



Loretta Nemec and Greg Filardo look at a purchase by Greg at the Kane County Flea Market

The Doorknob Collector

JULY-AUGUST 1987
Number 24

Let's Go To Des Moines

The **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** convention is a place to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. It is a place to engage in trading doorknobs, learn hardware history and much more. This all awaits **ADCA** member in Des Moines, September 23-27, 1987.

The annual meeting of the **ADCA** membership includes the Election of Directors, voting on issues, selecting future convention sites, reports, meetings and yearly doorknob auction.

Members planning to attend are encouraged to return the registration forms as soon as possible but not later than August 1, 1987. The Convention bulletin was mailed several weeks ago. If you plan to attend and do not have the **ADCA** Registration Form or the Hotel Registration Form call Al Still, 515-224-0473, or write him at 415 46th Street, West Des Moines, Iowa 50265.

A Visit To Kane County

Almost every month a number of **ADCA** members converge on the Kane County Flea Market. The Muellers and Lys set up every month to sell doorknobs, light fixtures and other assorted items. Greg Filardo and Debbie Fellenz usually come to buy but set up to sell a couple times during the year. Debbie is usually joined by her mother, Dolores, when she has a booth.

The Kane County Flea Market, one of the largest in the Country, is held on the first Sunday of each month year round. It is located at the Kane County Fair Grounds on Randall Road in St. Charles, Illinois.

It was 10:00 a.m. on June 7th, the first Sunday of the month. At Joe Mueller's booth in the Kane County Flea Market, Greg Filardo, Joe and Martha Mueller were discussing recent acquisitions at the flea market. They were soon joined by Ray and Loretta Nemec, then Joe Mann and Steve Menchhofer and finally Debbie Fellenz. **ADCA** members from four states were represented.

In another area, **ADCA** members Stefan and Helene Lys were tending to their booth. They have a spot in the main building.

Kane/P2

Kane (from P1)

St. Charles is located on the banks of the Fox River, between Aurora and Elgin, about 38 miles west of Chicago. In addition to the flea market, St. Charles is gaining fame as an antique haven with three large Antique Markets located in the business area.



Joe and Martha Mueller taking care of customers

The Kane County Flea Market is in it's 21st year and fills every available space of at least a dozen large exhibition halls in the winter and in the summer it covers the entire outside area of the fairgrounds. The market's founder, owner and operator, Helen Robinson, says that dealers come from as far away as Alaska to take part in the monthly sale. It regularly attracts collectors and bargain hunters from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin.

During the winter months, 5,000 to 7,000 people pass through the gates. In March, despite cold and rainy weather, 7,113 people attended the flea market. During warmer months, as many as 15,000 people visit the flea market looking for the bargain or a rare find from nearly 2,000 dealers.

The peddlers come in vans, trucks, station wagons, battered buses and trailers. They are retired business executives, college professors, antique dealers, farmers, factory and construction workers, entrepreneurs and in some cases, itinerants.

They sell most anything, from the doorknobs we collectors seek, to oak and maple furniture, dishes and plates, baseball cards, toys, coins, sheet music, tools and utensils....the list goes on and on.

Dealers rent was once \$5.00, then climbed to \$50.00 outside lots and \$70.00 inside areas. Now, we understand, the rates are being increased again.

Dealers buy like crazy from each other. Some items, are sold three or four times before finally leaving the fairgrounds.

"In the summertime it's like a party," Robinson says. "A lot of



Helene and Stefan Lys at Kane County dealers buy and sell and swap stories talk the night away. I love it."

Food is served all day, beginning with breakfast in the main building. Stands throughout the grounds offer most anything from hot dogs and Polish Sausage to ice cream and snow cones.

In all, the Kane County Flea Market is much like a carnival. Only the rides are missing. If you come to the flea market and want to check the wares of all the dealers expect to spend a full day. Wear comfortable walking shoes.

The Doorknob Collector

Published five times a year 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.

My Milwaukee Manse



I've always had an interest in antique ornamental hardware. At age seven, I can remember attending my aunt's funeral in an old funeral home and gazing at the bronze hinges with the bamboo and butterfly motive. By age ten I had learned architectural styles well enough that I could date most buildings to within five years of their construction. Shortly thereafter salvaged pieces from the past came home in coaster wagons. A rescued stained glass window gained new life in a "club house". More than 25 years have passed since I began rescuing pieces from the past. I realized that hardware played a critical role in determining very closely the construction date of the building.

The charisma of the historical significance of the piece of hardware soon proved to be irresistible. A bronze hinge from the house once occupied by Edna Ferber; the doorbell from the front door of the famous meat packers Patrick Cudahy, as well as financier' John Plankinton; the front door plate from the founder of the International Workers of the World, E. P. Bacon; all had incredible stories to tell.

I could not understand why no one wanted to preserve these irreplaceable buildings. As the 1960's and 1970's progressed, a cultural "dark age" blackened America in which some of our greatest architectural treasures were obliterated. Fortunately a few of us were saving some of the pieces so that they could be appreciated by future generations.



By
Greg
Filardo

As my collection grew, I faced a dilemma; where does one store and display all of these items? In 1976, one of Milwaukee's last pre-turn of the century mansions was for sale. At age 26, a thirty room house is not exactly a "starter home". On Valentine's Day I signed the offer to purchase and my love affair with the past became a reality.

The mansion was patterned after a palace built in Germany during the 1700's. Fortunately the interior was fairly intact even though the first



owner who moved out in 1920 was the last person to use the building as a single family dwelling. Since then, the building served as a Ku Klux Klan headquarters, a hospital, and a rooming house/apartment which was divided into 26 rental units. The past owner had begun to restore the building, but a lot of work remained. After 11 years, missing marble sinks, pull chain toilets, (in all seven bathrooms), fireplace tiles, magnificent gas/electric chandeliers as well as period furniture have returned.

Filardo P6

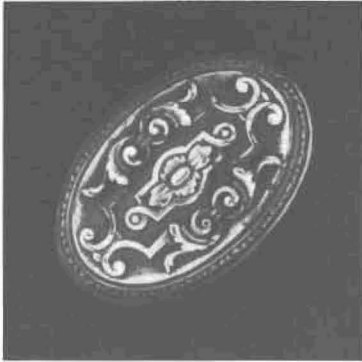
ORNAMENTAL DESIGN IN ANTIQUE DOORKNOBS

by Len Blumin

OVAL KNOBS

- N-131 ESTERNAY, Louis XV, Reading, 1910 catalog.
N-132 F. C. Linde Co. Precursor of Art Deco Style.
N-133 Unknown.
N-134 LARNA, Art Nouveau, Sargent, 1910 catalog.
N-135 Unknown. Large ornate "egg" knob.
N-136 ANGLURE, Rococo, Lockwood, 1900 catalog.

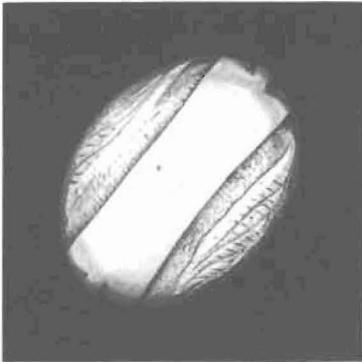
N-131



N-134



N-132



N-135



N-133



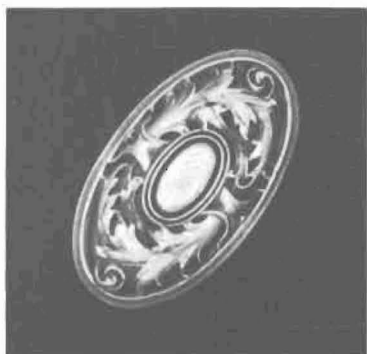
N-136



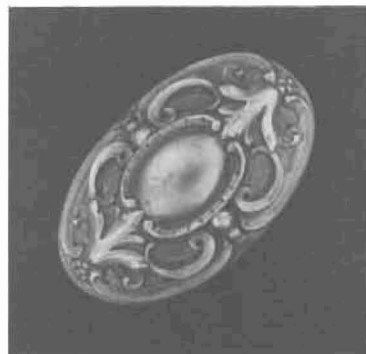
OVAL KNOBS
(continued)

- N-137 MARSEILLES, French Renaissance, Corbin, 1905 catalog.
N-138 Unknown, but common.
N-139 Unknown.
N-140 WINDSOR, Rococo, Schlage, 1930 catalog.
N-141 Unknown.
N-142 Corbin, 1932 Catalog, Spider-web motif.

N-137



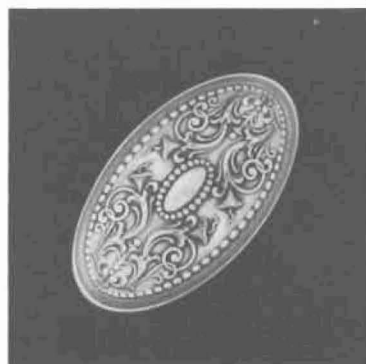
N-140



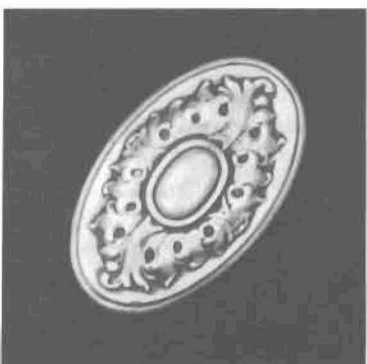
N-138



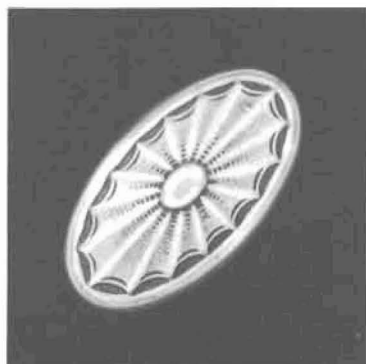
N-141



N-139



N-142



Filardo (from P3)

All of the hardware was stolen from the house in 1971 when it stood vacant awaiting possible demolition. By looking carefully at the outlines left in the varnish, all of the original hardware has been found (each room having a different pattern). Also housed in the building is a large collection of mechanical musical instruments from music boxes, nickelodeon, a self-playing violin, a fair-ground organ to old radios and phonographs.

The challenge of finding the hardware for the house was not easy. In 1971, the house had stood vacant for three months and fortunately the hardware was all that was stolen. The imprints of the plates were still visible upon the doors. Each room had a different pattern by a different company.

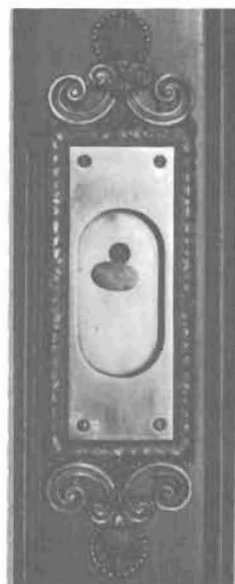
As I discovered, the architect matched the hardware to the design features of each room. (See photo of music room sliding door plate, then compare to photo of ceiling friezes.) After much searching, I did locate all of the identical pieces to replace the missing ones. The sliding door plates, in the music room came from Cleveland as well as from St. Louis. The hardware in the dining room is probably some of the most finely cast hardware ever produced in the United States. The imprint of the design is on the back side of the plate casting indicating that they might have been cast in plaster.

Something interesting I discovered



about the architect, Otto Strack, was that he believed, that in nature, nothing existed in a perfect state. When he built a building, one flaw was to be placed which would be almost undiscernable. The inside vestibule door plate was hung upside down and remained that way for 69 years until it was removed by the owners in 1967 when another door knob and plate were stolen. As you may observe, the small lion faces at the center edges would have been upside down. Note that the imprint left upon the door indicating the original position of the now righted plate.

One can now gather that the past did tell a lot of interesting stories. One point to ponder is why museums are so busy acquiring dinosaurs and other pieces of the past that "we can really relate to".....after all didn't all of our grandparents have one as a pet?...while incredible pieces of our "built environment" are not being preserved as works of art as which indeed they really are. Hardware is used by all of us every day...we could not even leave a room without it. For a brief forty years, Victorian man realized the significance of which hardware played in our lives and chose to lavish creative design on a utilitarian object to elevate it to a thing of beauty. Keats summed it up best of all, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever".



IT'S A RECORD

by Ray Nemeo

The radio station manager, knowing I collected doorknobs, said he had something for me. A few minutes later he reappeared and handed me several recordings. His face developed a large smile as mine showed amazement. The recording all had the same label, "Door Knob Records."

I had to know more about "Door Knob Records." Was it a new label? How was the name chosen? The name and address of the company appeared on the records. Maybe I have a story for the Doorknob Collector I thought as I wrote a letter to the company.

Soon I was to get my answers for in a few days I received a letter from Karen Kennedy. She wrote, "Door Knob Records is a subsidiary of Gene Kennedy Enterprises, Inc., here in Nashville. Both companies are now eleven years old and are owned by my husband, Gene, and myself. In eleven years, we have had close to two hundred chart records. It is rare to not find a Door Knob Record in neither Billboard or Cashbox magazines national Country charts. Usually we have something in at least one of these."

In October, 1986 Door Knob Records was named Cash Box Independent Label of the year. This award was for having the most records in the national charts throughout the year.

"I was sitting in Patsy Bradley's office at BMI," explained Gene to readers of Music Row, a music industry publication, on how he named the new label, "and I had to have a name for the publishing company because there was a song I was going to publish. Every idea we tried for the company name didn't clear, someone already had a company with that name. I was sitting looking at the door knob of her office door.....and the rest is history."

Now I have a new doorknob hobby.....collecting records.



Obituary

Ralph F. Chelin, a charter member of the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**, died as a result of a heart attack in Princeton, Illinois, on April 10, 1987. He was 72 years old.

Mr. Chelin, and his wife, Florence, attended the September 1981 gathering of doorknob collectors at Waverly, Iowa, and helped establish ADCA. They had attended all the conventions except the last one, in 1986.

Chelin was born September 14, 1914, in Princeton. He married Florence Smith on October 25, 1936. Ralph was a self-employed carpenter.

He started collecting doorknobs about 20 years ago. His work as a carpenter led to an interest in doorknobs and associated hardware.

Florence recalls, "we went to a household sale and there was a big iron kettle full of knobs. He bought it. I got the kettle, he got the knobs. That is when Ralph started collecting doorknobs as a hobby."

Chelin often gave talks and showed displays of doorknobs to church and club organizations in the Princeton area.

Ralph Chelin is survived by his wife, Florence, one son, Dale of Carterville, Illinois, and two grandsons.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
by Dorothy Miller



The response to the opportunity to order catalog copies was most encouraging.

13 members ordered catalog copies, including some individuals who ordered copies of all available catalogs. Only three of these 13 were among those who ordered copies when the order blank was published a year ago. Thus, ten more members this year than last year are now able to research the doorknobs in their collections.

If we add the ten newly interested members of this year to the total number who ordered last year, we arrive at a figure that is approaching one fourth of our total membership! Add to this the members who already have their own personal library of antique hardware catalogs, plus those members who missed the deadline to order, and we arrive at a figure that shows a good percentage of our membership is getting into the educational and historical aspects of our hobby.

By convention time, more catalogs will have been copies. I will bring copies with me, as I have done for the past two years, and will place them on the Archives table for the inspection and use of all members. It is not too early to be thinking of any designs or information that you will be wanting to look up. do make use of these catalog copies!

For the convenience of all members, I will have order blanks available. Just fill them out, attached your check, give your orders to me, and I will get the copies made and ship your catalogs to you when I get home from the convention.

NEW MEMBERS

The following members have joined **ADCA** since the 1987 membership roster was printed:

Dick & Dottie Daugherty, P.O. Box 2010, Sparks, NV 89432
Margaret & Daniel Owens, 309 Northwest 38th, Oklahoma City, OK 73118.

CLASSIFIED AD SECTION

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

FOR SALE OR TRADE. Want to dispose of bulk of my collection. Plain and fancy brass, iron, glass, ceramics. Knobs, escutcheons, roses, keyholes, locks, keys, padlocks, cabinet hardware. Designs identified in books by Len Blumin and Maude Eastwood. Good assortment for beginning collector. Bring your truck. Will ship small amounts UPS. Price negotiable. Vincent Noe, 402 West Walnut, Metamore, IL 61548. Phone 309-367-4733.

FOR SALE. Best offer, four knobs, one each, Knights of Columbus, Masonic, Bell System, Robert E. Lee. Contact, Debbie Fellenz, 2216 Cherokee, St. Louis, MO 63118.

FOR SALE. Supplement Number One to Antique Builders Hardware by Maude Eastwood for \$4.75 plus \$1.00 shipping and handling for each book. **ADCA**, P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126.

WANTED. Large quantity of H-110 doorknobs (shown on page H-4, Victorian Decorative Art by Len Blumin). Debbie Fellenz, 2216 Cherokee, St. Louis, MO 63118.

WANTED. One set of H-221 knobs with escutcheon plates and four sets of H-461 (both shown in Victorian Decorative Art). Debbie Fellenz, 2216 Cherokee, St. Louis, MO 63118.

ADCA MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

The **Antique Doorknob Collector of America** was officially launched in September 1981. A total of 43 members joined by the end of the year.

In 1982 there were 71 members and the total has increased each year since. Following is the number of member by year:

1981 - 43	1985 - 100
1982 - 71	1986 - 105
1983 - 82	1987 - 118
1984 - 90	