

# The Doorknob Collector

January 1985

Number 13



"SAVONA"

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE  
SARGENT

## From The Archives

In August of 1983, the ADCA archives were formally established. This marked an exciting step forward for the club.

One reason for the archives was to enable all members to have access to early hardware catalog reference material. In order to accomplish this, photocopies of pertinent pages carefully selected from antique hardware catalogs.

The original catalogs that have been copied were loaned to the club by various interested and generous members.

The catalogs copied to date:

Russell & Erwin, Volume 2, 1875

Russwin Hardware Schools of Design  
(no date)

Bayer Gardner Himes Cat. #2, 1925

A.F. Shapleigh Hardware Co. 1895

Yale and Towne, Catalog #10, 1884

Yale and Towne, Catalog #14, 1893

Norwalk Lock Co., Catalog 1890

"Locks" Mallory-Wheeler & Co 1882

A. G. Newman, New York (no date)

Corbin Monthly Brochures, 1902-03

Sargent Artistic Hardware (no date)

More catalogs have been loaned to us and are in the process of being copied. We will list them along with information on how members can order copies for themselves in the next issue of the Doorknob Collector.

### LIBRARY REPORT

At the 1984 annual meeting, President, Len Blumin, presented three books that would become part of the beginning of The Emil Miller Memorial Library. The three volumes are listed as follows: "The Antique Doorknob" and "Antique Builders' Hardware-Knobs & Accessories" by Maud Eastwood, and "Victorian Decorative Art" by Leonard Blumin. At the same time Len also donated his only copy of "Babcock & Stowell's 1894 catalog." Our library was thus started with these four volumes.

Later, during the same meeting, Martin Meldahl presented the library with his copy of the "Corbin Catalog No. 28 M."

Emil Miller's "P & F Carbin, 1905 Catalog" and his "Sager Locks & Hardware Catalog No 37" have since been donated.

If you have any hardware catalogs and would care to donate them to this very worthwhile project, your donation is tax deductible.

Dorothy Ann Miller, Archivist

8074 Cedar St. Omaha, Nebr. 68124

# Polishing Made Easy

By Charlie Bednar

From the time I started collecting, about 1968, until I retired three years ago, I was satisfied to do little else other than clean my hardware, i. e. remove the paint and or scrub the grime off. With more time after retiring I planned to do some additional work on my knobs. Those with a nice patina were left that way. Some were dark and discolored, others had been polished by the manufacturer or from use, but could be improved. I found products such as Nevr Dull worked fairly well if enough energy was used. More recently I tried a paste rubbing compound found in auto supply stores. It has an abrasive in it but does not do any damage. It is all I use now.

Holding a knob firmly with one hand while rubbing with the other gets to be monotonous. That is when I came up with the idea - why not do just the opposite? Hold the polish while rotating the knob.

To do this I took a spindle, ground and filed one end round for about an inch. Now I could use my variable speed 3/8" drill. Attaching a knob and turning it about 100 R.P.M.'s, it took no more than seconds to get a polish. The back and shank are polished by using my thumb to conform to the shape.

After going over the knob surfaces, an old toothbrush is useful for getting into recesses. Then take a clean cloth or paper product to remove remaining polishing agent and grime. It may be necessary to wash the knob with soap and water. After washing, a few spins using a dry paper towel or cloth will enhance the polish. If a knob is dark or stained it may be necessary to repeat the process. Of course knicks and scratches won't come out, however, in some cases, depending on the features of the knob, a fine emery cloth can remove surface damage without disturbing the pattern.

The same idea can be used to polish roses. Instead of a spindle, use a 5/16" or 3/8" carriage or round head stove bolt along with a few nuts and washers.

Paper towels and napkins vary in quality, some are nothing more than pulp and break down easily. Others, such as HI Dry or Northern contain more fiber and hold up better.

When grime gets on your hands, Borax does a good job of cleaning.

If you think of something different for polishing, take a poor knob and experiment, it might turn work into fun.

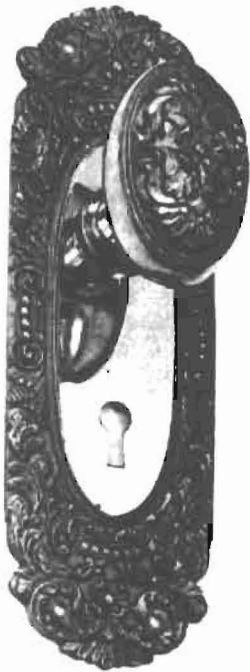


## FAVORITE DOORKNOBS

BY

ARNIE FREDRICK

My favorite knobs are on the doors at 221 Second Street Southeast in Waverly, Iowa. The house was built in 1909 by "Milly" Curtis, a son of Waverly pioneer S.H. Curtis. My wife Tedi and I have lived at this address since 1962 and are only the second family to own the house. .



"Alexandria"

Because the Curtis family was in the hardware business, the door hardware and other finishings in the house are of the highest quality. The local newspaper has stated that "the doors featured elaborate door-knobs with intricately scrolled plates." The door hardware is the "Alexandria" design by the Lockwood Manufacturing Company and is pictured on page 120 of Maudie's second book. [Maud L. Eastwood, Antique Builders' Hardware - Knobs & Accessories.]

These doorknobs sparked my interest in antique door hardware, although I did not start collecting until 1976. The design was apparently not popular since I have seen only one other knob of the same design.

Incidentally, the S.H. Curtis hardware store was established in Waverly in 1855. In addition to the Lockwood doorknobs, the store also sold door hardware manufactured by The Parker & Whipple Company, West Meriden, Connecticut. The hardware store founder's grandson operated

the store until about 1975. After the store was sold, the purchaser found a letter written by the president of Parker & Whipple. The letter was handwritten on October 11, 1877 in response to a letter written by Mr. Curtis wherein he complained about the discount on his last doorknob order. That letter and a Parker & Whipple brochure are reproduced on pages 176-177 of Maudie's book.

Several years after we moved here I was involved in the demolition of four old houses near the office where I worked. The first two houses were demolished and all of the materials were hauled to the dump. At the last minute I removed some of the hardware from the last two houses just before the wrecker came. I just threw the hardware in a box, brought the box home and sort of forgot about it.

I never made a rational decision to start collecting doorknobs. A love of antiques stimulated my interest in brass, bronze, and glass doorknobs. In 1976, while visiting an antique store in St. Louis, I bought three door knobs for three dollars each. My life never has been the same. I would not want to admit how much time and money I have spent (invested?) looking for and buying doorknobs since that day.

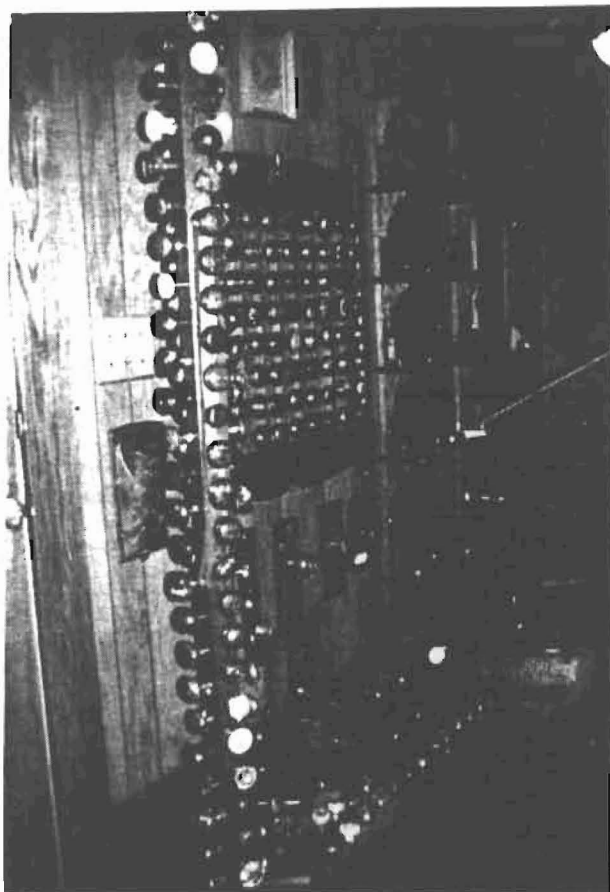
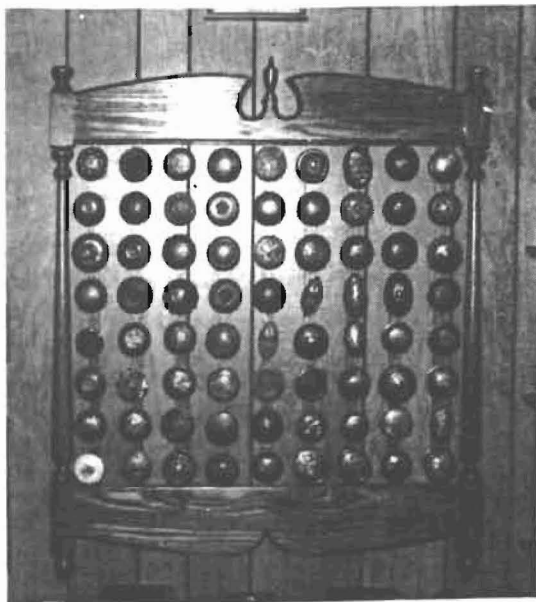
One of the first things I did upon my return from the 1976 trip to St. Louis was to look through the box I had set aside and forgotten. I discovered that I had several fine doorknobs and, with the three from St. Louis, I now had the start of a collection.

I had long since forgotten that first antique store in St. Louis until September 1984 when I visited the Fellenz family. Three members of the family have stores in St. Louis. I visited the store owned by Bill Fellenz, Debbie's brother, and recognized it as the site of my first purchase.

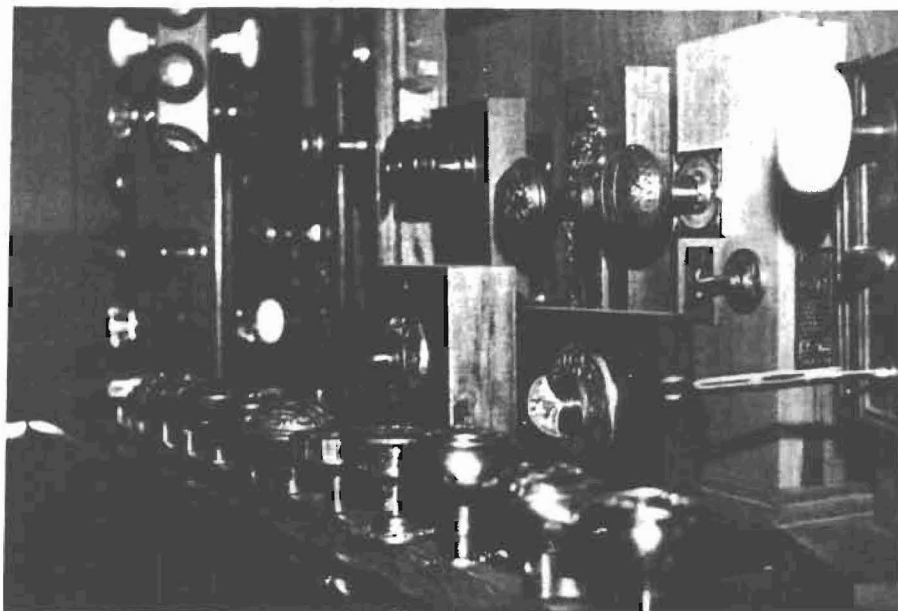
Two cast iron emblematics from the University of Iowa, my alma mater, also are among my favorites. Finally, another sentimental favorite is the cast iron knob from the door of the bedroom in which I was born in Strawberry Point, Iowa

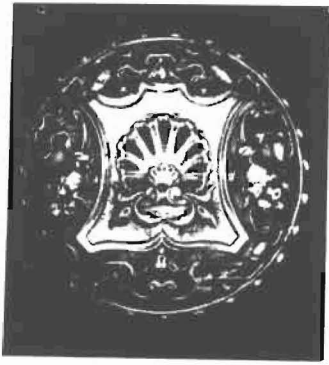


PICTURES OF ARNIE'S  
COLLECTION



The post on the left revolves,  
thus increasing display space.





"MILAN"  
Yale & Towne

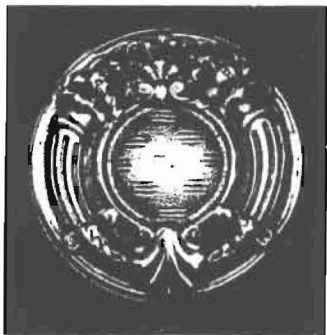


SCHOOL

## ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



"VEROCCHIO"  
Russell & Erwin



"BRAMANTE"  
Russell & Erwin

Closely after the Gothic came the Renaissance school of ornament which resulted in the return of the world of art and science to classic precedents in the early 15th century. The new-born appreciation of the beauties of Greek art and letters which swept over Europe, and particularly Italy, was in part due to the effects of the Crusades. Exposure to the best work of the Hellenic mind checked the ascendancy of the Gothic School.

In Italian Renaissance there is suggested sentiment, poetry, and luxury. It produced many beautiful, and finally frightful results, but arts and letters and civilization advanced. Hence we see in the ornament of the age, great liberties taken with stem, foliage, and animal forms. Satyrs, cherubs, beasts, birds and fish are often used indiscriminately as the vehicles of inspiration. Acanthus, lily, palm and all classic forms are repeated, often with shields, coats of arms, garlands of fruit or flowers tied with waving ribbons.

On the revival of letters in the 15th century, the Italians began to recognize that they were the national descendants of those who had produced the masterpieces in ancient Italy, the art practised by them was not a foreign importation like that of the Gothic style, but their own, which recalled the history of at one time, being the conquerors of the world.

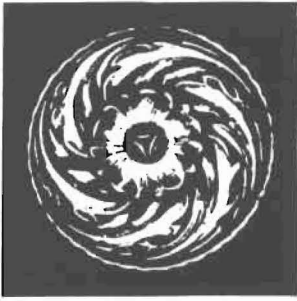
The early period of the Renaissance was marked by grace and spontaneity in decoration, and was executed with freedom and originality. Its decline saw the introduction of florid and alien ornamentation.



"TIVOLI"  
Corbin



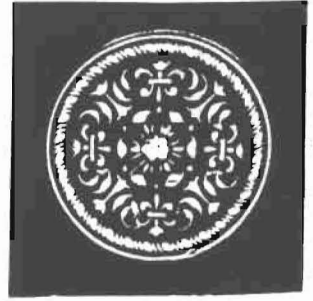




"URBANO"  
Yale & Towne



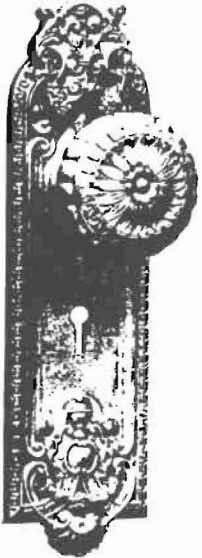
Pilaster capital  
Palace of the Doges  
Venice



"VERONESE"  
Corbin



From embroidery  
1529



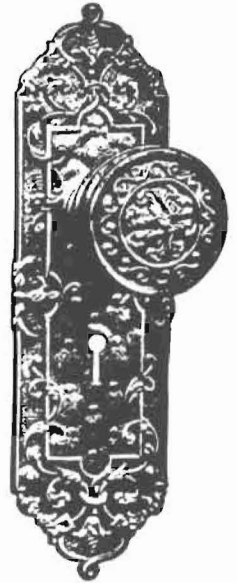
"MARSALA"  
Reading



Detail, pilaster  
San Angostino, Rome



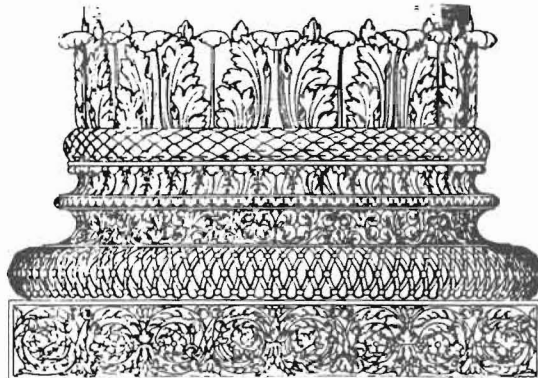
Marble floor mosaic  
Cathedral of Siena



"ARNO"  
Reading



Detail from  
choir seat



Column base  
Baptistry of Constantine  
Rome



Holy water-stoup  
Pisa Cathedral

MORE VARIATIONS

