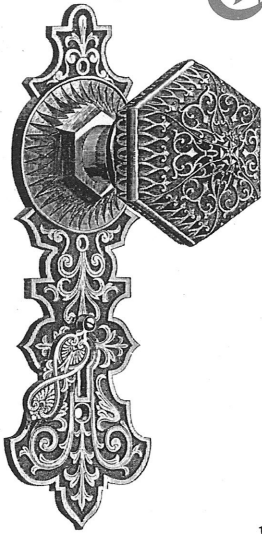


# The Doorknob Collector



Number 162

July-August 2010

**A Publication of The Antique Doorknob Collectors of America**

*A Nonprofit Organization Devoted to the Study and Preservation of Ornamental Hardware*

## THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD AND THE ELITE OF BALTIMORE

*By Allen S. Joslyn*

It should not come as a surprise that members of the ADCA, modest as their own abodes may be, are entranced by the super-wealthy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Modest porcelain knobs from ordinary houses are just fine, but there is nothing as exciting as the excesses of the wealthy in that period, as illustrated by their houses.

Our tour of Baltimore did not disappoint. The most interesting point (to me, at least) was the extent to which the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad created a very wealthy class there. Of course, railroads created much wealth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, much as high-tech (and hedge funds) did and do in our times. But unlike today, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century location was crucial, and Baltimore had it.

A few facts: The name of transportation game in the early and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in the East was two-fold: to get coal to the industrial and metropolitan areas of the country, and to open up transportation to the Midwest and the West. By 1820 the Erie Canal was created which could transport goods from the Eastern seaboard to the Great Lakes (and later the New York Central could do it by train). In Pennsylvania and New Jersey canals were dug to transport Pennsylvania coal across New Jersey to New York, and its suburbs. Baltimore understood that it had to act and open up a route to the Midwest, or it would become irrelevant. In 1827 the Baltimore & Ohio was incorporated to provide an alternative and faster route to the Midwest than the Erie's slower canal boats. In this respect, it was in a race with a similarly named canal company, which it eventually acquired. In 1831 it opened up a branch to Washington, D.C.



The Library at Evergreen \*

The B&O opened up large areas of the mid-west and connected them to the larger world. That is what made some Baltimoreans very wealthy indeed, especially the Garretts. As the tour demonstrated, they knew how to spend it.

Inside		
Convention Display Contest.....3	Other News from Portland ..... 4	Mc Math Award to Gailbraith.....4
The Doorknob Exchange.....4	Our Business Members ..... 6	VDA Update Sent .....5
Meet the ADCA Board.....5	The B&O and the Elite of Baltimore... 1	VDA IV Editorial Committee .....5

\* Library picture printed with permission of Evergreen

The Garrett fortune began with Robert Garrett, who emigrated from Northern Ireland and started a trading firm which hauled manufactured goods by Conestoga wagon to interior areas. His son, John Work Garrett, became a favorite of the financier Johns Hopkins, and in 1858 was appointed president of the B&O. The B&O was invaluable to the Union in the Civil War by maintaining communications between Washington, D.C. and the northern states. Under John Work Garrett, the B&O became enormously successful, one of the four major railroad lines in the East.

Two of the Mansions we visited were presented by John to his sons. The Garrett-Jacobs mansion in the Mount Vernon area of Baltimore was presented to Robert Garrett II and his bride, Mary Sloan Frick (yes, of those Fricks) as a wedding gift. She was keenly aware of social standing, particularly hers. She initially thought the mansion insufficient in size, but when Robert II became President of the B&O, she determined that their position required more spacious digs, and vastly expanded the mansion by demolishing two adjoining houses, and rebuilding. Robert II lasted three years as the B&O's President, and died relatively young. Mary remarried - to the live-in Doctor who had treated Robert II.

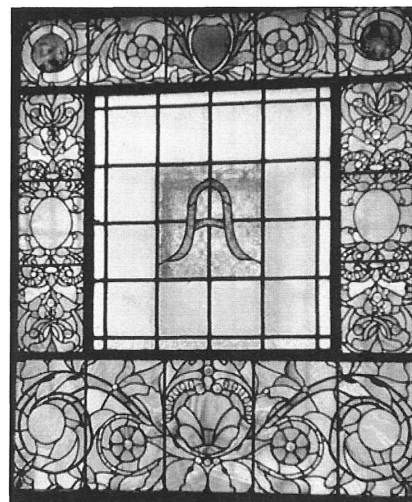
Mary's position became so pre-eminent in Baltimore that she was known as "the Mrs. Astor of Baltimore's 400." When she died in 1936, she left her art collection to the Baltimore Museum of Art, and lots of money to Johns Hopkins Hospital. The mansion's furniture was sold and it went through a decline, eventually being acquired by the City of Baltimore, which planned to demolish it. Fortunately the Engineers Club had lost its old premises, and in 1961 leased the mansion. The Club then brought the mansion, and has meticulously restored it. The membership is no longer limited to engineers, but reflecting its origins, the Club's library contains much-in-demand volumes such as the uniform electrical code of 1923.

The second son of John Work Garrett was T. Harrison Garrett, who in 1878 was given Evergreen, a house which grew mightily into a 48 room mansion. It was first built in 1857, but upon receiving the gift, T. Harrison and his wife started to work, renovating and expanding the estate, which their eldest son, John Work Garrett (grandson of the B&O President) and his wife, Alice Warder, continued.

John and Alice followed their own stars, living abroad for extended periods and becoming patrons of the arts. John followed the career of an energetic heir - he went into the diplomatic service, served in European capitals (he was Ambassador to Italy) and collected with exquisite taste. The mansion is a fascinating combination of High Victorian, extensive collections of Japanese and Chinese artifacts, and Art Deco. John and Alice also collected Picasso, Modigliani and Dufy. Alice had the gymnasium converted into a theatre, in which she sang for Baltimore's elite. This was a high period of Russian arts, from ballet to music to design, and the Garretts brought Leon Bakst, a famous Russian émigré, whom they had met in Paris, to Baltimore in 1922 to design the theatre, using themes from Russian folk art together with Art Deco design. Alice also introduced him to artistic circles in New York and elsewhere. There is a striking costume on display which he designed for Alice. Pictures of the theatre and of the costume can be found at [www.bmoremedia.com/features/basktheatre061510.aspx](http://www.bmoremedia.com/features/basktheatre061510.aspx)

John Work Garrett's library and its contents are outstanding. He obviously had exquisite taste and agents scouring England and the United States for the rarest of books. The library itself is beautiful, and includes autographs of every signer of the Declaration of Independence, Audubon's Double Elephant Folio of Birds of America (1827-1838), similarly huge, multi-volume sets devoted to birds of England, Australia and probably other countries, maps, and a vast collection of early Bibles. John and Alice died childless and left the estate to Johns Hopkins University, which now manages the estate.

We also toured three other beautiful mansions owned and lovingly restored by Agora Publishing Co. (the Tiffany window in one of the mansions is pictured) and the magnificent five-story Peabody Library. (See TDC 160 for more details). Curiously enough, there was only one person reading in the Peabody.



A Tiffany window in the Agora Publishing Co. Complex, a brownstone designed by Stanford White in 1882.

## Convention Display Contest

By Faye Kennedy

This year's contest was a real delight to the eyes. Our members displayed not only their doorknobs, but also their talents.

**Cheryl Blam** won for Most Creative. Her long-legged, long-armed, long-nosed individual was made by Cheryl. Look closely at the collar that she made by scanning the Corbin Ceylon knob (B-114) and applying the design to the fabric. Also note the basket filled with Corbin doorknobs. Cheryl says it took a month to create "The Corbin Collector". He is delightful!



Then we move to **Miriam and Gene De Lange's** display that took the prize for Best of Show. The Irish Setter doorknob, shown here,



was recreated in every detail in leather by Miriam. Gene had a case full of his favorite logo knobs with more leather work around the edge, and Miriam also had a sparkling display of glass knobs. All of their displays were striking.

**Steve Hannum** had the Most Outstanding Display of Corbin Hardware (see bottom photo). The 15 knobs were exhibited in a frame and eight of the knobs were displayed along with their escutcheon plates. I wish the photo showed more of the fine detail.



And last, but not least was **Jessie Brooks** with her Ugly Knob, dayglow pink plastic knob with a flower cut into it from the back, circa 1950. She tells us she threw away its match that was JUST day glow pink with no redeeming value. So Norm Blam presented Jessie with the Ugly Knob trophy that is passed on each year.



Sorry I didn't get a picture of her knob, but believe me, a black and white picture would not have done it justice.

There were some members who thought that Jessie's knobs were some of the most beautiful and should not have been displayed in the "ugly" category. Although rather recent, the circa 1950 Lucite knobs certainly have their own place in a collection.

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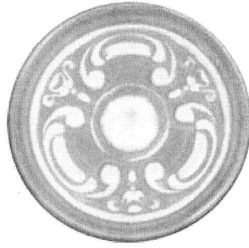
## The Doorknob Exchange

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:

G-114 Haven

Do you have either a brass Sargent's "Haven" entry set (knobs & plates) or passage set that you would be willing to sell. My friend is in the finishing stage in the long restoration of his 1910 home and needs these pieces to complete. Your help in locating this hardware would be much appreciated.



Mark Aitken (# 442)  
Email: mark.aitken@telus.net  
Phone: 250 386 6593

### Wanted:

Interior speaking tube



Vicky Berol (#450)  
Email: sfgofer@yahoo.com  
Phone: (415) 771-9899

## Cathy Galbraith Receives Mc Math Award

*By Allen S. Joslyn*

Three (or more) cheers for Cathy!! Our long-time member, occasional ADCA director, and, most importantly, the force behind the Bosco-Milligan Foundation's Architectural Heritage Center received the University of Oregon's 2010 McMath Award. It is awarded annually "to recognize an outstanding individual whose contributions in Oregon have raised awareness and advocacy through his or her commitment to historic preservation". As attendees of the 2007 Convention will recall, the Center occupies a beautiful historic building, and serves as an exhibition space and a resource center. The Center has led 390 preservation projects for more than 48,000 people in the Portland region. Issue 128 of The Doorknob Collector (Nov.-Dec. 2004) was devoted to the Center, including an extensive description by Cathy of the Center, and a history of the Center by Maud Eastwood entitled "Three Who Made A Museum" - Ben Milligan and Jerry Bosco, who collected all the artifacts, and Cathy Galbraith, who committed to preserve their collection and their building. In 1987 the Foundation was created and in 2004 the Center opened its doors under Cathy's leadership. (The ADCA contributed three display cases to the Liz Gordon hardware room).



## Other News from Portland

Bo Sullivan, who will be the host for the 2011 Convention, has an article featuring a very attractive pin-up from a 1896 plumbing catalogue in the current Old House Journal, Nov. 2010, p. 17.



## VDA Update Sent

By Faye Kennedy

The *Victorian Decorative Art Update* was sent out in July. You should have received your copy by now. Win Applegate has done an outstanding job on publishing the 100 knobs not previously in the VDA. All members will notice the improvement in the quality of the photos. Technology has come a long way. Now we begin the work on the next update which will be a total reissue of the book. There are corrections to be made as well as the addition of hundreds of new knobs.

This is not a job for a single person to do, so ask yourself how you might help the club and get involved in this endeavor. This is a real opportunity for members who are able to work from home to make a real difference. You will find a questionnaire enclosed. Just return it to Win Applegate and he will be in touch with you.

## *Victorian Decorative Art IV*

### Editorial Committee

By Win Applegate

We are seeking ADCA members to join with the Editing Team to develop VDA IV. It is expected that the DATE-TO-PUBLISH will be approximately December 2011.

Those participating will freely communicate, mainly by computer, corrections, new data, comments and photos. All members of the Editorial Committee will be fully aware of the complete development process and privy to decisions leading to the final product.

The recommended computer configuration would be:

- Broadband connection \*\*\*
- Microsoft WORD - - - No? – then we'll mail to you
- Microsoft EXCEL - - - No? – then we'll mail to you
- Laser Printer \*\*\*

\*\*\* Arrangements will be made with those with dial-up lines or ink jet printers to have some information mailed to them.

## Meet the ADCA Board

By Faye Kennedy

Each year Board members are elected for two year terms. John Roberts has been chosen to join the Board this year and we welcome him. Going off the Board this year are Loretta Nemec, Norm Blam, and Steve Menchhofer. We want to thank them for their years of service to the club.

Front row: Rich Kennedy, Win Applegate, Faye Kennedy, Vicky Berol, Jessie Brooks. Back Row: Nick Doto, John Roberts, Steve Rowe, Rhett Butler, Steve Hannum, Norm Blam, and Alan Joslyn. Missing from the picture are Maud Eastwood, Len Blumin and Don Pearson.

Feel free to contact any one of us if you have questions or suggestions about the club.



## Our Business Members

These are paid advertisements. The ADCA assumes no responsibility. For further information about these businesses see the Resource section on our website: [www.AntiqueDoorknobs.org](http://www.AntiqueDoorknobs.org).

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