

# Climbing the Tea Leaf Family Tree: Early Ancestors (Continued)

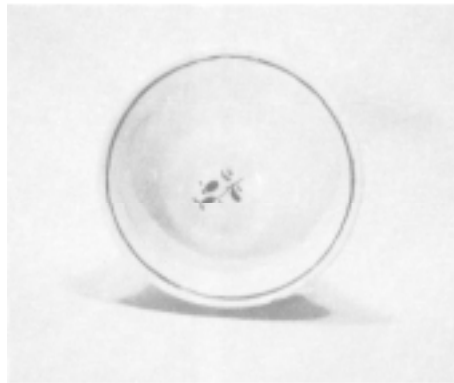
and is also trimmed with a dark-blue enamel.

Beside this piece a comparable pitcher in white ironstone in the New York shape and decorated with the early Teaberry design is shown. They both reflect the fussy rococo style popular in the 1850s.

It was during this decade that the use of the overall copper lustre glaze pretty much faded away and lustre decoration was restricted to accent banding or small floral sprigs such as our beloved Tea Leaf and its early "cousins," all used to enliven the stark white bodies of ironstone china we treasure today.

Before closing, I'd like to illustrate a few early hand-painted decorations found on other English earthenwares of the 1810-40 period. A glance at these will illustrate motifs which may well have inspired our Tea Leaf design of the 1850s and later.

First is shown an early pearlware handleless cup and saucer, ca. 1820, which is hand-painted with colorful flowers similar to the Tea Leaf. This piece is in Mary Bertram's collection.

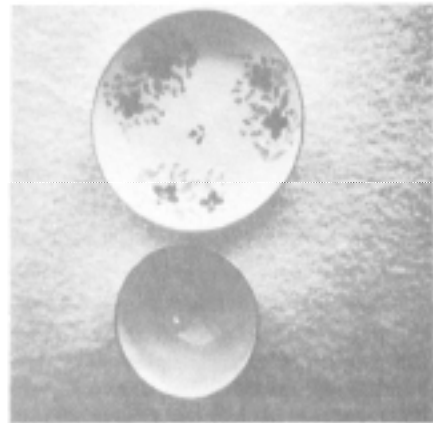


*Large earthenware washbowl features green and red sprigs resembling oversized TeaLeaf sprigs, ca. 1830.*

From my collection is the large earthenware bowl, originally from a bowl and pitcher set, ca. 1830. It is glazed in white and the rim is molded. It features embossed flower baskets around the inside. It is also hand-painted with large red and green sprigs which, if you look closely, have a large lobed "berry" and three serrated leaves-sort of an oversized

Tea Leaf cousin.

Although we may never know exactly who "invented" our Tea Leaf design, I hope this brief study will help you better realize what a rich and varied history it has-its ancient lineage stretching back over 1000 years.



*Early pearlware handleless cup and saucer with a three-leaf sprig in the center.*

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## About this Educational Supplement:

This is the first of a four part series documenting the 1993 convention presentations. In the April issue, Dale Abrams will review his slide show covering the 1840's and 1850's and Kimmey Decker will cover the 1860-1880 era. Carole Chadwick will complete the series in May with pieces and body styles from the last decade of the 19th century.