

An Overview of the 2016 TCC Annual Meeting

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The 17th annual TCC meeting was held in Charlottesville, Virginia, October 23-26 2016. This year's participants experienced a number of lectures by TCC members, including guest lectures by TCC members who are historical archaeologists working in Central Virginia at the presidential homes of James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. This combination of collectors, dealers, and researchers provided a well rounded conference where everyone was able to learn from one another. The meeting was organized by Leslie Bouterie, ably assisted by her husband, Larry.

Sunday events and lecture:



The Annual Meeting kicked off on Sunday night at the Doubletree in Charlottesville, Virginia. After a lovely dinner and welcome reception, participants enjoyed the first of a series of excellent lectures. TCC member and collector Nick Routson presented *Sharing my Love of Old Blue- A Collector's Perspective*. In his presentation, Nick, a self proclaimed "Encyclopaedic Collector", shared his extensive knowledge of blue transferwares produced for the American market. Participants delighted in seeing a fraction of his impressive collection. His presentation showcased many of the popular scenes and themes that made their way from Staffordshire to America. Despite trade interruptions during

various wars, America proved to be a lucrative market. Familiar images of American heroes, state houses, and historic events made it clear why these wares were so successful in the United States.

Monday events and lectures:

On Monday, the conference started bright and early at James Madison's Montpelier located in Orange, Virginia. There, we participated in a tour of the house and some of the archaeology sites. These tours highlighted the Madison's who lived in the main house, and the enslaved domestic community who lived in structures outside of the main house, in what is referred to as the South Yard.



Dr. Mary Furlong-Minkoff, Curator of Archaeological Collections, had a hands on session set up for us in the morning. During the session, she laid out a number of unidentified transferware pieces that have been found through excavations on the Montpelier property to see if anyone



could identify them. A number of TCC members gave her information regarding what the pieces could be. This provided the Montpelier Archaeology Department with one absolute match and



about three possible matches, which is very exciting!

After lunch, we had the opportunity to hear three speakers discuss their research. The first was Dr. Matthew Reeves, the Director of Archaeology and Landscapes at Montpelier. His presentation talked about how the excavations around the slave quarters at Montpelier have revealed that the enslaved community had different transferwares compared to what has been found through excavations around the main house. This indicates that the enslaved community at Montpelier was actively purchasing their own objects to be used in and around their own homes which can display identity.

The second presentation was given by Pat Halfpenny, Curator Emerita of Ceramics and Glass at Winterthur Museum, Wilmington, Delaware, who discussed how she is researching to learn about the origins of pattern designs, specifically trying to determine who was the designer, the engraver, and the manufacturer of vessels. Through her research, she was able to identify different characteristics that could aid in identifying who a designer or engraver was and where they were getting the ideas for their designs. This presentation was extremely informative



because it revealed how many individuals are involved in the manufacture of one copper plate and how all of these individuals can influence the design of one pattern.

The third and final presentation was given by Richard Halliday who discussed the research he is doing on the process of designing and creating a copper plate. Richard is a transferware scholar, author, and Spode Museum Trustee. His dissertation research focuses on recording the

process of engraving a copper plate. This is extremely important since there is only one engraver still employed and soon it could be a forgotten skill. His presentation followed the work of one engraver, documenting every step as he went. It was amazing to see all of the steps and

just how time consuming and tedious the engraving of one copper plate is. Richard's presentation left us on the edge of our seats since he is still waiting to record the final steps in the process: the transfer from the copper plate to the vessel. We all are anxiously waiting to see the final product!

Monday evening ended back at the DoubleTree Hotel with a show and discuss session. Many members participated in this and provided wonderful information and detail about their pieces.

Tuesday events and lecture:

On Tuesday morning, Leslie Bouterie, TCC Database of Patterns and Sources category editor, gave an interesting and lively presentation on the use of bees and beekeeping as a decorative motif in 19th century transferware patterns. Leslie taught us that beekeeping was a popular activity during the 19th century, so if you see a transfer print with a bee motif, you are looking at a depiction of daily life. Honey made by bees had many uses in 19th century England. It was used as a food and sweetener, wax, an ingredient in alcoholic drinks, and for medicine. In England, beekeeping was initially a cottage industry rather than an industrial endeavor, as it is today. As a result, bee motifs are often part of idyllic rural scenes. Additionally, bees and beekeeping equipment are usually shown with flowers rather than crops; and patterns that use beekeeping equipment as a motif, often have both flowers and people present.



On Tuesday afternoon we travelled to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello located south of Charlottesville, Virginia. The afternoon consisted of a house tour and self-guided tours around the grounds. The house tour presented members with new information about our third president. We learned that his home at Monticello was designed with unique aspects, specific to Jefferson's personality. In addition to the house tour, many walked along Mulberry Row, through the gardens, and through the various working areas that exist under the home (such as the

kitchen, smoke house, and ice house). Mulberry Row was particularly meaningful, being the area that many of the plantation's slaves lived out their days. It is evident that the Thomas Jefferson Foundation is trying to bring forward the story of the enslaved community who lived and worked at Monticello.

Wednesday events and lectures:

On Wednesday, October 26, we had the pleasure of listening to three interesting and diverse lectures. The first lecture was given by Ron Fuchs, Reeves collection curator at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia. During his talk, Ron discussed how English potters and engravers used various transfer print themes to make their wares more desirable to American consumers. Transfer prints that portrayed patriotic themes and historical events were among the most popular ways that the potters pandered to the American market. As a result, transfer prints are often commemorative of a person, place, thing, or specific date. English engravers were so dedicated to producing wares for Americans that they were even willing to produce prints that depicted British defeat during the Revolutionary War. Printed wares also served to unify and spread ideas. For example, as early as the 1770s transfer prints were employed to promote anti-slavery ideals, this speaks to the importance and prominence of transferwares in early American daily life.

The second lecture was given by Jack Gary, Director of Archaeology and Landscapes at Thomas Jefferson's retirement home, Poplar Forest. Jack discussed the changing role of Poplar Forest throughout Jefferson's lifetime. Initially, the estate was solely viewed by Jefferson as a tobacco plantation that he could use to pay down his debts. Later in his life, he viewed the home as a retirement retreat. Thomas Jefferson's transfer print assemblage at Poplar Forest is reflected in the archaeology that was conducted at the site. His transfer prints largely consisted of the Oxford and Cambridge series, and Willow patterned ceramics. Jack asserts that people often chose transfer prints that reflected their interests and ideals. He uses the Oxford and Cambridge series to support this statement. The Oxford and Cambridge Series depicts the architecture of educational buildings, and during Jefferson's time at Poplar Forest, he was designing the University of Virginia. Perhaps he was inspired by the Oxford and Cambridge series. The Oxford and Cambridge Series also has an octagonal border in the center of the plates and platters. Octagons are a repetitive theme at Poplar Forest since the center of the house is actually constructed in the shape of an octagon.

Jack also reminded us that although Jefferson did some of the ceramics buying for the plantation, the women who accompanied him there should be credited with much of the purchasing of ceramics for the household. Specifically, his granddaughters and possibly his daughter Martha, who all spent significant amounts of time at Poplar Forest, likely had much say in which patterns were purchased for the home.

The final presentation on Wednesday was given by Lynsey Bates, Archaeological Analyst at Monticello. During her talk, Lynsey discussed the ceramics that were recovered archaeologically from the enslaved community assemblages at Monticello and The Hermitage. Both of these sites are unique because unlike most other presidential homes, they do not have archaeological assemblages that can be definitively linked to presidential occupations; however, they do have assemblages that are specifically associated with the



enslaved communities who lived there. Her discussion of the enslaved communities at Monticello and The Hermitage led to her introduction of the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS). Lynsey also brought excavated transferware pieces from Monticello, and TCC members identified several of the represented patterns.

We learned that DAACS has two primary goals. The first is to provide standardized and comparable archaeological data of slavery across the Atlantic World. The second is to create useful standards for creating and cataloging data. DAACS can be used to answer important research questions about enslaved communities and what they had access to and purchased.

Throughout the meeting, attendees viewed a large number of transferware items and books donated for the raffle to support TCC's educational programs. They purchased raffle tickets in hopes of leaving the meeting with at least one. Eight TCC members returned home with prizes. Attendees could earmark their raffle purchase towards a specific offering. More than \$1,700 was raised as a result of the raffle.



The meeting concluded with the annual transferware Show and Sale. Fifteen TCC members displayed an extensive assemblage of transferware, and attendees opened their wallets with little hesitation. The Show and Sale is likely the largest display of transferware for sale in one room, anywhere.



Thursday events:

On Thursday, participants in the Annual Meeting had the opportunity to attend an optional trip to Lexington, Virginia, and the University of Virginia. The day began with a private visit to the Reeves Collection, at Washington and Lee University in Lexington. The Reeves Collection was



a gift to the university from Euchlin Reeves and his wife, American painter, Louise Herreshoff. The collection boasts an impressive array of Chinese export porcelain and armorial porcelain, as well as pieces made in Europe, Asia, and the Americas from 1500 to the present day. We were split into three rotating groups to experience the collection, and two handling sessions. The Reeves Center is small, but mighty, with highlights including an extraordinary display of armorial pieces, abolitionist transferware, and a gallery showcasing Louise Herreshoff's work. During this time there was also the option to see a temporary exhibition: *Washington in Glory: Commemorating the first president on English Creamware*, as well as a student-curated exhibition on transferwares

from the Aesthetic movement. The handling sessions with Pat Halfpenny and Ron Fuchs were equally enjoyable and informative. Pat's sessions were each a little different, giving everyone a chance to handle many different vessels and facilitate a discussion among a group of like-minded individuals. Ron Fuchs's session focused on a compare and contrast of earlier vessels that informed later designs. A highlight of his presentation was a small late Ming bowl with a lotus motif, reimagined as a plate in the second half of the 19th century by Minton.

After lunch the group travelled back to Charlottesville for a private tour of the University of Virginia's grounds, and an invitation into one of the pavilions, occupied by a university administrator. During the walking tour we were able to see firsthand Thomas Jefferson's vision for the university. A large, open lawn flanked by student and faculty housing leads up to a central building known as the Rotunda. Jefferson felt it was essential for students and faculty to live and work side by side, to facilitate discussion and free thought. While the pavilions appear uniform, each one is slightly different. Traditionally, the professor lived in the upper portion, and reserved the first floor of his pavilion for conducting class. In Pavilion IX we received a warm welcome of cider and cookies, and the opportunity to roam freely throughout. Much of the original Jeffersonian features were still in place, including decorative chimney pieces and stair brackets.

And so concluded a lovely week with the Transferware Collectors Club. The lectures, site visits, and handling sessions provided participants with a wealth of knowledge, and new ideas. And for those wishing to view additional images of the meeting, we have posted a host of pictures taken by Larry Bouterie at <http://larryb.smugmug.com/TCC2016/n-9zgNTn/>. We look forward to seeing old and new friends again next year.

Note: The three authors of this article were the first TCC Annual Meeting Scholarship recipients; seen here engaged in conversation with TCC Board Member Pat Halfpenny.



The goals of this new initiative were two-fold: to encourage attendance and enable young professionals to participate in the educational conference, and to engage new audiences by encouraging club membership among graduate students, archaeologists, preservationists, museum professionals, decorative arts scholars, researchers, and others new to the field of transferware ceramics. The scholarships covered the cost of registration as well as a stipend to assist with travel expenses. The TCC plans to offer scholarships for future meetings.