

# The Doorknob Collector

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## Seattle's Alaska Building

By Maude Eastwood

Interest in the door hardware for the 1904 Alaska Building in Seattle, Washington definitely did not lie in its beauty of design. Offsetting a possible lack of interest in the simple "A" monogrammed knobs, was their attachment to a historically significant

building in Seattle's architectural history, making them desirable mementos when replaced.

The Alaska building preceded Smith Tower, also of Seattle (see next issue), by ten years and though shorter by many stories, never the less, was a "first" in its own right, being the highest steel framed skyscraper (fourteen stories) in Seattle until 1911. The St. Louis architectural firm, Eames & Young with assistance of Saunders & Lawton designed the building.

By the early 1990s, the one pair of these knobs remaining in the building were found by a maintenance worker on the door of a battered, unused basement door. One of the knobs was painted white and the other remained unpainted, but hanging at a precarious angle from the door. One of those knobs currently rests in the collection of the insistent collector who convinced the worker that if he looked hard enough, he probably could find an example of the original hardware (he had no idea what it would look like) and, likely, in the basement. That of course is exactly where he found it.

John E. Chilberg, considered to have been one of Seattle's most prominent citizens, along with partners, financed and built the Alaska Building. From the mere idea in 1903 to completion in 1904 took only eleven months. The building was topped by a penthouse with unique porthole windows and became the home of the Alaska Club, a social club for Alaskans. The main floor featured a (cont'd pg 2)



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## 2002 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

by Debbie Fellenz

Think doorknobs! We hope all club members will be able to put the recent tragedies behind them and attend the next convention. It promises to be a good one.

I'm hoping the baseball Cardinals will be in town so fans can attend a game. There's nothing like being at the ball park.

The Millenium Hotel is in downtown St. Louis and has a great view of the riverfront and Arch. There is a revolving restaurant on the top that offers the best view in town of St. Louis, and they are known for their good food as well.

The tour will be memorable. It will start with a tour of the city museum where the doorknob display was last year. It will also include lunch and tours of two mansions, one of which is a private residence. There will also be an open house and welcome reception at Bill and Mary Fellenz's.

Besides the usual buying, selling and trading there will be a program by Liz Gordon one day and a round table discussion on the following day.

We are lucky to have Nini Harris, a local historian, come to the banquet to tell us about architecture in south St. Louis.

The banquet will feature your choice of orange roughy or pecan chicken. Since I'm a vegetarian you guys are lucky you won't be getting tofu and bean sprouts. My mom and I are in deep discussion about the dessert, the most important part of the meal.

The last day there will be the traditional breakfast followed by the ever-popular auction. To top off the whole week there will be a farewell reception at Debbie's.

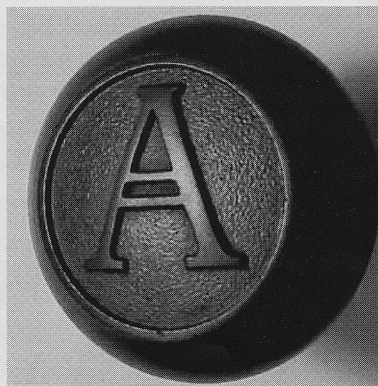
The weather in St. Louis in July is typically hot and humid but we won't let that dampen our spirits. Hope to see you July 24th through the 27th. "Meet me in St. Louis."

## Seattle's Alaska Building (Cont'd)

number of retail shops, the upper floors, mainly offices. Terra cotta panels covered the exterior of the first two floors and the penthouse floor, with brick veneer for the remainder. The main entrance walls and ceiling were constructed with marble veneering.

An entrepreneur of the first order, Chilberg, from a printer's devil start, throughout various enterprizes that included steam ship to Alaska, bank president, twice president of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and president of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition that ran from June 1 through October 15, 1909. Of this Exposition, President Teddy Roosevelt, in his 6th annual message to Congress on December 6, 1906, noted "the progressive citizens of Puget Sound were planning an exposition with the goal of up-building Alaska and developing American commerce on the Pacific Ocean."

Ultimately, the ten million preliminary expense before the exposition opened was shared by the Federal Government, State of Washingto, City of Seattle, businesses and individual citizens.



## In Memoriam

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of Florence Jarvis (#24) on December 15, 2001. Florence was a charter member of the ADCA and had attended every convention since our inception. She will be sorly missed.



Florence Jarvis

### The Doorknob Collector©



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## Time to Donate

By Stephen Rowe, President ADCA

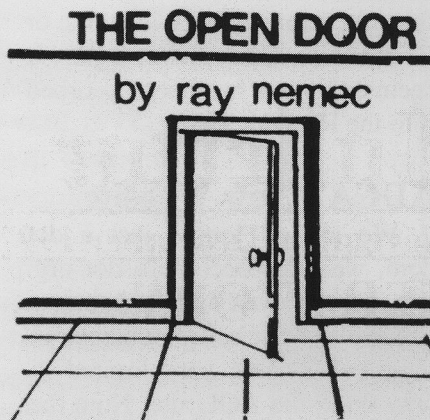
Have you ever wondered how two people can observe an event and when asked, tell completely different stories? Ask any historian and they will confirm that people see things in different ways. Whether it is a car accident or as simple as the study of what we collect, we all have different thoughts and insights of value to share.

These insights, when taken collectively, help form a historical perspective about an event. Just as the historian gathers information to write his/her perspective, there are those in ADCA who wish to record a historical account of the hardware industry. This task becomes formidable when key bits of information are missing or inaccessible. Add a little time and the destruction or loss of written documents, and a true historical perspective can be lost forever.

The position of membership to ADCA means more than simply collecting hardware. One of ADCA's mission statements refers to the gathering and preservation of information on the hardware industry. As club members, we all have pieces of hardware, yet many of us also have rare historical data relevant to collecting. Documentation can be as simple as a hardware advertisement, a copy of a hardware patent, or a manufacturer's catalog in part or in whole. Each member has knowledge vital to the field of antique hardware collecting and preservation.

Since one of the club's mission statements is to preserve hardware and its historical past, then these documents need to be available in the Club's archives for its collective members and those desirous

of researching the field. This does not mean each member must donate all of the special finds. On the contrary, the Club's archive is intended to be a repository of historical documents, be they in original or facsimile form. ADCA would be happy to accept a copy of your information today. Only when all our members work together will ADCA be able to assemble for discussion and dissemination, the many missing pieces of the hardware puzzle. As an ADCA member, what contribution will you make to further the Club's mission to document, record and educate? Contact the Archivists today!



### Whipple Manufacturing Company

A chance stop at Fremont, Ohio, on returning from the 2001 convention, we visited the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center and home. The doorknob on the front door of President Hayes' home catches a hardware collector's eye immediately. Questions come to mind such as who was the manufacturer of this quality hardware?

We soon learned hardware from the Whipple Manufacturing Company of Cleveland, Ohio, had been used throughout the Rutherford B. Hayes home. We also learned that a son of Hayes, Webb

Hayes, had been connected with Whipple and apparently chose the hardware for his father's home.

At this time little is known about the Whipple Manufacturing Company. Questions as to when and how the company was formed and what about its eventual demise come up.

There are two catalogs and a price booklet that are known to exist. The 1880 Whipple catalog contains 343 pages with approximately 20 pages devoted to doorknobs. Then in 1882 the company issued a price list referring back to the 1882 catalog. In 1884 a 431 page catalog was published by Whipple. There were about 25 pages of doorknobs in this issue.

Some research by Ralph Meermans, at our request, found the following:

Whipple Manufacturing Company, Mfgs. Of Builders Hardware.

41 Waverley Ave.

Cleveland, Ohio

L. Austin, President

H. J. P. Whipple, General Manager

Years of operation 1882-1885.

Since two 1880 catalogs exist, it seems certain the company predates 1882 by at least two years. The front page of the 1884 catalog reads:

The Whipple Mfg. Co.'s  
Illustrated and Descriptive  
Catalogue - Door \* Locks \*  
Knobs

Bronze Goods and Builders'  
Hardware -

Factory and principle office,  
Cleveland, Ohio

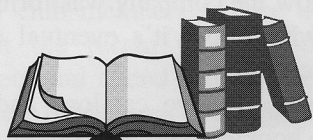
U.S.A.

July 1st, 1884

Now can any of our readers add more to the Whipple story? Are copies of the pages containing the doorknobs available? We would like to know more about the company and the people who ran it and the market size. Was it

just a regional company or did their hardware sell in eastern and mid-western markets ?

## From the Archives



By Steve and Barbara Menchhofer

Catalog orders have been filled, shipped and received. Our thanks go out to all members who ordered them. Now that you have yours, you are probably wondering how to keep them nice. We can tell you what we do with ours. We put them in clear plastic covers and place them in three ring binders. This keeps them in good shape.

We have received a donation of a French hardware catalog from Norman Blam. The hardware pictured in it is very nice. Thanks, Norman, for the addition to the archives.

Now that winter is officially here, it's time to curl up with a good book. Why not make that book a hardware catalog.

## New Members

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

666	Chris Jones	Rochester, NY
667	Robert Young	Frederick, MD

## Knob and Plate



This knob was pictured in the last issue and we were wondering where it came from. Larry Bolen found the answer for us.

He believes this knob came from the Etowah Bank in Rome or Cartersville, GA. As all banks, it seems, this one has been absorbed into the Regency Bank.

## ADCA's New Website

We are no longer just a dot com, we have become a dot org. We have moved our website so that we can put better pictures out there. We were very limited in size using the AOL site. Note the new address:

[www.antiquedoorknobs.org](http://www.antiquedoorknobs.org)

The Business Reference listing is on the web. We continue to send out about three copies a week to people calling us and looking for help. If you are not on the list yet, get aboard.

## The Doorknob Exchange

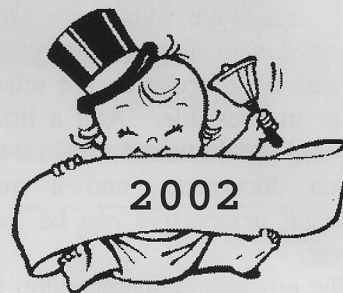
Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade, or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.

### For Trade:

A101 doggie, A106,301.  
B121. D127, 133. F125  
H110, 223, 233, J102, 109  
K110, 206, L102.

Whatcha got? Grab your *Victorian Decorative Art* and let me know what you have.

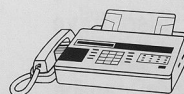
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**"See you in St. Louis, Louie"**

**Antique Doorknob Collectors of America  
Convention 2002**

**July 24 to July 27  
St. Louis, MO  
Host, Debbie Fellenz**



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