



# The Doorknob Collector

Number 54

July - August 1992

Their labor our love

— Page 3

## Convention Update



Photo by Art Pahlke

The ADCA 1992 year reaches its peak August 1-4 when Lillian and Dick Balasa host the 1992 ADCA National convention at the Ramada Inn in Elgin, Illinois. The facility features a restaurant and lounge, plenty of space to relax, socialize and talk doorknobs.

A change in the auction schedule is being made this year. Normally held in the evening, often running well past 11:00 p.m., the auction will start at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday and should be completed in time to enjoy the picnic that afternoon.

The Display contests and the "open to the public" time will be done the first full day of the official convention, Sunday.

Buying, selling and trading, the backbone of the convention, will be done on Sunday and Monday.

Planned for Monday during the day are four-one hour presentations that should be very interesting to all collectors and dealers.

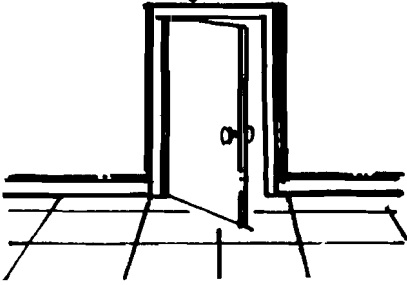
The annual business meeting will be Monday evening. Annual reports are presented and business is transacted as necessary.

A visit to Chicago, taking in the Kane County flea market, a visit to the Nemecs (and offices of The Doorknob Collector) and the many fine area restaurants should help add up to a great time at the 1992 convention.

ADCA Convention, Elgin, IL, August 1-4, 1992

## THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemec



It has been three years since the last ADCA convention was held in the Midwest. We are hoping to see a lot of friends who could not make the East or West Coast convention plus all the members from the Midwest who have joined since 1989.

Let us make the 1992 convention at Elgin a huge success. The way to do that is to come and be a part of it.

Last year at South Lake Tahoe, we found that members attending their first convention were a bit apprehensive about bringing displays, traders or knobs for sale. Once they found out what a friendly and helpful group members of ADCA are they realized there was no need to be concerned.

Whether you just want to come and look at knobs and chat with fellow collectors or get involved in the auc-

tion, buy from dealers, trade with fellow members or learn from the many informative presentations, the convention is a great place to be.

For those who want to have an informal get together before the convention gets into full swing, Loretta and I are inviting you to our home Friday evening (July 31, 1992). This is where we do the newsletter, which, for many members, may be the only source of door-knob information between conventions. We will also have our accumulation of knobs on display.

## New book


Maude L. Eastwood will be issuing a new book in the near future. Major setbacks including moving out of state, family health problems, endless annoying delays including eyestrain and production problems, have accompanied her efforts.

Confident that the "worst is behind her," Eastwood looks forward to marketing her book through the

ADCA office. Details will be following.

The **A TO Z GUIDE TO BUILDERS' HISTORIC HARDWARE** will be a comprehensive guide to outdated hardware that should answer the most often asked questions as well as those you didn't ask, but should have. Dealers and the trade should also find this guide helpful.

If you draw a blank on most of the following--you need this book. Was Eastlake a style or a school of architecture? What has a bracket bearing to do with a doorknob? What major manufacturer of paperweight doorknobs recently passed away? What is the difference between modern Colonial and Old-Time Colonial door hardware? What is Colonialism, a finish or a metal? Is the term "Cremorne," or "Cremone" correct and what does it refer to?.

 **The Doorknob Collector**  
Published six times a year by Antique Doorknob Collectors of America, Inc.  
P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126.  
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Phone: 1-708-357-2381  
FAX: 1-708-357-2391  
Printed by Sun Printing, Naperville, IL  
Annual Membership in USA: \$20.00  
Foreign rates on request.

# Their labor our love by Art Paholke

The following words are from Emile de Laveleye in his book on LUXURY. He wrote, "Might not the man of the people, on whom the curse of matter weight with so heavy a load, find the best kind of alleviation for his hard condition, if his eyes were open to what Leonardo da Vinci calls *la bellezza del mondo*- the beautiful things of the earth?"

I am sure we all, at one time or another, wondered who made these beautiful works of ART we now hold in great esteem.

History has taught us that these people, that made these works of ART, must have had a very hard and difficult life. Unless one has worked in a steel mill, foundry, metal stamping or metal casting job, one could not appreciate the labor and/or the pain in the metal casting industry. I was once told that if an evil person worked in a foundry a while, he would soon give up his evil ways because he would know what HELL would be like. Just think of all the dirt, dust, hazardous and toxic materials they were exposed too.

Can anyone imagine what it would be like to work ten or twelve hours a day, six day a week, at filing, scraping, sanding or



polishing these works of ART?

Remember, at this time there were no Federal or State laws that would protect the workers. There was no OSHA (Occupational, Safety and Health Act), no minimum wage law, (Union Scale of Wages-1912 Molder-iron .38 cents an hour, Laborer .37 cents an hour, Blacksmith .40 cents an hour), no Child Labor law, or benefit law, such as Unemployment Compensation, and if the boss fired a worker that was it. The worker had no right to appeal.

Life at this time could also be a living hell for the women/housewife. Among the daily chores a housewife faced in the 1880's were chopping wood, lugging heavy pails full of water into the house, emptying chamber pots, ironing with 10-pound

flatirons and making all the family food from scratch. The women also sewed everything their families wore, and fighting the soot from kerosene lamps and coal or wood-burning stoves was another gargantuan job.

We owe these people so very much. May I suggest that this upcoming convention be dedicated to these unknown persons that made contributions to our collectable treasures, and they will never be recognized for it.

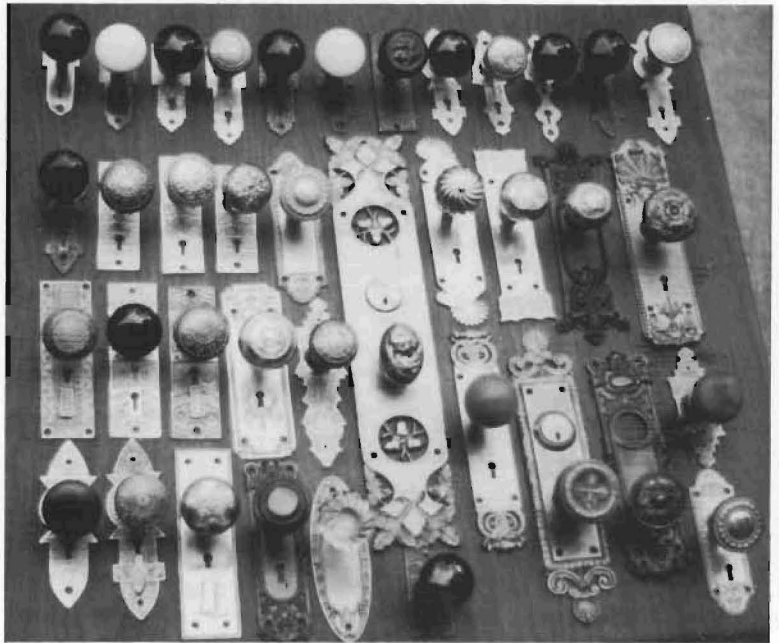
The Matriarch of our association, Maud Eastwood, has shared with us a great deal of information about the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company, and I humbly submit the additional following information that you may find of value.

(continued page 4)

**THE CHICAGO HARDWARE  
MANUFACTURING COMPANY  
1878-1906**

On June 25, 1878, Chicago real estate dealer Milton C. Niles and his son, Sidney S. Niles, received a United States patent for an innovative direct-action reversible latch lockset which was unique to the American builders industry. How Niles and his son came to create this unusual variation in hardware technology is unknown, as Chicago city directories for the early 1870's show Milton C. Niles operating a downtown real estate business, while his son is listed in 1876 as being a "student".

The Niles marketed their new invention themselves, establishing the lock manufacturing firm of Niles & Son by 1879. The firm's office and showroom occupied Milton Niles' former downtown Chicago real estate. No indication given that the firm of Niles & Son had its own manufacturing facility at this early stage of development, suggesting that the actual locksets were probably fabricated for the firm by outside foundries. Milton C. Niles applied for an additional patent for



the reversible latch system in 1879, which was granted on May 18th of the following year.

By 1880, the firm was reorganized and renamed the Gray Iron Company, securing a factory site at the northeast corner of Erie and Kingsbury streets, a manufacturing district near downtown Chicago populated by other foundries and semi-heavy industries. Milton Niles withdrew from the reorganized firm, but his son, Sidney, remained as secretary.

The president of the new firm was F. T. June, who had previously been in the business of manufacturing school furniture. The name, "Gray Iron Company," is deceiving, as locksets using the Niles patents seem to have been the firm's principal product, advertising in the 1881 city directory as the "sole

manufacturers of Niles' patent Mortise Door Knobs and Locks." An additional lockset patent was secured by the Milton C. Niles on May 18, 1880.

By 1882, the firm was renamed the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company, a name which was retained throughout its subsequent quarter century of operation. As with the Gray Iron Company, F. T. June remained as president of the renamed company and Sidney Niles as secretary. In subsequent years, the officers of the company changed several times, although Sidney Niles continues to appear as an official throughout listings in the 1890's.

Throughout its operations, the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company maintained an office and showroom in downtown Chicago, occupying suites in various office buildings. The factory

(continued page 5)

remained at Erie and Kingsbury Streets until 1895, when the firm's manufacturing facilities were moved to the suburb of North Chicago.

Like the major hardware companies of the East, the company maintained an impressive catalogue of stock patterns, which by 1895 reflected a wide variety of styles and schools of design. These patterns were offered in an extensive choice of materials and finishes, including an authorized Bower-Barff finish for cast-iron, licensed from the original British patent-holders.

The firm also solicited custom design orders, among its prominent orders being the Schiller Building, Chicago (Adler & Sullivan, Architects 1892). Chicago's most impressive example of a public structure was the Federal Building, constructed between 1898 and 1905 to house the cities main post office, the United States courts and various government bureaus (Henry Ives Cobb, Architect). The door knobs boldly bore a U. S. - or dollar sign - (ill. nbr. 1). This unabashed expression of civic pride was destroyed in 1965-1966. Other significant orders

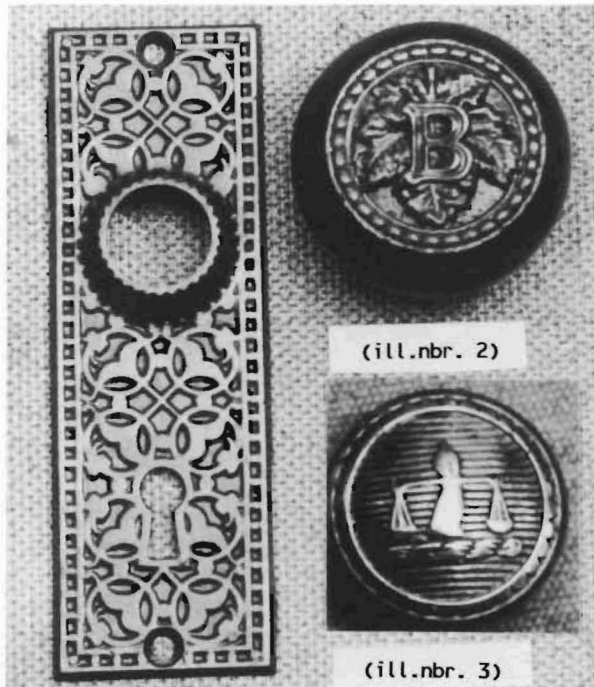


(ill.nbr. 1)

were from the Pabst Building, 609 Broadway, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (S. S. Beman, Architect 1894) (ill. nbr. 2), The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Criminal Courts Building (ill. nbr. 3), and the Wallace Street Public School - 1881 - renamed George B. McClellan, December

30, 1885. This school at 3527 South Wallace Street, Chicago, Illinois was my Mother's alma mater and years later it was also mine (ill. nbr. 4).

Advertisements for the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company were prominently displayed in contemporary architectural journals and trade magazines, particularly those of local origin. The firm placed an impressive two-page illustrated advertisement in the first edition of the now famous "Sweet's" Catalogue of Building Construction, published in 1906, but within a year the firm closed its doors, ending Chicago's major participation in the builder's hardware industry. (continued page 6)



(ill.nbr. 2)

(ill.nbr. 3)



Their labor our love  
(continued from page 5)

*Strange how much  
you've got to know  
before you know how  
little you know.*  
(Anonymous)

How true this statement is, especially if you are researching the history of the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company, Many years ago I made a trade of catalogs with the late Emil Miller, and I acquired the companies 1895 catalogue. I was able to identify a few of the knobs and escutcheons that are in my collection. Not long after, Pat and Harvey Sass gave me the companies December 1888 catalogue and so many more identifications were made.

With these catalogs and the information they contained I became a dedicated and attentive student of the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company.

The more I learned the more questions became apparent. I soon learned that there was little if any other available catalogs, architectural journals or trade magazines that



would help me in my research.

I would like to share with you some of my observations, frustrations and questions (unanswered) that I have encountered in researching the history of the Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company.

How did the Niles develop their radical locking device? The father in real estate and the son a student.

Why they did not try to integrate their locks with the conventional locks of the times?

Why they had cylinders larger than the standard cylinders? Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company cylinders are 1-3/8" and the standard cylinders are 1-1/8".

Why their Sample and Sales room in the U.S. Express Building, 87 Washington Street, Chicago, represented by George J. Adam, had hours only between 11 am and 1 pm.

I could go on, "but".■

#### Resource Information:

Tim Samuelson -  
Commission on Chicago Landmarks  
Handbook for Architects and Builders  
1902  
Sweets - The Architectural Record  
Co., 1906  
City of Chicago Directory, 1881  
Official Gazette, June 25, 1878  
U.S. Patent Office, May 1880  
Chicago Hardware Manufacturing  
Company Catalogue, December 1888  
Price List No. 7, December 15, 1888  
Price List No. 8, May 1, 1890  
Catalogue No. 6, Dec, 1, 1895  
Antique Builders' Hardware Knobs &  
Accessories - Maud L. Eastwood  
Chicago History - The Magazine of  
the Chicago Historical Society,  
Spring 1981  
Industrial Chicago, 1891  
Iron Age Hardware, April 18, 1912  
Early American Ironware, Henry J.  
Kauffman  
Lost Chicago, David Lowe - 1979  
The Doorknob Collector  
Photography for article by Art Paholke



(ill.nbr. 4)

# The rest of the story

by Charlie Wardell

In 1941, a pitcher for the Chicago Cubs suffered a broken toe caused by a wild ball. He altered his pitching style and brought on a more serious injury that was to spell the end of a career as a player. The new delivery and strain on his arm caused bursitis to develop and he played only one more game for the Cubs. He coached some and became a broadcaster of much fame. He was heard by millions on radio who enjoyed his "delivery" of the English language as much as they did of the game he was describing. Rules of grammar were discarded and his ludicrous and humorous observations were his trademark. Dizzy was an apt name and for twenty years "Dizzy" Dean was welcomed into everyone's home and heart as the most colorful analyst of the American pastime.

To follow Dean's career as a pitcher, a Chicago schoolboy bought his first copy of the Sporting News and entered upon a career of his own that resulted in an archive of baseball lore that is unmatched anyplace. Baseball historians and sport writers are using the material to fill in voids, verify tales and to discover the forgotten. For many years, the early records of Casey Sten-

gel were considered lost forever but the Chicago boy had them filed away safely in his collection of statistics.

From sometimes obscure or remote sources such as old newspaper accounts, conversations with and letters from old players, library files of baseball writings and a sharp mind for details the boy was in possession of a mounting treasure of facts about the early days of baseball. By going the "extra mile" he was able to discover what others of less patience had missed. He proved that John (Bud) Fowler was the first black man to play professional ball (1871) and Moses Walker, Toledo (1884), was the first black to play for the major leagues.

Focusing on the minor leagues, where the information is sparse, in these archives is the complete list of the minors before 1909 and every player's record, minor and major, for the last 48 years. Most any information desired about the game can be found here. The boy responsible, of course a matured man now, lives a normal life and says he would rather work (research) a game than go see it.

Who is this remarkable man? Well, to

keep your attention and "learn you some more", we must wait for the rest of the story. Don't touch that there dial and turn the page.



We will learn that he is a good citizen and family man who has worked full time since high school days for the same company. He and his wife have raised a family of four, lived in the same city or it's suburbs for a lifetime and enjoy the activities of the community and church.

Collecting something has always been a sign of intelligence (ahem) and this man and wife do it with zest. Among the things in their home are collections of old-time radio shows, beer cans and Victorian doorknobs.

The baseball archives are in the basement, well protected from atomic at

(continued on page 8)

## The rest of the story (continued from page 7)

tack or sonic booms that could come if the Arabs discover they aren't represented in the documents.

The man has been called a walking encyclopedia of baseball knowledge and the late Lee Allen, of the Baseball Hall of Fame, called his "the foremost authority on minor league players." There are over 100,000 player records on hand here and, without all the computer equipment that would be handy, a ruler must be used to measure.

The sheer volume is astounding and when you consider there was no underwriting of cost, it shows what a dedicated effort can achieve worthy of an edifice of it's own, near a park or library, it remains in the home and a beaten path is made here by baseball researchers.

Yes, a doorknob collection was mentioned and now, maybe can keep our minds alert just before break time. I also have a doorknob collection so this man must be an exceptional person. I relate to him and recall that he and his wife are sharp traders. As a caution I say be fair in appraising your hardware and you will be returned the courtesy.

Now, for the revelation of our mystery man (if you were obe-

dient and didn't turn the page) with the acquisitive bent and obsession for facts. He is Ray Nemec, our beloved co-editor of the ADCA newsletter and fellow doorknob collector. He has led a well balanced life in community affairs and church activities and is now retired to do what he wishes. He and Loretta were married in 1954 and their four children, Thomas, Allen, Alice and Jennifer are a close family unit. They have two grand-daughters who may meet us at Elgin.



Loretta, after a period of child rearing, returned to college courses and was employed 1973 at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, where she still works. Sewing is her hobby and she is skilled at making her own clothes, draperies, upholsterer and costumes for Barbie dolls that seem to grow wherever there are little girls. Gar-

dening, painting (walls that is), wall-papering and gourmet cooking are other skills possessed by this little woman with the motto: I AM WOMAN, HEAR MY CALL EVEN THOUGH I'M FIVE FEET TALL - I CAN DO ANYTHING!

Walking all day at a flea market with her buddy of 38 years is her idea of an abundant life. With other attributes, too numerous to mention, she has sincerity when listening and humor when speaking.

This couple (even though damn Yankees) are pretty nice folks. Keeping busy has been the answer for the accomplishment in their lives and a recipe for happiness. With all this talent in a family, we should expect a book (or books) relative to the grand era of baseball and fine hardware. They both have their beginnings about 1871 and each display the beauty that men can contrive when inspired. ■





# The Bosco-Milligan collection

by Don Shreve

In Maud Eastwood's book "The Antique Doorknob" she credits a number of the knobs and hardware pictured as being from the Bosco-Milligan collection. Maud had briefly mentioned the collection to me several times but since both owners were deceased, I had always assumed that the collection had long ago been disposed of. It therefore came as a pleasant surprise to learn that the collection was still located here in Portland and that it is virtually intact.

Jerry Bosco and Ben Milligan were two eccentric individuals that operated a business devoted to salvaging and selling all sorts of pieces and parts from many old and historic buildings. They dealt in every aspect of architectural artifacts including doorknobs, stained glass windows and even entire cast iron facades from old buildings.

When they died, they left the bulk of their estate to the Historic Preservation League of Oregon. The estate included a number of old houses plus several warehouses filled with their collection of artifacts. The League accepted several of the properties but they were so over-



whelmed with the huge size and scope of the remaining bequest that they declined to accept it. Instead, the balance of the properties and all of the artifacts were turned over to a foundation that was formed by a group of persons interested in preserving the bulk of the collection and establishing a resource and education center dedicated to the preservation and restoration of old buildings.

The Bosco-Milligan Foundation determined that they needed to dispose of the duplicates and non-architecturally related items in order to raise funds for the resource center. This meant that the entire collection had to be sorted, matched, catalogued, and priced prior to holding a huge garage sale.

Maud Eastwood, Linda Smeltzer and I were recruited to sort the doorknobs, plates, and hinges in an attempt

to determine what should be retained in the collection and what should be disposed of. We spent a number of days working in a dirty, unheated warehouse trying to sort through the many thousands of pieces of door hardware. Maud estimated that there were at least four dozen categories and at least 8,000 pieces of building hardware alone.

For me it was like a treasure hunt, with almost every box or bag revealing some new "treasure". Imagine dumping out a large box of mixed hardware and finding several hummingbird knobs and maybe a doggie drawer pull or a bag full of about 30 different ornate Victorian screen door hinges or a number of complete matching sets of old door and window hardware for an entire house. I was just like a child coveting all the goodies in a candy store.

It was very difficult to decide which knobs and hinges should be sold. Our ultimate decision was to retain for the Foundation's collection all of the significant hardware and those patterns with quantities adequate to assist in restoring or preserving old buildings. As a result

(continued page 10)

## Bosco-Milligan

(continued from page 9)

there were hardly any "neat knobs" included in the sale.

The Bosco-Milligan Foundation owns an old building that will be renovated to house the collection and we can look forward to having an important resource center for research and assistance in preserving old homes and buildings. This is a

very ambitious project and will require a great deal of planning and work to make it happen. Fortunately, the Foundation already has many of the leaders, financial resources, pool of volunteer workers and, of course, an outstanding collection of architectural artifacts.

One of ADCA's stated

goals is to have an educational resource center and museum. Here is opportunity for us to support such a project and I would hope that ADCA and all of its members will eagerly assist in whatever ways we can as plans are formulated for setting up the Bosco-Milligan Center. ■



The first Illinois convention, Naperville, IL September, 1983.

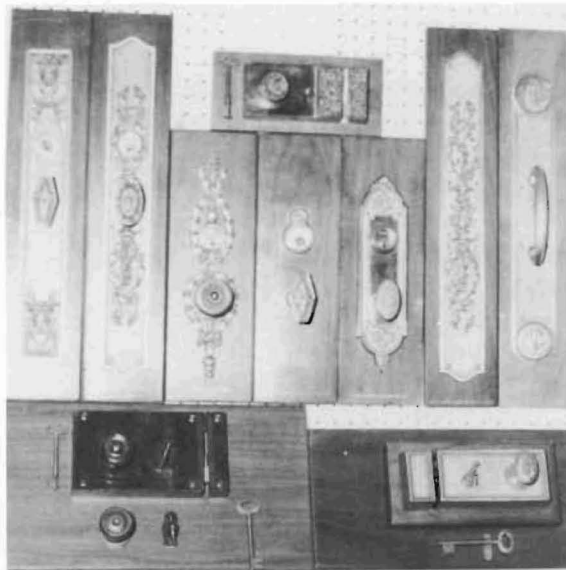
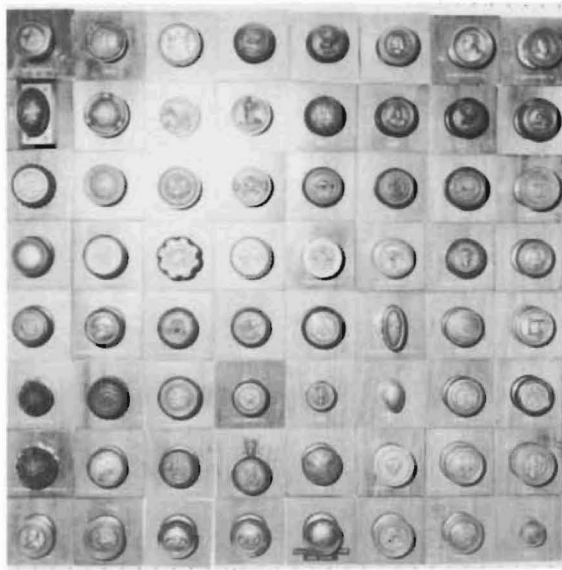
(Photo by Tom Nemeč)

# A museum you should visit

When a recent issue of The Lock Museum's newsletter arrived at the ADCA office, it served as a reminder the The Lock Museum houses one of the finest collections of antique doorknobs to be seen anywhere.

Hundreds of doorknobs of almost every description can be found on display. Rather than for us to detail the collections, we prefer to urge you to view the hardware in person.

The museum is open to the public daily, except Monday, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., May to October 31. It is located at 120 Main Street, Terryville, Connecticut. There is a small admission charge. For more information, you can write to The Lock Museum of America, P.O. Box 104, Terryville, CT 06786 or phone them at 203-589-6359.



**Waldorf Astoria Hotel**

1930

## Russwin Original Sample Mounts

### ANTIQUA DOORKNOB COLLECTORS OF AMERICA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Win Applegate #110, Hamilton Square, NJ  
 Vice President, Dale Sponaugle #85, Buffalo, NY  
 Sec/Treasurer, Loretta Nemec #8, Naperville, IL  
 Board Member, Len Blumin #3, Mill Valley, CA  
 Board Member, Dean Campbell #11, Newberg, OR  
 Board Member, Maud Eastwood #2, Woodinville, WA  
 Board Member, Arnie Fredrick #1, Waverly, IA  
 Board Member, Carlos Ruiz #52, Alameda, Ca

### HARDWARE CATALOGS

The following is a list of Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company catalogues known to exist. They are in the hands of collectors, museums and/or libraries. As reported in Art Pahlke's study (this issue) about the company, little is known about the formation and the eventual demise of it.

If you have a Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company Catalog not listed below, or have knowledge of the company or the people who owned or operated it, please advise us what you have or know.

### CHICAGO HARDWARE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CAT.#</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
1888		424
1895	6	227

# The doorknob exchange

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

**WANTED.** Ornate door hardware to use on several doors in my house. Store front push button door handle sets. Other styles of very fancy door plates and knobs. Mechanical doorbell handles, buttons and twist knobs (one piece or complete doorbell). Set of hinges (common or rare). Complete letter slots. Any other hardware that would go on a 19th century American door. Russell Barnes (#288), 203 W. Caddo, Austin, TX 78753. PH:512-835-9510.

**LIZ'S** Antique Hardware Matching Service. Send photo, sizes and quantity. All request are kept on file until located.

Liz Gordon (#111), 3821 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92103. Ph:619-297-6502 or 3501

## WANTED.

(3) Knobs, #B-104,  
(2) Knobs, #B-106,  
#F-116, with  
tightening ring,  
(2) Knobs, #H-202,  
#H-208 and #H-233,  
any or all, brass  
only.  
Stephen Rowe, (#287)  
85 Jasmine Ave.  
Clovis, CA 93612  
PH:(209) 299-8863.

**WANTED.** 1-Lockwood Broken Leaf B-125 pocket door plate escutcheon.  
2 - Lockwood Key plate escutcheons (p.183, The Antique Doorknob).  
1 - Sargent Thumb latch with escutcheon,  
1 - Thumb latch only (P.177, TAD).  
1 - Mortise Lock B-205.  
Any or all, Brass only.  
Stephen P. Rowe (#287)  
85 Jasmine Ave.  
Clovis, CA 93612  
PH: 209-299-8863.

## ROSTER UPDATE NO.1

The following are additions to the 1992 **ADCA** Roster which was enclosed with the May-June 1992 issue of **The Doorknob Collector**.

#291  
Karen & Clark Bright  
362 Egret Place  
Pittsburg, CA 94565

#292  
Rhett Butler  
110 Green Street  
Suite 700  
New York, NY 10012  
PH:212-925-3565.

## DEADLINE

All ads, material and articles for the September - October 1992 issue of **The Doorknob Collector** should be in the hands of the editors by August 25, 1992.

## KENNEDY KOMMENTS by Rich Kennedy



Several things crossed my mind as I was wondering what to write about in the last newsletter before the convention, I guess that first and the most important thing is that I hope everyone makes a big effort to come to the convention, its always nice to see fellow doorknob collectors and friends again.

The second thing is a Q and A that appeared in the Newport News, Virginia newspaper, it was from an Ann Landers Column;

Q There is a lack of education today about simple hygiene. The days of school nurses instruction students are long gone. Please tell your readers that rest rooms have sinks with soap because good maintenance of health includes washing your hands.

Small children are growing up without any idea of the importance of washing their hands.

I heard a man say that the dirtiest things in houses are doorknobs and that no one ever thinks of washing them.

If we can't have national health insurance, at least we can educate everyone in the nation about the benefit of hand-washing.

C.S.Orleans,Mass.

A Thanks for preventing a lot of colds, heaven knows how many cases of flu and an assortment of other illness. Please, folks, USE SOAP.

As of this time I still have room for one person to ride out to Elgin with me. If someone wants to ride out with me and fly home, that's OK. I can also pick someone up along the route. ■