

# REXLEIGH MILL POTTERY COLLECTION

## OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTS

<b>Repository:</b>	Folklife Center Crandall Public Library Glens Falls, NY
<b>Creator:</b>	Oakley, Molly
<b>Title:</b>	Rexleigh Mill Pottery Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	unknown
<b>Quantity:</b>	1 cubic ft
<b>Identification:</b>	Folk Art & Artifacts
<b>Accession #:</b>	ACC 2023.11
<b>Abstract:</b>	Collection of pottery made at the Rexleigh Mill Pottery commune, likely by Molly Oakley.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Situated on the Battenkill River, Rexleigh Mill Pottery commune was started by John Oakley and Edythe Donovan in 1969. The building was originally the Rexleigh Marble Mill, cutting marble from Dorset and Rutland, VT, and then went on to become the Bartlett All-Steel Scythe Co., producing sickles and machetes for Russia until WWI. It then served as a commercial pottery factory for a time, but when this business closed, architect John Oakley went to purchase clay and met Edythe Donovan there (John and Edythe went on to marry before eventually divorcing). The commune housed about a dozen potters year round and hundreds in the summers, shipping their work each week down to New York City. Many members ended up settling in Salem even after the end of the commune in the mid-1970s. John and Edythe's daughter, Jessica, who was born at the commune, donated the three acres of riverfront property to the Battenkill Conservancy in 2016, including the remains of the mill building after it was partially destroyed by fire. One of the two kilns still remains in the slate-roofed building, which is now a protected property.

Molly and Bob Oakley were the sister-in-law and brother of John Oakley. The pieces in this collection were thought to have been made by Molly while visiting. Molly and Bob were well-known patrons of the arts in the Salem area and helped to found the Valley Artisans Market in Cambridge and the Georgi Museum in Shushan. Molly died in 2004 and Bob died in 2023.

## INDEX TERMS

**Topics:** Pottery  
Ceramics  
Communal living

**Places:** Salem—Washington—New York

**Important People:** Oakley, John  
Donovan, Edythe  
Oakley, Molly  
Oakley, Robert

**Form/Genre:** Realia

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Preferred Citation:** Rexleigh Mill Pottery Collection  
Folklife Center  
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY

**Accession Information:** Purchased in 2023 from the estate sale of Molly and Bob Oakley.

**Processing Information:** Arranged and described by Amanda Franzoni, October 2023.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS

3 complete goblets

2 incomplete goblets (cup and part of stem only)