

The Doorknob Collector

Number 211

September-October 2018

A Publication of The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America

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

A SCULPTURAL RETURN TO THE GARDEN STATE

By PAUL WOODFIN

Most American's familiarity with the State of New Jersey is generally rides from Newark airport into Manhattan or television showing the industrial areas across the Hudson from NYC. For the 2018 ADCA Convention at Princeton, New Jersey, our hosts Nick and Jean Doto showed us why New Jersey is called "The Garden State" (growing produce, actually, but we saw lots of green). This was our first convention held in the state which has been business



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the historic King George Inn at Bristol, PA, which is America's oldest continuously operating inn. Founded in 1681 (before William Penn built Pennbury Manor), the current building only dates to 1765 and played to host to Washington, Adams and Madison. On the way out of town Nick had the bus stop at Mazzanti's (one of Nick's favorite haunts from his younger days) to pick up some sandwiches for the hospitality room that evening.



Our next stop was at Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ where we posed for our tour group photo. The museum features some 270 works of modern sculpture set in a 42 acre park which used to be the New Jersey State Fairgrounds. After a leisurely stroll and lots of photographs, we were back to the bus and back to the hotel.

home to the ADCA for the past 20 years. Wednesday was tour day, and for those who got out of bed before 6 AM, included a visit to the Golden Nugget Antique Flea Market, where Nick Doto is well known. For those of us who are not early risers, the bus stopped back at the hotel to pick up the rest of us to start our tour. Our first stop was Pennsbury Manor, the country home of Pennsylvania founder William Penn located on the banks of the Delaware River. Originally built in 1683-86, the property was reconstructed by the State of Pennsylvania in 1939 as a house museum showing the colonial life of the state's founder. The property includes a smokehouse, a kitchen and a brewery (where they demonstrate how to make beer to tour groups). And the garden featured a really large bench, which was a perfect respite for the 3 Steves.

Lunch was served at

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Published six times a year by
Antique Doorknob Collectors of America,
Inc

P.O. Box 803,
Hackettstown, NJ
07840

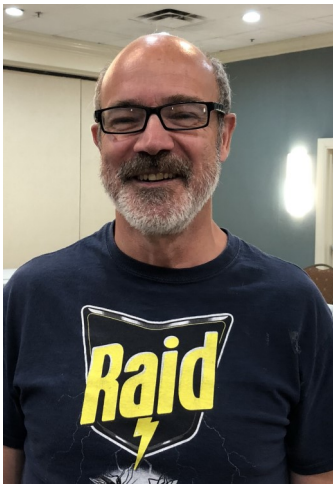
Annual Membership in US \$25.00
age 18 or younger US\$10.00
Foreign rates on request.

Founded Sept 1981, the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization devoted to the study and preservation of ornamental hardware.

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The other third of conference attendees joined us on Thursday for a day of buy, sell and trade. We were joined at Princeton by two first-time attendees, Howard Kruse (left) from Chicago, IL and Phil Flor (center) from Jersey City, NJ. Our latest re-member (a former member who rejoins the ADCA after a few years away), Maurice Onraet from Lansdale, PA, dropped by with his wife (right) after rejoining the club and digging out his collection, to see if things were as interesting as he remembered.



Former ADCA President Win Applegate and Carol were welcome attendees after missing several conventions, as was Web Wilson, who no doubt was picking up treasures for his next auction. We were glad to see Jim Morneau, Bernie Edelman and Rich Kennedy after missing the convention last year in Indianapolis.

After a morning of trading and a successful auction, the members and guests gathered together on Friday night for the Banquet, Annual Meeting of the ADCA and presentation of awards. Our speaker was William Newman, an author who provided a historical presentation about New Jersey and Princeton.

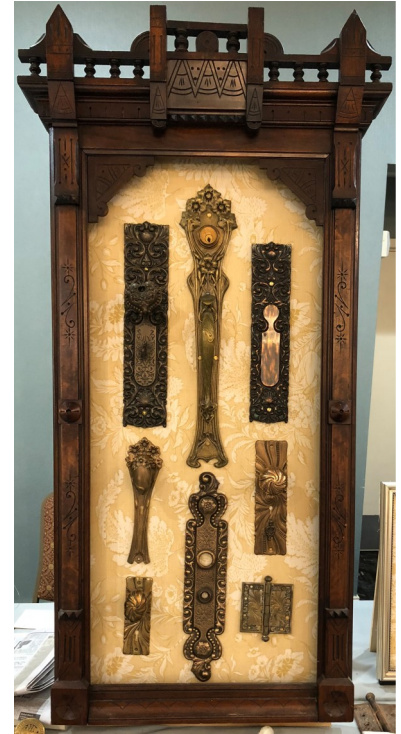


President Joslyn then convened the membership meeting, recognizing the Applegates and the Kennedys for their many years of service to the ADCA and our membership. As was discussed last year, with Faye having requested to be relieved of office duties for the club, several agenda items dealt with making this change possible, as well as the on-going operations of the club, all of which were approved by the membership.

- Relocating our business address from New Jersey to Arkansas, as Mike Smith has accepted the assignment of managing memberships for the club. The business address was last changed 21 years ago, moving to New Jersey.
- Vicky Berol will continue to welcome new members to the club.

- Election of a new slate of officers, with Allen Joslyn remaining President and Steve Rowe remaining Vice President. Mike Smith is the new Secretary (replacing Paul Woodfin), and Paul Woodfin is the new Treasurer (replacing Allen Joslyn).
- Board members re-elected for new two year terms were Faye Kennedy, John Roberts, Liz Gordon, Mike Smith and Paul Woodfin.
- Nominating Committee Chair Steve Rowe requested that any member who wishes to become more involved with the ADCA should contact him.
- Reports from the Treasurer, Secretary, Archives, VDA, and new Memberships were favorably received.

Then the awards were presented for the 2018 Convention. The theme this convention was “Oval Knobs”, and the winning displays are shown below. Winning “Best of Theme” was Mike Smith. Winning “Most Creative” was Bernie Edelman. Winning “Best of Show” was Allen Joslyn. And winning the “Ugly” award for the second year in a row was Mike Smith, because he framed the Ugly award, rather than hiding it as past recipients have done (I can report that as of August 8, the award is frameless and hanging in Mike’s garage). ☺





In Memorium Carol Meermans (Member #34)

Carol Meermans, age 88, passed away on Saturday, January 13, 2018. Beloved wife of the late Ralph. Loving mother of David (Mei), Carl (Nancy), and Andrew (Margaret). Cherished grandmother of Alexandra, Pete, Brian, and Jack. The family suggests donations in Carol's name to Barton Senior Center, 14300 Detroit Rd, Lakewood, OH 44107 where she volunteered for over 45 years. A Memorial Service was held on January 27, 2018 at Bay United Methodist Church, Bay Village, OH. Carol has been a volunteer knitting instructor at Barton Center for 25 years. She also is a trustee of the Golden Age Centers of Greater Cleveland and volunteer at WVIZ TV. Her father Carl Klamm was an engineer who invented a revolutionary leakproof gasoline and oil line tube fitting which he installed on the Spirit of St. Louis, leading Carol to recall "that's why Lindbergh made it -- because nothing leaked". According to her story told at the Pittsburgh convention, her parents were married in Chicago and honeymooned at either the Stevens or Palmer House hotel (and she was born 9 months later), so she bought a doorknob from each at the auction. And she often brought other family members to the conventions!



EUREKA!!!

THE DISCOVERY OF SPECIAL HARDWARE LEDGERS

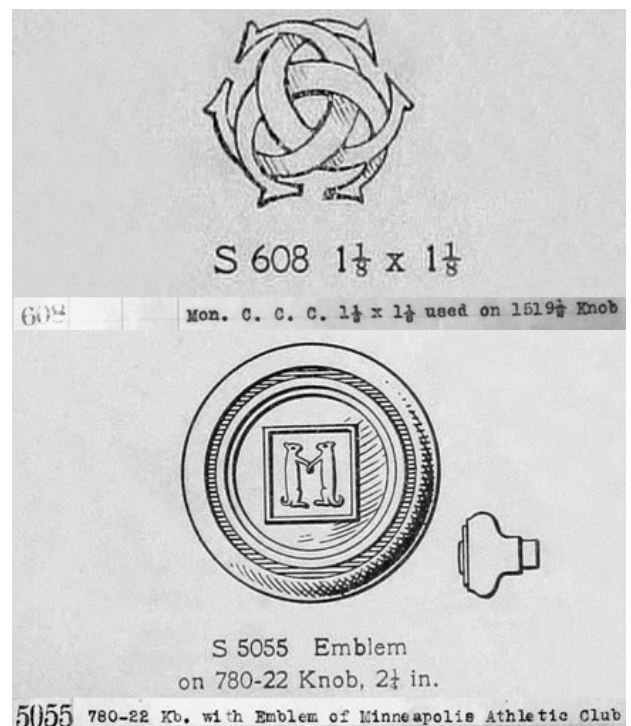
BY PAUL WOODFIN

Collectors of emblematic hardware are always happy to find a new emblematic knob or plate that they have not seen before, but always want to know the origin of the knob or plate, which most likely was custom-designed for a building and their business or organization. While some knobs are easy to identify or well publicized - the Wanamaker knob (P-25140) or the oval Plaza Hotel knob (P-47770) - most are a challenge to identify or make out the monogram or symbol. Yale & Towne, Russell & Erwin, Corbin and Sargent began making sizable quantities of "special hardware" around 1890 to meet the needs of their customers and architects, while other hardware companies (Reading, Lockwood, Hopkins & Dickinson, and especially Schroder & Chicago Hardware) produced such hardware on an "as needed" basis. Unfortunately, catalogs of emblematic hardware were not produced for general distribution, as they were made for a specific project that would not be of interest to anyone else. By 1900 manufacturers usually would devote a page or two in their standard catalog to "special" designs to make customers aware of this option. Corbin produced one "Special" catalog in about 1920, but limited distribution to major salesmen in larger cities. And the Corbin catalog contained no identifying information other than the S number assigned at the factory to each special hardware item, unless the design provided the information.

After collecting a number of Corbin plates which actually have the S number cast on the back of the plate, I realized that those numbers were the part numbers, so originally there had to be a ledger book from the Corbin factory that recorded each S number as they were assigned to an item. I have spent close to ten years trying to locate such a ledger, but found no source which had Corbin records that seemed to have the sales or production records for P & F Corbin. I was afraid that this ledger might have wound up in a dumpster, lost to history.

Last spring I decided to go do several "bucket list" things in New England prior to the convention, one of which was to visit the Lock Museum at Terryville, CT. I contacted them using their new e-mail address and Tom Hennessy Jr. said he would be happy to meet me there on Sunday before the convention. He asked what my interests were so I shared about emblematics and looking for any company records that could help identify the building identities for the emblematic hardware. When he mentioned that they had the Corbin S catalog from the factory that identified some information about the S numbers, along with a ledger from Russell & Erwin and a couple books from Yale & Towne, I was ready for the convention!

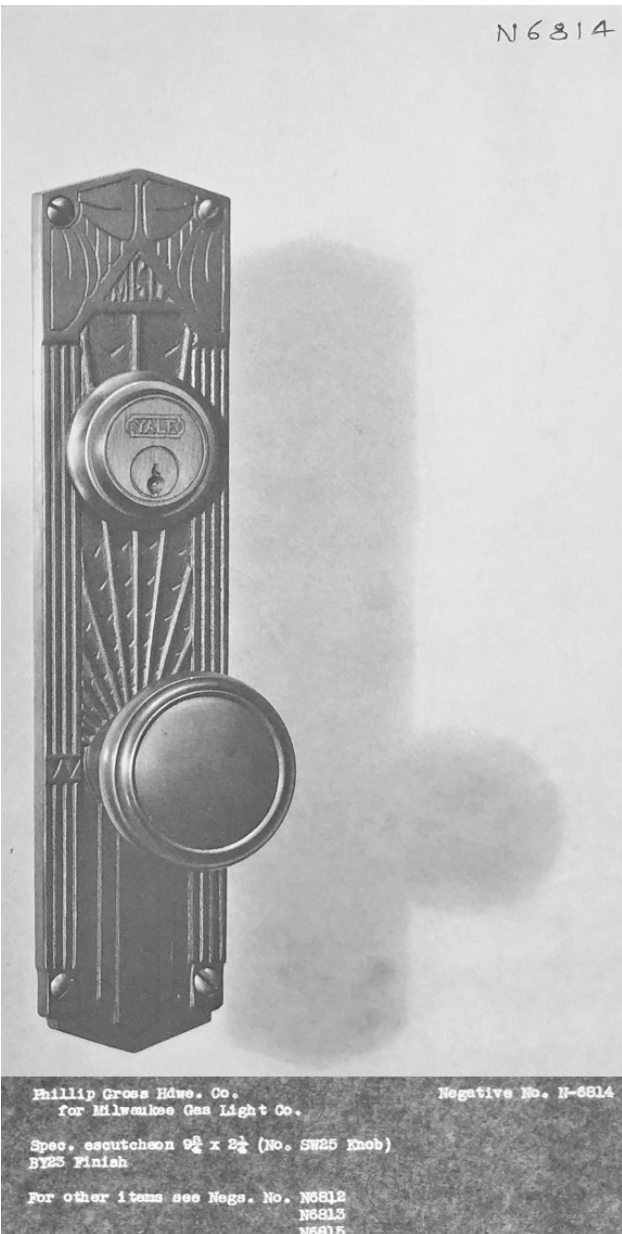
After a quick tour of the museum, we began looking going through the Corbin book, which literally is a mostly type written numerical ledger compiled over many years of every S number assigned by the factory, along with a description and other information about the item. Tom's comment about identifying "some information" is because in many cases such as S 608 (P-41440) only says "Mon C. C. C. used on knob" rather than giving the building name or city. But many do, such as S 5055 (P-71600) which identifies this one from the Minneapolis Athletic Club, or gives enough information to help with the identification. Three of those now identified are included in this newsletter, with copies of the ledger listings. More will come in future issues of this newsletter, along with an article on the Lock Museum.



The Russell & Erwin ledger is a handwritten description of each custom designed item, also using S numbers for their special hardware. The descriptions are very good and provide information about the name of the building, city and/or subject of the design. Unfortunately Russell & Erwin did not publish a catalog or photos of their special hardware, but instead kept samples of the finished hardware mounted on boards with the S number or other part numbers recorded on each wooden display, as shown at right for S1347, from the Jefferson Memorial Building in Saint Louis (A-32300). The Lock Museum only has some of the wooden displays, as others likely were donated to other museums or given to persons related to the company or industry. So in order to identify the Russell & Erwin hardware, if any readers of this newsletter happen to have a display that looks



1347 Jefferson Memorial Bldg. St. Louis. 71/ model of knob as S-1237 with head of T. Jefferson.



Phillip Cross Hdwe. Co.
for Milwaukee Gas Light Co.
Spec. escutcheon 9 1/2 x 2 1/2 (No. SW25 Knob)
BY25 Finish
For other items see Negs. No. N6812
N6813
N6815

like the one

at right (or some also have the plates on the display), please take a photo and send to us (e-mail to adcaoffice@aol.com or snail mail to Paul Woodfin).

The Yale & Towne books were blueprint copies of hardware photos including identifying information for the hardware and the building. Unfortunately these only record a few later examples of the thousands of custom items that Yale & Towne produced over several decades. But some of the photos I took of pages from the Yale & Towne books did allow the identification of a few items. One of the plates shown at left was brought to the convention this year, with the owner knowing nothing specifically about it. Reviewing the pictures we could identify this one (at left) as originating in the art deco Milwaukee Gas Light Company headquarters. This plate now has a good home with one of our members, and the owner knows what the knob which matches the plate looks like!

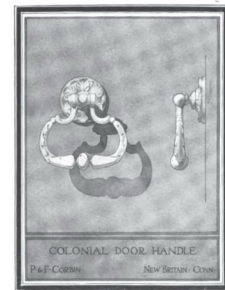
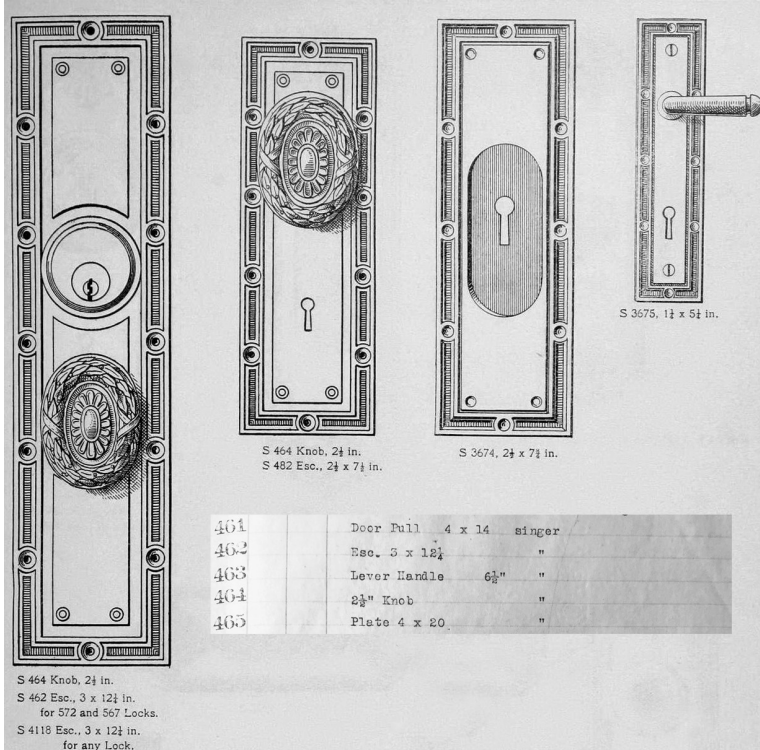
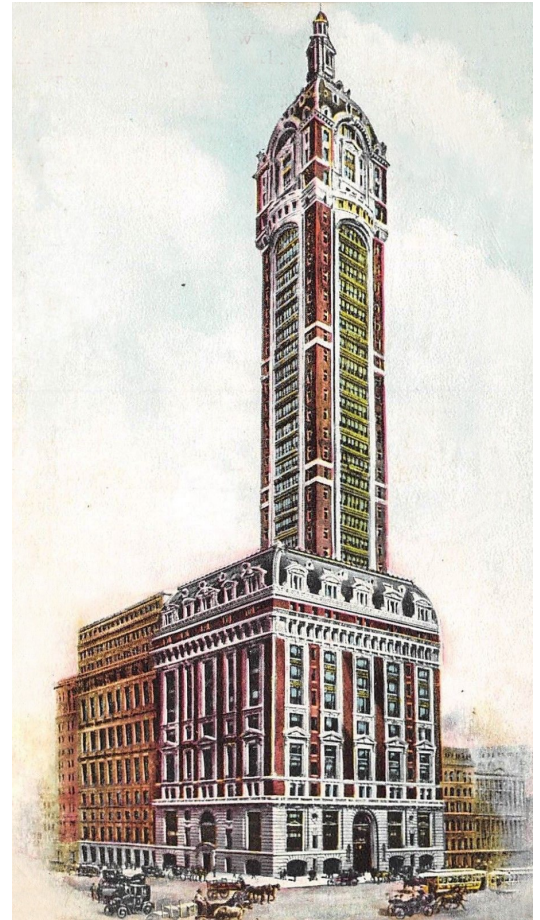
The Lock Museum has agreed to allow the ADCA to image these books in order to make them available to collectors and researchers as we do the catalog archive. Hopefully they will be available in a few months. Many thanks to Tom Hennessy Jr. and the Lock Museum, and my fellow convention attendees for allowing me to be excited about this find, which will help identify some of the "unknown" emblematics on the VDA website www.antiquedoorknobs.us. See the "New Information" listings on the Updates page over the next several months.

Singer Building New York, New York

The Singer Sewing Machine Company was an American icon of business. While other companies built sewing machines for use by housewives and businesses to clothe Americans, none was as famous or well-respected. That business success allowed Singer to build three buildings in New York, all designed by noted architect Ernest Flagg. Most people know about the 1908 Singer Tower formerly at 149 Broadway, which was torn down in 1968 for a steel and glass skyscraper for United States Steel. And some know about the “Little Singer” building at 561 Broadway from 1903.

But this hardware comes from the original Singer Building at 149 Broadway. In the photo at right it is the left half of the base of the Singer Tower. Completed in 1897, the office of company President Frederick Bourne was located in this building. The 1908 addition doubled the size of the original building and added the iconic tower above the addition.

While the Corbin ledger listing notes that S 464 is from “Singer”, real confirmation comes from a P & F Corbin ad in an architectural magazine from 1899 that note providing hardware for the Singer Building, New York. The 1908 tower used plain Corbin unit locks as featured in publications of the time.



P. & F. CORBIN,
Art Workers in Metal,
 AND MANUFACTURERS OF BUILDERS' HARDWARE.
 Offices, 11, 13 & 15 Murray Street, New York.
 Works, New Britain, Conn.

The following are among the many prominent and important buildings supplied with hardware by this firm:

HOTEL CHATEAU FRONTENAC, -	BRUCE PRICE, Architect
WASHINGTON LIFE INSURANCE BUILDING, -	CYRUS L. W. EIDLITZ, Architect
SINGER BUILDING, -	ERNEST FLAGG, Architect
PARK ROW BUILDING, -	R. H. ROBERTSON, Architect
EMPIRE BUILDING, -	KIMBALL & THOMPSON, Architects
PARK BUILDING, -	GEORGE B. POST, Architect
BOURNE OFFICE BUILDING, -	ERNEST FLAGG, Architect
RESIDENCE OF F. G. BOURNE, -	ERNEST FLAGG, Architect
FRANKLIN BUILDING, -	CLINTON & RUSSELL, Architects
GRAND CENTRAL STATION, -	BRADFORD L. GILBERT, Architect
STANDARD OIL BUILDING, -	KIMBALL & THOMPSON, Architects
CHEMISTRY BUILDING, COLUMBIA COLLEGE, -	McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, Architects
ENGINEERING BUILDING, -	McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, Architects
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, -	McKIM, MEAD & WHITE, Architects

Reference: <http://www.nyc-architecture.com/GON/GON003.htm>

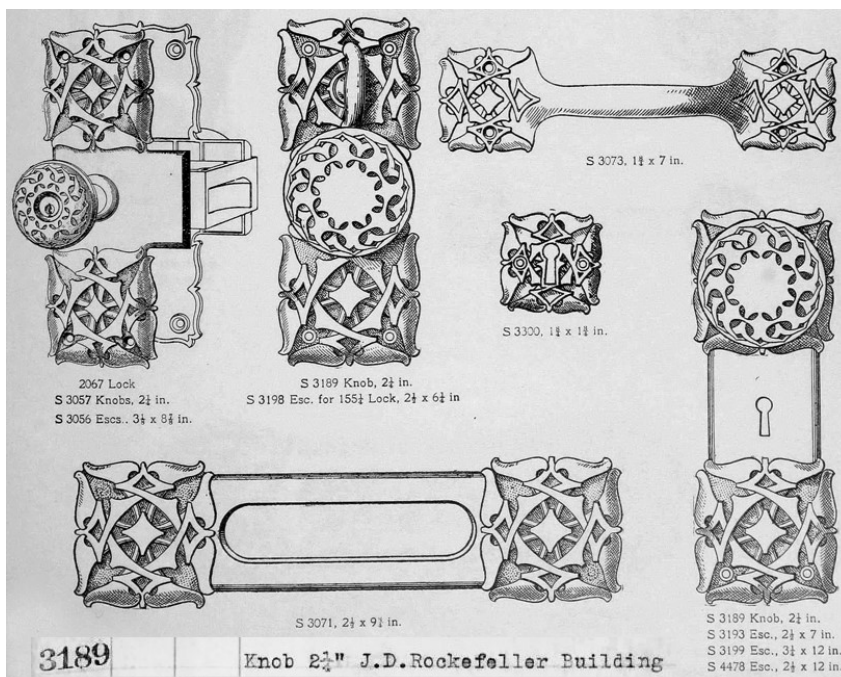
Rockefeller Building Cleveland, Ohio



Standard Oil was founded by John D. Rockefeller and other investors in 1870, and Rockefeller built and lived in a grand mansion on Euclid Avenue. While Standard Oil relocated the corporate headquarters from Cleveland to New York City in 1885, the company remained very active in Ohio due to refineries and oil fields nearby. In 1903 Rockefeller announced plans for a new 16 story office tower to be built just west of Public Square. The Rockefeller Building would be designed by Cleveland architects Knox & Elliot. The two partners met while working for Burnham & Root in Chicago, and after working for Henry Ives Cobb in Chicago, they moved to Cleveland and hung out their shingle. The Rockefeller Building was completed in 1905.

One ADCA member has remarked that this knob looks Sullivan-esque. Given that both Knox and Elliot spent a decade in Chicago when many leading architects, including Louis Sullivan, were choosing newer styles of ornament for the terra cotta exterior of new buildings, the overall influence is found on both the interior and exterior of the Rockefeller Building, including unique ironwork on the elevator cages, stair balusters, and building entrances by Chicago-based Winslow Brothers. The very unusual suite of bronze hardware shown below is from the S catalog by P & F Corbin.

The Rockefeller Building is a survivor. When the family sold the building in the 1920s, the new owner changed the name to his own. Within a year the Rockefellers had repurchased the building and installed a large sign just under the cornice showing their name. The sign remains today, and fortunately the exterior of the building looks much the same as it did after a matching addition to the was built in 1910.



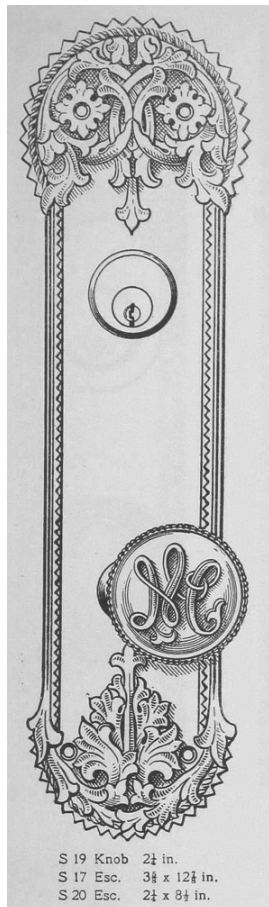
References: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockefeller_Building_\(Cleveland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockefeller_Building_(Cleveland))
<https://case.edu/ech/articles/k/knox-elliott>
 Building Photo, OZinOH, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/75905404@N00/3583276236>

Majestic/Mabley Building Detroit, Michigan

Mabley & Company was a department store founded in the 1870s in Detroit, achieving great success through customer service (and employing a young J. L. Hudson). In 1895 the firm decided to consolidate their operations into a single new building to be named after founder C. R. Mabley. Chicago architect Daniel Burnham designed the 14 story store and office building, and with the assistance of architects Mason & Rice created the most imposing and well finished (and tallest) building in Detroit.

Hardware was by P & F Corbin, featuring doorknobs of a decorative letter M. The letter M was featured in the exterior stonework and on interior finishes, which included 50,000 feet of marble. Unfortunately, Mabley & Company was unable to fund the \$1.4 million cost for the building, and later closed their Detroit location because of these cost overruns. The development company was reorganized months before completion, and the building was renamed the "Majestic", which one owner said aptly described the building.

By 1961 First Federal Savings & Loan planned a new glass and steel skyscraper for the Majestic's location. As was a common practice, the demolition contractor sold on site the marble wainscoting and wash basins, ornate iron railings, original light fixtures (and doorknobs, no doubt). And then demolition commenced.



S 19 Knob 24 in.
S 17 Esc. 34 x 12 1/2 in.
S 20 Esc. 24 x 8 1/2 in.

13	" Mabley." Bar Sash Lift	1 1/2 x 5 1/2
14	" " L. P. Plate and Hood opening	
15	" " Door Pull	3 1/2 x 18 1/2
16	" " Push Plate	3 1/2 x 18 1/2
17	" " Esc.	3-5/8 x 12 1/2
18	" " Knob	2 1/4 Mon. M. C.
19		




Reference: Historic Detroit, <http://historicdetroit.org/building/majestic-building/>

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.

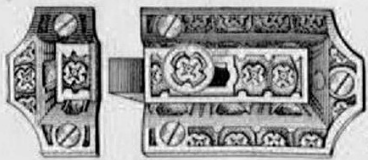
Wanted: Pete Sabine (#933) is seeking the following Branford items. Contact him by email at specklesandme@yahoo.com (preferred) or at (727) 453-0807 if you have any of these available.



No. 3634.

3" x 11"

Flush Cup Escutcheon



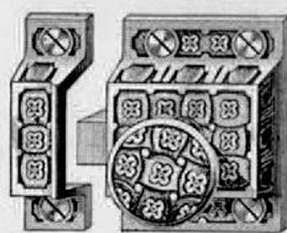
No. M512.

Number	Size	Finish
M512	1 3/4 x 2 1/4 inches	3

Cupboard Turn.

Packed, 1 dozen in paper box, with screws.

Number	Size	Finish
M500	2 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches	3

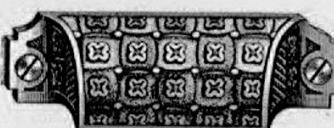


No. M500.


Drawer Pull.

Packed, 1 dozen in paper box, with screws.


Number	Size	Finish
M286	7/8 x 3 1/4 inches	3



No. M286.



No. M1034.



No. FF1062.

Antique Doorknob Collectors of America

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