



The Doorknob Collector

Number 47

May-June 1991

"First timers" are encouraged to come

The annual convention of the **Antique Doorknob Collectors of America** will take place in South Lake Tahoe, California, from August 11th to August 14th 1991 at the Tahoe Sands Inn. Members planning to attend are encouraged to complete the registration forms, which were mailed recently, as soon as possible, but not later than July 19, 1991.

Marge and Joe Bornino are the co-chairpersons. They would like to remind members who have not attended a past convention that we have all been "first timers" at the past conventions. Marge says, "we don't have to tell you that it can be a time of uneasiness. We aim to put you first timers at ease from the very start."

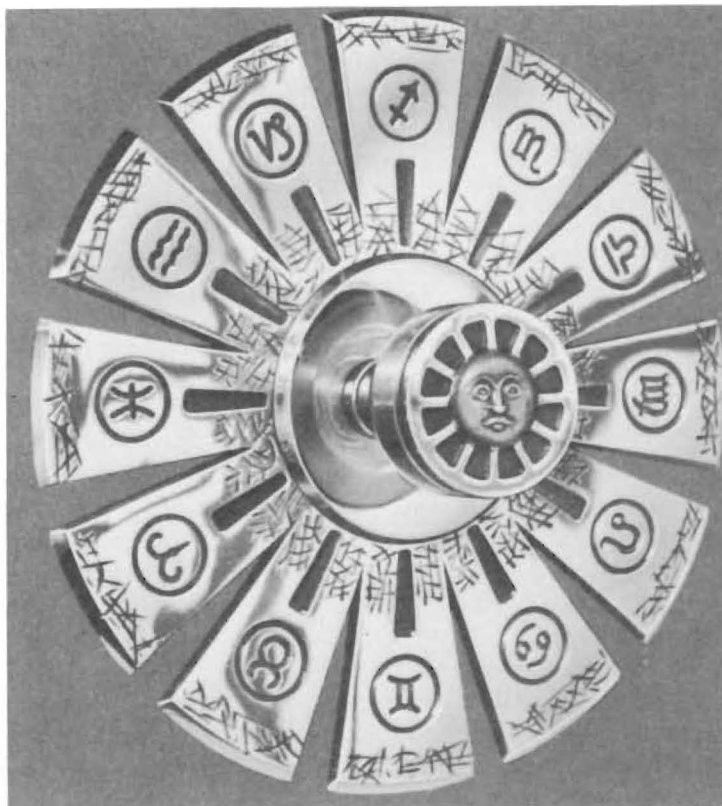
Your registration fee automatically entitles you to a table in the convention hall. The tables can be used for showing displays and/or knobs you

wish to sell or trade.

There will be an auction on Tuesday night. Members have put many fine pieces of hardware up for auction and some good buys are always made. Everyone, whether they participate or not, seem

to enjoy the auction.

A reminder: The convention registration has been sent. If you need extra registration forms, or if you have any questions about the 1991 convention, please contact the **ADCA** office.■

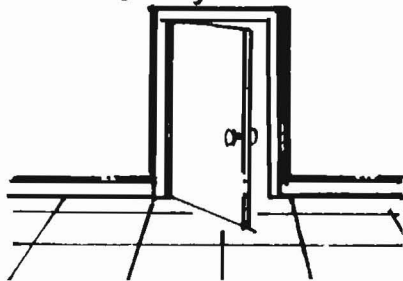


ZODIAC

Schlage Lock Company
Symbol of the heavens...
Aztec influence...
knob 3" with 12" dia.
backplate

THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemec



Recently Danielle Arnet listed in her weekly "Collectibles" column in the Chicago SUN-TIMES the major flea markets in the Chicago area. Almost every weekend there is a flea market to attend. For those who may be traveling to the Chicago area in the next few months we would like to pass along the information Ms Arnet supplied to her readers.

First weekend of the month. The Kane County Flea Market, at the fairgrounds, on Randall Road in St. Charles. Hours are Saturday from 1 to 5p.m. and Sunday 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$3.

Second Sunday of the month. The Grayslake Antique & Collectibles Market, at the Lake County Fairgrounds, routes Illinois 120 and U.S. 45 in Grayslake. Hours are 8a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$2.

Third Sunday of the month except July. The Wheaton Antique & Collectible Market, at the DuPage County Fairgrounds, 2015 W. Manchester, Wheaton. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission \$2.

Fourth Sunday of the month except August. The Will County Fairgrounds, Peotone-Wilmington Road and West Street, Peotone, IL. Hours 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$2.

Several members responded favorably to our suggestion of compiling a listing of all known hardware catalogs and books. Art Paholke has indicated he would be willing to tackle the job of putting together a list of catalogs, etc. We encourage members to send their list of catalogs, etc, to either Art or to **ADCA**. If you have any questions please let us know.

Speaking of Art, some of his collection is featured in the Summer 1991 issue of **COUNTRY COLLECTIBLES**. M.E. Cooper has written a story, titled Decorative Doorknobs, which touches on the history and where to find old and new doorknobs. Charles Wardell, Maude

Eastwood and ADCA are mentioned in the article. ■



The 1991 **ADCA** membership roster is enclosed with this issue to all paid members. The roster includes 190 members. Two additional members have been added since the roster was printed, bringing the total membership to 192. Last year at this time there were 177 members.

The 192 members are located in 37 states, the District of Columbia, two Canadian provinces and one European country. California leads with 28 members. Illinois is second with 18 and New Jersey is third with 13.

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Strawberries and Doorknobs

by Charlie Wardell

My first taste of strawberries came at age two. The delicate aroma, color and flavor have made them, in my opinion, food for the angels. My mother served them with sugar and cream whenever in season and her jars of preserves (in the days before frozen foods) assured us of having the wonderful fruit to enjoy the year-around. A strawberry pie baking in the kitchen perfumes the entire home with such a delicate aroma even the most dreary day becomes a time of enchantment. I can't conceive of anything more delightful so I guess that anything this good is unhealthy or sinful (or both) and I should repent and turn to apples and oranges for my eating pleasures. On second thought, I'll be content to die young and I'll face the consequences if I can have my strawberries! Brag about your Folger's coffee, your Gallo wine, your Jimmy Dean Sausage, your Whitman's chocolate and your French cooking if you will. Nothing excels a bowl of tasty strawberries.

Another favorite of mine that deserves some discussion - lots of it - is the collectable doorknob (and its associated hardware) that entered my life at age forty. I had never regarded a

doorknob as anything more than a grip for opening and closing a door. They were about as interesting as the sidewalk. Then "that day" came when I noticed Corbin's "Putman" pattern unexpectedly. I shudder



when I realize I could have overlooked it in its dismal surrounding. The first knob made such an impression with its beauty and craftsmanship I was astounded. Like the first crocus appearing among the dead leaves and ice of late winter, it shown with the elegance of a precious stone. Pardon the poetic language but this was a day of discovery. Like in my discovery of girls, the mind and body were in accord and the magic worked. Today I will travel great distances to view new specimens (not girls) an discuss at length their charms - always

hoping for new acquisitions to add to my collection.

Most collectors happened upon their favorite thing while engaged in some other endeavor. My discovery of doorknobs occurred this way in an abandoned church in Greensboro, NC in the early 1960's. I was loading stained glass windows that I had bought into my station wagon when I noticed a lone door, still swinging amidst the rubble, with its hardware intact. I was both captivated and mystified. I began a search to find who made the hardware and when and where. This has thrilled me for nearly thirty years and every piece of literature and my fellow fancier of hardware fill in the blanks one by one. There is still much to be learned about the American Hardware Industry and I'm still digging for the facts.

There was little information about it and the libraries couldn't help. The antique shops didn't have such mundane things as doorknobs and The Smithsonian Museum in Washington came up with a blank. They still have nothing documenting the hardware industry.

The flea markets were starting up in my area then and occasionally I'd find a



nice knob there, but usually the dealers had only the plain porcelains or wood knobs. The nation was embarking on a gigantic road building and Urban Renewal program that was taking miles and miles of buildings down. The wreckers' yards then became my hunting grounds and a paradise for me on weekends. Here were hundreds of windows and doors, bricks, boards, plumbing fixtures and everything. Stacked in convenient rows, with hardware intact, I could pick from the magnificent hardware of the past seventy-five or more years. A few coins bought most knobs and one dollar was the top price. Remember this was when a new Ford or Chevrolet cost \$1500 and a house sold in the fifteen or twenty thousand dollar range.

All this may sound too good to be true, but I think I was earning less than \$100.00 a week as a carpenter. Also, people hadn't awakened to the charm of old architecture and it's appurtenances. The

timing was most fortunate in that the hardware I was acquiring was the best ever produced. The compression casting process was patented in 1870 and the detail and styles have never been surpassed. In fact a decline in beauty and quality of manufacture began about 40 years later. As one artist friend said: "Five thousand years of discovery and development of art was discarded after fifty years of application." Aah, for the good old days.

Every find I made was an indication that there was more to come and great adventures awaited me each weekend at the wrecker's yards. Talk about the thrill of the hunt! Big game hunting could not have offered more. Although I was alone in my hobby (I thought) I knew I wasn't losing my mind even if this wasn't certain to others. Be it irrational, eccentric, odd or peculiar I had become a dedicated collector! My direction was decided then, now and forevermore. Amen. Robert Fulgham almost said it right: "All I really need to know I learned at age forty."

A collector is the strange embodiment of the detective, the antique lover, the Yankee trader, junk dealer, beach comber and pack rat in one

suit of clothing, usually soiled and ragged. Some of a scholar, historian, architect, archaeologist and philosopher dwell in all of us. As I've previously said, all of man's accomplishments would have vanished were it not for the collector.



A recent article by Jim Lahrer, the newsman, praises the service to society by fellow pack rats, "our car trips down country lanes and blue highways are treasure hunts." To the general reader he says, "Envy us the characters we meet in the course of finding, trading, selling, buying touching, oohing, aahing." Harry Rinker, the antique writer, claims that he gets his high, not from drugs, but from his finds at the flea markets. Collecting certainly adds a new dimension to life and rejuvenates the psyche. (continued on p.7)

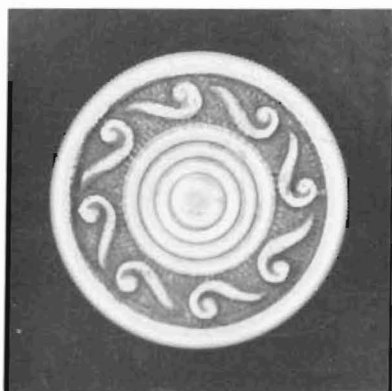
Ornamental design in antique doorknobs

by Len Blumin

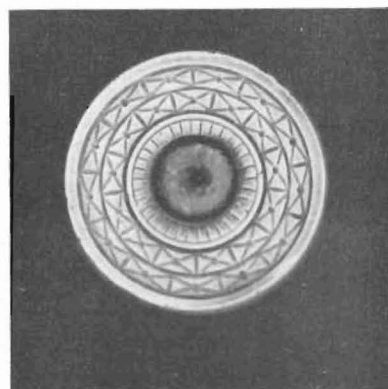
CONCENTRIC SYMMETRY

- M-119 Cast. Some say this is a "Questionable" design.
 M-120 Simple design, nicely finished.
 M-121 "SAXONIA," R&E, 1909 catalog. Also fourfold.
 M-122 Gilbert type of knob (fixed.)
 M-123 Patented shank. TAD, p.84. ? Clark type (ABH, p.165.)
 M-124 A ninefold Prouty knob. Central button operates latch. (ABH, p 179.)

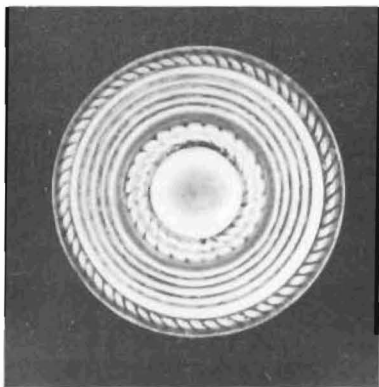
M-119



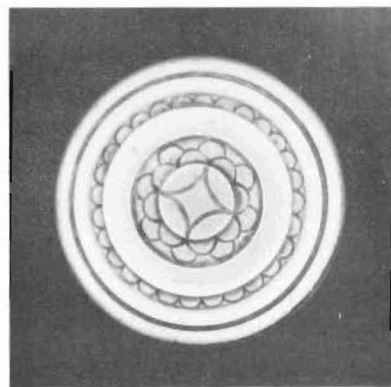
M-122



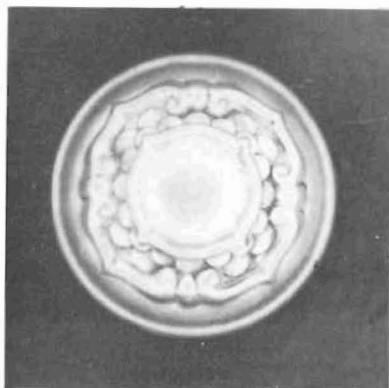
M-120



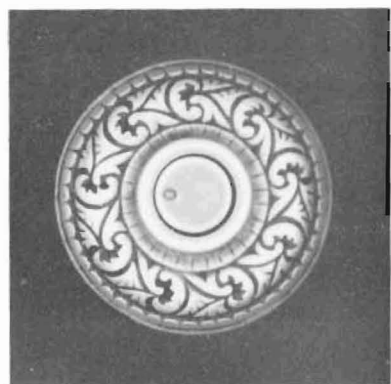
M-123



M-121



M-124



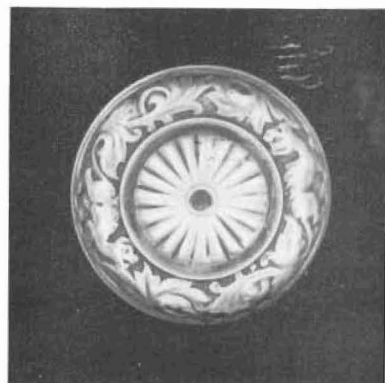
CONCENTRIC SYMMETRY,
continued

- M-125 Corbin, 1905 catalog. Well made, depressed center.
M-126 Difficult to classify. Eight rosettes, fivefold central swirl.
M-127 Chicago/Niles, A wreath of flowerbuds.
M-128 Acanthus and two beasties in the border.
M-129 You could also call it a sixfold.
M-130 Corbin. 1895. ? "ETRUSCAN."

M-125



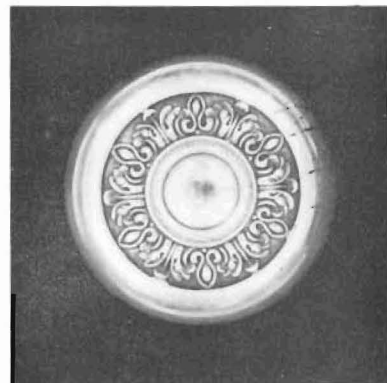
M-128



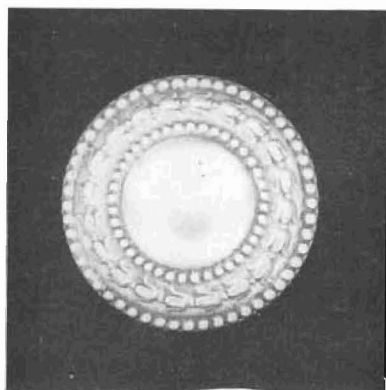
M-126



M-129



M-127



M-130



Strawberries (continued)



That first door knob opened many doors to an increased interest in architecture, design, industrial history, metallurgy and the other arts and sciences. It is a paradox that the great books on famous homes of the South, the West and New England never mention hardware. Neither do the fine homes magazines so widely distributed over the nation bring up the subject of hardware. Awesome tales are told and magnificent pictures detail the elegant buildings and this is good documentation, but is far from a complete picture. What about the doors? Didn't these buildings have them and accompanying locks and hinges to make them functional? What kept these edifices protected from the creatures of the night, robbers, peddlers, weather, dirt and noise? Certainly, a chapter is missing here and an honest approach as to just what a door is must be made.

A door is simply a barrier to the uninvited but it is also a social tool and badge of prestige. A closed door denotes status and, open, it signifies a level ground for our human relations. The destinies of billions of people with earth-shaking decisions were (and ever will be) made behind them. A door is a statement, an introduction and a farewell and men have adorned it with their finest art to signify its importance. The door possibly is the oldest invention of man and of environmental control. The carpenter, likewise, is the oldest professional. Not that other thing of ill repute. I could way eloquent on and on but you follow me in my respect for doors and hardware.

While researching the doorknob I learned of balusters, brackets, beams, corbels, cornices, clapboards, soffits, fascias, rafters, joists, and pegged floors. I became acquainted with stenciled walls, wainscots, newel posts, chandeliers, hand made bricks, mails, gates, and grilles. Oh yes, wavy window glass is a beauty mark and a definite dating tool. I've really become an authority on early construction methods and materials and I'll consider offers to

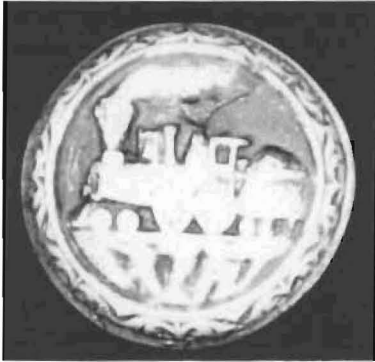
host a television show like "What Old House?" or "Push It Over."

Seriously, I admire the old buildings and even more so the workmen who had no power tool and sometimes shaped every stick that went into the building. As a carpenter the major part of my life, I love to study, visit and handle these old structures and experience the aura of a journey back in time.

The reader should, by now, know the heart of this collector and, by the grace of God, it is pumping strong and steady. You can be sure I'll be hunting at the next flea market I hear about if I can tear myself away from my strawberries. To you fellow strawberry lovers, I have a recipe for the mock strawberry shake if you can't find the real thing. It is delicious and uses beets and fruit juice. It would fool even me.

Joys and frustrations are plentiful at a huge flea market and, to see one thoroughly, you must have stamina and patience. I have both and I've walked fourteen hours straight and didn't see it all. This was followed the next day by seven hours of hunting and walking after which I sat down and counted my treasures. Pennsylvania, Ohio, Georgia and Vir-

ginia are my favorite hunting grounds and the wallet is the only inhibitor. Weather is also a consideration in the winter, but the South is kind to the likes of me and a flea market or mall is open every weekend.



Considering that the population of the United States grew by 93 million persons from 1830 and 1920, I figure there were over a billion doorknobs made and installed in that period. Since the great majority of this hardware has been replaced by more modern stuff, a lot of good hardware is floating around or stashed away for you to hunt down and put in your collection.

And, for heavens sake, clean it up so it will show the artistry that was intended. You wouldn't leave the grime of decades on a piece of furniture nor would you call it "patina" the smears and dirt of the road that collect on a vintage auto. A buffing wheel isn't necessary but some modern cleaners and

some old-fashioned effort will work wonders and tell the world of the pride you have in your collection.

When you are in my area I want you to stop in and visit **WHAM*** talk shop, see some of the hardware you missed and, if my supply holds out, partake of some strawberry preserves or ice-cream on the house. The door is open.

I'm going out now and look for that elusive Mallory Wheeler Indian and locomotive knob. Wish me luck or trade me the one you have.

*Wardell Hardware Art Museum. ■

ROSTER UPDATE

The following are additions to the 1991 **ADCA** roster which is enclosed with this issue of **The Doorknob Collector**.

#120

Patrick Hughes
111 High Ridge Road
Lombard, IL 60148-3703
PH: 708-495-1984.

#257

Ed Bauler
317 East 15th
Wellington, KS 67152.

Archives from P.10

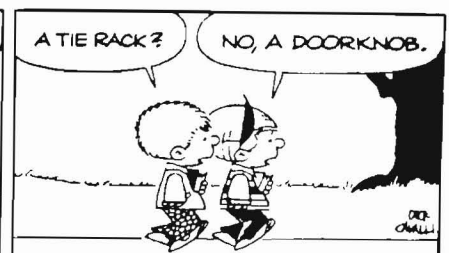
Hardware, Types of Pottery, Manufacturing Processes, Major Corporation Collections, Suggestions and Examples of Displaying and Sharing your Collections, Photographing your Collection, Kinds and Types of Collections, Kinds and Types of Doorknob Materials, Suggestions for Appraising your Collection.

After reading this booklet, you can come away with a lot of good ideas, more knowledge about your collection, and maybe even some questions that you would like to have answered. This is an excellent resource material to have, so keep it in mind to order when we next offer catalogs. ■

The earliest design patents for ornamental iron hardware were awarded to Cornelius Erwin and Henry Russell in 1858, for cast iron lock plates, and were titled, "Village" and "Pioneer."
Taken from Continuing Educations Booklet--34 Q and A



WINTHROP by Dick Cavalli



Meet Ed Sobczak

You have to get up early if you are going to beat Ed Sobczak to a flea market. Ed likes to get an early start looking for doorknobs. During the winter months he is often at Maxwell Street before dawn. He is a frequent visitor to the Kane County and DuPage County flea markets.

A native of Chicago, where he lives, Sobczak, was introduced to **ADCA** by Art Paholke, whom he met often at the Maxwell street flea market in Chicago.

Ed specializes in collecting pairs of knobs. If he does not think he will get a matching mate for a knob, there is a better than even bet he will trade that knob for one to complete a pair.

Sobczak will call and say, "this is Number 154," referring to his **ADCA** membership number. He is an enthusiastic collector willing to trade, buy or sell. He has become very knowledgeable on door hardware and enjoys talking to people who share his interest. ■



Ed shows a visitor one of his displays.



Ed examines a new acquisition.

Some places to visit when attending the 1991 Convention. All are located in the Lake Tahoe/Reno area.

Carson City, Nevada

The capital of Nevada is located here. Also, the Nevada State Railroad Museum, a still functional roundhouse, the Carson Nugget Casino with the world's rarest gold collection and the Steward Indian Museum and Trading Post.

Virginia City, Nevada

Much of the gold and silver from this area helped finance the Civil War and the Transcontinental Railroad. Virginia City was founded over 130 years ago and many of the old buildings have been restored.

The Ponderosa Ranch

Located on Incline Village on the north shore of Lake Tahoe, it offers an exact replica of the TV model plus an amusement area, petting farm and a Western town with general store, saloon, etc.

The doorknob exchange

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

WANTED. Buy or trade: C-102, C-103, J-102. Rosaria Sinisi (#223), 16 Clifton Place, Brooklyn, NY 11238, Phone: 718-638-4966.

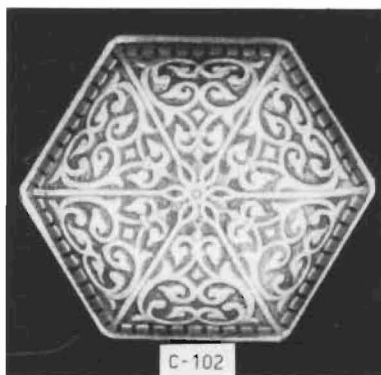
WANTED. Buying figural and emblematic knobs. Please describe and price to Richard Hubbard (#192), 162 Poplar Ave., Hackensack, NJ 07601.

FOR TRADE. Lions Head by R&E. Will trade for other knobs of similar importance. Interested in a Crow Wing County knob, a pigeon (A-113) or a M-W figural knob. Will also consider emblematic or state seals. Charles Wardell (#9), P.O. Box 195, Trinity, NC 27370. Phone: 919-434-1145.

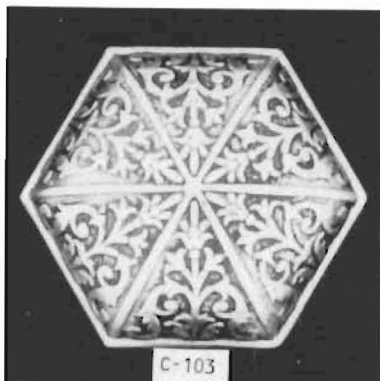
FOR SALE. If you are passing thru San Diego, stop in and see Liz's Antique Hardware, at the Unicorn Antique Mall, 704 J Street in downtown San Diego. Inquires by mail: Liz Gordon (#111), P.O. Box 16371, San Diego, CA 92116. Phone: 619-284-1075.

FOR SALE: Still time to get your **ADCA** sweatshirt to have for

the convention. All sizes, all colors. Doggie doorknob likeness on sweatshirt. Price \$16.50 each. **ADCA**, Dept.. S, c/o L.C. Bolen (#113), 17 Tree View Drive, Apt. B. Lithonia, GA 30038. Phone: 404-981-1752.



FOR SALE. Large selection of knobs - brass, glass and porcelain. Multiples of some decorative sets in stock. Also available, escutcheon plates, pulls and mortice sets. Specializing in authentic antique lightening lighting, fireplaces, glass and iron work. Donetta George (#229), BRASS KNOB, 2311 18th St.. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Phone: 202-332-3370.



**FROM THE ARCHIVES
WITH ARCHIVISTS**
Steve/Barb Menchhofer

34 Questions & Answers

Recently it was brought to our attention that perhaps some of our club members were unaware of the vast wealth of information available to them in the Continuing Education Booklet - **34 Questions and Answers** offered through the Archives.

Developed and compiled by John Holland, with contributions from himself and six other doorknob collectors, the booklet was made available to club members for the first time at the fifth annual **ADCA** Convention in 1985 and has since been offered through the Archives.

Very worth while and interesting to read, the booklet contains many topics that the collector has had thoughts about at one time or another. Among the many topics discussed are: Early Doorknob Manufacturing, Signs and Clues for Identifying Age of

(continued on page 8)