

Assessing the Cincinnati China Resource Sheet

Part I: What is the Cincinnati China

Direction: Read the archeologist and historian conclusions regarding the Cincinnati China found near the slave quarters at the Arlington House and answer the guided questions.

Artifact #1



Artifact #1: Cincinnatiware Plate (Replica) from Society of the Cincinnati

The Society of Cincinnati: The Society of the Cincinnati was organized on May 13, 1783, near Newburgh, NY, by Continental officers who fought in the American Revolution. It is an organization of descendants of eligible commissioned officers of the Continental Army or Navy and commissioned officers of the French Army or Navy who served in the Revolutionary War. The Society is the first veteran's organization established in the United States. George Washington served as the organization's President General from 1783 until his death in 1799.

Cincinnatiware Plate: These plates were given to member of the organization. The Three Cincinnatiware shreds are from a set given to George and Martha Washington during his presidency by several French military officers. They were part of George Washington Parke Custis's, a owner of Arlington House, "Washington Treasury."

Artifact #2



Artifact #2: Archeology Group's Findings of Shreds of Cincinnatiware Plate Shreds

The items in this group were found during an excavation of the two surviving slave quarters at Arlington House. The quarters, just behind the main house, were occupied by slaves who worked in the mansion. They include:

- Three shards of Cincinnati ware, one hand-painted polychrome, two blue transfer print
- Hand from a china doll, toy cup
- Hook with an eye at one end
- Small ceramic marble with an incised decoration

It was not uncommon for slaves who worked in the master's house to receive cast off items from the master's family.

Assessment Question:

1. Why was the Society of Cincinnati Plate at the Arlington House?
2. What is the significance of the Society of Cincinnati?
3. Would you have given this item away?
4. What assumption are historians and archeologists making about the China based on the location the shreds were found?

