

Yellowstone Park Limoges by Tresseman & Vogt

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Hand painted Yellowstone Limoges by Tresseman & Vogt is considered to be among the Park's most attractive historical items. This article briefly reviews the history of procelain painting in the United



T&V 6" Limoges humidior. *Old Faithful. Y.N.P.* Circa 1910.
Lancaster Collection.

States, the history of Tresseman & Vogt and then discusses the Tresseman & Vogt Yellowstone Limoges porcelain held in the authors' collection.

The full history of painting on porcelain stretches back to ancient times, but this artistic technique does not substantially intersect with American history until circa 1860. It was in that decade that the European porcelain manufacturers found a ready market for their wares in the United States. Driving this vigorous market was the American woman, who had either embraced china painting as a hobby or as part of the thriving cottage industry that developed around the art.

Among the top manufactures who shipped this hard paste pottery to American shores during the golden age of china painting (1860-1920) was the French company Tresseman & Vogt. The company had its beginning in 1882 as a porcelain decorating and exporting business in the Limoges region of France. In 1891, T&V began making its own Limoges pottery. The company also had a sister operation, Vogt and Dose, in New York, which was run by Charles Vogt, the brother of Gustave Vogt, the owner of the French operations. Like T&V, Vogt and Dose ran a decorating operation in addition to its import business. The T&V partnership ended in 1907, but the product continued to be marked with the T&V brand until Gustave Vogt sold the company in 1919 to Martial Raynaud.

The two companies executed a straight forward business model. The T&V operation in France created the white ware (aka 'blanks') product. Some of the white ware was shipped to Vogt and Dose in New York, where it was sold as is or sold after being decorated by the New York facility. The other white ware was held back for decoration by the T&V decoration facility in France where they applied their decoration before it was exported to Vogt and Dose in New York.

Another notable aspect of the T&V business model was their method of marking products. Products manufactured and decorated in a T&V facility were given two marks: a T&V manufacturer's

mark and a T&V decoration mark. Items manufactured by T&V but not decorated in a T&V facility were given only one mark, the manufacturer's mark. The company used various designs of marks over the years and through these marks the pieces can be dated. Books specializing in Limoges pottery identify these marks and the dates of their usage. Unfortunately, in no case do the T&V decoration marks reveal which facility (New York or France) decorated a given piece.



Figure 1: T&V manufacturer's mark used between 1892 and 1907.



Figure 2: T&V manufacturer's mark used between 1907 and 1919.

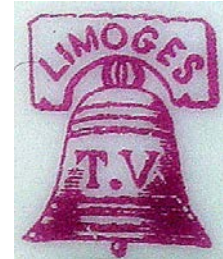


Figure 3: T&V decoration mark used between 1907 and 1919.

Once T&V started making their own porcelain in 1891, it was not long before artists began using it as a canvas for their Yellowstone images. A case in point is a set of five 9.25" T&V plates in the authors' collection. The plates were painted in 1894 by an amateur porcelain painter, known only through the initials 'K.D.P'. The scenes on the plates depict the campsites of the artist's party as they traveled from northern Yellowstone south to the Tetons. The manufacturer's marks on the plates are dated to 1892-1907(Figure1), supporting the artist's inscription of July-Sept., 1894 as the dates of the camping trip. Since the plates were not decorated in a T&V factory, they have no decoration marks.



T&V Limoges 9.25" plate titled *Camp on Slough Creek, Hell-roaring River, July 1894.* Lancaster Collection.



T&V 9.25" plate titled *Lower Pacific Creek Camp*. Sept 1894. K.D.P. Lancaster Collection



T&V 9.25" plate titled *Pacific Creek & G.K's 45-90*. Sept, 1894. Lancaster Collection

Perhaps the most interesting scene in these set of plates is the one depicting the campsite at Yancey' Hole. This may be the only original art of this historic location.



T&V 9.25" plate titled *Yancey's Yellowstone Park*. Circa Aug 1894. Lancaster Collection.



The popularity of painting Yellowstone sights remained strong with amateur porcelain artists throughout the golden age of china painting in the United States. As evidence of this continued interest, the picture below is of a very large (11"x16.5")T&V plaque painted in the latter part of the golden age. The painting, which was done by the amateur artist "Jula (?) S. Rimer", is a copy of the important Haynes Yellowstone photograph # 16343. The photo was taken in 1916 by Haynes employee, Elloit W. Hunter, and copyrighted by J. E. Haynes in 1917. When it was first published, Haynes titled the photo

“Babes in the Wood”. In 1920, Haynes retitled the image to “The Mother Bear” and then, circa 1930, he re-titled the image for a third time to “Madonna in the Wild”. Since the photograph was taken in 1916, the date of the untitled painting is constrained to be somewhat later, placing it in the last part of the golden age. It is interesting to note that the manufacturer’s mark on the white ware plaque is of the 1892-1907 era (Figure 1), making the plaque much older than the painting.



Hand-painted image of Haynes' photograph #16343, on 11"x16.5" T&V plaque.

Circa 1917. Lancaster Collection

Perhaps due to the success of the 1909 Seattle World's Fair that nearly doubled attendance to Yellowstone, or due to some other business reason, T&V decided to launch its own factory decorated 'Yellowstone Line' around 1910. The line, as it is found today, is composed of, at least, 13 different pottery shapes, each decorated with a popular Park scene. Most scenes, of which six are known, grace more than one shape of pottery (see table in Addendum). The white ware mark on the pottery is either the early 1892-1907 era mark (Figure 1) or the later era mark of 1907-1919 (Figure 2). In all cases, the decoration mark is for factory painted pieces dating from 1907 to 1919 (Figure 3). Unfortunately there is no way to determine if the decoration was executed in France or in New York. There is also no way to determine who painted the images as there is no signature on the pieces or extant corporate documentation listing artists and their works.

The locations from which the pieces were distributed and sold are also difficult to determine. Examination of the inventories of the various Park concessionaires who operated during this era has revealed no inventories listing Limoges pottery. This search has included the Canyon Art Shop located in the Grand Canyon Hotel and the Art Shop in the Mammoth Hotel. However, it is believed that these *objets d'art* were sold in the greater Yellowstone region, based on the number of pieces collectors have discovered in the cities surrounding the Park. In contrast to the lack of paper evidence on local sales outlets, there does exist documentation demonstrating the T&V Yellowstone product line was sold in Chicago. This documentation is in the form of a Chicago department store tag affixed to the reverse side of a 12.5" charger.



T&V 6.25" high cider pitcher. *Kepler's Cascade Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection



T&V 8.25" plate. *Golden Gate. Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection



T&V 14.5" vase. *Old Faithful Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection



T&V powder jar with lid. 4 .88" w x 2.75" h. *Grand Canyon, Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection.



T&V cup (2.375" high) and saucer (5.75" diam). *Kepler's Cascade, Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection.



T&V Dresser Tray.. 7.5" l x 5.0" w. *Lower Falls, Y.N.P.* Circa 1910. Lancaster Collection

Tresseman & Vogt was not the only porcelain company in this era to leverage Yellowstone's natural beauty to bolster their financial bottom line. Other companies such as Wheelock (USA), the Limoges China Company (USA), Bauer Rosenthal & Co (Germany) and Victoria (Austria) produced porcelain products decorated with Yellowstone scenes. While these companies all vied for the Yellowstone market dollar in porcelain, they failed to capture significant market share as they lacked the quality and breadth of the line produced by Tresseman & Vogt. Today, collectors recognize this distinction and celebrate when a new T&V piece is discovered or added to their collection.

Addendum

Known Tresseman & Vogt Limoges Shapes and their Factory Painted Yellowstone Images

- Plates (8.25", 10.25" and 12.5" diam)
 - Golden Gate
 - Old Faithful
 - Kepler's Cascade
 - Grand Canyon
 - Liberty Cap
 - The Great (Lower)Falls
- Cups (2.375"high) and Saucers (5.75" diam.)
 - Kepler's Cascade
 - Grand Canyon
 - Old Faithful
- Vase (14.5" high) –Old Faithful
- Humidor (4" high)–Old Faithful
- Ladies' Powder Jar (5" diam.)– Grand Canyon
- Cider Pitcher (6.25" high)– Kepler's Cascade
- Tea Pot (~ 4" high) – Liberty Cap
- Tankard (15.5" high) – The Great (Lower)Falls
- Dresser Tray (7.5" long) – The Great (Lower)Falls
- Punch Bowl (4.5" high) – The Great (Lower)Falls
- Footed Bowl (~8.25 diam.) – The Great (Lower)Falls