

September 24, 1973

Ms. Mary C. Berger, Librarian
Ferro Corporation
Technical Center
7500 East Pleasant Valley Road
Independence, Ohio 44131

Dear Ms. Berger:

In response to your letter of September 18, 1973, I must let you know, first of all, that I am no longer the Director of Kettering Laboratory, having retired several years ago. The present Director is Raymond R. Suskind, M.D.

I still work at the Laboratory, however, and I have done my best to seek an answer to your request for reports or reprints which deal with the observation of members of the staff on the extraction of lead from glazed ceramic surfaces. I was unable to find but one report (which I am enclosing) in our library, and I am constrained to believe that these were private reports which were not published, because of their lack of suitable or significant information.

I shall tell you, however, something of the significance of the work done in the Laboratory at my request, on this matter. I'm afraid I can accept no responsibility for anything else which has been done, and I believe that whatever was done, provided little additional useful information.

The problem of the lead in the glazes on ceramic ware lies in the fact that the manufacturer has not always submitted the article in question to a sufficiently high temperature to convert all of the lead (in the presence of ample quantities of silicate) to the silicate. This is likely to be the case in the production of "mat" finishes on pottery - a type of glaze which is preferred often by artists. Under these circumstances, the glaze goes partially into solution in acidic foods and salad dressings, and such ceramic ware used with sufficient frequency in the household has induced cases of lead poisoning among those who use such ware. It is a very simple matter to glaze pottery in such a manner as to avoid this situation, and industrial technology is adequate generally to accomplish this purpose. The main trouble is that "art" pottery may be fabricated by artists without the benefit of sound technologic knowledge, advice, and supervision, plus the fact that some manufacturers, it seems, have no (or inadequate) knowledge or concern about matters of public health.

Cordially yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

RAK:wb