

# Retailers on Willow: Gilman Collamore & Co.

By Jeff Siptak

Have you ever turned over a piece of willow to find an additional mark next to the manufacturer's mark? It is usually a company name, sometimes along with a city or an address. These are the marks of retailers who sold that particular willow in their stores and had their willow marked as such. In some cases, willow manufacturers would create a unique color, pattern or design for retailers as a way of offering an exclusive piece or set only found in that retailer's shop. Enjoy learning more about this retailer in the series.

By the mid-1850s, the Collamore name was well-established in the china, porcelain and glass shops of New York City and rivaled the biggest retail names of the time, including Tiffany & Co. and Black, Star & Frost.



The family line of business began with Ebenezer Collamore, who by the 1830s, had settled in New York City and embarked on a successful trade in porcelain and china resale. Located at 403 Broadway, he imported china from France, India and England and supplied stoneware, Brooklyn Flint Glass and

Wedgwood for wholesale and retail.

In 1836, at the age of 16, younger brother Davis apprenticed for six years with Ebenezer, mastering the details of the business and the study of ceramics. In 1854, another brother, Gilman Collamore, came to join the company and the name changed to Davis Collamore & Co. During this time, and under the leadership of Davis, the company commissioned designs from Copeland Spode and Thomas Minton Sons that featured hand-painted details over transfer-printed outlines and often rich gilding. Porcelain by Haviland, Royal Worcester, and Villeroy & Boch also appear with the firm's stamped underglaze marks alongside the manufacturer's.

Not to be outdone, Gilman soon branched out on his own in 1861 with storefronts in Union Square and in a tall building on 5th Avenue under the name Gilman Collamore & Co. See Figure 1.

It is under this name that we find several examples of some of the finest in willow with the Gilman Collamore & Co. retailer backstamp. Figure 2 shows a wonderful plate in the Queen Charlotte pattern made by Copeland. It is trimmed in gold and has a dark, rich blue transfer. This pattern is not extremely rare, but collectors don't see it too often. The mark shown in Figure 3 would date the plate to after 1891.

The Booths plate shown in Figure 4 features the pattern in gold against a black background. Its mark dates the plate to 1906+.

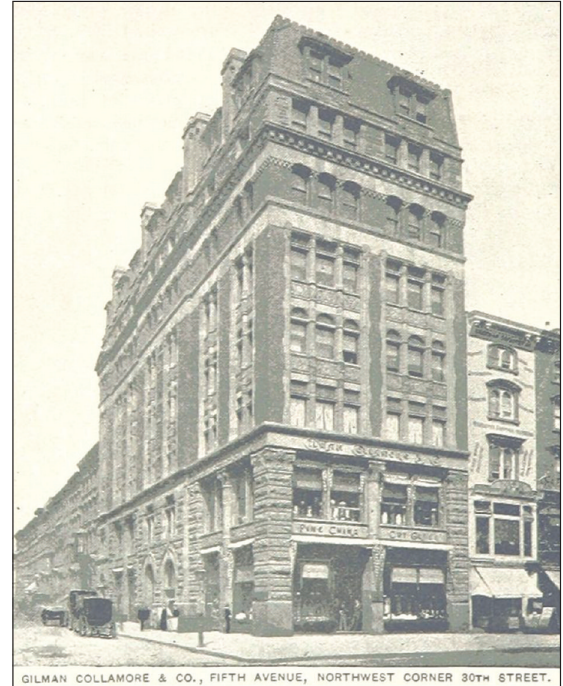


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

Of the Gilman Collamore retail marks, notice the difference in design. This could be due to different production times or perhaps different marks for different manufacturers. How could we expect Minton's mark to look like Copeland's?

I found a few more examples of willow with this retailer's mark.

In Figures 6 and 7 we see a sugar and creamer, as well as a footed cup and saucer with the gold dotting made famous by Davenport. These pieces date from the 1920s.

Figure 8 shows another example of Booths willow – a beautiful flared vase. Its brightly colored mark is seen in Figure 9.

Speaking of the 1920s, it was during that time that Gilman Collamore produced a small reference pamphlet on selected pottery and china marks. See Figures 10 and 11. It is very interesting to read in the Preface why some marks of “unknown and unimportant potteries” were left out. One might say Gilman Collamore & Co. knew which side its bread plate was buttered on.



Figure 6.



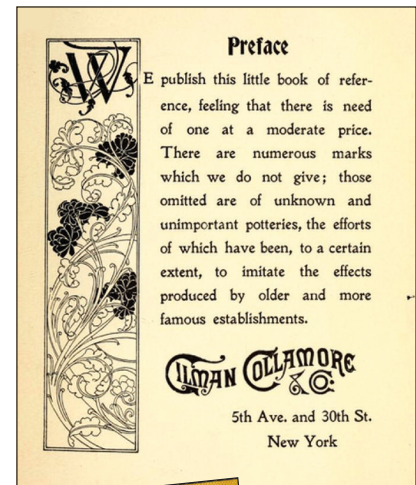
Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.



Figures 10 and 11.

