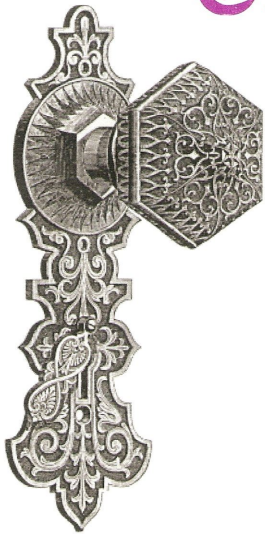


The Doorknob Collector



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A Nonprofit Organization Devoted to the Study and Preservation of Ornamental Hardware

WITH THIS, MY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

By Allen S. Joslyn

OK, we won't live forever, which is why we make out wills. Disposing of a large collection of antique hardware poses, however, some special problems which require pre-planning. There are a limited number of collectors (which we hope is growing), and that means it is possible to overload the market and

drive down prices. There are also options other than sale. In a following article, Loretta Nemecek makes the excellent suggestion ADCA members start recycling their collections during their lives to other members through sales at the Convention. Though normally that would require attending the Convention, there is no reason I can see that is necessary for members – some arrangement might be made with another member, or to place the items in the auction. Recycling your collection is not, however, a solution as long as you want to keep your goodies as long as you live.



Shown above is the only doorknob (the “Judgment knob”) I could think of to possibly illustrate the demise of a doorknob collector. The other illustrations have nothing to do with this article. I should also add that the following suggestions are not based on any empirical data at all, but only on my impressions. Dissent, comments and responses are encouraged and will be published.

Of course, if your children (or close friends) love the stuff also, and raising cash is of minimal importance, your problems are solved. If either of those is not true, you should provide for disposal of your collection by will or by leaving instructions to your executor (since you know a lot more about the options than your executor is likely to). You may want to suggest that your spouse or heirs consult with a particular friend who is knowledgeable in “doorknobdom”; indeed, you could just let the friend figure it all out after you die.

First, realistically evaluate the worth of your collection. We all have numbers of very pleasurable knobs, etc. but which are not rare. Many other club members have the same knobs. An old saying is that in

ADCA Convention – Lisle, Illinois – July 8-11, 2008

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any collection, 80% of the value is in 20% of the items. Unless you can get someone else to do the chores, these may be too much bother to offer on eBay. You could always offer groups of knobs on eBay – say six knobs together as a unit - which may, or may not, increase the total sales prices. Dealers in antique hardware (see the listing on our website) presumably would be happy to add them to their inventory. You will have to make a listing for the dealers of what you have, following Len Blumin's classification system.

There is another option, selling them through the auction at ADCA's Annual Convention, since it is usually attended by several dealer-members as well as collectors. (Attendees at a prior convention may recall that this can be a particularly good site if you have a knob related to Texas) assuming you are going to have some really valuable pieces put in the Convention auction, a problem might arise with members who might be reluctant to bid without advance notice. In that event, TDC probably could be prevailed upon to run advance publicity in TDC.

At this point, I should point out that the ADCA welcomes gifts to it, for general or specific purposes. This is obviously not limited to gifts of hardware; cash will be also welcomed. As a tax-exempt 501(c) (3) organization, such contributions qualify as charitable contributions



There are several options for selling your rare pieces (in addition to the Convention). You may offer it first to a member who has a specific interest in the piece. Beyond that, an online auction is an obvious choice, be it eBay, or Web Wilson's periodic auctions, <http://webwilson.com>. Increasingly we also see some very desirable hardware being auctioned in general antique auctions which also list the pieces on eBay, such as five rare enameled hinges that were sold in the last year or Louis Sullivan hardware. Such general auction houses may have the advantage of attracting collectors of general Americana (as long as the items are also listed on eBay).

Raising money for your heirs may, however, not be a principal concern. There is a basic difference in where some collectors want to see their "babies" end up. Some collectors want to leave at least their rare pieces to posterity, to some public institution where they may be displayed and where the donor's name will remain connected to them. Others may speculate that their collection is likely to reside in cardboard boxes in the institution's warehouse and would prefer that the items be owned by an individual who will derive pleasure from them.

In the event that you want to donate the rare pieces to an historical organization, the Bosco-Milligan Foundation, the Lock Museum and/or the City Museum in St. Louis are obvious candidates, and there may be others. Less rare pieces could be disposed of, for example, by donating them to the ADCA for auction at a convention (or splitting the results with the ADCA). When leaving a collection to a museum or institution, provide as much information as possible. Otherwise, they may be catalogued simply as a "bunch of doorknobs." You are likely to know more about your rare pieces than a stranger, so pass it on. An issue that may be of concern is the potential for "de-accession" a gift to a museum, which several years later may sell the gift to raise funds. There is, to be sure, a possible divergence between the interests of the Donor, who wants his loved ones to remain available to the public, and the museum, which has broader purposes to serve. Cathy Galbraith of Bosco-Milligan advises that all museums allow de-accession of objects as a matter of policy, but that Bosco-Milligan has never used it. "Everything



we have accepted has had a clear connection to our mission, or we would not have accepted it.”

De-accessing disputes sometimes arise when a charitable organization falls upon hard times and decides to sell a valuable painting in order, for example, to put a new roof on. In general, I do not think this is likely to be a realistic problem for a hardware collector – the simple fact is that your favorite knob will not pay for much of a roof. You must, of course, pick the museum carefully in terms of whether its purposes mesh with your hardware, but if they do, and the museum accepts the gift, it is unlikely that the it would later de-access your gift. Giving it to a local library, historical society, or the Girl Scouts could be more problematic. Of course, if the hardware-related museum was later given another example of one of your rare pieces, but it was in better condition, it would not shock the conscience if the museum decided to keep only one example.

There may be an advantage in leaving your collection to a local historical society or library. You may want your collection to be on permanent display, but major museums are unlikely to limit their discretion in such a fashion whereas a local institution might. Be prepared, however, to receive a request for a bequest to cover the costs of display cases, and perhaps a bit extra to cover some of the institution’s ongoing expenses.

There are also possible conditions which could be placed on the recipient of such a charitable gift, if they agreed, such keeping the pieces as part of their collections for at least a fixed term of years (e.g. 40). An alternative would be to loan the collection for only a fixed term, but that raises the question what happens when the term is up, and the pieces should be returned to the donor’s heirs, but no one knows who or where they are. One could also provide that if an item was to be de-accessed, it would be traded or conveyed to another non-profit museum or organization, or that a collection of related hardware be held (or disposed of) as a collection. Depending upon your local law a requirement that donated objects be held in perpetuity might be declared invalid as an unreasonable restraint upon alienation.

My suggestion: while you are still around, pick the museum or institution, review their forms and discuss your wishes with the museum. You undoubtedly will be able to work out a solution for your wishes.

So what about the Federal Estate Tax? Don’t expect an explanation of that here or any meaningful advice on the subject. With the amount of estates that pass tax-free rising each year (currently at \$2 million), this may not be a matter of interest to many people, at least until Congress fails to extend the new exemption level (which it will have to extend before 2010, when the tax reverts to its pre-Bush levels). However, if the collector does leave a spouse and an estate in excess of the exclusion, serious tax advice is warranted, particularly whether the collection should be left to the spouse (gifts to spouses pass tax free under the current estate tax), who then would give it to the designated museum and would get a charitable deduction from his/her income tax. And even below those amounts, charitable deductions may have very favorable income tax effects.

“Jewels of the Door”

By Loretta Nemeč

Now that the holidays are over it is time to start thinking and organizing our collections. With the convention being in the Midwest and a convenient drive from the surrounding states, I hope to see many of our backbone collectors and new collectors at the convention in July.

While going through the ADCA Roster membership numbers I counted 38 members with two

digit membership numbers, all having joined ADCA over 21 years ago.

Like me, it is time for us to go through our collection and weed out the miscellaneous hardware and auction it off rather than going through the hassle of selling them on the internet.

Time to bring in those Jewels; this is why I selected the theme for this year’s convention, **“Jewels of The Door”**.

After having 500 knobs on display at the Naper Settlement in 2007, it made me opened my eyes to all the miscellaneous hardware, knobs, escutcheon plate, hinges, finials, locks, knockers, doorplates and push plates I have. Do I really need to store this hardware throughout the house? It is time for the new collectors to see and take home some of our past treasurers.

For those of you who have never been to a convention, past conventions had awesome displays of hardware mounted on doors, tabletops and headboards. Some brought in doorbells. One

collector even had a display of various spindles, another a display of mailboxes. All this hardware is truly **“Jewels of The Door”**. If your specialty is in glass, ceramic and/or figural, bring them in. We are anxious to see your collection. Or, if you are into doorknockers or locks all these are **“Jewels of The Door”**, and jewels to share with others.

Mark the date July 8 to 11, 2008. At the Wyndham Hotel, Lisle Illinois.

ADVICE FROM MAUD

(As the contact point for e-mailed questions to the ADCA, www.antiquedoorknobs.org, I have frequent need to consult Maud. Here is a particularly interesting question and response. – Editor)

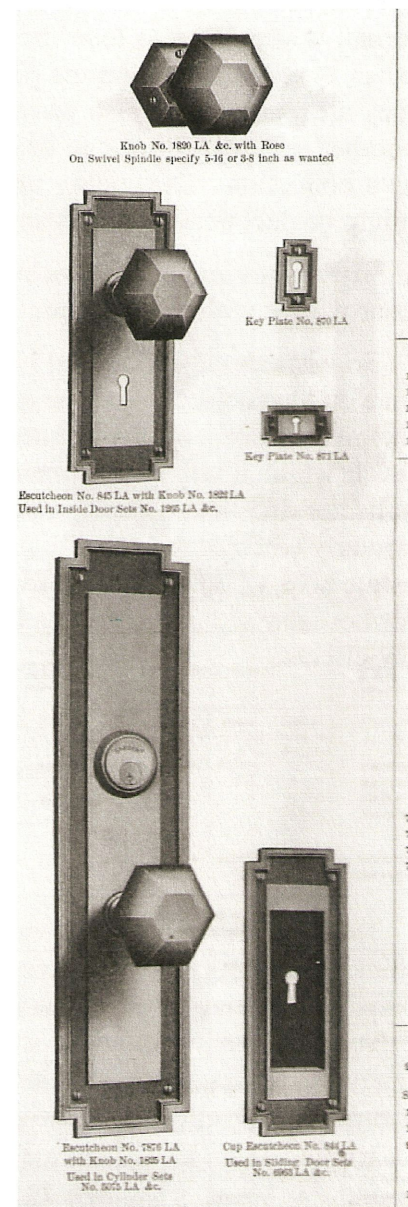
Q. I would appreciate any advice on an appropriate main entrance door for a 1917 Prairie style home located in Dallas, Texas. Any suggestions?

A. I would suggest that you consider Sargent’s Lepanto design (Greek), cast bronze, for your Prairie house. This design is shown of page 106 of Sargent’s 1910 catalogue (on the right).

Frank Lloyd Wright used this design for his 1908 Prairie style house in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I photographed one on an inside door when we held our Convention in Grand Rapids in 1996. Win Applegate wrote an article about the house for TDC, # 79, and pictured the knob. It is simply a fine looking 6-sided plain knob with a flat top. The rose is also 6-sided, the center flat and also elevated. The key escutcheon is rectangular with a bead around the perimeter, in two styles, horizontal and vertical. The escutcheon is also a triangular shape, and has a raised center and outside rim.

The outside or entry knob hardware was also plain cast bronze, a rather thick neck that is a little longer than usual, and the knob is spheroid, flatish on top.

In general, Wright preferred simple hardware, lacking surface designs. In the Wright rooms in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, for example, the hardware is simple stock brass round knobs.



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 Sale: One push plate 3 ¼ by 16 ¾ inches (shown above right) Back reads Denver- DHM Co. Flower is columbine. Price \$200.00 + S&H. Call or write:

Lee Kaiser (#5), 6040 Morgan Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55419
Phone: 612 861 6215



For Sale - As a collector of doorknobs for over 20 years, I have a collection of brass, glass, emblematic, etc. knobs, many of which are shown in Len Blumin's and Maude Eastwood's books. I live in (Elgin), a suburb of Chicago.

Contact Lillian Balsa (# 71),
847-695-4254 or
Email:
lillibee@peoplec.com

ADCA 2008 Convention

Display Contest: "Jewels of the Door"

It is time to start thinking of the display contest and your displays. More than one display is accepted in the contest.

Our first display contest was in 1985, chaired by Vince Noe, with three categories for displaying hardware.

Class I - Metallic knobs

Class II - Non-Metallic

Class III - Best of Show

Since that first contest we have continued featuring a hardware contest. Some of the themes were of hardware companies such as Russell & Erwin Mfg Co., Yale & Towne, Hopkins & Dickinson Mfg. other themes included various materials, such as Glass, Iron Age, Wood, on to People & Places, Fourfold Symmetry Knobs and last year it was American History.

This year, however, is "**Jewels of the Door**" with the following categories:

- **BEST DISPLAY OF "DOOR JEWELS"**

(An assortment of every type of hardware that could be used on a door, i.e. knockers, doorbells, hinges, strike-plates etc. They all don't have to be of the same pattern.)

- **BEST DISPLAY BY NOVICE**

(First time conventioneer/collector)

- **MOST CREATIVE DISPLAY**

(It will be interesting to see the creativity of our members. All displays should be arranged attractively.)

Awards will be presented at the banquet. If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Loretta Nemec DORNOBLADY@AOL.COM

Phone: 1-630-357-2381

Thanks to Our Members

Below is a listing of those members who went the extra mile to support the club with monetary donations of over \$2100 during 2007. We thank them for their thoughtfulness and generosity. These contributions factor into the continued success of the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**.

When you renew your membership take a look at the various levels of giving and perhaps you would like to contribute to the club's success as well. Because we are a non-profit organization any contribution over the cost of membership may be tax deductible.

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