



The Doorknob Collector

MARCH 1979

EDITORS' NICHE

With spring just around the corner, we are sure everyone is thinking about their favorite flea market or antique shop. This just might be the year you find a beautiful pair of solid bronze door-knobs or a nice set of Limoges. In your travels think of the newsletter and let us know what you find. Also please send along any questions you might have.

We are hoping to get a chance to meet some of you during the travel season, either on our own journeys or when you are in N.J. Let us know if you are to be in our area. We live about 30 minutes west of New York City.

Faye and Rich Kennedy
Editors

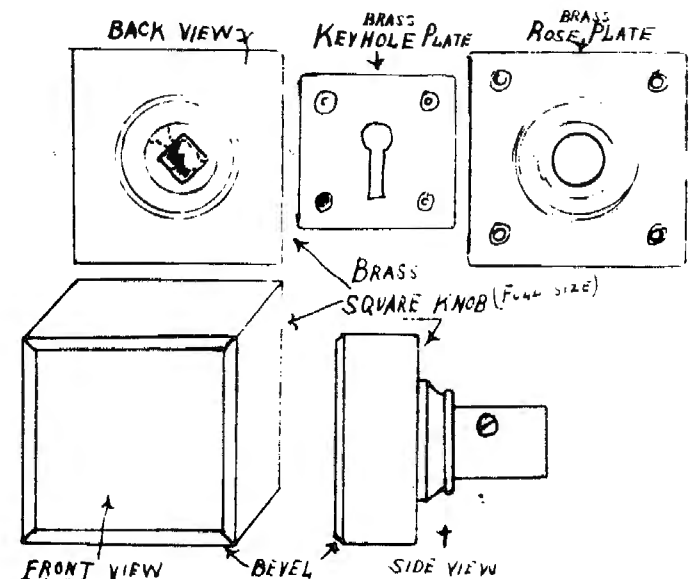
CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE

Elise Roenigk (East Hampton, Conn.), a new member of our group, has about fifty knobs. Her husband, Marty, writes that they also collect doorbell pulls and music boxes.

We received a Christmas card from Louis Nicolosi (Kansas City, Mo.) which features a red door with a garland around it and a fan-

cy escutcheon plate and knob on the door. The card is made by Metropolitan Greetings, Inc. Cambridge, Mass. 02142

Louis also sent along this detailed drawing of a square door-knob from his collection.



The following is quoted from a letter we received from Scott Klemm (Rialto, Cal.). Sounds like he is willing to do some work if the rest of us help him out with our own knowledge.

I have been doing a little research on the history of door-knobs and handles. Here is the

results of my preliminary investigation. The first doorknobs were used in ancient Egypt, although they did not turn like ours. Two mushroom shaped knobs, one on each door leaf, were connected by a knotted cord, and a seal was placed over the knot.

Knobs or handles were not used on the doors of the ancient Greeks or Romans. Likewise, I have found no evidence of their use on doors of the early medieval period. Ring handles may have been used during these periods, but it is difficult when studying a picture to determine if a ring was intended as a handle for pulling, or whether its primary function was that of a door knocker.

Door and lever handles seem to appear early in the 16th century, although I suspect they were used earlier. Doorknobs as we know them make their appearance early in the 19th century. In her book, The Antique Doorknob, Maude Eastwood lists the date 1827 for the earliest American doorknob patent. On page 122 of her book, Mrs. Eastwood infers that knobs were used in England while lever handles were more popular on the continent. While looking through G. Dahl's Portals - Doorways and Windows of France, 1925, I saw numerous examples of French doorknobs. An interesting observation is that they all were elliptical in shape. Unfortunately the book does not show close-ups of the knobs, and no text is included.

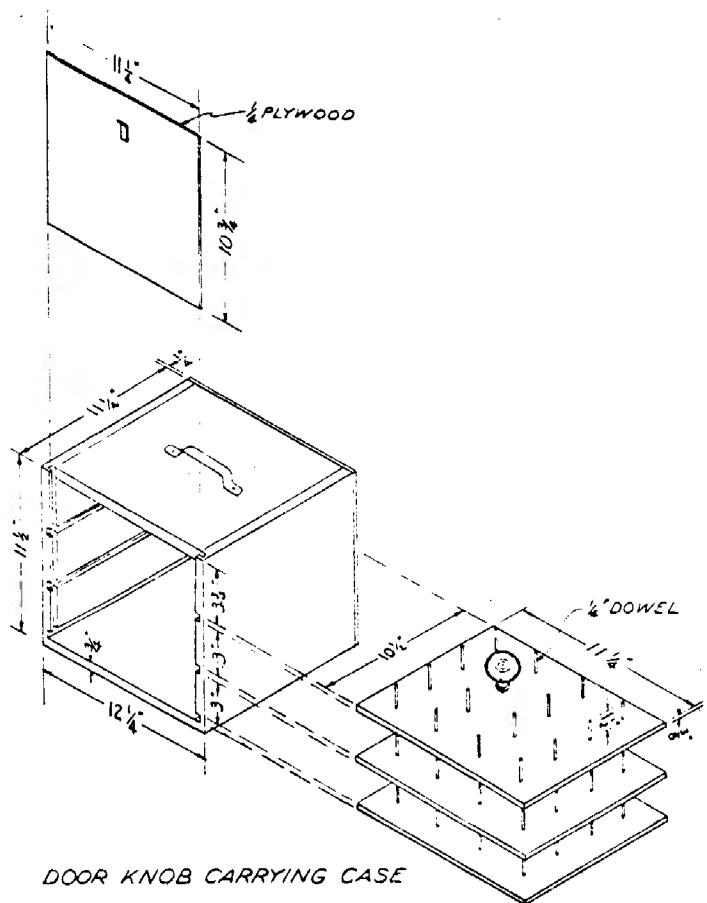
There are no books, or even an encyclopaedia article, that traces the history of doorknobs and handles. (Mrs. Eastwood's excellent pioneering work is a collectors guide rather than a history.) If readers would be willing to send me bits of information they have found on the subject, I would be willing to attempt to write the first history of doorknobs and handles. This history could serve as a base for the work of future researchers.

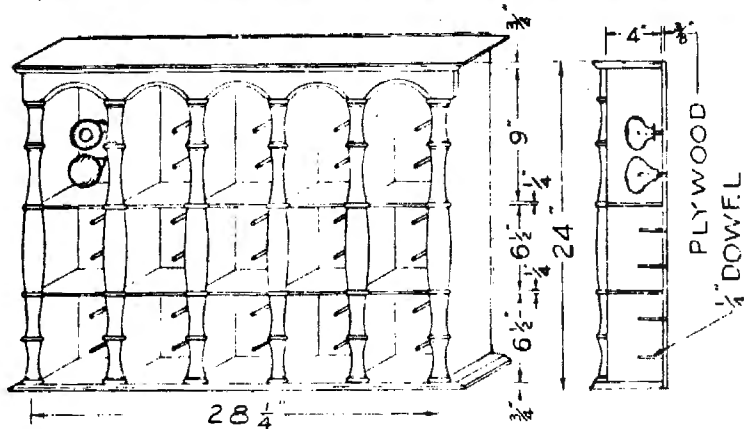
SHOWING OFF

Our readers responded to our request and sent us their methods for displaying doorknobs. We also received a sketch of a carrying case.

John Holland (Phoenix, Ariz.) sent along these very detailed drawings of a carrying case and also a display cabinet that he uses in his home. Both are pictured below. John's neighbor can provide a limited number of carrying cases for \$50 plus shipping if ordered before June 1st. He hopes to have them shipped out by the fall. To order write directly to

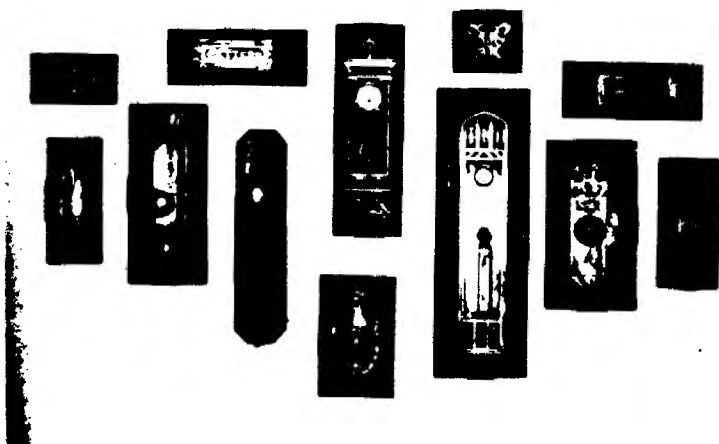
John Holland
3434 N. 47th Way
Phoenix, Arizona 85018





DOOR KNOB DISPLAY CABINET

Marshall Young (Burbank, Ill.) sent us a photo of his unique way of displaying doorknobs, each knob and plate is mounted on its own wooden plaque and grouped together on a wall.



Wendall Trumbull (Bethlehem, Pa.) sent us this snapshot of some of his knobs displayed in antique iron bowls which are themselves conversation pieces. Note the designs on the rims.



Here in the Kennedy house, many of my knobs are displayed in wooden or glass bowls. I also have a table with a glass top that has a bowl of doorknobs below which can be seen through the table top. The glass knobs cast beautiful patterns on the walls when the sunlight strikes them.

I also made a wooden display rack which hangs on the wall on a stair landing. A picture light has been installed above it to best show off the knobs. The rack is 2' X 4' with a frame around it. There are nine rows of dowels set at an angle, each row holds eight knobs. At the top is a row of eight dowels coming straight out of the back with the dowels 8" above the next row which facilitates the hanging of my knobs that have matching plates.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In the last newsletter Scott Klemm (Rialto, Cal.) wanted to know the age and origin of the doorknob pictured. Our ever faithful historian, Emil Miller (Omaha, Neb.) sent the answer along with copies of several pages from an old 1952 Peabody Co. catalog. Schlage Lock Co. who bought Peabody many years ago still makes this particular knob and rose which is called Medici Design in the Schlage catalog of custom hardware.

In response to the other question concerning the knob and plate pictured on the top of our newsletter, we pass on the information, also from Emil Miller, that it is pictured in an old Yale catalog #20 (about 1910) and was called Meridan Design. Also pictured along with it is a lovely letter slot in the same pattern.

SWAP ? BUY ? SELL ?

We feel that a classified advertising service might be helpful to our readers as many have shown interest and have inquired as to the possibility of such a column. If one of you would be interested in handling this area we would be most grateful.

Generally Maude Eastwood's book, THE ANTIQUE DOORKNOB would make a good pictorial reference guide. However, if the doorknob in question is not pictured in the book, a snapshot could be reproduced in the newsletter.

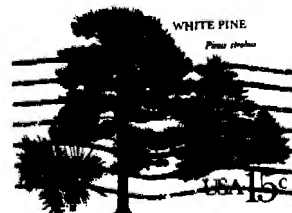
NEXT ISSUE

In the next issue we would like to feature some of your unusual stories of how you obtained some of your doorknobs. Perhaps one of your first knobs come from an old Victorian house that was about to be demolished to make way for progress, or maybe you received one from a friend who had it sitting on a basement shelf for years.

One of Rich's first knobs came from a friend who found it on a beach in Maine and had kept it in his fishing tackle box for twenty years before giving it to him.

We are sure others of you have unusual stories too, so let's print them so others may share.

DOORKNOB COLLECTOR
7140 1/2 Pine
CHATHAM, N.H. 07928
201-600-6888



Maude Eastwood
3900 Latimore Rd. N.
Tillamook, Or. 97141