

# The Doorknob Collector

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## THE KNOB - THE SYMBOL, IT'S HISTORY

This rather "plain-Jane" doorknob and plate probably wouldn't get a second look from most hardware aficionados. It may not have as impressive a history as some, but none the less, it has an interesting historic background. Bill Werner, an acquaintance, brought this knob to me and also shared very personal recollections of the company. He grew up in Newark where the headquarters and central terminal for Public Service dominated the landscape along Broad Street.

A book titled *A History of PSE&G - The Energy People* by James C. G. Conniff and Richard Conniff is the basis for much of the information in this article.

When the book was published in 1978 PSE&G (Public Service Electric and Gas) was still the third largest combined utility in the nation, serving eight out of every ten residences in New Jersey. Today new utilities are entering the market so the percentage may be a bit different, but PSE&G is still a very large supplier of gas and electric power in the state.

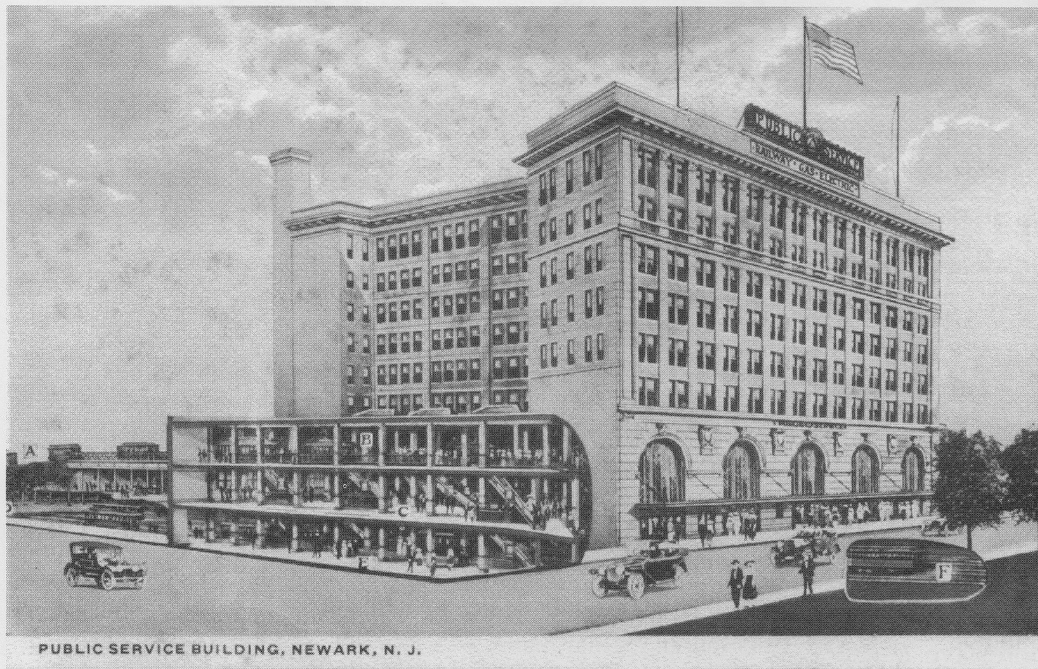
"Before Thomas N. McCarter founded the company in 1903, literally hundreds of little firms were providing one or another of these three services, often duplicating each other's efforts at prices that reflected the resultant inefficiency." Many were put out of business by lowering their rates to the point that they could not cover their costs.

In February 1903 there was a horrible trolley and train accident that killed children on their way to school. That accident pointed out the financial problems of foundering transportation, gas and electric companies. *Fortune Magazine* said, "Patently, the times called for a Man of Vision ... The man of vision turned up in Trenton. His name was Thomas Nesbitt McCarter."



### Newsletter Deadline - Monday, December 10, 2001

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PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING, NEWARK, N. J.

The corporate symbol of the Public Service Electric and Gas Company (founded in 1903) was the triangle representing the company's principal interests of gas, electricity, and transportation.

"The business of the gas industry in 1903, when Public Service was born, was lighting. In January 1847, long before Public Service was founded, Newark was credited with being the 13th city in the country and the first in New Jersey with a gas works. This was 35 years before electric power was available to homes in the state.

"Some gas men had considered gas for home heating, the major use of the fuel today, but none had tried it. Gas cooking was only beginning to replace the coal and wood stoves. Industrial use of gas was almost unknown. Lighting had been the business since the industry's first day ... Gas lighting grew slowly but steadily then in competition with whale oil,

which sold for from 80 cents to \$1.77 a gallon and tallow candles, which cost 15 cents per pound, six candles to the pound." Gas was a competitive way to light the house until electricity came along.

Originally, the transportation segment of the business was trolley and also ferry lines to New York City. The 1917 postcard pictured below has a cut away view of the main terminal where the cars came in underground and turned around to begin the route all over again. As Bill explained, the cars entered the building at the front and then circled around at the rear and entered the enclosed part of the building to pick up passengers, not unlike our modern bus terminals. Note in the picture the triangle symbol just below the flag.

As Thomas Alva Edison perfected the light bulb it replaced gas as the source of residential lighting. However, gas remains a primary source

of heating and cooking to this day just as the early visionaries had predicted.

As the company grew so did the need for larger quarters. In 1913 the company was housed in mix of homes and shops. In 1915 ground was broken for a new corporate headquarters (pictured) in downtown Newark, NJ boasting three levels of tracks for the trolleys. Then in 1980 this building was replaced with a 26 story glass-walled building.

Where the original building stood is a large courtyard. This site remains the headquarters of Public Service today.

#### The Doorknob Collector®



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**September 11, 2001**

Many of our members contacted us after the events of September 11th. The whole nation was feeling such sadness. Because there was such interest we wanted to publish some of the thoughts of our members who were near the scenes of destruction. We were not able to get hold of anyone in the DC area or western PA, but here are some remarks from those living near NYC and also from our Canadian friends.

**Val Friesen and Bob Wilson  
Winnipeg, Canada**

To all our friends in ADCA, we grieve with you for the people who were lost on Tuesday, for their loved ones and for you. God bless you, the victims, their families, and above all God Bless America.

**Norm and Cheryl Blam  
Cedarhurst, NY:**

We live on Long Island, New York just outside of Kennedy Airport. As with everyone else on Sept. 11, 2001 we were glued to the TV set and went into shock along with our fellow Americans.

Living by a major airport we have gotten use to hearing airplanes coming over our house to land at Kennedy. I can only tell you our nerves were a little unsettled, when they close down the airways, and all one hears is silence, along with the smell of electricity and smoke coming from New York. I can envision how easy it would be for any chemical warfare in the air after this experience!

The first night I did hear an airplane was also upsetting as it was our military fighter planes, and they flew overhead all night, and many days after. Their engine noise is powerful, loud and

angry and so disquieting. So very different from a commercial plane. We did feel very protected seeing the military ships arrive on our shoreline, and having our protective planes in the sky.

Our skyline is so different without the WTC and now I have to take a second look to get my bearings. It also brings a sadness and emptiness that is so hard to shake off. We all seem to walk around with a depression that lies underneath our bravado.

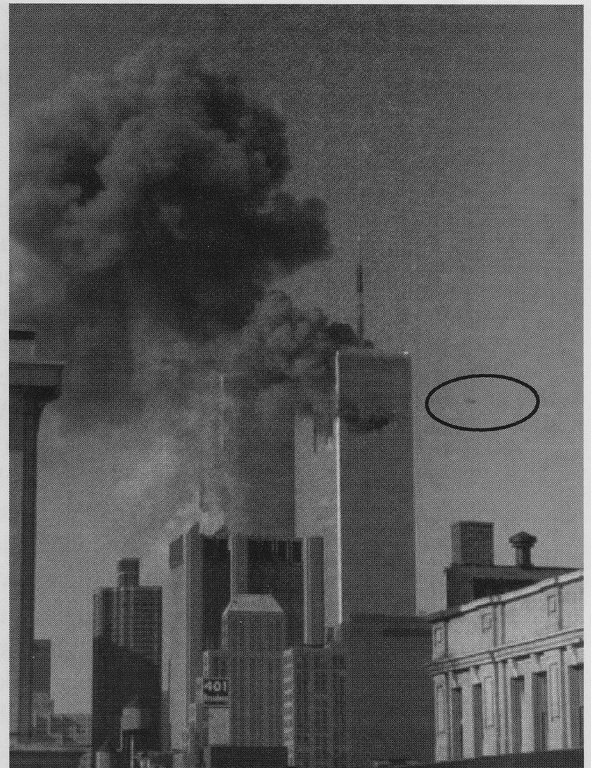
All our friends and acquaintance were accounted for, but there were many frantic moments till we could make contact. I was touched by all our friends reaching out to us to make sure we were safe. Many called when I usually only hear from them at Christmas, so we felt doubly blessed.

I am acquainted with a woman who is the Head of the Legal Dept. for the City of NY, and her task has been to get the death certificates out as quickly as possible. She has had to deal with all the family survivors, which has been a monumental feat, and to listen to such sad "last moments" from their loved ones. Another friend is a chef and had volunteered to feed the people at Ground Zero after the accident. They fed over a million meals that first two weeks!

The other thing that has been such a phenomenal occurrence is that every town and almost every home has a flag waving from the windows or flagpoles. We lost one firefighter from our town, and over 1,000 people came to his funeral. Our church could only handle 400, so the rest spilled over into the streets. Mayor Giuliani flew into our town park by helicopter, and then attended three

more funerals that day. This man has been such an inspiration to all of us.

The military planes and ships are gone, and we are now trying to go back to our daily routines. Norm and I have begun to go back into the City, and we notice the horns do not honk so quickly and people seems to respond more easily, but collectively we are all now more aware of our precious freedoms.



**Rhett Butler  
New York, NY**

The photo above is from Rhett Butler. He shot this view from his office window while the events unfolded. It appears that this photo shows the second plane approaching the tower. Another photo that he sent is of the building collapsing. We all saw it over and over on TV, but to have seen such destruction from one's window is unthinkable.

**Steve Rowe  
Clovis, CA**

Steve and his wife, Tracy had been at Windows on the World, the restaurant at the top of the twin towers, with Rhett just before the convention in Bethlehem. They were shaken thinking of the people in these upper floors where they had been so recently.

**Rich and Faye Kennedy  
Chatham, NJ**

We live just over 25 miles from the city. Because we are on the direct train line to the city, many residents work in NYC. Our two towns, Chatham and Chatham Township lost 11 people in the disaster. Within our church we went to the memorial service of a young man, 40 years old who grew up in our church and the brother-in-law of our church secretary is a missing fireman.

In the weeks since, we have not spoken to anyone in town who did not know of a victim of the WTC collapse. It shakes you to the core when each week there have been about eight obituaries in our little local paper of young people from the area who lost their lives.

A good friend of ours was late to work that morning and heard about it on the train so he turned around in Newark and came home. Another had a meeting in New Jersey that morning and so was not at the WTC at 8:45 am as he usually is.

We were on vacation in Ocean City, NJ that week. Rich came home and reported to the Red Cross (he works there) and then returned to South Jersey and worked at that Red Cross chapter helping to coordinate deliveries of needed items to New York.

Our son-in-law is working with IHOP to serve breakfast to relief workers at the site. The need for these kinds of services will go on

for months. Red Cross workers from across the country are still at the site. It just goes on and on.

**Vickie and Marshall Berol  
San Francisco, CA**

Marshall and I were in Washington, D.C. on September 11. In 24 hours, the city went from vibrant to a city that spoke in a whisper. Marshall was in Bethesda at a hearing when the bombing took place. That was nerve-racking for me, as I didn't know when or how he would get back to the hotel. (He got back around 7 p.m.) We had originally tickets for Wednesday, September 12. Needless to say, our flight was cancelled. It took Marshall hours on the phone trying to make flight arrangements, and finally on Saturday, we flew out to San Francisco. Both Dulles and Reagan National were closed. We were channeled to BWI.

We were always okay, other than we, like many, were hurting. On Wednesday, we went to The Smithsonian. All museums had security guards. Purses and packages were looked into. This was not a case when I sent to the museums the week before. We walked to The Red Cross. Marshall wanted to give blood. It was an amazing mass of humanity,



waiting to donate. As we were not local, we were asked to donate in our city. There had to be a waiting line of up to three hours. We were able to walk by the White House. By Thursday, that had changed, as there were bomb threats to the Capitol and the White House. They were cordoned off for a five-block perimeter.

## *Short Notes from Our Members*

**Lloyd Noseworthy (#661)** tells us that he has an extensive collection of both postcards and letter heads. These are from many old buildings, especially hotels. He is interested in helping doorknob collectors match doorknobs with hotel stationery and cards of buildings from which your doorknobs come. You can contact him at

43 W. Macada Rd.  
Bethlehem, PA 18017

**Florence Jarvis** informs us that Gene and Mariam Delange were not able to attend this year's convention because of his mother's illness. Hattie DeLange, Gene's mother passed on September 3, 2001. We offer our condolences to Gene and Miriam on their loss.

**Allen Still** saw this advertisement in the Fall 2001 issue of the Smithsonian Catalog (pg 60) for Castle Doorknob Lion Jewelry. There is a pin/pendant and earrings. They are described as a matte finish gold-plated jewelry inspired by the classic lion's-head doorknob found on the east doors of the Smithsonian Castle. The knobs were patented by Ludwig Kreuzinger in 1870. See picture at left.

## New Members

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members who have joined the ADCA since our last newsletter.

663 Jean Fournier Kirkwood, MO  
664 Jim Kvidt Philomath, OR  
665 Weni Chang San Marino, CA

## Postcard Find of a Lifetime

Dick Hubbard's collection of postcards and doorknobs was featured in the May-June issue of *The Doorknob Collector*. Just after the convention in Bethlehem he went to a postcard show at the New Jersey shore. Of course to find postcards of interest one must leaf through boxes and boxes of old postcards. But in his search, Dick found several old postcards of the Hotel Bethlehem. Having just been there these cards were of interest so he bought them.

Upon his return home it is al-

ways interesting to see what was written on the back of the card. Much to his delight, he discovered a famous signature. Ray Nemeck, Mr. Baseball, would give his eyeteeth for this postcard with the signature of "the Babe". This appears to be the real thing.

We all know that we have to dig among the dusty items to find the best knobs. It looks like this trip was well worth the time.

## Business Listing Reminder

In the last issue we enclosed a flyer for those of you who would like to be on our reference listing. We get calls on a regular basis asking for information and sources of hardware. We want to direct these inquiries to members of our club. We are putting together the listing that we will send out to those who call us. Please get your form into us along with the \$25 so that your name and business will be included. If you need a form, please contact us and we will forward it to you.

The listing has already been sent out to those seeking sources. So get your name on the list.

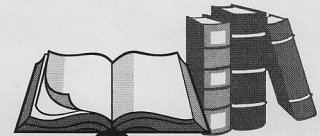
## NEW TV SHOW

Here's a new TV show that will be of special interest to the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America. **Flea Market Finds With The Kobels** is a new weekly national television series broadcast Wednesday nights on HGTV (home & Garden Television Network) The hosts are Ralph and Terry Kovel, nationally syndicated column-ists and well-known antiques and collectible experts. ADCA members will be especially interested in the show now

scheduled for December 19 that will feature doorknobs.

The show airs weekly on Wednesday nights at 8:00 PM and 11:00 PM (Eastern Time); 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM (Central Time); 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM (Mountain Time); and 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM (Pacific Time). Some shows are repeated on Saturday and Sunday.

## From the Archives

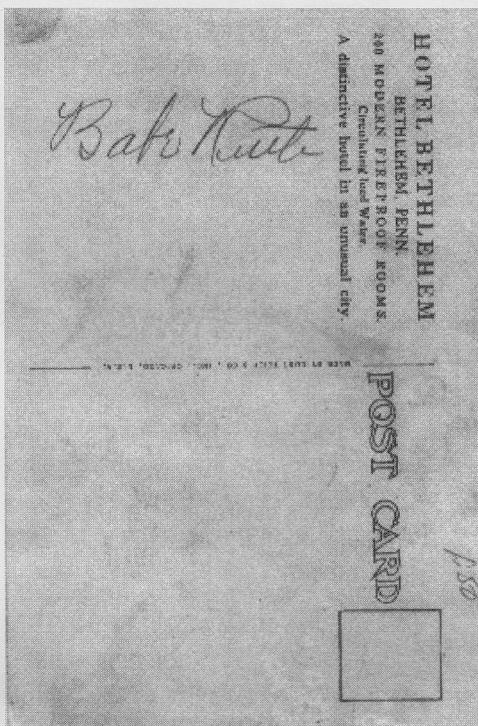


By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

It's amazing to us that no matter how many times we go through catalogs while checking and filling members orders we always spot a doorknob or a piece of related hardware that before this we had never really noticed. Or we learn some new fact about the hardware manufacturer by reading what was written in the catalog.

Catalogs can be very interesting and informative. A few of the catalogs describe schools of designs, showing examples of the hardware in the respective school and in some cases the buildings or homes which the hardware graced. Some catalogs offer insights to the histories of the companies. Plus there are many, many more facts you can learn. You can find out what escutcheon plate or rosette goes with a doorknob you have, and about other related hardware such as window lifts, doorbells, etc. matching a particular design.

So get out your catalogs, read about your hardware and learn more about your hobby. We want to thank the members who ordered catalogs and we hope that they will serve as an educational tool for them to use.



## Knob and Plate

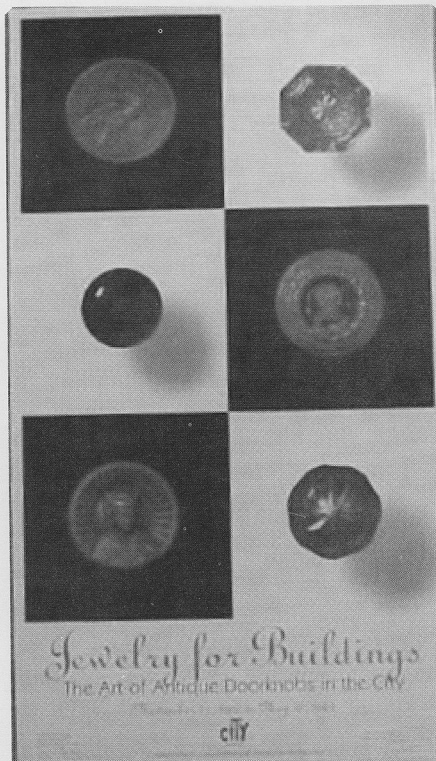


Felice Brenner, a woman whose father's business was Simmons Plating Works of Atlanta, gave this knob to us hoping that we could identify it. It seems that the knob and plate were left behind from some long-ago job. It is believed that the set may be from a bank.

Does anyone know of a bank or other business in the area that might have had these initials (EB) on the doorknobs. It seems that in the past few years banks change names, like most people change socks so there may not be a bank with these initials still existing in Atlanta. It may take a memory of over 20 years to solve this one. The woman believes that the job was done about 30 years ago. Can you help identify this knob?

## Posters Are Available

Thinking about a nice holiday gift. These posters from the exhibition in St. Louis make a lovely gift when mounted and framed. They measure 20 1/2 x 37 inches. Send \$10 (includes shipping) to the ADCA and we will ship one to you in a cardboard tube mailer. There is a limited supply so let us know if you would like one soon.



## It's a Small World After All

We received this note from Alice Empric and it brought a smile to our faces.

Just back from the convention and at the beach with friends. I was introduced to a gal from Manhattan who's with Barnes & Noble.

At a recent meeting, new books were dispersed for the staff to select. Lo and behold ... a coffee table edition on doorknobs! It was her selection and she spent an initial 2 to 3 hours with it, finding it fascinating.

Talk about timing! ... Wasn't that a coincidence for me? Thought you'd all enjoy hearing about this one.

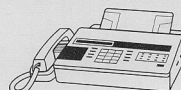
My oh my, Liz Gordon, how you do get around!!

*Decorative Hardware* is available from [shop@LAHardware.com](mailto:shop@LAHardware.com).

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**"See you in St. Louis, Louie"**

**Antique Doorknob Collectors of America  
Convention 2002**

**St. Louis, MO  
July 24 to July 27**

**Host, Debbie Fellenz**