

## - Meet the Collectors -

### Mrs. Emma DeF. Morse's Collection at the American Antiquarian Society Worcester, Massachusetts

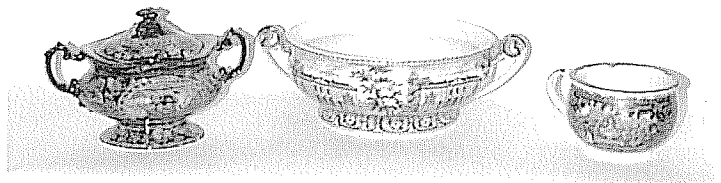
I first became aware of Mrs. Emma DeF. Morse, when two pieces, a brown 17" platter depicting the "State House, New Haven" and a mulberry 17" platter with "Harvard College" were published in the May 1902 (that's right....1902) issue of the Old China Magazine. I first became *seriously* interested in Mrs. Morse, when the same magazine published portions of her holdings in the extremely rare medallion group, in September 1902. Later, while researching some of Sam Laidacker's, American Antique Collector magazines, I learned that Mrs. Morse had donated her collection to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. So that is what brought me to Worcester on March 31st, during the beginning of a massive snow storm, which was later characterized, by the local media, as a "white hurricane," dropping 30+" of wet heavy snow, whipped by 60-70 mph winds. Nature's April-fool, since the previous day we had enjoyed 60-70 degree temperatures.



The American Antiquarian Society located at 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, is not only the home of the Emma DeF. Morse Collection of Historical Staffordshire, but also contains a fabulous collection of 18th and 19th century American books, broadsides, ledgers, advertisements and prints, plus a fine collection of American portraits.

As I parked in front of the impressive brick structure, I was greeted by a very large wild turkey standing approximately 6' from the car. It seemed, she too was visiting the Society and had taken up residence there for the last two months. This in the center of Worcester, the second largest city in Massachusetts! Anyway, back to the collection of Mrs. Morse.

From information provided to me by the gracious Curator of Graphic Arts, Mrs. Georgia Barnhill, I learned that Mrs. Morse and her husband Edwin, started collecting in 1885,



Here's a few items I had not seen before, namely an "Arms of Connecticut" gravy with a cover, a most unusual 12" to 14" d low footed bowl by Ridgway with two views on each side of "Exchange, Charleston" and "Bank Savannah". The little handled "ladies spittoon"/"babies potty" (whatever it is) is by Phillips and shows "Franklin's Tomb". This view is known only on a tea service, so what is this form doing with this view? Is it the "posset cup" listed in Arman, "Historical Staffordshire"? Just what is posset and why did it need a huge "cup" like this?



Illustrated here, for the first time since February 1903, the Morse coffee service from the "Baltimore Views" series. From L to R, the views are: Coffee Pot, "Baltimore Almshouse" (body) "Baltimore Assembly Rooms" (neck), creamer "Baltimore Masonic Hall", sugar bowl "Baltimore Almshouse" and small coffee pot "Assembly Rooms" on the base, "Almshouse" on the neck and "Baltimore Hospital" on the cover.

with the intent of obtaining every known American view. Edwin had been an invalid for several years, as a result of wounds received as a Captain in the Worcester Guards, at the Battle of Spotsylvania, during the Civil War, died in 1890. Mrs. Morse continued her collecting and by 1907, she and her collection were featured in the magazine "American Homes and Gardens," with the comment by Alexander Hudnut (another early Staffordshire collector) that she was one of the

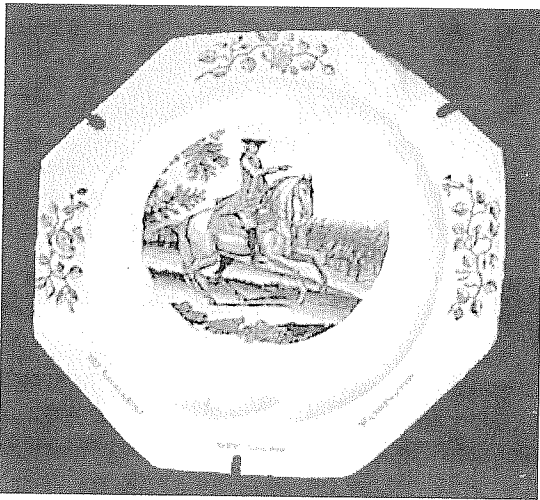


Above and to the right: The bowl and pitcher set is one of the smallest I have seen, with the pitcher measuring a scant 7 1/2" h. Manufactured by Ralph Stevenson and Williams, they are a lovely mixture of light, medium and dark blues. The figure in the foreground, according to Mrs. Larsen, is "Justice". Yes, there is a wedge-shaped piece out of the lip of the pitcher, but it is intact, located inside the piece, waiting for a very easy restoration.



Below: These two square vegetable dish bases are among the rarest views in historical "blue". On the left we have the "Dutch Church at Albany", a transfer apparently used here by Ralph Stevenson and also by Andrew Stevenson, who made pitchers containing the view. According to Mrs. Larsen's note, this is the only vegetable dish with this view. The second base is "Albany Theatre 1824", also by Ralph Stevenson and apparently only known to exist on this particular dish in this Collection. I noticed only one cover at The Society and that has the four medallions of "Washington", "Jefferson", DeWitt Clinton and "Lafayette" placed on the four sides.





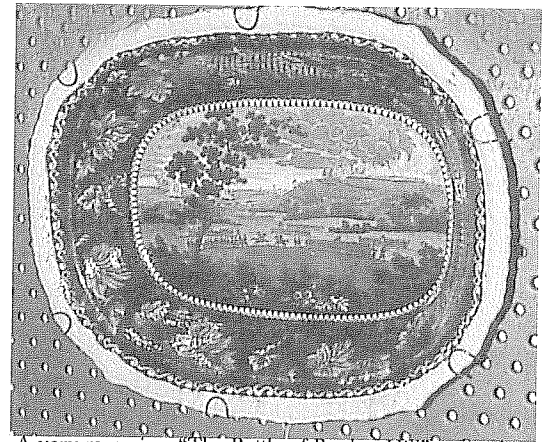
Something else I had never seen, an octagonal Liverpool creamware plate with Washington on horseback pointing toward his troops, with the inscription "HIS EXCELLENCY GEN'L GEORGE WASHINGTON".

most successful collectors of the last decade. In 1913, although she was not a member of the American Antiquarian Society, she donated her 280-piece collection with the proviso that

it be properly and safely displayed. Thus, in 1913, the Society paid \$1,200.00 for the permanent installation of the cases in which the collection is displayed to this day, in what is now Mrs. Barnhill's office. For our reader's further information, The American Antiquarian Society is a fine research library with extensive holdings of 18th and 19th century American books and prints, which means they have many of the source prints for Historical Staffordshire and Liverpool. In addition, they have a large representation of period trade catalogues, ledgers and advertisements, all of which should be of interest to the serious collector and researcher in the fields of both glass and ceramics. It is a little jewel of a place and I can't urge you enough, to visit, should you be in the area of central Massachusetts.

As previously stated, the Collection consists of approximately 280 pieces, consisting mostly of the dark blue, with groups of pink, mulberry and brown displayed in two of the six cases. Because of the confines of the office, some of the

camera angles and lighting effects, were somewhat less than optimal, but I believe we have photographed the Collection in its entirety and you should be able to identify most of the views. You will note that the Collection is typical of one



A very rare view "The Battle of Bunker Hill" on a white rimmed vegetable dish. We have seen it on platters and openwork trays and bowls, but not a vegetable dish.

formed in this period, in that it consists primarily of plates and platters, with little representation of the hollow pieces. The reason is simple, until the last thirty years, this ware was displayed as the ceramics prints that they are and were hung on walls in the place of framed prints. However, the hollow pieces that are in this Collection are rare and quite wonderful.

Speaking of rarities, the jewel of the

Collection is the diminutive washbowl and pitcher set in a vibrant blue depicting "The Capitol, Albany" with portrait medallions of "Sir Edward Coke" (English, 1552-1634) and "Chief Justice of New York, Kent" (1763-1847). Two creamware bowls in black and white with this view have been recorded (one was offered in the last **Quarterly** by an advertiser), but only one set has been found in blue and that is the Morse example, illustrated in the *Old China Magazine* and once again in Mrs. Larsen's book. The pitcher is adorable (I'm gushing, aren't I?), since it is only 7 1/2"H. Why has there only been one set located in blue? Does anyone know



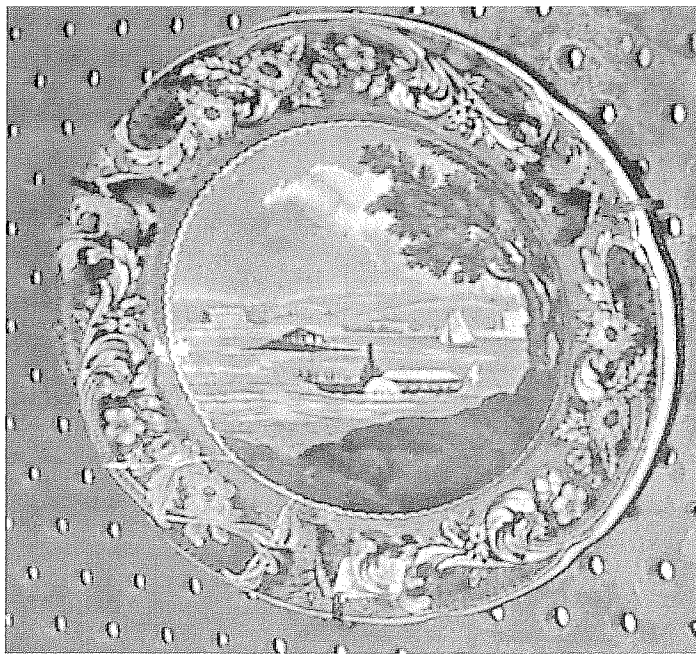
A small copper lustre pitcher with a cream-colored band containing black transfers of two English genre scenes and "Welcome Lafayette" hidden under the spout. The large copper lustre pitcher is "William Henry Harrison" and the inset shows the reverse which has a "Log Cabin" with the sign hanging on the door, "To Let In 1840". The remaining copper lustre pitcher is so small that there was no room for the usual red or yellow ground, just the white areas containing a black transfer of "Andrew Jackson - The Hero of New Orleans"



An extremely rare "Arms of Connecticut" gravy tureen with an even more rare cover. By Mayer from the "Arms of the States" series.

of another?

Running a close second as to desirability and rarity are the **TWO** high domed coffee pots from the exceedingly rare "Baltimore" series by an Unknown Maker (I'm pushing for Davenport as the manufacturer). These two pots, 10 3/4" h and 9 1/2" h are the only two recorded examples that I can locate and they are only illustrated in the February 1903 issue of the Old China Magazine. I was also fortunate enough to make an up close personal acquaintance with the elusive 7 1/2" d plate by Stubbs from the Eagle border series "View At Hurl Gate, East River." Mrs. Larsen in her fine work, *American Historical*



So very rare, is this little 7 1/2" d plate by Stubbs from the Spread Eagle border series, "View At Hurl Gate, East River". I have little doubt that if one came up at auction it would sail past the \$5,000.00 mark with little or no effort.

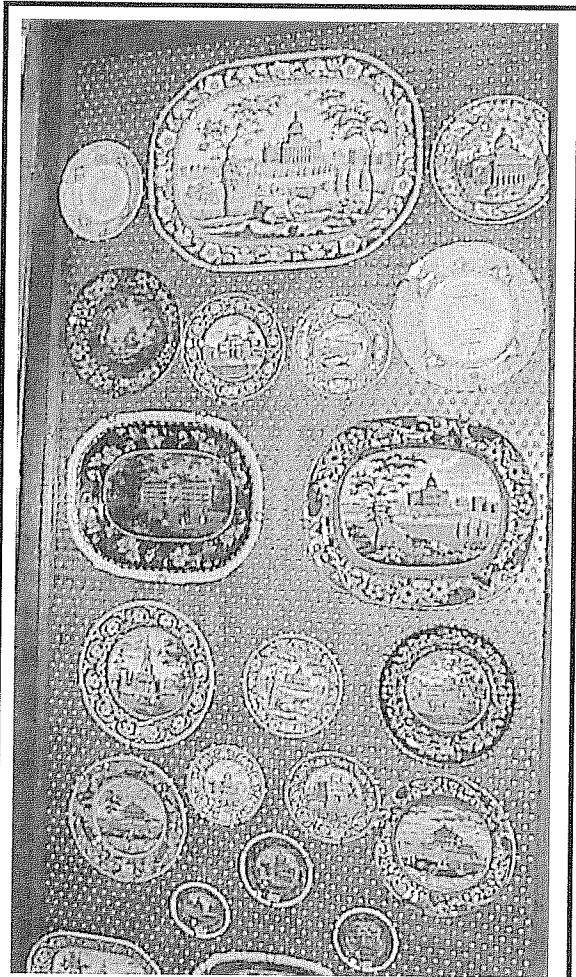
*Views On Staffordshire China* blithely lists this as occurring in "Plates, 7 1/2, 7 1/4, 7 inches," however I truly doubt that there are three pieces with this view in existence, as this is the only one I have ever heard of or personally viewed. Once again, does anyone know of another? Enough said for now, let me take you on a photographic tour of The American Antiquarian Society's collection of Historical Staffordshire formed by the late Mrs. Emma DeF. Morse.

Close up views of the coffee service illustrated earlier in this article. Made by an unknown maker, this rare service has many characteristics shown by other unmarked series with American views that are now known to have been manufactured by the Davenport firm. Long considered the rarest of the rare, there have been very few pieces offered in the last thirty years, with one notable exception. In 1981, due to a rather strange deaccession of a portion of the



fabulous Duckworth Collection, eight pieces came on the market, which we acquired and offered on our mail order list. These consisted of four perfect cups and saucers with views of "Baltimore Hospital" and "University of Maryland", a teapot and sugar bowl, both with "Baltimore Almshouse" and two waste bowls, one with "Baltimore Assembly Rooms" and the other with "Baltimore Court House". The entire group sold to the first caller for over \$9,000.00 (three of the major pieces had damage).

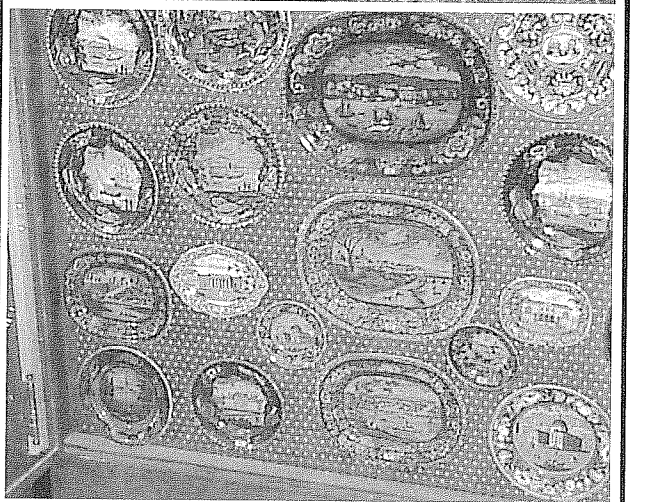
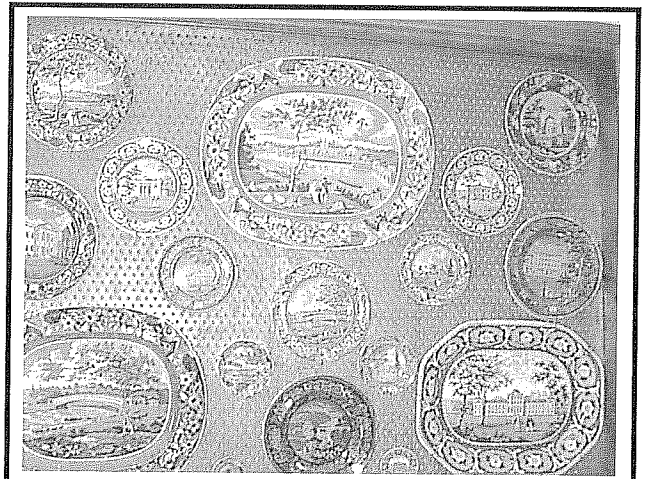




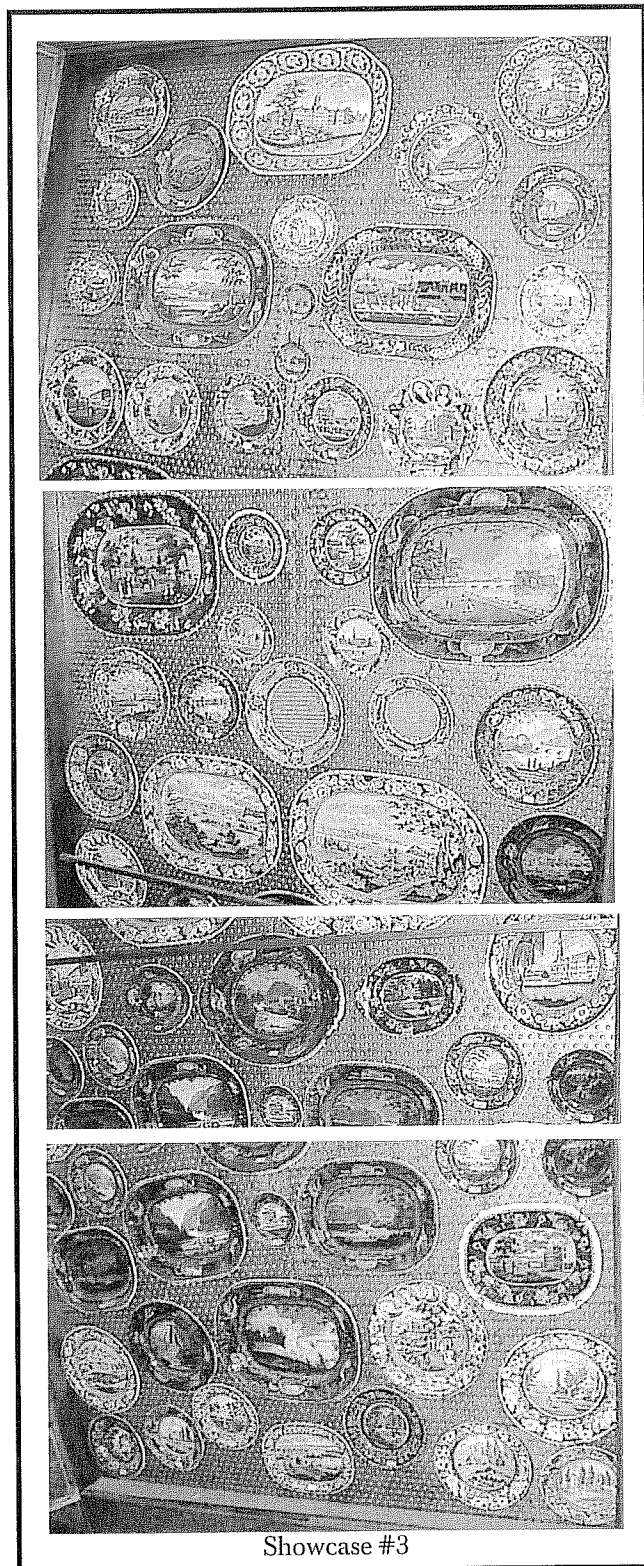
Showcase #1



Left: Show-case #1 contains quite a few great rarities. Please note the three white embossed rim cup plates by R.S.W. from the Acorn and Oak Leaf border series: "Octagon Church", "Boston State House" and "Staughton's Church". Below the "Battle of Bunker Hill" vegetable dish, you will see an extremely rare 6"d "Harvard College-End View" and a 5"d "Boston Court House" both also by R.S.W. from the Oak Leaf border series. To the right of this last plate, you'll find a 10"d "Constitution and Guerriere" plate by Wood from the Irregular Shell border series. Case #2 on the right, is shown in three sections. The upper section contains one piece which I had never seen prior to this visit - it is the small round piece to the right of the large "Upper Ferry Bridge" platter. It is a 5"d round, scalloped rim, leaf-shaped dish with the view "Upper Ferry Bridge" from the Eagle border series by Stubbs. The center section has a "Pickett's Charge" platter and a rather rare 10"d "Franklin's Tomb" plate to it's right. Below the 21" "Captiol, Washington" platter by Ridgway, you will find the large "Detroit" platter by Davenport from the Cities series. Below this, continued in the next section are others from this series: "Sandusky", "Columbus" and "Louisville". on the far left of this lowest section is an extremely rare 9 1/2" "Chillicothe (raft)" platter. This case also contains two pieces from the medallion series, a 9"d plate with four medallions and the view "Faulkborne Hall". This is by Andrew Stevenson from the Wild Rose border series. The other medallion is from the large scroll series by R. S. W. and contains two tiny medallions of "Washington" and "Lafayette". There are quite a few other views readily identifiable. How many can you identify?



Showcase #2



Showcase #3

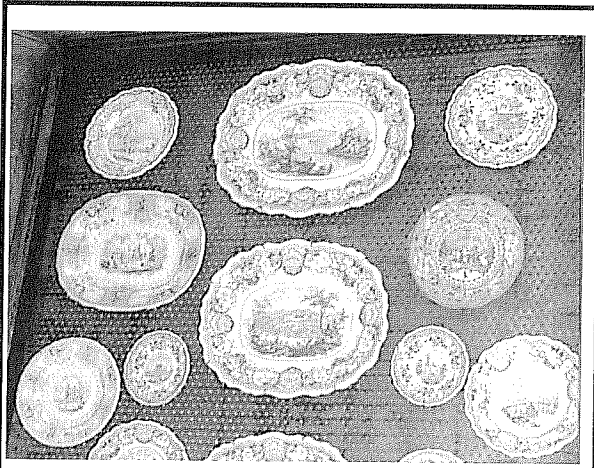
Showcase #3, above, displays several of Enoch Wood and Sons lovely Shell border pieces, notably a 21" platter "Castle Garden", a very rare "Hope Mill" soup tureen undertray, a 16" "Lake George" platter, a 14" "Niagara From the American Side" platter and two 13" platters, "Highlands, Hudson River" and "West Point". The two Stevensons also have several examples, including a two medallion "City Hotel, New York" and a four medallion "Park Theatre, New York", plus an extremely rare "Troy from Mt Ida" 10" platter, a 16 1/2" "New York From Heights Near Brooklyn" platter and a 20" "View of New York From Weehawk" platter. In my opinion, the three rarest pieces in this case are the 10"d "Highlands, North River" plate and the 7 1/2"d "Hurl Gate" plate, both by Stubbs and the lovely 10 1/2" platter, "Brooklyn Ferry" by Ralph Stevenson.



Showcase #4 (partial view)

Showcase #4 really holds some treasures. The upper section has on the far upper right, a partial view (my photography **does** leave a bit to be desired, but this case was especially difficult to shoot) of one of the rarest and most desirable platters in the field, namely an 11 1/2" "Temple of Fame...To The Memory of Commodore Perry" by Andrew Stevenson. Below that, and somewhat more visible are Mayers "Arms" including a "Pennsylvania", "New Jersey", "North Carolina", "South Carolina", "Virginia" and a "New York" beaded bowl. In the center is the rare 18 1/2" "States" platter, surrounded by plates depicting heroes of the War of 1812, from left to right "Major Gen'l Brown", "Pike", then two of "Lafayette" (yes, I know he was earlier than 1812) and on the right the "Washington" Liverpool and a "Jones of the Macedonia" and finally a "Capt. Hull of the Constitution". Of course, you should readily recognize the "Dutch Church" and the "Albany, Theatre" vegetable dishes. Not only does the lower section contain THE washbowl and pitcher, but it also has a four medallion cut-corner square bowl with the view "Dorney Court" from the Oak Leaf border series. On the shelf with the "Baltimore" pieces, there lurks a "Belleville on the Passaic" soup tureen by Wood and directly below that is a very rare small soup tureen by Ridgway with four little peg feet and the view "Almshouse, Boston". This is really a great collection!

As you can see, this Collection contains great rarities and "boring common" pieces all mixed together. What gives me great food for thought is this.... this woman and her husband, without *any* of the reference books we now take for granted,



Showcase #5

Showcase #5 is all reds and pinks, with a few mulberry that includes six platters from Adam's "U. S." views series. From the top we see the 20" "Falls of Niagara", a 17" "West Point", the outer two edges of a 15" "Harpers Ferry" (between section one and two), a 13" "Lake George", an 11" "White Mountains, New Hampshire" and a 10" "Skenectady on the Mohawk". Close inspection also reveals a large "Texian Campaigne" platter and a red "Buffalo on Lake Erie" vegetable dish from Wood's Celtic China series. We do not list red/pink as one of the known colors in this series. Learn something new every day.

scoured the country-side and managed to assembled the only known examples of at least four views. Remember the time-frame, 1885, prior to the automobile and its resultant mobility. Prior to electricity and prior to trade periodicals, where one could locate specialist dealers. How did they do it? Did they hop into their buggy and knock on farmhouse doors, as is described in the 1913 work by Camehl in "The Blue China



Showcase #6

The last case is filled with blues and purple and includes a fine representation of pieces by Wood, Clews and Jackson.

Book"? Mrs. Morse donated her Collection by the time that book was available. Did they own one of the early volumes of Halsey's great work, "Early New York on Dark Blue Staffordshire Pottery"? How did they know what to buy and where did they find it (just around Worcester)? Interesting questions.

*All photographs courtesy, American Antiquarian Society*

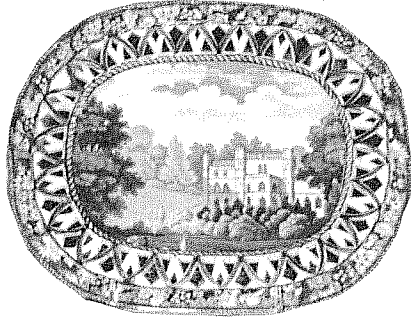
# THE Q China and Glass Quarterly

Volume I

April/May 1997

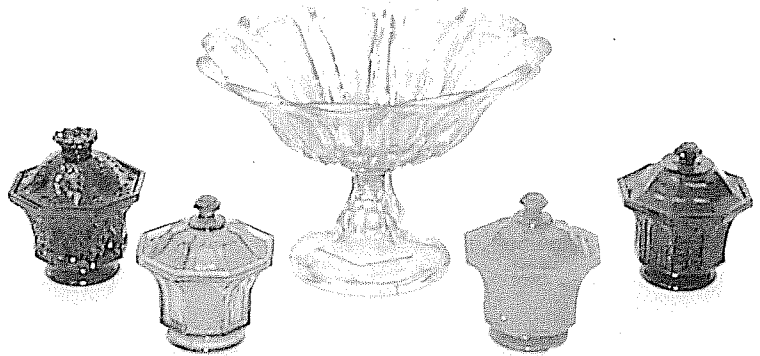
No. 2

## The Grapevine Border Series

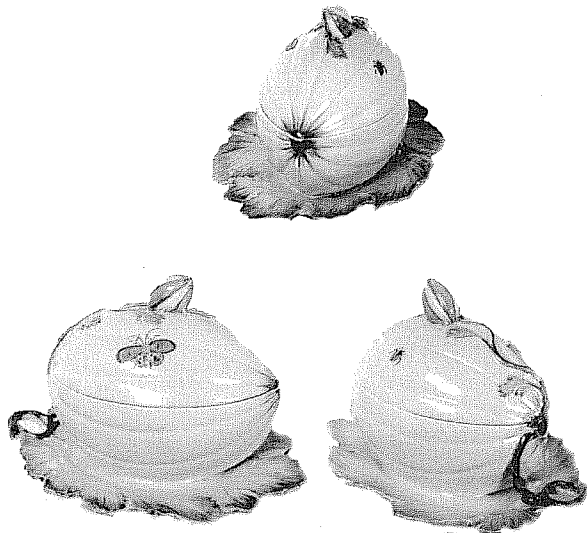


Openwork undertray Wellcombe, Warwickshire. The view taken from Neale's "The Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland"

## A Class Glass Collection



## Yellow-Glazed Earthenware



Three views of the same Wedgwood gray tureen in a melon form, placed on a leaf-shaped undertray. Highlighted in green, orange, red and black. Note the butterfly and the ladybug on the sides. It was these "fruit" tureens that caused Josiah Wedgwood to experiment with the yellow glazes.

## Meet the Collectors



Mrs. Emma DeF. Morse's coffee pot "Baltimore Assembly Rooms" and "Baltimore Almshouse" by an unknown maker (probably Davenport) at The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

W  
h  
a  
t'  
s  
  
I  
n  
s  
i  
d  
e

*Plus So Much More.....*