

# The Doorknob Collector

APRIL 1987

Number 23



James F. Kaiser  
1926 - 1987

## Death Claims Jim Kaiser

### ADCA Mourns His Loss

Jim Kaiser, President of **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** and one of the world's foremost doorknob collectors, died of cancer at his home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on February 11, 1987. He was 60 years old.

Mr. Kaiser, with his wife, Lee, took an active roll in the formation of the ADCA at Waverly, Iowa, in September 1981. Jim and Lee accepted the responsibility of editing and publishing a quarterly newsletter and Lee took on the added responsibilities of a board member and treasurer. They held these positions until September 1986.

Because of work and personal commitments, the Kaisers stepped down from their newsletter and treasurer positions for the following year.

Jim and Lee hosted the 1986 ADCA convention in Minneapolis. At the annual meeting held during the convention, Jim Kaiser was elected to the board of directors and President

of the organization. Maude Eastwood was elected Vice-President and succeeds Kaiser as President.

"It started about fifteen years ago," Jim recalled for February 1986 readers of **THE DOORKNOB COLLECTOR** "when closing up the farm house of a deceased relative. We noted that the front doorknob was different than the white porcelain knobs on all the others doors."

"After cleaning the paint from the knob it was found to be cast iron and had a delicate and pleasing design."

"After that we began to take note of the doorknobs in antique shops and at flea markets. The next five or six acquisitions were of the wrought steel type. Then we found a cast brass knob with a fetching Branford pattern. That did it, we became collectors."

At the time of his death, Jim Kaiser had over one thousand, seven hundred different doorknobs.

(continued page 2)

# KAISER (continued)

James F. Kaiser was born in Pernham, Minnesota, on October 27, 1926. He attended high school in Bagley. Following graduation, he entered the United States Navy. Upon completion of his military obligation, Kaiser entered the University of Minnesota where he graduated with a degree in Business Administration.

Following his graduation from college, Jim worked for Hope Chest Company, owned and directed the Suburban Maintenance Commercial Cleaning Service and worked at Maple Manor (in Stillwater, Minnesota) before becoming the Administrator of Mount Olivet Careview and Mount Olivet Home in 1972. He held that position until his death. Mr. Kaiser also had a seat on the Board of the Metropolitan Health Council (in Minneapolis) and was the only long-term health care Administrator on the board.

Jim is survived by his wife, Leona(Lee), three sons, William, David and Michael and three grandchildren.

In memory of Jim Kaiser, contributions may be made to the:

Mount Olivet Careview  
Jim Kaiser Memorial Fund  
c/o Lee Kaiser  
4125 Colfax Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN. 55409

## OFFICERS

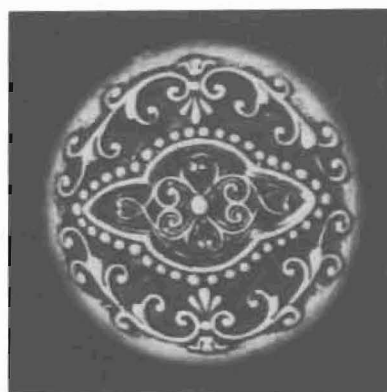
President.....Maud Eastwood  
Vice-President.....vacant  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Ray Nemec  
Board Secretary.....Dorothy Miller

## BOARD MEMBERS

Charles Bednar.....Roseville, MN.  
John Holland.....Phoenix, AZ.  
Florence Jarvis.....Grand Rapids, MI.  
Stephen Menchhofer.....Speedway, IN.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

1987 Convention.....Al Still  
Archivist.....Dorothy Miller



Kaisers'  
First



The  
Clincher



Jim's  
Favorite

## The Doorknob Collector

Published five times a year by  
Antique Doorknob Collectors of  
America, Inc.  
P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126  
Phone: 1-312-357-2381  
Ray and Loretta Nemec, Editors.  
Annual Membership: \$20.00.  
Lifetime Membership: \$150.00.  
Rates on request for inserts.

COMPLETE CONVENTION INFORMATION IN THE  
JULY ISSUE OF THE DOORKNOB COLLECTOR.

# Kaiser Was Perceptive

By Maud Eastwood

It was with deep regret that I learned of the death of Jim Kaiser, our good friend and club president, on February 11, 1987. I take very personally the untimely passing of founding members of our club. First, Emil Miller, then Darrell Razor and now, Jim Kaiser. These men were among those members caught up in the original urge to unite, a move that surfaced in mid-1977, preceding the joint and successful efforts of Arnie Fredrick and Emil Miller to form an association of doorknob collectors.

Jim was an acquaintance of George Doyle, who, in 1978, had pushed for a club. However, the time was not right, the attempt withered, but not before Doyle succeeded in bringing excellent publicity of the move to people and organizations in high places. Jim was among the first and strongest proponents for an association of knob collectors.

Jim Kaiser, with his wife, Lee, were the first and only editors of the ADCA newsletter until September 1986 when the position was relinquished and Jim was elected club president. Our newsletter is the outgrowth of the 1977-1981 newsletter edited by Rich and Faye Kennedy of New Jersey, a newsletter that served a contingent of knob collectors that were bound together by correspondence and an occasional friendly visit.

Jim was a man of great depth and perception, to a degree attained by few people. In answer to my September 1977 inquiry soliciting his ideas on the possible interest felt for a club formation and for his ideas, he replied with a three-page letter. The content was both hopeful and prophetic, as evidenced by the following quotes: "As your book becomes more widely circulated, I'm sure you will find yourself becoming the focal point of a lot of correspondence with all sorts of suggestions and proposals for setting up a club." (That materialized.)



Maud Eastwood  
President

"Maybe someone will surface that has the time and inclination to put something together." (That materialized.) "I would think serious collectors would attend weekend meetings either regional or national." (That materialized.) Then, he further generously offered, "if it develops that a paid staff person is required to carry out some organizational duties, I would be glad to financially support it."

Jim often spoke with gratitude of his lovely wife, Lee, who was with him in all matters "doorknob" and who also filled the office of Secretary-Treasurer of ADCA.

As elected Vice-President for the year, I will be stepping into Jim Kaiser's footsteps, endeavoring my best to do even half the job I know that he would have done. As sadly as we all will miss Jim, we will always be grateful for his inspiration and carry on in a manner worthy of him memory.

# ORNAMENTAL DESIGN IN ANTIQUE DOORKNOBS

by Len Blumin

## OVAL KNOBS

- N-119 OSTEND - Reading, 1910 catalog.  
N-120 ISIGNY - Louis XVI, Yale & Towne, 1910 (also Guerin).  
N-121 Unknown  
N-122 ARCADIA - Barrows.  
N-123 Unknown  
N-124 SAVENAY - French Renaissance, Reading, 1910 catalog.

N-119



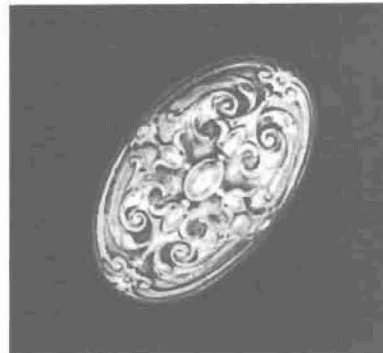
N-122



N-120



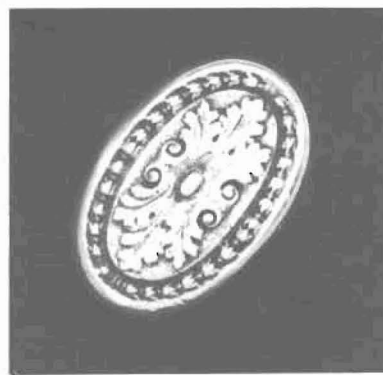
N-123



N-121



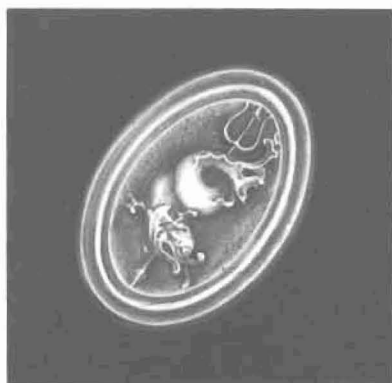
N-124



OVAL KNOBS  
 (continued)

- N-125      HEREFORD - (HG), Gothic, Sargent.  
 N-126      LOUVRE - Corbin, 1905 Catalog.  
 N-127      SARGENT - Reminiscent of N-125.  
 N-128      Unknown, unusual shape.  
 N-129      ROOSTER KNOB - Yale & Towne "Special" design, 1910.  
 N-130      Egyptian style lady. - Corbin (?).

N-125



N-128



N-126



N-129



N-127



N-130





# Touring Des Moines

With Barbara Liesman

Had a nice letter and phone visit with Ray Nemec, asking me to tell you about Des Moines.

I am a fourth generation Des Moiner. My great grandfather came here from Terry-Town-on-the-Hudson in 1874. He was a stone carver and a sub-contractor on our beautiful state Capitol.

I wish I could take you on a personal tour of Des Moines. We would start at the Capitol, on the east side of the Des Moines River. The Capitol, built greek cross design, is situated high on a knoll overlooking much of Des Moines. It has a center gold leaf dome with four corner lesser domes. Twenty-seven kinds of marble were used in the interior....beautiful marble fireplaces. The law library with it's handsome spiral stairways to the tiers of books, Supreme Court rooms with ornately carved walnut, magnificent chandeliers throughout and a series of mosaic panels that greet you at the second level of a wide beautifully carved marble stairway are well worth you taking time to see the Capitol.



From the Statehouse west, at the foot of Capitol Hill, will be our new State Historical building. It should be opened by the time you come in September. Then on to our geodesic dome botanical center on the river front. It's displays change with the seasons. Outside are nice walk around gardens. You would see a piece of modern metal sculpture. I say it looks like a rib cage of a pre-historic monster that belly upped.

From the gardens we would make a quick trip to City Hall. There has been some good restoration work done and it has a handsome marble stairway and great brass light fixtures. Then we would cross the river to the west side of downtown Des Moines. On the river front, across the street from each other, are two nicely restored favorites of mine. Our main library has a beautiful stained glass dome, cherry woodwork, a gallery all the way around the main room and looking down you see a great big glass star in the floor. Light shows through from the lower level. While I was growing up, I spent many happy hours in this library.

Next we would go to our old Post Office which is now used for additional office space by our County government. The two story lobby has been redecorated to the original colors. Fortunately it had never been remodeled or otherwise spoiled, and is now used as an art gallery and for interesting traveling displays.



# DES MOINES (continued)

The business and shopping districts, a few blocks farther west, have enjoyed a real renaissance. We have new office buildings, sky walks, great shops, fun places to eat and drink, Younkers Department store where they still maintain a lovely tea room...I love it all. Beats going to a mall anytime.

And with a little luck, maybe the Sherman Hills, designated a National Historical area, will be having their fall walking tour while you are here for the Doorknob convention.

I collect doorknobs because of my own interest in Des Moines. My grandparents had a fine old home near downtown, an area developed in the 1870-to-1900 era. They died in the early 1930's and the area changed much in the next twenty-five years. Then came plans for a freeway through the area I had grown up in... and I had a dream! A fireplace from Gramp's house. There had been three of them and now there were none. But there were still doorknobs and that is how I got started. I bought five at 25 cents each. One each for two aunts, who had grown up in the house, and two cousins. I knew immediately I would mount them for paperweights. It was then I became interested in doorknobs, but only from homes of folks I had known or houses that had been owned or built by well known Des Moines folk. I let a lot get away at first as I really didn't realize I was collecting doorknobs.... I was saving a bit of Des Moines. And so I wish I could tour you thru Des Moines as my grandmother did in the mid 1920's. She loved to ride the trolley cars. On Sunday you could ride all day on a pass for 25¢, and she would take me along, pointing out homes and barns where she had played and who lived there, and there and there and so I learned to love Des Moines, my home town.

## ADCA CONVENTION REMINDER

September 24-26, 1987

Des Moines, Iowa



### Len Blumin Donation

Len Blumin, author of the book, **Victorian Decorative Art**, has donated over 260 copies of the publication to **The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**. The club appreciates Dr. Blumin's generous gift.

The association is selling the book for \$10.00 plus a \$1.00 shipping and handling charge for each book. Members may want to take advantage of this special price and may do so by sending \$11.00 for each book they want to **ADCA**, P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126.



The first R&E trademark. First used in 1851, registered in 1872



In 1886, Russwin became the Company trademark as well as trade name.



This trade symbol has been used as the Russwin trademark since 1959

### LOCK MUSEUM NEWSLETTER RECEIVED

The December 1986 issue of the Lock Museum of America Newsletter was received. The newsletter contains a listing of the Lock and Hardware catalogs in their collection. Thomas Hennessy, curator of the Lock Museum, writes that the Museum's library contains one of the largest collections of full line lock and hardware catalogs, books and magazines in the country.

For more information on the catalogs, and costs of copies, write to Lock Museum of America, Box 104, Terryville, CT 06786.



At the September 1984 annual meeting, then President Len Blumin announced that the ADCA Board of Directors had voted to honor the memory of Emil R. Miller, a charter member and 1983-84 club archivist, by naming our club archives and library, "The Emil Miller Memorial Library."

President Blumin then presented three books that had been donated by their authors: "The Antique Doorknob" and "Antique Builders' Hardware, Knob and Accessories" by Maude Eastwood and "Victorian Decorative Art" by Leonard Blumin. Len also donated his only copy of Babcock & Stowell's 1894 catalog. This was the beginning of our permanent club library of complete books.

Martin Meldahl later presented the new library with his copy of "Corbin Catalog Number 28M" and I contributed Emil Miller's "P. & F. Corbin, 1905 Catalog" and his "Sager Locks & Hardware Catalog NO. 37, 1937."

That was the start of the library in 1984. It has continued to grow, but we are always looking for new additions. If you have any old hardware catalogs that would enhance the library, we would be delighted to have you help us grow even more. Remember that your donations are tax deductible.

#### CLASSIFIED AD SECTION

Members are reminded that you dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge.

**FOR SALE,** Victorian Decorative Art (book) by Leonard Blumin. \$10.00 plus \$1.00 shipping and handling for each book. ADCA, P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL. 60519-0126.

**WANTED,** To trade or buy, The Commodore Hotel Sailing Ship Doorknob (pictured on page 5, 0-106, The Doorknob Collector, issue #21). Donald Pearson, 38 Judson St., Canton, NY. 13617.

#### LETTERS

##### LIKES NEWSLETTER

Have a copy of THE DOORKNOB COLLECTOR and find it interesting. I am always glad to have people collect. Happened to talk to a neighbor the other day and found he collected belt buckles. New collectables turn up all the time. THE DOORKNOB COLLECTOR is well done. I don't know ADCA member Jack Cooney of nerby Villisca, Iowa. Villisca is where the ax murder occurred in 1912 and was the subject of the book last year, "Red Dawn".

C.W. Fishbaugh,  
Newspaper Columnist  
Shenandoah, Iowa

##### Likes Len's Book

I'm pleased to report that the book I ordered, "Victorian Decorative Art," has arrived and is the best book I have ever received.

I hope Mr. (Leonard) Blumin puts out another book soon, the work in the book is great, the best I've seen.

William E. Hart  
Henderson, Nevada

##### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

I am wondering if you could send me a subscription form of The Doorknob Collector and give me some information about the three books.

I would also like some information as to what catalogs you have reproduced that are for sale for the period of high cast Eastlake bronze door hardware.

Doorknob collecting is interesting in spite of what my high school friends say.

Robert McNutt  
Ottawa, Ontario

##### ADDRESS CHANGE

Moving your doorknobs to a new address? Please let us know. Be sure to include your old address along with your new address and mail them to ADCA, P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL. 60519-0126.