



Surprising Spout Prints
Database Discoveries – Contribution # 10
Transferware Collectors Club

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Every once in a while, when working as an editor in the TCC Pattern and Source Print Database, one is completely surprised. It might be when a marked piece in a pattern surfaces, and it suddenly becomes possible to identify the maker of that pattern. It might be when one finds evidence of copper plates being purchased by one potter at another potter's bankruptcy sale, explaining why the patterns of the two potters appear to be identical. It might be when one finds evidence of a pattern being re-issued under a different name decades after it was originally introduced. Or, as in the case at point in this article, it might be when one finds some unexpected pattern anomalies.

Recently I was intrigued when working with several patterns, used on tea and coffee wares. More specifically, the intrigue had to do with the varying spout prints found on these pieces. In fact, three of the spout prints appeared to be quite out of context, if not downright bizarre. Yet, as luck would have it, one of them led to the identification of the maker of two of the coffee pots in question.

The first tale begins with two “Gardening” coffee pots, each with differing spout prints. Fig. 1 illustrates one version of the coffee pot with a floral and botanical border and a similar floral and botanical spout print (the latter unfortunately only partially visible) that are both quite compatible with the center view, featuring a lady watering plants in her garden. This coffee pot is marked underneath with a printed floral cartouche surrounding the words ‘Opaque China,’ written in script (Fig. 1a).



Fig. 1 - “Gardening” coffee pot.



Fig. 1a – “Gardening” printed mark.

Next, we encounter the second "Gardening" coffee pot (Fig. 2) printed with the same center view, but a completely different border and spout print (Fig. 2a).



Fig. 2 - "Gardening" coffee pot.



Fig. 2a - "Gardening" coffee pot spout print.

This time, the spout print has nothing at all to do with the refined lady in a garden watering her plants. Rather, it features a primitive figure in a completely different time and place, holding a bow and arrow, presumably out hunting his next meal! Even more surprisingly, this coffee pot is marked underneath with a title mark (Fig. 2b) that makes no reference to the main "Gardening" center view found on the coffee pot. Rather, the title, "Indian Chief", clearly relates to the spout print. The initials 'J.H. & Co.' in the mark indicate the maker was Joseph Heath & Co; this attribution is corroborated by a surviving 1839 written invoice that lists "Indian Chief" as a Joseph Heath & Co pattern. Figure 3 shows an "Indian Chief" creamer in the database that displays the complete view from which the spout print was taken.

Interestingly, we find that the different border used on the second coffee pot is, in fact, fittingly the border J.H. & Co. used for the “Indian Chief” pattern found on the creamer. One wonders why these two patterns were co-mingled on the coffee pot.



Fig. 2b – Coffee pot printed mark.



Fig. 3 – “Indian Chief” creamer.

For the second tale, we move on to two unmarked “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pots. The center view on each coffee pot depicts a seated mother engaged at play with her child in an outdoor setting. With this center view, one would expect to find both a floral and botanical border and a floral and botanical spout print, reflecting the nature motifs of the scene. However, neither coffee pot features the expected floral and botanical border and spout print. Instead, each is printed with a different out-of-context border and spout print. One of the coffee pots (Fig. 4), bears a spout print showing a fairly detailed view of a domed cathedral in an urban venue (Fig. 4a).



Fig. 4 – “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot.

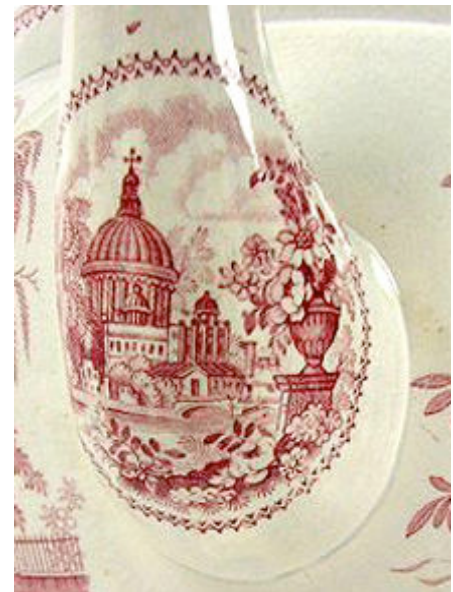


Fig. 4a – “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot spout print.

This pattern is found in the database under the title “Cathedral” printed on an unmarked sugar box and a marked saucer, maker unknown (Fig. 5). The saucer, not illustrated here, interestingly bears a printed cartouche title, “Cathedral”, along with an impressed propeller, like that used by Joseph Heath & Co – and possibly another maker (Fig. 5a).



Fig. 5 – “Cathedral” sugar box.



Fig. 5a – “Cathedral” saucer (not shown) printed mark.

Examination of the “Cathedral” sugar box, shows that its charming bird border is the same border used on the “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot! Once again, we have co-mingling of patterns, with a tentative attribution of a maker (Joseph Heath & Co., based on the impressed propeller used principally by Heath). Moving on to the second “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot, we again find another case of two co-mingled patterns. With the second “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot (Fig. 6), we have a real sense of *déjà vu*. Note the now familiar border and spout print (Fig. 6a) found on this coffee pot.



Fig. 6 – “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot.



Fig. 6a - “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot spout print.

Again, the out-of-context border and spout print are from the “Indian Chief” pattern, here co-mingled on a coffee pot with the “Mother and Child at Play” center view. The coffee pot itself is unmarked, but in this case, knowing that Joseph Heath & Co. is the maker of the “Indian Chief” pattern, we can make a clear attribution for this version of the “Mother and Child at Play” coffee pot. We find it intriguing that a maker, in this case J.H. & Co, would co-mingle a border and spout print from one pattern (“Indian Chief”) with two separate and distinct center patterns (“Gardening”) and (“Mother and Child at Play”) on these two different coffee pots. Likewise we are intrigued by the possibility that the same maker may also have co-mingled the border and spout print from the “Cathedral” pattern with the “Mother and Child at Play” pattern.

As the reader can see, diminutive spout prints found on tea and coffee wares may not demand much attention when viewing the overall piece, but they do sometimes prove to be interesting and to offer some real surprises.



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