

Curator's Choice

A Taste for Classicism

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This platter, decorated with the Corrella pattern, was found in a Baltimore privy that had been used by the family of Nathan and Matilda Mansfield when they lived on Sharp Street between 1866 and 1889 (Basalik 1994). The platter is a blue printed earthenware dish with a classical design of a statue of a woman holding a child amid a number of Grecian urns (Figure 1). A mark on the back of the platter (Figure 2) shows that it was manufactured by Barker and Son, a pottery firm in Burslem, England operating between 1850 and 1860 (Godden 1991:55).



Figure 1. Platter found in Baltimore privy with Corrella pattern.

The Corrella pattern was made by at least three different English pottery companies: Barker and Son (1850-1860), Cork, Edge, and Malkin (1860-1870), and Edge and Malkin (1870-1903) (Godden 1991). Many pottery companies copied popular designs, but made minor changes to avoid being sued for copying another company's design. Firms going out of business also sold the copper plates used to create the designs to other potteries. Since Barker and Sons went out of business the same year Cork, Edge and Malkin began operations, it is likely that the latter firm purchased plates from Barker and Sons. Although classical motifs on printed pottery were most commonly produced between the late 1820s and late 1840s (Samford 1997), when the neoclassical movement in architecture and furniture made these motifs fashionable, the manufacture of this pattern into at least the 1870s shows that classical motifs remained of interest to consumers.

Families with enough money often bought sets of dishes decorated with the same pattern. In addition to the platter, the Corrella pattern was also found on plates (Figure 3) and bowls from the privy. This finding suggests that the Mansfield family purchased an entire set of dishes in this classical pattern.



Maker's mark with "B & S" on back of platter.



Plate found in same Baltimore privy with the same Corrella pattern.

References Cited

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