

The Doorknob Collector

Number 96

July -August 1999

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Convention Displays May Include Vernacular Door Hardware Designs

by Maude Eastwood and Len Blumin

The Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 was a major influence on public taste. In particular, the "Japanese" style was greeted with great approval and is credited in the patent for the Flying Bird knob. A host of new designs were introduced, featuring simple, well-defined, often geometric elements. These designs were the efforts of pattern makers or other untutored workers and resulted in a style or ornamentation that defied naming (other than Henry Towne's "entirely unrelated to art").

The 1880s creations were bold and new in concept and seem to have a remarkable affinity for the common Victorian home of the day. It seems fitting to choose the term *vernacular* to designate them as a group, for they are distinctly native to our country, as much so, as the flamboyant Queen Anne homes they adorned. The vernacular style proved very popular and remained available in the 1890s, with some designs still being produced in 1910. Most were cast bronze and cast iron, but by 1890 many were being fabricated in wrought metals, Ceylon being a good example.

These motifs could not be traced to any historical precedent, which denied them a place among the Periods of Design as noted in Hardware manufacturer's catalogs. Truly, these were vernacular designs - being peculiar to one locality and era. Therefore, and because this type makes up a large percent of the designs collected within our club, they will be given a school of design classification for the purposes of displaying and entering the contests at the convention in Portland in August.

Should readers desire a more articulate explanation of the coining of the term "vernacular" they should contact the editors to obtain a copy of *The Doorknob Collector*, No. 5, December 1982, featuring Charles Wardell's incisive and sensitive article, "Hardware Decoration - its Roots in Art History."

For display purposes, hardware fitting the vernacular category will be those not found in a defined school and specifically, those designated vernacular in Len Blumin's *Victorian Decorative Art*. Members exhibiting at the convention are reminded, as always, those exhibits are definitely not limited in content to the theme alone. That is, displays of glass, wood, plastics, and china are most welcome.

New collectors with small collections and collectors who elect to bring only hardware they wish to sell, must realize their participation is important to our organization - you are our future. Meanwhile, members of longer standing, continue working on matching those designs in your collection to the 595 (by actual account) illustrated and identified-by-school examples that appear in Eastwood's *Antique Builders Hardware* and Blumin's *Victorian Decorative Art*.



Russell and Erwin
"Flying Bird" 1879



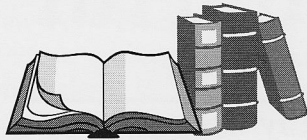
Corbin
Ceylon, 1885

Newsletter Deadline - August 15

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From the Archives

By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

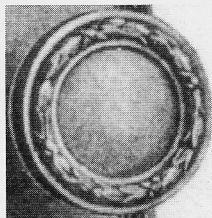


Door Hardware Schools of Design - Convention '99

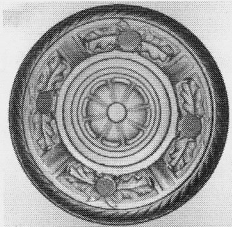
You will find an archive order form enclosed with this issue of TDC. This will be the only time this year we will offer the catalog copies for sale. Please read the information on the order form. - it is important that you understand the instructions. We have a cut-off date of August 15. Any order received after this date will be returned. If you have any questions, you can call us at 317-291-6043 after 6pm or email us at smenchhofe@aol.com anytime. We will be happy to answer all questions.

Needed Knobs

We have once again been called upon to help find some missing knobs for a public building. This is one way the ADCA can fulfill its mission as conservator of antique hardware. Take a look around and see if you can help in this effort. The knobs will be seen by many and will aid in the restoration. Thanks!



Russell and Erwin - Belfort



Russell and Erwin - Hadrian

Pittock Mansion Knobs

One of the Portland landmarks we will be touring during the Annual Convention is the Pittock Mansion. Sitting 1000 feet above the city on Imperial Heights, this French Renaissance chateau was under construction from 1909 until 1914, and is chock full of exotic woods, imported marble, cut stone, and elaborate details. Now a public museum owned by the city, the residence has been extensively restored - but not completely!

Like missing teeth, a number of original doorknobs leave gaps still to be filled. The director has graciously agreed to open the mansion for our ADCA tour free of charge, in hopes of our locating some of the missing knobs in exchange. The door hardware in the Pittock Mansion consisted of Russell & Erwin designs in three patterns: two in cast brass, Hadrian and Belfort, and multi-faceted octagon lead crystal knobs. The following is a list of the required knobs and finishes:

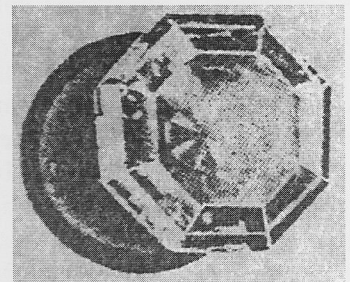
- 1 2½" x 2½" Belfort laurel-ring knob cast brass
- 1 2¼" multi-faceted octagon knob brass (w/cast rose)
- 1 2¼" multi-faceted octagon knob nickel-plated brass
- 4 1¾" multi-faceted octagon knobs brass
- 2 1¾" multi-faceted octagon knobs nickel (w/cast rose)

If you have any of these knobs and would be willing to sell or donate them to the Pittock Mansion, please bring them with you to the convention and arrangements can be made at that time. Should you have further questions, contact Bo Sullivan at Rejuvenation House Parts in Portland, (503) 230-2645, or e-mail sullivan@rejuvenation.com.

Contributors

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions of ideas, articles and information presented in this issue.

Win Applegate
Len Blumin
Maude Eastwood
Cathy Galbraith
Jennifer Lanphier
Barb and Steve Menchhofer
Bo Sullivan



Russell and Erwin - Multi-faceted
Beveled on slant on all sides

The Doorknob Collector®



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Richard and Faye Kennedy, Editors

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Founded Sept 1981, the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** is a non-profit organization devoted to the study and preservation of ornamental hardware.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Directors of ADCA or the editors.

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New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members of the ADCA:

Rod Hoylman Charleston, WV
George Stiles Meyersville, NJ
Emery Prior Hudson, OH

New Member Policy

Membership in ADCA follows the current calendar year. Anyone joining between January and September is enrolled for the current year and receives all the issues of **The Doorknob Collector** for the current year.

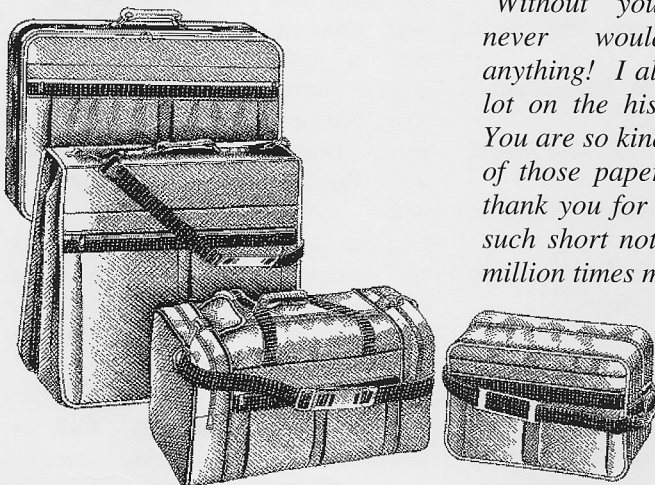
New members after September 30th will be enrolled as members for the following year. They will begin receiving **The Doorknob Collector** with the Jan-Feb issue of the next year.

Shipping Your Knobs

Is your luggage overflowing?. You are invited to ship your hardware in advance of the convention by UPS to:

A&E Safe and Alarm Company
C/o Ron Elsberry
835 N 99W
McMinnville, OR 97128

Ron (#514) has been kind enough to offer this convenience to us. Please feel free to take advantage of his offer.



Thinking of Our Members

As we go to press we are thinking about our long-time member, Art Paholke (#51). He is unable to lecture at this year's convention because his wife is gravely ill. We wish him and his family the very best and want him to know that our thoughts are with all of them during this difficult time.

A Note from a Young Girl

A young schoolgirl, Leah Hoagland, from Lakebluss, IL contacted Maude Eastwood because she had a school assignment on doorknobs. She was requesting any information she could get. The question was, "Who invented doorknobs and how could they be compared to a wheel and axle?"

A short amount of time required fast action. The answer lay on page 128 of *The Antique Doorknob* (1976). It explained the evolution of the doorknob over a long period of time. Leah had her answer and was very thankful. The following is a note sent to Maude.

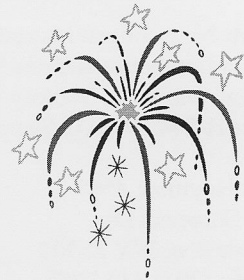
Dear Mrs. Maudie Eastwood,

Thank you so mush for all of your useful information. Thanks to you my friend and I got a very good grade on our project. You helped us out tremendously.

Without your knowledge we never would have gotten anything! I also learned a whole lot on the history of doorknobs. You are so kind to have sent us all of those papers. I also want to thank you for getting it to me on such short notice. I thank you a million times more!

*Your fan,
Leah C. Hoagland*

Maybe someone will find a nice knob at the convention to send on to our newfound admirer of doorknobs. I do wonder what teacher dreamed up this tough assignment for the kids. Guess anything is possible with the Internet information now available. But, Leah went straight to "the source". Good job, Leah!



Shopping/Browsing at Historic Sellwood In Portland

"In 1856 the Rev. James Sellwood and his family settled in this area, receiving a governmental land grant. In the 1880s, this land was sold to a real estate company, and the land was divided and sold as lots, many of which were bought by trolley care drivers, as the car barn was located here. In 1887 the thriving community incorporated as the town of Sellwood in honor of the pioneer minister and was annexed to Portland in the 1890s.

The bustling township of yesteryear was a natural to evolve into the largest and best selection of antique and collectible stores in the state, today Sellwood continues to grow as a lively hub and a delightful place for shoppers, offering a larger and better selection of friendly, leading edge shops and personal services each year."

If you think this sounds like an advertisement, you are correct. This area of Portland is thirteen blocks of antique and specialty shops. So if you arrive early there is plenty to do.

The Doorknob Exchange

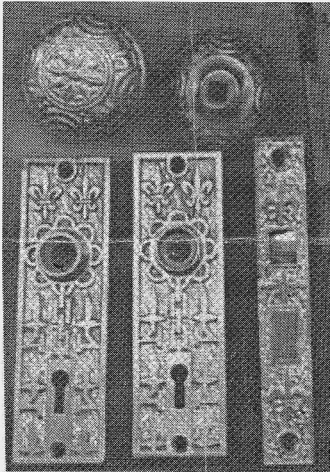
Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.

Wanted: I need a knob with the letter "M" on it. (for a baby present)

Debbie Fellenz, #31
2224 Cherokee, St.
Louis, MO 63118 (314) 776-8363

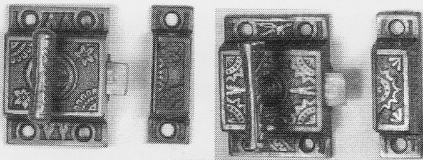
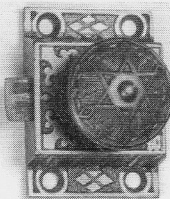
Wanted: New collector is restoring a Victorian farmhouse and needs four knobs and one lock. Mallory & Wheeler H-244 (VDA). See photo below.

Rod Hoylman #567
809 Somerset Dr.
Charleston, WV 25302
Work: (304) 343-7655
Home: (304) 344-3814

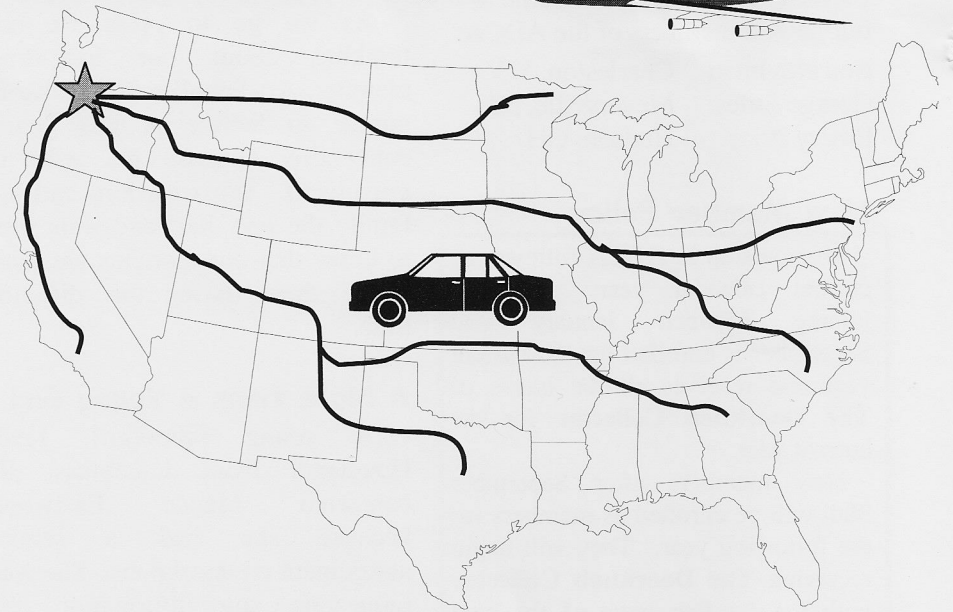


Wanted: These cabinet turns and bin pull pictured below are needed for a restoration project. Any number will help.

Patty Maclay (#389)
3511 Hwy D
West Bend, WI 53090
Ph. (414) 338-4096



This August, All Roads Lead to Portland, Oregon



Good Friends, Good Food

The list of restaurants in downtown Portland is impressive. While you are sharing a good time with old and new friends you might want to visit some of these establishments. This is merely a listing with the simplest of explanations. A better listing will be available upon your arrival in Portland.

Atwater's Restaurant and Bar - very classy Northwestern cuisine

Alexis - Greek food and atmosphere

Brasserie Montmartre - classy, great jazz

Cassidy's - American and Continental cuisine, close by

Ringler's Pub - open late, great burgers

Heathman Hotel and Restaurant - elegant dining, all meals

Higgins - classy yet cozy Old World atmosphere

Huber's - turkey dinners, fantastic Spanish coffees

Jake's Famous Crawfish - great seafood, nice Happy Hour

The Kingston - soups, salads, sandwiches

London Grill - great old-fashioned service, all meals

Mandrin Cove - great Chinese food from many regions

Pazzo's Bar and Ristorante - great

Northern-style Italian food, elegant **Ringside** - some of the best steaks and onion rings in town

Suriya - varied Thai menu, great food and service

Typhoon! - Artistic Thai cuisine, voted "one of the 10 Best Restaurants" by Gourmet Magazine

Now there are some real choices for you. After you have eaten so well you will want to take a walk around town. You can explore Downtown Portland with Pete

Chausse, Antioch University Instructor and Portland enthusiast with a choice of three different tours: Lloyd Center & vicinity, Water Front/ Old Town, or Portlandia/New Town.

Tours are offered daily. Call for information (503) 665-2558.



A Brief Story of Our Doorknob Collecting,

by Len Blumin

We bought our first decorative doorknob in 1975. Like you, we have a vivid mental image, and can recall the excitement, that "moment of discovery". Patti and I were hooked, and have been collecting Victorian hardware ever since.

Our first mentor was Dave Masterson, soon to be joined by Maud Eastwood. Dave had a friend named Harry Starnes, and along with a few others we all gathered unofficially at Dave's house for a "convention" in the late 70's, the highlight of which was a gold plated Heart Knob (C-111) and escutcheon. Well, Harry ended up selling all his "stuff" to us, and we were suddenly bona fide "doorknob collectors".

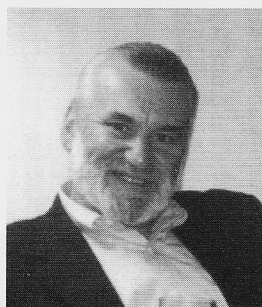
Over the years we have acquired over 3000 knobs, plus thousands of other items, weighing literally tons! Having a small house became a blessing, as it forced us to make some cruel decisions, like what to keep, what to trade, and what to sell. We ended up parting with innumerable backplates, hinges, and related items, gratefully purchased by Lonnie Moes to add to his stock, and the load was lightened. Years later we made the more difficult decision to actually sell doorknobs, and we have parted with over 2000. Since then we have shed other "non-essentials", and we can now get a better look at what has become our core collection, consisting largely of doorknobs from the period 1870-1890, along with some related roses and escutcheons.

The above process of sorting and culling is a critical step which many of you either have faced, or will face some time in the future. Although it is sad to give up pieces with memories attached, there is great satisfaction in the process of

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deciding what it is you truly cherish, and focusing your collecting efforts on acquiring a good sampling of those items that are really meaningful to you. Some of you will prefer schools of architecture, whereas others might like colored glass and painted porcelain. There might be some collectors, those with large houses and ample budgets I guess, that will like everything. But I suspect that the day will come when almost all of you will make that fateful decision to define what you truly like, and I hope you will be as happy with the decision as we were.

Len is a retired physician. Patti is a devoted environmentalist and nature lover. They both spend countless hours teaching and volunteering at Audubon Canyon Ranch, a system of nature preserves in Northern California. They live in a modest Victorian cottage in Mill Valley, which still lacks some finishing touches. Visitors are welcome, as long as they don't comment on the lack of proper hardware on the doors, and aren't allergic to cats.

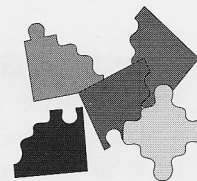


Len Blumin

Len will be the featured speaker at the convention enlightening us about "The Artful Designs of Mallory Wheeler, 1882". The subject of Mallory Wheeler is no accident. You may observe the relationship between the talk and the hotel that is being used as "Convention Central".

Bits and Pieces

By Win Applegate



"As we get older, the travel bag with the medicine gets bigger and bigger!"

Well, it's almost time to do the packing for the Portland trip. A lot of planning and working out of schedules, but the end result is already known: a good time will be had by all.

The new auction program will be "fined tuned", a faster laser printer will appear and shorten, still further, the end-of-auction settlement time. Have a short term cash problem at the auction? No problem! We will have a very liberal credit plan (of course you may have to leave a grandchild or two ... only kidding)

We are expecting a shipment of hardware from one of our charter members. This will be priced by a group of our knowledgeable collectors and, hopefully, some of the specimens will be tagged for the auction.

A few of the newer members have already registered and we are looking forward to meeting them. This will be another fine convention. A beautiful city, good friends, and a fine program supported by a lot of planning.

The business meeting will see some proposals for bylaw changes plus an election where a new President and other officers will be selected.

This like all of the conventions, is one not to be missed. Hope to see you in Portland.

**Return Your
Registration NOW!**

Bob Rodder
1203 Bruce Road
Oreland, PA 19075-1904
(215) 885-1488

Amethyst Glass

The following is quoted from *The New York Times*, Tuesday, July 2, 1996 in answer to the question of why glass in city sidewalks is purple.

Renaissance glass makers in Italy discovered that they could clarify glass, naturally green or brown depending on how much iron was in the sand it was made from, by adding certain minerals, notably black manganese oxide, or manganese dioxide.

Ultraviolet light can bring out a purple tint in glass containing manganese dioxide and other metals by exciting their electrons, said Dr. George H. Beall, a research fellow at Corning Inc. in Corning, NY.

"Manganese is one of the ions that can absorb a photon of ultraviolet light, transfer an electron and change color," he said. "Traces of iron and titanium that may be in glass are also capable of solarization."

Solarization may develop slowly and fade when the sunlight is removed, like the photochromic glass used in sunglasses. An irreversible photosensitive effect is also possible.

Glass used for inserts in sidewalks to give light to basements below got plenty of UV wavelengths, as did some glass insulators on telephone lines.

An old bottle left in the desert might eventually look like amethyst, which is also colored by Manganese.

C. CLAIBORNE RAY

Many of us have light purple glass knobs in our collections. They most probably were outside knobs. Our understanding is that newer glass no longer uses the manganese to make it clear in color; alas no more purple knobs.

Architectural Hardware Design Motifs

Information provided by
Maude Eastwood

In architectural design and thus in builder hardware ornamentation, evidence of certain nature-based motifs or elements may be found. Design and form seem to be a natural part of human history as many repetitive designs were first noted on cave walls of prehistoric man such as the sun, moon, water, and the eye. As these time-honored motifs were embellished or simplified they became known as circles, scrolls, beads, etc. and were used both in borders and in general design.

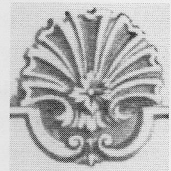
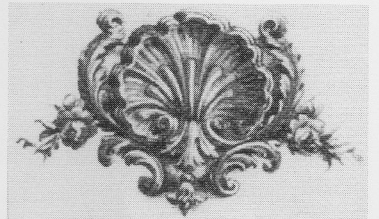
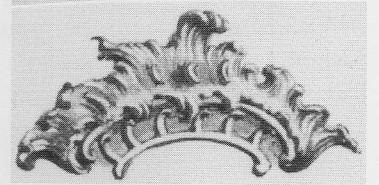
In the last issue we began a study of designs in architectural hardware and used doorknobs to illustrate the designs used in various schools. This time the emphasis is on the design itself. It is sometimes easier to see the ornament when it isn't combined with other elements on the hardware.

Schools of design can often be identified by their elements as listed in the last issue. In some cases, elements are held in common, that is, they are represented in several schools of design. Motifs were altered to more closely fit the style characteristics of the school of design involved as can be seen in



the example of the three scrolls shown here which demonstrate the motif in forms from very ornate to quite simple lines.

Likewise, the samples of the shell design below (representing a bivalve or other marine shells) show how the same motif can be used in hardware designs from different schools. The top one has a rococo feel, the center one more a French or Italian influence, and the bottom being much simpler reminds us of Colonial furniture finials or drawer pulls.



Keep in Touch



Mail:
ADCA Box 31
Chatham, NJ
07928-0031



FAX:
(973) 635-6993



Phone:
(973) 635-6338



E-Mail:
KnobNews@aol.com



Web Site:
<http://members.aol.com/knobnews>