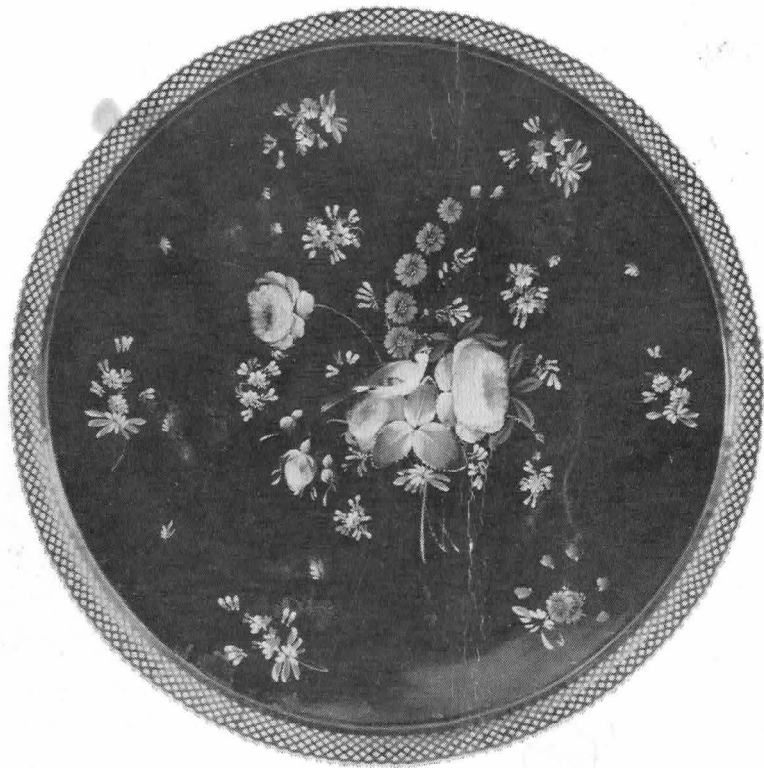


The Decorator

Volume XIX No. 1

Cooperstown, New York

Fall 1964



Journal of the
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

*Organized in 1946 in memory of
Esther Stevens Brazer*

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24" Pierced Edge Pontypool Tray, Gift of Mr. W. D. John to the
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THE TOUR GROUP

From Left to Right: Dorothy Hutchings; Harriet Klein; Richard Nickson, Pan-Am Representative; Doris Wiley; Elizabeth Monroe; Mildred Ayers; Anna McDowell; Viola Walters; John Clark; Maryjane Clark; Mary Richards; Mattie Kipp; Mona Rowell, Tour Leader; Helen Gross; Mary Smith; Julia Ides; Elizabeth Bourdon; George DeVoe; Margaret Willey; Shirley DeVoe; Violet Blumenfeld, Representative, Travel Bureau, Inc.

EDITORIAL

This issue of the THE DECORATOR has been devoted, for the most part, to articles written by members of the Wales Tour Group. By request, the report of the Tour which was presented at the Cooperstown Meeting has been included in a somewhat condensed form.

It seems fitting, at this time, to honor one who contributed much to the success of the tour and who, over the years, has kindled our interests in the japanware of England and supplied us with much valuable research material. He has always been an encouraging influence, creating much goodwill between the museums in the jappanning centers of England and our Society.

William David John is a native of Newport, Monmouthshire, a county in England originally known as Gwent and a part of Wales. He was fortunate in attending West Monmouth Grammar School at Pontypool, where he heard talks on the early Pontypool ironworks given occasionally by Mr. Robert Stephen who, in later years, wrote an illustrated article for ANTIQUES. (August 1949)

Mr. John obtained much valuable information from two friends; Mr. B. C. Kyrle Fletcher, the local antique dealer, and Mr. B. A. Williams whose relatives still own the ground on which the first Pontypool Jappannery stood.

It was, however, Mrs. John, Dr. Sylvia John, who was first interested in acquiring all possible specimens of the best Pontypool japanware and who spent much time tracing important pedigree items. These included the historical tray from Coldbrook Park, the home of the Hanbury-Williams family; fine pierced edge trays and tureins from the Paton family of Pontypool; and the remarkable basket with gold chinoiserie on a scarlet ground. Dr. Sylvia's enthusiasm was responsible for the book, *Pontypool and Usk Japan Wares*, written by Mr. John in 1953. (See The Bookshelf).

Mr. John's nieces, Ann and Jacqueline Simcox, have also acquired an interest in this field, each owning several fine specimens. Jacqueline gathered research material and assisted Mr. John in writing his newest book *English Decorated Trays*, which is reviewed in The Bookshelf of this issue.

In referring to his outstanding collection, Mr. John recently wrote, "Probably the most knowledgeable and interested visitors to our collection in Newport are the many members of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, and every single one is always most welcome to call in whenever in South Wales."

MONA D. ROWELL

THE WALES TOUR

Mona D. Rowell

Excitement filled the air on August 6th when the long-awaited flight day finally arrived. For a few of us there was a hidden tension until the final group-count numbered nineteen, for the now-famous Wales Tour had been planned for the bare minimum of twenty people, nineteen to go by plane, one by boat. It was with welcomed relief that the nineteen members traveling by train, plane, bus, and private car from Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, arrived safely and on time at Kennedy Airport.

We felt like celebrities that morning for Miss Violet Blumenfeld of Travel Bureau, Inc. who had devoted many hours in arranging each detail of the Tour for our utmost comfort and enjoyment had met the group which spent the previous night in New York City and accompanied us to the airport by taxi, and Mr. Richard Nickson, the charming Representative from Pan-Am, was on hand at the airport to greet us and to attend to all the little details we forgot in the excitement, such as checking in for a seat on the plane.

At flight time we were escorted down the runway, all laden with large pocketbooks, tote bags, Pan-Am bags, reading material for idle time on the plane, cameras, and coats, all of which we had decided to carry rather than include in our forty four pound limit, little worrying how we were going to return with the added purchases we were sure to make. After the official photographs were taken, we entered the plane, rather surprised to find that one hundred forty other people were already on board.

For several this was our first jet flight; for others, this was our first flight. It was a thrilling experience to soar along at six hundred forty miles an hour, at an altitude of 33,000 to 35,000 feet, with one hundred fifty-nine passengers on board, having breakfast in New York and dinner in London. It was a perfect flight day with the sky a beautiful blue and the snowy clouds neatly arranged below like fluffy mounds of whipped cream.

We were seated together in one section of the plane and spent our time exchanging clever observations, taking photographs, changing seats to allow everyone to sit by a window, filling out forms, signing autographs, eating *and* eating (the most caloric food!), and checking on progress, in fact, keeping so busy that the six and one half hours flew by leaving us no time for the reading we had planned to do.

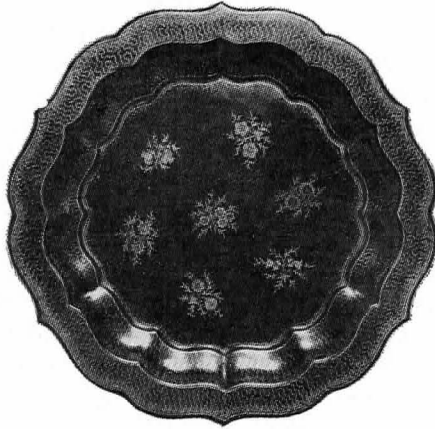
Like school children we checked each announcement that the Captain made to make sure that what he said was really down below! The announcement that Great Britain was in sight was the most exciting of all. We were fascinated by the mosaic-like pattern of greens and golds of the English countryside, and as we neared the London airport, the magic lights that flicked on, rippling down first one street and then another. Typical of London weather, the temperature was 63° and we landed in a light drizzle.

After our passports were quickly stamped and our luggage collected, the Frames' guide who greeted us informed us that the Customs Official was in "a rather nasty mood, entirely uncalled for", and asked us to stand quietly beside our luggage which now occupied a very long table. The official began the inspection at one end. Suddenly another official appeared on the scene, quickly asked a few questions and whisked us through. On the street we met Freddie who escorted us to a bright shining coach with red plush upholstery and drove us the eighteen miles to our London hotel, pointing out, with typical English humor, interesting sights along the way, an example being the announcement that we were approaching the sharpest corner in England, the sight of the Gillette Factory!

We were settled in our comfortable rooms by 6:40 P.M., dinner time to us, but 11:40 to Londoners. After sandwiches and extremely strong tea to which we were to become accustomed in the next three weeks, the Americans were ready to go exploring, drizzle or not.

Londoners had been enjoying usually warm weather with the temperature well in the eighties the previous week. Fortunately, the good weather continued except for the drenching showers that appeared out of nowhere and disappeared as quickly, making a raincoat necessary daily equipment.

The next morning we met our Courier, Mr. Arnold Robinson, who was, as we were to learn, a former business man, author, lecturer, and a scholarly and humorous English gentleman who had been on a tour around the world, and our bus driver, Mr. George Seaton, a skillful driver who never gave us an anxious moment and entertained us with songs, recitations, and interesting bits of information. It was a wonderful combination for they worked together beautifully and with each passing day, the group appreciated them more and more. At first our keen interest in antique shops, old tin, and papier mâché rather bewildered and amused them, but as time passed, they spent their free moments searching out shops and reporting back to us any items in which they thought we might be interested.



Usk Waiver with "Stormont" Pattern and Sprays
Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales

During our stay in London we went on two guided tours of the city visiting many historically famous places and several museums, with one morning spent at the Victoria and Albert Museum. In the Photography Department I learned that a new Victorian Wing not yet opened to the public might contain the type of articles in which we were interested. After following several leads, I located a Public Relations man, Mr. Gibbs-Smith, who obtained permission for us to go into the unfinished wing with Mr. D. R. Coachworth who was in charge of research where we were able to ask questions and take all the pictures we wished. It was a mad rush trying to locate as many members as possible in that large museum in a period of ten minutes. It was an exciting experience for we were allowed to handle the articles and arrange them as we wished for photography.

A delightful tea was arranged for us at the American Women's Club of London by Mrs. White, sister of Miss Blumenfeld, at which time we met several charming ladies from America and England and Jane Toller, author of *Papier Mâché*. One member expressed regrets that we had no stickers with us that could be autographed and pasted in our copies of Mrs. Toller's book. The Tour Leader spent the next half hour dashing up and down streets trying to follow directions to a certain store that people only seemed to know how to get to by pointing over roof tops. After finally purchasing the stickers, there were some anxious moments retracing footsteps.

Added to our enjoyment of London were two nights at the theatre, a visit to a flea market for some, Sunday morning shopping on Petticoat Lane, visiting Kew Gardens and the Wallace Collection, shopping, meeting so many friendly people, covering the antique shops, with so much left undone that some of us hope to return.

We changed our route on leaving London in order that we might visit Mrs. Toller's Shop which dates back to the 1400s where some members made choice purchases.

Interesting castles along the way included Windsor where one of our group committed the unpardonable error of photographing the Queen's Doll House which excited the guard so much that we felt the culprit would have had to apologize to the Queen had she not left the castle a half hour before. The rest concealed their cameras. Also visited were Warrick, Raglan, and Edinburgh, views of which are often seen on old trays and other articles. Cathedrals included Worcester Cathedral from which yard several members were privileged to send up homing pigeons on trial flights and Coventry Cathedral where the bombed out ruins of the old Cathedral held more religious inspiration for some than the cold modern architecture and art of the new.

Our visit to Stratford-on-Avon during Festival Year was an exciting experience marked with our attendance of "Edward IV", a noisy, gory, exciting play with many people killed and heads decapitated, resulting in an excessive use of ketchup, all the more thrilling since we occupied front seats. It was so gory that it was fascinating and fortunately easy to understand.

The highlight of our stay in Wales was our visit to the National Museum where Mr. Charles, Keeper of the Art Department, spent the morning with us discussing their collection of japanware, removing the doors of the cases that we might obtain better photographs, and sharing with us all the items not on public view that had been assembled in one room for us to study and photograph as we wished. In the evening Mr. Charles slipped away from a family reunion long enough to join us at a cocktail party.

Later in the evening Mr. John visited us bringing with him his lovely niece, Jacqueline Simcox, copies of *THE STORY OF PONTYPOOL*, (now out of print) published in 1958 for the Festival of Wales and located for us by Mr. Harry Cook, the Town Clerk of Pontypool, and an unbound copy of his forthcoming book, *English Decorated Trays*.

For many the following morning was another exciting highlight of the Tour, our visit to Mr. John's home in Newport where we saw

his beautiful collection of Pontypool ware, his rare collection of Nantgarw porcelain, and his fascinating bookshop. During the morning we were presented a beautiful twenty-four inch pierced edge tray for our Museum which Mr. John said he hoped we couldn't bring back to America as he hated to part with it. As Tour Leader, I decided that I should have a difficult time explaining to 738 members why I couldn't bring it back. Jacqueline Simcox made the presentation with a photographer from a local paper on hand to take a picture. The tray has been safely delivered to Cooperstown.

Mr. John set a table up out-of-doors in order that we could bring out any items that we wished to photograph. A delightful lunch of dainty sandwiches, Welsh cakes, tea, and coffee were served with several relatives assisting, all most charming and hospitable. We certainly felt that we were welcomed guests.

Mr. John then accompanied us to Pontypool showing us the old Hanbury gates at the entrance of Pontypool Park and the old Hanbury home, Pontypool Park House, which is now a convent school. After our walk through the beautiful park during which Mr. John told us more of the history of Pontypool, we bid Mr. John and Jacqueline farewell and continued on our way to Hereford, then to Birmingham the next day.

We did not enjoy our stay in Birmingham due largely to the fact that we were treated there the way many tours are, being fed as a group with no individual choice. Fortunately, it happened no where else. There, too, we encountered our first heavy rain. Despite our difficulties, our stay was rewarding, as we had the opportunity to visit Blakesley



Tea Pot, Painted View of Raglan Castle
Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales

Hall of the City of Birmingham Museum where we were cordially greeted by Mr. Thomas who had placed on exhibition for us all the pieces owned by that museum which had been made and decorated in that area.

In the afternoon we journeyed on to the Wolverhampton Art Gallery where we were met by Mrs. Morris. In this Museum we saw the samples of designs painted on tin, some of which were pictured in Volume XIII, Number 2 of *THE DECORATOR*. Two of their six pattern books were on display for our inspection. These contained tracings with spots of color and notes, not completely decorated designs as we had anticipated. Many were border designs. This was, indeed, a privilege.

Mrs. Morris then accompanied us to Bantock House where many Wolverhampton pieces were on display, some very different in style and design from those seen in other areas.

From here on, the Tour was devoted to sightseeing with a stop at Chester where some walked the old Roman Wall; Liverpool where we stopped only long enough to mail Beatle postcards to our teenagers back home; Blackpool, a holiday spot; the lake district with its rolling lush green hillsides covered with sheep and rugged stone walls that have withstood the centuries; Greta Green, famous for its runaway marriages; then, on into Scotland with an extended-without-permission shopping spree in Galashiels for sweaters and tartans; and finally, Edinburgh, an exciting and colorful spot during the Festival Season.

With a Scotch Guide, Mrs. MacGregor, in charge, we toured Edinburgh and visited the Trossachs which hardly seemed to equal in beauty other areas we had already seen. The gala military tattoo, an inspiring concert, a church service at St. Giles for some, and last minute shopping brought our stay in Edinburgh to a close.

Our final trip in Scotland took us through Glasgow, an unattractive city where even shop windows have to be barred in some sections, and on to Prestwick where we were to rejoin the DeVoes and board our plane for home. Shirley and George had left us in Birmingham, Shirley to do research work, George, to visit a few golf courses.

It was rather a relief to check in early at Prestwick, to know that our baggage was attended to, and to relax before plane time. We bade farewell to Arnold and George who had been so devoted to the group. We were proud to have them say that we were a good group, and I was happy to hear the members say later that it never would have been the same without Arnold and George.

We welcomed George DeVoe back to the fold about 4:30 and by 6 P.M. were anxiously scanning the horizon for Shirley. At 6:20 with

orders to board the plane we reluctantly left, sadly waving to George who stood by faithfully awaiting his mate. Although the plane was thirty minutes late taking off, we had to leave with only seventeen members aboard.

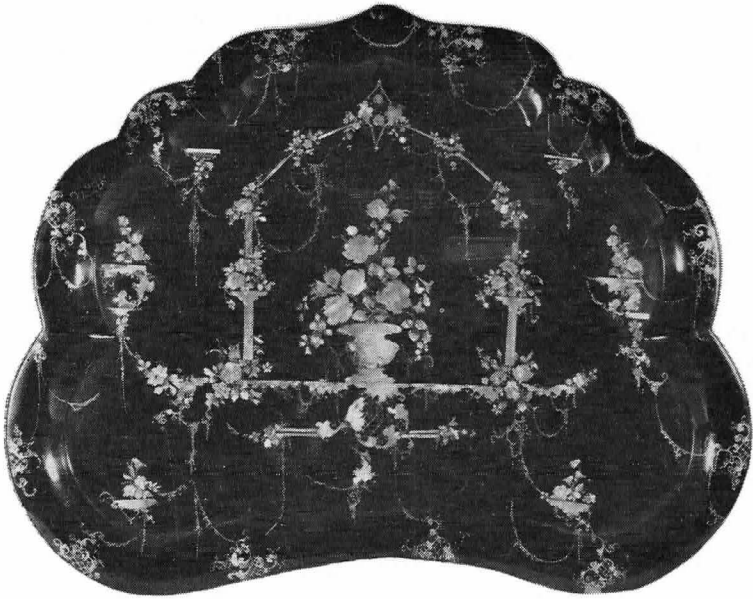
We later learned that Shirley's train had developed a hot box necessitating a thirty-five minute delay; the cab she took at the station broke down en route to the airport; and the motorist who came to her rescue drove at a speed of thirty-five miles an hour and insisted upon pointing out the sights along the way. Fortunately, Pan-Am was able to send them home the following day via first class.

An hour and fifty minutes after takeoff the plane landed in Iceland for a thirty minute stop. The returning group behaved like veteran travelers and in a quieter mood enjoyed the beauty of the lingering sunset. As lights began to appear along the coastline of New England, the party came to life. While landing at Kennedy Airport at 10:30 P.M., it was announced that the baggage workers had gone out on strike at ten o'clock. We could picture ourselves waiting endlessly for our luggage to arrive. It gave us a warm feeling as the immigration officer stamped our passports with a cheery "welcome home". Arriving in the Customs area, we found that our luggage was already awaiting us and on hand to see that we encountered no difficulty due to the strike was our good friend, Mr. Nickson. The Customs officials were kind and once through customs, our group seemed to evaporate in thin air.

As I stood in the almost deserted terminal, the words of Catherine Hutter spoken at the Woodstock Meeting in September 1962 ran through my mind, "I would like to go on record for the Society sponsorship of a trip to Wales." At the time it had seemed like wishful thinking to be excited by the idea, but the trip had taken place, truly thrilling and rewarding. And now there seemed to be a new goal to work for, that of returning to England to see the many fascinating places that time did not permit on the first tour.

To serve as Tour Leader was a challenging experience. You have every reason to be proud of these members who represented the Society with dignity, who cheerfully accepted the inconveniences encountered in a foreign land, and who lived for three weeks in complete harmony. My thanks to each for her co-operation, thoughtfulness, and dash of humor, I was proud to be "mother".

Some members have asked about the possibility of a Second Tour. If you are interested, write to Mona Rowell, Whitman, Mass.



Housemaid's Tray
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum

**THE NEW VICTORIAN GALLERY,
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM**

Margaret Willey

The Victoria and Albert Museum opened a new Gallery October eighth of this year, which will attract those who are interested in decorative arts of the Victorian period.

Some of our members, who visited London this summer, were given a preview of this fabulous collection which represents some of the best pieces of that period to be found, dating up to 1860. It was a great privilege to be able to examine the articles, study the fine details, and take photographs.

Much of the furniture in the new Victorian Gallery was originally shown at International Exhibitions. Most of it belongs to the Museum, having been purchased or given by various donors. There are, at the present time, two large silver and gilt table centers on loan from H. M. The Queen.

Many pieces of furniture were made by Jennens and Bettridge who were pioneers in the designing and building of papier mâché furniture. Henry Clay revolutionized the whole industry of papier mâché in 1772.

He made panels to be decorated and used for coach building and other uses, along with trays of simple design and finally some furniture. In 1816 Jennens and Bettridge took over the Clay business in Birmingham. One of the first things they did was to improve, or vary, the shapes and designs for trays and to make many other objects, large and small, from the same material. They became famous for their variety of gothic trays. Various methods of decorating were used, mainly painting and gilding, until 1825 when they took out a patent for "ornamenting papier mâché with pearl shell".

Perhaps the most spectacular piece of furniture in the new Gallery is a huge cabinet, designed by Eugene Prignot and made by Jackson and Graham, in 1855. Jackson and Graham was one of the most important Victorian cabinet-making firms in the early fifties, employing 250 workers. "All their work was ornate, elaborate and in the French manner", writes Elizabeth Aslin, in her book *19th Century English Furniture*. The firm won awards at all the major exhibitions. This particular piece done in marquetry of various woods, ornamented with trophies, figures, and festoons of flowers in full relief in gilt bronze. In the front and sides are set oval porcelain plaques. The piece is surmounted by a mirror in a frame of carved and gilt wood. It was made for the Paris Exhibition of 1855 and purchased by the Museum after the Exhibition.

A half tester bedstead was probably made in Birmingham about 1850. There are japanned and decorated metal baluster posts at head and foot with brass foliage bosses and capitals. The head and foot boards are made of papier mâché decorated with floral bouquets and arabesques in polychrome and gilt on a black ground. The canopy is hung with valances of green cotton rep, trimmed with looped cords and wood tassels bound with silk. The bed was given to the Museum by H. M. Queen Mary.

A pair of papier mâché pole screens are oval with scalloped edges. They are painted in oils with bouquets of flowers, roses, lilies and other garden flowers, and bordered with gilt scroll-work. The shafts are turned, having a round convex stand with three scrolled feet. Signed on the backs of the panels "Jennens & Bettridge", they are mid 19th century pieces. In a hand book, *Collectable Furniture*, by Jane Douglas, she writes, "Our ancestors must have suffered a good deal from both heat and cold, hence the vast numbers of screens they have left us, which either ward off heat from a roaring fire or provide shelter from freezing draughts. Lately we have been bringing them down from the attic again for their purely decorative qualities".

A papier mâché music canterbury with mother-of-pearl inlay is an extremely rare piece. The stand is divided into four compartments of scrolled outline with turned rails at each end. It is decorated with sprays of flowers and bouquets in polychrome, on a black ground with mother-of-pearl inlay and gilt acanthus foliage. It has a small drawer set in front and was made about 1860.

Two papier mâché chairs are decorated with gilt and mother-of-pearl inlay. One has a rounded back and contains a concave oval panel decorated with a representation of a ruined building. The seat is covered with its original yellow damask.

The papier mâché settee is painted in colors and gilt with mother-of-pearl inlay on black. The back consists of a central frame of horizontal oval form, flanked by shield shaped frames, all decorated with mother-of-pearl. The purple brocade seat is modern.

There is a table showing a "Regency" shape with a center pattern of flowers and gilded scrolls on top. Every inch of the table, including a rather heavy pedestal, seems to be covered with floral sprays or gilt scrolls. There is another earlier tripod table of more graceful lines, decorated with painting, mother-of-pearl, and gilt.

The trays are varied and interesting. One was called a housemaid's tray, sometimes spoken of as a parlourmaid's tray or mammy tray. Jane Toller tells us in her book that it was so named because of its slightly concave front. This would make it easy to carry close to the body and be less strain on the arms of the maid. This tray was designed and patented by Jennens and Bettridge.

A gothic tray of papier mâché is painted with a scene of a castle in a mountainous landscape. The back is inscribed — "B. Walton & Co. Warranted Crusader's Castle — 3391".

There are many more pieces large and small but what is written here may "wet your appetite" and make a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum a "must" the next time you are in London.

* * * * *

AMGUEDDFA GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU

The National Museum of Wales

Maryjane Clark

The *National Museum of Wales* was officially opened in 1927. The exterior is of Portland stone. Placed above the cornice, extending around the buildings are sculptured groups of the Stone, Bronze, Iron and Coal ages, Mining, Shipping, Learning, Art and Music. Dragons and Lions buttress the Dome of this handsome building. Inside on the ground floor you are greeted by Rodin's famous bronze group "The Kiss". To its right and left are exhibits of Zoology, Botany, and Geology beautifully displayed. The first floor on the South balcony had three cases of Pontypool ware that held our interest for several hours. Mr. Charles, keeper of the Art Department, was very charming and cooperative. He took the large glass doors off the cases and let us handle and photograph to our hearts' content. The cases contained around 60 japanned metalware pieces

made in the 18th and 19th centuries, at Pontypool, Usk, and elsewhere. The earliest piece was a 24" round red tray, gold leaf design with a large oval and diamond pierced flange. There were three coffee pots, a basket, and two trays with this same piercing. (I've not seen this cutting here). The most exquisite piece to me was the large red coffee urn with brilliant crimson background, and exquisite lace edge painting of a peach, rose, two buds, bird, and little typical sprays. The piece stood about two feet high. The finial on top was an acorn, the sign of "Welcome".

Next to this we saw a 10" x 12" lace edge basket. The twelve-hole pierced side had a gold leaf zig zag strip through it making an interesting pattern. Above this were two more rows of piercing. The floor was tortoise shell with an alive rose in mint condition. Even the handle was



Coffee Urn
Decorated by Thomas Barker
Courtesy of the
National Museum of Wales

pierced. Above this piece was a hand painted 6x8" portrait of Mr. Hanbury on tin. The frame was dark beveled wood with an insert of lighter wood about 1½" in all.

In another section was a cylindrical coffee urn with a spigot and two lion and ring handles, resting on square box with pierced sides where the lamp was put, (see DECORATOR Vol. XVII, No. 1,) with lion feet and floral decoration in free hand bronze and silver in the Chinese taste. On either side of this we saw the same period applied to two covered urns.

The famous coffee urn decorated by Thomas Barker, done at Pontypool, had a hollow for lamp behind and tap in front, with perforated base, a leafy border below, and a wide oak leaf border at the top in gold. The body was decorated with a rustic landscape with figures and sheep.

The basket beside this piece had a solid handle and one row of a long pierce, more like a key hole. The decoration was solid gold leaf on the outside. The shape had flaired ends and was rectangular and quite deep. Inside, the ends had a gold leaf design too.

Another large black tray, on top of one of the cases, had an all over Chinese pattern. It looked almost new, it was so shiny and bright.

A lovely Pontypool coffee pot with its handle covered with wicker had a background of warm tortoise shell (mottled brown over leaf). The decoration on lid, base and around handle was in gold leaf. The sides had a scene with a shepherdess in gold leaf accented with burnt umber. (See DECORATOR, Vol. XVII, No. 1).

An interesting Usk coffee pot had just vertical ¼" stripes of dark asphaltum: then crimson (alizarin over new tin).

Quite a few trays had deep red backgrounds — most with gold leaf designs. One case held, more or less, miniatures of papier mâché and tin; snuffers; coasters; tea caddy; candle holders, etc.

Mr. Charles then took us upstairs and we were overwhelmed by what we saw. More tin than you could imagine. Again we handled and photographed many lovely painted trays, some stenciled and free-hand bronze, plus objects galore.

In another section of the first floor we saw paintings by Gainsborough, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Monet, and Richard Wilson's pictures of Welsh castles. He is the eminent Welch painter.

The English and Welsh pottery and earthenware were observed and I finally saw tray painting designs and borders on so many pieces I do not remember their names. In spite of what we saw, we, too, have a fine collection and would love to show it to all our grand friends in England.



AMGUEDDFA GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WALES
The National Folk Museum, St. Fagans

Mary Richards

In the village of St. Fagans, in pleasant pastoral country four and one half miles west of Cardiff, is the Welsh Folk Museum, an open-air museum comparable with Farmers' Museum, New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York. It comprises the Elizabethan mansion of St. Fagans Castle, the rooms of which are furnished in period style. We were delighted to find only the best examples of furniture, tapestries, and paintings. In the Castle a long gallery extends from the main staircase to the back staircase, a normal feature of Elizabethan mansions. Here are displayed paintings and tapestries and, to our surprise, an unusual rectangular lace edge tray, really the top of a wine table. Special permission was granted to our members to photograph it and a few other japan ware articles that had not been on display.

There was much walking to do at this museum as it covers eighty acres. As a folk museum represents the life and culture of a nation, there are work rooms with trained craftsmen producing traditionally designed woodenware. On the grounds is the Esgair Moel Woolen Factory, re-erected; the main features of its original setting have been reproduced. Here, powered by water power, the entire process of producing beautiful woolen material is carried out. The craftsmen explain as they work from spinning wheel to loom. The products are for sale.

The cottages and barns are furnished and decorated in a sparse manner, normal for the period.

We found the gardens a delight. They were well cared for, as all gardens in England are, but here they were superior to most.

Reference: *Handbook, National Museum of Wales.*

THE ASHBRIDGE HOUSE

Mr. Trimber, Park Supervisor, Lower Merion Township, has granted permission for reprinting this quaint article.

Years marched by, more than eighty years in long procession, and left their signatures. They whitened her hair and etched her face, and slowly, gently, turned her into an old, old, lady. But they never changed her delight in the sound of voices and spontaneous laughter.

The years left their mark on her surroundings, too. Trees she first saw as saplings became grand giants,—the beeches and the holly tree whose red berries were like so many little lighted candles in autumn. And as the trees grew larger, the estate smaller, divided again and again for new neighbors. Yet its smooth acres still spread in every direction. And the old mansion remained exactly as it was when it was built in 1769.

Toward the end she thought a great deal about time as it had been. Sitting by the window on a winter evening, watching snow swirl from the Pennsylvania sky over Rosemont, on the main line, and pile drifts on the long drive which curved from Montgomery Avenue through the grounds to Airdale Avenue, she liked to remember. Or strolling, not too certainly, through the formal gardens on a summer evening, through



Ashbridge House, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

the garden's nostalgic fragrance under the stars, she liked to live over the days of her girlhood.

They were three in those days, the three Ashbridge sisters. And how they kept the old home filled with life and color and movement! It was a place for parties, for friends to gather and frolic and be happy. Now Mary had been dead more than thirty years, and Lydia, also grown old, had died the year before.

Only she was left with her memories. And, of course, the house and gardens. And now the past seemed to blend strangely with the future and she felt that laughter should go on in the old house. That there always should be happy people there.

This is why Ashbridge House today is available to the public as a place to entertain. When Emily Ashbridge died at the age of eighty-seven in 1940 she bequeathed her home with its thirty acres of ground to Lower Merion Township. Any civic, political or patriotic group of the district which wishes to, may use it for meetings or parties by applying to the Township Commissioners.

There are, of course, a few not very difficult rules set up by Miss Emily to make sure that her home would continue to be a place where gentlefolk entertained. No liquor may be served at any time and no games may be played on Sunday. Nor can the house be used for anything to which tickets are sold. More difficult to abide by, perhaps, is the rule that all affairs must be over by midnight. (The curfew rang earlier in days of the Ashbridge sisters.) Then, precluding an athletic field, baseball diamond or such device as might injure lawns, gardens, or trees, is the rule that no games involving more than four persons may be played on the grounds.

It was to the Ashbridge House that the William Penn Chapter turned when searching for a "home" in March 1962. After much discussion and correspondence, a permit was given to the Chapter in December of that year to use one of the rooms. (First two windows on right.)

At that time, the room was sadly in need of redecorating. The Chapter, however, voted to spend two hundred dollars to carry out the improvements recommended by the committee, Forrest Cookenbach, chairman, Sara Fuller, Mildred Stainton, and Margaret Towle.

An off-white was chosen for the background color on the walls which were stencilled with a design recorded from the original walls of a home in New England.

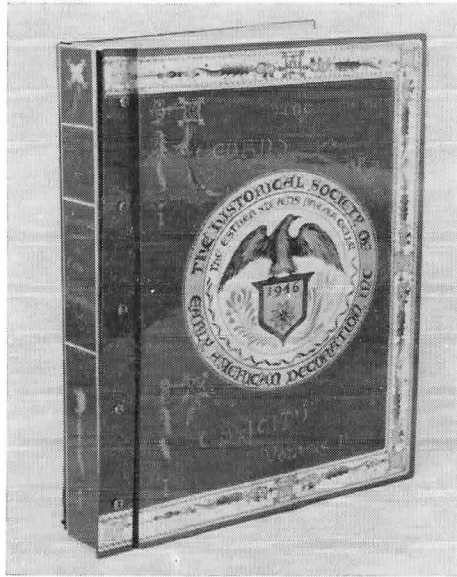


Room in Ashbridge House Used by the William Penn Chapter

In discussing the work, the chairman said, "The chosen day for the work, came, but it was so cold my car would not start, and the wind ripped a stencil from my hand which had to be recut. Another day was set and Margaret, Mildred, and I, bundled in sweaters and scarves with cans of paint and wool swatches, arrived at the Ashbridge House to work. It seemed that we climbed miles up and down the step ladders, trying to remember that we were 'ladies' when confronted with old uneven walls and ceilings. The thing that really held us together was a big old-fashioned kettle of water boiling on the kitchen stove for making hot tea to 'warm the edges.' It took four days to complete the work."

In this room with white ruffled curtains at the windows and furnished with several antique chairs, tables, and trays on loan, the William Penn Chapter houses its portfolio and books, conducts special classes and holds four meetings a year. Having a "home" has proved to be a most successful venture for regular attendance has increased from twelve to forty in a Chapter whose membership is forty-nine.

We congratulate the William Penn Chapter for this outstanding accomplishment.



Volume II Publicity Scrap Book
Made and Illuminated by Maria Murray

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Cooperstown, N. Y.

Cooperstown never looked more picturesque than during the days of our Fall meeting. Cradled like a toy village in the verdant hills with here and there the punctuation mark of a white steeple or the scarlet plume of a sugar maple to break the greenery, the village welcomed us with open arms.

Red too, was the color of the figurative carpet rolled out everywhere in "our town"—but nowhere more graciously and warmly than at Fenimore House. Two hundred fifty-six registered members and their guests attended the gala social hour given in our honor by New York State Historical Association. It was good to greet such old and valued friends as Dr. Louis Jones, Fred Rath, Virginia Partridge and Betty Morris, among many.

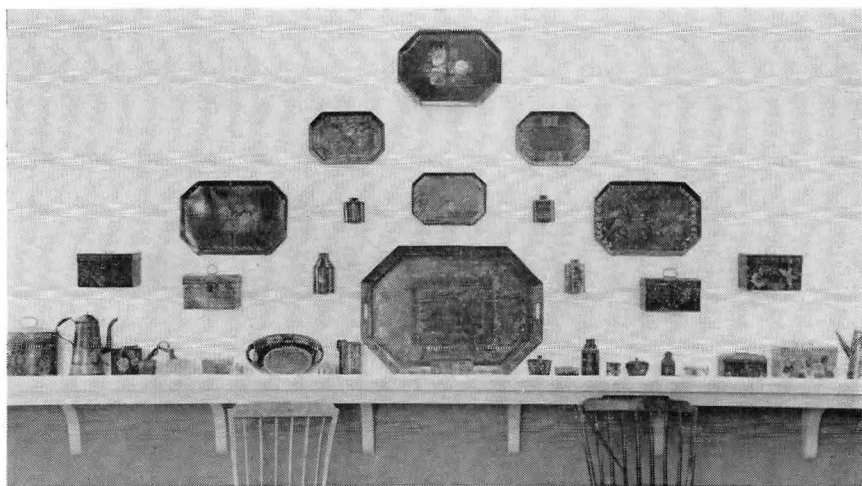
Instead of the traditional gallery talk on opening night Martha Muller reminisced on the history and background of some of our museum treasures. She and her committee had been working for some days in advance assisting Ginny Partridge in setting up our new cases. This preview, with a few intimate peeps, whetted appetites for the opening of the refurbished Exhibition Hall on the morrow.

Tuesday morning we were privileged to gather for our business meeting in the handsome Hall of Life Masks. Here under the haughty gaze of the incomparable Stuart portrait of Joseph Brant, our able Program Chairman, Ruth Coggins introduced the opening speaker Mr. Frederick L. Rath, Jr., Vice-Director of New York State Historical Association, who addressed us on "Love and Marriage". It soon became apparent he had tongue in cheek and was referring to the relationship between our Societies. In a more solemn vein he pointed out the importance *always* of hewing to standards of *Quality*.

During the business meeting Mrs. Stuart Brown gave a touching tribute to our late President, Violet Milnes Scott, in presenting to the Society the collection of originals and the monetary fund established in her memory. It was most fitting that this presentation took place here, in the very house where she, as President, had been so instrumental in placing our first gift, The Oldham Collection of Ann Butler Tinware.

On a lighter note, Mona Rowell described the highlights (and some ups and downs) of the historic Wales Tour. There were many ooh's and aah's over the magnificent Lace Edge tray presented to our Society via our travellers, by their host Mr. W. D. John.

Committee reports as given show that our total membership is now 745 as compared to 617 at the time of our last meeting at Cooperstown in 1959. Eleven new members were greeted at this time. Standards and Judging handled 72 pieces, resulting in 27 A Awards, 10 B Awards as well as the accepted applicants. Our Curator reported the purchase



Display of Country Tin, Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, New York

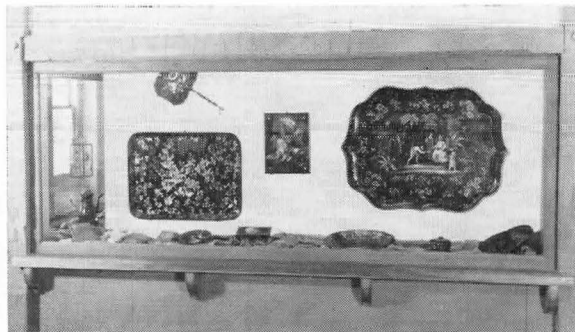
of approximately 45 pieces from the McCaw collection and an impressive number of new gifts resulting in the addition of \$5,328 worth of newly insured material to the collections. This includes some of the Walter Wright material with more to be received.

Ways and Means, under the competent leadership of Della Harvey, who almost single-handedly stencilled 50 painting aprons, undertook to manage the pieces sorted from the museum as well as those brought in for the Silent Auction. Total Receipts amounted to \$718.15 and the Grand Total for Ways and Means, a staggering \$1,564.10! Receipts from the auction will go to the Museum Fund to cover purchases of fine originals.

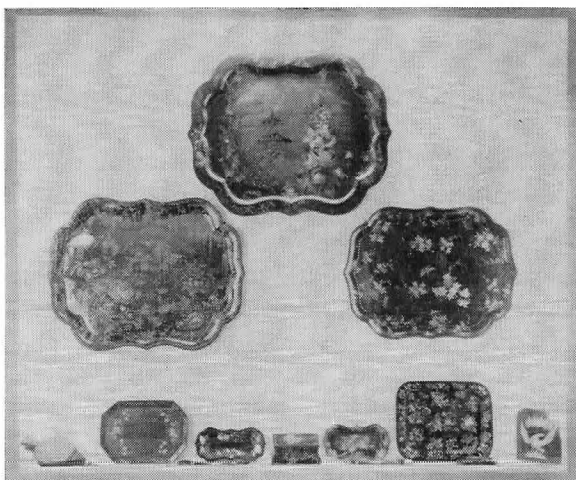
The Exhibition, while smaller than usual was choice and extremely well displayed. Praise to Madge Watt for her first effort "at the helm". Teacher Certification showed a fine portfolio on Country Painting, particularly appropriate to the Folk Art Gallery. Much admired was the beautiful Volume II of our scrapbook presented by our Historian, Maria Murray. Its hand-illuminated pages were perused with something akin to awe and astonishment at the hours of patient labor and thoughtful planning. It will join its predecessor in safe storage at Cooperstown.

Demonstrations continue to be largely attended, a brief understatement. It behooves us to express our gratitude to those loyal members who so willingly sacrifice the time and effort necessary to produce these popular events. Dorothy Hutchings and Marion Cooney demonstrated Country Painting and Tinsel Painting, both most effective and lavishly illustrated with excellent examples.

During the afternoon members toured the Farmer's Museum to see the new Exhibition Hall as well as the reserve collections and work-rooms at Bump Tavern. One picture is worth a thousand words and



Display Case, Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, New York



Display Case, Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, New York

Catherine Hutter, Photography Chairman, and Bernice Perry produced the stunning examples elsewhere in this issue. I *would* like to comment on the effectiveness of the lemon-gold background in the cases, which particularly highlights the bronze powders and gold leaf. Our originals simply glow.

The lovely classic ball room of the Otesaga Hotel was the setting for the buffet banquet, an occasion not to be forgotten. Lucullan—simply Lucullan! From the tall ice sculpture of a squirrel, bathed in light, and surrounded by autumnal fruits and vegetables—down through mounds of lobsters and platters of roast beef, ham, turkey and chicken—cheek by jowl with the truffled-in-aspic originals from which they came—through the forests of Chef's hats on through Lobster Newburg, Stroganoff until if one could manage it the tables of desserts, Yes! desserts were reached. If this sounds as if the HSEAD had abandoned its purposes and become an eating society—well—for one wonderful night it did.

Alas, one sad note, only two hundred sixteen could be accommodated despite the good offices of Mr. Dodge, Julia White, and her hard-working committees. For sometime it has been apparent that as we grow there are bound to be some "dislocations". It is now absolutely imperative that members register *in advance* in order that the Meeting Committee can have some leeway in coping with overflow situations. This was the largest meeting we have ever had and Bernadette Thomp-

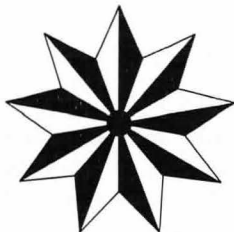
son and Liz Laurence deserve much credit in handling an unexpectedly large number so graciously.

A new associate, Mr. Minor Wine Thomas, Chief Curator of New York State Historical Association was our dinner speaker. He showed charming slides with equally delightful comments on the Gardens of the 18th and 19th Century. Many were familiar to us which added to our pleasure.

Chapters continue to grow both in number and enthusiasm. Madeline Hampton and Viola Brauns chairmanned this meeting, resulting in a profitable exchange of ideas and information. The New Jersey Chapter deserves commendation on the check for \$200 recently sent to the Museum Fund, for they have been most loyal to this particular project.

I have left until last the most difficult task of all. How can one adequately express gratitude to Julia White, Liz Peck and the Hudson Valley Chapter? Thumb through the *Thesaurus* from A to Z. Wordy, and *still* not sufficient. Unfortunately, the many hours spent behind the scenes in planning a meeting never show on the surface. One greets the tags with appreciation, country painted canisters; or exclaims over the place cards, large cut-corner trays with a water color of Bump Tavern in the center; somehow, it just never seems enough. So, from all of us to all of you, heartfelt thanks for your cordiality, the hours of thought, the sacrifice of time, the many little "extras" that made this such a friendly meeting. The phraseology may be weak, the intention is warm!

ANNE E. AVERY





Pennsylvania Bride's Box
Courtesy of Elizabeth Goodwin

REPORT OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH EXHIBITION
Fenimore House
Cooperstown, New York
September 21, 22, 23, 1964

The Exhibition of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. officially opened Monday evening, September 21, in the Folk Art Gallery of Fenimore House, home of the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York.

The well-lighted Folk Art Gallery was a very appropriate setting for our members' work and originals with its folk paintings, large wood statues, busts, ship figureheads, early American decorated chairs and glass enclosed cases containing charming artifacts.

The Exhibition Committee processed and displayed 34 applicants' and 38 members' pieces as well as 88 originals.

The number of member-owned originals was smaller than usual at this meeting due perhaps to the fact that Cooperstown is our home and



Document Box and Tray
Courtesy of Lynette Smith

our members wanted to spend time inspecting our originals at Bump Tavern and those so perfectly displayed in the Farmers' Museum.

Outstanding, among the collection of loaned articles, and of special interest were the following:

Choice country tin pieces, including a goose-necked coffee pot and trunk, in practically "mint condition"; a large red document box with predominantly red design, black rick-rack and brush strokes (rare and unusual); a Mercy North document box, in fine condition with her distinctive graining; and a cut corner Stevens Plains bread tray with the lovely "pulled-in" color, so typical of Maine pieces.

We were fortunate to have two versions of the "Peacock and Peas" tray loaned this time in two different sizes for comparison. Among our membership there are now six known trays of this pattern, covering a span of at least 100 years.

There was a pair of Chippendale face fire screens and one round velvet one; some beautiful glass and several unusual chairs. Among the latter was a pair of high backed, paint-grained Windsors with "rabbit-eared" posts, and somewhat surprisingly, the slat bore little painted scenes.

Paint graining was well represented in various forms. The rectangular bride's box (part of our own collection) on exhibition at Fenimore House had a completely paint-grained interior of the honey and vinegar type. Outside it displayed a lovely butterfly on each end and somewhat primitive birds on the top as well as prominent initials, M.A.B., in black. A white hitchcock chair was unusual in that it combined a very odd type of brown graining on the slat with the more expected stencilling. There was also a curved-top chest, grained in two shades of green, done in yet another manner. The variances in these pieces were of interest to all.

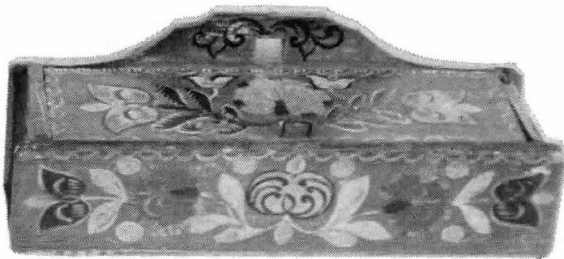
Not only eye-catching but of superior execution was the large lion's head painted on velvet, not with a brush, we were told, but with cotton-tipped toothpicks! Although unsigned, the artist certainly understood that animal and was able to express what he saw.

There was a very interesting collection of boxes, several proudly proclaiming their old-world ancestry. Aside from the rectangular one previously mentioned, there were two fine, older bride's boxes. The larger was of earlier construction using the ingenious wythe connection to join the sides. Earle F. Robacher has said of the designs on this type of box that they are either "coily romantic" or "stiff and uncompromisingly rigid of countenance", and we certainly had a perfect example of each!

We also had the handsome lace edge tray which Mr. John presented to our Society and the originals which had been donated to the Violet Milnes Scott Memorial Collection.

I am indebted to Madeline W. Hampton, Teaneck, New Jersey for the above history and description of the originals displayed in our exhibition, the friendly, helpful staff at Fenimore House, our members who made the advance plans for the exhibition, my committee, and Dorothy Daniels and Ardelle Steele who helped at check-out time.

MADGE M. WATT, *Chairman*



Pennsylvania Candle Box
Courtesy of Doris Swift



Original Chippendale Tray — Signed Clay
Gift of Alexander McCaw in Memory of Clara McCaw

CURATOR'S REPORT Cooperstown, New York — Fall, 1964

It is with the deepest gratitude that Mr. Walter Wright's pattern portfolio has been accepted by the Society, to be prepared for filing and housing in our rooms at Cooperstown, for future use by our members. Work on the task of mounting and filing them will proceed when all patterns have been returned to Mrs. John Clark and the proper materials for covering and mounting them are at hand. Mrs. Lyman Mears has presented a stencilled inkwell to our collection of originals. Some time ago, the New Jersey Chapter donated \$150.00 to the Museum Fund for a purchase and this money has now been used for a fine Sandwich-edge tray in excellent condition and a letter box, with four lovely white roses.

The Board of Trustees voted to purchase the Clara McCaw collection of originals and this has been done. There are forty-three pieces in the collection, many of them very fine ones. About forty-five other items were purchased at a small sum for use by the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Alexander McCaw has donated eight books to our Library.

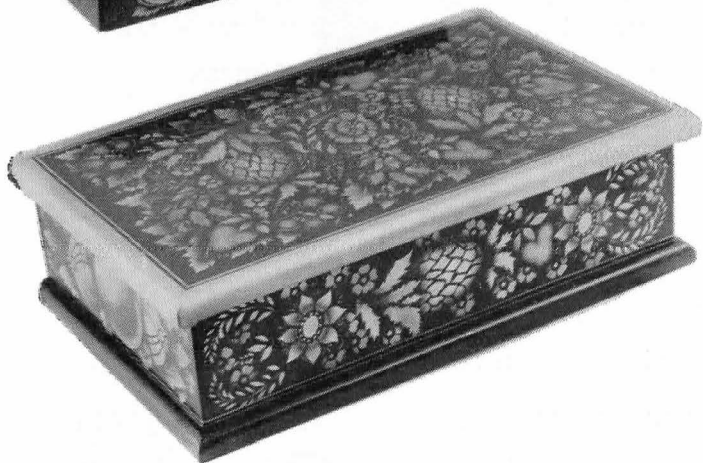
In time for the Fall meeting, our new glass cases have been completed in the Exhibit Hall of Farmers' Museum. Together with Mrs. Partridge, your Custodian and Curator have been working for four and a half days to prepare a new exhibit for you. Many of the newly purchased McCaw pieces will be shown. Also on view, for the first time, will be the Constance Sanford Klein collection, donated by Mr. John S. Klein of Northport, L. I. It is a collection of four trays, all in different free-hand bronze styles. Members will see the Charlotte Carnahan Gordon collection of two urns, a fan and an apple-tray. Two mirrors will appear for the first time, also. One of them is the gift of the former Wachusett Chapter and the other is a purchase from Mrs. Glessner.

MARTHA MULLER

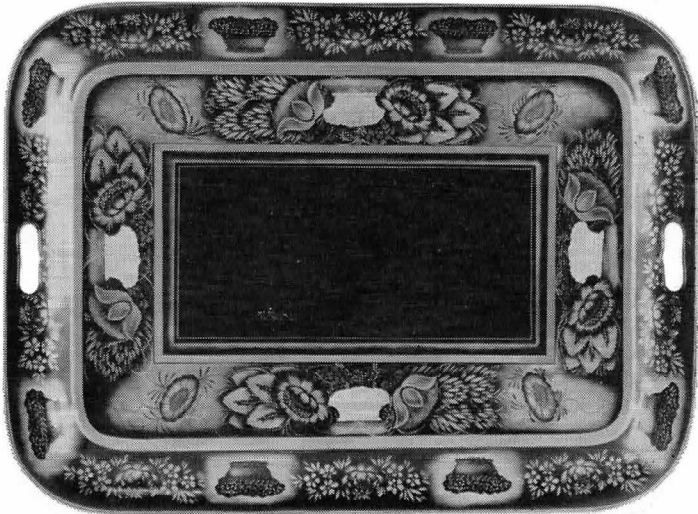
**APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS MEMBERS AT
Cooperstown, N. Y. — September 1964**

- Childs, Mrs. Richard (Helen) Holden, Mass.
- Clark, Mrs. A. D. (Mary) Glens Falls, N. Y.
- Cowles, Mrs. Frank (Ida) Glens Falls, N. Y.
- Crawford, Mrs. Robt. (Madeline) Glens Falls, N. Y.
- Derby, Mrs. John J. (Mary) Glens Falls, N. Y.
- Gavin, Mrs. Joseph (Elizabeth) Plaistow, N. H.
- Hough, Mrs. B. K. (Marjorie) Ithaca, N. Y.
- Kidwell, Mrs. Richard (Sylvia) Washington County, N. Y.
- Lees, Mrs. S. Ramsey (Dorothy) Oakville, Ont., Can.
- Totten, Mrs. Johns (Katherine) Duxbury, Mass.
- Whitman, Mrs. Roger (Gertrude) Old Saybrook, Ct.

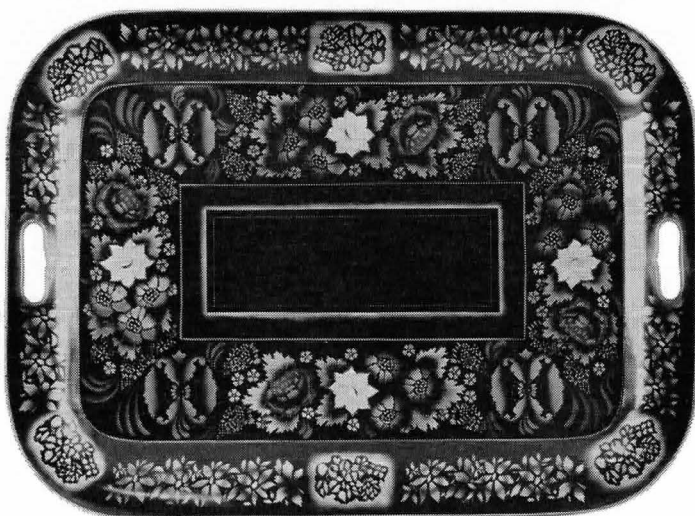
MEMBERS "A" AWARDS
Fall, 1964 — Cooperstown, New York



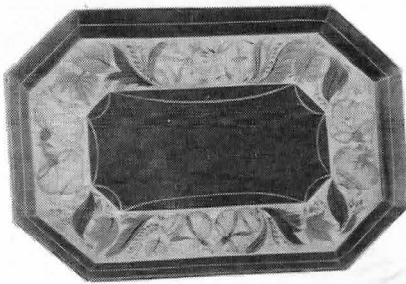
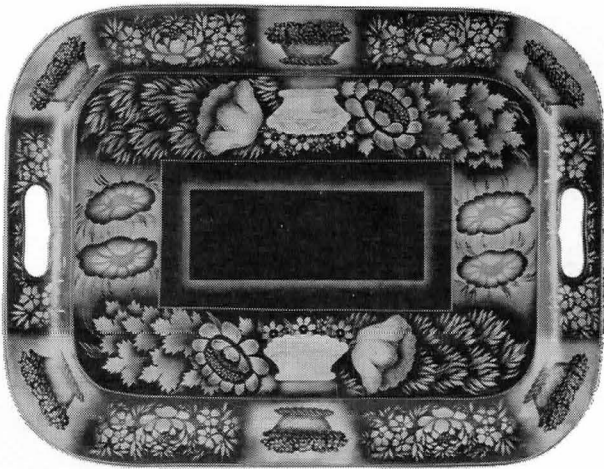
Stencilling on Wood
Dorothy Hutchings — Jane Hawks — Walter Wright



Stencilling on Tin
Phyllis Sidorsky
Monica Hoffman



Stencilling on Tin
Viola Brauns
Eleanor Meredith



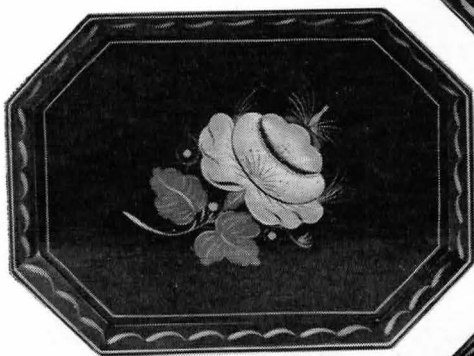
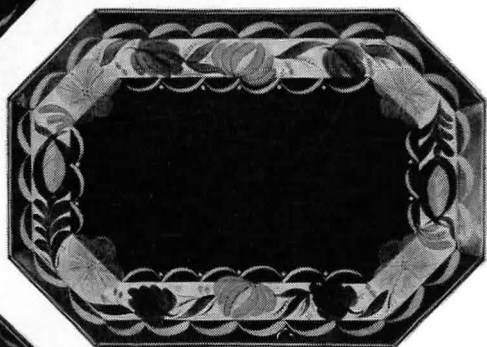
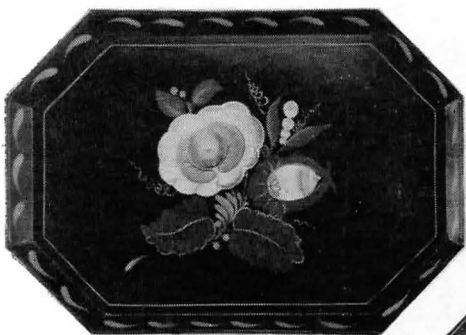
Stencilling on Tin — Julia White

Country Painting

Emilie Underhill

Avis Heatherington

Emilie Underhill



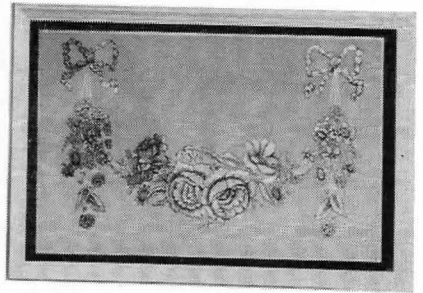
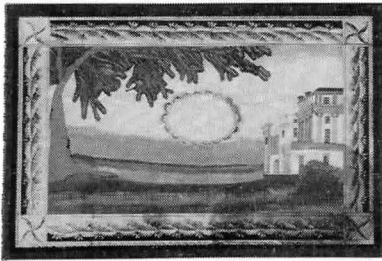
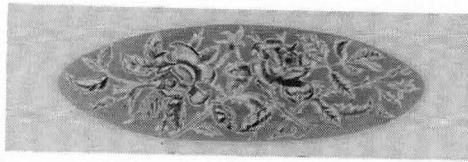
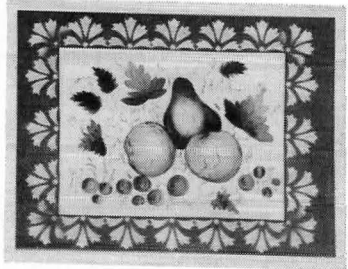
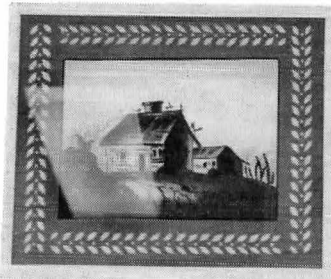
Country Painting

Doris Fry
Monica Hoffman

Norma Stark
Dorothy Hagedorn



Metal Leaf
Avis Heatherington
Annetta Cruze



Glass Panel — Stencilled Border

Cornelia Keegan

Margaret Watts — Elizabeth Mitchell

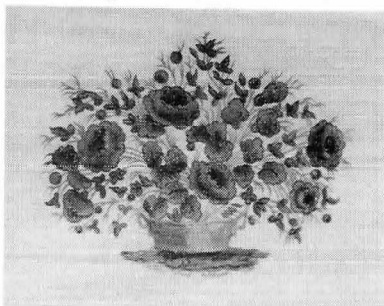
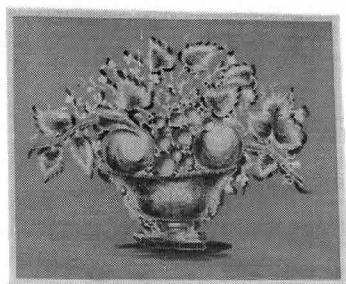
Glass Panel — Metal Leaf — Cornelia Keegan

Glass Panel — Metal Leaf Border

Dorothy Hutchings

Glass Panel — Metal Leaf

Forrest Cookenbach



Glass Panel — Metal Leaf
Thelma Riga
Thelma Riga Gina Martin
Special Class — Theorem
Margaret Watts

THE VIOLET MILNES SCOTT MEMORIAL COLLECTION

Violet Milnes Scott devoted sixteen years of active service to our Society, first serving as a member of the Organization Committee of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild in 1946. She served as a Trustee for eleven years, holding the office of Vice-President from 1949 to 1953 and of President from 1953 to 1957.

Mrs. Scott was the first Chairman of the Judging and Standards Committee, and as a result of her efforts, the Standards Booklet was drawn up. Realizing the need for an official seal, she arranged a competition for its design, giving all members an opportunity to participate. She was the inspiration for the Traveling Museum which brought our loan collection to many museums and historical societies throughout the country.

Through her wise counselling, our most satisfactory relationship with the New York State Historical Association was established. During



Gifts for the Violet Milnes Scott Memorial Collection

her presidency, initial steps were taken toward publishing some of Mrs. Brazer's research material which resulted in our first book, "The Ornamented Chair". In 1953 Mrs. Scott joined the editorial staff of *THE DECORATOR*, serving as Printing Chairman for five years, and Editor, for two. Her years of devoted service came to a close on July 2, 1962.

In November The Old Colony Chapter established The Violet Milnes Scott Memorial Collection to which it has contributed a pair of beautiful Chippendale fire screens purchased from the Estate of Violet Milnes Scott.

Because Mrs. Scott's work was Society-wise, an invitation was extended to all members and Chapters of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. to contribute money or choice original pieces to the Memorial Collection.

To date, ten original pieces have been donated to the Collection and over seven hundred dollars. Members may continue to send their contributions for this fund to Mrs. Stuart Brown, Linwood, Massachusetts.

Our Society has grown very fast in the past few years, and possibly our new members who did not know Violet Scott will want to contribute to her memory as one of the organizers.

RUTH BROWN

METHOD OF CLEANING OLD METAL AND PAPIER MACHE

W. D. John

Since the members of the Tour did not quite agree on the method of cleaning old metal and papier mâché articles which Mr. John demonstrated, we are printing the directions which were requested for *THE DECORATOR*.

"The old metal and papier mâché trays are cleaned with a metal polish such as our English "Brasso" rubbed quite vigorously, and if very difficult to clean, with the addition of fine scouring powder such as tripoli. When the old grime is removed, wipe over with a rag with turpentine or petroleum solvent, then a light polish with a few spots of raw linseed oil. Finally, use a hard wax polish containing carnauba wax. "Simoniz" hard motor car polish will give a brilliant lasting lustre.

When cleaning with the liquid "Brasso", be sure to keep it away from delicate gilding."



THE BOOKSHELF

Natalie Ramsey

English Decorated Trays by W. D. John and Jacqueline Simcox, The Ceramic Book Company, St. John's and Chepstow Road, Newport, Mon., England. Price \$22.50.

This new, long-awaited book came off the press this fall with a limited edition of one thousand copies. At the time of writing, shipments have not been received in the United States. This review has been written from an unbound copy.

The book, which traces the development of English trays from 1550 to 1850, contains nine chapters covering Gold; Silver-Gilt; Silver; Sheffield Plate, Paktong and Pewter; Pottery and Porcelain; Wood and Parquetry; Tunbridge Ware; Japanned Metal; and Papier Mâché Trays. There are 455 illustrations, with six in color, on a very fine grade of paper. Each chapter contains a history of that particular type of tray followed by many illustrations with excellent descriptions as to size, date, special features, and historical data.

Although we can appreciate the development of each type and the similarity of style or design among the various kinds, the chapters on Pontypool and Papier Mâché Trays naturally are of special interest to us. The descriptions accompanying the illustrations contain a wealth of information in themselves, as they show the type of tray and ornamentation found in each japanning center of England with sixty photographs of Pontypool and Usk pieces, forty of Wolverhampton, and forty-five of Papier Mâché. This book should be of special interest to members who are working for Teacher Certification in Gold Leaf, Free-hand Bronze, Lace Edge, and Chippendale.

The Appendix has been devoted to our Society with a reprint of "The Influence of Esther Stevens Brazer on The Decorative Arts" by Violet Milnes Scott from our own book *The Ornamented Chair*, followed by photographs of sixty-one "A" awards of our members, a very impressive showing.

Pontypool and Usk Japanned Wares by W. D. John. The first edition of this valuable research book was published in 1953 and has been out of print for approximately six years. It was reviewed in the

Spring 1955 issue of THE DECORATOR. Mr. John has received continued requests for the book and has finally decided to print a second edition which will be ready by Spring 1965, in an enlarged format, on better paper, with an increased number of illustrations. The price will be about \$16.50. Since it will be a limited edition, orders should be placed early with The Ceramic Book Company, address above.

Please notify your Bookshelf Editor when you discover an interesting book that you think our members would like to have reviewed.

NOTICES FROM THE TRUSTEES

ANNUAL MEETING

May 17, 18, 19, 1965

The Inn, Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania

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FALL MEETING

September 30, October 1, 2, 1965

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ANNUAL MEETING

May 20, 21, 22, 1966

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FALL MEETING

September 26, 27, 28, 1966

Equinox House, Manchester, Vermont

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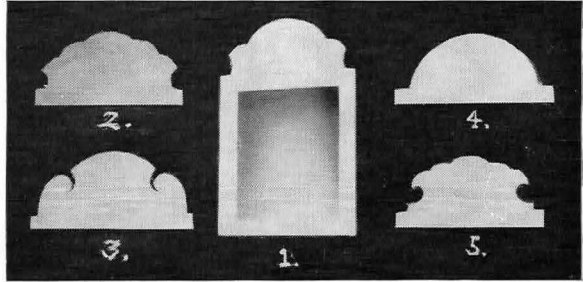
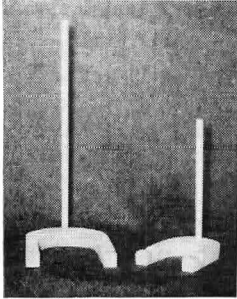
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