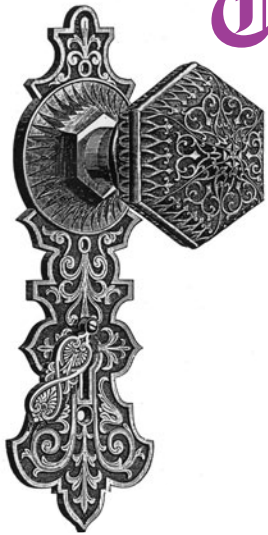


# The Doorknob Collector



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**A Publication of The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**

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

## 2014 ADCA Convention - Austin, Texas

### July 23-26, 2014

*By Margaret Mills*

**Y**ou'll find Austin, Texas a friendly, beautiful, informal city with plenty to entertain, educate or relax you. Wednesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, will be our first tour day, to Gonzales, home of Suzanne's Discovery Architectural Antiques and several other interesting shops, with lunch and local lore. Transportation will be by "caravanning" – drive your own car and include guests, or be someone else's guest. It is about an hour's drive. In the evening will be a Board meeting. The hospitality suite will be open.

**Thursday, July 24** will be the group bus tour day,

**Friday, July 25** will be buy, sell, and trade days, and

**Saturday July 26** will have brunch, auction, and evening banquet. We are staying, and meeting, at the **Holiday Inn on Town Lake**, on the shores of



The State Capital

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the Colorado River, in the heart of Austin. Our display room is light and spacious with ground-floor views of the Lake, the Hike and Bike trail, its canoes, kayaks and other (non-motorized) water activities. Rates are \$ 114 per night, free hotel parking, and free hotel/airport shuttle service.

## Austin History

Central Texas provided an oasis on the Colorado River for the local Tonkawa and Comanche indigenous tribes, and was first claimed by French and Spanish explorers in the 1600s. It was settled by Spanish missionaries in the early 1700's, which later became part of Mexico after its independence from Spain. In 1822 Stephen F. Austin, given license by the Mexican government for Anglo settlement, generated waves of immigration from the U.S. and Europe, notably German, Czech, and Swedish settlements. In 1836 Texas declared independence from an increasingly oppressive Mexican dictatorship. Following several battles, including those at the Alamo and Goliad, General Sam Houston led Texan troops in defeating President/Generalissimo Santa Ana at San Jacinto. Houston became first President of the Republic of Texas, and in 1845 (after its annexation as a State) was the State's first U.S. Senator, and later Governor. The city of Austin was first surveyed in 1839 as a trade crossroads between the Gulf of Mexico and Santa Fe, and on the Chisolm cattle Trail.

The new State, based on a cotton and slave economy, became a destination for immigration, both overland and through Galveston's port. After the Civil War, Austin's economy was based on its agricultural trade, governmental and educational systems. Railroad service expanded inland from Galveston and Houston, and the indigenous populations were displaced or eradicated. Texas' cattle economy grew through the 1870s and 1880s and in 1910 Spindletop introduced the oil boom and the petroleum industry, though Austin was not directly part of that. Its early water-generated electric service from a Colorado River dam was insufficient to support industry, and the dam washed away in 1900. It was years before another dam could satisfy the water and electric needs for the area.

## Austin Today

Austin maintained its residential, cultural, educational, and governmental identity for decades. The University of Texas's student enrollment is now over 52,000, and St. Edwards University is 5,000. Austin's identity finally expanded into industry in the 1960s and 1970s, when IBM, Texas Instruments and Motorola initiated research and manufacturing, followed by Dell and Sematech. Austin has over 400 high-tech facilities today. Growth was aided by seven dams along the Colorado River, forming the Highland Lakes. As part of the beautiful Texas Hill Country, the lakes became a destination for recreation, aided by its comprehensive music industry, tourism, and local wineries. Formula 1 motor racing, with international attention, began in 2013, and rounds out the University of Texas sports teams, bicycling, the Republic of Texas motorcycle rally and water sports. The growth from those boosted Austin's population at an unprecedented rate, and its metropolitan area is now around 1.9 million. Its emphasis on environmentalism is a response to the rapid development, and desire to preserve its natural treasures.

### The Doorknob Collector ©



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Last but not least, Austin is famous for its bats, the **largest urban bat colony** in the U.S., where the underside of the Congress Avenue Bridge is summer home to 1.5 million Mexican Free-tailed bats. They fly out in a spectacular show every evening at dusk, attracting hundreds of locals and visitors to this eco-tourism site. It's only a half-mile walk on the Hike and Bike Trail from our Hotel. Check out the website for Bat Conservation International, based in Austin.



**THE BRIDGE WITH BATS**

## **In July 2014 Here's What's Happening in Austin**

Our Hotel, the **Holiday Inn – Town Lake** is on the **Hike and Bike Trail**, which encircles the shores of the Colorado River. It's a short walk to Congress Avenue, the main street through downtown, and terminates at the magnificent 1888 **Texas State Capitol**, the centerpiece building of Austin, built of Texas pink granite from 70 miles away. Hourly tours there are free, and the shady grounds invite a picnic.

Spring-fed **Barton Springs pool in Zilker Park** is the heart and soul of Austin; to swim or relax here under the hillside live oaks is the purest rejuvenation available on a hot July day.

Guided **Segway tours** offer an easy street-level view of the city. **Rental bicycles** are all over downtown –use your credit card at a rack, hop on, and drop off at any other rental rack. Lake **rental kayaks or canoes** for one or two, or **stand-up paddleboards**, are available at several marinas on Lady Bird (Town) Lake.

South Congress Avenue (**SoCo**) has trendy, western, and antique shops. Here also is a delicious array of cuisines: Austin is a leader in the **trailer-food movement**, which is manifested all over town. It also has the most restaurants per capita of any Texas city. For relevant shopping, there are 3 large antique shopping facilities in town.

Austin is proud of its music, which includes local, regional and international performers, the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and Austin City Limits and South by Southwest music festivals. Music venues are all over town, including the famous bar-hopping 6<sup>th</sup> Street area. Famous for Blues is **Antone's**, for Rock is **Mohawk**, and for Country is the **Broken Spoke Café** and dance hall.

Art lovers find the world-class **Blanton Museum at the University of Texas** campus, the **Mexic-Artes Gallery** and **Austin Museum of Art**, both downtown, a satisfying mix. The **Cathedral of Junk** (16 tons of a picker's collection, in his back yard) proves Austin maintains its reputation for the Weird.

The **Paramount Theatre** (1915) on Congress Avenue is a restored Classic and Baroque Revival theatre, built for vaudeville, and hosts national acts and tours. Its popular Summer Classic Film Series, all double-features, is great escapism in a historic venue.

Especially famous and creative are the satire skits, music and magic show at **Esther's Follies** on East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, with new and original acts monthly – the Texas political scene provides constant inspiration. Down 6<sup>th</sup> Street is the **Alamo Drafthouse Theatre**, providing seats with tables for a meal and drinks during the film.

The local **Zach Scott Theatre** has 3 small- to medium-size stages for live theatre productions, and a talented roster of actors.

The oldest business in town is **Scholz Beer Garten** (1866) with live music, food, and good beer. **Threadgill's Restaurant** has live outdoor music (Janis Joplin started here) and down-home cooking. Its south location is only a mile from our Hotel.

Exhibits at the acclaimed **Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library**, near U.T., were recently re-curated and address all aspect of this complex man's political life, including his civil rights legislation and the Vietnam War. It is a museum worth the time.

## July 24 Tour Day

Thursday, July 24 will be a full day with an historical orientation, in-town bus tour and guide. It will include a tour of the **French Legation** (1840), Austin's oldest residence, a Creole vernacular cottage built for the French Charge d' Affaires, representing the first government to recognize Texas as a sovereign nation. It includes an outdoor kitchen and carriage house. The **Neil-Cochran Home** (1855) is Greek-Revival antebellum, built by Abner Cook, who was prolific in Austin and also built the Governor's Mansion. (Alert: its antique hardware is fascinating but still a mystery to the owners.) **Laguna Gloria** (1916), in an Italian villa style, was built by Clara Driscoll, famous for her efforts in preserving the Alamo. Situated several miles from downtown on a quiet lagoon at the edge of Lake Austin, it features expansive grounds, native plants and a small selection of works from the Austin Museum of Art, which now owns it.

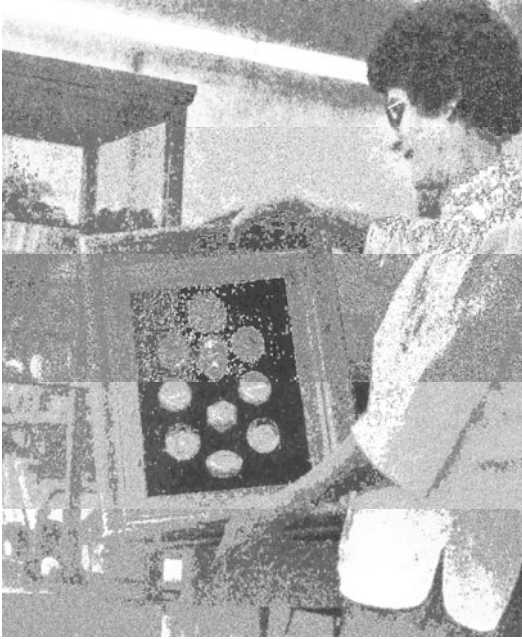
Lunch will be a buffet, likely from **Moonshine Grill**, with "upscale comfort food" and relaxed ambience.



Door Handle by Russell and Erwin

So come on down  
to Austin!

## MAUD'S MEMORIAL



On April 4, 2014 a Memorial Service for Maud Eastwood was held in the Tigard Christian Church in Tigard, OR. Cathy Galbriath, Phil Austin, Linda Smeltzer and Eliane Shreve from the ADCA attended. Here is a picture of Maud with doorknobs from her Memorial Album. The ADCA contributed a \$250 memorial contribution in her memory to the Tillamook Museum in Tillamook, OR. If you want to see more pictures of Maud, please email [ajoslyn@comcast.net](mailto:ajoslyn@comcast.net) for a copy of her Memorial Album. It includes pictures of her favorite sheep.

## New Britain, Florida



### (or Further Adventures with the Corbins)



*By Lois Blomstrann*

A prior TDC told the story of the Corbin-Norton mansion on Martha's Vineyard but that wasn't the only real estate that Philip Corbin was interested in. Most – or all - people don't remember that there was once a place, just south of Daytona Beach, which was known as New Britain, Florida, on the East (or Atlantic) coast of Florida.

Philip Corbin along with his brother Frank, of P. & F. Corbin, wanted to do something for many of their longtime and elderly employees who were going to retire. So, in 1873 Phillip sent three trusted employees, Daniel Wilson, George Millard and Lucius Summers to Florida to check out a piece of property which would be large enough and suitable as a retirement location. It would be a health resort for employees, who had contracted tuberculosis or black lung disease in the factory's foundry or who were ready to retire.

It is reported that the men travelled along Ocean Ave. from St. Augustine, until they found a well-marked trail leading west from the sand dunes and they followed it to the home of John Bostrom. Mr. Bostrom, a Swede, having come to America in the 1860s, was the first full time settler in the area and lived next to the Halifax River where he had planted orange groves. He boated the three men across the Halifax to see 630 acres fronting the west side. He evidently convinced them and the three thinking it perfect, purchased the land along with some land owned by the government. They put up a few rough buildings and called the new location NEW BRITAIN. 12 families from the P & F. Corbin arrived in the colony during the winter of 1874-1875 and got a home site on the river and land for orange groves. As time went on, other families arrived; among them William and Rebecca McNary, who had become acquainted with Florida briefly during the Civil War. When William retired from the Corbin Lock Co.

in 1874 he returned to Florida with his wife and son Charles to build a large citrus grove and one of the first homes on the mainland side of the Halifax River. Many other orange groves followed.

The name of New Britain continued until 1880. As more settlers arrived they recognized the need for a village government and a new name for their community was suggested. James Francis, a prominent merchant, offered a bag of sugar to any man who would vote to retain the old name of New Britain, but it didn't work for reasons unknown. In a vote of April 22, 1880, the name Ormond was unanimously chosen in honor of James Ormond II a local 18th century plantation owner. Years later it was changed to Ormond Beach.

When Ormond was celebrating its Centennial, a letter addressed to Mayor William McNamara arrived at New Britain, Connecticut's City Hall, inviting a representative from New Britain to attend their celebration. Being a member of a City Commission, the Mayor called Lois Blomstrann to suggest someone to attend and who better than someone with the Corbin name. She contacted Olive and Emory Corbin, who was the great nephew of Philip Corbin. They accepted the invitation and received the red carpet treatment.

Note: This article appeared in the New Britain Industrial Museum Newsletter.

Addendum. One cannot but help wondering what happened to New Britain/Ormond, even if it has little to do with doorknobs. It turns out a lot happened and there is at least one connection with a doorknob.

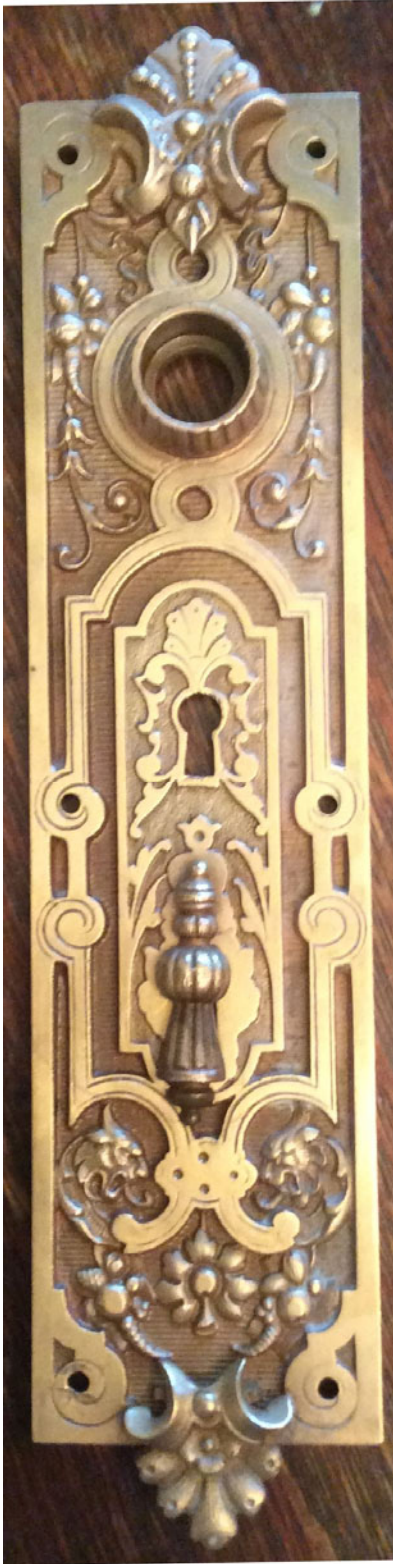
It is not clear to what extent the New Britain colony became a health resort for Corbin employees who were either sick or at retirement age, or how long the connection with the Corbin companies lasted. The village slowly, but steadily, grew. The first general store was established in 1876, as was the first school (six students). By the 1880s, orange growing became the main industry, and the area also began to attract the wealthy because of its weather, and the orange groves. There were, however, no grand mansions. In 1888 the Hotel Ormond was built to accommodate winter visitors. Most of the groves were destroyed by the big freeze of 1895-96 and there was a switch to truck farming.

The big development was Henry Flagler developing an interest in the East Coast of Florida. He had been one of the three founders of what became Standard Oil, which eventually ended up with a near monopoly of oil refining in the United States. While John D. Rockefeller is better known, when asked whether Standard Oil was his idea, he responded "No, sir. I wish I had the brains to think of it. It was Henry M. Flagler." Needless to say, he had resources.

Flagler initially travelled to Florida in the winter on the advice of his Doctor, and several years later



Knob at the Flagler College



visited St. Augustine with his second wife on their honeymoon. He found it charming, but with insufficient transportation and hotels. After a few years, he built the 540 room Ponce de Leon Hotel in St. Augustine, a magnificent and ornate building decorated with Tiffany glass and a lot more. Flagler also decided he needed a good transportation system for his planned series of Hotels along the coast, and started buying railroads. In 1890 he built a railroad bridge across the Johns River to connect to the southern half of Florida and purchased the Hotel Ormond. His march down the coast continued, with towns, hotels and railroads springing up on the way. He planned to create a new “American Riviera” stretching down the entire Atlantic Coast. Indeed, his railroad, the Florida East Coast Railway, eventually ended up in Key West (128 miles beyond the end of the Florida peninsula). When he died in 1913, he had largely created Florida, and was worth 1/651 of the total United States GNP.

But back to Ormond and its glory days. John D. Rockefeller liked the climate also. He wintered there for several years in a hotel, but (reportedly) having been told that it charged him extra, purchased “The Casements”, a house originally built as a retirement home for a clergyman. Of course it was expanded. He wintered there every year until his death, entertaining such luminaries as Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Will Rodgers and Harvey Firestone. After his death, it served a number of functions, and then was unoccupied and deteriorating for years. It was eventually purchased by the City of Ormond and restored.

So Ormond’s glory days were when those who wished to visit Florida had to travel by train, and they went where the trains went. The automobile changed all that, and areas south of Ormond (such as Palm Beach, Miami, etc.) developed. The rich no longer wintered in Ormond. Eventually the Hotel Ormond was torn down and condos replaced it. Ormond is now part of metropolitan Daytona. The name Corbin remains on one street a few several businesses.

A final doorknob reference. The Ponce de Leon hotel in St. Augustine became Flagler College, and it retains its magnificent decorations and its distinctive “shell” doorknobs (pictured). By all means, look it up on Flickr and other websites.

Allen S. Joslyn

Door plate by Corbin

*References:* In addition to Wikipedia, and the websites for Ormond and The Casements, thanks to Raymond L. Manning, [The Regional History of Ormond Beach](http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF0099624/00001) (University of Florida Digital Collections, 1977) (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF0099624/00001>) and Flagler College for the picture.

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