

**LOUIS SULLIVAN  
DESIGNED  
DOOR HARDWARE**

**by M. Eastwood**

## FOREWORD

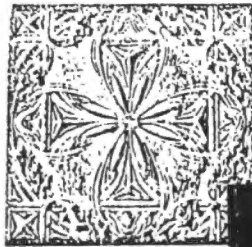
### LOUIS SULLIVAN DESIGNED DOOR HARDWARE

This compilation of evidence of Architect Louis Sullivan's co-operation and work with Yale & Towne and Chicago Hardware, to develop artistically correct designs for builder's hardware ornamentation based on the true principals of design, constitutes, at best, a rough introduction to the subject.

The material was gathered at the request of John Holland, Education Committee, to be presented at the 1988 Indianapolis convention by Maudie Eastwood, who wishes to extend appreciation and acknowledgment to the various individuals, company records and publications from which the material was gathered.

578

*Art Metal*



Ornament.—Sullivan.



**K-308 PARMA**

School: **MODERN RENAISS.**

Mfr: **Y & T**

## SULLIVAN HARDWARE RESEARCH--WHERE TO START?

The current attempt to identify hardware of Louis Sullivan design is clouded by a lack of primary material. Information in any form is scant and the few records known to exist have yet to be researched. Not all Sullivan hardware was designed "Proprietary" hardware, that is, as we are used to seeing, designed by the architect for his exclusive benefit or that of the client for whom it was made. Some designs, such as "Senlis", were developed for a specific building, Union Trust, in St. Louis, but were later added to open stock. Other designs were produced for Yale & Towne without reference to building ties, for Sullivan was one of the leading architects who, c. 1882-3, were retained by that manufacturer in the interest of producing a higher grade of ornamental hardware, and who "---brought out in rapid succession, a series of designs--many of which are still in active demand." (Towne, Locks and Builder's Hardware, 1904)

A significant number of designs in the last category were probably classified in the Romanesque School, as evidenced by the fact that the architects were based in Chicago, the "center of that cult" in the West. Not only was Yale & Towne heavily involved in producing Sullivan's designs, but Chicago Hardware, also. (Note the Schiller illus.) It is not known at this time whether Chicago contracted for stock patterns from Sullivan, or what other companies lines he may have been involved in.

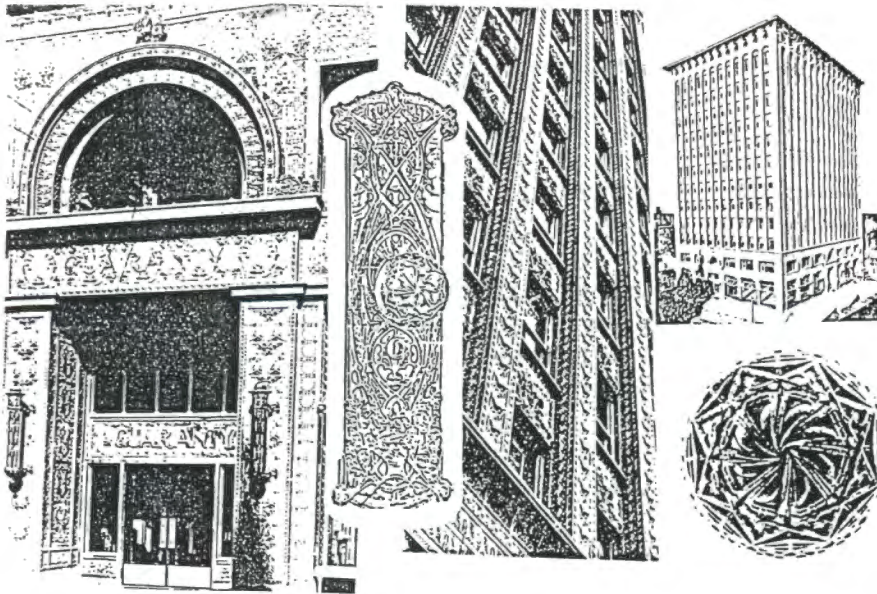
Sullivan designed over 120 buildings in his career, more than 100 in the 15 year period from 1880--85 were still standing in the 1970's. A challenging task faces the individual who shoulders job of tracing the hardware for these buildings--both those demolished and those still standing. The path will lead through renovations, restorations, modernizings, vandalism, demolition, dumps, salvage yards, dealers, collectors, Art Museums and, happily, to the Sullivan architectural gems still standing, in use, and with the original hardware still in its appointed place. (Note illus. of the three types listed)

The sources of Sullivan's designs--the elements--are not hidden to the art student. Some date back to Pre-Christian eras and have appeared in various other schools and Renaissance work down through the years. It is Sullivan's treatment of these elements that has made his work endure. He was not successful in starting an American School of Architecture, as such, but became recognized as one of the greatest pioneers of Modern Architecture, and was posthumously awarded the gold medal by the American Institute of Architects in 1943.

For other reference on Sullivan, see THE DOORKNOB COLLECTOR, Dec. 1986; "Louis Sullivan on Tour" and the Feb. issue, 1986, "Architect Designed Hardware". Most importantly, study LOCKS and BUILDER'S HARDWARE, TOWNE, 1904. The vast array of Sullivan material in print gives scant attention to specific mention of door hardware, but makes fantastic reading.

Having studied Sullivan, his theories and practices, I am totally convinced that removing original hardware from a Sullivan structure would be tantamount to cutting off a finger or a toe--it would be really missed. Sullivan breathed (designed) life into his structures; to him they were living entities with function in the same way a human is made of parts and all function.





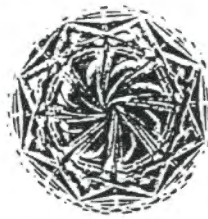
GUARANTEE BUILDING, BUFFALO  
From 1899, the Prudential

Architects: Adler & Sullivan, 1896  
Hardware--Yale & Towne, Bower Barff Iron

Knob--Full ornamentation--geometric treatment

Plate--Pure Sullivan, an amazing system of ornamentation.

Note. This set is shown on pg. 571 of 1904, Towne, as an illustration of artistic hardware.



SCHILLER THEATER BUILDING, CHICAGO.  
Later re-named the Garrick

Architects: Adler & Sullivan, 1892  
Hardware: Chicago hardware, Bower-Barff process. Spindle-less feature.  
Knob--Monogram "S" centered in a bed of stylized leaf patterns. Plain border.

Note. Building demolished in 1960 and replaced with a garage.

Comment: The ornamentation on the knob may have been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, a Sullivan protoge.



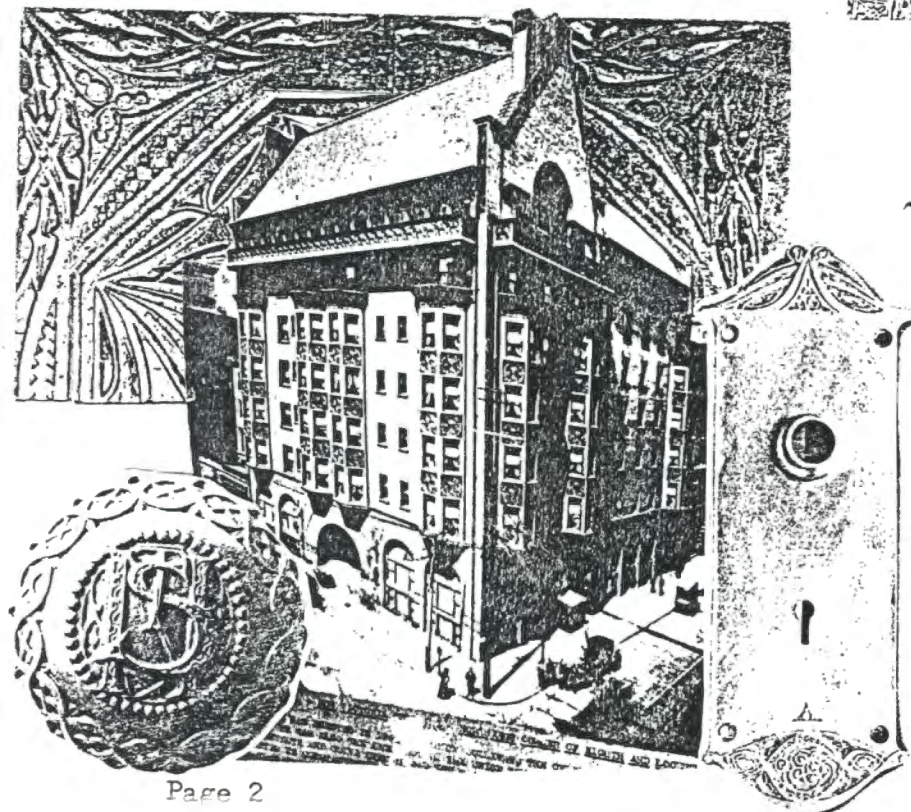
ST. NICHOLAS HOTEL, ST. LOUIS  
Renamed the Victoria in the early 1900's

Architect: Louis Sullivan  
Hardware: Yale & Towne Bower-Barff Iron, Cast Bronze and Nickel plated  
Knob--Central monogram, "S<sup>TH</sup>" in an unusual setting surrounded by beading, a plain band and a crown-of-thorns perimeter design.

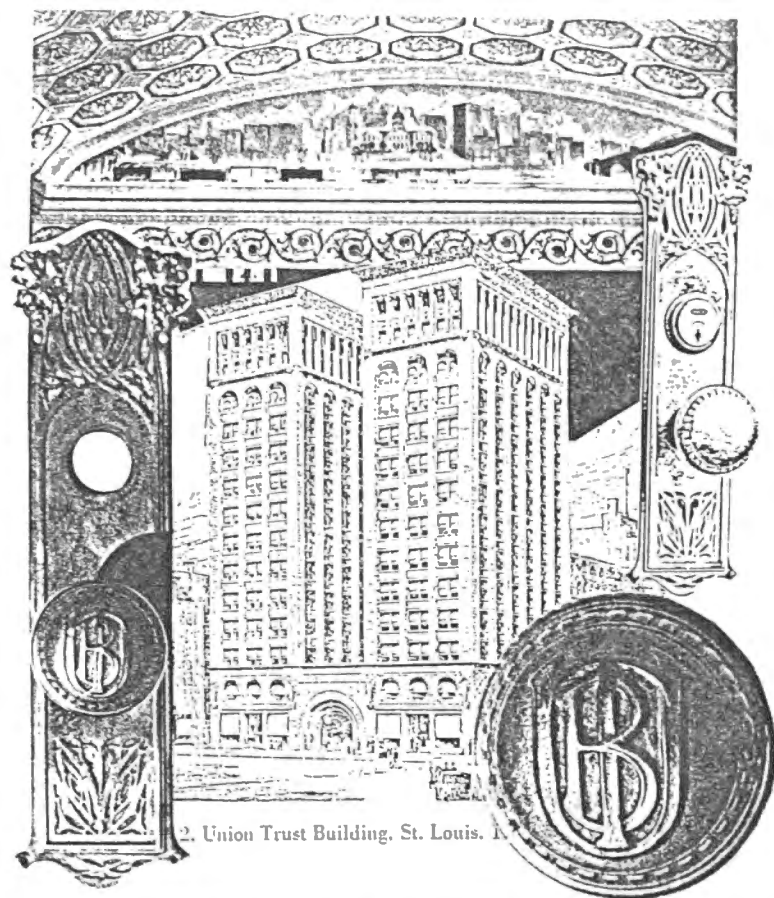
Plate-- End designs, only. in the form of intersecting ellipses, criss-cross bands and a system of spirals.

Note: The building was demolished in 1973

Comment: The hardware had dropped from sight after removal when the building was converted to office use in 1905 and only in recent time have pieces surfaced.





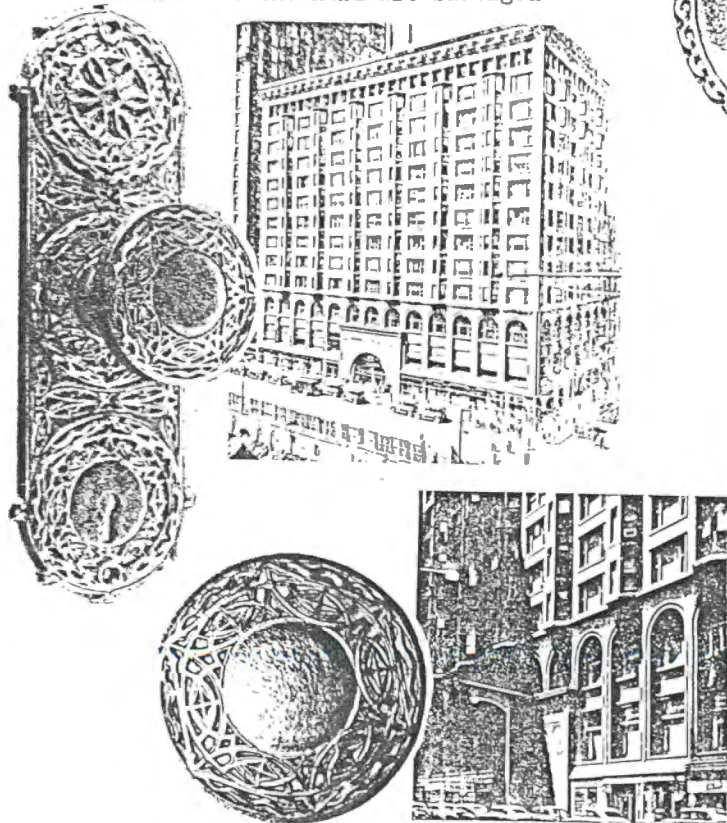


2. Union Trust Building, St. Louis. 1

### CHICAGO STOCK EXCHANGE

Architects: Adler & Sullivan, 1884  
 Hardware: Yale & Towne, Bower-Barff iron  
 Knobs--Ellipses, intersecting, ringing plain center  
 Plate--every inch ornamented in 15th century Spanish Gothic manner

Note. Exchange demolished in 1972  
 Comment: Was the hardware salvaged?

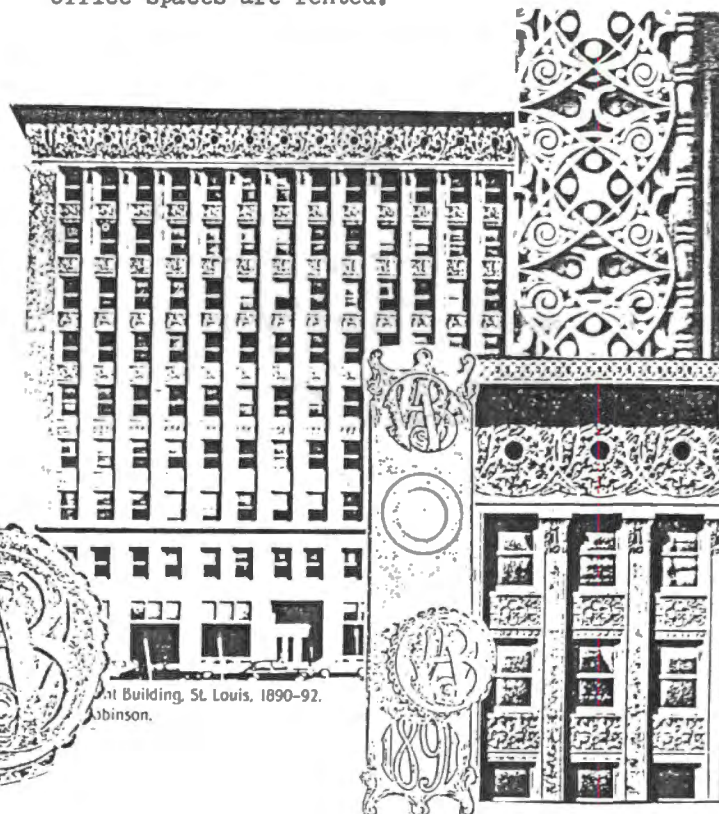


UNION TRUST BUILDING, ST. LOUIS  
 Currently, Central National Bank

Architects: Adler and Sullivan, 1884  
 Hardware: Yale & Towne Bower-Barff cast iron and cast bronze. Modern Renaissance school.  
 Knob--Monogrammed "UTB" ringed with a border of elongated beads.  
 Plate--Not emblematic; end ornament of intersecting lines and foliage

Note. A stock pattern, also. See "Senlis" available in Cast Brass, Bronze, Iron and Old Copper. 1904 Towne, pg. 580 and 714. ABH pg. 96, no. 17

Comment: Hardware is being restored and or removed at discretion of tenant as office spaces are rented.



at Building, St. Louis, 1890-92.  
 Robinson.

### WAINWRIGHT BUILDING, ST. LOUIS

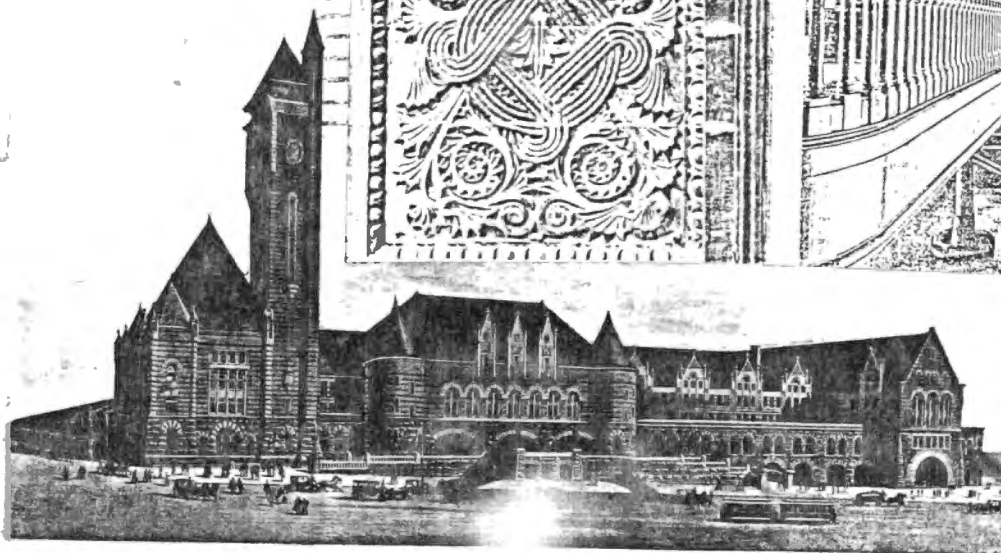
Architects: Adler and Sullivan, 1881-2  
 Hardware: Yale & Towne, Bower-Barffed cast iron, German Renaissance  
 Knob--Domed, intertwined monogram "WB", beaded perimeter  
 Plate--Proprietary emblems "WB", top, "1891", bottom

Note. Available in open stock as "Bonn," with emblems deleted. 1904 Towne, Pg. 468; 1910 Y&T, pg. 685. ABH, pg. 95, No. 17

Comment: The double entry doors currently are fitted with reproduction hdwe. in a modified "Parma" plate design. (Pg. 96, No. 19, ABH)  
 Stock version also available in cast Brass and Bronze with old copper, oxidized silver or Bower Barff finish.

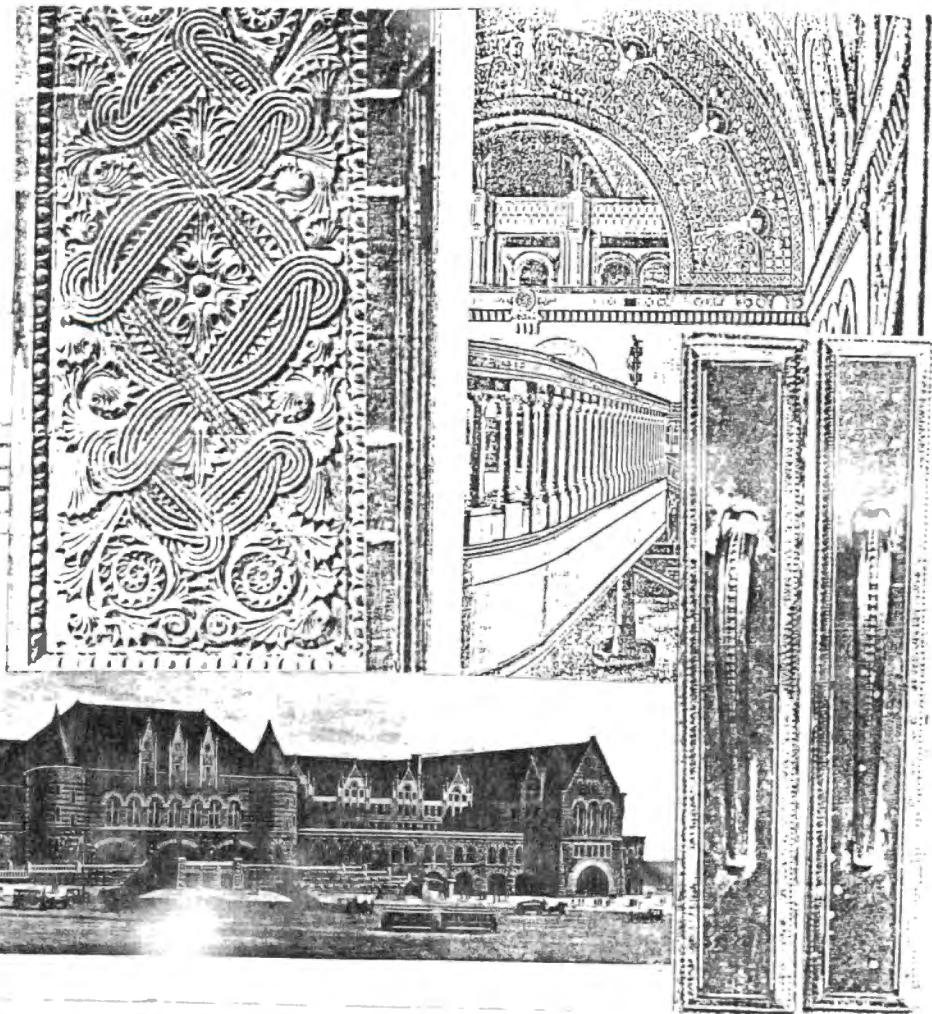


Union Station,  
St. Louis.



UNION STATION, ST. LOUIS

Romanesque Architecture, c. 1888  
Sullivan, Illus. Pg. 570, Towne, 1904  
Hardware: Yale & Towne, cast bronze  
Door Pull--Vernoux design, Pg. 658  
1910, Louis XVII



THE COLCORD BUILDING, OKLAHOMA CITY

A Sullivan-esque "Spin-Off" Deserving of Space\*

COLCORD BUILDING, Oklahoma City, 1910  
William H. Wells, Designer (Early Louis  
Sullivan student)

Hardware: Chicago Hdwe. Mfg. Co.

Knob--Gleaming bronze of high polish

Central monogram design: CFC

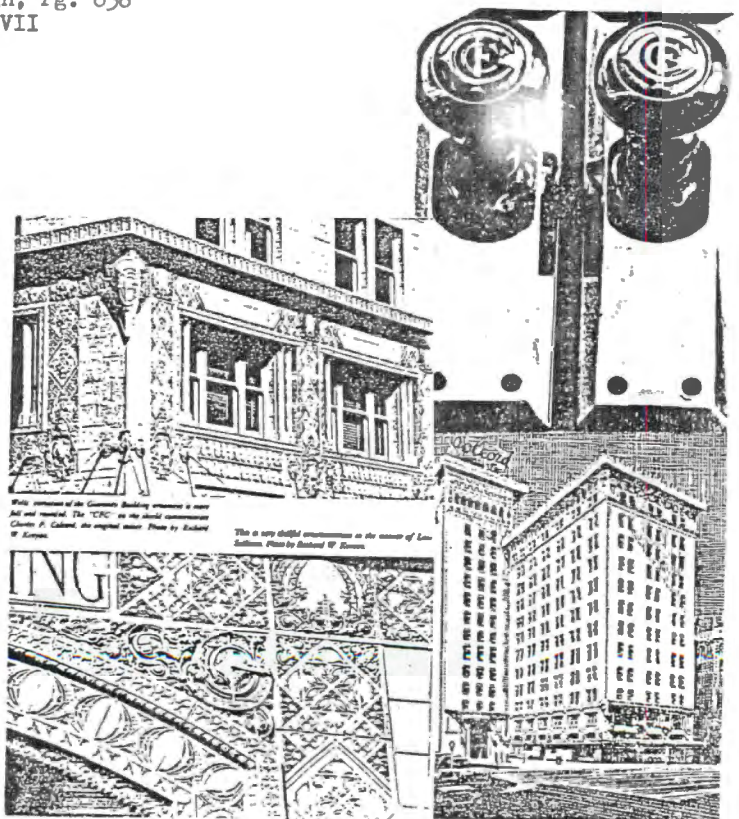
Plate--Rectangular, devoid of ornamentation

Shank--"Stepped-up", rests on plate thimble

Comment: Lock, only, specifies Chicago hardware  
Equipped with conventional shank and spindle.

Note. Hardware design approval for any specific  
building, regardless of type of structure,  
ultimately rests with the owner, hence the  
CFC--the choice of Charles Francis Colcord,  
owner.

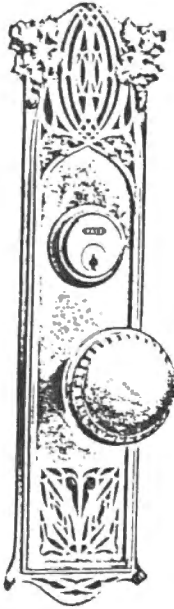
\*Material provided by members Jack Smith Schick  
and Claude Knox from original source.



LOUIS SULLIVAN DESIGNED HARDWARE  
 Found In Hardware Catalog Sources  
 YALE & TOWNE'S MODERN (1904) OR MODERN RENAISSANCE (1910) SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Yale & Towne Designs

SENLIS



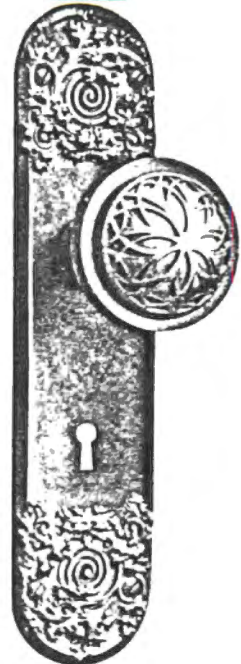
1904 Pg. 580 Fig. 4  
 1910 " 715  
 ABH " 96 No. 17

CAMBRA



1904 Pg. 580 Fig. 1  
 1910 " 713  
 VDA K-308\*

PARMA



1904 Pg. 580 Fig. 9  
 1910 " 714  
 ABH " 96 " 16  
 VDA K-308\*

\* 1 knob design; plates differ.

Note. The above sets are all of Sullivan design, they represent one school, only. More Sullivan designs will be found in other schools; if they are determined to be appropriate for open stock, limiting emblems (as with Senlis, designed for the Union Trust Building and marked with a intertwining "UTB") will be deleted.

Note. Sullivan ornamentation relating to Parma and Cambra will be found in Y&T, 1904, pg. 578.

In Towne's 1904 "Locks and Builder's Hardware", the three patterns illus. above were grouped with two others to form a Modern school of ornament. In 1910 the three were the only examples listed under Modern Renaissance school and the reader was advised that, properly speaking, there was no real school of Modern American Renaissance, but a phase of L'Art Nouveau.

The ornament of the Modern Renaissance school is based on natural and geometrical forms. The description reads like an illumination of the Sullivan design system:--Use of an adaption of the prairie lotus--lace-like patterns of bands of different widths, intersecting--elongated ovals appearing often like egg and dart patterns.

Intense research and study will be required to further identify Architect (Root, Mundie and Sullivan) designed hardware undoubtedly represented in many collections, as yet unidentified or even known. Section 2 of Towne's manual titled "Artistic Hardware" is illustrated with fourteen possibles.