



Baltimore Stoneware



The rarity of signed examples of Baltimore stoneware often results in the belief that production in this Maryland city was limited to the common, sometimes crude examples of late nineteenth-century manufacture. In fact, during the early to mid-nineteenth century, Baltimore was the most influential stoneware-producing center south of the Mason-Dixon Line, and was one of the most important in the entire nation. A rapidly expanding

early 1812, advertising “a regular supply of Stone Ware of the best quality,”² Morgan’s products did not come close to matching the sophistication of stoneware from most other urban centers. Excavated shards of Baltimore pottery dating to before 1812 reveal insufficient salt glaze, uneven clay color, and poor-quality cobalt-oxide decoration. Morgan and other early local stoneware potters had yet to master the techniques of maintaining the consistent kiln temperatures of 2300 degrees needed



Fig. 3: Pair of early Baltimore stoneware pitchers (from left, as follows): Attributed to Elisha Parr, impressed “E. PARR,” circa 1818–1829. H. 8½ in.; Attributed to David Parr, circa 1823–1832. H. 10½ in. From the Kappler collection.

city with a well-developed shipping industry prior to the War of 1812, Britain’s blockade of American ports caused Baltimore to develop its own manufacturing centers out of necessity, with the results that the city’s once-insignificant stoneware industry quickly developed.

The city’s first stoneware potter, Thomas Morgan (ca. 1770–1842), founded his business on Pitt and Green Streets in 1794.¹ Though Morgan made major expansions just prior to the outbreak of the war in

to vitrify the clay and vaporize the salt to bond with the clay.

In June 1812, Congress declared war on Britain, and Baltimore’s stoneware industry dramatically changed almost overnight. In the same month, Baltimore China merchant William Myers (n.d.), unable to import pottery from abroad because of the conflict, announced the opening of his stoneware manufactory on Pitt Street. Myers endeavored to manufacture the highest quality stoneware ever produced in the

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Fig. 1 (top): Group of incised Baltimore stoneware (from left, as follows): Water cooler attributed to Henry Remmey (ca. 1770–ca. 1841), impressed “H. MYERS,” circa 1821–1829. H. 15 in.; Pitcher attributed to Henry Remmey, impressed “H. REMMEY / BALTIMORE,” circa 1812–1821. H. 10¾ in.; Pitcher attributed to Henry Remmey, circa 1812–1821. H. 9½ in.; Flowerpot attributed to Henry Harrison Remmey (ca. 1793–ca. 1878), circa 1812–1827. H. 7 in. All items from the Kappler collection.

Fig. 2 (bottom): Group of early Baltimore stoneware (from left, as follows): Pitcher attributed to William Morgan, circa 1818–1827. H. 8 in. Private collection; Milk pan attributed to William Morgan, incised “Morgan Maker,” circa 1822–1827. H. 6¾ in. Kappler collection; Jar attributed to the shop of William Morgan and Thomas Amoss, incised “Morgan & Amoss / makers / 1821,” circa 1821. H. 10¼ in. Kappler collection.



Fig. 4: Group of merchant-manufactured Baltimore stoneware (from left, as follows): Jar attributed to the manufactory of George Earnest and Wesley Cowles, impressed "EARNEST & COWLES," circa 1830. H. 14 in. Private collection; Jar attributed to the manufactory of Henry Myers, impressed "H. MYERS," circa 1821–1834. H. 10 in. Private collection; Cake crock attributed to the manufactory of Henry Myers and John C. Bokee, impressed "MYERS & BOKEE," circa 1834–1838. H. 7¾ in. Private collection.

city. To superintend his new "Baltimore Stoneware Manufactory," Myers secured Manhattan-trained Henry Remmey (ca. 1770–ca. 1841), whose influence on the Baltimore stoneware industry would be hard to overstate.³

Henry Remmey grew up in Manhattan and learned the art of stoneware practiced by generations of his family in France, Germany, and the United States. Early Manhattan stoneware, manufactured most notably by the Remmeys and their competitors the Croluiuses, exhibited elaborate forms, expert firing, and incised cobalt decorations unmatched by any other American stoneware potters of the time.⁴ In 1812, Henry Remmey moved south and began manufacturing stoneware of the same high quality at the Baltimore Stoneware Manufactory. In 1818, an advertisement for the manufactory announced that its "Stone Ware is manufactured by Henry Remmey & Son, of New-York, and is inferior to none in the United States...."⁵ Extant pieces made in Baltimore by Remmey and his son, Henry Harrison Remmey (1793–1878), validate this advertisement. All four vessels in figure 1 are examples of expert Manhattan-style craftsmanship. The new, optimal kiln conditions gave an even, often bright gray finish to the high-quality Baltimore stoneware clay and created a vibrant cobalt blue decoration. Some of the finest incised decorations on American stoneware adorn the Remmeys' Baltimore work. In addition to the incised decorations,

the Remmeys' stoneware was often decorated with a distinctive horizontal vine motif.

Surviving Baltimore stoneware indicates that Henry Remmey's advanced knowledge of stoneware production filtered throughout the local craft community within a few years of his arrival. Thomas Morgan's son, William (1796–1864), who became owner of the Pitt and Green Street manufactory in 1818 and oversaw production until his retirement in 1827, seems to have acquired some of Remmey's knowledge of kiln management. Signed and attributed William Morgan stoneware (Fig. 2) displays even clay color and salt glaze, as well as vibrant cobalt-oxide decoration. Remmey's influence also seems to have contributed to Morgan's decorating techniques; the horizontal flowering vine decorations on the examples in figure 2 seem inspired by the freehand motifs seen on Henry Remmey's work.

Joining in the opportunities availed to them by the war, brothers David (1786–1832) and Elisha Parr (1782–1834) also opened their pottery in June 1812. While they went their separate ways after only three years together, the surviving products of their subsequent individual ventures are closely aligned, especially in regards to decoration (Fig. 3). The pitcher on the left in figure 3, signed "E. PARR," is attributed to Elisha Parr's 1818 to 1829 Pitt Street and Harford Run manufactory. Although unsigned, the pitcher in figure 3 on the right is attributed to David Parr's



Fig. 5: Group Baltimore stoneware (from left, as follows): Five-gallon water cooler attributed to Maulden Perine, circa 1840. H. 17½ in. Kappler collection; Seven-gallon water cooler attributed to Maulden Perine, circa 1840. H. 19½ in. Kappler collection; Five-gallon churn attributed to William Linton, impressed “WILLIAM LINTON’S / POTTERY AND SALESROOM,” circa 1848. H. 17½ in. Private collection.

later work during his sole ownership of the Eden Street pottery (1823–1832). Attribution is based on capacity marks, decorations, and forms associated with documented later examples.⁶ Both Parrs commonly decorated their stoneware with a horizontal tulip-and-leaf motif. In addition to slight differences in this design, more examples of David’s work survive than his brother’s, suggesting a greater level of success. Extant examples of David’s work are also decorated with more liberal amounts of expensive cobalt-oxide and are some of the most heavily decorated stoneware ever produced in the United States.

Prime retail outlets for Baltimore stoneware potters were the shops of the city’s many China merchants. In addition to Myers, other merchants chose to capitalize on the demand for salt-glazed stoneware by erecting or buying their own manufactories. A number of examples bearing merchants’ marks have survived. Henry Myers (n.d.), who inherited the Baltimore Stoneware Manufactory in 1821, produced stoneware signed “H. MYERS.” He used this mark until 1834, after which he took on fellow merchant John C. Bokee as a partner. Their stoneware was impressed “MYERS & BOKEE” for the duration of their partnership, which lasted until 1838. Baltimore merchants George Earnest and Wesley Cowles owned a small stoneware manufactory in east Baltimore, in conjunction with their merchant business, from 1828 until 1852, and a few examples signed “EARNEST & COWLES” have survived.⁷

The unique nature of Baltimore’s merchant-owned potteries is reflected in the surviving examples of their stoneware. These merchant pottery owners employed stoneware potters trained at other local potteries to superintend their manufactories. Therefore, stoneware impressed with one Baltimore merchant’s mark often exhibits the characteristics of another of Baltimore’s manufactories. For instance, the “EARNEST & COWLES” jar in figure 4 bears the tulip decoration often used by David and Elisha Parr. In addition, because Baltimore was a major shipping center, stoneware signed by these merchants often surfaces far from Baltimore. The “H. MYERS” jar in figure 4 was purchased in Gloucester County, Virginia, a plantation-filled region 150 miles south of Baltimore. This jar, possibly decorated by Henry Remmey, is painted with a cobalt-oxide scene of three figures picking fruit, and may have been specially ordered by a fruit-growing plantation in the area.

By the 1830s, intense competition arose amongst Baltimore stoneware manufacturers. During the 1810s and 1820s five well-respected potteries operated successfully within a four-block radius in east Baltimore. With local manufacturers producing an ever greater supply of stoneware in the 1830s, not every manufacturer could compete. In 1838, the Baltimore Stoneware Manufactory, then operating under the firm of Myers and Bokee, went out of business, and a year later, the Pitt and Green Street manufactory, Baltimore’s longest-running stoneware pottery, closed for good. In fact, the only major



Fig. 6: Ten-gallon stoneware water cooler attributed to William A. Prince for James L. Parr, impressed "W. A. PRINCE," circa 1850. H. 19½ in. Private collection.


stoneware manufactory in business in late-1830s Baltimore was the Eden Street pottery operated by David Parr's heirs. Sensing an opportunity, Baltimore earthenware potter Maulden Perine (1799–1865) opened a stoneware pottery in 1838 on Baltimore's west side. Since he had not previously manufactured stoneware, he took on two skilled Baltimore-trained potters, Philip Miller and Enoch Burnett, as partners.⁸

Perine's new pottery quickly rivaled the Parr pottery in terms of quality. Two surviving water coolers (Fig. 5) can be attributed to Perine on the basis of decoration. These coolers are among the most heavily decorated, artistically executed examples of American stoneware in existence. Fired perfectly, the pure Baltimore clay contrasts with the bright cobalt-oxide decoration to enhance the visual appeal of Perine's work. The designs seen on Maulden Perine's work became a dominant

motif in Baltimore stoneware during the middle of the century.

An employee and partner of Maulden Perine, named William Linton (ca. 1814–ca. 1873), soon attained his own manufactory in west Baltimore and his work often bears the same decorations. The churn in figure 5 is one of the few known signed Linton examples. The Parr pottery made the ten-gallon water cooler, circa 1850, in figure 6. The standard Baltimore clover decoration adorns the front and back of the cooler, made by one of the Parr's head potters, William A. Prince (1807–1879), and impressed with his name.

By the 1850s, in Baltimore, as in the rest of the nation, stoneware potters had begun to streamline the potting process, facilitating mass production with standardized forms and decorations. The clover motif that apparently originated at the Parrs' Eden Street manufactory, became a popular repeated motif on

locally-made stoneware. For several decades after 1850, potters like Maulden Perine, William Linton, Peter Herrmann (1825–1901) and Hugh Gifford (1817–1898) all eventually adopted this decoration and the vast majority of late nineteenth-century Baltimore stoneware bears a variation of this cobalt-oxide clover design. To date, Baltimore has been recognized for this later stoneware and not its high-quality, pre-Civil War ware that set the standard for mid-Atlantic stoneware production at the time. 

Luke Zipp is currently authoring a book on Baltimore's nineteenth-century utilitarian potters. A graduate of Johns Hopkins University, his award-winning thesis tracked the effects of competition on changes in Baltimore's stoneware industry. Zipp is a partner in Crocker Farm, Inc., an auction house specializing in American stoneware and redware.

1 Baltimore City Archives, City Council Records (1839), RG16 S1, number 680.

2 *Federal Gazette & Baltimore Daily Advertiser* (23 January 1812), 4

3 *American & Commercial Daily Advertiser* (4 July 1812), 1; *American*, 15 (October 1812), 2.

4 W. Oakley Raymond, "Remmey Family: American Potters, Part II," *Antiques*, XXXII (1937) found in Diana and J. Garrison Stradling, *The Art of the Potter* (New York: Main Street / Universe Books, 1977), 116.

5 *Supplement to the American* (28 April 1818) 1.

6 Stoneware exists bearing the mark of David Parr's 1815–1823 partnership with James Burland. Also, one signed presentation pitcher made in 1858 at the Eden Street pottery under David's heirs exists. The capacity mark on this pitcher was used to understand the products made by David Parr decades earlier.

7 *American* (12 February 1834), 1.

8 *Matchett's Baltimore Directory for 1842* (Baltimore : R. J. Matchett, 1842), 102; Baltimore County Land Records, TK No. 268 Folio 431.