: Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado  
Negative Location: Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons (except as noted below)  
Date: September 2008 (except as noted below)

#### Information Different for Each View:

Photograph Number, Description of View, and Camera Direction

Photograph Number	Description of View	Camera Direction
1	Front (south wall) from Monument Valley Park	N
2	Front and west wall from Glen Avenue	NE
3	South wall of east wing with central part with smokestacks to the left	N
4	Detail of upper part of south wall of east wing, showing the black cat sculpture, conjoined AA tile panel, and terra cotta chimney cap	N
5	West and south wall of east wing	ENE
6	Inset porch on the west wall of the east wing; note tile on lower portion of walls	E
7	Central portion of the front of the building	NNE
8	Dormer and smokestack detail (front of the building)	NNE
9	Gargoyle detail (front of the building)	NNW
10	East and south walls of the west wing	WNW
11	South wall of the west wing with the central portion of the building to the right	N
12	Detail of the south wall of the west wing, showing tile panels forming sundial surrounded by signs of the Zodiac (center), date of original construction (bottom), and rooster (top)	N

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Van Briggie Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

<b>Photograph Number</b>	<b>Description of View</b>	<b>Camera Direction</b>
13	Chimney near south end of west wing with floral tiles and terra cotta chimney cap	NW
14	South and west wall of west wing (right), projecting one-story flat roof section (center), and brick wall (left)	NE
15	Slightly projecting gabled bay on the west wall of the west wing, display tile panels with company name, floral motifs, and the conjoined AA and terra cotta ornamentation	E
16	West wall of the west wing (far right), west wall of one-story flat roof addition, and brick wall (left) with central portion of the building beyond	ESE
17	Brick wall (far right), north wall of the one-story addition (right), north wall of the west wing (center), and part of the central part of the building (left)	S
18	West wall of the central portion of the building with the north wall of the west wing at right	E
19	Window detail of the west wall of the central portion of the building, with tile panels displaying company name (below) and the conjoined AA (flanking windows)	E
20	Detail of tile panel depicting kiln smokestack with year of the building's construction on west wall of the central portion of the building north of window	E
21	Rear of building (north wall) from equipment yard, showing projecting one-story components and the north wall of the central portion of the building (with dormers, smokestacks, and chimneys)	SSE
22	Rear of building (north wall) showing roof detail of smokestacks, chimneys, and dormers	SW
23	East wall of the east wing	NW
24	Interior of the former salesroom at the south end of the west wing, showing tile fireplace, tile floor, and built-in seating	SSE
25	Interior of the former salesroom at the south end of the west wing, showing ceiling beams, light fixture, and tile panels with columbine (left) and pansy (right) designs	SE

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

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<b>Photograph Number</b>	<b>Description of View</b>	<b>Camera Direction</b>
26	Interior of the former salesroom at the south end of the west wing, showing floor panel of conjoined AA tiles surrounded by red orange tiles	E
27	Interior of the former studio at the south end of the east wing, showing tile fireplace and tile floor	SSW
28	Panorama of front and west walls of the building Photographer: Linda Crissey. Date: July 2008. Used with permission.	NE

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

### Photograph/Figure Log: Historic

These photographs/figures may not be included in internet posted documents and other publishing venues due to possible copyright restrictions.

Photo/Fig. Number	Description of View	Camera Direction
H1	Artus Van Briggle. SOURCE: Van Briggle Pottery website, [REDACTED], accessed November 2008.	N/A
H2	Anne Gregory Van Briggle. SOURCE: Van Briggle Pottery website, [REDACTED], accessed November 2008.	N/A
H3	Anne and Artus Van Briggle examine one of their vases. SOURCE: <i>House and Garden</i> , October 1903.	N/A
H4	Artus Van Briggle working on a clay sculpture at the Chico Basin Ranch. SOURCE: Pikes Peak Library District, Special Collections, photographic archives, call number 001-358-di-72.jpg, c. 1899-1900.	N/A
H5	The Van Briggle Pottery Company building floorplan (c. 1907) by architect Nicolaas van den Arend shows a sprawling, multi-winged plant. SOURCE: Colorado College, Tutt Library, Special Collections.	N/A
H6	Young engineer Frank Riddle bore primary responsibility for the design of the Van Briggle Pottery Company kilns, as indicated on plan and elevation/section views (c. 1907). SOURCE: Colorado College, Tutt Library, Special Collections.	N/A
H7	Architect Nicolaas van den Arend produced this detailed perspective view north (c. 1907) of the planned Van Briggle Pottery Company building. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department.	N
H8	Artus and Anne Van Briggle joined the first letters of their names to create the pottery company's logo/pottery mark. SOURCE: Fieldwork image from west wall of building, Thomas H. Simmons, photographer, September 2008.	E

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

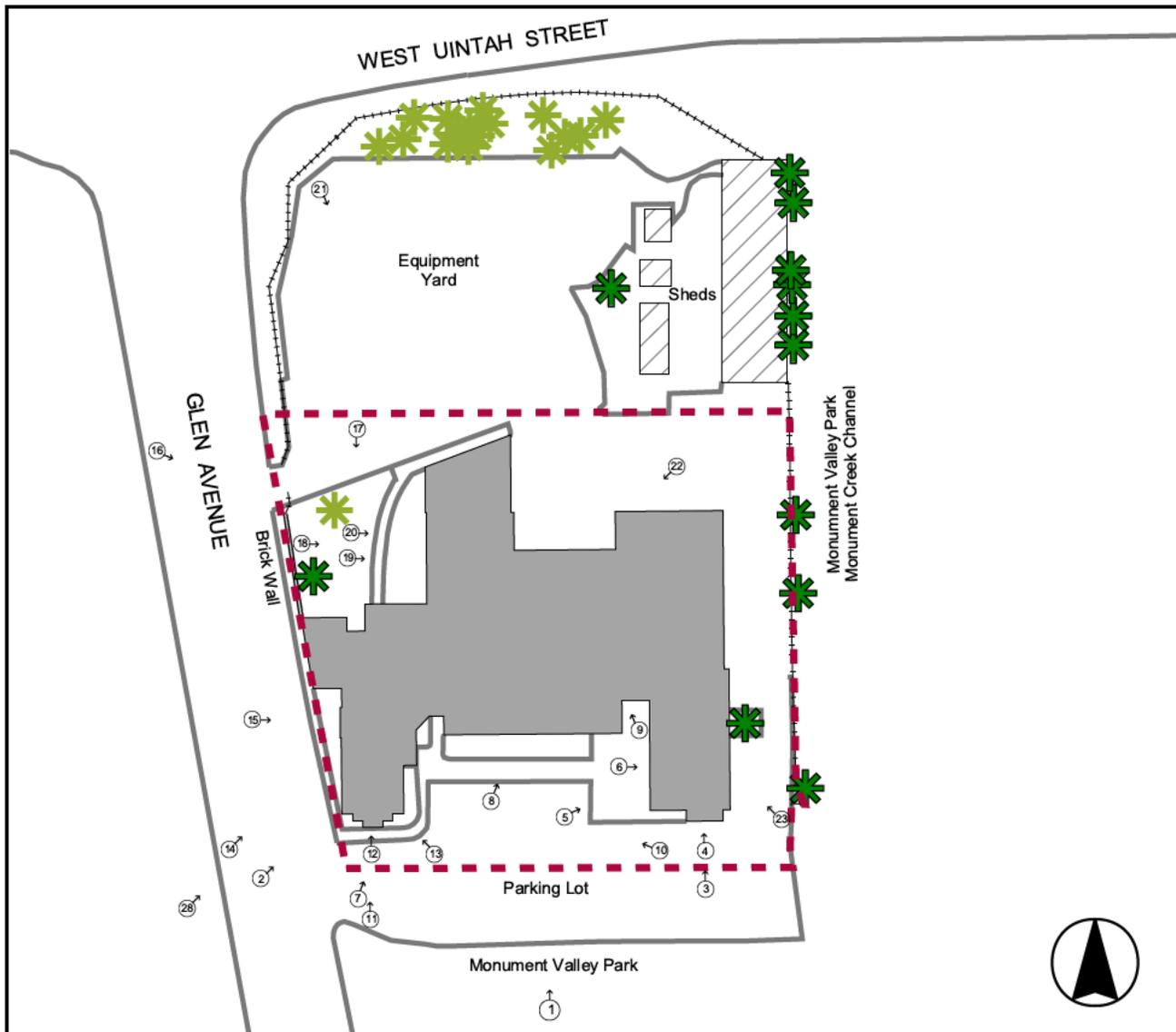
Photo/Fig. Number	Description of View	Camera Direction
H9	This display features early examples of Van Briggle pottery designs highly prized by collectors. SOURCE: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, photograph collection, H.S. Poley photographer, call number P-1662, early 1900s.	N/A
H10	A late 1910s postcard view picturing the front of the Van Briggle plant. SOURCE: H.H.T. Company postcard, number 15422, Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons collection.	N
H11	Four workers dine in front of the east wing of the plant in the 1910s. SOURCE: Colorado Springs Museum, Starsmore Center for Local History, Van Briggle photographic collection, accession number A 82-1-310.	NW
H12	The salesroom wing of the building displayed art pottery designs as well as interior architectural products, such as tile fireplaces. SOURCE: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, photograph collection, call number X-14311, c. 1910s.	S
H13	A variety of tile installations with the theme of time appear in this 1920s view of the west wing. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department, Miles Schmidt collection.	NNE
H14	The 1935 Memorial Day flood of Monument Creek severely damaged the pottery's molding/casting wing and left water, sand, and mud throughout the rest of the plant. SOURCE: Colorado Springs Museum, Starsmore Center for Local History, Van Briggle photographic collection, accession number S 2000.0143.0001.	SW
H15	This 1947 view of the pottery illustrates its proximity to Monument Valley Park (foreground) and Monument Creek (right). SOURCE: Pikes Peak Library District, Special Collections, photographic archives, H.R. Zelley photographer, call number 217-6789-di-72.jpg, May 1947.	NNW
H16	Van Briggle promotional materials, including catalogues, stationery, and brochures for visitors, featured images of the pottery building. This colorful brochure probably dates to the late 1940s or early 1950s. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department.	N/A

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



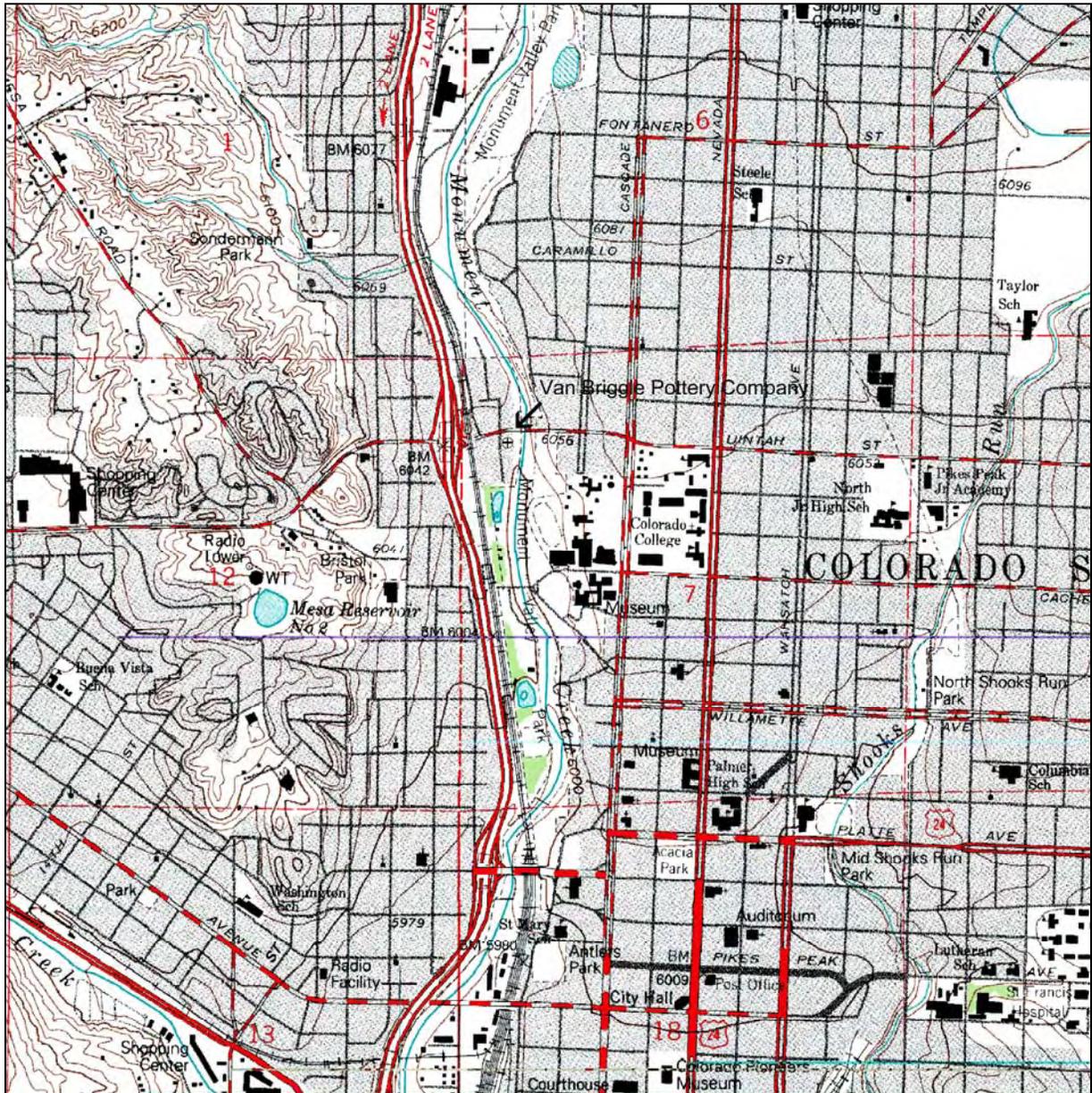
Sketch Map. The shaded building is the nominated Van Briggle Pottery Company, with the dashed line indicating the nomination boundary. Circled numbers with arrows are photograph locations and camera directions. Photographs 24, 25, and 26 are views of the interior of the south end of the west wing; photograph 27 is a view of the interior of the south end of the east wing. One inch equals approximately 52 feet.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

## USGS MAP EXTRACT



SOURCE: Extract of U.S. Geological Survey, "Colorado Springs, Colo.," 7.5 minute topographic map (Reston, Virginia: U.S. Geological Survey, 1994). A crosshair called out by an arrow and label indicates the location of the nominated resource. Scale is one inch equals two thousand feet.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

## Historic Figures



H1



H3



H2



H4

Figure H1. Artus Van Briggle. SOURCE: Van Briggle Pottery website [REDACTED], accessed November 2008. Figure H2. Anne Gregory Van Briggle. SOURCE: Van Briggle Pottery website [REDACTED], accessed November 2008. Figure H3. Anne and Artus Van Briggle examine a vase. SOURCE: *House and Garden*, October 1903. Figure H4. Artus Van Briggle working outdoors on a clay sculpture at the Chico Basin Ranch. SOURCE: Pikes Peak Library District, Special Collections, photographic archives, call number 001-358-di-72.jpg, c. 1899-1900.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

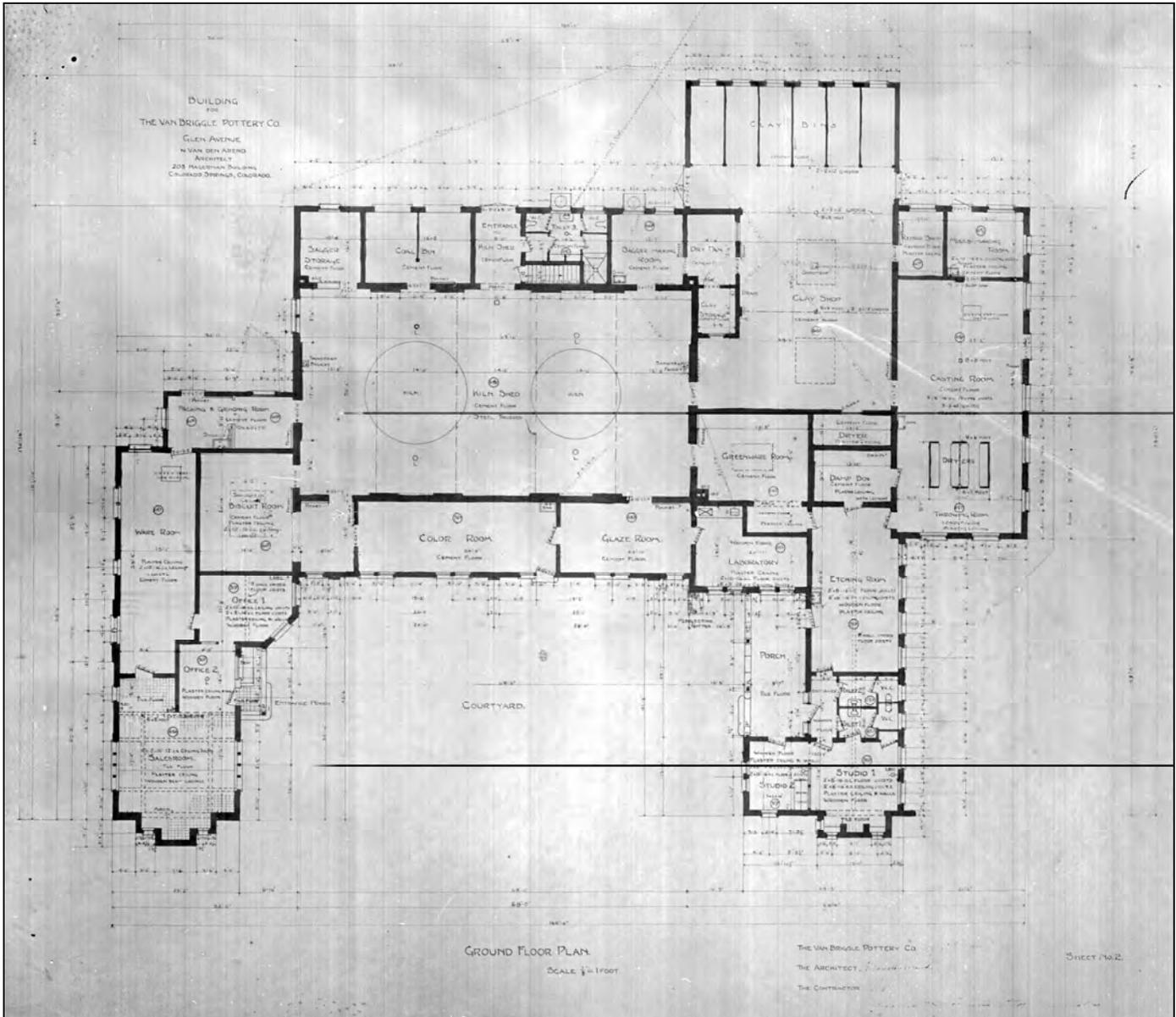


Figure H5. The Van Briggle Pottery Company building floorplan (c. 1907) by architect Nicolaas van den Arend shows a sprawling, multi-winged plant. SOURCE: Colorado College, Tutt Library, Special Collections.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

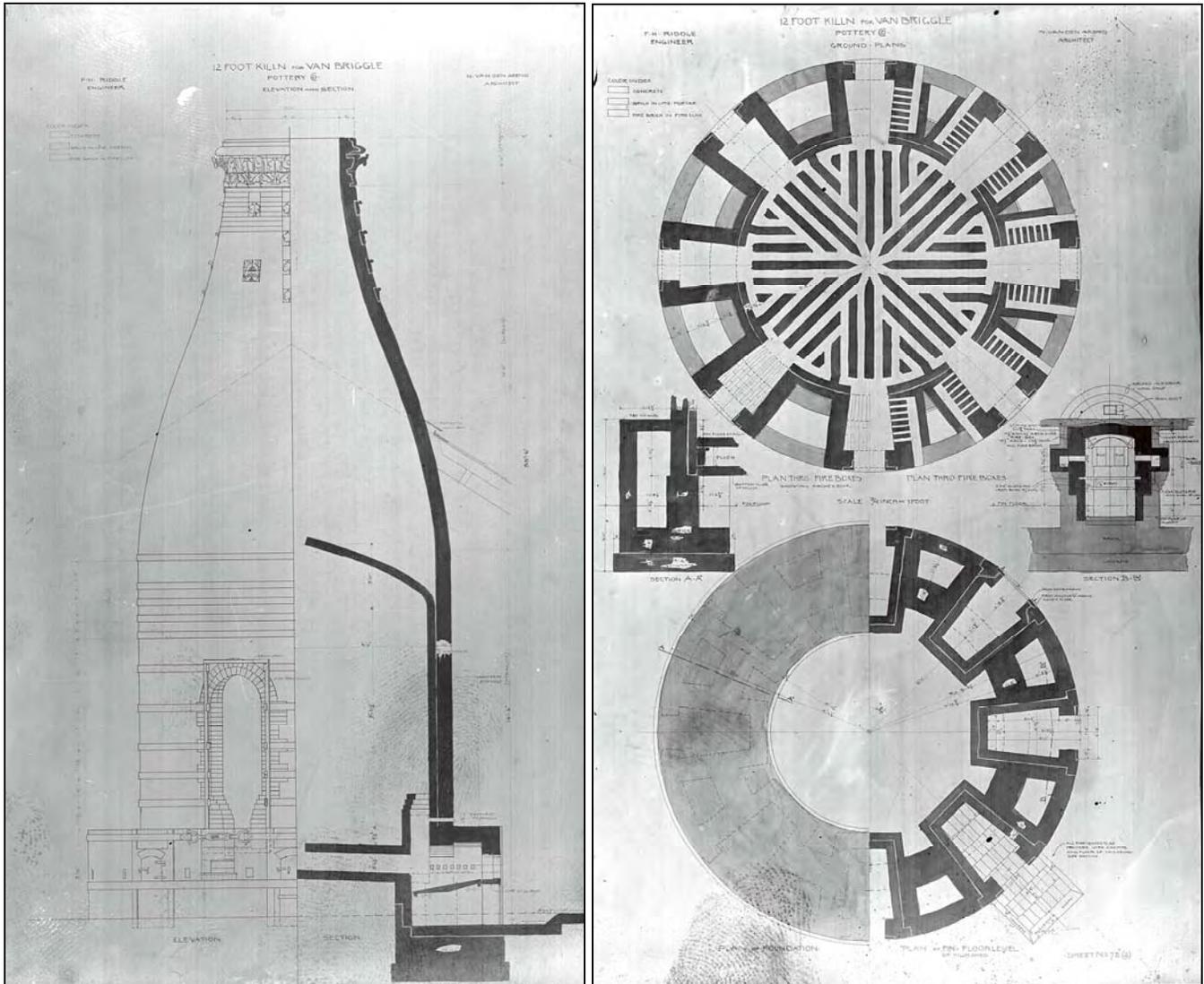


Figure H6. Young engineer Frank Riddle bore primary responsibility for the design of the Van Briggle Pottery Company kilns, as indicated on plan (right) and elevation/section (left) views (c. 1907). SOURCE: Colorado College, Tutt Library, Special Collections.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

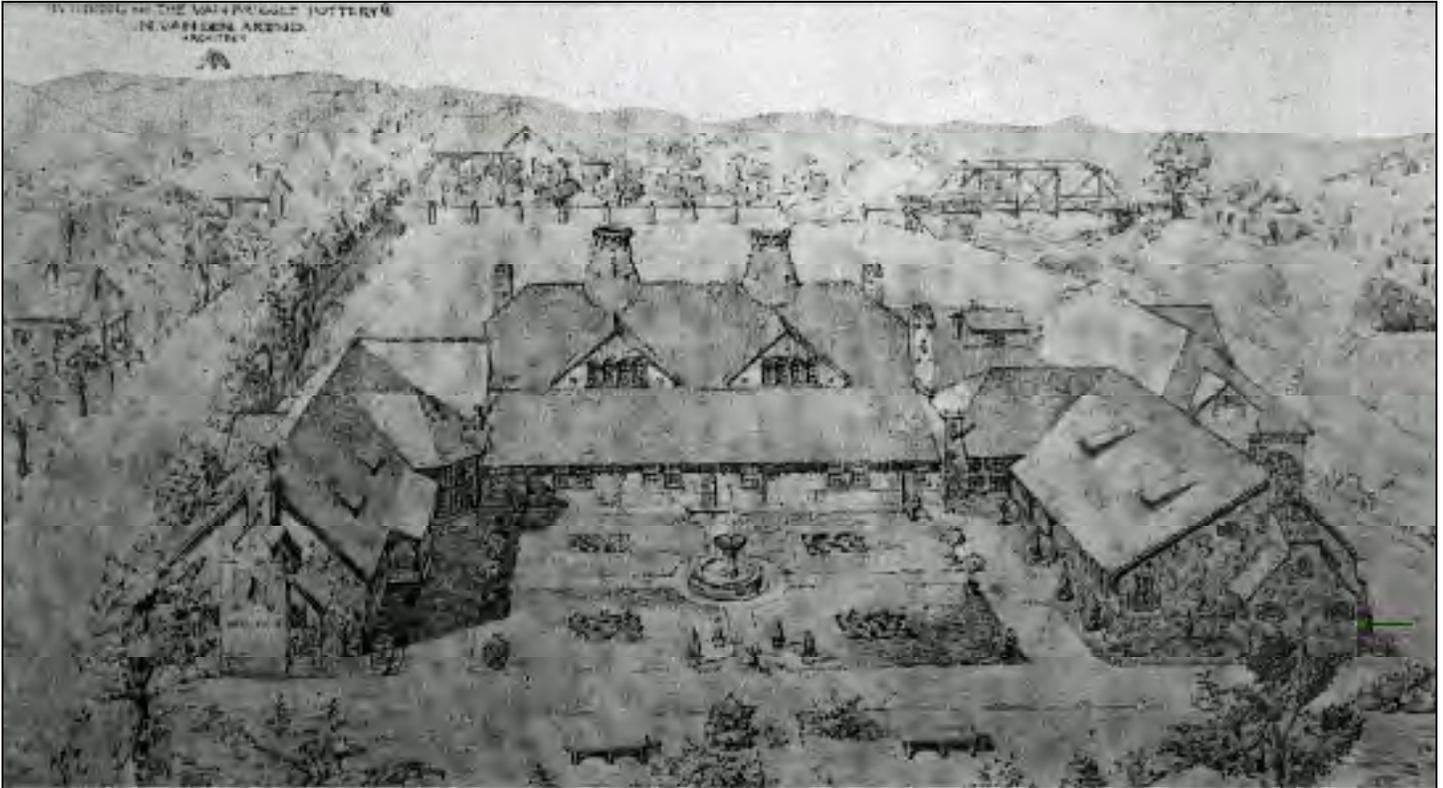


Figure H7. Architect Nicolaas van den Arend produced this detailed perspective view north (c. 1907) of the planned Van Briggle Pottery Company building. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



Figure H8. Artus and Anne Van Briggle conjoined the first letters of their names to create the pottery company's logo/pottery mark. SOURCE: Fieldwork image from west wall of building, Thomas H. Simmons, photographer, September 2008.



Figure H9. This display features early examples of Van Briggle pottery designs that are highly prized by collectors. SOURCE: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, photograph collection, H.S. Poley photographer, call number P-1662, early 1900s.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

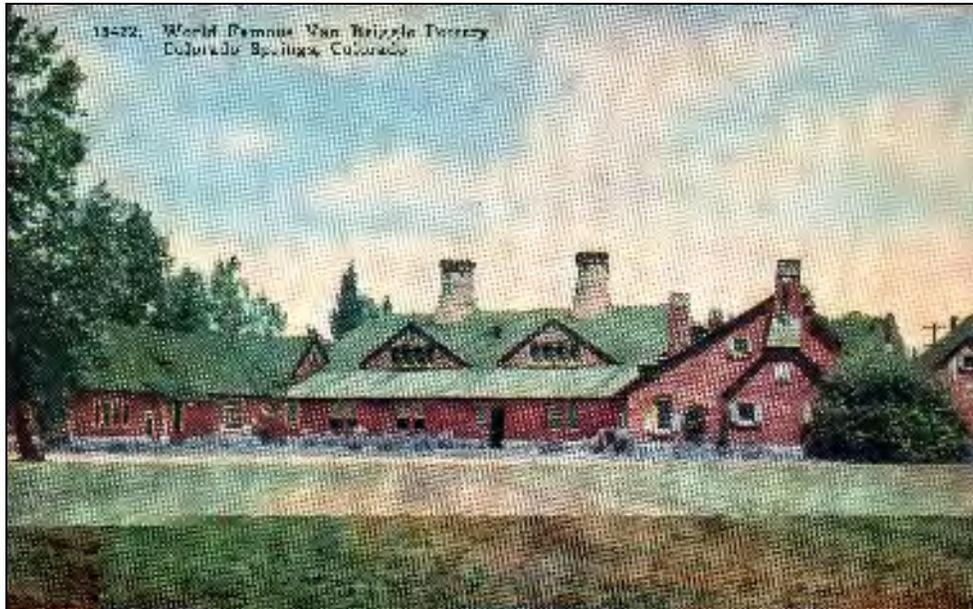


Figure H10. A 1910s postcard view pictures the front of the Van Briggle plant.  
SOURCE: H.H.T. Company postcard, number 15422, Thomas H. and R. Laurie Simmons collection.



Figure H11. Four workers dine in front of the east wing of the plant in the 1910s.  
SOURCE: Colorado Springs Museum, Starsmore Center for Local History, Van Briggle photographic collection, accession number A 82-1-310.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



Figure H12. The salesroom wing of the pottery displayed art pottery designs as well as interior architectural products, such as tile fireplaces. SOURCE: Denver Public Library, Western History and Genealogy Department, photograph collection, call number X-14311, c. 1910s.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



Figure H13. A variety of tile installations with the theme of time appear in this 1920s view of the west wing. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department, Miles Schmidt collection.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



Figure H14. The 1935 Memorial Day flood of Monument Creek severely damaged the pottery's molding/casting wing and left water, sand, and mud throughout the rest of the plant. SOURCE: Colorado Springs Museum, Starsmore Center for Local History, Van Briggle photographic collection, accession number S 2000.0143.0001.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado

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Figure H15. This 1947 view of the pottery illustrates its proximity to Monument Valley Park (foreground) and Monument Creek (right). SOURCE: Pikes Peak Library District, Special Collections, photographic archives, H.R. Zellely photographer, call number 217-6789-di-72.jpg, May 1947.

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Van Briggle Pottery Company, El Paso County, Colorado



Figure H16. Van Briggle promotional materials, including catalogues, stationery, and brochures for visitors, featured images of the pottery building. This colorful brochure probably dates to the late 1940s or early 1950s. SOURCE: Colorado College, Facility Services Department.