



# Introduction to Red Wing Dinnerware



Larry Roschen

Terry Moe



Longtime Red Wing dinnerware collectors Larry Roschen and Terry Moe have produced one of the best resources for dinnerware collectors ever created, and they have graciously allowed for their work to begin appearing in the *Red Wing Collectors Society Newsletter* beginning with this issue. But before we dive in to their massive research, let's take a look at how it came about.

Larry's quest for finding original Red Wing dinnerware documents began in the late 1990s. When looking on eBay for pieces to fill the gaps in his growing dinnerware collection, he occasionally purchased Red Wing brochures and found them interesting. Over time he acquired several different brochures from a given pattern and noticed that the pieces available sometimes changed over the course of time.

Larry says the light bulb went on after purchasing an undated Provincial Luncheon Ware catalog that included a November 1946 price list. The catalog included photos and text describing Orleans, Brittany, the early version of Ardennes, Harvest, Lexington and the Fruit or Salad set (bowls and plates with fluted rims). The catalog had been printed some time prior to November 1946 because the price list stated that Ardennes, Harvest and Fruit or Salad were no longer available. This made it clear that those three patterns had been discontinued at some point before November 1946.

"Also, the catalog did not include Normandy, which told me the early version of Normandy had been discontinued before the catalog was printed, and thus before early Ardennes was discontinued," he says. "None of this information was included in the existing dinnerware references. These new tidbits of information fascinated me."

Terry traces his connection to Red Wing back to when his mother's family sold Red Wing dinnerware at their Rexall Drug Store in Laurens, Iowa. He also recalls eating his Wheaties as a young boy from a 6-inch Gypsy Trail Hostess Ware bowl (number 979). He inherited the partial set of Gypsy Trail when his mother died and has been adding to it ever since.

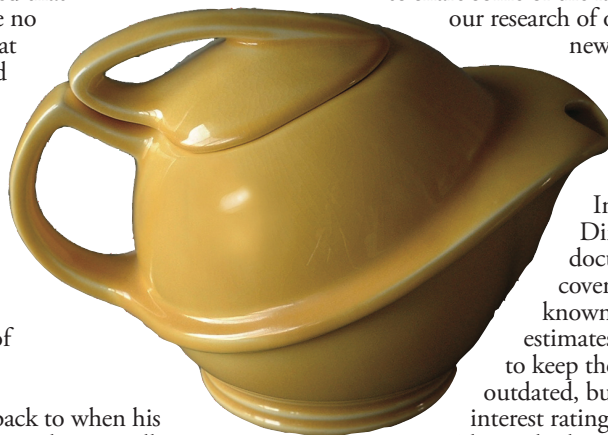
Terry and his wife, Marilyn, often found items in antique shops that looked like they should be Gypsy Trail, but couldn't locate them in any of the books available on Red Wing. That's when he started researching on his own.


"I decided there had to be more information if I could only find it," Terry says. "My academic training is as a historian, so I viewed it as another historical mystery that could be researched and perhaps solved."

When Larry and Terry realized they had a mutual interest in Red Wing dinnerware and documents produced by the company, they began to share their brochures and price lists with each other. Visits to the Minnesota Historical Society and the Goodhue County Museum yielded photocopies of additional material, and Red Wing ads in trade journals and homemaker magazines were another source of info. They also integrated information that they had gathered from fellow collectors. After several years they realized they had a wide range of documents that covered all eras of Red Wing dinnerware production, but how to share it all in an effective manner proved to be a challenge.

Over the past few years, Larry and Terry have presented educational seminars at the annual RWCS Convention and MidWinter that included some of the new information they had picked up from the documents. They also started a spreadsheet that attempted to document the introduction and exit of every piece made in each dinnerware pattern. But Larry says the gaps in their knowledge made it difficult to complete the spreadsheet with any certainty.

"It didn't seem right to simply regurgitate the information already available in existing references," Larry adds. "I wanted to share some of the facts Terry and I learned in our research of old documents – something new that most collectors wouldn't know. Then we finally settled into a format that seemed to work well."



The result was "An Introduction to Red Wing Dinnerware" – a 30-page document that chronologically covers information on every known line of dinnerware. Value estimates were intentionally excluded to keep the information from becoming outdated, but availability and collector interest ratings were created for each pattern. Obviously this expansive material must be divided into segments so it can be featured in the *RWCS Newsletter* over time, but once the information has been printed there are plans to post it on the RWCS website. 

Dinnerware photos courtesy of [WWW.REDWINGDINNERWARE.COM](http://WWW.REDWINGDINNERWARE.COM).