



IRVING AND DAVIDA SHIPKOWITZ (1934-2021)

What began as a hobby finding beautiful treasures such as antique children's alphabet plates at flea markets and antique shows for our parents, Irving and Davida Shipkowitz, soon became a passion. Our mother spent her entire career working in special education and reading resources with young children, and our father spent his career as a skilled OB/GYN helping families bring healthy children into this world. They used their passion for children and education in their retirement years to create a comprehensive resource and educational book about their antique children's ABC plate collection.

Our parents became enthralled with the use of transferware on children's ABC plates. They researched the origins of their collection as far back as the 18th century and they studied the history of the companies such as Staffordshire and Brownhills that manufactured many of these plates. They also investigated the culture of the periods during which the plates were created. This helped them to better understand the ideas, lessons, and messages behind the images used for the transfers at the plates' centers. These images allowed a glimpse into the parenting practices, politics, religion, morals, commerce and interests of the people from the era in which they were created.

Our parent's collection became vast, and later included ABC needlework samplers, crocheted lace pieces and antique children's books. As their collection grew, so did their expertise. In 2002, after years of collecting ABC plates, cups and flatware, and after searching through the libraries in the United States and Europe for the art and literary sources of the transfers that adorned the centers of these ABC plates, they published their book, The ABC's of ABC Ware: A Schiffer Book for Collectors. The mission of their book was made clear in the first pages of its text where they wrote, "With each plate goes the tale behind the transfer that was told at mealtime. Each transfer was chosen to deliver a message. It is to these messages, which together make a portrait of a period, that we devote this book." This book, of course, was organized in an A-to-Z format. It included an overview of the history of these ABC plates, their manufacture, transfer sources and an estimated monetary value of each plate, cup or piece of flatware represented. It also provided beautiful photographs of many notable pieces from their collection. Our parents hoped their publication would be used by antique dealers, as well as collectors, to enable a full appreciation for the value of this decorative art.

In 2021, both of our parents passed away leaving their extensive collection of ABC ware to us, their four daughters. In truth, while we had always been aware of their work, we had never studied their collection in great depth until now. Like many children working through their family's estate, we were

overwhelmed at how large their collection had become and amazed at how hard they had worked to make such an extremely complete and detailed compendium of their collection. We are committed to honoring their considerable achievements and sharing them with those who understand our parents' commitment to preserve history by educating future generations.

Our parents were enthusiastic members of the Transferware Collectors Club. They got great pleasure from interacting with others who appreciated their specialized interest. Sharing the story of our parent's ABC plate collection and their book with this organization, helps us to acknowledge our great pride for their accomplishments, and helps us heal from the loss of our parents by communicating with those who can relate to their passions.

Thank you all for your support of our parents and their collection over their many years of participation.

With warmest regards,

The daughters of Irving and Davida Shipkowitz-- Jill, Sandra, Vicki and Amy

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