

# Climbing the Tea Leaf Family Tree:

## Copper-Lustre Decorated Ironstone 1840-1860

**A Program presented by Dale Abrams at the  
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About the photos: *Top row, Left-Gothic coffee pots, creamer and sugar, pointed (conical) finial; center-rare Gothic covered pitcher, floral finial; right-interesting hexagonal-shaped, cockcomb handled coffeepot which can also be found in Teaberry. Continuing down right column-Livesley & Powell Ring O'Hearts, 2 coffeepots and sugar bowl; Walley Grape Octagon sauce tureen; Paneled Grape coffeepot.*



It was not long after the turn of the 19th century that English potters introduced ironstone china, primarily for export to the United States.

Although John Turner potted the first of the inexpensive and durable opaque earthenwares, his pottery soon went bankrupt. In 1813, Charles Mason and his sons perfected and patented pieces which they christened "Patent Ironstone China" and became the most well-known of the early ironstone potters.

Although Mason held an exclusive patent to the ironstone formula until about 1830, by that time many of the other 150 potters in the Staffordshire district had developed formulas of their own.

Up until the 1850's, white ironstone body styles were relatively simple and geometric. After that time, however, the body styles began to become more intricately potted with different shapes, panels, impressed and embossed designs, decorative handles and three-dimensional finials-the early geometric shapes blossomed into pieces with

scallops, foliage and flowers.

In decorating as well as body styles, the simple evolved into the more complex. By the mid-1800's, white ironstone had been decorated with numerous motifs...copies of oriental patterns, historical blue, flow blue, and others. In about the mid-1840's, however, lustre decoration was once again thrust into the forefront of popularity.

Although it is impossible to exactly date when the use of each different decorative motif began, I am relatively confident that the items presented are from the 1840-60 time period.

Above, we see simple banding starting on the earliest of the body styles, "Gothic," potted by numerous companies including Livesley & Powell, the elusive "J.F.," and Edward Walley.

At the right and on page 2, we can look at some lustre banded "transitional shapes"-still slightly paneled but beginning to blossom into more full-bodied pieces.