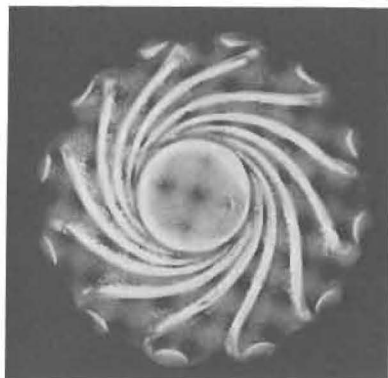


# The Doorknob Collector



Yale & Towne, 1900  
School, "Romanesque"

DECEMBER 1986

Number 21

1987 Convention Dates on Page 3

## Louis Sullivan on Tour

Since September 5th and continuing until January 4, 1987, the Chicago Historical Society has on display an exhibition devoted to the works of a man who is recognized as one of America's most influential architects -- Louis Sullivan. Originated by the Chicago Historical Society, in collaboration with the St. Louis Art Museum, the exhibition focuses on Sullivan's controversial use of ornament and the meaning behind it.

Louis Sullivan's work has been of great interest to many ADCA members and a fine feature was presented in the January 1986 issue of **The Doorknob Collector** by Maude Eastwood and Tim Samuelson.

The exhibition visually carries us through most of the high points of Sullivan's career. It provides us with a deeper understanding of his ornamental works.

Although the Chicago exhibition is almost over, ADCA members still have a chance to see it. The display will go on a national tour. The dates and places of the exhibition are as follows:

March 23 through May, 1987 - The Cooper-Hewitt, New York City

August 28 through October 25, 1987 - The St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Mo.

Spring 1988, National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.

Over one million visitors are expected to view the exhibition in the four major markets over the 18 month period

### WHY SULLIVAN IS IMPORTANT

Louis Sullivan defined the architect as "a poet who uses not words but building materials as a medium of expression." His use of ornament was sometimes pushed to the brink of its architectural possibilities, thus creating more diverse criticism than any other architect during the past century. Sullivan strived to perfect what he termed "an American architecture," one completely free of historical references. He took man's relationship to nature and adapted it to architecture, integrating the inorganic with the organic. The result was an ornamental vocabulary which

gave poetic expression to his buildings. Its impact has only recently been recognized and understood by architectural historians. Most importantly, many of today's leading post-modernist architects look to Sullivan and his creative use of ornament to conceptualizing their own work.

Frank Lloyd Wright, who worked for Sullivan in the 1880's, said that Sullivan "may have been ridiculous when he wrote, was miraculous when he drew."

#### WHAT'S IN THE EXHIBITION

There are approximately 170 objects included in this exhibition. They include original drawings by Sullivan, building fragments, stained glass windows, wall stencils, vintage and new photographs and, yes, some doorknobs. The many items were borrowed from public and private collections, including that of member Tim Samuelson.

#### SULLIVAN THE MAN



Louis H. Sullivan, 1891. Courtesy of Sulliviana Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photograph by Alexander Hesler.

Louis H. Sullivan was born September 3, 1856, in Boston, Massachusetts, into an artistic family. During the early 1870s, Sullivan studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 1875 Sullivan moved to Chicago, where he worked as a freelance designer and draftsman. Sullivan became a principal in the architectural firm Adler & Sullivan in 1883. During the next twelve years, he designed some of the period's most important commercial buildings and private residences for clients in Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo, Seattle and other cities nationwide. After Dankmar Adler dissolved the business partnership in 1895, Sullivan continued to seek building commissions throughout the Midwest. Most of these were more modest structures, like small-town banks, in contrast to the dramatic skyscrapers he had previously designed. In his later years, Sullivan wrote extensively on his philosophy of architecture. He died in Chicago on April 16, 1924.



Yale & Towne, 1894  
School, "Romanesque"

#### The Doorknob Collector

Published by Antique Doorknob  
Collectors of America, Inc.  
P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126  
Phone: 1-312-357-2381  
Ray and Loretta Nemecek, Editors  
Annual Membership, \$20.00.  
Lifetime Membership, \$150.00.  
Rates on request for inserts.

## 1987 Convention in September

The sixth annual Antique Doorknob Collectors of America convention will be held from September 24 to September 27, 1987 in Des Moines, Iowa according to Al Still, convention chairman.

The event will be held in the Sheraton Inn Located on Hickman Road. Complete information will be given in the July 1987 issue of **The Doorknob Collector**.

The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America was formed as a non-profit organization at a meeting of collectors brought together by Arnie Fredrick in September 1981 at Waverly, Iowa. In each of the following years a convention has been held by the club. Following is a list of convention sights in previous years and the chairperson:

1982 San Francisco, CA. - Len Blumin  
1983 Naperville, IL. - Loretta Nemec  
1984 Waverly, Iowa - Arnie Fredrick  
1985 St. Charles, MO. - Debbie Fellenz  
1986 Minneapolis, MN. - Jim&Lee Kaiser



Al Still, 1987 Convention Chairman.

## We're Going to Five Issues

It is with pleasure that we announce another milestone in the growth of the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America and **The Doorknob Collector** - already the nation's most respected organization on doorknobs. Beginning in 1987, we will begin publishing five issues a year of **The Doorknob Collector**- an increase of one from the four issues we have been publishing for the past five years.

At four issues, we have felt constrained in our capabilities to present doorknob collectors with timely news. Essentially, the new issue will be during the winter months, a time when outdoor activities are often curtailed in many parts of the country. The issues will be dated February, April, July, October and December.

For those of you, in particular, who have been loyal readers from the start, we believe you have recognized the development the publication has made from its inception, under the direction of editors Jim and Lee Kaiser. With your help it will continue to grow. The Newsletter needs your articles, pictures and suggestions.



### Obituaries

Charles King, of Moline, Illinois, died recently. He was the husband of Lavonne King, an ADCA member since 1985.

# Emblematic Knobs

By Len Blumin

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a supplement to Len's excellent book, VICTORIAN DECORATIVE ART, and additional supplements will appear as a regular feature.)

A great variety of knob designs were produced at the special request of a customer. There so-called "emblematic" knobs were ordered by schools, hotels, seats of government, fraternal societies, corporations, and countless other entities. Victorian Decorative Art did not contain an emblematic section, due to space limitations. This group of twelve knobs is presented as an initial offering in the category "Emblematic Knobs", which will be designated by the

letter "O" followed by a number, in keeping with the numerical system of Victorian Decorative Art.

It seems that these knobs were produced as early as the 1870's, but clearly gained greatest popularity in the period 1890 to 1910. Most of the major hardware companies were capable of filling such custom orders. The diversity and beauty in the emblematic category is such that they would make a fine field of specialization for a collector so inclined.

Seal of the United States. Russell and Erwin, 1890's. Said to be the Seal of the U.S. Army, but I suspect that it is really a more broadly defined emblem.

O-101



Seal of the Department of the Treasury. This knob is said to have come from one of the U.S. Mints. A fairly wide variety of Treasury Seal knobs have surfaced.

O-102



Flag knob. Manufacturer and significance unknown. The pennant above the knob carries the motto: "This we'll defend". I have tried without success to trace the motto. A free copy of VICTORIAN DECORATIVE ART to the first reader who identifies it.

0-103



Seal of the City of San Francisco. "Oro en paz, fierro en guerra" (Golden in peace, iron in war). This knob is typical of the genre, in that the true seal of the city or state is faithfully copied on the knob face.

0-104



Seal of the County of New Jersey. The woman on the porch has just been shot by the man with the rifle. Perhaps a reader can supply the details. Surely this is the only knob depicting the scene of a murder.

0-105



The Commodore (Hotel), New York. Most hotels opted for relatively simple mono-grammatic knobs, but a few like this one provide more visual interest. Probably the majority of large hotels from the turn of the century have either been demolished or extensively renovated, accounting for the fairly broad selection of hotel knobs accessible to the collector.

0-106





# Insuring Your Collection

By David Kaiser

Antique Doorknob collections can be covered for loss or damage from most events by one of two types of policies,

The first is the "homeowners" policy that most people will already have to cover their home, personal property and liability. This policy covers the value of doorknobs for common types of losses such as fire, wind, smoke, vandalism, water damage, collapse of the house, explosion and damage from vehicles and aircraft. This policy will also cover your collection while being transported and while located away from your home, although for a limited amount.

The value of the doorknob will be the cost to purchase a replacement doorknob of like kind, condition and quality. If another similar doorknob is unavailable the estimated cost of replacing the doorknob, if one were available will be basis for claim settlement. It is extremely important that you review the amount of insurance for personal property that is provided by your homeowners policy. the amount is generally equal to 50% of the amount of insurance on the house itself. This amount may not be sufficient to cover the aggregate value of your collection and your other personal property such as furniture, clothing and appliances. This amount of insurance can be increased.

The other common policy used to cover doorknob collections is a "personal property floater." This type of policy covers collections against more types of losses and may be more expensive. This type of policy is also used to cover coins, stamps, jewelry, furs, fine arts and antiques. If you currently have this type of policy your collection should be added to it. The policy will insure the value of your collection stated for each item on a list you provide, or may be written up to cover a stated limit (\$25 or \$30) per item of a combination of both (up to \$30 for any one doorknob and \$100 for a specific doorknob.) This type of



policy covers your collection where ever it may be and while being transported.

Covering your collection under your homeowners policy is probably the easiest. Many insurance companies may not appreciate the value of antique doorknob collection and may not issue a "floater" type of policy. You or your insurance agent may need to check with several insurance companies before you find the coverage you want.

No matter how you cover your collection you will need to keep accurate and thorough records to be able to purchase the proper amount and types of insurance and to make claim settlement easier should a loss occur. Maintaining an inventory of your collection is important for insurance purposes. You may want to supplement the inventory with photographs or video tapes.

In order to expedite claim handling when a loss occurs it is a good idea to ask your agent to have your company respond in writing as to how they will handle a claim on you collection. (i.e., value paid, information needed from you and any other procedures they have that you need to be aware of.)

If you have any questions about insurance for your collection or claims write a letter to the editor with your question or concern.

# Highways to a Doorknob

By Mildred C. Bright

Early in the 1940's we learned to love the Arizona Highways magazine with its stories and scenes of Arizona - its mountains, lakes, deserts, rock formations, Indian ruins, canyons and valleys - its magnificent, blue sky and glorious sunsets that makes silhouettes of the palm trees and mountains.

All this time as years unfolded we have been subscribers to the Arizona Highways and have visited many of the places that the articles in the magazines described in pictures and in words. We became avid collectors of the magazine. Sometimes in order to get a specific issue that featured Indian pottery, rugs, trade beads, jewelry, art baskets or history we needed to buy a number of the magazines to get the one we sought. Soon we had a collections including issues and or volumes from 1938 to 1985. We continue to seek ones to fill in to make a complete set from its beginning 1925 to the present day.

In 1985 Arizona Highways celebrated its 60 anniversary by having an open house and a flea market of magazine trading, we did a roaring business since we could offer old black and white ones and also the later ones that were in color (the first full color issue was December, 1946.)

After the 60 anniversary celebration, interest was aroused in information about collectors and collections. In August 1986 Arizona Highways published an article about them. We were included and pictured in the article. The article mentioned that we collected railroad nails, spikes and also barbwire.

Perhaps you are wondering how this has anything to do with doorknob collecting since the article did not mention that we collect doorknobs.



One Arizona Highways subscriber, Edith Martin, who read the article, lives in Westmorland, California. Through the Arizona Highways, a letter from Edith Martin reached us. She told us about a railroad spike she had from the silver mine at Los Florez, Baja California, Mexico. She wanted to send us the spike for our collection.

Our appreciation note said we would like to have the spike since we have an old ore cart from an Arizona mine. The cart is mounted on a short narrow gauge track as it was used at the mine. A post script mentioned we also collect doorknobs. Soon a package with the spike arrived, in the box was also a very plain iron doorknob and a very interesting history of the knob. This doorknob had been on a main living quarters of the Hacienda style ranch home of Harold Bell Wright, author of "The Winning of Barbara Worth," a story about the first settlers in Imperial Valley.

Edith Martin told that about 1916, during World War I, Harold Bell Wright invited the Imperial Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross to use his premises for a war bond rally. Edith Martin was selected as one of the 10 year old girls to be dressed as a Red Cross nurse and walk among the crowd to sell Saving Stamps and Liberty Bonds.

## HIGHWAYS (continued)

About 1960, the Harold Bell Wright ranch changed ownership and later was abandoned to be demolished. Edith Martin asked the workers for a doorknob.

Edith Martin's family pioneered in Imperial Valley after having moved there from Palomas, Arizona. Her father had worked on the old Mohawk Canal in Arizona in the 1840's.

This is the story of a strange route that a doorknob followed to reach two members of the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America. (Editor's note: The Brights are interested in hearing from anyone having old issues of ARIZONA HIGHWAYS.)



Allen and Janet Still had a major portion of their collection on display at the Franklin Ave. Library in Des Moines earlier this year.

An art teacher from a local high school was so impressed with them as an art form she photographed each knob individually to show her art classes.



Steve & Barbara Menchhofer's collection was on display at the Speedway, Indiana, local library recently.

## LETTERS

### House is Free

What do you look for in doorknobs, age or beauty? We have a couple dozen in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, we want a hundred thousand for them and will throw in the house they are attached to.

G.W.(Doc) Embree  
Grant Pass, OR.

### Wants a Setter

If by any chance, you know of anyone who has or (knows) where available, the Doorknob of the Irish Setter, on page 10 of **The Doorknob Collector** (October 1986) I would like one for my collection as we have had Irish Setters for many years.

Fred Magnus  
Ft. Myers Beach FL.

## CLASSIFIED AD SECTION

Members are reminded that your dues entitles you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge.