

MARCH 1983

NUMBER 6

The Doorknob Collector



MALLORY, WHEELER & CO.
"RECLINING FARMER"
CAST BRONZE-1882 CATALOG

A D C A WILL AGAIN FEATURE AN AUCTION AT THE
SEPTEMBER CONVENTION IN NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS,

JOHN HOLLAND HAS BEEN ASKED TO HANDLE THE DETAILS, IF YOU HAVE
ANY HARDWARE ITEMS YOU WISH TO SUBMIT FOR AUCTION, PLEASE WRITE
TO: JOHN HOLLAND, 3434 NORTH 47TH WAY, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85018

PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR ITEM AND INDICATE YOUR BASE PRICE AND ADVISE
IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO SHARE ANY OVERAGE WITH A D C A IN PART
OR IN FULL.

PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON, LORETTA NEMEC REPORTS THAT MANY PREPARATION DETAILS
HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND REMINDS MEMBERS TO RESERVE SEPTEMBER 9 - 11

The Bower-Barff Process

Some collectors, especially beginners may be curious about the black finish that is often found on iron hardware. In most cases the hardware has been treated with what is known as the "Bower-Barff" process. This process was the invention of two Englishmen, whose name it bears. The process was originally applied to water pipes, architectural iron work and other rough products. In 1887 Henry Towne obtained an exclusive license for its application for builders hardware for the Yale and Towne Manufacturing Company.

The Bower-Barff process consists of treating the iron or steel in a special furnace, by gases, at high temperature. The end result is that the surface is converted into a magnetic or black oxide of iron. The process provides very effective protection against normal corrosion except if exposed directly to the weather or salt air, where minute pores in the "skin" allow moisture to penetrate and eventually produce rust and discoloration.

When the Bower-Barff patents expired, several manufacturers adopted the process with varying degrees of success. When properly applied the process yields a finish of lustrous black with great depth and softness.

Source: Locks and Builders Hardware
by Henry R. Towne

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THIS IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS
WITH CHARTER MEMBER COLLECTORS. CHARLES BEDNAR
AND HIS WIFE, ALVA, LIVE IN ST. PAUL, MINN. MR.
BEDNAR RETIRED IN OCTOBER 1981, HAVING SPENT
THE LAST 30 YEARS AS A CARPENTER WITH THE
CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM.

For a long time I have admired the originality and workmanship the craftsmen of the Victorian era put into furniture and buildings. I was also impressed with the technology that produced such fine quality hardware.

I was first exposed to a small doorknob collection of a friend in the early 60's but it didn't rub off just then. The second time was in 1966. The carpenter shop I was working in for the previous 15 years was to be moved and the building demolished. I had been aware of some miscellaneous ornate brass hardware laying around since I began working there and I thought I had better salvage everything possible lest it all end up as scrap.

Later on I became more serious about hardware when a fellow workman and I were given the job of boarding up some old houses that were to be demolished. It didn't take long to realize the ornate doorknobs I was seeing would end up in a land fill and be gone forever....a few turns of the screw driver and the knob was mine to preserve when no one else seemed to care.

Antique dealers and flea markets were getting more numerous and along with salvage yards and wrecking companies I acquired more hardware as the housing sources ended. One salvage yard let me look over the wooden parts of window frames after they had broken them up to remove the glass. This started me on sash locks, I now have over 90 different locks. I also acquired a variety of ornate hardware such as, hinges, drawer pulls, cabinet locks, sash lifts, sliding door hardware etc. Eventually the high cost of labor made it unprofitable to salvage very much so that source is greatly diminished.

Most of my 500 varieties of knobs are from the Twin City area. Ninety of these knobs are complete sets of knobs, escutcheons and lock case. I have mounted several of these sets in a block of wood so they are operational. Alva prefers the more feminine painted porcelain knobs.

With at least 5 other collectors in the area plus many other buyers it is getting difficult to find anything on the market. Making my self known has been of some help. I ask around at shows and sales - do you know of anyone who has knobs? Some times a lead pays off.

Charles Bednar

WILL THE REAL JASPER RELIEF KNOB PLEASE TURN?

by Maudie Eastwood



This pink (or lilac) bisque knob with a white raised design is not a Wedgwood knob.

Ceramic knobs of bisque and Wedgwood jasper are appearing in collections. Collectors are becoming confused in their attempts to accurately identify these specimens, either by type or manufacturer. The current trend to categorize all bisque (unglazed) knobs as "Wedgwood" types seems to be following the former pattern of labeling all streaked, mottled brown knobs as "Bennington" types. The attempt to identify the specimen shown here (my pride and joy) and acquisitions by other collectors, led me to bone up on the background of bisque, jasper and parian knobs.

In the absence of pictorial evidence from china manufacturing sources, I offer the following first and second-hand evidence, authoritative quotes and educated guesses in an attempt to shed light on this segment of our collective need. I found this family of ceramics and the knobs produced from them, to have points in common, and yet unmistakable differences; small wonder we are in confusion. The basic need in this case appears to lie in our ability to identify types of clay bodies found in bisque porcelain, by appearance and name.

In my search I first contacted David Buten, curator of the Wedgwood Museum in Merion, Pa. Content at last that I owned a Wedgwood knob, I enclosed pictures and awaited confirmation. The response was negative! In short: "Mrs. Eastwood, Wedgwood made jasper relief knobs in blue and white by applying clay on clay. Your knob was made in one piece in a mold, both body and relief decoration. Had it been Wedgwood, with raised ornamentation, it would have been Queensware, and glazed. The design, however, is not one of Wedgwood's."

From my second contact, Gaye Blake Roberts, curator of the Wedgwood Museum at Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, England, came a similar reply, "not of Wedgwood manufacture by appearances, probably was made in Paris in the second half of the 19th century." Mr. Roberts further stated that one must be careful in attributing a knob of the jasper bas-relief type to Wedgwood, as imitators made similar items.

Three types of wares are associated with the manufacture of knobs in unglazed porcelain. All may be generically labeled bisque or biscuit ware. Specifically, they are: Bisque (bisque ware, Bisqueware, bisque porcelain, white bisque); Jasper (jasperware, Jasper Ware, jasper relief ware); Parian (Parian ware, Parian Marble).

(Continued)

COMMON IDENTIFYING FEATURES:

Finished surface unglazed. (Parian, an infrequent exception)
Matte finish
Slightly granular texture. (Jasper can be polished like stone)
Pressed or poured into molds, not thrown.

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE:

Bisque (as in doll heads of the 1860's to 1890's) was made by a number of potteries, decorations may be in relief: white or colored. On the surface: painted or gilded.

Jasper Ware, Wedgwood introduced and manufactured ware. The applied design, white (usually) and in relief, was formed in a mold, removed and undercut to enrich the design, applied to the body for baking. Jasper, without the relief decoration, would be just another stoneware. This ware accepts color readily.

Parian, a white biscuit. with a fine granular surface, easily soiled, having neither glaze or color. Resembles Parian Marble.

(Exceptions to the above cannot be ruled out)

To determine whether a knob was pressed or poured (thus often establishing the age of the piece, the pressed being the older), feel or examine the inside of the spindle hole. If the interior is rough or uneven, it was pressed; if smooth and of even thickness, it was poured. The later is often translucent.

I am not aware of the history of my bisque knob but the subject of the design is the time honored duo of Cupid and Psyche, often repeated in different scenes by the modellers of Wedgwood, proving this imitation of Wedgwood jasper ware to be well researched. Psyche, her hair tied in the traditional manner, wears a head band with hearts framing her forehead. Her butterfly wings bear out the Greek symbolism of her name - butterfly, or soul. Cupid's wings, of course, are feathered.

Unfortunately, I do not know who manufactured the knob, but Bennington produced pitchers in the same manner or by the same method as that used in making the Cupid knob. The surface color was first painted on the inside of the mold, in the form of a colored slip, therefore the design could be of a different color, as it was cut intaglio (depressed below the surface) in the wall of the mold. The body of the object was then filled, allowed to assume the thickness of wall desired in drying, and the remaining poured out, creating the hollow center. By this method there could be no undercutting to clarify the design-as is true of the Cupid knob.

If the Cupid knob was manufactured in Paris, as suggested by Mr. Roberts, the important china factory at Sevres may well have produced it, after 1865. This factory was, at a former location, involved with the production of bisquit porcelain since 1753. This knob was produced in a three part mold.

Several potteries, known to have produced knobs, who also involved in the manufacture of bisque and Parian were: Charles Cartlidge & Co. in Greenpoint, N.Y., after 1848; M & N Tempest, Cincinnati, Oh., after 1859; The American Pottery Co. of Trenton, N.J., who worked with white bisque in 1876 and George Allen of Philadelphia, 1857

I trust these leads have been helpful and that from among our group will come other leads.

PROFILES



DIANA - GODDESS OF THE MOON
ROMAN MYTHOLOGY



IDENTITY UNKNOWN



SARA BARTON



IDENTITY UNKNOWN



GREEK HEAD
MALLORY, WHEELER & CO.



ROMAN HEAD
MALLORY, WHEELER & CO.



GEORGE WASHINGTON
F. JAHN, PHILADELPHIA



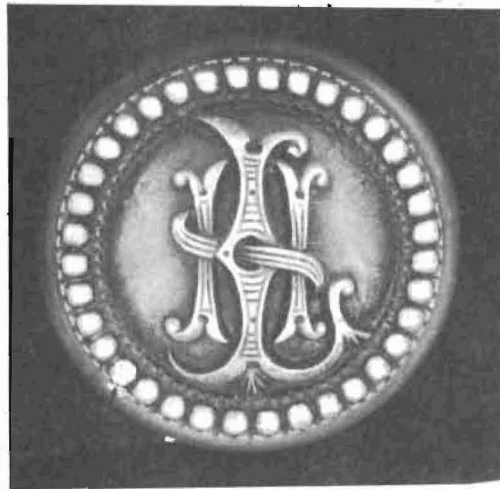
MARTHA WASHINGTON
F. JAHN, PHILADELPHIA



CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
RUSSELL & ERWIN



This knob is from the LaSalle Hotel Chicago

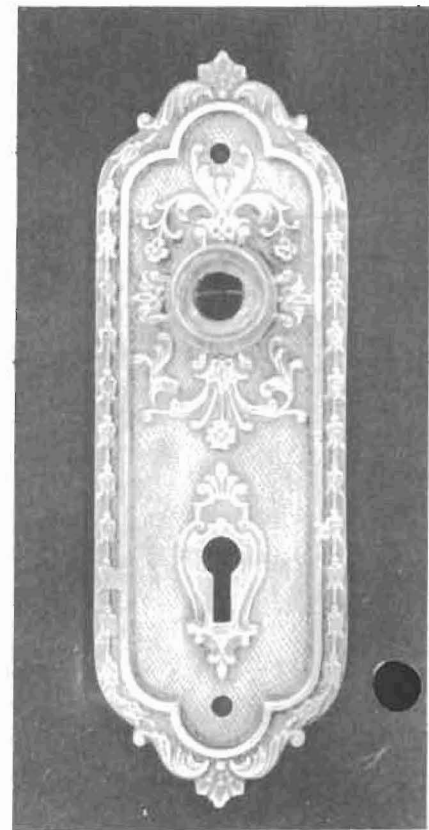


The demand for a new hotel in the financial district led to the opening in 1909 of a Holabird & Roche masterpiece, the LaSalle, situated at the NW corner of LaSalle & Madison Sts.

The style of the hotel was a mixture of Louis XIV and Louis XV. The 19th floor ballroom shown above was 140 feet in length.
-Alas, it was demolished in 1977-

This cast bronze knob and escutcheon are probably not too common in the collector's world. They were made by a relatively obscure manufacturer, The Taylor and Bogus Foundry Co. of Cleveland.

An ad appeared for the set in a 1917 Builders Hardware catalog.



FROM THE EDITORS

Please excuse the late mailing of the newsletter for March. We are about two weeks behind schedule because of work related time demands.

The June issue of the D C will include a membership directory.

As in last years directory, we will include additional information such as, interest in trading, specialties, home and work phone numbers. For those who wish this information included in the directory, please complete the form at the bottom of the page..

Thanks to Art Paholke of Chicago for research on the LaSalle Hotel and to Maudie Eastwood for identifying the Taylor and Bogus Foundry Company set.

Rich and Faye Kennedy have traders on hand and are anxious to trade. Their address is: 7 Lafayette Place, Chatam, N.J. 07928

Does anyone know what a door nail is, as in dead as a door nail?



NOT A WRENCH SILLY-
A SCREW DRIVER

Information for the 1983 Doorknob Collectors Directory

Name _____		Address _____	
		()	
City _____	State _____	zip _____	Home Phone _____
() _____	Interest in trading: Yes _____ No _____		
Work Phone _____			
Specialty: (Emblematics, Victorian etc.): _____			
____ Please do not include my name in the directory			