



The Doorknob Collector

JULY-AUG 1980

EDITORS' NICHE

We apologize for the delay in getting this issue of the newsletter to you. This summer has been a particularly hectic one for us.

The composing of this newsletter is really up to our readers. If the newsletter is to continue, we must hear from you readers. We need mini-articles, stories, personal glimpses anything we can set to type. We really cannot come up with endless ideas without your help.

Faye and Rich Kennedy
Editors

COLLECTORS CORNER

One of our newest subscribers, Arnold Fredrick of Waverly, Iowa, sent along an article about his collection which appeared in The Waverly Democrat on June 19, 1980.

The spark that began his collection came when he moved into an old house 18 years ago. The house had been built by a hardware store owner and the doors featured "elaborate doorknobs with intricately scrolled plates.

The bulk of Arnold's collection has come about within the last four years. His collection numbers about 300 knobs. He includes in his collection a knob, plate and

letter slot which are still attached to a portion of the original door. Arnold enjoys woodworking and has constructed frames to display part of his collection. Others are in an antique display case and still others are tucked in the shelves around his home.

The Fredricks have two children to whom they have given mounted knobs and plates with the following poem engraved on a plate attached to the wooden plaques.

"Only one house was home to me,
Only one house was home.
The door of the house spoke
'Welcome.'
The knob on the door said
'Home.'"

Anonymous

When their daughter was burglarized, she called her parents to report, "The bad news is we were burglarized. The good news is they didn't take the doorknob.

FEEDBACK

In our last issue the article on emblematic knobs pictured a knob with a clock on the face with the hands at

the eleventh hour. We mistakenly indicated it as a symbol used by the Elks Lodge. It is a logo of the Masonic Temple.

George Doyle (Hartford, Conn.) wrote to say he thinks the "SP" doorknob could be from the Southern Pacific Railroad. Do any of you have any information to confirm this assumption?

Elise Roenigk (E. Hampton, Conn.) dropped us a line saying she has a knob we labeled as "Statler Towers" and according to her friend it was from Seaman's Institute in Manhattan which seems logical with the anchor motif.

John Holland (Phoenix, Ariz.) said that the knob pictured on the upper right corner on the unidentified page is the emblem used on the escutcheons of the Chicago Tribune building in Chicago. The building is now owned by First Federal Savings and Loan Assoc. of Chicago. He has the escutcheon, but the knob which goes with the escutcheon is ribbed around the edges, but is otherwise plain. So we are still not positive that this is the origin of the knob pictured.

Several people have asked how the pictures in the last issue were done. Rich took pictures of the knobs with a camera set at a distance so the 4X5" Poloroid image would come out true to size. These were then set on a light box and traced. The shading and detail was added freehand by looking at the photo. By eliminating the gray tones of the pictures, clear reproductions could be made.

EXCHANGE

We often receive notes from our readers who are interested in trading. We have given this some

thought and our only solution is to list those who are interested and have you get in touch with each other directly.

Wendell Trumbull (Bethlehem, Pa.) would like to know who is interested in obtaining, swapping or selling old hardware catalogs.

Len Blumin, 382 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley, Ca. 94941 has sent us a Xeroxed copy of his extra knobs that he wants to trade and also a list of some that he wants to obtain. If you are interested write directly to him.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Len Blumin has posed a question about a knob he has. It is a cast iron knob mounted on an old rim lock. The design features a lion's head, with an ornate repeating design as a border, leading into a deeply scalloped perimeter. He is trying to determine its origin. We did not receive a picture of it. He is thinking it is English, an early Russel and Erwin or a Mallory-Wheeler. We don't have the answer.

THE PURLOINED DOORKNOB

The following article was sent to us a long time ago. We do not know where it came from, but has a date of March 1977 on it.

On the day the doorknob was invented an ancestor of General Sessions Judge Buford Wells may have stubbed his toe. Or cut his finger. Or hit his head on a low limb. Whatever, intuition tells us, it made him angry.

Allowing heredity to have its way, it is no more than natural that Judge Wells got upset when somebody stole the knob off his courtroom door. At lunchtime yet. He had a right, of course, to as-

sume his attitude about the door-knob. Some people are disturbed by cats or snow or rock and roll or radiators or scotch and soda. It just happens that Wells was upset by a missing doorknob.

"Who would do such a thing?" he asked. A person who had a screwdriver in his or her pocket would do such a thing. A person who collects doorknobs would do it. A person who wanted to see if he could do it and get away with it would do it. Run that through your police files and Wells may have the culprit. Or he may not, for it could have been someone who passed by with a nail file and a free spirit who took it just because it was there.

The doorknob was replaced with a replica, complete with the seal of Shelby County on it, from a box of spares, which shows what courthouse purchasing agents think of Memphis crime. "They turn up missing from time to time," said a maintenance man.

If this is the sort of thing that's going on, something should be done. Action is called for. Doorknobs today; entire doors tomorrow. It could grow bigger and bigger and encompass the entire

county. Think of the grand jury investigations that could follow.

The solution, however, is simple. Everyone knows how busy the courts are and how lawyers and clients go in and out in a pace that sometimes matches arguments in dizziness. Get rid of the doorknobs. And install revolving doors to cut down on crime and make our courts more accessible.

Another advantage is that Atty. Gen. Hugh Stanton Jr. would find it easier to enter the courtroom with a case instead of just to present the judge with a plain store-bought doorknob for chuckles.

NEXT ISSUE

We hope to do an article on mercury glass knobs in November. If you have anything to contribute to our knowledge on this subject, please send it on. Do you have any unusual mercury glass knobs? We would like a photo of them.

Please remember, this is your newsletter. Contribute!

