



The Doorknob Collector

Number 81

January-February 1997

ADCA Convention, Pennsylvania - August 13-16, 1997

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE SECOND HALF OF YOUR LIFE

by Rich Kennedy

I. THOU SHALT MAKE PLANS - Be hold, be daring. Take up a new hobby, try collecting doorknobs, get active in the Antique Doorknob Collectors of America.. anything to keep your mind and body active.

II. THOU SHALT LOOK ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE - Be optimistic, there are doorknobs out there you haven't seen or have in your collection.

III. THOU SHALT TRAVEL - There is no time like the present to visit a good flea market or antique shop.

IV. THOU SHALT NOT WHINE - Its' a time waster and won't get you that doorknob any cheaper. Better to devote your time to a more outrageous story e.g. "I just bought this old house".

V. THOU SHALT WRITE AT LEAST ONE ARTICLE FOR THE ADCA NEWSLETTER And that means one article every other month, be creative but do it ... it only takes two minutes everyday.

VI. THOU SHALT MAKE A LIST OF 20 THINGS YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO DO AND DO THEM AT ONCE - Too often we put things off due to the lack of time. The first one being to clean, polish and count them, doorknobs that is.

VII. THOU SHALT WEAR OUT RATHER THAN RUST OUT - Actually I think its the other way around, doorknobs rust out before they wear out.. or maybe we're thinking about old cars.

VIII. THOU SHALT TAKE TIME OUT TO SMELL THE ROSES -Which loosely translated means, take time out to enjoy the works of art in the beautiful doorknobs in your collection.

IX. THOU SHALT MAKE TIME TO LAUGH AND FROLIC - You can always laugh at the one that got away or you missed but your fellow collector found and bragged about.

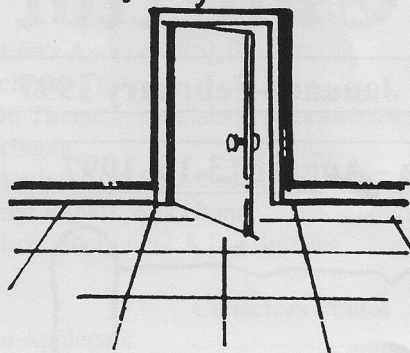
X. THOU SHALT FORGIVE AND FORGET - I can't. I can't because I know I'll never see that doorknob again especially at the price I saw it for.

Inside

Open Door	Page 2
Iron Age Builder's Hardware	Page 2
The Ritz Carlton	Page 4
Radioactive Doorknobs	Page 6
Archives	Page 6
Doorknob Exchange	Page 6
Letter to Editors	Page 7
1996 Index	Page 8

THE OPEN DOOR

by ray nemec



Doorknob collectors around the world gained an ally when the *Antique Doorknob Collectors of America* was formed in 1981. It was assumed the only real interest in the aged hardware was collecting specimens of a fine art once used in old homes and commercial buildings. There were several among us, such as Len Blumin, who wanted to fit their Victorian homes with the proper hardware but we were mostly collectors of antiques.

There has been a change in the past 16 years and we have become a part of it whether we want to or not. This was brought to our attention forcibly on the front page of a section in the *Chicago Tribune* on Sunday, January 12, 1997. The story picked up from the Reuter news service was titled "It's a fact." It read:

"A doorknob, latch or knocker may seem an unlikely asset. But as the restoration of old homes and historic buildings picks up, the hardware needed for the finishing touches has become valuable. If you have door hardware or doorstops you think may be valuable, contact a specialist antique dealer or club like the Antique doorknob Collectors of America, in Eola, 708-357-2381."

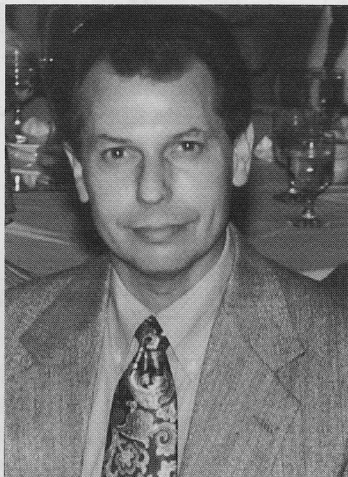
This increasing interest in restoration can be seen in the makeup of ADCA's membership. When the club was started there were only a few dealers, probably less than 5% of the membership. Now dealers make up almost 40% of the membership and each year that number increases.

Some collectors have felt dealers are responsible for higher prices. The fact is that increased demand for the hardware

(Continued on page 6)

Meet Your Board of Directors

Each issue *The Doorknob Collector* will feature the picture of an ADCA member who is on the Board of Directors. In this issue we present:



Steve Menchhofer

Steve Menchhofer and his wife, Barbara, have been members of ADCA since 1983 and have attended every convention since. Steve's appointment in 1996 to serve a one year term is his second term on the board. He was on the board from 1985 to 1988. The Menchhofers hosted the 1988 convention at Indianapolis and have been ADCA's archivists since 1989.●

Get Well Wishes

Speedy recovery wishes go out to Betty Wise, wife of member Richard Wise, and Kae Zyc, both of whom had recent hospital stays.

Art Deco Enthusiast

The 4th World Congress of Art Deco Society sponsored by the Los Angeles Art Deco Society invited Bud Wolski to speak at their convention on May 23, 1997 on Art Deco hardware. Bud would like to hear from other Art Deco hardware collectors prior to the convention to share information and thoughts.●

Did You Know?

Thirty ADCA members have served on the board for an average tenure or 4.3 years. Leading, in the point of service, are Maud Eastwood (14 years), Len Blumin (12 years), Arnie Fredrick (11 years) and Win Applegate (10 Years). Three former board members are deceased (Arnie Fredrick, Jim Kaiser & Darrell Razor).

THE ADCA BOOK PEDDLER

Book Prices

Antique Builders Hardware (three ring binder w/hard cover) by Maud Eastwood	\$21.50
Supplement No. 1 Antique Builders Hardware by Maud Eastwood	\$ 6.00
150 Years of Builders' Hardware: Forms, Use & Lore (three ring binder w/hard cover) by Maud Eastwood	\$27.50
150 Years of Builders' Hardware: Forms, Use & Lore (soft cover-style)	\$22.50
Victorian Decorative Art by Len Blumin	\$12.00
Moes' Enterprise Catalog of Authentic Pre- 1929 Hardware (1984) by Leonard Moes	\$12.50
The Builders Hardware Industry (by Walter H. McAninch, DAHC) A United States History 1830 to 1990s	\$25.00

*Canadian orders, add extra \$1.00 per book
Prices include shipping and handling costs.

Make check payable to ADCA

Mail order to ADCA Book Peddler
P.O. Box 126
Eola, IL 60519-0126

All ads, material and articles for the March/April 1997 issue of *the Doorknob Collector* should be in the hands of the editors by February 15, 1997



The Doorknob Collector

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

Raymond and Loretta Nemec, Editors
Phone: 1-630-357-2381

FAX: 1-630-357-2391

Annual Membership in U.S.A. \$25.00

Foreign rates on request.

Single issue of *The Doorknob Collector* \$5.00

Founded in September 1981, the *Antique Doorknob Collectors of America* is a non-profit organization devoted to those interested in collecting and preservation of Antique Doorknobs and related hardware.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writer and not necessarily reflect those of the Board of Directors of ADCA or the editors of *The Doorknob Collector*.

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Iron Age Builders' Hardware

by Maud Eastwood



Ornamentation -Cortona
by Yale & Towne 1893
Bower-Barff with enamel tracery

In 1882 nearly all fine builders' hardware was made of bronze, cast-iron being rejected as inferior and unsuitable. However, that situation was about to change, setting the stage for the Iron Age in Hardware to be recognized at the 1997 ADCA convention

1882 was the year Henry Towne of Yale & Towne obtained exclusive rights to use the English Bower-Barff rust proofing process on builders' hardware in the United States. Yale & Towne's perfecting this process, coupled with the use of Tilghman's (a Philadelphia patentee) sand-blast surface treatment, led to the wide acceptance of iron door hardware by the trade.

By the end of the decade, Yale & Towne and Chicago Hardware were supplying important buildings with ornamental cast-iron hardware. This metal lent itself remarkably well to fine detailed designs.

Not to stand still, by 1890 Yale & Towne had also introduced locks cased in steel. In 1894 they offered their first ornamental steel surface trim (knobs, plates, etc.), the design was named Arcadian. The race was on. Other companies closely copied

this first design and established lines in this practical new material.

An understanding of the three members of the iron family from which door hardware was made will help to properly label our specimen. While the all-encompassing term, iron, is legitimate when referring to any one of the three members (and to all items made of this metal), familiarity with their names, Cast-Iron, Wrought Iron, and Steel, will give the collector greater confidence.

All grades of iron are down-the-line derivatives of pig-iron, the product of smelted iron ores. Simplified, cast iron is made from pig-iron, wrought iron is a refined product of cast-iron, and steel is a refined product of wrought-iron. Cold rolled steel is the grade of steel that can be effectively shaped by dies to form knobs, escutcheons, butts, sash lifts, etc. with each successive refinement, the material was more economically formed into a finished product.

Happily, the fastidious collector will be able to clean his 1997 convention-bound specimen without fear of critical comments about destroying clues to authenticity, or have them downgraded due to wear. This applies to hardware of cast-iron. This type does not wear, the ornamentation is forever. The finish is another matter.

Bas-relief designs were technically the most suited for cast-iron although etching with chemicals and engraving with tools were also practiced.

Finished plated on iron are the least durable of all finishes due to the nature of the metal to rust more or less quickly, depending on the type. The rust proofing Bower-Barff process produced the most attractive and long lasting protection.

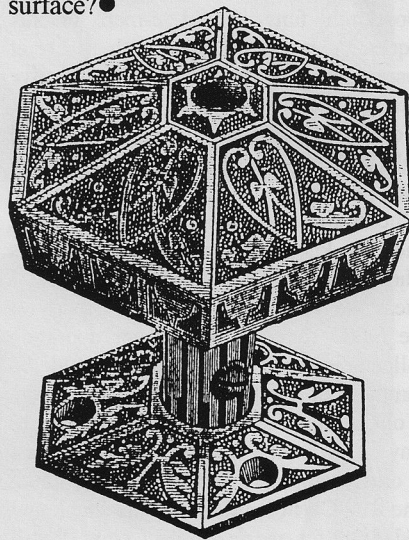
Finishes used on iron goods, in addition to rust inhibiting formulas, were brown and black japanning, copper, bronze, nickel and silver

plating. An earlier copper dip to retard rust left only a thin film. A popular bronze plating was called statuary bronze, used on iron and steel to impart the look of weathered statues (hence less cleaning).

Curiously, some collectors prefer to see brass and bronze finishes cleaned bright and shiny. Had this been the manufacturers original intent they would not have offered the large number of options for finishes, plating, and textures found in their catalogs.

To remove rust from Bower-Barffed cast-iron, use the finest of steel wool. To remove rust from wrought-iron, rub with a kerosene dampened cloth, then scour with extra-fine steel wool.

What examples of cast-iron hardware might we hope to see at the convention? An example from the trio of Russell & Erwin picture locks, patent dated in 1858 with scenes cast on the cover and named Pioneer, Village, or Immigrant? An 1889 Yale & Towne knob and plate with enamel tracery outlining an Etruscan school design, the tracery inlaid into a Bower-Barffed surface?●



Livingston & Co. 1875
Berlin Bronzed & Nickel plated
with Black Inlaid

Doorknob Giveaway



O-196
The Ritz-Carlton
Naples, Florida

Were you one of the lucky collectors who obtained O-196 from The Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida?

Newspapers around the country ran the following article several months ago:

"Doorknobs anyone? The Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida, is giving away the doorknobs to its 463 rooms. The old-fashioned bronze knobs, engraved with The Ritz-Carlton lion and crown logo, have been replaced by a computerized safety system that uses key cards. The old knobs, meanwhile, have been transformed into paperweights with felt bottoms."

The article then suggested that "doorknob fans should e-mail or fax requests" to the hotel with a brief description of why the hotel should give them this collector's item.

For those lucky to get one, it arrived right before Christmas with the following note: (see note)

The bronze knob is certainly a handsome one. We know of three ADCA members who each received one of the knobs. I guess we will never know how many of the 6,000 requests were from doorknob collectors. The Ritz-Carlton should be commended for their allowing collectors to obtain them. Hopefully other companies may follow suit. We would like to suggest to other companies not to alter the knob. The Ritz-Carlton did cut off the shank and added felt for use as a paperweight. It still weighs nearly 12 ounces and is a welcomed addition to anyone's collection. •

*Congratulations on winning a piece of art
and history and sharing in the tradition of
The Ritz-Carlton, Naples.*

*Your request for this original bronze doorknob
was one of 463 chosen -- from more than 6,000
enchanted letters.*

*Thank you for sharing in the rich history of
The Ritz-Carlton, Naples.*

Season's Greetings!

Radioactive Doorknobs

by Debbie Fellenz

Did you know that a doorknob can be radioactive? I found that out recently when someone came in the shop asking for Vaseline glass. I immediately thought of a Vaseline glass doorknob.

I have several in my collection so I showed those to him and sure enough they are radioactive. A light green glass one showed some reaction too.

The man in question is Mark Hart, from Livermore, California. He collects radioactive antiques and has about 300 items, from dishes to spark plugs. He gives lectures on radioactivity and radiation. He uses examples of antiques to get people to think, and exercise perception.

Mark never dreamed that a doorknob could be radioactive or that there would be people who collect them. When he saw them in my shop he understood why, "since there are so many unique designs and materials used in their construction." He was surprised that doorknobs were made of Vaseline glass. The active ingredient in Vaseline glass that makes it radioactive is NaU* or

Sodium diuranate. One sodium atom and two uranium atoms dissolved in the glass gives it the yellow-green color. This is much like cobalt dissolved into glass gives it a cobalt blue color. This will fluoresce under a black light.

Some glass does not have as much uranium salt dissolved in it so that's why green glass doesn't react nearly as strongly.

Mark has been collecting radioactive antiques for a little over three years. It started as a matter of curiosity. (How many doorknob collections have started that way?) He thought he would get one or two pieces and his collection has grown.

The FDA has asked Mark on several occasions if the radioactive antiques are safe and they definitely are, so our doorknobs are OK. He is looking for a Vaseline glass doorknob to add to his collection, so if anyone has one (reasonable, since teachers don't make much money!) they could contact him. Mark Hart, phone 510/423-4770. •

Ornamental Design in Antique Doorknobs

by Len Blumin

(The following regular feature is a supplement to Len Blumin's excellent book, **Victorian Decorative Art**. Copies of the book are available from ADCA for \$12.00)

Eightfold Symmetry

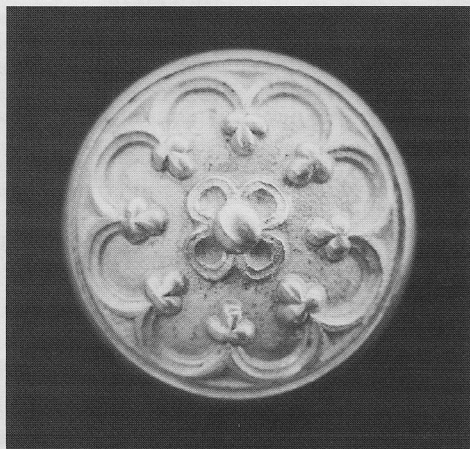
K-317 Gothic style, maker unknown.

K-319 Bronze Rouen design, Page 130, 1895 Chicago Hardware Manufacturing Company Catalog (Niles N0.21.)

K-321 Nice eightfold, bronze

K-235 Eightfold vernacular.

K-317



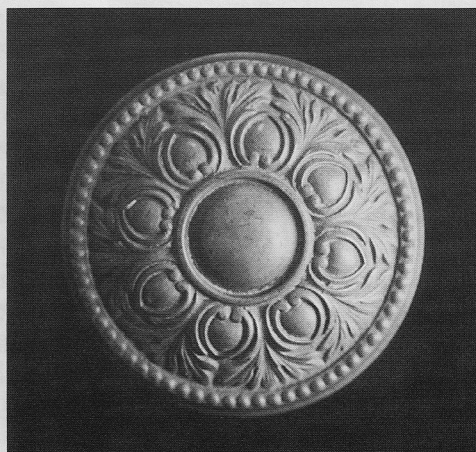
K-319



K-235



K-321



From The Archives



by Steve & Barbara Menchhofer

Welcome to the new year! The holidays have come and gone and winter has arrived. Now is the time to learn more about your doorknob collection and prepare for the upcoming convention.

We will be offering the catalog copies for sale in the next issue of **TDC**. There will be a new addition to the order form this time. Reading Hardware Catalog #20, dated 1923, will be offered in doorknob designs, selected pages, and complete catalog.

Please remember that we offer these copies only once or twice a year and that is the only time we have the masters out of the file. This is so they don't wear out.

Check out the order form in the next issue and be sure to order the catalogs that you want or need. They are a valuable asset to any doorknob collector. ■

Opendoor (continued from page 2)

brings increased prices and the need for more outlets. To keep prices down there has to be an increase in the supply of hardware. The *Tribune* article is telling readers who think they may have valuable hardware to seek out a dealer.

This can help bring out hardware collected by someone years ago and make it available. Unfortunately for collectors, the people interested in these pieces may be dealers or those working on restoration.

The interest in door hardware has never been greater. We see it here as libraries in the area ask us to display, organizations request speaking engagements and newspapers want to do stories. In almost each case, someone will come forward with hardware they have in their basement or garage.

Doorknob sources may be changing but we see a rosy future for doorknob collectors and dealers. ■

Doorknob Exchange

Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.

Wanted: Need Lion A-102 will buy or trade. Possible traders: A-105, A-106, A-301, B-107, C-104, C-105, C-106, F-215, G-101, H-101, H-233, H-273, H-407, J-101, J-102, K-101, K-205, K-116, N-101.
Steve Rowe (#287)
2535 Roberts Ave.
Clovis, CA 93611
PH: 209/299-8863

Hardware Service: Free Hardware Matching Service (Furniture & House Hardware). Send Photo-copy and SASE along with description to:
Robinson's Antiques (#460)
170 Kent St.
Portland, MI 48875
PH: 517/657-6155

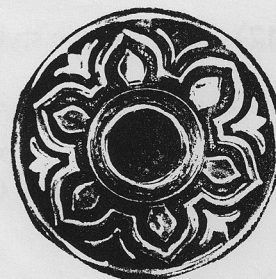
For Sale or Trade: Board of Education knobs, Seal of B of E Detroit MI, James McMillian, Delray MI c.1905, for sale or trade for cast bin pulls, cast hinges, hooks & furniture hardware.
Robinson's Antiques (#460)
170 Kent St.
Portland, MI 48875
PH: 517/657-6155

Wanted One rose 1-1/2" stamped back plates for behind tear drop knob.(See photo)
Steve Robinson (#460)
170 Kent St.
Portland, MI 48875
PH: 517/657-6155

Wanted: The following doorknobs.
C-101, C-103, C-104, C-106, C-107, C-108, C-109, C-109a, C-110, C-111, C-114, C-116, C-117, C-118, C-119, C-120, C-121, C-122, C-123, C-125, C-127, I-102, I-105, I-106, I-115, I-116, I-119, I-121.
Homer Snow (#149)
732 Sherman Street
Nashville, MI 49073
PH: 517-852-9455.

For Trade: I-112, I-113, I-114, I-120, J-101, J0213, J-217, J-301 K-203a, K-212, L-103, L-109, L-139, M-109, O-114, Steel oval knob w/Swastika, Plactic sphere (clear), Solid brass round knob 3/4" thick, Solid brass square knob 3/4" thick with square rose.

Homer Snow (#149)
732 Sherman Street
Nashville, MI 49073
PH: 517-852-9455



1996 ADCA FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The following statement is for the year January 1, 1996 through December 31, 1996 (excluding archives, auction, convention and museum accounts).

RECEIPTS	1996
310 Renewal dues	\$5036.00
311 New membership dues	788.00
312 ADCA publication sales	856.50
313 Promo, misc. item sales	362.50
314 Book sales (Eastwood, etc.)	1469.75
315 Donations	220.00
320 Int. on Temp. investments	87.04
330 National conv. income	4100.00
370 Archives	114.52
390 Miscellaneous receipts	-0-
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$13,034.31

DISBURSEMENTS	
701 Printing newsletter	\$2864.40
703 Other printing expenses	708.53
730 Postage(exclud.conv.)	1264.37
803 Operating exp., adm. office	489.43
804 Purchases: comp/fax/printer, etc.	260.57
805 Archives expenses	114.52
908 National Conv. expenses	3403.15
971 Honarariums	1000.00
981 Insurance	362.00
987 Condolence expenses	-0-
988 Purchase books	892.70
989 Purchase videos	20.00
990 Misc. Expenses	51.00

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$11,430.67

120 Excess of receipts over disb.	\$1,603.64
110 Beginning cash bal.	\$4,275.24
100 Ending cash bal.	\$5,878.88

Respectfully submitted,

Raymond J. Nemec,
ADCA Secretary/Treasurer
1/2/97

I was in an antique store back in 1995, one that I have visited regularly. On the inside of the front door is an A-205, also known as the priest knob. Although certainly not my favorite, I had asked the proprietor on several occasions if I could purchase it and he finally had agreed on a price of \$50.00 and another fine Victorian knob to replace it. The only catch would be a wait of approximately one year. A wait that was to end with his retirement from the business and the sale of his building. It seemed as if we would both benefit and I was happy to wait. In November 1995, Web Wilson held his first Antique Hardware Auction. Sure enough, there was my Priest Knob proudly presented as the highlight of Web's auction. Amazingly it realized a staggering \$850.00! My worst nightmare was realized when on my next visit to the Antique Store I was greeted with the question, "did you see how much my doorknob is worth?" So much for that knob I thought.

Two more auctions have since past and I have heard much talk about how they have and will continue to affect our club. Just what are the effects of this publicity? Web's Hardware Auction is hardly a new idea. There are auction houses nationwide selling everything from Sterling to fine Victorian furniture. *The Antique Trader*, is filled with mail order auctions each week of its publication. Although not original it certainly was a good idea for Web to put into practice. Each auction seems to be a greater success for him and his wife, and in reading the results it can be seen that there is great demand for good hardware. Sometimes I wonder why I didn't think of this myself! I am certain that if Web had not put this idea into practice, it would only be a matter of time before someone else would have.

There can be positive benefits for ADCA from Web's auctions. If hardware bidders would become new members we would all benefit. New members create new funds for the club to work with, new sources for buying and trading hardware, and new friendships! On the other hand we should be wary of this publicity too. I have to admit there was great disappointment when my Priest Knob no longer became available and if it ever is again I am sure that it will not be for the agreed upon

price. Published prices can destroy the market. Ask the collector of Tin-toys, Roseville Pottery or Victorian furniture what published prices has done to their collecting. We already struggle in the hunt for good hardware. Not only is it difficult to find, but it is often already overpriced. How many times have we seen common black porcelain knob prices at five times their worth in an Antique Mall? Now we can look forward to Priest knobs at \$850.00? How much will the doggie sell for in Web's latest auction? Will this price inflation stop?

As members of ADCA, is there anything that we can do to affect Web's auction and its results? Unfortunate as it must seem the reality is NO - we cannot. We may not like it, but we cannot be unhappy with Web. He is only a man in business who has taken on idea and is making the most of it. I have known Web Wilson for several years and I believe he feels he is doing the right thing for both himself and ADCA. I do not believe he would knowingly do anything to hurt ADCA or its membership. Then what can we do? We must educate the future collector. Can you imagine what the bidder of the \$850.00 Priest Knob or the record breaking Doggie Knob will think when they attend their first convention? Undoubtedly there will be disappointment!

As members of ADCA we need to do at least three things. First, we need to quit pointing fingers and plan our future. This club needs unity not dissension. Second, we need to encourage new membership like we never have before. New members at their first ADCA convention probably learn more in three days than they have in all of the years they have been collecting. This I know from personal experience. Finally, we need to discourage the publishing of prices. Although we cannot stop outside publications we can insure that our own newsletter not publish auction results. When potential collectors, members and/or dealers read these results they do not see the whole picture. Exciting details of unbelievable high bids paint an incomplete picture of what an item is really worth. Besides, just how accurate is an Auction bid? Auction prices are not the real value of an item but rather a reflection of two or more competitive bidders

who are often over zealous in the bidding process. It is clear that the bidder of the Priest Knob or the Sargent door bell pull that sold for \$260.00 in Web's first auction had no idea what real value was. If these buyers had better knowledge about hardware these high bids would never have been realized. ADCA should not advertise high prices in our own newsletter because we are not the benefactors.

In conclusion I must ask the question, "are we seeing the last days of fairly priced hardware?" No, when people realize that literally millions of doorknobs were produced, and see just how much hardware is still available they will understand that there really is very little scarcity of good hardware. You have to put things into perspective. We are not collectors of Faberge "eggs" or one of a kind tiffany presentation pieces. All of the publicity that hardware collecting is receiving will not spell the end of our collecting. However, if we can impact this publicity and educate the new collector we will find that it is in our best interest.

Steve Rowe #287

Clovis, CA

(We would like to encourage others to communicate through the **The Doorknob Collector** about this issue. Used as an open forum, the ADCA newsletter can be a useful tool for members.)

Thank You

Thank you for this wonderful doorknob club. The newsletter is always looked forward to.

Ann Marie Ferguson #341

Carmel, CA

1997 Display Contest Categories

The 1997 Convention Display contest categories will be as follows:

1. Best Iron Pattern display.
2. Best Iron Emblematic display
3. Best Iron Figural display
4. Best Bronze display
5. Most creative display
6. Best of show. (based upon total votes from categories one through five above.)■

1996 Index

At the beginning of each new year, we will list the previous year's features. Numbers refer to issue-page.

Activities

	Issue-Page
Wilson's Auction a Big Success.....	75-1
Michigan Trivia.....	73-3
1996 Theme - Porcelain by Maud Eastwood.....	77-1
Michigan	78-1
Tentative 1996 Convention Schedule	78-7
Grand Rapids Was Grand	79-1
Wilson Auction #2 A Big Success	79-4

Collectors Photos

Win Applegate.....	78-2
Rich Balasa.....	79-1
Norman Blam.....	76-1
Marge Bornino	79-2
Rachael Clark	79-7
Dwight Cleveland	79-7
Lorelei Crawford	79-7
Gene & Miriam DeLange	79-1
Maud Eastwood	77-2, 79-1
Mike Hill	78-3
Rich Kennedy	75-2
Tom & Chuck Krueger	79-7
Glen & Junella Leach	79-1
Ardythe Leaders	76-7
Raymond Lowe	79-7
Charles & Lori Mesken	79-7
John & Mary Ann Morscher	79-7
Jeff Reardon	79-7
Steve Robinson	79-7
Bob Rodder	80-2
Ed & Flicka Thrall	76-6
Charlie Wardell	77-3, 79-1
Jill Wilson	79-5
Web Wilson	75-1, 79-5
Camille Woodward	79-7

History - Research, People

1903 P & F Corbin Residential Hardware Suggestions, by Maud Eastwood	79-6
A Background Introduction to Iron Door Hardware in America by Maus Eastwood.....	80-3
Ardythe Leaders	76-7
Ceramic Door Hardware, Establishing Provenance by Maud Eastwood	78-7
Head for the Hills	78-3
Only Yesterday by Charles Wardell	77-3
Pages from the Past	77-6, 78-5, 80-7
Porcelain & Related Terms by Maud Eastwood	76-1
Simple Elegance Through Porcelain by M. Eastwood.....	76-3

From the Archives

.....	75-7, 76-8, 78-8, 79-8, 80-8
-------	------------------------------

Identifying Doorknobs

Moes vs. Blumin.....	77-8
Ornamental Design in Antique Doorknobs	
B-135	77-5
B-136	77-5
B-137	77-5
B-138	77-5
K-234	76-5
K-318	76-5
M-142	76-5
M-146	76-5
O-162b	75-5
O-178	80-5
O-180	80-5
O-182	80-5
O-183	80-5
O-184	78-4
O-186	78-4
O-187	78-4
O-188	78-4
O-190	75-5
O-191	75-5
O-192	75-5
O-193	75-5
O-194	75-5
O-201a	75-5
O-204a	75-5
O-205a	75-5
O-209	75-5
O-210	75-5
O-211	75-5

Meet Your Board of Directors

Win Applegate.....	78-2
Norman Blam.....	76-2
Marge Bornino.....	79-2
Maud Eastwood.....	77-2
Rich Kennedy.....	75-2
Bob Rodder.....	80-2

Miscellaneous

ADCA Convention Survey.....	80-6
Bits & Pieces by Win Applegate	75-3, 76-7, 77-2
Building the Market via Auction	79-5
Business Side of Things by Win Applegate	80-6
Finding a Doorknob (collector) in a Haystack	78-6
The Hardware Gallery	75-6
Hardware Puzzle Answer	75-6
Hurricane, Romance & Cobalt Knobs	80-1
Kennedy Comments	76-5, 76-6
Musing, No More Moore by Carol Meermans	80-1

Obituaries

Roger Gwillim 3-24-96.....	79-8
Fred Magnus.....	76-8