



The Doorknob Collector

Number 65

May - June 1994

Milwaukee will open its door in '94

The annual convention of the *Antique Doorknob Collectors of America* will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from August 3 through August 7, 1994 at Marquette University.

The doors are open . . . the beds are made. This will be a first time for conventioners to be staying on a University campus. We will be in Mashuda Hall, 1925 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Each room includes full linen service with daily maid service, and is equipped with a private bath, telephone, TV, radio, and refrigerator. Room rates are reasonable. Guests will appreciate the easy parking that Mashuda Hall offers. A newly remodeled "Cafe" is located in Mashuda Hall for overnight guests. The "Cafe" is open for meals and snacks and has late evening hours.

Marquette University is a Catholic independent co-educational institution of higher learning formally opened in 1881. The University was named after Pere Jacque Marquette, the French Jesuit priest, who explored the upper middle west in the seventeenth century.

Theme for this year's convention will be Yale & Towne Hardware (and architect Louis Sullivans relationship with the company).

Once again, we will don our Victorian costumes for the Saturday open to the public event. The Victorian costumes were a great hit at the last convention, the men looked dashing in their top hats and mustaches and women with their high top shoes and bustles. It is not too early for us to start looking for some great Victorian attire.

Convention chairman Greg Filardo is working diligently to have this convention one worth remembering, with a tour of old Milwaukee via street car, the Reinhold Hardware store built in 1914 and still in operation and the Pritzlaff Hardware Company. A reception at the Pabst Museum is planned for Friday evening. The Pabst Museum is next door to Mashuda Hall. Watch your mail for the convention brochure and registration forms. •

1994 Convention Theme

Yale & Towne hardware (and architect Louis Sullivans relationship with the company).



Pabst Beer Pavilion

(Photo by Greg Filardo)

The Pabst Beer Pavilion (above) was where the Pabst Brewery products were displayed at the Columbian Exposition (Chicago) in 1893. It was at this "world's fair" where Pabst won the "blue ribbon."

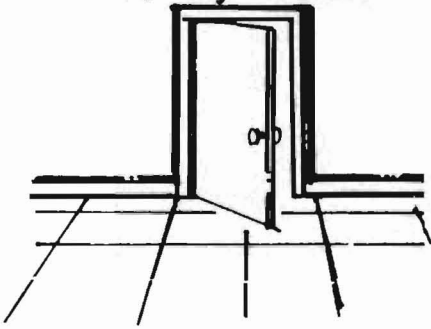
The pavilion was constructed out of Terra Cotta and then moved from Chicago to Milwaukee and annexed to the Pabst Mansion. The building, designed by Otto Straack, was built in 1892 and rebuilt onto the Pabst Mansion in 1893.

The building to the right, Mashuda Hall, is where ADCA conventioners will be staying during the convention. •

For a free brochure of greater Milwaukee, phone 1-800-231-0903

THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemeč



The Open Door

The 1994 convention is only about three months away and as plans for the convention are being firmed up, it is not too early to begin thinking of 1995.

My suggestion would be to have it in the Dallas area. The fact that two national organizations I am familiar with are having their conventions in that area influenced my thinking. I have been to Dallas, in fact in 1988 I stayed where one of the groups is having their convention. The site for the International Association of Jim Beam Bottle and Specialties Clubs will be meeting this July at the Grand Kempinski Hotel where we attended a wedding reception.

The 48x32 inch map on the wall next to my desk has a pin in for each convention site. We have never had a convention south of St. Louis. Not only would Dallas be the furthest south for us but also the third furthest western point. Only the two in California being closer to the Pacific Ocean. Thus, a Texas convention could satisfy two geographical areas. What do you think?

Steve Rowe has supplied us with our feature, Pages from the Past. In addition, we have two articles from new contributors plus a few from some old standbys. We appreciate the material you send in. It is always more enjoyable to have a choice of articles to choose from.

Anita Gold's antique column no longer appears in the Chicago Tribune



The Pabst Mansion (Photo by Greg Filardo)

The Pabst Mansion (above) in Milwaukee is the site of a hardware display from May 1 to September 1, 1994. It will also be the site of the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America convention reception on Friday evening, August 5th.

Construction on the Pabst Mansion was started in 1890 and completed in 1893. It was the residence of Captain Frederick Pabst until 1906. The mansion served as the residence for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee from 1908 to 1975 and is currently headquarters of Wisconsin Heritage's.●



← Hardware in dining room of Pabst Mansion.

but it does appear in about 200 newspapers across the country. When Anita mentions us in her column, we always receive letters or phone calls from all over the country. . . . places like San Diego, Oklahoma City, Albany (NY) and Janesville (WI). Thanks Anita.●

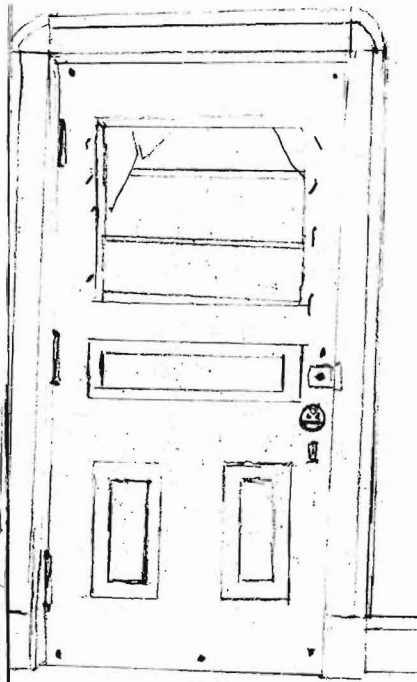
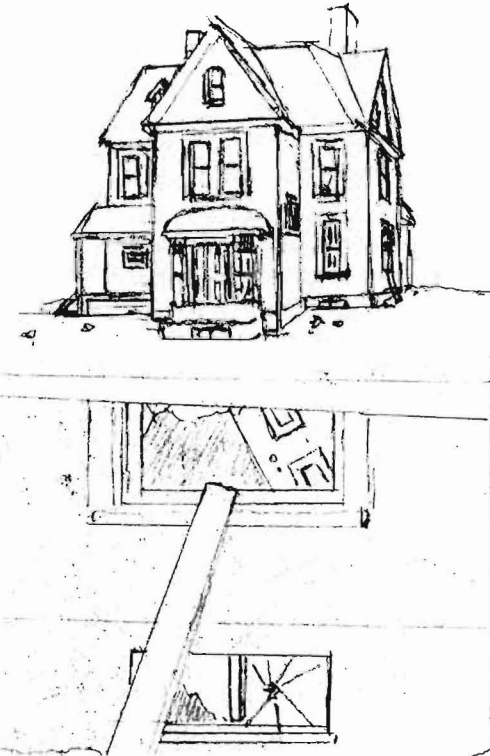


The Doorknob Collector

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Early experiences in collecting doorknobs

by Steve Blumberg



c.1963
1st Brass doorknob
Russell & Erwin
Bluebird
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I thought, since I have some time on my hands, I would write of some of my experiences in early doorknob collecting. First of all let me start off by elaborating on the trend of thoughts back then. Those few of us who collected doorknobs in the early days, being 20 or 30 years ago, believed we, alone, were the only ones to have this unique interest. Hardware, as an art form or an expression of beauty and style, had gone out fifty years or two generations earlier. Hardware, back then, had assumed a strictly utilitarian usage. To think someone would even have interest in a doorknob was considered somewhat strange. The only people who had any idea of hardware as a form of beauty or antique were a few antique dealers. To them some of the brass knobs and bells had some measure of charm. If one was lucky to find a knob in some shop it could

be readily purchased for a few dollars.

The same could be said for many architectural embellishments then. Old Victorian style homes were considered outmoded eyesores. They were often deemed ugly and the more pronounced or ornate style the more they were subjected to remodeling or demolition if in groups. Beautiful stained glass windows were either removed or plastered or painted over. As these houses were taken down by the thousands, one who had the appreciation and perception could have a field day. Just going around, wandering through vast stretches of blocks of derelict buildings in the paths of future interstate highways, one could easily observe dozens of styles of ornate brass and porcelain hardware. I vividly recall removing only several sets of a new pattern when forty or fifty would be

available for the asking or taking. Why did one need so many of the same sets? There was absolutely no market for them, except the scrap yard.

I started, at this time, to save a very few examples of each design. The narration of this article will be of these.

MY FIRST BRASS KNOB - THE BLUE BIRDS

The first brass knob I remember seeing which made me aware that they even made decorative doorknobs was the Bluebird knob by Russell & Erwin. One cold afternoon, I was in Minneapolis going along the site of Interstate 35. This was to run out 3rd and 4th Avenue South. In near town, below Franklin Avenue, were still rows of large pre-1900 houses and apartment buildings. They had been changed over to kitchenettes and rooming houses. At the time, the city government and State considered areas with these homes as blighted. The freeways were deliberately routed through these older residential areas. I always felt that the highways should be routed along the then being abandoned railroads. The industry was along there as well as central location, and pollution. Those making the decisions didn't feel this way and most of the older nineteenth century neighborhoods were ruptured by these freeways.

On 16th Street and 3rd Avenue was a large house that had been vacant for months. The windows had been broken out. This being a hazard, the state would have its crews remove the doors and nail them over the inside of the windows. I recall them removing

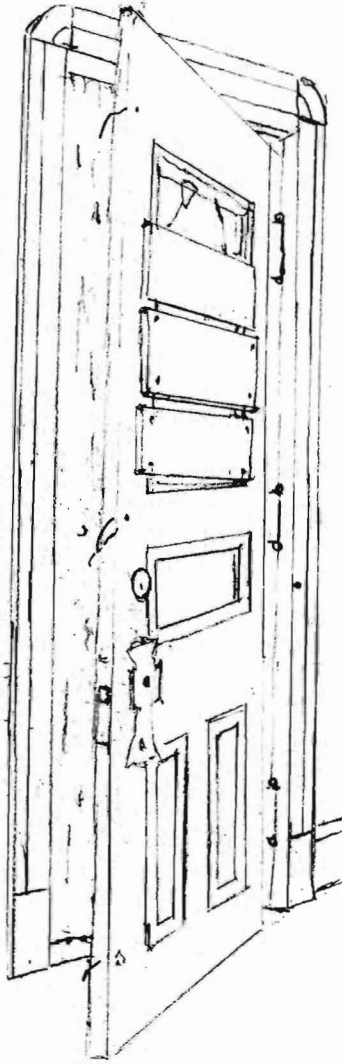
(Blumberg continued)

doorknobs with sledgehammers to flatten the surface of the doors to attach to the windows. On the side of this large empty house was an open window. The adjoining homes had been demolished. Several more were still standing in the next block. By this broken window was a plank someone had used to get in. I crawled up and slid inside. It was dark and the shattered glass crunched under my feet. As my eyes became accustomed to the darkness, I ambled along directed toward slivers of light. I got to the front door and thought I would open it but it had been spiked shut. I pulled on the knob. I looked down and, lo and behold there it was, a large Bluebird knob. Wow! What a treasure. I had a screwdriver and removed the set screw and pulled it off.

It had a rose, I left it and went back outside to further examine my treasure. What a beautiful thing. Like a work of art in brass. I simply found it astounding that something so beautiful and intricate in artistic detail could be used as a doorknob.

Later on in the week I was over in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was in the habit of frequenting Salvation Army stores then. They use to have thousands of 78 rpm recordings in stock and they sold for five cents each. These stores were invariably in areas where they were tearing down the old houses. In St. Paul, I had a friend. On my way to his place near the Salvation Army I wandered into another house. My friend's mother was poor and went into places to gather scrap brass plumbing fittings to sell to the junk dealers. I went along and found a complete set including plates and locks of the Japanese sunflower design, I think by Hopkins-Dickinson. It was there I realized the significance of locks and escutcheons as complete units.

This information has served me well over the years for with



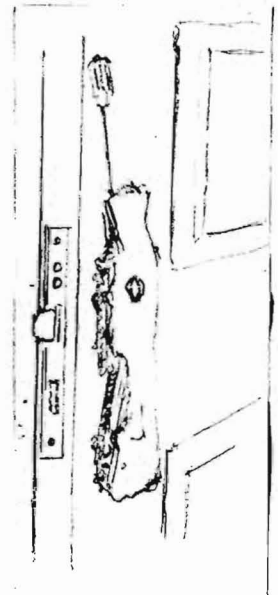
collectors, especially ones who have acquired their collections exclusively in antique shops and garage sales, often they buy one item here or there or a box of miscellaneous parts. Having removed complete sets, it helped me identify which plates go with which knobs, etc. The work we do now, reproducing lock catalogues, in many ways is very helpful in a collector being able to identify his own. Years ago, some of our older members were kind enough to have me over as a guest and I worked with assembling their collections with the correct knob and plate. We then had nothing else to go by other than someone's experience dismantling locks in the field.

Learning the significance of this other aspect of hardware research,

the component units, was a vital step in my collecting and research.

Having become aware of this I pondered, "I wonder what the plate on that Bluebird knob is like"? The door on that house had been spiked shut from the inside. On the outer side a heavy piece of plywood had been spiked over the opening. Several days later I got a stout screwdriver and went back over and unfastened the door from the inside. Sadly the outer knob, in this case the smaller Bluebird knob, had been removed and a common non-decorative knob had been put on in its place, but the large plate was still there. It was under many layers of paint. I couldn't see any pattern on it or even the complete outline, or perimeter of the plate. I gently pried loose a part of the plate. As you may know this plate is very delicate and the screw locations are well concealed in the pattern. Very carefully I lifted the plate off the door by gently peeling it up in stages. As I got it loose, some of the paint flaked off in chips. Slowly as I peeled many layers off the plate the beautiful pattern gradually became exposed. What was it? All that afternoon with a safety pin, I gently loosened the thick paint. •

(Next issue, **The Standing Indian**)



(Sketches by Steve Blumberg)

Glass bubble knob

by Maude Eastwood



What is the vision common to knob collectors hearing the name, PAIRPOINT?

A bubble knob. Bubbles captured within the glass body of a doorknob. The collector who owns a bubble knob feels he is "in," though often largely in the dark about his prize.

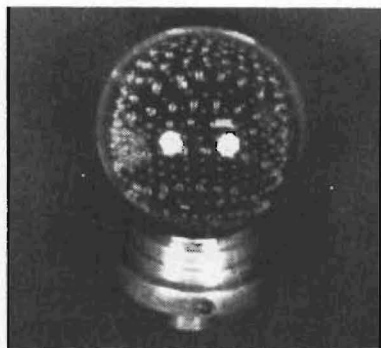
The truth is, not all bubble knobs were made by Pairpoint. The average collector does not know this, nor should it become a critical point in his appreciation of the knob.

More than one manufacturer produced bubble knobs, using different mechanical devices to produce the pattern. Other differences are found in the shape of the knob body and the type of shank. A glass expert might also identify differences in the character of the glass.

The author is aware of at least three distinctly different types of bubble knobs. In one, the bubbles are all of uniform size. In another, the bubbles are smaller at the top. In the third, the bubbles appear to elongate as they go down into the neck (perhaps an optical illusion). In this knob, the shape is also elongated as opposed to the usual ball or globe type.

The type of shank mostly found on bubble knobs is the shell shank that originated in the 1840s and was still being used for fine glass knobs into the early 1900s. Later bubble knobs were fitted with regular sized shanks with the metal spun over a flange at the bottom of the knob neck. The unusual shank of the third type suggested a "key" was used to secure the end of the shank to the escutcheon plate or rose.

Interestingly, a 1950 printing of the World Book Encyclopedia noted



that Pairpoint of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was known, particularly in the late 1800's for a line of paperweights of blown glass containing patterns of air bubbles with resemblance to teardrops. The safe assumption being that incorporating the bubbles in doorknobs came later. William Hall's 1897 catalog of Glass Knobs may have been the first to offer the bubble glass knob.

The Pairpoint name was originally connected with the manufacturer of silver. Thomas J. Pairpoint, a leading silver designer of the day, took over the operation of the Pairpoint Silver Company that later (1894) merged with the Mount Washington Glass Works to become the Pairpoint Glass Works who developed the bubble process.

A microfiche of a 1900 selection of unmounted Pairpoint knobs, including the bubble, exists in Corning archives. Glass knob sections of the following hardware manufacturers' catalogs illustrate the very same knobs mounted on company applied shanks: Yale & Towne, 1904; Corbin, 1905; Russell & Erwin, 1909; Reading, 1910; Lockwood, 1914; and Corbin, as late as 1932. An educated guess places the time span of the Pairpoint doorknob between the mid-1890's and early 1930's.

How were the bubble knobs made? Mr. Bancroft of Pairpoint provided an official 1989 explanation: "*Bubble Ball* is Pairpoint's name for pieces with controlled air trap bubbles. The bubbles are incorporated using a special tool. This tool contains a series of points, that when a gather (blob) of glass is put into the tool, the points form indentations. This gather of glass is then cooled. It is then taken back to the glass pot and a second gather is taken over the first, so that it is completely covered. This second gather of glass traps the air in the indentations created by the tool and they appear as symmetrical bubbles in the glass."

"Since then, many other companies have copied this process. However, each tool, from each factory, may create a different series of bubbles and a trained expert may be able to determine the origins."

Glass knobs have even been associated with Colonial Architectures, with pillared porches and polished brass knockers. John Tein's 1928 Glass Knob Catalog stressed this point, painting so clear a picture of crystal knobs, "their beauty reflecting brilliantly in the sunlight and their mute dignity appealing to our finer senses", that one was ready to build a Colonial, or at least to convert to all glass knobs.

Tein suggests glass knobs be used on inside doors throughout the house. Correspondence with owners of turn-of-the-century houses, particularly around Boston, New Bedford, and other glass production areas indicate this was common when glass knobs with a pattern were used, such as the bubble. This

(Bubble knobs continued on page 6)

Maine
Too cold, no doorknobs
 by Don Warming

It's been a tough winter, weather-wise and doorknob wise. (I don't think Maine has doorknobs. Either that or the knobs are still on the doors.)

Anyway, it took a vacation to Florida in February for me to have any luck at all. I found many doorknobs I didn't have including a lion head (Kathy says it looks like the lion in the Wizard of Oz) and a crystal knob with gold foil inside.

My luck began at Renninger's Antique Center in Zellwood, Florida. I had a great time exploring everything there. They have over 500 dealers and are open Saturdays and Sundays. All the knobs I obtained were from dealers located outside. I didn't have as much luck inside the buildings that is approximately 35,000 square feet (It takes a while to go through if you collect other things like I do).

One of the buildings housed a large selection of door hardware. I found it difficult to tell the difference between real and reproductions. For example, this dealer had many knobs of A-305 (lady with Parasol) but they appeared to be reproductions. When I asked the dealer selling the knobs he said he didn't know himself if they were real or not but he had the knobs for many years. I decided not to purchase a set even though I would have liked to have had them for my collection. I'll probably regret not having bought them, but then again, I now have an excuse to go back to Florida again besides wanting some warm weather. It doesn't look like Maine has any intention of getting above 20 degrees any time soon nor does it seem likely we will get rid of the snow before August.

Overall, I recommend Renninger's if you are in the area. Also, in Lakeland, Florida there is an antique shop called Agapes Antiques that has a bucket of Chicago Knobs.

Thanks to my trip to Florida I have some more traders for the upcoming convention in Wisconsin. I can't wait. See you all there. •

(Bubble knob continued from page 5)
 knob was found in Inns as well as for residential use. One owner confessed to twenty pairs of bubble knobs on his doors and miniature bubbles on cupboards and drawers.

George Doyle, one of the earliest collectors, found his bubble knob in 1977 on the East Coast. Have any been found on the West Coast? Perhaps the Pairpoint Bubble Knob is destined to be just that - - - - - vision infrequently materializing. •

Not ADCA members

An upset Lakewood, Ohio, landlord complained to police recently that his upstairs tenants had moved out and had taken all the doorknobs with them.

**ORNAMENTAL
 DESIGN IN ANTIQUE
 DOORKNOBS**

by Len Blumin

Oval Knobs



N-170

Rare Mallory Wheeler oval, shown on page A-260, 1882 catalog. Design suggests Native American patterns. Compare to N-161, another early oval. •

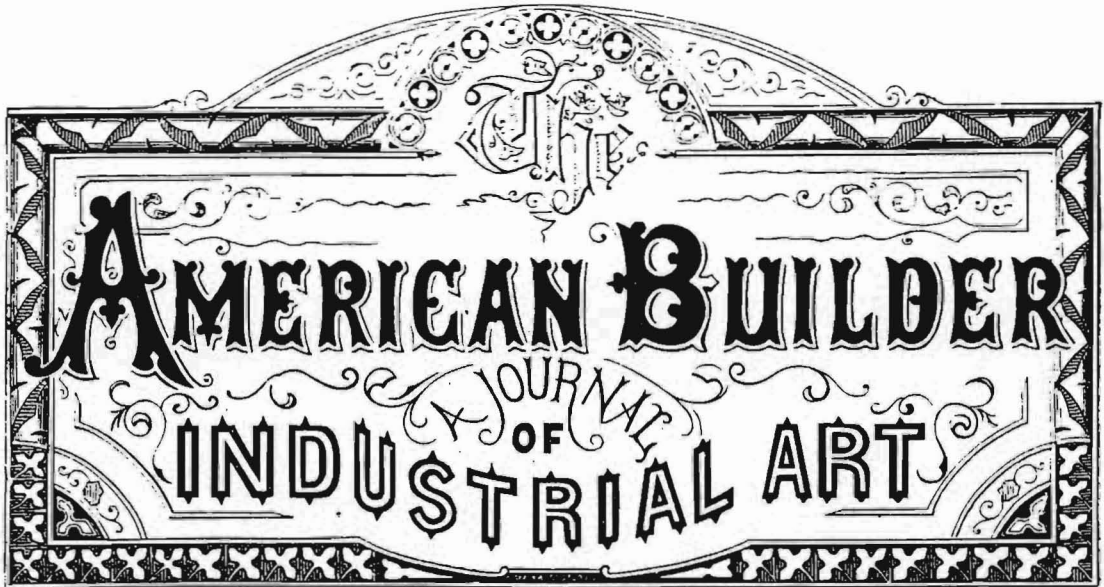
Identifying doorknobs

This is the third of a series which cross-references the number appearing in Lionel Moes 1984 catalog with those assigned by Leonard Blumin.

<u>Moes</u> <u>Enterprises Catalog</u>	<u>Len Blumin's</u> <u>Victorian Decorative Art</u>
A-25	L-102
A-26	H-262
A-27	B-104
A-28	K-204
A-29	F-213
A-30	H-217
A-31	H-250a
A-32	H-209
A-33	J-311
A-34	O-126
A-35	F-110
A-36	J-217

(Compiled by Edward Sobczak)

Pages from the past.



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MANUFACTURER OF

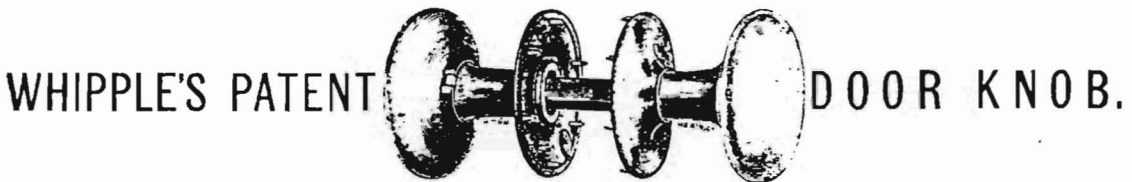
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OR 97 CHAMBERS STREET, NEW YORK

Letter to Editor

We have a door fitted with an offset-face lock and an inside rose and knob identical to the one shown in Antique Builders Hardware by Maud L. Eastwood, on page 122, No. 1128, 2-1/2" Elongated Rose. The spacing from the center of the spindle hole to the center of the first keyhole is 2-1/4" and the distance from that keyhole to the center of the one below is also 2-1/4".

To be able to purchase the appropriate front door escutcheon plate would be great. I am wondering if any ADCA members would happen to have such a plate in their collection, so that, even if they would not wish to part with it, they might be willing to send me a rubbing of it so that I could see what it looks like.

Richard Zillman (#370)
280 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, Ca 94117
PH 415/258-4171

U. S. Patent

Invention number chart

How old is your patented antique door knob? Following is the first table in a series to help you determine the approximate age.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PATENT NUMBERS</u>
1836	1 through 109
1837	110 through 545
1838	546 through 1060
1839	1061 through 1464
1840	1465 through 1922
1841	1923 through 2412
1842	2413 through 2900
1843	2901 through 3394
1844	3395 through 3872
1845	3873 through 4347
1846	4348 through 4913
1847	4914 through 5408
1848	5409 through 5992
1849	5993 through 6980

MUSINGS ON KNOBS

by Carol Klamm Meermans

When Opportunity comes knocking with special gifts for us,
All hinges, locks and knobs must function perfectly, no fuss.
Our doors will surely charm her with knobs of style and class,
Whether made of wood, bronze, iron, gutta-purcha, crystal, brass.

The Doorknob Exchange

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

Wanted: To buy. B-104 knobs and escutcheon plates in bronze for restoration of old Victorian house.

Lee Bettenhausen (#281)
Al Bar Laboratories, Inc.
127 Green Bay Road
Wilmette, IL 60091
PH: 708/251-0187

Wanted: Key plate, Moes Catalogue, Page E8 item #E119 and sash lock, Moes Catalogue, Page F8, item #F156.

Richard Zillman (#370)
280 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
PH: 415/258-4171

Wanted: K-214, knobs, locks and strike plated for restoration project.

Richard Zillman (#370)
280 Divisadero Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
PH: 415/258-4171

Wanted: Kenton Lock. That name or a logo of **KLCO**, intertwined in a 1890s style, will appear on the case or lock bolt end. Will pay top money for a Kenton catalog dated 1893 up to 1899 that also shows their cast iron toy line.

Robert Saylor (#371)
5476 Marion
Upper Sandusky
Marion, Ohio 43302

DEADLINE

All ads, material and articles for the July-August 1994 issue of **The Doorknob Collector** should be in the hands of the editors by June 25, 1994.

KENNEDY KOMMENTS

by Rich Kennedy

Several weeks ago my hobby was revealed, a picture of myself and my doorknobs were featured in our countywide newspaper. I was a little apprehensive at first, but wanting to extol **Antique Doorknobs Collectors of America** I agreed to be interviewed and photographed. The phone calls, letters and "free knobs" were overwhelming. I even got calls from out of state asking about their value, etc. This type of public relations is great for the collectors as well as ADCA. Much of the literature I sent in return was to "interested collectors," hopefully we will see some of these names on our membership list.

Other ways to promote ADCA is to exhibit one's collection in a local library or museum. Many clubs and organizations are always looking for "show and tell" programs. •

Addition to the roster

Richard L. Zillman #370
280 Divisadero Street.
San Francisco, CA 94117

Robert Saylor #371
5476 Marion
Upper Sandusky
Marion, OH 43302

Lynn P. Wiedeke #372
2402 Myrtle Avenue
Sullivan Island, SC 29482

Jackie M. Rode #373
10415 Alpine Avenue
Sparta, MI 49345-9465

James Rosenquist #252
334 Weldon Ct.
Benicia, CA 94510

Change in address

Stephen P. Rowe #287
2535 Roberts Ave.
Clovis, CA 93611-6286