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Single-Plate Multicolor Printing by Hot Press

In the 1820s chrome green became available as a color for underglaze printing. By 1824 Spode began printing a few patterns in blue with green over the top. They used the hot-press technique. The first print was applied in blue, then much of the design was masked out with a sticky substance known as ‘ackey’, leaving the background exposed. A green print with an all-over pattern was then applied. When the tissue paper was washed off, the ‘ackey’ was washed off with it. The result was a design in blue with a background pattern in green. The most popular design used for this two-color printing is the one known as ‘Tumbledown Dick’ because the bird seems to be falling off his twig.



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In the 1830s other factories, especially Davenport, began printing underglaze in three colors by applying different colored inks to different parts of the same engraved plate. This was single plate printing. Davenport’s Muleteer pattern, introduced as a print entirely in blue, was now available with different parts printed in green, blue and black.



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