

CHILDREN'S POTTERY

By Mo Wajselfish and Johnny Young
Leatherwood Antiques, PO Box 1676, Sandwich, MA 02563-1676
www.leatherwoodantiques.com 508-420-1433

Children's pottery started around 1790 in Staffordshire England (there was already a "cottage industry" for pottery in the area) after a surge in interest of children's products as a commercial entity and the popularity of children's books. The many subjects produced in English Children's Pottery have long fascinated and charmed us. Children's pottery subjects have touched every aspect of life, and many were created in order to inspire and educate children.



Most collectors start with "christening" pottery otherwise known as "name" mugs, plates, and jugs. The introduction is simple, one sees one's spouse or friend's name on a piece of pottery and there is an instant bond. Some just collect the names of their loved ones while others go on to collect more subjects. Of course, the dearest subjects are subjects that play on your heart strings which are family, pets and values. Some subjects give us a window into the daily life and values of the 19th Century and the philosophy of the maxims and mottos are relevant today.



A few of our favorite sayings are:

"Make hay while the sun shines"

"Know the value of money, try to borrow some"

"Nothing is impossible to a willing mind"

"A Good Man passeth by an offence and a Noble Spirit scorneth revenge"

These are good values for children to learn and take into adult life.

Reward subjects are also popular (children were rewarded for good behavior by tokens of pottery) because just like then, they are relevant to adults as well as to a child. Some of our favorites are:

"For a good child" (boy or girl)

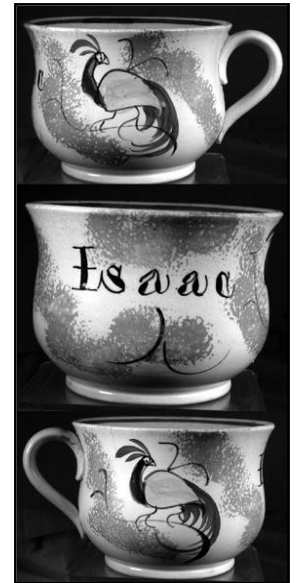
"For my dear child"

"For my favorite"

"For a diligent child"

"For being good at church"

When production started early in the 19th Century, they were aimed at the wealthy population crafted in creamwares, pearlwares and canary glazes were decorated with clear transfers and illustrations depicting children dressed in finest clothes and sometimes with expensive toys, ponies and country manors. There were as many as sixty workshops and small factories around Staffordshire sometimes employing child labor and some lasting for only a very short period. Later in the 19th Century, production increased and quality of transfers and pottery deteriorated. As well as the domestic market, the potters also produced pottery aimed at the export market; the American market and European. For the American market they produced American subjects from patriotic to folklore.



In making these objects, a craftsman transferred a print from an engraved copper plate to an unglazed earthenware surface. First, he worked paint into the grooved lines etched onto the plate. Afterward, he'd wiped off the excess paint before applying a sheet of damp tissue paper to the surface and putting the

CHILDREN'S POTTERY

By Mo Wajselfish and Johnny Young
Leatherwood Antiques, PO Box 1676, Sandwich, MA 02563-1676
www.leatherwoodantiques.com 508-420-1433



piece in a press. This paper became known as the "pull". The "pull" was then removed by slightly heating it and cutting it into shape to fit the ceramic. To assure color adhesion, the "pull" was applied to the ceramic surface and rubbed thoroughly. The piece would then be dipped into water to remove the paper and fired at low temps to adhere the color. Finally, it would be glazed and fired at a higher temperature to create the desired object of affection.

Objects of affection they are. Some remind us of our childhood, some educate us, and some instill religion and life values while others are just pure charming.