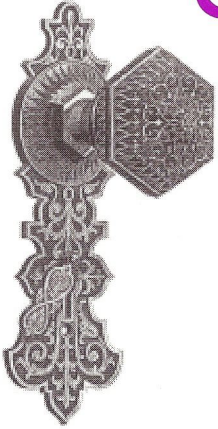


# The Doorknob Collector

Number 129

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## LOUIS SULLIVAN, RICHARD NICKEL AND THE CHICAGO STOCK EXCHANGE

By Allen S. Joslyn

The official life of the Chicago Stock Exchange Building began on April 30, 1894 when the membership left their old digs, had lunch and descended upon the newly-built Exchange while a band played the “Washington Post March”. In June, 1971, the tenants were forced out of the building; in October the last event, a wedding, was held in the first-floor restaurant. Then the stripping and demolition began.

But the building had a pre-history and a post-history. Ever since the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Chicago had been on a building boom. The 1892 Columbian Exposition further put Chicago on the map, and Louis Sullivan designed one of the most popular buildings at the Exposition, the Transportation building. Chicago’s stock and bond traders were enjoying prosperous times and required a new Exchange and more impressive home. In order to attract the Exchange, the building’s developers offered it a rent-free trading hall for 15 years. The prestige of the building was enhanced by the fact that it was designed by Adler & Sullivan, one of the preeminent architectural firms in Chicago.

Dankmar Adler of the Adler & Sullivan partnership provided more of the engineering, bonhomie and business sense. Louis Sullivan was the more artistic architect, and a somewhat prickly one at that. Both were gifted architects and their work together was a true collaboration. Sullivan and his assistants designed unique ornamentation. of all sorts to cover the interior of the building. The center of the Exchange building was the trading room, whose ceilings were covered with colorful stencils and which is now one of the most admired exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago. In order to accommodate the large, uninterrupted space required for the trading room, Adler designed a system



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of boxed trusses which permitted the weight of the 4<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> floors of the building to be carried on four huge columns. While the estimated cost of the construction was \$1,800,000, it came in well under budget. (An interesting aside: while the four columns were in fact covered by a special type of plaster, scagliola, the contemporary Harper's Weekly was fooled, and reported that the columns were of Siena marble.)

But how, you might ask, did I wander into an architecture lecture? What is important to us is the fact that the firm of Adler & Sullivan in several instances designed unique door hardware for specific buildings - the Stock Exchange in Chicago, the Guaranty building in Buffalo, and the Wainwright, the St Nicholas Hotel and the Union Trust in St. Louis. The Albert Sullivan residence featured the Kelp design of Yale & Towne while the Schiller (Garrick) theater had knobs with a "S", probably designed by Adler & Sullivan. Otherwise, their buildings, as far as we are aware, were fitted only with stock hardware.

Interestingly enough, the Union Trust Building hardware was also sold as part of Yale and Towne's line under the name "Senlis", the only difference being that the stock knob omitted the "UTB" monogram. Henry Towne's Locks and Builders Hardware (1904), pp. 51-52 also states that "many of the designs procured [by Y&T] from" Sullivan and two other Chicago architects "are still current and among the standard products of the company for which they were made." Which, if any, of the other Yale & Towne stock designs came from Sullivan or his firm is unknown (although, if I had to guess, I would pick the Holly pattern).

The only hardware pictured in a drawing in Sullivan's own hand was that for the Guaranty building. While Sullivan delegated considerable design responsibility to his chief draftsmen, first Frank Lloyd Wright (1888-1893) and then George Grant Emslie (1893-1909), it is likely that Sullivan did the initial designs of the other hardware and his the draftsmen did the detailed drawings.

The problem is that virtually all the records of Adler and Sullivan, and later those of Louis Sullivan as a sole practitioner, have gone missing. In 1918, when he was closing his office in the Chicago Auditorium Building, Sullivan packed most of his records off to storage, and delivered three boxes of his photographs to the custody of a Chicago photographer. - never to be found again. Office records were destroyed in a fire. Personal records were reportedly destroyed by Emslie, to preserve Sullivan's privacy (Emslie was Sullivan's Literary Executor). The largest single source of Sullivan's extant drawings was his personal collection of 109 drawings which he gave, on the eve of his death, to Frank Lloyd Wright. Only 273 of his drawings have been identified, and of the architectural drawings, most are of ornamentation, not structures. While one would expect that an active architectural practice, with more than 50 draftsmen, engineers and designers at its height, could fill a warehouse with drawings, blueprints and documents, very little remains. Apparently Sullivan did not regard drawings and architectural plans as possessing any inherent importance once the building was up.

The Chicago Stock Exchange door hardware consists of a door-knobs, escutcheons, letter slots, window pulls, push plates, and kick plates. These are cast iron with a Bower-Barff finish, or, in the case of the hardware used on the front doors, bronze (or electroplated bronze).

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Allen Joslyn, Editor  
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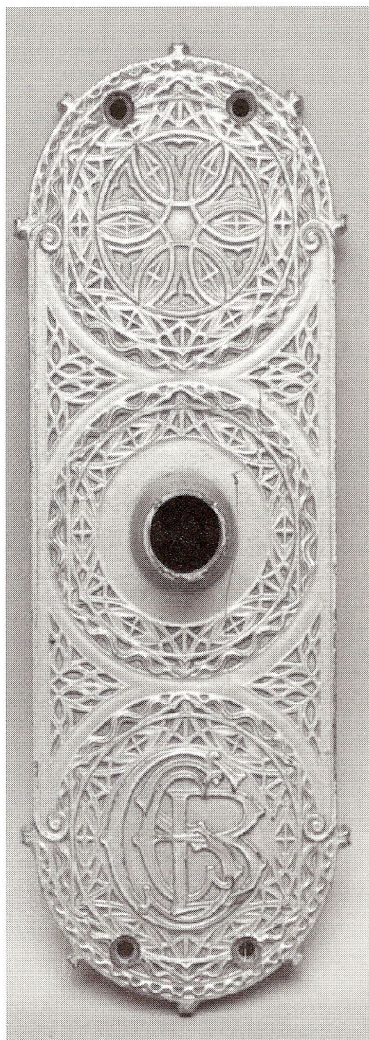
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Sullivan did not, however, seem to consider hinges objects worthy of decoration.

Following the glorious opening of the Stock Exchange building, life went on, fortunes were made and lost there, and eventually the building went into gentle decline. In 1908 the Stock Exchange moved out. The Building's 400 offices began to seem dated (only one toilet per floor). Other tenants arrived (one used the trading room as tennis courts for its employees), and redid the interior, sometimes painting over portions of the stenciled ceiling. There were at least three different eventually re-modellings of the room and building. The iron work on the main stairways was removed. The trading room itself was left empty from 1930 until the late 1930s, and then it was divided into low-ceiling cubicles – which had the unintended benefit of preserving the upper half of the room. The soft-brown exterior got dirty. There was, however, nothing seriously wrong with the building, except that by the 1970s it had become worth more dead than alive.

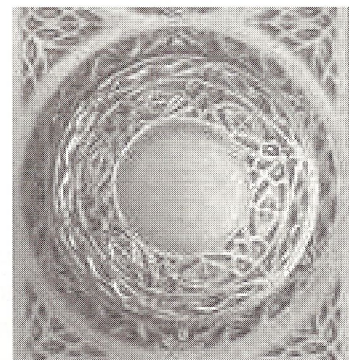


After the Stock Exchange was built, Adler & Sullivan filled only one more big commission, the Guaranty Building in Buffalo. As a result of the panic of 1893, new building commissions virtually ceased. Dankmar Adler moved to a better-paying job in private industry in 1895, leaving Sullivan alone. Between 1880 and 1895, Sullivan had designed over 140 buildings; in the 27 years thereafter when he was a sole architect, he designed only 20 buildings, less than one a year. By himself, he did not attract commissions - he was a loner and, some have said, intellectually intolerant. After the split with Adler, Sullivan designed a three more skyscrapers, but after 1905 designed only lower, smaller buildings (most of them banks) in small Midwestern towns or suburbs. These may be his best work. When dealing with two or three story buildings, structure is less important and his unique ornamentation can dominate.

But his style went out of style. He and others attributed this largely to the Exposition itself, the “White City”, which popularized historical styles, Roman and Renaissance, rather than the particularly American and individualistic styles of the Chicago school, Richardson, Sullivan, et al. Sullivan referred to the Exposition as causing a “contagion” in the architectural profession, “a violent outbreak of the Classic and Renaissance in the East, which spread slowly westward, contaminating all that it touched, “ “the virus of a culture, snobbish and alien to the land...”

Sullivan's last commission was in 1922, the façade for a two story building in Chicago, the Krause Music Store. He died in poverty in 1924, and his architecture was gradually forgotten. Then came urban renewal, which destroyed vast tracts of Chicago but also eventually created the preservation movement and saved much of Sullivan's heritage through the activism of Richard Nickel and others.

Nickel, the subject of a terrific book, They All Fall Down was a professional photographer who became entranced with Sullivan's work while taking his Masters' degree at the Illinois Institute of Technology. During the 1950s and 1960s many of Sullivan's buildings were lost to decay and urban renewal, but they did not come down unmemorialized. Nichols located them (often from only a hazy description) and did



detailed and measured drawings of the structures. He recorded their existence and destruction in masterful photographs. (Nickel also worked for years on what he hoped would be the definitive treatise on Adler and Sullivan's architecture, but always seeking to improve it, he never finished it). Some of his photographs of the last days of great Sullivan buildings, with bulldozers chewing away, could be prime exhibits in a future International Tribunal on Architectural Crimes. Of course, Sullivan was not the only photographer documenting Sullivan buildings, see John Szarkowski's work, but he photographed far more of them, both before and during their destruction.

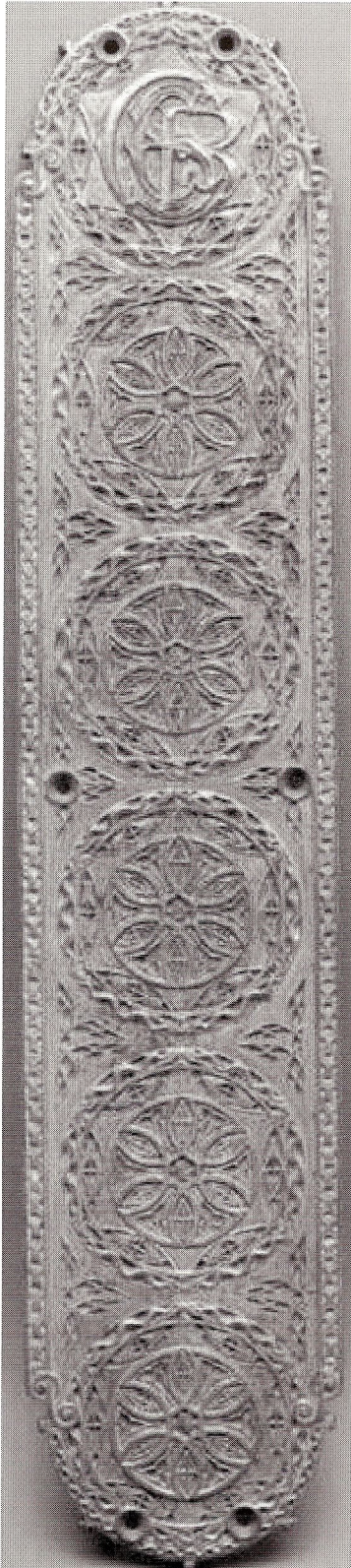
When, in early 1960 Nickel heard that Adler & Sullivan's Schiller (Garrick) Theatre was to be demolished, he mounted a public campaign to save the building. Chicago had a newly created Preservation Commission, but it was eventually proven powerless to stop the demolition unless the City would buy the building, which the City was unwilling to do. (Historic preservation zoning has come a long way since then, as has public taste).

Nichols not only photographed Sullivan's buildings; he also preserved their ornamentation. Not just pretty little bits, but stone, ceramic and metal components sometimes weighing hundreds of pounds taken off of buildings in 12 hour workdays, often in freezing weather, and just before (or after) the wrecking crews arrived. He and his few friends who helped were truly the Delta Force of the Sullivan preservation movement. Needless to say, they normally did this without compensation from anyone.

Eventually Nickel sold his extensive collection of Sullivan pieces to the Southern Illinois University at Edgarsville, where it now resides. Other pieces were disbursed, from time to time, to any museum which wanted them. Without Nickels' salvage efforts, our knowledge of Sullivan's work would be incomparably poorer. Of the approximately 160 of Sullivan's actual buildings or projects (depending how one counts), only 21 survive in Chicago and about another 20 elsewhere.

But not all of Nichols's work required heroic efforts. On one auto trip, Nichols visited the Guaranty building in Buffalo, which was then undergoing renovation, and was given Sullivan doorknobs and escutcheons by the workmen. (For those of the faithful who are now drooling, I should also mention that during the demolition of the Chicago Stock Exchange, the wrecking firm set up a small shop on the street and sold doorknobs and escutcheons for \$150 apiece).

In 1968 word spread that the Chicago Stock Exchange (now named the 30 North LaSalle building) had been bought by developers. It changed hands and the new owners assembled near-by parcels for inflated prices, thus driving up any possible purchase price. An extended fight before the Landmarks Commission followed, which voted in 1970 to preserve the building. That decision was overruled by a committee of the City Council, on the ground that by then it would cost too much to condemn and restore the building. The City Council voted not to



declare the Stock Exchange a landmark. The entire struggle is chronicled They All Fall Down, including a possible double-cross by a firm which offered to save the building by buying the air rights but then backed out. For all the furor, demolition began.

By now, however, Sullivan's architecture and ornamentation were in demand. The owners of the building agreed to save the "woodwork, doorknobs and keyholes". The stone entrance arch was moved to the Chicago Art Institute's East Garden. The Art Institute wanted (and got) the entire trading room. The Metropolitan Museum of New York got a stairway and various ornaments. Nickel was determined to save all he could from the wreck, not only working under his former pupil, John Vinci, who had been retained by the Art Institute and the Metropolitan, but often alone.

After the trading room and the materials wanted by the Metropolitan, Nichols were removed continued to haunt the site, always looking for some other Sullivan ornament or structure to save. During this period, he became engaged, with the wedding scheduled for June 10, 1972. As the wrecking continued from the top down, the building was being collapsed into itself. Nichols planned another visit for April 13, 1972, hoping to remove a lintel and a stair stringer. He did not come home from the Stock Exchange. Portions of the building had collapsed on him. His body was found after four weeks of digging.

Thanks to: Tim Sullivan and Maud Eastwood.

#### Bibliography

Since a picture can never be replaced by words, and copyright law and space limitations make it difficult to insert very many pictures in the Newsletter, I plan to bring the following books about Sullivan to the Convention in Charleston, South Carolina.

Cahan, Richard, They All Fall Down: Richard Nickel's Struggle to Save America's Architecture, (The Preservation Press, 1994)

De Wit, Wim, ed., Louis Sullivan, The Function of Ornament, (Chicago Historical Society, 1986)(Companion to the 1986 traveling exhibition of Sullivan's work)

Frazier, Nancy, Louis Sullivan and the Chicago School, (Crescent Books, 1991)(Beautiful photographs, mostly of Sullivan, many in color; great cheesecake!)

Harpers' Weekly, January 12, 1895

Larson, The Devil in the White City, (Vintage, 2003)(History of the 1893 Exposition and the architectural world of Chicago together with contemporaneous serial killer; a good, and educational, read).

Louis H. Sullivan, Architectural Ornament Collection, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, (Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University 1981)(Index to all the Sullivan ornamentation in its possession; 44 Illustrations; Fig. 39 misattributed to Guaranty Building, should be Chicago Stock Exchange)

Morrison, Hugh, Louis Sullivan, rev. ed., (W. W. Norton & Co., 1998)(A classic biography, first published in 1935, with a forward and updated list of buildings by Tim Samuelson)

Sprague, Paul E., The Drawings of Louis Henry Sullivan, (Princeton University Press, 1979)(Catalogue of drawings in the Frank Lloyd Wright collection in Columbia's Avery Architectural Library; also includes pictures of some ornamentation. Does not reproduce all of Sullivan's drawings at the Avery.)

Szarkowski, John, The Idea of Louis Sullivan, (Bullfinch Press, 2000)(Classic black and white photographs from the 1950s)

Twombly, Robert and Menocal, Narcisco, Louis Sullivan, the Poetry of Architecture, (W. W. Norton & Co., 2000)(Includes plates of all of Sullivan's known drawings)

John Vinci, The Trading Room: Louis Sullivan and The Chicago Stock Exchange, (Art Institute of Chicago, 1989)(The construction, destruction and restoration of the Room by he who supervised its resurrection)

# 2005 ADCA Convention

*By Steve Rowe, President*

The 2005 annual convention of the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America will be held in Charleston, South Carolina from July 25 thru July 30. Charleston is an area rich in historical significance and heritage. Founded in 1670 by British settlers, the town grew quickly into a prosperous colonial city. By early 1690, Charleston had a population of 1200 and was known as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest city in colonial America. Originally named Albemarle Point, the city was renamed Charles Town in honor of England's Charles II. Over time, the names merged into the current Charleston.

Located near the midpoint of the South Carolina coastline at the convergence of the Ashley and Cooper rivers, Charleston quickly became recognized as a crucial shipping port. In the early years of its prosperity, the city played an important role in the indigo, rice and slave trades. Due to its importance to the new world economy, several military forts were built for the city's defense. Fort Moultrie was instrumental in helping to defeat the British in the Revolutionary War. Fort Sumter is remembered as the site of the opening shots of the Civil War when military cadets from the citadel fired upon a Union ship entering Charleston's harbor.

Following the Civil War, Charleston's economy suffered decline and depression for many years. The early 1900's brought recovery with the establishment of a key naval shipyard in the area. Continued development through the World Wars brought thousands of jobs and new industries. In 2004, the U.S. Navy Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) became the largest employer in the greater metropolitan area.

Although Charleston still manufactures many different goods, it is tourism which fuels the city's economy today. Charleston is a tourist's dream with a wealth of beauty for the visitor to experience. With its cobblestone streets, grand oaks draped in Spanish moss and lovely preserved architecture, this quaint old world city is the perfect location for the 2005 convention.



Our host this year is Rhett Butler and E.R. Butler & Co. The 2005 convention will be a special event recognizing the 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America. Many noteworthy events are being planned and those whom are not in attendance will truly miss out. This year our host has scheduled 2 days of tours to best enjoy the wonders of the many historically significant sites of Charleston. One day will be a bus tour of area plantations and the other day holding the unique and memorable experience of a horse-pulled carriage tour of the old city.

The convention hotel, the historic Mills House, is located in old town Charleston on the corner of Meeting and Queen Streets. This old world property is lavishly appointed with antique crystal chandeliers and Victorian décor. The hotel prides itself on southern hospitality with many modern amenities. It will be important for all attendees to reserve their rooms early allowing considerable savings from the properties normal rates. Rhett has negotiated very attractive rates with considerable

savings from the Mills House rates of \$300-\$350 per night. Registering early not only makes **\$ense**, but will also help our host in planning this special time. During the early registration period, **January thru May 31<sup>st</sup>**, the rates for ADCA attendees will be ***\$109.00 per night***. After May 31<sup>st</sup>, ***rates will increase to \$129.00 per night***. The hotel's phone number is ***1-800/874-9600***. Please remember to tell the reservation desk that you will be attending the Doorknob convention in order to receive your ADCA discounted rate.

The convention hall will be located just down the street from the hotel at the **South Carolina Society Hall**. This historically significant building was built between 1799-1804. It is an important architectural resource of Charleston representing both Federal and Greek Revival architecture. The Hall will house ADCA for both convention trading days and our annual banquet. This year the convention will again be open for public visitation. It is hoped that ADCA will be well received with visitors who are inquisitive about the collecting and preservation of antique door hardware.

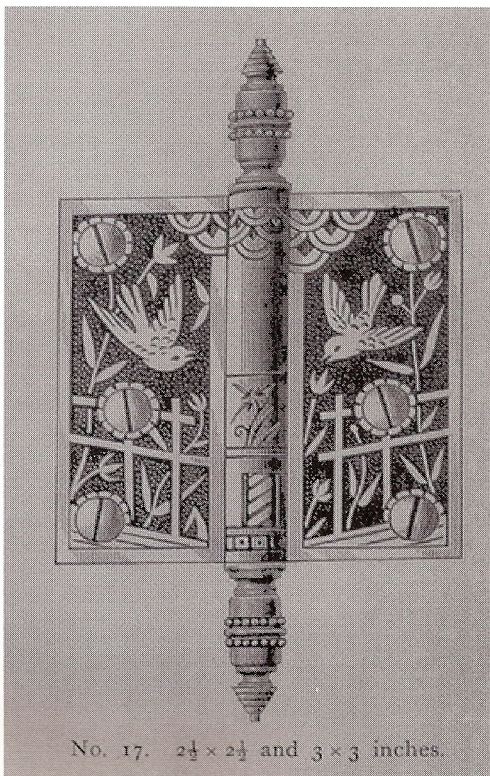
As ADCA's president, I would like to encourage all of you to attend this milestone year convention. I am looking forward to seeing many friends and taking the opportunity to meet new ones. Charleston and its southern hospitality are not to be missed by any ADCA member in 2005. Please call and make your travel plans today! See you in July!

## UPDATE ON R&E JAPANESE HARDWARE

*By Allen S. Joslyn*

In its July-August, 2003, TDC published a longish article by me on the Russell & Erwin Japanese Design Hardware. Some further facts have been developed of late.

Despite my unfounded musings and speculations, there is an R&E catalogue which shows this hardware, and it is dated in 1882. The Catalogue indicates that there were more sizes of hinges available than was thought, but it does not illustrate any new designs. The hinge sizes that were available are listed in the following table; whether some of them were only made to order (and thus those not ordered never actually existed), or whether all were produced for inventory, is unknown.



HINGE TYPE	DESIGN	SIZE	HINGE TYPE	DESIGN	SIZE
Patinated Iron	Bluebirds	2 1/2 x 2 1/2	Bronze	Bluebirds	2 1/2 x 2 1/2
		3 x 3			3 x 3
	Crane	3 1/2 x 3 1/2		Crane	3 1/2 x 3 1/2
		4 x 4			4 x 4
	Couple	4 1/2 x 4 1/2		Couple	2 1/2 x 2 1/2
		5 x 5			3 x 3
		5 x 6			3 1/2 x 3 1/2
		5 x 7			4 x 4
		5 1/2 x 5 1/2			4 1/2 x 4 1/2
		6 x 6			5 x 5
					5 x 6
					5 x 7
					5 1/2 x 5 1/2
					6 x 6
					6 x 8
					6 x 9

Even this understates the-then available choices, since patinated iron hinges have been found both with brass pagoda finials and with patinated iron straw-hat finials. The Catalogue does not, however, show the rare bluebird escutcheons.

Secondly, Russell & Erwin appear to have been producing at least some of this hardware well before applying for design patents. Christesen's patent application for the Couple hinge design is dated June 18, 1879. However, Palliser's Modern Homes contains an advertisement for those hinges; it is copyrighted in 1878 and contains an introduction dated July 1, 1878. There is no basis to think the 1878 date should be 1879 for two reasons: (a) claiming an earlier copyright date for the book would only shorten the period of protection, and (b) it is not effective marketing to claim that what one is selling is already a year old and thus is not up-to-date.

**ONE MORE REMINDER: CONVENTION QUICK FACTS:**

- WHEN:** July 25-30, 2005. Hotel will honor rates for attendees July 24-31<sup>st</sup>. Early registration is January thru May 31, 2005.
- WHERE:** Historic Mills House Hotel, 115 Meeting Street, Charleston, S.C., 1-800/874-9600 or 1-843/577-2400.
- HOW:** Charleston International airport is located approximately 12 miles from hotel property. The average taxi trip from airport to hotel is \$23.00 + gratuity.
- WHY:** This is ADCA's 25<sup>th</sup> annual meeting. Your single greatest opportunity in 2005 to see, display and purchase antique door hardware while visiting with long-term friends and making new ones, in the the magnificent city of Charleston.

**WANTED TO BUY :** Any Antique or vintage doorknobs that do not meet your collectable standard. I would be happy to negotiate a fair price. I plan to use them as garden items. Janine Avis, 610-644-5372, [Janine@J9Gardens.com](mailto:Janine@J9Gardens.com)

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