

The Sentinel



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B&O CHINA

Part 4: Centenary on the Dining Cars - Page 3

Message from the President

Friends. As we still cope with COVID-19, life must go on. The past quarter of course has been quiet with many national functions and activities shut down. The society has been no different. The archives activities have not operated since the second week of March. The two Mini-Cons have been canceled and the convention has been rescheduled for Akron in 2021. So here is what I can tell you today. The Eastern Mini-Con will be done on ZOOM in July for free. Check the society's website, BORHS.org, for date and times. Andy White has lined up four presenters. The convention will be a one-day digital event for a small fee sometime in the Fall, check our website. As for other inhouse events this Fall, everything is still up in the air.

We are in the process of doing improvements to the archives and have rearranged work stations to improve social distancing. Hopefully the archives staff will begin playing catch-up starting July 9th. Since many of our volunteers have health issues or family members with such, we have no idea how many volunteers will return. Please be patient with any request until we get our feet back on the ground.

We now have less than a year until we pay off the mortgage. As off this date our goal is close to 80 percent. Please consider donating so that this financial burden is done and we can focus on the future.

If you have not seen in the press, both Athearn and Tangent models have

produced B&O 1960s and 1970s era cabooses. Athearn has announced a second run on their cabooses. Check their websites for details. The society is in discussions with Tangent models to do a special car; details will be out early 2021. The long-expected D-14 combine from Bethlehem Car Works is waiting on resin casting. The producer of these parts has some health issues and John Greene is making every attempt to resolve the situation, so hang in there—now expecting around late July for the D-14 combines.

As you can guess our book projects are on hold until travel restrictions improve. My release expectation has been put back at least six to eight months. The calendar needs one new replacement image for the back cover. With retail and tourist attractions closed, the opportunity to make sales has been reduced. Get you orders in now!

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Required by By-Law, we must have an annual business meeting. This will be done digitally and details will be worked out. The notice will be posted on the website. I have been informed by Chris Winslow, Treasurer, that he is willing to run for a couple more terms. He has served the society faithfully for last eighteen years and he is close to hanging up his pencil. Also, our Vice-President would like to return to his only duties as archive building manager. Here is what we need to make a smooth

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On the Covers

FRONT COVER: Collection of Centenary dinner place setting and additional pieces on a B&O dining car table cloth. (Photograph by Allen Young)

BACK COVER: This sheet of standard paint color samples for structures and their "appurtenances" as of 1939 is copied from the original in the Society archives. To learn where each shade was used, see the article beginning on page 31.

Modern Dining Car Patterns — Centenary on the Dining Cars

By Allen Young

All photographs by the author except as noted.

With this final installment of the series, we'll do a deep dive into the most popular B&O china, the Centenary pattern. Since the post-dining car reproduction versions of Centenary were already covered in Part 3 (*Sentinel*, 4th quarter 2019), the focus here will be on Centenary produced for or intended to be used for dining cars, which covers the period from 1927 to May 1, 1971, when dining car service officially ended on the B&O. An overview of dining car Centenary was initially covered in Part 2 (*Sentinel*, 2nd quarter 2019), so if you haven't already read it, I recommend doing so before reading this part.

First, some additional information concerning three of the four manufacturers:

Buffalo

B&O would have liked Buffalo to have been their china producer since their plant was along a B&O route (former Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh (BR&P) line), which would have made china delivery more convenient. Buffalo Centenary pieces tend to be a bit darker blue than those produced by other manufacturers, and the sharpness of the transfers varies quite a bit, so they are usually easier to spot without having to look at the backstamps. Buffalo pieces are generally rarer and more expensive since so few were made. Buffalo pieces were also made in other years besides 1939, though they were test pieces never produced in production quantities.

Shenango

Shenango tried multiple times to obtain the china contract with the B&O, and was finally successful by 1949–1950 with the issuance of dinner plates with the *Cincinnatian* locomotive added to the outer rim. Shenango improved their



Extremely rare Scammell gravy boat, PAF, with backstamp on the bottom and no fill line. (Dr. Charles Boice collection)

offset transfer decal printing technology sometime during the 1960s to the point that it became superior and cheaper compared to the old-fashioned copper plate process used previously. Shenango china was generally made using white bisque, though a few test pieces were done on other bisque colors (e.g., Inca Ware tan). The earliest blue Shenango pieces are easy to spot since the background surrounding the locomotives around the plate rims is largely white, whereas later pieces had the white space filled with blue micro-dots so that they looked more like pieces made by other manufacturers.

Sterling backstamps

- ◆ The earliest Sterling pieces look just like Scammell's Lamberton DP since Sterling used Scammell's copper plates after they acquired Scammell. Sterling continued production this way until the quality of the china degraded as the original copper plates wore out and had to be re-engraved.
- ◆ Early Sterling included a small black letter/number code under glaze on the

back of each piece. The book *Official Guide to Railroad Dining Car China* has a chapter called, "The Companies that Produced Railroad China," with a page on Sterling and a table to help identify when a piece was made based on the code.

- ◆ Later Sterling has the same Capitol Dome logo on the back as Scammell, except that it reads Sterling Lamberton China Design Patented. Some pieces, for example the cereal bowl and the gravy boat, almost never were backstamped as Sterling Lamberton.

One way to quickly tell when dinner plates were made by any manufacturer is to look at the locomotives around the rim/perimeter. The earliest dinner plates, which are 9" in diameter, do not include EA diesel 51 or the *Cincinnatian* locomotives, so would have been made between 1927 and 1937. Starting in 1938, the size

of the plate increased from 9" to 10½", and the *Lord Baltimore* locomotive was replaced by the EA diesel. These larger plates were not actually used on dining cars until 1942. This later version was used on the reproduction paper plates offered for sale starting in 2019 through the Society's Company Store. Starting with production in 1950, the *Cincinnati* was added.

Variations

This is a composite list of all known individual pieces made by each manufacturer. I'm always updating this list as I encounter new examples, so if you know of any that are missing, or better yet have photographs of them, I'm always interested to hear about them! Not every manufacturer made every piece. In the list below, "Penn" refers to a squat cup version, while "Streamline" refers to a tall one.

I've also included references to relative rarity in terms of how many pieces exist, which is admittedly very subjective, based on what I've observed and heard from others over time. Be mindful that "exists" means what is available in the marketplace plus what is held in museums and private collections, which is less than what was initially manufactured (remember that wear & tear and breakage was commonplace on the trains, so many pieces were destroyed over time). In this context, [RARE] means 500 or fewer pieces exist, [VERY RARE] means 100 or fewer pieces exist, and [EXTREMELY RARE] means 10 or fewer pieces exist.

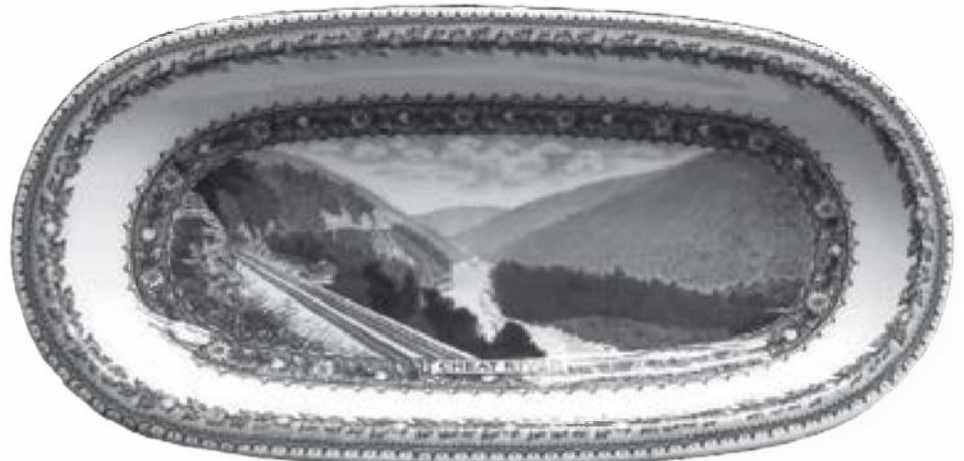
► Scammell's Lamberton Patent Applied For (PAF) White Background

(all very rare unless otherwise noted):

- Butter pat/chip
- Celery tray/trough
- 12 oz. Creamer pitcher, "clouds" as opposed to purely white background, no fill line
- 6½" Large baker
- 9" Soup plate
- 2 qt. Juice pitcher [EXTREMELY RARE]—only example I've ever seen is at the B&O Railroad Museum



Early Sterling teapot with Scammell DP backstamp.



Very rare Scammell celery tray or trough, PAF, in the earliest "white" background design. (Rob Hoffer collection and photograph)



Scammell butter chip or pat in the earliest "white" background design. (Rob Hoffer collection and photograph)



Very rare Scammell 12-ounce creamer pitcher, PAF, in the earliest "clouds" background design.

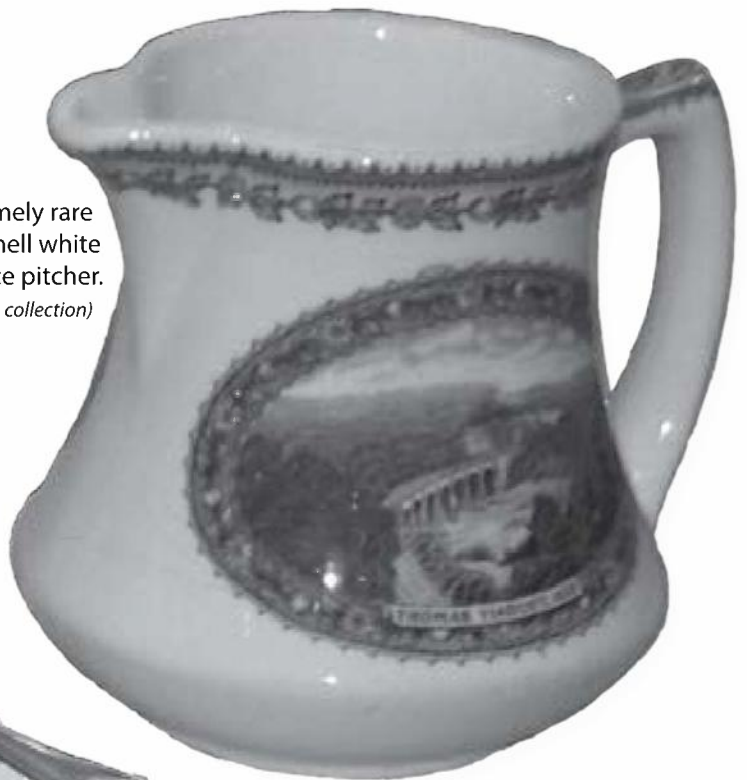
Sizes are not proportionate.

Very rare Scammell large baker, PAF, in the earliest "white" background design.

(Dr. Charles Boice collection)



Extremely rare Scammell white 2-quart juice pitcher. *(B&O RR Museum collection)*



Rare Scammell butter chip or pat, PAF. The shade of blue of the inner border usually doesn't quite match the rest of the piece. The reason for this is that an inner border was added to existing "white" butter chips which were re-fired.



Scammell squat or "Penn" style demitasse cup and saucer, DP, with fill line. This photograph also includes a silver Reed & Barton demitasse spoon, and a "This is on the House" serving doily.



Very rare Scammell tall-style coffee cup, DP, in the earliest floral design. The matching saucer for this cup was almost bowl-shaped, and was also done in the floral design.

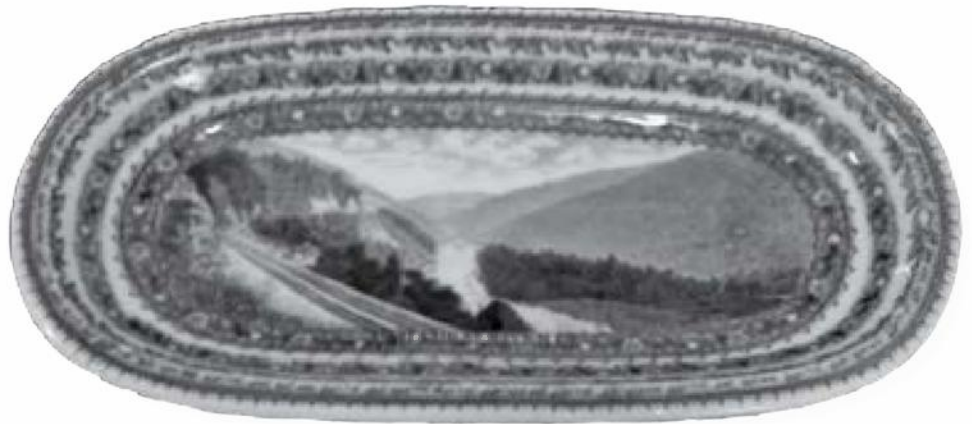


Scammell tall-style coffee cup, DP, in the later band-on-top design, and with the later rounded handle. The rounded handle came about because the earlier and more angular "Penn" style handle tended to break more easily.

► **Scammell's Lamberton Patent Applied For (PAF)**

(all rare unless otherwise noted):

- Butter pat/chip (inner blue border was added on top of the white version and re-glazed)
- Penn demitasse & saucer, with fill line
- Penn cup & saucer
- Celery tray/trough, with double outer border
- 12 oz. Creamer pitcher, route scenes, both sides Thomas Viaduct, and fill line
- Baker:
 - 6 1/8" Large [VERY RARE]
 - 5" Small, no glaze on bottom
- 6 1/2" Cereal/general purpose bowl, Carrollton Viaduct/locomotive pictures
- 7 1/4" Oatmeal/hot cereal bowl, wide rim and Thomas Viaduct
- 6 5/8" Bread plate
- 8 1/4" Tea/lunch plate
- 9" Small dinner plate
- 9" Soup plate
- 8 1/4" Small platter, Thomas Viaduct



Very rare Scammell celery tray or trough, PAF. This early version has a double outer border design. The first DP versions also had the double border (rare), but later was changed to a single border.



Rare Scammell gravy boat, with fill line and no backstamp (PAF). Most people call the decorative lines inside of cups and pitchers "fill lines", but this is clearly not a line any waiter would fill this pitcher up to, since its height varies throughout the inside of the piece. This line is thus merely a decorative element. Earlier Scammell pieces often have this line, while later pieces, and pieces produced by other manufacturers, do not have it.

Sizes are not proportionate.