

University of Maine

From the Selected Works of Desiree Butterfield-Nagy

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Memories of Maine: Wedgwood's Historic College and University Plates

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/desiree_butterfield-nagy/7/

Now ~

MEMORIES of MAINE

In Distinctive Wedgwood Plates . . .

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Commemorative Plates made by Wedgwood will now be available to alumni in an original pattern of six different center views created especially for the University and approved by a committee of alumni. Printed from a hand-engraved design on the firm's famous Queensware pottery, these Plates will feature a symbolic evergreen border surrounding views of the President's House, old Oak Hall, Mount Vernon, and the University seal. The center designs will picture Alumni Hall, The Library, Wingate Hall, Winslow Hall, Coburn Hall and the Alumni Memorial.

The color will be Staffordshire Blue, a soft harmonizing tone, distinctive in appearance and reminiscent of Maine traditions. Green also may be had if demand should prove sufficient.

Beautiful for decorative pieces, serviceable for either dinner or serving use, the Plates will be made in 10 1/4" diameter and may be ordered in dozen and half dozen lots. Orders placed now will be ready for delivery in the spring.

The sale of Maine Plates by the Alumni Association is intended only as a means of making available to alumni this way of commemorating their University days and is not a fund-raising plan. Production of the Plates will depend on the receipt of a sufficient number of orders and none will be placed for delivery until the minimum quantity is pledged. Should there be insufficient demand to make ordering of the Plates possible, all amounts will be refunded.

By ordering now you can receive one of the first issues of Wedgwood's Maine Plates. The price is \$15 per dozen and \$8 per half dozen, plus express charges collect from Boston.

A PERMANENT AND BEAUTIFUL MEMORIAL OF MAINE

Produced under the direction of Jones McDuffee & Stratton Corporation, Boston, Mass.



The original full page advertisement that appeared in the November 1938 edition of The Maine Alumnus

Memories of Maine, Wedgwood's Historic College and University Plates

by Desirée Butterfield-Nagy, Archivist, Special Collections Department

While the Special Collections Department is known to researchers primarily for its substantial collections of print materials, the department is home to many artifacts as well. Many of these items, often referred to as memorabilia, were donated with larger collections and provide additional historical context to accompany printed materials. Other items were offered to the library because of their symbolic importance to the history of the university. One example is a collection of University of Maine Wedgwood plates from 1940.

Beginning in 1880, the company of Jones, McDuffee & Stratton created a thriving business by marketing various series of "old blue Wedgwood historical plates" that were made in England and distributed by their Boston firm. Their first offerings focused on national events and locations that would appeal to the general public, featuring scenes like the United States Capitol, Washington D.C., and the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

In the late 1920s, the company launched a new effort that became a tremendous success throughout the eastern United States. The firm began working with alumni associations at colleges and universities to develop commemorative plates that would feature scenes specific to each campus. Alumni/ae were then encouraged to purchase them or offer them as part of fundraising efforts.

In the November, 1938 edition of the University's alumni magazine, *The Maine Alumnus*, a full page advertisement appears, noting, "University of Maine Commemorative Plates made by Wedgwood will now be available to alumni in an original pattern of six different center views created especially for the University and approved by a committee of alumni... Plates will feature a symbolic evergreen border surrounding views of the President's House, old Oak Hall, Mount Vernon, and the University seal." The original price for one dozen was \$15 and required a \$5 deposit.

Eight of the ten plates in the collection are stamped, "First Edition Plate - 1940," and all bear the Wedgwood seal. Department records indicate that they were given to us by Louis T. Ibbotson, an early director of the library.

Ibbotson began his post in 1928 after attending Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. His classmates there noted that the curly-headed, bespeckled young man was known for spouting Greek in his sleep and was already showing signs of being an aspiring



Louis T. Ibbotson

librarian (much like his father, Hamilton College's librarian). Ibbotson later attended library school at the University of the State of New York, worked at Duke University and briefly at Rochester Public Library before coming to the University of Maine.

Ibbotson was initially director of the library in its location in Carnegie Hall (one of the scenes featured on the plates) and later campaigned for a new building. He assisted in designing the building and in 1947 supervised the move to what is now known as Raymond H. Fogler Library. Ibbotson retired after a 35 year career at the university and continued to live in the Orono area with his wife, Hazel, until his death in 1983.

Although records do not indicate the exact date when the plates were given to Special Collections, they were donated in their original shipping container. The box is marked as having been sent from Boston to Orono via Railway Express on July 19, 1940. For more information about the plates or other items in the library's memorabilia collection, feel free to contact Special Collections.