



AN ARTIST AND HIS WORK—Eric Soderholtz is shown at his West Gouldsboro home with a few of the many copper trays which he has designed. (Joy photo.)

Floral Love Led West Gouldsboro Man Into Field Of Creative Art

WEST GOULDSBORO, Nov. 2—More than 52 years ago, Eric E. Soderholtz, well-known Boston artist and photographer, felt the need of flowers around a new home he had designed at West Gouldsboro.

BACK FROM EUROPE

He had just returned from Europe where he had photographed architecture in Spain, France, and Italy for a museum.

And from his photographic collection of ancient pottery, he took 11 models and using concrete instead of clay made large flower urns and decorative garden pieces.

Soon flowers were blooming brightly from his creative pottery and satisfied with his work—and a three months vacation—he returned to Boston to follow his trade.

While in Boston he showed some photos he had taken of his unique West Gouldsboro pottery and within a few days had orders "to make some of the same for sale."

Delighted with an excuse to return to Maine, Mr. Solderholtz began making garden pottery fervently.

NO MORE PICTURES

"It was good-bye to photography," Mr. Soderholtz now says with a wiry smile. For the next 40 years he worked exclusively with pottery—of his own design.

Creating his well-known art, Mr. Solderholtz uses several methods. He turns some on a hand-made kick-wheel while others are set in intricately carved wooden dies. Other times he used clay molds in which he set his concrete mixture.

A Chinese dragon which stands majestically in front of his West Gouldsboro home took form thus: He allowed a cement mixture to set overnight, then working rapidly with fingers and tools before the

mixture had hardened he fashioned the dragon to suit his tastes.

Other intricate patterns made by this Maine artist include garden tables, sun dial stands, floral urns, and gate posts. Many were taken from designs from the ancient masters of Spain and Rome.

Mr. Soderholtz has received many formal awards for his work. One he prizes greatly is a 1913 recognition of several large vases by the Chicago Art Institute.

A native of Sweden, the artist came to the United States in 1871 at the age of five. While in his teens he worked with his father in the photographic business—later continuing by himself.

Now 82, Mr. Soderholtz relies upon assistants to meet demands for his garden pieces. But in the meantime, he's found another hobby. Making decorative trays, lamps and other useful treasures of copper keeps his hands alert and active "when I'm away from my pottery."