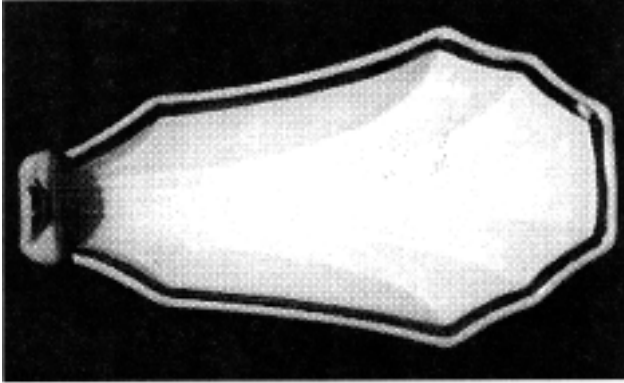


Livesley, Powell & Co. Gothic Shell; Est. Registry:1850-1859



Edward Walley Gothic Shell; Est. Registry 1850-1859



Jacob Furnival & Co. (Attributed) Grape Octagon Chelsea Grape; Est. Registry: 1850-1859



Jacob Furnival & Co. (Attributed) Grape Octagon Pinwheel Est. Registry:

Notice the presence of one handle on a mitten shape that resembles either a shell or a leaf. The pickles are often adorned with embossed leaves, grapes, or berries. The handle is sometimes pierced or reticulated.

Is it a pickle tray or a gravy or sauce boat undertray?

As we continue our study into the fourth quarter of the 19th century, we become increasingly aware of a steady decline in both the number of mitten-shaped pickle trays and the use of shell and leaf forms which predominated the third quarter. Photos 44 through 86 capture occasional rectangular and oval mitten-shaped designs by potters such as Alfred Meakin, Arthur J. Wilkinson, Wedgwood & Co., Thomas Furnival, and J.&E. Mayer. The heavy shell and leaf embossments are no longer present.

What are the two-handled oval or rectangular dishes in the photos? Many people have coined the terminology gravy or sauce boat underplate. Perhaps they, too, are pickles or pickle trays.

References from 11 catalogs distributed by manufacturers, importers, and retailers of ironstone between 1874 and 1897 and one bill of lading from Powell, Bishop & Stonier dated March 31, 1890, reveal the following:

- The terminology gravy boat underplate or sauce boat underplate was not used. Instead, items were identified as “pickles,” “pickle dishes,” and “pickle plates.”
- In open stock, pickles were purchased independently of gravy or sauce boats.
- In crate lots, the ratio of pickles to gravy boats varied. In some cases, more pickles were included.
- Sauce boats for which stands were available were identified. When a sauce boat stand was available, a pickle was also available.
- Shell or other mitten-shaped pickles were still manufactured in the fourth quarter of the 19th century

Where were the pickle trays placed on the table?

Now that we have established a new name for those glorious dishes we have so very much cherished, let’s take a look at where these pickle trays were placed on the table. Throughout the Victorian era, table setting varied; special importance was placed on achieving the proper symmetry

In the 1860s, the most prominent dish was usually placed in the center of the table while items of less importance were placed first at the ends and then at the sides of the table. Pickle trays filled the spaces in between. It was considered adequate to have four pickles to serve four to six people. In 1885, *Godey’s Lady’s Book* dictated that pickles as well as butter, jelly, and salt and pepper should be placed at the corners of the table.

What was placed on the pickle dishes?

In 1858, *Mrs. Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* cautioned the housewife to not keep pickles in earthenware because the lead in the glazing combines with the vinegar of the pickles. Earthenware is a term commonly used for ironstone.

According to the 1861 *The American Practical Cookery-Book or House-Keeping Made Easy*, the first course of a three-course dinner party would include soup, meat from the soup, and “kickshaws.” This term is derived from the French phrase “quelques chose,” which literally translated means “several items.” Kickshaws could be either hot or cold. Examples include relishes, olives, pickles, horseradish, oysters either raw or cooked, anchovies