



The Doorknob Collector

Number 55

September - October 1992

Elegance in Elgin

President's message

by Win Applegate

...Victorian, that is.

Lillian and Richard Balasa hosted a fine 1992 convention. Well planned and orchestrated as it was, they had an ace-in-the-hole...a community full of history and Victorian houses.

Did you know that from the late 1890s to 1940 you could buy a precut house from Sears Roebuck and Company? It was helpful if you lived near a railroad siding, for obvious reasons. Did you want your pre-cut with an indoor bath? In 1904 they started at \$310. Other options included built-in china closets and, of course, hardware with a choice of finishes.

The Victorian theme, the Sears precut houses and the convention theme of Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company was interlaced throughout the four or five days.

On Friday, Lillian led an auto caravan that pinpointed several Sears precuts and other historical points of interest in and around Elgin. Lillian's portable bull horn aided her (on-the-spot) talks and got occasional reactions from the locals.

Tea was at a turn-of-the-century Tudor Victorian, *The Iron Hedge*, now seeing duty as a Bed and Breakfast. The trip to Chicago's Sears Tower was detoured to *Salvage One*. This



Sears, Roebuck Catalog House
The Crescent

salvage firm has enough knobs to give a new collector a good start.

Kane County flea market attracted many on Saturday. A number of our members are regular fixtures there.

By Sunday morning it was down to business with display judging prior to the segment which was "open-to-the-public".

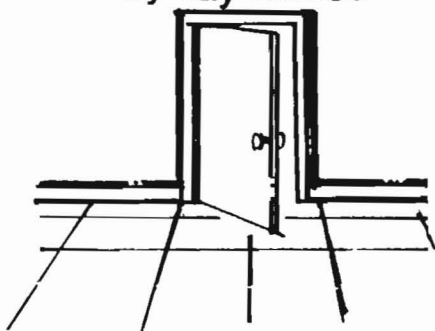
First time exhibitors were Philip Ondersma, Marilyn Hunt, Richard Wise and Carol Stone. It was worth it just to watch them as the buying and trading moved into high gear. In case you have never attended, this activity never stops until all car trunks are locked and the cars are driven at least ten miles toward home. I purchased my last knob about 4 PM after the picnic and most of the people had left.

A feature was added that could possibly become permanent. On the open-to-the-public day, many attendees were in Victorian dress. From garments of their great grandmothers to

(continued on page 3)

THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemec



I would like for you to drop me a note today. It is true, I love to get mail but this time I am looking for some help. There are three questions I would greatly appreciate getting your opinion on.

The first two deal with the convention. If you were to attend a convention what three days would prefer it to be held on. For example, would you prefer Friday, Saturday and Sunday, or a Tuesday Wednesday and Thursday, etc.?

The second question has to do with the month the convention is held. Please let us know what your favorite month is...any one of the twelve. Incidentally, if you have no preference on days or months, please let us know. That will help, too.

The third question has to do with the newsletter and doorknob prices. Would you like to see more on prices? We know

that doorknob prices range considerably, both by areas and dealers. There are several approaches that can be taken on pricing features and we will explore them if you have the interest. Again, your input will help set the direction we go.

The note can be on a card, letter or fax.....but please let me know your preference or if you don't have any. That way we can serve you better.■



Richard Balasa
(In full attire)



E-130 ARCOLA
Mfg:Barrows
1925

Our Thanks to All.....

It was a pitch in and help effort from day one when help was needed to set up the table assignments and so it continued through the entire convention.

We won't forget the volunteer Barbershop Quartet who were the lively evening entertainment nor the members who joined in the sing-a-long. The unique input set forth by the Show and Tell members will be fondly remembered... Anyone for an opium session? Just ask Maud...

Last but not least, it takes a select amount of experienced persons to run the Auction, and we had the best... A special thanks to the NemeCs - for without their commitment and encouragement we never would have said YES to hosting the convention.

Your show of appreciation to us made it all worth while. The club has given us memories to last a lifetime...Elgin truly did get a "learnin" from the ADCA show.

Rich and Lil Balasa



The Doorknob Collector

Published six times a year by Antique Doorknob Collectors of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 126, Eola, IL 60519-0126.

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Phone: 1-708-357-2381

FAX: 1-708-357-2391

Printed by Sun Printing, Naperville, IL

Annual Membership in USA: \$20.00

Foreign rates on request.

Elgin

(continued from page 1)

red suspenders and paste-on mustaches, that which folks such as the Zycs had been suggesting for years became a reality. Next year, your truly will not look so far out of place.

Education is a corner stone of our organization and was heavily emphasized on Monday with four presentations.

Charles Bednar (note-not ADCA's Charles Bednar) of the Gifford Park Association gave a slide presentation. Just 13 years ago, much of Gifford Park was the "other" side of town in Elgin. The association raised interest in the run-down part of town and was instrumental in defining the Elgin Historical District. Before and after slides were startling as multiple family dwellings were returned to single family homes with more appropriate Victorian color schemes...a lesson in neighborhood rebirths.

Jeanette Field presented the Sears precuts. The over 450 models of houses offered are now compiled in a book with prices and specs...sort of a "Field Guide" (pun intended). Thousands

of precuts exist today and a trip to the attic or the basement to note the numbered rafters or joists will verify a house's origin. According to Jeanette, the Sears guarantee on these houses was unsurpassed.

The President of the Elgin Museum Association, Christian Schock, chronicled the History of Elgin, Illinois. There was a time when to much of the world Elgin stood for quality. The highest grade of butter was "Elgin Quality" and, of course, the quality of the Elgin watch was well known, Schock traced the growth of the city from 1892 when the watch company employed 2,800, a very high number for the then small community. The town fought back from several economic depressions and the introduction of margarine to its pre-

sent balance of industry.

Our own members "stood us well" as Arnie Fredrick gave a slide presentation on mechanical door bells. This is worthy of an article in the news letter and I will only say that is was an excellent and informative presentation.

From previous articles you are aware of the lack of information regarding the founders of the **Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company**. Ray Nemec dug into the Niles Family history. Answering many questions about both the firm and the people, Ray's talk showed the results of determined research. Perhaps another article Ray?

The auction is always a key event. This is run by Arnie and he runs it well. Personally, I was apprehensive about

(continued on page 4)



"The Barber Shop Quartet"
Rich Kennedy, Charlie Wardell
Bill Byington & Len Blumin

Elgin

(continued from page 3)

the Tuesday morning schedule but it worked. Fine tuning is always being done and next year will be no exception. Well done, Arnie.

I almost started this article by not using the word "convention" because it is as much a time for us collectors to gather and fellowship together, this means food and quiet conversation with fine people.

Friday evening was light fare at the Nemecs. Loretta and Ray are multifaceted and as collectors they're a nice blend...not only a good collection but all on display.

Sunday evening's Victorian dinner included Yorkshire pudding, Bangers and Mash and homemade snickerdoodles (by Balasa's). Songs by a male quartet consisted of men of sound character but a sound of questionable character...a nice after dinner show.

A presentation to Maude Eastwood, a very prolific writer for the newsletter over the years, Maudie was given a book containing all of her articles. Let the record show that is was a large book.

The final meal was a picnic in the park after the Tuesday auction.

Victorian elegance in Elgin? Yes.

Excellence in Elgin? Yes, thank you Lillian and Dick. ■



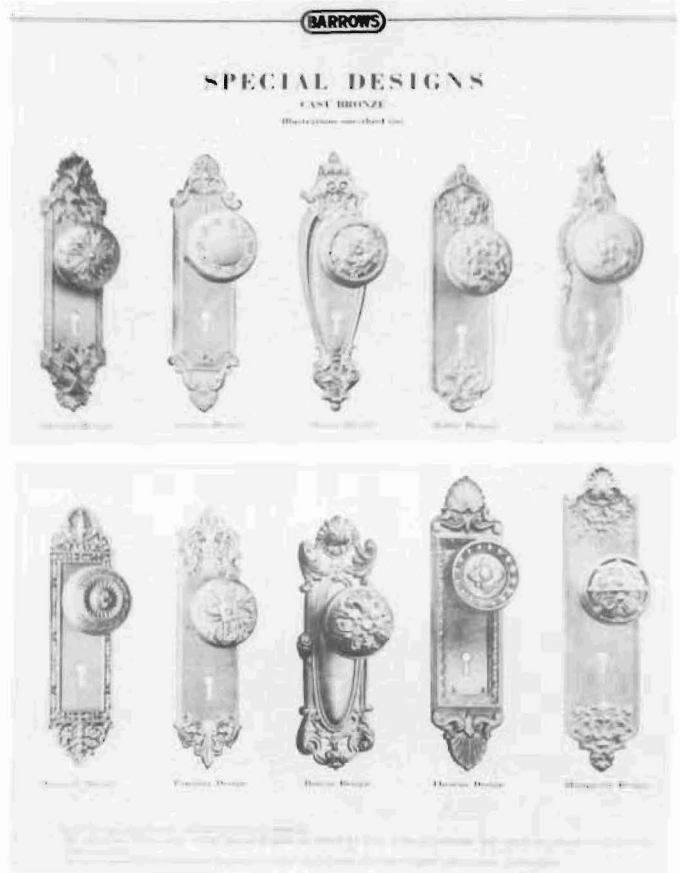
Victorian Dinner in Progress

An opportunity to help

A post-convention visit to the 1890-1925 location of the **Barrows Lock Company** created an opportunity for the **ADCA** to exercise a mandate to aid in the education and preservation of historic builders' hardware.

Ray and Loretta Nemec and Maude Eastwood visited the site at the urging of member Richard Wise. They were gratified to find the main building restored, in use, and plans for further restoration of adjacent buildings.

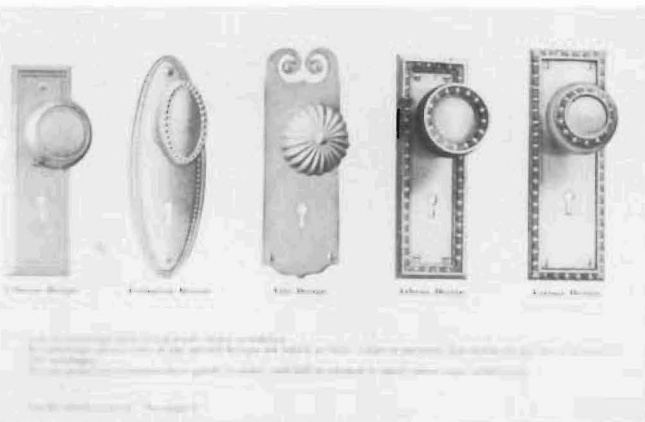
Barrows, acquired by Yale & Towne in 1925, was moved from the Lockport location, 32 miles southwest of Chicago, around 1932, therefore, 60 years later, little memory and few artifacts were left to proclaim the going concern **Barrows** had been. **ADCA** might well make an offer of its



services to augment the modest collection of **Barrows** artifacts found and displayed on site.

An unofficial, on-the-spot suggestion was made to locate and make available on a loan basis, the metallic **Barrows** knobs and plates illustrated on pages 102 and 103 in **Antique Builders' Hardware**. Also, the dearth of **Barrows** historical and definitive material at the local library makes the offer of a copy from our Archives of the 1925 **Barrows** catalog seem advisable.

Expect more on this opportunity in a later edition of **The Doorknob Collector**. ■



HARDWARE CATALOGS

The following is a list of Barrows Lock Company catalogues, prior to 1940, known to exist. They are in the hands of collectors, museums and/or libraries. If you have a Barrows catalog not listed below, please furnish us with the year, catalog number (if there is one) and the amount of pages.

BARROWS LOCK COMPANY

YEAR	PAGE
1925	159
1938	565

Enjoyment at Elgin



Carol Applegate
Martha Mueller



Orval Ryan



Kathy & Don Warming



Linda Smeltzer



Shirley & Daniel Powers



Betty Madison, Florence Jarvis
Mariam & Gene DeLange



Elaine Shreve



Left to right: Helen Ryan, Kae Zyc, Flicka Thrall,
Mariam DeLange, Carol Stone, Carol Meermans
Front row: Maude Eastwood, Lillian Balasa



Rhett Butler



Bill & Helen Byington



Richard Wise



Marilyn Hunt



Barbara Liesman



Ray & Loretta Nemec,
Maude Eastwood



Bruce Gerrie, Charles Bednar



Charlie Wardell, Lillian Balasa



Phil & Karen Ordersma



Back row: Gene Moen
Front: Steve Arnold



Judy Niedenthal, Betty Jackson



Gene DeLange, Ray Zyc, Eugene Stone, David Olafsen,
Len Blumin, Arnie Fredrick, Bill Byington
Front row: Don Shreve, Ed Thrall



Paul Carton, Gregg Filardo



Carolyn Hubbard



Dolores & Debbie Fellenz

Doorknobs in radio spot

(The following letter was received from the author of the Alka-Seltzer doorknob spot. In response to our request for a copy so it could be shared with our members who may not have heard it. We thank him for his kindness in granting permission to print it.)

Thanks very much for your warm letter regarding the recent "Doorknob" radio spot for Alka-Seltzer. I'm proud to claim authorship of that spot and couldn't be more pleased that several of your members enjoyed it.

How I developed the concept for the commercial is a long story only slightly less painful than a dull date. I can however relate that several other hobbies were considered along with doorknob collecting. For instance, at one point we thought about making the theme revolve around someone who collected pieces of barbed wired. However, it was brought to my attention that many people actually do this for a hobby. In fact, some rare pieces of barbed wire fetch great sums of money. Next, I considered someone who collected "odd pieces of string."

However, that seemed a tad strange even for our tastes. It was then that I came up with the idea of doorknobs. I thought doorknobs were esoteric and interesting enough for someone to collect, yet everyday enough not to be appreciated by others. Of course, I was totally unaware that an organization such as your's existed.

John Hahn,
Assoc. Creative Dir.
McCANN-ERICKSON
NEW YORK, NY

ALKA-SELTZER "DULL DATE"

(SFX: RESTAURANT NOISES)

ANNCR: ALKA-SELTZER'S LAWS OF
INDIGESTION #26.
The duller the date, the
more you will eat.

MAN: My hobby's collecting old
doorknobs.

WOMAN: Fascinating. Pass the
egg rolls.

MAN: I'll never forget my
first doorknob.

WOMAN: I'm sure. More spare
rib please.

MAN: It's quite a story.

WOMAN: Better pass the
dumplings.

ANNCR: Law #1. The more you
suffer from acid
indigestion or
heartburn with headache,
the more you need the
fast relief of
ALKA-SELTZER. (PLOP,
PLOP).

MAN: Yep. I can talk doorknobs
all night long.

WOMAN: Ohh, Waiter.

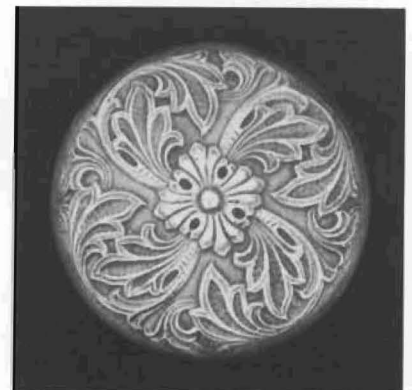
ANNCR: ALKA-SELTZER. BECAUSE
THERE'S NO LAW AGAINST
FAST RELIEF.



As I slowly come down off my convention "high" I first of all would like to thank the Balasas for the excellent job they did in running the convention. Also my thanks to all the others who had any part in making the convention a memorable event. I think the best part of the convention, at least as far as I was concerned, was in chatting with the folks that I had corresponded with over the year.

I am also having fun explaining what one does at a doorknob convention for four days, some people still think I'm kidding them when I tell them I even collect them. Hopefully in the next several months I'm going to promote more interest in the ADCA by exhibiting a part of my collection at the local library and museum.

I am already looking forward to the convention in Washington, D.C. in 1993, it may take that long to clean and identify all the new knobs I acquired, particularly the emblematic ones. Hope everyone has a great fall and happy Doorknob hunting. ■



E-117 Panama
Mfgr: Barrows

FROM THE ARCHIVES
WITH ARCHIVISTS



Steve/Barb Menchhofer

484

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.

Solid Bronze Metal Door Knobs.

Class 2.

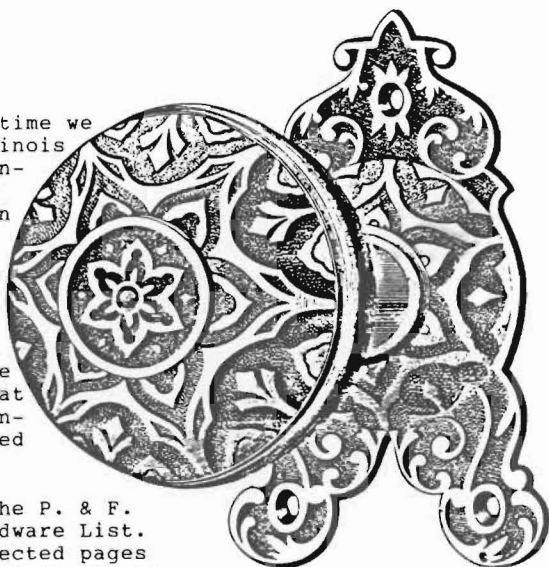
FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Price Book, Page 39.

What a wonderful time we had in Elgin, Illinois at the ADCA convention! Seeing old friends once again and making new ones was great. We can't wait until next year for another one.

As we put away the catalog copies that we took to the convention, we glanced through them.

One catalog was the P. & F. Corbin 1874-5 Hardware List. (Bronze). 45 selected pages are offered through the Archives. The items shown in this catalog are very large and detailed. This page was taken from the catalog to show the detail. A variety of items are represented such as escutcheons, bell pulls, store door handles, drawer pulls, parlor bell levers and doorknobs. This is an excellent reference to use to identify some of your hardware as Corbin.



No. 2113. Treasury Pattern.

No.	Diameter of Knob.		DESCRIPTION.	Per pair.
	Inch.			
2101	3		Round Knob, on $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch Plain Spindle, for Heavy Front Doors,	\$
2113	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		Round Knob, Treas'y Pat'n, Round Rose, Plain Spindle, for Heavy Front Doors,	

With Swivel Spindle, add \$

Per pair.

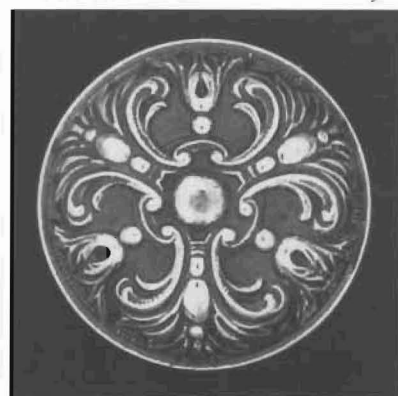
The doorknob exchange

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

WANTED. R&E knob #921 (J-102), also rose no. 950 (R&E catalog 1875). Paul S. Carton (#201), 3016 Geyer Ave., St. Louis, MO 63104. PH: 314-771-6437.

WANTED. 1 Pair J-201 (large size). Rosaria Sinisi (#223), 16 Clifton Place, Brooklyn, NY 11238. PH: 718-638-4966.

LOST: At the convention, the book Victorian Decorative Art. Please contact Ray Zyc, 1042 Milton Avenue Janesville, WI 53545. PH: 608-754-2643.



G-124 Dorcas
Mfg: Barrows

DEADLINE

All ads, material and articles for the November-December 1992 issue of *The Doorknob Collector* should be in the hands of the editors by October 25, 1992.

Roster Update No. 2

The following are additions to the 1992 ADCA roster which was enclosed with the May-June 1992 issue of The Doorknob Collector.

#293
Hank Vogel
River Town Galley Antiques
176 West 7th St.
Winona, MN 55987

#294
Glenn A. Pratt
W. C. Vaughn Co.
55 Messina Drive
Braintree, MA 02184-6700

#135
Mike Maldonado
51-B Union Avenue
Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064

#148
Bruce Gerrie
2711 Lafayette
St. Louis, MO 63104

#155
Bill Causey
600 Park Blvd.
West Cape May, NJ 08204

#13
E. P. Dick
3701 Bryant Ave. So. #509
Minneapolis, MN 55409

#95
Dennis W. Keck
13430 foliage Ave.
Apple Valley, MN 55124

#295
Edward Donaldson
1488 York Road
Carlisle, PA 17013-9237

#296
George P. Stillwaugh
219 Gillick Street
Park Ridge, IL 60068

#297
Craig S. Phillips
2324 33rd Street
Allegan, MI 49010

#298
Genevieve Szaradowski
P.O. Box 48895
Niles, IL 60174

#299
Edmond Goedert
437 N. Kenilworth
Oak Park, IL 60302

#300
David Masterson
3773 17th Street
San Francisco, CA 94114

#301
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4173 Bloomington Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

#302
Joe & Diane Jeffrey
Route 2 Box 127
Lexington, NE 68850

#303
Angela Loda
941 Willow Creek
West Chicago, IL 60185

#304
Patrick A. Randazzo
Maple Grove Estates
1 Birch Court
Andover, NJ 07821

#82
Tim Samuelson
11432 So. St. Lawrence
Chicago, IL 60628

#305
Clarence Westman
138 Dwight St.
New Britain, CT 06051

#306
Ron Andrlich
Ron's Knobs 'N' Knockers, Inc.
1214 1/2 South Fifth Street
Aurora, IL 60505

#307
Kent Westbrook
Brass Unlimited Antiques
102 Dillon Avenue
Campbell, CA 95508

#308
George L. Jurach
1909 26th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

#309
Brian Applegate
4655 Centerbury Court
Bensalem, PA 19020

#310
Carol Applegate
319 N. Burtis Ave.
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

#311
Hillary Applegate
319 N. Burtis Ave.
Hamilton Square, NJ 08690

The following are changes to the 1992 ADCA roster.

#111
Elizabeth Gordon
Liz's Antique Hardware
453 South La Brea
Los Angeles, CA 90036
PH: 213-939-4403

#98
Jeffrey G. Beutner
2400 E. Newton Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211

#123
Marge & Joe Bornino
P.O. Box 11999
Tahoe Paradise, CA 96155

#70
Joseph & Julie Mann
6204 Maren Drive
Speedway, IN 46224

#235
Don Warming
41 Back Cove Estates
Portland, ME 04103

#85
Dale Sponaugle
728 Guilford Court
Silver Spring, MD 20901
PH: 301-589-5008

#25 Mark Davidovich
13364 Borden Ave.
Sylmar, CA 91342

