

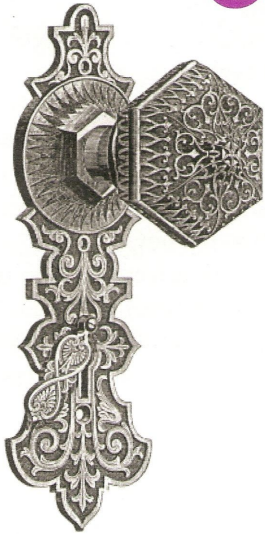
The Doorknob Collector

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



THE HARDWARE OF LOUIS SULLIVAN:

By Allen S. Joslyn

The Union Trust Building in St. Louis, designed by Adler and Sullivan, is noteworthy in several respects. First the hardware is classic Sullivan design, and is, as far as we know, his only design to be featured as a stock item in Yale & Towne catalogue. Other Sullivan designs for particular buildings were made by Y&T on a custom basis, such as for the Chicago Stock Exchange, but no other design was adopted as a stock item. The Union Trust design, less the monogram on the knob, was designated as "Sentis". It was not included in Yale & Towne's 1893 catalogue, but appeared in its 1897 "Art Metal Work" catalogue and its 1910 catalogue, from which the illustration is taken. By then it was described "Modern Renaissance School", which is described as really a version of Western American Art'Nouveau. To quote:

"Decorative art has, property speaking, no real school of Modern American Renaissance but a phase of L'Art Nouveau, the ornament being based upon natural and geometrical forms, as in vogue among other American Renaissance forms. In it the conventionalized prairie lotus takes the place of the acanthus. It is of Western American origin. In it we find lace-like patterns of contrasting bands of different widths, so crossing and recrossing, as to suggest various

715

Modern Renaissance School

Senlis Design

Symbol KS
Cast bronze, brass and iron
Appropriate finishes
CX22 Old copper SX72 Oxidized silver
FX90 Bowers-Barff
For description of finishes see page 91.

Knobs

No.	Size	Description
KS37	2½ x 2½ inches	Door knob with No. 9 (high) shank
KS36	2½ x 2½ "	" " " " " "
KS35	2½ x 2½ "	" " " " " "

Escutcheons and handles

No.	Size	Description
KS88	8¼ x 2½ inches	Plate for 3½ to 4½ in. locks
KS91	13¼ x 3¾ "	" " 4½ " 7½ "
KS3705	2½ x 1½ "	" " thumb-stem, etc.
KS854	11¼ x 3¾ "	Cup for all sliding door locks
KS314	21¼ x 3¾ "	Handle for locks Nos. 414½, 428 and 472½ series

List number of lock to be associated with escutcheons must always be specified. For escutcheons with thumb-stems add ½ to list number.

Other pieces

No.	Inches	Description	No.	Inches	Description
KS1507	2½ x 8¾	Letter drop-plate	KS170913¼	x 3¾	Push plate
KS1527	"	Hood for above	20	x 5	" "
KS554	13¼ x 3¾	Pull, door	21½	x 3¾	" "
KS1416	8¼ x 3½	Push button	KS1349	1½ x 5½	Shank lift, flush

Locks in sets

KS1786	Inside doors	Lock 1629 (page 199), knobs KS35, 2 escutcheons KS88
KS2186	" "	Lock 1509 (page 292), knobs KS35, 2 escutcheons KS88
KS2889	" "	Lock 1492 (page 297), knobs KS35, 1 escn. each KS91 and KS91½
KS2286	Communicating	Lock 1535 (page 192), knobs KS35, 1 escn. each KS88 and KS88½
KS3686	" "	Lock 1525 (page 193), knobs KS35, 2 escutcheons KS88½
KS139	Sliding doors	Lock 1706 (page 215), 2 cups KS854
KS149	" "	Lock 1716 (page 215), 4 cups KS854
KS159	" "	Lock 1726 (page 215), 4 cups KS854
KS8389	Vestibule doors	Lock 790 (page 222), knobs KS36, 2 escutcheons KS91
KS8289	Front doors	Lock 730 (page 222), knobs KS36, 1 escn. each KS91 and KS91½
KS9410	Store doors	Lock 414½ (page 230), 1 pair KS314

When ordering give list number (in the case of escutcheons also lock number), size and finish. For finishes see page 91.

Cuts third size

Cuts third size

YALE & TOWNE

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

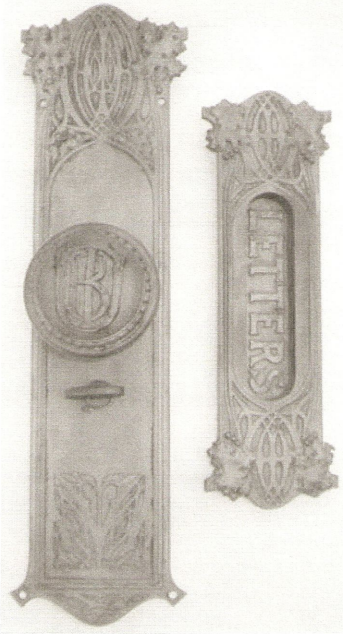
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forms of crystallization relieved by embossed and thistle-like leaves which dimly recall the Gothic character of Flemish treatment of the acanthus, elongated ovals appearing often like egg and dart patterns.”

There is no mention of Sullivan or any other specific designer in the catalogues, but Henry Towne’s 1904 book, *Locks and Builders Hardware*, refers to Sullivan and two others as Chicago architects who became interested in Y&T’s “efforts to produce much more artistic work in cast metal than had been produced heretofore”, and that “many of the designs procured from them are still current and among the standard products of the company for which they were made (pp. 51-52). Towne also illustrates Sullivan’s Guaranty Building door knob and escutcheon. He also states that Sullivan “holds a recognized position

among modern designers, in that he has developed a rich vein of striking originality, delicacy and grace, which if more generally accepted and followed would justify classification as a distinct school.” (p. 573).

Of course, there is no extant drawing from Adler & Sullivan of the Union Trust or the “Senlis” hardware (indeed the Guaranty building has the only design that can be traced directly to a Sul-



livan drawing). My basis for attributing the “Senlis” design to Sullivan, or more likely, his office, is that it was custom made for a Sullivan building, and it looks like Sullivan, with the fine tracery and the naturalistic leaves at the top, which is also found on the Guaranty hardware. Third, Towne’s description of Sullivan’s style – based on the “stem and leaf design of the prairie lotus, its tendrils and foliage being susceptible of freer treatment than the acanthus and with this plant he has combined lace-like geometric ornament” – parallels Towne’s description of the Modern Renaissance School quoted above, of which Senlis was a part.

Turning to the Union Trust building itself, it was built a year or two after Sullivan’s Wainwright Building in St. Louis, and thus could not claim to be the first high-rise building utilizing strong vertical forms. The Wainwright has been called “probably the greatest

work of architecture of the Nineteenth Century”, not because it was “the first steel frame skyscraper” but because it was “the first architectural solution, the first architectural expression of the high rose skeleton construction office building as such. It is architecturally the father of all contemporary office buildings”. Prior to the Wainwright, “steel frame structures had been covered with architectural clichés and trappings which bore no relation to the revolutionary new frame-work type of construction. They were covered with ill-fitting clothes borrowed from load-bearing types of construction.” (See National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form for the Wainwright Building).

While the Union Trust was not the first, it was soon thereafter, and taller than the Wainwright (14 vs. 10 floors). St. Louis was in a building boom, and developers decided that it was cheaper to build tall rather than wide. As Jay Gould is reputed to have said, “ground costs money and air does not.” Both the Wainwright and the Union Trust confronted a key problem in skyscraper design – commercial tenants wanted lots of light, and wouldn’t pay much for dark quarters. (This was, of course, before fluorescent lighting.) So they needed a design to bring light inside. The Wainwright solved the problem with an indoor atrium. The Union Trust used an exterior light court opening southward, in effect a “U” shaped floor plan. It was the only Sullivan building to use this design, but it brought in more light than the interior atrium.

The first two floors were a contrast to the sharp verticals of the next twelve. There was a massive half-circle entrance (a design that occurs in other Sullivan buildings) and large “port-hole” windows on the second floor. Two heraldic lions holding shields flanked the main doorway and were also placed at the corners of the two towers. They were richly embellished with terra cotta ornamentation. The contrast between plain expanses, or vertical columns, interspersed with highly ornamented surfaces is, of course, classic Sullivan. Then came 1927, when the exterior of the first two floors was replaced with plain rectangular windows, the lions banished, and the massive stone entrance converted to an Art Deco metal entrance. Otherwise the exterior of the building has not been changed.

The Union Trust shares another characteristic with the Wainwright: neither has been torn down. This is surely a welcome distinction for a Sullivan building; most have long since been sacrificed for “progress”. It is also a welcome distinction for St. Louis, where massive demolition occurred in the downtown area in order to make way for parking lots. Hopefully the future of both buildings is finally secure.

Sources:

There is not a lot written about the Union Trust. By far the best source is its Nomination Form for the National Register, to be found at

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo/stlouiscity.htm>. The Nomination Form for the Wainwright is to be found at the same site.

A Further Note On Chicago Stock Exchange Hardware



Another example of Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange Hardware has recently popped up. It is an escutcheon and doorknob reportedly used on closet doors; the escutcheon measures 6" by 2 1/4", and the knob is the same size used with the larger door escutcheon, 2 1/4" in diameter.

Order Your Archive Copies

It is time to order your archive copies. The ADCA has an extensive collection of antique hardware catalogs. In order to preserve them, the club gives members an opportunity to get copies made once a year. The catalogs are taken out of storage and the correct number of copies are made to order. You will find a [yellow order form included in this newsletter](#).

Checks should be made out to ADCA. Return the form to Rhett Butler, 55 Prince Street New York, NY 10012

YOUR LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT RECONSIDERED

In my article in the last issue on what to do with your hardware when you are no longer around to cuddle it, I invited responses which I promised to print. This issue we have two, one from Web Wilson and another from Richard Zillman.

Some Thoughts On Doorknobs, Values, & Selling Collections

by H. Weber Wilson

The doorknob on page one of the Jan-Feb ADCA Newsletter is a classic example of collectible builders' hardware, and it brought back memories of doorknobs sold and auction prices realized. That knob gained fame as the cover lot of our very first hardware auction in November 1995, before the Internet, when we mailed out a black and white catalog and bids came in by fax and phone. Jill bought that knob at Brimfield and as it presented a personality that cried out for a moniker, I named it "Judgment".

The winning bidder paid \$850 plus 10% buyers' premium, and that price was a shocker as no one really knew how much a rare doorknob might bring in an auction promoted to serious hardware collectors. Our second auction (with a color catalog) ran in June of 1996, and the cover lot was an R&E Parrot knob and plate (the Christensen design) that realized \$700 plus 10%. More strong publicity followed, resulting in a call

Very Rare Double Doggie



from someone with something “better than the bird knob”. This turned out to be half a dozen Kruzinger doggie knobs, of which we sold two in our November 1996 auction for \$3765 each, a world record doorknob price at the time.

This was the original doggie story, and it still has legs, with people talking about it and calling in 12 years and more than 50 auctions later. And since that seminal event, our always-anonymous bidders have paid \$5000, \$7000, and even \$9000 for American hardware rarities.

In 1999 I wrote *Antique Hardware Price Guide*, and it features the photos and prices realized of items sold through my first 10 auctions. About that time, however, the Internet emerged, causing collectors to come to grips with the virtual reality of *Cyber-Econ 101*: a worldwide market brings forth a dramatic increase in supply, but when demand remains level, or decreases, prices can fall sharply.

Example: the Kruzinger doggie is now listed often on Internet auctions, and it is being reproduced by at least two companies. Way too few new collectors are emerging, and so this once-revered hardware icon can be bought today for less than \$1000.

At the same time, we see that the Internet has opened a quick and easy selling venue that brings things to market that were heretofore unknown. So where supply remains limited, even slight demand pressures can cause prices to rise. This causes winners to yell “wow, I won!”, and back-bidders to grouse that “Some fool paid way too much...”



Doorknocker

Example: the double doggie (see pg 3) we sold in 2002 for \$7800 (shown here). Another one has not been seen before or since and this probably one-of-a-kind knob would certainly fetch a premium should it be put on the market again. On the other hand, not all “doggies” are expensive; the doorknocker illustrated would probably sell for \$400-500. But a sleeper like the Monel metal lever shown below which sold for \$200 might bring serious money in a Modernism auction.

Now, this long introduction is actually a segway to the topic at hand, which is what to do if you want to cash in your collection and spend the money, or what instructions to leave for your family about how to deal with your stash after you are gone.

My short answer for the best selling strategy is to use an Internet auction. Auctions allow you to sell the largest quantity of items at one time, and the Internet gives you maximum buyer exposure.

My short answer for the worst selling strategy is to call in collector friends, thinking they will pay “market prices” At best they will offer wholesale values for the choice items and leave you with a pile of stuff nobody wants. Quite likely you will also give away a few rare and wonderful pieces that would bring big money were they offered in a market where serious collectors could compete, and prices would reflect true demand.

Please note that both previous paragraphs emphasize the phrase “short answer”. Just how you select the sales venue best for you requires a lot of thought, and then a lot of work. This is why many collectors balk at the daunting project of sorting through years of accumulation and just leave the collection, and the hard decisions, to others.

Perhaps I will share more auction and antiques experiences in future articles, but for now, I’ll leave you with a few thoughts.

1. The eighty/twenty theory mentioned by Allen is absolutely valid. Select the best 20% of your collection. That will represent 80% of the collection’s total value. Sell off the remaining 80% however you can; garage sales, flea markets, donations, or local auctions. You will end up with a nice amount of money and you will never miss what you sold.



Monel Metal Lever

2. After 6 months, do the 80/20 exercise on the 20% you kept. This round of sales will net you strong money and you'll still have the very best and most valuable part of your collection to enjoy. This remaining top 5% of your original pile is now ready for presentation as a great auction that you can organize and enjoy, or it becomes a very manageable project for your heirs.
3. Do something about the shrinking hardware market. Tell the ADCA to join the 21st Century and actually talk about door knob prices in their newsletter. If everyone thinks doorknobs are worth nothing, how will you sell your collection if there is no buying interest? What young collector will join a group where members spend thousands on their hobby but the club's officers pretend it never happened? If new collectors are not shown what and how to buy at the \$10 and \$20 level, why would they even consider buying at the \$100 or \$1000 level?

Almost every collecting category features at least one example that has sold for more than \$10,000. (There are glass insulators from old telephone poles that have sold for more than \$25,000) Antique builders' hardware combines art, architecture, industrial genius, and social history—and doorknobs appeal to everyone. But everyone's first question is "what's it worth?", and unless the ADCA can help people work out that answer, our "treasures" will remain only as valuable as toadstools: coveted by the frogs and elves, but just about worthless to most everyone else.

Another Response

By Richard Zillman

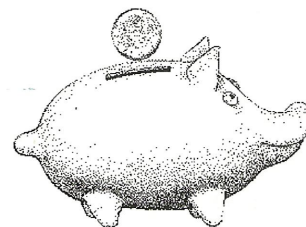
Although I am a fairly long-term member of ADCA, I am not a doorknob collector as such. Rather, I, along with my dear wife Cher, am a restorer of historic buildings, and I believe that the highest potential use for historic hardware is in the proper restoration of old buildings.

In that regard, I am rather particular, and don't wish to see hardware of the 1888's, for example, being installed in a 1920's structure. But I do feel that our membership should be sympathetic and de-accessing from their collections specific hardware items that are needed for a building restoration. Consideration should be given at a minimum to at least loaning the specific hardware that it can be copied. A certain amount of trust would be necessary, of course.

Of course the problem with having hardware reproduced is that the cost would be far beyond the budget of many restores. It would be better to use actual antique hardware

Wow, Money in Our Bank

By Faye Kennedy



We received a letter from the Department of Psychology at Augusta State University in Augusta, Georgia. I spoke with Adrian Janit, PH.D. about this project. He is trying to get as many collectors as possible to fill out the information for the study. He is very interested in our club because he has many stamp collectors, but is looking for a little diversity. We will eventually receive his hypotheses and the results of the study so you will see it in the future in the newsletter. Just fill it out while you are watching television or sipping something delicious on your back patio during this wonderful spring weather.

Enclosed is a **green questionnaire**. **Please fill it out and return it by June 5th** to ADCA PO Box 31, Chatham, NJ 07928-0031 and we will return them to the university as a packet. By the way, the extra postage and printing of this questionnaire is being paid by Augusta State University.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE. For every questionnaire that is returned to us, the ADCA will receive \$1.50. It is an easy way to support the ADCA and the results should be of interest to all of us whose friends thought we were crazy to collect doorknobs. Although we are still not sure about those barbed wire collectors!!

Convention 2008

By Bonnie Otte

We're starting off the 2008 Convention with a contest. How many hardware terms and authors can you find in the welcome article associated with ADCA? Write them down and send your list in with your convention registration. Contest drawing will be at the Friday night banquet. Winner will receive a free year membership to ADCA.

We're back to Naperville for the 25th Anniversary of the Nemeec's hosting of the 1983 ADCA Convention! Time has spun as fast as the turn of a doorknob.

If you have never attended a convention before, let us assure you that you need to latch onto this opportunity. Unlock for Yale-self the doorway that leads to discovering what all the fuss is about.

Your entry into the convention will send you through a passage way of beautiful Jewels for the door brought by members to display, trade and sell.

Strike out on your own, or step up to the plate and join the tour that convention Sargents', Loretta and Ray, have arranged. Heading East-wood you will enjoy taking the architectural tour of Chicago.

There will be ample time to put hard-ware on your feet trekking to antique shops in the area. Brochures for shopping and sightseeing will be available.

Dining in the Naperville/Lisle area is an "escutchulent" experience, whether you are looking for Chicken Corbin Bleu or pizza. If you prefer not to have your meal to be dead; bolt on over to Luigi's in Naperville, where they serve a number of vegetarian meals.

Planning on shipping your Jewels of the Door collection to Naperville? Give us a call; send an e-mail, or Mallory sponse in the post, and just Wheeler on in! There will be a spacious banquet room available for ADCA displays at the hotel.

Thursday evening the public will have a door-jammed evening as they come to view the ADCA exhibits.

If you plan on attending the auction, be prepared to spindle little money on refining your collection. Whether you have to Russell up some cash, Erwin the lottery, what better way to un'hinge away stress than spend a few days at the Wyndham/Lisle Hotel.

We hope you will not consider our Midwest destination a vernacular convention, but one of the more ornamental you will experience! We look forward to seeing you, and through our earnest efforts, we hope that you enjoy your stay.

Get those Webs polished off your knobs for a Blumin good time.

A MODEST SUGGESTION FROM YOUR EDITOR

Richard Zillman points to a real problem. If you want to outfit your house with hardware which is all of the same design, you either have to wait a long time, picking up what you can from time to time, or have it reproduced, which often is significantly more expensive that buying the originals. But who says all the doors have to have the same hardware? Maybe the same hardware for each room, but the whole house? I suggest a solution based on use of fine antique wine glasses at a fancy dinner – use different types! Most people will not notice, and for those who do, just respond "isn't a variety of designs more interesting than uniformity?" and smile brightly.

I should also remind members that if they are looking for a specific kind of hardware, there is a free place to advertise in "The Doorknob Exchange".

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¹ Issue 145 was misnumbered as "144"

ADCA 2008 Convention Program Ads

All members (whether you are attending the convention or not) are invited and urged to contribute to this year's Souvenir Program booklet. This is yet another way to support your club. Create an interesting entry relating to knobs, hardware, collections, or your business, etc.

Please use the guidelines that are in your Convention Packet (you should have received it in the mail) to submit copy for inclusion in the souvenir program. Return to Patty Ramey no later than **Friday, June 6, 2008**.

All ads must be camera-ready. That is to say, it must be complete and ready to go. It may be an ad you have used before in a publication of any sort. If this is the case, we need the ad itself, taken from the publication. Cut it out of the page and send it in.

We cannot use a hand drawn sketch or a rough copy of something unless that is exactly the way you want it to appear in the booklet. If you want your business card reproduced, we can handle that. The same applies for greetings or well wishes.

Hand *written copy is fine, typed is better, digital format* submitted electronically through e-mail *is best*. We will put it in final form for the printer. Ad copy cannot be returned to you unless absolutely necessary. If the copy is to be returned, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Make check or money order payable to **ADCA**. Payment is to be made at the time of submission, personal check or money order (**NO CASH**) to:

Please submit your ads to Patty Ramey via e-mail in an electronic format (jpg, jpeg, bmp, pdf, word, or ppt), if possible. Contact Patty if you have another format that you would like to use or need additional advice.

Please e-mail Electronic Copies to: Mrminstral@AOL.COM and include ADCA in the subject line. or

Mail hard copies to: Patty Ramey
 24 Forsythia Lane
 Olivette, MO 63132

If you need an order form, please contact the membership office listed below.

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Editor of *The Doorknob Collector*

Allen Joslyn,
Phone (973) 783-9411
Fax: (973) 783-8503
Web Site: www.antiquedoorknobs.org

Membership Office

ADCA
Box 31
Chatham, NJ 07928-0031
Knobnews@optonline.net
Phone: 973-635-6338

General Questions

Antiquedoorknobs@comcast.net

Officers

President: Steve Rowe
4narowe@sbcglobal.net
Vice President: Brad Kittel
bwk@discoveries.net
Secretary: Rich Kennedy
knobnews@optonline.net
Treasurer: Allen Joslyn
ajoslyn@comcast.net