



## Source Prints (Not Just Pretty Pictures)

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Database Discoveries – Contribution # 14

Transferware Collectors Club

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The Transferware Collectors Club (TCC) database, now with over 11,000 records, also has well over 750 source prints, the supposed inspiration to the potter of the scene or depiction on his ceramic creation. The source print is sometimes a real life scene and sometimes imaginary. Many of the American category prints are found by searching references such as Ellouise Baker Larsen's *American Historical Views on Staffordshire China*, but sometimes the editor must search for the source print by other methods.

These source prints are not just pretty pictures or works of art, but are often a different type of clue as to the scene itself and its location. Source prints can be critical to the dating of the ceramic piece. The following are but a few examples of the use of source prints.

### **Example A. STAUGHTON'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA**

We have most of the source prints for the Ridgway series of Beauties of America, but up until the summer of 2012, we had lacked one for the view known as Staughton's Church. Published as part of James F. O'Gorman's open journal titled, "*A New York Architect Visits Philadelphia in 1822*," we found reference to architect's sketches by John or Robert Mills apparently preparing for the construction of the Baptist Church on Sansom Street in Philadelphia, then known as the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia. In 1822, a New York architect, John McComb, Jr., visited Philadelphia to draw various buildings there.

The Baptist Church was completed in 1812, and McComb apparently had stumbled upon the original architect's sketches preparatory to its construction. The architect is variously known as John Mills (TCC database), or Robert Mills (McComb's notes). We now know that the Baptist Church later became known as "Staughton's Church," named after William Staughton (1770-1829), minister of that church for many years. It could be that Ridgway was aware of these sketches and took his example from the original architect's renderings which O'Gorman had included in his journal. Shown below are the two sketches (Figures 1 and 2), the second of which sure looks like the view on Ridgway's' plate (Figure 3).

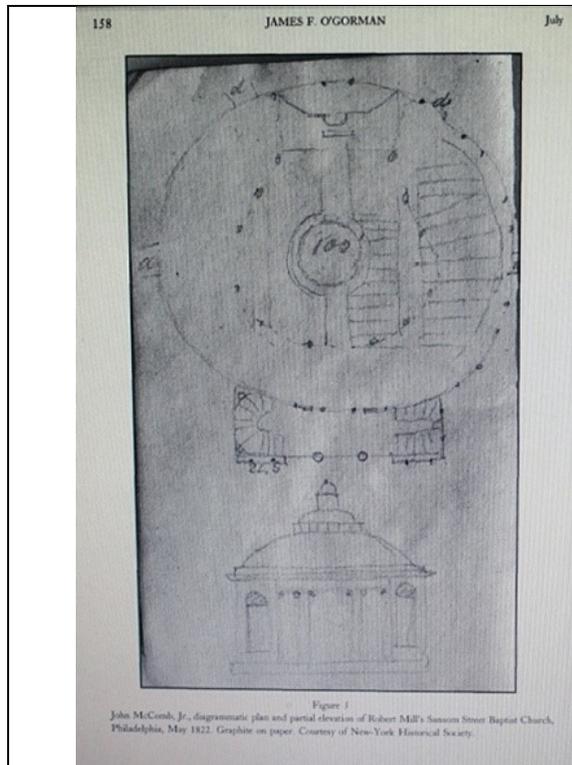


Fig. 1 - Diagrammatic plans and elevation of Mill's (sic) Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia

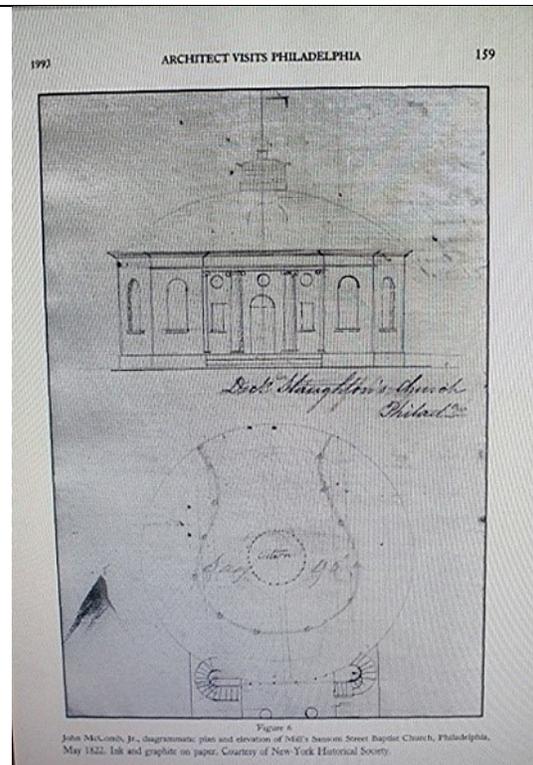


Fig. 2 - Diagrammatic plans and elevation of Mill's (sic) Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia

Text beneath each sketch, above: "John McComb, Jr., diagrammatic plans and elevation of Mill's (sic) Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia May 1822. Ink and graphite on paper. Courtesy of New York Historical Society."



### Example B. RAMNUGUR, NEAR BENARES ON THE GANGES

Another example of the importance of source prints is for the identification of the view depicted in the ceramic piece. Here is a sauce tureen, 7.75 by 4.75 inches and 6.5 inches high including the lid. The tureen is pictured in Arman1974, p. 67, as "Unidentified View a" with four other unidentified views in this shell border series by Enoch Wood & Son, which are designated "a through e". Arman1977 pictures the same tureen and designates it #153A, on p. 23, and in fact this view remained unidentified prior to the location of its source print. That source print was drawn and engraved by Thomas and William Daniell in 1795, and it bears the title, *Ramnugur, near Benares on the Ganges*. See TCC1999-, Vol. XI, No. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 16-17, "Untitled View on Shell Border Tureen Identified", by TCC member, Len Kling.

A small two-masted ship at anchor is approached by a barge with many oarsmen, and with what appears to be a dragon headed mast and an Oriental pavilion. While the source print shows the sailing vessel flying a version of the Union Jack, the tureen appears to show one or perhaps two American flags, one of which does not appear on the source print. Perhaps Wood altered the transfer to make it more appealing for the American market. The nearby sea shore is dominated by cliffs on the top of which are buildings. This is one of several views in Wood's Irregular Shell border series that are untitled. See "Shell Border, Irregular Center - Unidentified View g" for the view on the lid to this piece.



Fig. 4 - *Ramnugur, near Benares on the Ganges*



Fig. 5: detail from tureen base - *Ramnugur, near Benares on the Ganges*



Fig. 6 – source print *Ramnugur, near Benares on the Ganges*; Daniell, Thomas and William, artist and engraver: Daniell 1795-1808; 23.5" x 17" (approximate), c. 1795.

### **Example C: DUTCH CHURCH AT ALBANY**

Often overlooked in the TCC database is the wonderful presentation of over 750 source prints to the scenes depicted on historical Staffordshire and the other transferware categories. As noted, however, these source prints provide additional information regarding the scene depicted and later presented on ceramics. Recently we have discovered the source print to the Dutch Church at Albany. The view is entitled “*A View Of The Late Protestant Dutch Church In The City Of Albany.*” This appears on a pitcher, 8 inches tall and 9.5 inches width

Beneath the title on the print are the words: “The Venerable Edifice was situate at the junction of Stock Market & Court Streets. It was erected A.D. 1715 and Pulled Down A.D. 1806. It included within its walls, the site of a church, the corner stone whereof was laid by Rutger Jacobson A.D. 1656.” The origins of the source print are obscure and a number of editions appear to have been issued. Examples can be seen in the Library of Congress Digital Collections online, the New York Public Library Digital Collections online and in the collections of the Albany Institute of History and Art. Without that source print we would not have been aware of the information regarding the church. Search Dutch Church at Albany to find it in the TCC database.



Fig. 7 – source print *A View of the Late Protestant Dutch Church in the City of Albany*; Snyder, Henry W. and Hooker, Philip, engraver and artist. Origins of print unknown.

The view on this pitcher is found with at least two borders: the border with flowers and scroll work seen here, by Andrew Stevenson and the Acorn and Oak Leaves border, with Four Medallions, by Ralph Stevenson. The original Dutch Church at Albany, the oldest church in upstate New York, was a blockhouse church built in 1656. The big stone church was built around it in 1715, and it was demolished in 1806. This view is often accompanied by vignettes of Erie Canal views on either side of the pitcher.



Fig. 8 - *Dutch Church in the City of Albany, New York*



Fig. 9 – additional view, of the Erie Canal. on the same jug

**Example D: AMERICAN SCENERY: WILLIAM RIDGWAY & CO.**

Another critical value of source prints and their discovery, is the dating of a particular potter's works. Up until recently, because of the marks on many of William Ridgway's series of American Scenery (also known as the Narrow Lace Border series), we had dated this series between 1830 and 1834, the dates that the pottery was run by William Ridgway alone (initials WR). In 1835 and until 1854, the firm was known as William Ridgway & Co. That does not seem to make much difference until you become aware that most all of the views in this series are after the engravings from the drawings of William H. Bartlett. These drawings were created around 1838-1839 and were set forth in the two volume work by N.P. Willis in 1840. So obviously, William Ridgway, operating as that pottery from 1830-1834, could not have used Bartlett's artwork which was created some four to seven years later. Because the "American Scenery" series was based on the drawings from Bartlett dated 1840, and the Ridgway firm closed in c. 1854, we know that the series was produced for 14 to 15 years at the most. Without that Bartlett date, we would have assumed production from c. 1830 to 1854, a period of 24 years. It wasn't a matter of intermixed designs leading to a difficulty in dating later pieces. It was a matter of the firm using any and all of the marks from 1830 onward: WR, WR & Co., WR S & Co., for the 14 years of production.

	
Fig. 10 – reverse mark, showing W.R. (William Ridgway)	Fig. 11 – reverse mark, showing W.R.S. & Co (William Ridgway, Son & Co)

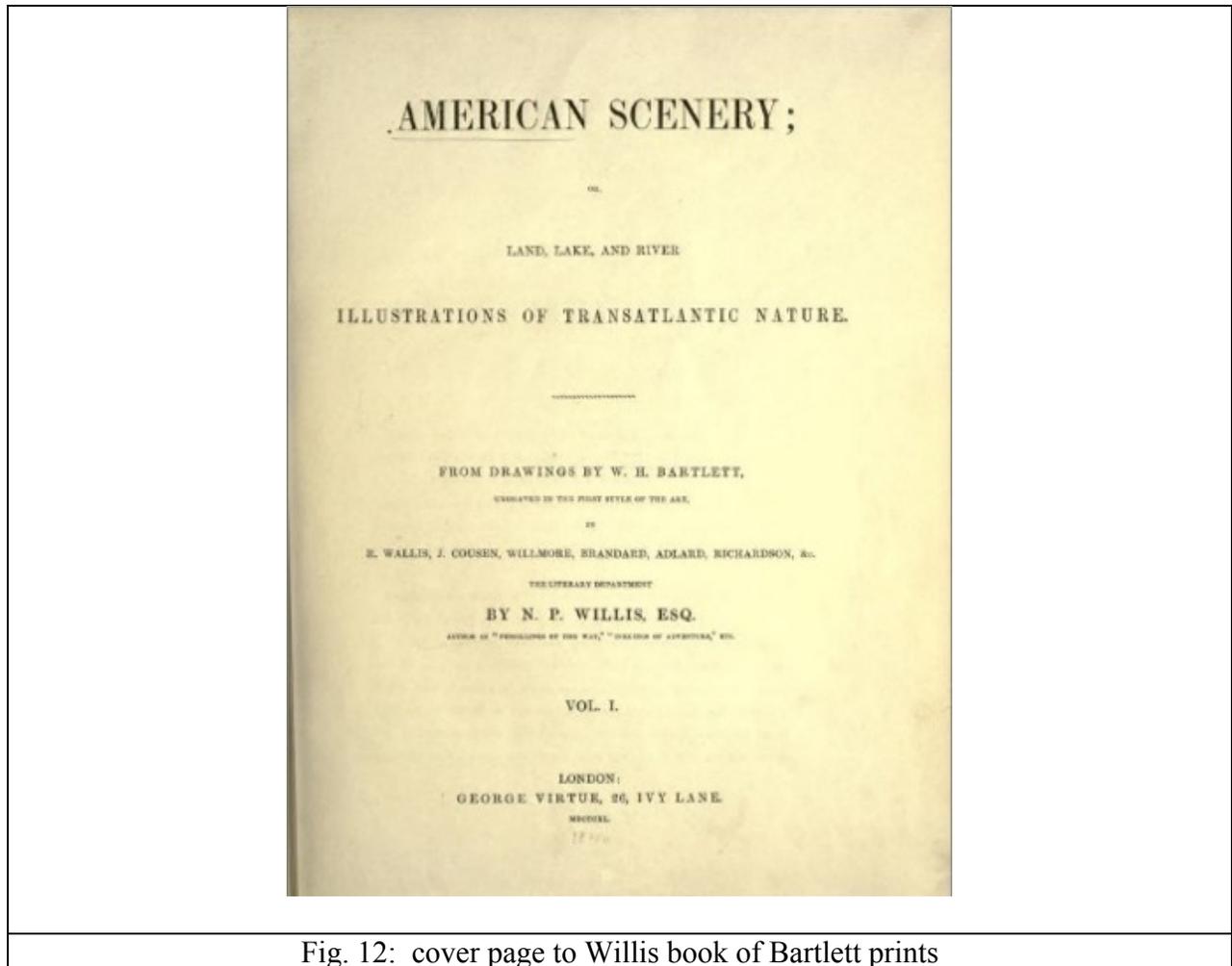


Fig. 12: cover page to Willis book of Bartlett prints

If you would like to flip through all of Bartlett's beautiful works, here are the citations to the online archive of the two volume set: It also makes interesting reading.

<https://archive.org/details/americanscenery02willrich>

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**References on following page**

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