

Magical Dinners

with JMG's

Royal Worcester China

By Judy Haynes



Thanksgiving opens our holiday season, with Hannukah, Christmas, and the New Year not far behind. One of the wonderful traditions that many have is to gather for a big family dinner accompanied by their finest dishes. In the Gough household that meant setting the table with a beautifully monogrammed set of fine Royal Worcester china.

Each dish of the one-hundred-piece set has a white background, with a red and gold band trimming each plate or bowl and features a design with a personal touch, a colorful JMG monogram for John and Mary Gough. This would indicate it was a special order, either a gift or family purchase. Since the Gough family consisted of John, Mary, John's half-brother Herbert, his father Samuel, several nieces and a nephew, a full house was sure to use and need this extensive set of fine porcelain.



JMG Monogrammed Fine Royal Worcester China

We have in our Historical Society Museum 55 pieces with the largest and heaviest of the pieces, a heavy platter 22 ½ inches long and 18 ½ inches wide. This platter could easily hold a very large



JMG Monogrammed Platter

Turkey as a centerpiece to the table for any harvest or Christmas celebration. On the back of this platter, and many of these dishes, is found the early Royal Worcester logo, a plain imprinted circle stamped or impressed with no words or numbers, as is found in their later patterns. The circle simply holds an impression of four calligraphy-like W's. This indicates this set was produced at Royal Worcester about 1862 or after, possibly post-Civil War.

Porcelain in Worcester, England is believed to have begun near the River Severn ca. 1751, and was perfected by Dr. John Wall who developed the production of soft paste porcelain. At least one source indicates it to be "one of the oldest English porcelain companies in the world, if not the oldest itself, yet another source indicates The Worcester Porcelain Company being one of the most prominent porcelain companies, in the United Kingdom. It was this company which became the Worcester Royal Porcelain Co. Ltd. in 1862 commonly known as Royal Worcester. As such, over the years, many different backstamps have been used to identify different Royal Worcester patterns and pieces."¹ The plain marking found in our collection signifies it was most probably made between 1862 and possibly post-Civil War. It was a privately ordered special production created for the mid-19th century Temperance orator, John Gough, who was well-known across America and the English isles. It may have been one of the many gifts he and Mary received to celebrate their 25th Silver Wedding Anniversary in November 1868.



JMG China on display in the Knight Family china closet

Production at Royal Worcester, Severn, ceased in 2006 with the factory closing in 2009. It now houses a museum, but we don't need to go to England to see samples of Royal Worcester China. Our museum in the heart of Boylston, Massachusetts exhibits a display of eight of the JMG pieces graciously donated by the Arthur Knight family in 1980. A later addition of 47 more pieces of the Gough chinaware set was donated in 2009 by Elizabeth Knight Marble in memory of her mother, Helen Magee Knight. Helen Knight's family traces back to John Gough's half-brother Herbert David Gough. Mrs. Marble's daughter, Pam Sherman, recalls fondly being at the Knight family home for

holiday dinners when this special dinnerware graced the table keeping a beautiful family tradition alive of gatherings at holidays and remembering their past family history. Pam recalls

"The dining table was all set with the JMG china and crystal and sterling. And all the candles were lit. It was magical."²

Wishing all of our Boylston Historical Society members and friends magical family gatherings this 2021 season. Bring out the fine china and silver and celebrate the holidays.

¹ www.Coscomefineporcelain.com/...royal-Worcester

² Pam Sherman message to Nancy Filgate, November 12, 2021.

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Photography of Knight Home, Courtesy of Pam Sherman