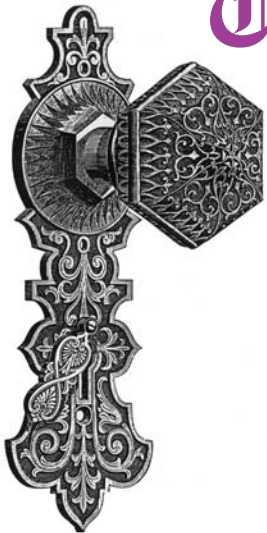


The Doorknob Collector



Number 173

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

A LOUISVILLE KNOB

By Patty Ramey

While the pictured knob was part of the remaining contents of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad's headquarters which were auctioned in 2011, it did not come from that building. Rather it is from the Louisville City Hall which was built in 1870-1873 and which represents one of Louisville's high points.

Louisville grew up at the location of the 14-foot drop in the Ohio River known as the "Falls of the Ohio". In the days when the main method of transport was by river, this required steamboats to transport cargo around the Falls, to the benefit of the local population. Eventually a canal around the Falls was built, and large numbers of steamers and flatboats passed through the toll locks. Louisville prospered. In recognition of this source of wealth, the first city seal depicted a steamboat.



But water transport was largely replaced by railroads, which could go where was most convenient. Some cities built on water transport declined, but Louisville did not. In 1859 The Louisville & Nashville Railroad was founded, and took off. While parts of its network were used by both sides in the Civil War, it profited greatly from being in a Union State, connected to Nashville, which fell to the Union in the first year of the war. It was busy transporting Union troops and supplies, being paid in sound Federal "greenbacks", rather than depreciating currency of the South. After the war it became a major transporter of coal – the oil of the 19th century – from the coal-rich eastern Kentucky.

So in 1861 the old Louisville city seal was replaced with one showing a locomotive with the word "Progress" on it, which continued being used until 1910.

The back of the pictured knob states "Made by Russell & Erwin Mfg. Co.", and bears the date June 7, 1870. Using that date appears to have been intended to claim a design patent on the circumference pattern which is found in two Kreuzinger knobs patented that on that date (A-301 & 302).

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Construction of the Louisville City Hall began in 1870, and it was completed in 1873. That the knob came from that building is clinched by the pediment over the main entrance which shows that train steaming past southern flora, the date “1871” and the word “Progress” both appear on the knob. To see a photograph of the pediment, Google “brent Louisville city hall pediment”. [Editor’s note: We did not receive permission to print the photo of the pediment, but it is well worth the effort to see it on the internet.] The exterior of the City Hall basically remains unchanged but the interior was completely remodeled several times – a process which undoubtedly involved scraping all the antique knobs.

Incidentally, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad did open a magnificent railroad station, the Union Station, but that was in 1891, far too late for a knob which honored the “Progress” of 1871.

References: Manchester, “Louisville, Cashes in on Culture”, *Harper’s Magazine*, August 1955; [Wikipedia](#) articles on the Seal of Louisville, Louisville City Hall, Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and the Union Station (Louisville).

OH, THAT IS WHAT IT WAS!

By Allen Joslyn



TDC 172 asked “what manner of creature” could be found on the knob illustrated there. The learned response from some members was a “griffin”. Wikipedia explains that a “**griffin, griffon, or gryphon**...is a legendary creature with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. As the lion was traditionally considered the king of the beasts and the eagle was the king of the birds, the griffin was thought to be an especially powerful and majestic creature. The griffin was also thought of as king of the creatures. Griffins are known for guarding treasure and priceless possessions.” Another member thinks it is a phoenix. It is difficult to tell, since very little of the body is shown (is it a lion’s body or a bird’s body?). Finally a third member believes the image comes from Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), who was instrumental in establishing the fields of comparative anatomy and paleontology through his work in comparing living animals with fossils.

GET ON BOARD

By Faye Kennedy

Think about helping your club by buying an ad in our annual Souvenir Booklet. Each year at the convention we put out a booklet that lists the participants at that convention along with the By-Laws, a list of the officers and committee chairs, and lots of information about this year’s convention. It gives all members an opportunity to send your good wishes or advertise your business even if you are unable to attend.

In the convention packet that you receive, you will find on page 9 and 10 instructions and an order form. Take the time right now to include your ad and support the ADCA. **All contributors will receive a copy.**

You can either mail your entry or send it by email. Pictures may be sent as jpegs or as flat copy. How about a picture of your favorite knob or piece of hardware that fits the category of this year’s theme: Flora and Fauna or Lesser Known Hardware Companies.

We look forward to hearing from many of our members who wish they could be in Buffalo enjoying all the fun. Others will join us there, but we can all lend a hand.

The Doorknob Collector©



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RUSSELL & ERWIN
A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT
(PART 2), CONTINUED FROM TDC 172

FROM THE COMMERCIAL PATHFINDER, NOVEMBER, 1869

THE MANUFACTURING IN NEW BRITAIN

“The Works of the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Co. comprise a series of spacious buildings covering two entire blocks and occupy five and a half acres of ground. The Company also owns twenty-five tenement houses for the accommodation of many of the operators, the whole number employed in the various departments of the factories amounting to over 500, who receive steady employment throughout the year, working 10 hours a day and obtaining ample remuneration therefore. Two steam engines afford a combined force of 100 horse power, and although little machinery is used, an immense amount of all descriptions of hardware is turned out in the course of 24 hours. Skill, energy and activity are conspicuous in every one of the busy shops, the productions of which are of course too numerous to be mentioned in an editorial sketch. The general term of house-furnishing hardware by no means expresses the variety. Some of the specialties however which have contributed to make the house famous and we shall elsewhere mention, when alluding to the warehouse in New York. We will, however, for example here refer to the manner in which the Locks – a prominent specialty – are made at the factory. Nine and a half tons of Scotch and American iron are daily used in the manufacture, melted and cast in moulds designed for various parts of a great variety of locks. These parts include the case, in which is the main body of the lock, the cap, which is the thin plate forming one side of the lock, afterwards screwed on the body; and the strike, which is the portion set into the casing of the door and into which the bolt slides. These parts issue from the mould, dirty, rough and with the moulding sand adhering. After being partially examined and sorted in the sorting-room, they are carried to the tumbling-room placed in cylinders, in which are small pointed pieces of metal called scratches. Here for hours they are rapidly revolved, and issue forth bright, smooth and thoroughly freed from sand. They are now again assorted and sent to the lockshop, where the case and caps are put together and then sent to the japanning room where they are coated with lock varnish made of asphaltum, oil and turpentine or benzene. They are then baked in the japanning kilns, which are heated with steam. This process gives them their peculiar dark and glassy appearance. Returned to the lockshop the case and the cap are again separated and the bolt, latch, hub, tumblers and springs are inserted between them. The bolt is the bar which slides into the casement of a door; the latch is the part which slides in and out by turning the doorknob; the hub is a metal case in which the knob fits; the tumblers are pieces of metal inside the lock and detains the bolt so it cannot be moved till the key lifts them and thus leaves the bolt at liberty; the springs are metallic parts which guide the action of the bolt.

“The other parts of the lock are the front, out of which the bolt and latch slide; the stumps on which the cap rests; and the wards, which are low projecting ridges on the case and cap, and they are made to fit the corresponding notches in the head of a key; when a key, therefore, is inserted in a lock, its indentations must be or other object to which it is affixed, such as to fit the wards; if so, the key turns partially around; the notches strike the tumblers, lift them, set the bolt free, and the key pushes it forward and thus it fastens the door. Ordinary locks have one to five tumblers. The bolts and latches are variously made of cast iron, wrought iron, cast brass, wrought brass, and sometimes of brass and iron combined. Locks in which the latch can be turned so as to fit either side of the door, or enable the door to shut from either direction, are styled reversible; and the best reversible locks made in America are produced by this Company. After all the parts of a lock are put carefully together in the lockshop, the lock is inspected in the factory room, the key tried on both sides, the knobs are examined and applied, and the whole is packed for shipment. Padlocks are also made in immense quantities in a separate building known as the padlock forge. “Bolts, latches, knobs, fronts and keys are often made of brass or other metals than iron. We shall not describe the process, but make a general reference to the brass foundry where they are made – a capacious establishment erected by the Company in 1859. It is supplied with an immense stock of Lake Superior copper, the best in the world; zinc imported from Germany; tin and lead. Here these metals are properly combined – copper and tin for bell metal; copper, tin and lead for pattern and key metal; and copper, zinc, tin and lead to make brass. Four casks of

copper are used weekly, melted in crucibles with the other ingredients and poured thence into moulds. The Mineral Door Knobs are made by this Company in kilns in Norwalk, Conn. Without entering further into details regarding the numerous processes of manufacture at this establishment we will here mention the fact that in 1865 the Russell & Erwin manufacturing company published a large illustrated catalogue of over four hundred pages, on finely tinted paper, each page 12 by 14 inches in size, the volume containing 3,300 finely executed wood engravings representing nearly every article of American Hardware manufactured in the United States. The edition cost many thousand dollars, and the Catalogue is used as a standard work of reference by the trade, to whom it is furnished at \$25 a copy. It has never been equaled in completeness and beauty by any other commercial hand-book in this or any other country. It was designed by this firm to simplify the mode of conducting the hardware business and to assist beginners in learning their business." [To be Continued]

In Memoriam

Dean Campbell (#11) April 22, 1922 – April 24, 2012

Dean passed away on April 24, 2012 just two days after his 90th birthday. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Edith, a son and daughter, four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Dean and his wife, Edith, were charter members of the ADCA and Dean was on the ADCA Board for a time. Collecting doorknobs was a hobby that gave Dean much pleasure and they both enjoyed the conventions they attended. They enjoyed showing their collection. The coffee table, made to show off eighty-five doorknobs, was pictured in color in Women's Day magazine in the early years of collecting.

During WWII he was a First Lieutenant and Bombardier Instructor and flew missions in the South Pacific with the 13th Army Air Force, 42nd Bombardment Group as a navigator and bombardier. His awards for military service include Air Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, American Theater Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Medal with 5 Bronze Stars, Philippine Liberation Medal with one Bronze Star and WW II Victory Medal.

Dean's community service during his lifetime was extensive. He was President of the Nampa Kiwanis Club and served on several boards including the Board of Trustees of George Fox University. He was Vice President of the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging (OAHA) and was given a Lifetime Honorary Membership in OAHA. He was active in the Friends Church.



In Memoriam

Thomas M. Otte

August 22, 1948 – March 3, 2012

Tom Otte, husband of Bonnie Otte (#484) passed away peacefully at home on Saturday March 3, 2012 after a brief battle with cancer. Tom was a teacher for over 30 years and during his tenure he became known as Mr. Science. He was a volunteer at the Aurora Historical Society, member of Gleaners Antiques Club, was on the Board of Directors of the Spring Lake Cemetery in Aurora, IL. Survivors are his wife of over 40 years, Bonnie, his children, Brett, Brian, Cari, and Becky, and six grandchildren.

Bonnie joined ADCA in 1998 after the passing of her father, Rich Wise (#269) in 1997. The Otte's presented an 1887 Russell & Erwin catalog to the archives in her father's name at the 1997 convention in King of Prussia, PA.

Tom and Bonnie co-chaired the 2008 Doorknob Convention in Lisle, IL.



ANOTHER BUFFALO KNOB

By Allen S. Joslyn

We all know about the Liberty National Bank knob (picturing, of course, the Statue of Liberty) from Buffalo, but here is another knob from just a few miles away, picturing the Niagara Falls.



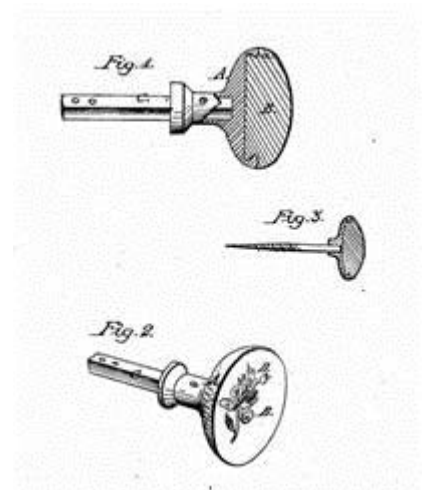
In 1869 Edwin Day received a patent (No. 85,799, shown below) for an improved door knob on attaching glass heads to metal shanks. “For the purpose of ornamenting the knob, I place on the back side of the glass any suitable design, picture, colors, the name or photograph of the owner or the number of the room or house...” And thus a design-it-yourself Victorian knob.

The method of construction was first to form the glass dome, paste whatever picture is required on its back, and then to cast a soft metal to form the body of the knob. If the picture was fragile – such as being on paper - it was backed by some insulation to protect it from the metal’s heat.

Maud Eastwood’s archives contain pictures of what appear to be the patented knobs. One of the knobs shows, I’m sure, the world’s first working railway suspension bridge, 2.5 miles downstream from Niagara Falls, which was in operation from 1855 to 1897. Its architect was John A. Roebling, who went on to design the Brooklyn Bridge, which was completed by his son, Washington Roebling. As locomotives got heavier, they exceeded the specifications of the bridge, and it was replaced. See the Currier & Ives print of the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge dating from 1856. (Unfortunately the picture of the knob is not detailed enough to read the caption.)

Another knob shows an unidentified building with a tall tower.

These knobs were in the possession of Anne Marie Ferguson (# 341) of Off The Wall Architectural Antiques in Carmel, CA, who sent them to Maud for her opinion and to be photographed. Someone apparently thereafter bought them – was it any of our readers?



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: IMPORTANT ANTIQUE DOORKNOB AUCTION SET TO OPEN JUNE 15

Your chance to bid on more than 60 choice lots including MW Vampire and Crow Wing County knobs, R&E Japanese Suite hinges, MW Grapes, fancy door bell buttons, rare hex knobs, several fine lion knobs, pocket door pulls, store door handles, figural door plates, fancy and colored glass, and many other fine piece of vintage builders' hardware.

All bidding is on line at www.AntiquesYes.com. No hidden reserves. All bidders remain anonymous. Extended bidding software eliminates sniping. There is a link to the preview gallery at AntiquesYes.com.

Web Wilson (#266) at 800-508-0022 for more information.

WANTED: A Woodmen of the World Knob: Shows a hatchet in a tree stump.
Joe White (#489), bluebeardhouston@gmail.com



WANTED: Doorknob B-214 Columbian
Rich Kennedy (#238) fandrkenedy@aol.com or 908-684-5253

CONVENTION, CONVENTION!!

Get Out Your Calendar Now and Save the Date

The 2012 Convention will be held in Buffalo, New York, September 12-15. There will be two tour days, September 12 and 13, and members are free to do one day, two days or none. The Convention itself will be September 14 (buying, selling, trading) and September 15 (buying, etc., auction, banquet and membership meeting). We will stay at the same hotel as we did in 2006, the Holiday Inn Buffalo Amherst in Amherst, New York.

This Year's Theme:

"Flora and Fauna" and "Lesser Known Hardware Companies"

THE BUFFALO CONVENTION WILL ALSO FEATURE AN AMAZING DISPLAY OF HARDWARE MASTERPIECES FROM E. R. BUTLER & CO.!

A Look Forward to Buffalo

By Dale Sponaugle

Frank Lloyd Wright and Soap:

Buffalo boasts a number of buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, but paid for by soap. Here is the story. The Larkin Soap Company was founded in Buffalo in 1875 by John D. Larkin, Elbert Hubbard and Darwin D. Martin. By the beginning of the 20th Century it expanded into dry goods, groceries, china and furniture, and became a national mail-order house. Darwin Martin, the Company's CFO, saw some Wright houses in Chicago and asked him to visit Buffalo to discuss a house for him. The result was the house which will be on our tour. We first saw the result during the prior Buffalo Convention, but since then it was undergone additional restoration.

But that does not end Wright's connection to the Larkin Soap Company. Wright designed the firm's headquarters, which were built in 1906, Wright's first commercial project. While it appeared massive and a bit forbidding from the exterior, the interior was a glass-roofed atrium. It was also one of the first air-conditioned buildings. Unfortunately, the Larkin Company never completely recovered from the depression, or acclimated itself to modern retailing. The City of Buffalo seized it for back taxes in 1945 and it was demolished in 1950 to make way for a truck stop (which was never built).

Another Wright building we will see was also connected to Larkin, "Graycliff", a summer residence for the Martin family on a nearby lake. Wright also designed a house for a lawyer for the company and another for its advertising director. Interestingly enough, buildings designed by Wright are still being erected in Buffalo – the Blue Sky Mausoleum built in 2003 (originally designed for the Martin family), and the Fontana Boathouse in 2005 on the Buffalo waterfront (originally designed for the University of Wisconsin crew team).

The Roycrofters



Meanwhile another founder of the Larkin Soap Company, Elbert Hubbard, also became active in design and the arts. Deciding that he needed a lifestyle change, he sold his interest in the Company and set out on a walking tour of England. He met William Morris and was attracted to Morris's Arts-and-Craft publishing venture, the Kelmscott Press. On his return to Buffalo, he founded the Roycroft Press, and became a hugely popular author. He also published monthly magazines (*The Fra* and *The Philistine*); a series of books called *Little Journeys*, and was an almost constant nationwide lecturer. When the stream of visitors to his East Aurora print shop became too big, he built a hotel to house them, and had simple furniture built for it. The furniture also proved popular, and thus a manufacturing industry was born. The workers (called Roycrafters) were also skilled in metalwork, leather and bookbinding. At the peak there were over 500 Roycrafters.

Hubbard and his wife died in the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915. His son took over the business, but tastes eventually changed and in 1938 the enterprise ended. We will be visiting the Roycroft Campus in East Aurora.

Our Business Members

These are paid advertisements. The ADCA assumes no responsibility. For further information about these businesses see the Resource section on our website: www.AntiqueDoorknobs.org.

<p>Materials Unlimited Owner: Reynold Lowe 2 W. Michigan Ave. Ypsalanti, MI 49197 Phone: 800-299-9462 Web Site: MaterialsUnlimited.com Email: Materials@MaterialsUnlimited.com</p>	<p>Antique Door Hardware Collector Owner: Tom Iannucci 16624 Frederick Rd. Mount Airy, MD 21771 Phone: 240-595-1115 Web Site: antiquedoorhardwarecollector.com Email: antiquehardware@verizon.net</p>	<p>Architectural Salvage, Inc. Owner: Elizabeth Werhane 5001 N. Colorado Blvd. Denver, CO 80216 Phone: (303) 321-0200 Web Site: savgelady.com/</p>
<p>Discovery Architectural Antiques Owner: Suzanne Kittel 409 St. Francis Gonzales, TX 78629 Phone: 830-672-2428 Fax: 830-672-3701 Web Site: Discoveryys.net Email: swk@discoveryys.net</p>	<p>The Brass Knob Owners: Donetta George 2311 18th St. N.W. Washington, DC Phone: 202-332-3370 Fax: 202-332-5594 Email: BK@theBrassKnob.com Web Site: theBrassKnob.com</p>	<p>Aurora Mills Architectural Salvage Owner: Mike Byrnes 14971 First St NE Aurora, OR 97002 Phone: 503-678-6083 Fax: 503-678-3299 Email: auroramills@centurytel.net Web Site: auroramills.com</p>
<p>American Antique Hardware Owner Keith and Sarah Chilcote Phone: 503-399-8009 Email: contact@americanantiquehardware.com Web Site: americanantiquehardware.com</p>		<p>Liz's Antique Hardware Owner: Liz Gordon 453 South La Brea Los Angeles, CA 90036 Phone: 323-939-4403 Fax: 323-939-4387 Email: Shop@LAHardware.com Web Site: lahardware.com/</p>
<p>Albion Doors & Windows Owner: Larry Sawyer PO Box 220 Albion, CA 95410 Phone: 707-937-0078 Fax: (call first) 707-937-0078 Web Site: knobsession.com Email: bysawyer@mcn.org</p>	<p>House of Antique Hardware Owner: Roy Prange 3439 NE Sandy Blvd./PMB 106 Portland, OR 97214 Phone: 888-223-2545 Fax: 503-231-1312 Web Site: HouseofAntiqueHardware.com Email: Sales@HouseofAntiqueHardware.com</p>	<p>Bill's Key & Lock Shop Owner: Andy Streenz 127 E. Beaufort St. Normal, IL 61761or 401 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701 Phone: 309-827-5522 Web Site: billskeyandlockshop.com Email: locksmith@billskeyandlockshop.com</p>

Antique Doorknob Collectors of America

The Doorknob Collector Editor: Allen Joslyn
 Phone (973) 783-9411
 Email: ajoslyn@comcast.net

Web Site: AntiqueDoorknobs.org

Officers

President: Steve Rowe
 Vice President: Rhett Butler
 Secretary: Rich Kennedy
 Treasurer: Allen Joslyn

Membership Office: Faye Kennedy
ADCA
PO Box 803
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
 Email: adcaoffice@aol.com
 Phone: 908-684-5253

General Questions
Antiquedoorknobs@comcast.net

Email Addresses:

4narowe@sbcglobal.net
butler-newyork@msn.com
ADCAoffice@aol.com
ajoslyn@comcast.net