

White Ironstone Notes

Vol. 30, No. 1, June 2025

Samuel Alcock & Co.'s Hill Pottery and Rick Rack Shape



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A Message from The WIN Editorial Team

Beginning with this issue of the "White Ironstone Notes" (WIN), the newly formed "WIN Editorial Team" looks forward to working together to continue offering educational and enjoyable material related to white ironstone china to our WICA Members. We would like to recognize and thank Adele Armbruster for her contribution as our previous WIN editor.

The WIN is just one of the many ways WICA helps share research and new discoveries with our members. By publishing three issues of the WIN each year (February, June and October), WICA will continue to carry out its mission to educate, stimulate and maintain an interest in all matters pertaining to white ironstone china and to promote the interchange of information.

Throughout this endeavor we want to hear from YOU! Share with us photos of your interesting ironstone finds and marks. Have you done, or would like to do, any white ironstone research that others would like to hear about? Send us questions on a particular piece that you'd like to know more about. Write about "Ten Favorite" white ironstone items in your collection – how you acquired them and why they are special to you. Share your thoughts and ideas with us and we'll take it from there!

You can contact us via email at membership@whiteironstonechina. com or mail to: Jeneen Berry, WICA Membership, 2129 Hastings Drive, Charlotte, NC 28207.

Your "WIN Editorial Team"

Jeneen Berry,

Jim & Mara Kerr

and Denise Schine

WICA's "E-News" delivered right to your inbox...

Are you receiving WICA's periodic online "E-News"? Be sure your email address is on file with your WICA membership to keep up-to-date on:

- WICA Happenings including Zoom Meetings and In-Person Gatherings
- Research Material and Publications available in the WICA Shoppe
- New White Ironstone China Discoveries
- White Ironstone and Spare Parts that are "For Sale or Wanted" by fellow WICA Members
- Other timely news and information that is shared in between the published issues of the WIN



Sample of Previous E-News

WICA Membership Renewal

It is time to renew your WICA Membership! The cost of a household membership is still just \$40 per year. There are several easy ways to renew your membership.

Go to www.whiteironstonechina.com and the blue box in the center of the page contains a JOIN/RENEW WICA link that will take you to the online membership form. You can pay for your membership online through PayPal or you can print a membership form and mail it to me with a check.

If you don't have a printer you can just mail a check and include a note indicating your current contact information.

Make checks payable to WICA and send to me at the address below. It is that easy!

Please renew by June 30, 2025 to insure you will receive the next issue of the WIN.

At any time during the year, if you have changes to your address, email address or phone number you can let me know by writing to me or emailing me at: membership@whiteironstonechina.com

Jeneen Berry WICA Membership 2129 Hastings Drive Charlotte, NC 28207



In The Works!

During the last year and a half extensive work has been ongoing by the WICA Database Committee to create an Online White Ironstone China Identification Guide. Thousands of white ironstone photos are included and more will be added as time goes on. Under the guidance and direction of data analytics expert Martin Durbin, committee members Dale Abrams, Adele Armbruster, Jeneen

Berry, Sandy Durbin, Jim Kerr, Rick Nielsen and Denise Schine have spent hundreds of volunteer hours gathering and organizing the information included in the database.

This interactive database will be available as a free online resource to help identify ironstone pieces by Item Type, Pattern/Shape, Characteristics and Potter. It will be an invaluable resource tool similar to databases used

by the Tealeaf Club International and the Transferware Collectors Club.

Funding for the development of this monumental project was made possible thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of long-time WICA member Sally Scrimgeour.

WICA's goal is to launch this new educational resource in the Fall of 2025. Stay tuned for more details on this exciting project.

SAMUEL ALCOCK & CO.,

The Hill Pottery Of Burslem And The Mysterious Rick Rack Shape

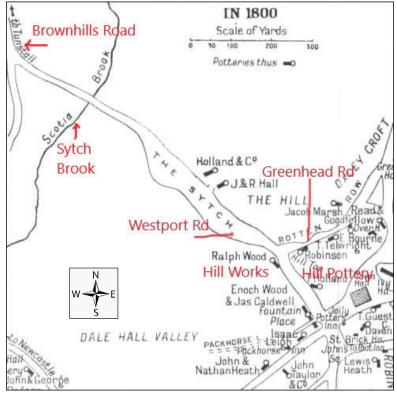
By Jeneen Berry

After finding several pieces of a white ironstone shape collectors have named Rick Rack I began a search for information on who manufactured this lovely shape and when it was made. I hoped, above all, that there would be a simple answer. my disappointment this was not the case. To unravel the mystery of the Hill Pottery mark it is required to go back to the early days of china and earthenware production in the 18th century Stoke-On-Trent region.

At the top of a hill in Burslem, also known as The Sytch, were two potteries in the 19th century both with "Hill"

as part of their name. In the 1750's The Sytch was a ½ mile road that began at the single pottery named Hill Top Pottery and continued down the hill and across Sytch Brook to Brownhills Road. In 1832 The Sytch Road was renamed Liverpool Road because it provided direct access to the Port of Liverpool. This was an important factor in the location of the pottery industry. In 1878 it was renamed yet again to Westport Road. The Sytch Brook was renamed Scotia Brook. The area around the road and top of the hill was also generally referred to as The Sytch.

To understand the potteries in Burslem one must explore the history of the area. Burslem was a major town employed in the manufacture of chi-



na and earthenware. It was the center of the industry in an area known in broader terms as Stoke-on-Trent. There were many potteries in the area that employed hundreds, if not thousands, in their manufactories. The hill known as The Stych was home to the intersection of Liverpool Road (now named Westport Road) and Greenhead Road.

The north side of this intersection is where John & Richard Riley built the Hill Works. The Hill Works' front Venetian façade resembled Enoch Wood's Fountain Place Works which was located further up Liverpool Road. Prior to the erection of the Hill Works in 1814 there was an existing pottery manufactory named the Hill Top Pottery. It was

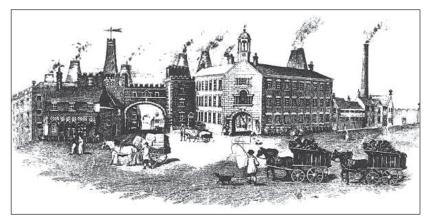
built in the 18th century by Ralph Wood and was the first pottery on Sytch Ralph Wood left the Hill Top Pottery in 1802 and John & Richard Riley, John Robinson & Sons and William Taylor commenced production there. 1814 John & Richard Riley completed the new larger pottery, Hill Works, directly across the street from Hill Top Pottery. John & Richard Riley, John Robinson & Sons and William Taylor moved most of their manufacturing to the new Hill Works building, but they continued to use parts of the Hill Top Pottery through the late 1820's.

Samuel Alcock, the son of a farmer, began working in the pottery manufacturing business in the early 1820's in Cobridge. He joined an existing partnership between Ralph Stevenson and Augustus Aldborough Lloyd Williams and their firm was known as Ralph Stevenson, Alcock & Willams. This partnership was dissolved August 11, 1826 and Samuel Alcock and Ralph Stevenson continued their partnership under the name of Samuel Alcock & Co. In 1828 Samuel Alcock & Co. began renting and operating out of the Hill Top Pottery (Burslem) in addition to their former pottery in Cobridge. Samuel Alcock and Ralph Stevenson remained partners until the partnership expired and was subsequently dissolved August 12th 1831.

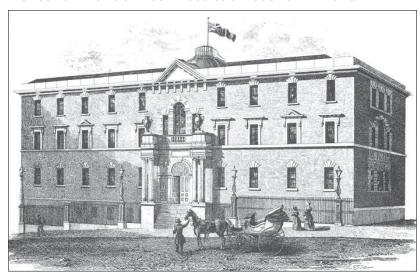


The Hill Works circa 1963. Photo: https://potteries.staff-spasttrack.org.uk/

Samuel continued to rent the Hill Top Pottery until 1832 when he and his nephew, Joseph Alcock, purchased it from the Robinson family. Additionally, Samuel was in a partnership with 3 nephews, Joseph, George and John Alcock in the Burslem Commercial Bank. Shortly after the pottery partnership with Joseph was established and the purchase of the Hill Top Pottery was completed, they commenced an ambitious rebuilding and expansion project. Samuel's partnership in the Burslem Commercial Bank may have financially facilitated the Hill Top Pottery expansion. The bank partnership between Samuel Alcock and his three nephews was dissolved in 1838. The new Hill Top Pottery building was designed by Thomas Stanley, a notable Shelton architect, and was completed in 1839. It was now the jewel in Burslem's crown and became known henceforth as Hill Pottery.

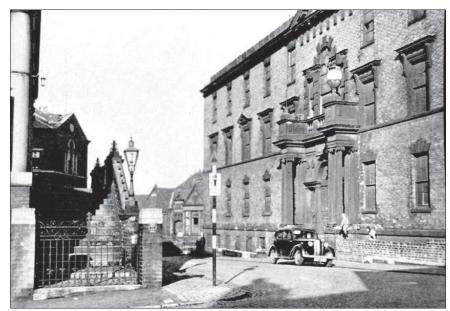


The Fountain Works of Enoch Wood as a model for Hill Works.



The Hill Pottery c.1840

"Whilst this article is in the press [1839] Mr. Alcock has completed the rebuilding of his manufactory, which presents the most striking and ornamental object of its kind within the precincts of the Borough, and of which his liberality enables us to introduce an engraving. Messrs. Alcock and Company are largely engaged in the export trade to America." History of Stoke-on-Trent', John Ward



Hill Pottery circa 1950 (on left is Hill Works)



Hill Pottery Facade

The period of time between opening the Hill Pottery in 1839 and Samuel Alcock's death in 1848 was a time when he registered and manufactured

many different designs. The marks he used were varied and some displayed Hill Pottery in the name and others were impressed S. A.& Co., S. Alcock

Some examples of Alcock wares and marks in the 1840's



Gothic Octagon Relish Unregistered, circa 1847



Gothic Octagon Relish Mark



Love and War Jug Unregistered, circa 1848



Love and War Jug Mark



Greek Satyr and Flute Bowl Unregistered circa 1840's



Greek Satyr and Flute Bowl Mark

& Co. or Samuel Alcock & Co. Many times, Samuel Alcock marks included a printed or impressed bee hive mark which represented industry and cooperation. The use of this mark on pottery appears to have first been used by Samuel Alcock and continued to be used by Burgess & Leigh and Dunn, Bennett & Co., later occupants of this site. In the 19th century printed marks that were applied by transfer were more expensive than impressed mark so often only an impressed mark was used.

During his lifetime, while making his mark as an outstanding pottery manufacturer, Samuel Alcock also made many contributions to his community. In 1836, he was appointed Improvement Commissioner for Burslem and in 1842 he was elected Chief Constable for the town. In this post he took an important part in quelling the Chartist Riots.

In the England census of 1841, Samuel Alcock and his wife Elizabeth were living at Elder House, Cobridge. At that time their oldest child, Samuel, was 15. At the time of Samuel's death in 1848 his son Samuel was now 22 years old and his youngest child Georgiana was just 5. In the census of 1851 Elizabeth is 49 years old, listed as a widow and as a manufacturer employing 249 men, 187 women, 135 boys and 116 girls. There are nine unmarried children living with her as well as a governess and 3 house servants. Samuel (25) and Thomas (21) are listed as managers. Son James (23) is a Fellow at Lincoln College and sons George and John, in their teens, are listed as clerks. The remaining 4 children, girls 8-19, are scholars living at home.

From 1848 until 1859 Elizabeth Alcock and her children managed and controlled Hill Pottery. In 1859 the pottery closed in bankruptcy. During the time Elizabeth and her sons were managing Hill Pottery they continued using the Samuel Alcock & Co. firm name. Approximately 12 registrations were recorded with the Office of Registry of Designs in London between 1854 and 1859 for this company.

The two white ironstone shapes registered by Samuel Alcock & Co. were Atlantic Shape and Stafford Shape.



Atlantic Shape Tureen Registered May 10, 1859



Stafford Shape Tureen Registered September 5, 1854

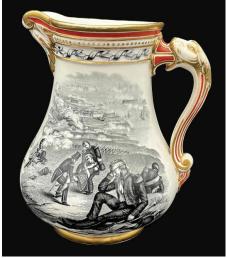


Stafford Shape Tureen Mark

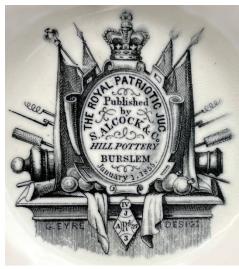
Other types of earthenware and china were also registered such as a Royal Patriotic Jug, depicting the Crimean War, which was registered December 27, 1854. There are other registration dates for Samuel Alcock & Co. but no description of the type of item was given.



Royal Patriotic Jug (side 1)



Royal Patriotic Jug (side 2)



Royal Patriotic Jug Mark



Grape Octagon Relish



Framed Leaf Relish

Although not registered by Samuel Alcock & Co. we have found white ironstone pieces made during this time period such as Grape Octagon (modeled and registered June 11, 1854 by Ralph Scragg) and Framed Leaf (unregistered) both with the S. Alcock & Co. Hill Pottery mark.



S. Alcock & Co. Hill Pottery Mark

Sir James Duke & Nephews (James Duke Hill & John Sherriff Hill) purchased the Hill Pottery and general estate in bankruptcy in 1860 and they continued manufacturing until 1863. The active partner was John Sherriff Hill and it is his JSH monogram that appears on these wares. They produced white & cream-colored earthenware services, china and Etruscan ware.

Nineteenth century potteries employed men, women and children to do a wide variety of jobs. It took hundreds of people to run a good-sized pottery. The wages in the potteries were comparatively low and those who worked there did not have access to transportation. Most workers lived within walking distance to their place of employment. The area surrounding the pottery was a self-contained community. Therefore, when potteries changed hands, it stands to reason that those employed there stayed to work

for the new employer. This meant that there was consistency when there was a change in ownership or management. Likely those workers were the same ones who had been doing the work previously. This system was what allowed Samuel Alcock's widow Elizabeth and their sons to continue to run the pottery for 10 years after Samuel's death and probably even after the sale of the Hill Pottery to Sir James Duke & Nephews. In 1863, Thomas Ford purchased the Hill Pottery from Sir James Duke & Nephews and through the years subsequent owners followed.

What has become of these once grand pottery manufactories? By 1977 the Hill Works stood in a derelict state. In later years the Hill Pottery was badly neglected and fell into a state of disrepair. Sometime before 2003 it was demolished and housing blocks were built on the site. The British government has done a good job preserving

historic properties, but unfortunately for us the Hill Pottery of Samuel Alcock was not one that was saved.



The Hill Works circa 2022 Photo: Google



Hill Works Building Plaque

Date	Potters at the Hill Potteries	Notes
?-1802	Ralph Wood	Sold to J. & R. Riley in 1802.
1802-1828	J. & R. Riley, John Robinson & Sons and William Taylor	J. & R. Riley built a new pottery across the street named "Hill Works" in 1814 but still occupied part of the Hill Pottery (Old Hill Top Pottery) until 1828.
1828-1859	Samuel Alcock & Co.	Pottery Rebuilt and Expanded in 1839. Samuel Alcock's family carried on the business after his death in 1848.
1860-1863	Sir James Duke & Nephews	Purchased in 1860 from the wife and children of Samuel Alcock. The new owners produced white & cream colored earthenware services, china and Etruscan ware.
1862-1870	Morgan, Wood & Co.	They occupied portions of the Hill Pottery concurrently with Sir James Duke & Nephews.
1863	Thomas Ford	Purchased from Sir James Duke & Nephews.
1864-1867	Earthenware and Porcelain Company	Carried on business under the style of the Hill Pottery
	(Possibly called the Hill Pottery Company)	Company, Ltd., late S. Alcock & Co.
1867	Thomas Ford	Repurchased by Thomas Ford and divided into a china company and an earthenware company.
1867-1899	Burgess & Leigh	Operating the earthenware division.
1867-1870	Alcock, Diggory & Co.	Operating the china works division.
1870-1871	Bodley & Diggory	Operating the china works division.
1871-1874	Edward F. Bodley	Operating the china works division.
1874-1875	Bodley & Son	Operating the china works division.
1875-1892	Edwin J. D. Bodley	Operating the china works division. In 1882 the china division became known as the Crown Works.

The Rick Rack Mystery

Now we can look for answers to an ironstone "mystery." In the shape that has been named Rick Rack by collectors, the only pieces that have been found are either unmarked or marked with a Lion and Unicorn and printed "Imperial Ironstone China Hill Pottery". It has been assumed for many years that Rick Rack was made by Samuel Alcock & Co. because they occupied the Hill Pottery and used the Hill Pottery name in conjunction with the firm name. After looking at all the marks that Samuel Alcock & Co. used, they all either have his name or initials with or without Hill Pottery (see previous examples).

Below are the examples of Rick Rack that have been found. It is not a readily found shape. It is a plain, round or oval body with a rick rack type border (hence the name given

by collectors). The style is reminiscent of later plain body shapes of the late 1860's through 1870's. However, the relish dish handle, the details on the ring handles, the terminus of the pitcher handle and the finial of covered pieces are more closely related to shapes of the late 1850's.





Platter



Border detail



Relish, Hill Pottery



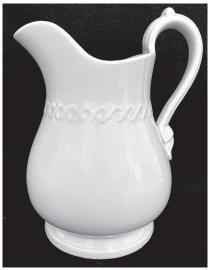
Relish Mark



Syllabub Cup, unmarked





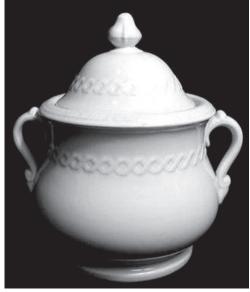


Left: Pitcher, Imperial Ironstone China, Hill Pottery Right: Pitcher Handle detail



Pitcher Mark





Sugar Bowl, Imperial Ironstone China, Hill Pottery



Sugar Bowl Mark

There appears to be an impressed diamond registry mark under the printed mark of this sugar bowl.

Is it possible that this shape was registered, but we do not have that information from WICA's Kew research?



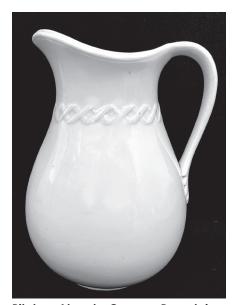
Soup Tureen, Unmarked



Soup Tureen Handle detail



Soup Tureen Finial detail



Pitcher, Alcocks Opaque Porcelain, Hill Pottery



Pitcher Handle detail



Pitcher Mark

Because so much of the ironstone that was made was not registered and molds were shared, bought and sold there is no easy answer as to when a piece was made and who the potter was if it is not marked. This is when we need to look at the characteristics of the pieces and compare them to pieces for which we have known makers and registrations.

Ironstone Shapes from the 1840's through late 1850's with details similar to Rick Rack.

In the case of Rick Rack, I am inclined to believe that it was designed shortly before the bankruptcy of Samuel Alcock & Co. (1859) but never produced by them or that it was designed by a former modeler who still worked at the Hill Pottery after the sale to Sir James Duke & Nephews (1860-1863). There is a registration in the Office of Registry of Designs in London for a "shape for dinner service and vegetable dishes" on October 9, 1862 that could be a registration for Rick Rack. It was design no. 155550 and the proprietor registering this design were the owners of the Hill Pottery, Sir James Duke and his nephews (though they are not listed as owners by name). This information is found in the National Archives' catalogue online, but it has not been digitized so a visual confirmation has not been made.

Regardless of the possible registration, but rather based on the design aspects of Rick Rack I have concluded that it was probably made in the very late 1850's or early 1860's.



Gothic Fluted Finial, James Edwards, circa 1840s.



Montpelier Shape Finial, John Ridgway & Co., Registered September 30, 1848/ March 31, 1849



Girard Shape Relish, Ridgway, Bates & Co., Registered July 30, 1857.



Framed Leaf Finial



Girard Shape Finial



Framed Leaf Relish, Samuel Alcock & Co., Unregistered circa 1850's

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Ten Favorite Things

from Rick Nielsen

Rick Nielsen has collected white ironstone for over forty years. He is a Charter Members of WICA and has attended every annual convention since the beginning in 1995. He has served on the WICA Board, is the current vice president, is a WICA past president and was the editor of the WIN for five years. Rick received WICA's "Jean Wetherbee Honors Award" for exceptional service in 2011. He shares with us here a few of his favorite pieces of ironstone (Watch for a future issue of the WIN where his wife, Suzanne, will share her ten favorite pieces.)

High Relief Wedgwood Commemorative Pitcher



As I really love high relief ironstone, this is the finest example I have seen. The following was the eBay listing description. I was over the moon when I was able to win this auction.

"Large Vintage Commemorative Ironstone Pitcher for Josiah Wedgwood, Born 1730 Died 1795. Decorations abound for the Wonderful Piece. The Handle has a Winged Lady Stretching for the body of the vessel at the Flower (Slight firing crack). On the back of the handle is a Pallet with Brushes, a Trident, Medical Symbol, To the right and left of the Wedgewood Portrait are Ladies of Work, one painting with pallet, the other Seemingly of Design with a Scroll. On the reverse is a Stately Lion above a Regal Crown. Below the spout is seen the Shape of the Portland Vase, highly associated with the Wedgwood Company. It measures 11 1/2 inches tall and is a hefty 4 pounds. The bottom is shown with the Cobalt 4(?)."



2 Adriatic Shape Punch Bowl (Barrow & Co.)

As many of you know, I have a large collection of Adriatic Shape Ironstone, but did not have this piece. This is my latest favorite find, as this item was pictured on a set of shelves in an online auction, but the image was blurred and I had to ask the auctioneer to send better photos. After I received the detailed photos, I left a bid and waited impatiently for the auction to take place. Finally, I received an email from the auctioneer that I was the high bidder. Then I held my breath until the package arrived undamaged. Thankfully it arrived intact and is absolutely beautiful.



Berlin Swirl Vertical Toothbrush Holder w/ Tray (Mayer & Elliot)

Over 30 years Suzanne ago, and I were in Brimfield at the J&J Field early Friday morning. As we scanned the tables of a vendor we saw the top of this piece and asked what his best price was. He responded that he had another piece for it and he reached under the table to unpack the tray. As this is the



only example of this piece that I have seen, I am always very happy he looked for the undertray.

Spoon Warmer with Pewter Lid



I purchased this in Atlantic City, NJ at the Atlantique City Show. At the time, around 1999, there was very little ironstone at this show, but I always found harmonicas there, which is something else I collect. So, when I saw this ironstone spoon warmer it made this find even more exciting. A fellow ironstone collector always coveted this piece as she wanted to add it to her seashore collection. The pewter top makes this a very special item.

5 Wedgwood Garden Cheese Dome

All cheese domes are special and this one has very crisp detail. It has beautiful flowers and foliage in a basket. I purchased it on eBay and was happy that neither the dome underplate nor damaged were in transit.



Vertical Panel Gothic Sauce Tureen (Mellor, Venables & Co.)

I drove to Columbus, Ohio to the Scott Antique Show and arrived around noon. I was sure everything would have been picked over, but to my surprise, I spied this sauce tureen on a table and thought that I had not seen anything like it, so I purchased

it. I sent a photo to Bev and **Ernie** Dieringer to which they wrote in the WIN - "This remarkable sauce tureen is the first piece of Vertical Panel Gothic that we have seen



other than the regular and child-size teapots shown on page 19 of the Teapot Book. The mark is very clear with the same date of Feb. 2, 1849."

Reticulated Chestnut Bowl (attributed to Francis Morley)

This chestnut bowl is marked "Real Ironstone" so I think it was made by Francis Morley. Most chestnut bowls are oval or rectangular, so when I saw this for sale on an internet site, I made an offer to the seller and they took it. Many times these have some damage, but this is perfect. Ernie Dieringer had one just like this with a blue insignia for a hotel. This example is plain.



Tiny J. F. [Jacob Furnival] Cake Stand

I heard through the grapevine that a collector in Ohio was selling some of his collection, so I set up an appointment and drove to meet him. Upon arrival, I was overwhelmed with several magnificent pieces. This was one of my choices since it was perfect and marked J.F. I brought it to the WICA Convention when Barb Stewart coordinated a display of cake stands, which is where this photo is from.



Adriatic Shape Hot Beverage Server (Barrow & Co.)

I bought a Mason Sauce Tureen with claw feet at a local auction. I brought the tureen to a WICA Convention "Show and Tell" since I was very proud of my purchase. Ed Rigoulot was at the convention and he came to me after the presentation to inquire if the tureen was for sale. He wanted the sauce tureen as it would match the feet on some furniture he owned. I



had seen this Adriatic Shape Hot Beverage Server that he owned in one of the WICA newsletters so I suggested a trade. I know we were both happy about our trade. I doubt I will ever find another hot beverage server like this, but I have found another Mason Sauce Tureen and purchased it.

10 Falstaff Syrup Pitcher

Since I have a large collection of syrup pitchers, wanted to include a syrup on my list. A pitcher like this was brought to a WICA Convention for "Show and Tell" and at that time I said that the maker must have used me as the model for it! I bought this one on eBay, but found it just minutes before the end of the auction. I did not have time to evaluate the photos, but threw caution to the wind, put in a bid and won.



Collectors' Showcase

Gothic Rose Compote (Charles Meigh & Son)

Submitted by Denise Schine

This Gothic Rose Compote came from an auction house in Maine that was selling the contents of a Rhode Island estate. It has exceptionally lovely handles that resemble wreaths on a classic Gothic low compote body and was potted by Charles Meigh & Son, Hanley (1850-1861). Along with its

Gothic Rose "friends", a soup tureen and sauce tureen, it is on display in Denise Schine's collection.

A funny side note to buying this compote was that the auctioneer told me that if I was the successful high bidder he would have a friend of his bring it to Brimfield a few days later

and I could pick it up there. Well, as it turns out, this friend was the person I was bidding against and the auctioneer understandably felt awkward asking him to deliver it to me. He did find someone else going to Brimfield, which is not too difficult to do in New England!



Gothic Rose Compote Mark



Gothic Rose Compote

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

"Follow Us" on WICA's main Facebook Page – "White Ironstone China Association". Join WICA's group Facebook Page – "White Ironstone China Association Group" which was started to help promote the Association and encourage the exchange of information among people interested in all-things white ironstone.



White Ironstone Notes 2129 Hastings Drive

Charlotte, NC 28207

February 2, 1880 Advertisement for Clementson Brothers in "The Pottery Gazette"

ESTABLISHED 1832.

London-20, Bartlett's Buildings, Holborn Circus, G. G. MacWilliam, Agent. NEW YORK—

MAYER BROTHERS, Agents,

Clementson

Brothers,

MANUFACTURERS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION OF

Earthenware and Ironstone China.

White Granite, and C.C. Sponged, Painted, Marbled, and other Ware, for the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, &c.; also for the Home Market.



CLEMENTSON BROS. ENGLAND.

ILLUSTRATED SHEETS AND PRICE LISTS ON APPLICATION.

PHŒNIX AND BELL WORKS, HANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.