

The
Decorator

*Journal of The Historical Society
of Early American Decoration*



Fall 2019 Vol. 75



The Historical Society of Early American Decoration

A Society with affiliated chapters was organized to carry on the work and honor the memory of Esther Stevens Brazer, pioneer in the perpetuation of Early American Decoration as an art; promote continued research in that field; record and preserve examples of early American decoration; maintain exhibits and publish works on the subject of early American decoration and its history to further the appreciation of this art and the elevation of the standards of its reproduction and utilization; assist in public and private efforts in locating and preserving material pertinent to the Society’s work and to cooperate with other societies in the accomplishment of purposes of mutual concern.

Vision: The Historical Society of Early American Decoration (HSEAD) perpetuates and expands the unique skills and knowledge of early American decoration.

Mission: HSEAD will develop new ways of growing and sharing its art and expertise, of expanding its membership and collaborative relationships and of awakening appreciation of early American decoration among new audiences.

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Cover: Country Painting Pattern in the Walter Wright Collection, Original, Peg Watts
The identical pattern appears in the Lending Library of Design Catalog, (CP 099) pg. 13, Cornelia Keegan, 1 Sheet Waiter.

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The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.

26 North College Street

Schenectady, New York 12305

518 - 372-2220 www.HSEAD.org info@hsead.org

Editor's Letter

In harmony with Spring's spirit of renewal, our Society celebrates the renaissance of America's traditional decorative arts, its ongoing research and resourceful perseverance in this genre. Our Spring Annual Membership Meeting's Exhibition in Amherst, Mass. staged a buffet of members' creative use of our standard techniques in works of art that reflected their personal interpretations, family history and whimsical imaginations. The program, "The Artistic Woman," featured several speakers who highlighted early 19th century women artists. Informing our commitment to recording historically authentic patterns, HSEAD's own Collection of Originals was handsomely displayed. Inspiring as always, our standard exhibit of members' juried artwork elicited admiration for its charm, beauty and authentic renditions of the originals. Every category, including the recent addition of Women's Painted Furniture, was proudly represented.

Our meeting venue, Historic Deerfield, offered us an opportunity to visit the Museum (not yet open to the public at this time of year), and the Museum graciously staffed a number of its houses for our members to tour. Stepping into these 18th and early 19th century homes, we viewed many familiar painted pieces that were both utilitarian and decorative, fitting comfortably into the lifestyles of their inhabitants. There are so few Museums that focus on early American art and artifacts, and I appreciated Historic Deerfield's permission to share some of its unique works in its Collection for an article and have also written an overview of *Historic Deerfield, A Portrait of Early America* by Elizabeth Stillinger, an informative and fascinating story of Deerfield's history.

Hall Tavern, among other houses at Deerfield, displayed colorful stenciled walls, a clever and artistic alternative to wallpaper. Many of us are familiar with the famous father/son team, Moses Eaton and Moses Eaton, Jr. and with the research on Stenciling from Janet Waring to Anne Eckart Brown. In this issue, Polly Bartow closely examines a stenciled motif in the Holden House in Otisfield, Maine to discover if the artist might be Moses Eaton, Jr.

Before digital, electric and battery run timepieces, many homes whispered the rhythmic sounds of pendulum operated tall case clocks, some with painted ornamental dials. Astrid Donnellan shares the history of Painted White Clock Dials from the mid 18th century and her

knowledge gained from years of experience restoring their faces.

On the subject of clocks and their white faces, Pat Evans shares a delightful experience of friends and friends of friends and the odyssey of two Riley Whiting Clocks. This is the story of these two 1883 clocks, unique for what lay beneath their painted faces, i.e., their wooden works. Pat shares a story of two clocks and a clock case whose destinies, it will seem, were meant to be.

An historical society, HSEAD's beginnings are artistically recorded in its unique, handpainted archival collection of early American decorative patterns (many from originals) owned and passed down from our founders and others including Esther Stevens Brazer. Valerie Oliver, the Society's Historian, has culled and cited detailed information from *The Decorator*, Annual Reports, the Society's Newsletters and other documentation and has given us a comprehensive and chronological history of HSEAD's Pattern Archive.

Who is Harry B. Sherman? Lois Tucker's article on Sherman reminds us that there were a number of people practicing stenciled decoration and experimenting with technique. Sherman was a stenciler and working on his technique perhaps around the same time that Brazer was exploring the technique of stenciling with George Lord (1833-1928). If any of our readers have success in contacting members of the Rhode Island Society of Mayflower Descendants (Sherman served as its Governor), please let us know. It would be interesting to learn more about him, and seeing some of his stenciled work might answer some questions about his technique.

As always, *The Decorator* celebrates our members' meticulously decorated work, juried and awarded pieces. As well, we thank our advertisers who support *The Decorator* and facilitate reproducing early American decorative painting by offering us the quality products and supplies required. We also appreciate members who contribute articles, sharing history, research and insightful information about the techniques employed by masters and initiators of the various categories and styles of decoration. Thank you all for your support.

On behalf of the staff of *The Decorator* and all who contribute to HSEAD in a variety of ways, we wish you and yours a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

Sandra Cohen



Early American Painted Decorative Patterns, An Historical Society of Early American Decoration Archive

Representing the Life's Work of
Esther Stevens Brazer, Walter H. Wright, Ellen Sabine and Virginia Martin

by Valerie Burnham Oliver

In 1946 the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild (later known as The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, HSEAD) was established by her students in honor of their teacher and dedicated not only to share the knowledge that Brazer had garnered and imparted over the years, but also to collect, preserve, and promote the reproduction of historically authentic decorative designs and techniques employed to create them. The techniques included: Country Painting, practiced initially in America to decorate tinsmith products and featuring oil painted brush stroke work; Stenciling using bronze lining powders; Freehand Bronze work, where lining powders are used without stencils; Metal/Gold Leaf work; Reverse Glass Painting as seen on decorated clocks and mirrors; Lace Edge or Pontypool Painting style where wax is used as the medium instead of varnish with oil paints; hand painted tall case Clock Dial Painting; and Theorem work, stenciling with watercolors or oils on paper or white velvet. These techniques were used to decorate various objects such as trays, boxes, furniture and other household items.

The 80 Brazer students, who initially met in Darien, Connecticut at the home of Emily Heath, became the Charter Members of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild (D 20:2, p.5, 1966). Over the years the desire to collect and preserve early designs has



*Large Oval Tray Pattern by Peg Watts 1954
Walter Wright Collection*

Key: **AR**, Annual Report of HSEAD / **D**, *The Decorator*, Journal of HSEAD
Photography by the author

been accomplished, in a major way, with the donations of four key personal pattern collections.

The first Collection was Esther Brazer's and was located originally at her home called Innerwick in Flushing, N.Y. This Collection contains patterns that she recorded from objects to which she had access over her adult life and perhaps some patterns given to her or purchased. The other Collections in this article also contain patterns recorded and painted by the Collection owners, but also contain many patterns that they acquired from other Society members or friends who were willing to share; some might have been purchased as well. During the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s Society members often shared their patterns and also access to their Antique Collections. We can see this by reading the notations and documentation written on the patterns themselves providing information as to who owned the original or who painted the pattern sometimes providing a date when executed or copied.

In 1958 Mrs. Brazer's Collection was moved to the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y., becoming a more formal and separate part of the entity known as the HSEAD Museum Collection. In 1981 this HSEAD Museum Collection was moved to Albany, N.Y. and the HSEAD Albany Museum.



*Cut Corner Tray, Country Painting Pattern
by Natalie Ramsey 1955*

In 1991 the collections including research materials, patterns and original decorated objects were given to the American Folk Art Museum in NYC. Members had the privilege of making appointments to consult the Collections, and in 1992 an annual Brazer Memorial Lecture and Docent Awards were established at the Museum.

It was also stipulated in the formal transfer agreement that HSEAD would have first refusal if any antique item were to be de-accessioned.

After 19 years of ownership by the American Folk Art Museum, in 2010 President Sandra Cohen, with legal guidance, arranged for a new contract to be signed leaving the HSEAD Collection of artifacts, antique decorated objects, under the American Folk Art Museum's care and ownership, but returning the HSEAD Pattern and Research Collec-

tions, now after their beginnings in 1948, 62 years ago, an Historical Archive to HSEAD. These Archives were transported from New York to Old Sturbridge Village (OSV), Sturbridge, Mass. There HSEAD rented the small building called the David Wight House as our HSEAD Research Center from 2010-2017. This was a location that afforded a more convenient place to consult research and patterns, hold meetings, workshops and celebratory events.

More recently in 2017, unable to continue renting the property at OSV, Collections at the David Wight House had to be placed in storage until their eventual move in 2019 to a new property in Schenectady, N.Y.

Who donated the patterns making-up this Archival Collection and how were they received by HSEAD?



Stenciled Tray Picture Pattern with Bronze Powders by Esther Brazer

The Esther Stevens Brazer Collection / 1948

Mrs. Brazer became interested in early American decoration while living in historic homes, first, the John Hicks House in Cambridge Mass., with her first husband, Cecil Fraser. With her second husband, Clarence Brazer, she moved to the Hill Tavern or Grey Gardens House, also in Cambridge (D L:2, p.22-23, 1996) and last to Innerwick, the house in Flushing, New York. As her interest and knowledge grew, she began recording designs, writing, teaching and taking commissions.

One major commission was for Bertram and Nina Fletcher Little at their family home known as Cogswell Grant in Essex, Mass., now owned by Historic New England and opened to the public in 1993. Here, in 1939 Mrs. Brazer restored and/or recreated the original painted woodwork. It remains today as a testament to her careful study. In addition to her many articles for *The Magazine Antiques* her major publications include: *The Rocking-Chair, An American Institution*, co-authored with Walter A. Dyer, 1928; *Early American Decoration*, 1940; *Basic Instructions for Home Painting in the Early American Manner*, 1943; *Early American Designs for Stenciled Chairs*, 1945.

After the death of his wife in 1945, Dr. Clarence Brazer, in 1948 gave Esther's collection of "patterns, lantern slides, manuscripts, notes and photographs" (D 20:2, p.12, 1966) and tinware to HSEAD (Excerpts 30th Ann. Mtg. 5/1976, p.14). This was the first of several key personal pattern collection gifts to the newly organized Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, developing the Esther Stevens Brazer Collection. This Collection contains hundreds of painted and stenciled patterns as well as wall and floor stencils. Many of the stencil patterns include very carefully executed stencils used individually to carry out the work. Esther Brazer was "intrigued with all the decorative arts," and her research included "glass panels" especially used for clocks and mirrors. Her portfolios contained many examples of this work recorded "step by step." It was at a Kingston, Mass. meeting of the organization in 1949 that reverse glass paintings, reproductions of early designs, were judged for the first time (D 14,1,p.4, 1959). Here, we see the positive influence of her work and research in expanding the Guild's interests and endeavors. Exhibitions continue at HSEAD Annual Meetings where members' work can be judged and recognition given to these decorative projects.

At the same Kingston, Mass. 1949 meeting, Martha Muller displayed some of the Brazer patterns in their new protective mountings. "Their beauty is unsurpassed" was stated as members were



*Gold Leaf Tray Pattern by Gina Martin 1955,
(Mrs. Sherwood Martin, Charter Member #51)
Walter Wright Pattern Collection*

“thrilled” to see the patterns again after being familiar with them from their classes (D 4:2, p.12, 1950). Muller, in her report titled, “Gifts to the Guild Museum” stated that “No other society exists that would so completely enjoy and appreciate decorated original things.” (D 7:1, p.37-38, 1953) The gifts donated to the Brazer Guild at that time were “housed temporarily at Innerwick which became our first Museum.” (D 20:2, p.12, 1966). Violet M. Scott in her 1954 President’s Report stated that after each meeting there was more and more interest in “research in decoration,” and she “hoped that members who wish to participate in this work will avail themselves of the files at Innerwick [the Brazer home] which contain many notes, clippings, books, photographs and slides, as well as the patterns copied from originals by Esther Stevens Brazer” (D 8:2, p.14, 1954).

An article in 1954 by James Dunn, then Librarian at the New York State Historical Association’s (NYSHA) Fenimore House Library, reminded members of the lack of extensive Collections on the craftsmanship of “your hobby” and the scarcity of primary source material in the field of early American decorative arts (D 8:1, p.6, 1954). An article in *The Decorator* referred to a recent donation of original William Page Eaton stencils that certainly are primary sources (D 12:1, p.31, 1957). With the availability of the Brazer Collection, the patterns would now constitute a worthy primary source for this type of decorative design.



*Cut Stencil on Architect's Linen
by Esther Brazer*

In 1958 the Farmers’ Museum, member of NYSHA in Cooperstown, New York, became the home for the HSEAD Collection, a Collection not only of patterns but also of original artifacts con-

tinuously donated by generous members. It was after the agreement with NYSHA that items in the Brazer Deed of Gift were moved from Innerwick, to Cooperstown. The help of Martha Muller and Anne Avery in moving things from Flushing was noted (Excerpts 30th Ann. Mtg. 5/1976, p.14). Thus the first HSEAD Museum Collection was brought together. Louis C. Jones reported in the *NYSHA Quarterly Journal* that the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild “is a group of men and women who

are devoted to the preservation, re-creation and study of early American decorative patterns.” He looked forward to helping them by providing space as a “depository for their library, patterns and original objects” (AR 1958-59:2). His article referred to “The Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Designs.” Also noteworthy in this early Annual Report was the President’s Report by Bernice M. Drury who stated that in 1946 the first reason for establishing the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild was for “Recording and preserving examples of Early American decoration” (AR 1958-59:3). She refers to the importance of “our Portfolio of Early American Designs.”

The many HSEAD meetings where displays of members’ recordings were exhibited also often included exhibitions of original (antique) artifacts. The exhibitions provided opportunities for study, if only for



*Cut Stencil on Architect's Linen
by Esther Brazer*

the brief period of time of the meeting itself. A Fall 1960 meeting report described 42 pieces of glass and referred to some as very unsophisticated, but the whole offering an “excellent opportunity to study and compare the various techniques and to appreciate the charm worked into what at first glance might appear crude.” (D 15:1, p. 21, 1960). Here again we see the research value of a Collection. In the 1962 “In Memoriam” piece honoring Violet M. Scott, her counsel was noted in

helping to produce the first HSEAD book in 1960, *The Ornamented Chair* by Zilla R. Lea. Scott stated it was possible only because the Society had the Brazer Collection of photographs and research (D 16:2, p. 3, 1962). Eleanor Jones wrote about the value of stencils as a primary source when she noted the historical value of the “Brick Stencils” of Gardner, Massachusetts (D 17:1, p. 10-12, 1962). Catherine Hutter also talks about the research value of a pattern book with 600 designs located in England’s Wolverhampton Museum, suggesting that a future Society trip might be in order to see it and the Museum (D 17:1, p. 17, 1962).

Work continued on the Brazer Collection as Margaret Coffin completed tracing the floor and wall stencils, 29 wall stencils on 74 sheets

and 14 floor stencils on 12 sheets (AR 1977-8:9). Eventually selections were made for pattern packets readied for sale and as gifts to many new members over the years.

At the 1996 HSEAD 50th Anniversary Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, the theme, “Gold Leaf on Our Golden Anniversary,” spoke to the important honor HSEAD wished to give Esther Stevens Brazer. Both of Mrs. Brazer’s daughters, Constance Fraser and Diana Fraser Seamans were special guests. *The Decorator* also honored her memory with a special issue (D 50: 2, 1996); it contained the reprinting of “My Story” by Mrs. Brazer first published in *The Decorator* in the October 1951 issue, a historiography of Stevens’ life and her publications by Violet Scott and “Esther Stevens Brazer, the Woman” by Shirley S. Baer. The article by Violet Scott is a listing of Esther’s major life events as well as a list of all her writing. It also includes a list of her articles in *The Magazine Antiques*, interior decoration work, lectures and exhibits.



*Gold Leaf Tray Pattern by Walter Wright
(Walter Wright, Charter Member #154)*

The Walter H. Wright Pattern Collection / 1964

Walter Wright of Vermont was HSEAD’s President from 1959-1961 and became a Life Member in 1959; he is best known among members for his artistic work. His many patterns must have been well known and

appreciated by members as a notice in bold type appeared at the end of the Annual Report, 1962-3, p. 15 that read: “Please return all patterns belonging to Walter Wright.” We learn from this that he generously lent his patterns to members. The following year at the New York Business Meeting in January of 1964, “a letter was read from Mr. Walter Wright offering his Collection of patterns, books and [some] original[s] to the Society,” and it was noted that “It was accepted with great gratitude.” Wright’s donation then became the second major pattern collection donated to HSEAD. In her President’s Report Anne E. Avery noted the gift and asked that “those persons still holding any of these materials are urged to return them at once to Mrs. John Clark [Mary Jane Clark], Scrabble Arts, Norwell, Mass.”



*Gold Leaf Tray Pattern by Jessica Bond,
Walter Wright Collection*

(AR 1963-4:5 and 1). At the end of this Annual Report in bold lettering is another specific request that Walter H. Wright patterns be returned to Mrs. Clark for “re-cataloguing and remounting to open the collection to the membership.”

Walter Wright’s work was highly valued as evi-

denced also by the raffle in May 1965 of a “handsome stenciled box.” It was felt that by “handling it in this manner everyone had a chance, not just a fortunate few. 280 tickets were sold with Mrs. George Morse the fortunate winner.” (D 19:2, p. 21-2, 1965).

During the 1960s, while associated with the Farmers’ Museum, the Society’s finances were such that the Museum Committee was able to “clean, repair and mount almost 600 of Walter Wright’s patterns” (D 20:2, p.14, 1966). In Martha Muller’s article on “The Museum Collection” in the same 20th HSEAD Anniversary edition of *The Decorator*, she states that the Museum Collection of HSEAD now consisted of several hundred decorated furnishings and also, “the Esther Stevens Brazer Pattern Collection and the Walter Wright Pattern Collection, both for use by our membership.” (D 20:2, p. 17, 1966). During this 20th Anniversary Meeting, the Exhibition included a display of “230 Walter

Wright patterns” (D 20:2, p.25, 1966). They were mounted on the gallery walls; grouped together were patterns representing styles such as: Chippendale, lace edge, free hand bronze, gold leaf, decorated chair, stenciled trays, bread trays and bellows. The arrangement, Madge Watt wrote, allowed members to “examine closely the delicate brush work on the patterns for which Walter Wright is so noted and admired” (D 20:2, p. 28-9, 1966). Martha Muller, Curator, noted that the Collection now contained 500 items of the Walter Wright Pattern Collection (note 100 less than the 600 mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph). She made a plea that she hoped “the remainder of the outstanding patterns of the collection will find their way back to us... We feel that our Society is singularly fortunate to have for our use these beautiful recordings of decorative designs, and we hope that all members will join us in expressing gratitude to Mr. Wright for these works of art.” The patterns were prepared for exhibition by Anne Avery, Madge Watt and Mildred



Pontypool Tray Pattern by Walter Wright



Rose detail



Bird detail



Bird Patterns, Walter Wright Collection

Stainton (D 20:2, p. 33, 1966). At a Spring Meeting in Cooperstown in May 1971, “a sampling of Walter Wright painted patterns and some of the stencils and stenciled patterns of Esther Stevens Brazer were also shown.” (AR 1970-71: 9-10).

An appraisal, reported at a Trustees’ Meeting in May of 1974, valued the patterns at \$23,000 (AR 1973-4:19). Anne E. Avery noted, at that time, that with the library and research materials “our holdings will reach toward \$100,000. A large responsibility indeed.” Walter Wright died in 1974. His pattern collection, given to the Society ten years earlier, was valued at \$15,700 in 1975; this added to the estimated value of the Esther Stevens Brazer Pattern Collection of \$9,850 gave HSEAD a total pattern collection value of \$25,550 (AR 1975-6:5). Mona Rowell, President, noted that the HSEAD Collection of artifacts, patterns and research materials “is steadily growing in historical importance.”

In honor of Walter Wright, Mr. Robert Keegan wrote a tribute to him in the Fall 1974 *Decorator*. In the tribute he stated that after Walter



Birds in Pattern Designs, Wright Collection

Tray On Left Painted by Peg Watts, Original Owned by Mrs. Brocker, New Jersey
Tray On Right Painted by May Hale Auer, New Hampshire, 1949
(Charter Member #29) Original Owned by Walter Wright

“hung up his brush,” he donated his “outstanding pattern collection” to HSEAD. “All who knew him were warmed by his generosity of spirit in sharing his gift. The standards of craftsmanship and other accomplishments of this Society are in part due to his many years of devotion and service.” Mr. Keegan suggested that a special exhibit be mounted of Walter’s decorated objects. Those members contributing to this exhibit also provided some of his many hand painted Christmas cards. The exhibit took place at the Spring 1975 Meeting in North Falmouth, Mass. Other exhibits of his work have continued into recent years: the Society’s Charleston, South Carolina Spring Meeting 1995 (D 49:2, p.29) and the Burlington, Vermont Annual Meeting 2009 (HSEAD Newsletter, no. 87, p.1).

Mona D. Rowell stated her wishes that HSEAD would establish its own museum as she felt HSEAD had a “collection of fine originals but also the most extensive collection of designs to be found anywhere” (D 30:1, p. 15, 1975-6). She was speaking upon the announcement of the Natalie Ramsey Collection of some 1,000 patterns and some objects being given to the Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont. Although this Collection was not given to HSEAD, Mrs. Ramsey, a talented Society member, was intent upon setting up the first “regional work center” for the study of early American decoration. By donating to a college, she felt her Collection would be located and made available for use by those interested in consulting a large group of designs. Over 20 years later in 1999 the College, unable to maintain the Collection any longer, sold it to HSEAD. Many of the patterns were integrated into the Society’s Lending Library of Design with duplicates being sold. About 50 of her objects were auctioned at the Batavia, New York Meeting, September 1999.

During the 30th Anniversary Meeting, “Our Decorative Heritage,” in Cooperstown, N.Y. in May 1976, Jane Bolster in her introduction to a seminar on Country



Pontypool Tray Pattern by Walter Wright

Painting stated that “One of the most important functions of our organi-



Snuffer Tray Pattern by Peg Watts 1954, Original owned by Ruth Croque, Virginia



Snuffer Tray Pattern with Birds and Butterflies



Gothic Snuffer Tray Pattern, Mrs. Carl D. Cushing, 1949 (Charter Member #70)



Stenciled Snuffer Tray Pattern copied from Peg Watts, 1952, Original owned by Zilla Lea

zation is to Share Our Knowledge.” The last three words were in bold and capitalized by Bolster. From these thirty years it is very evident that sharing knowledge was paramount in members’ actions, shown by making donations as well as by providing many demonstrations and written instructions dealing with painting and technical matters.

The Decorator also showcased the sharing of research findings by many members. Mrs. Brazer, Mr. Wright and Mrs. Ramsey all wished to share their work; they accomplished this with their research, teaching, their devotion to recording patterns of designs and in Natalie Ramsey’s case, by also establishing the first regional work center where her large Pattern Collection could be studied, recorded and enjoyed.

As early as 1977, it was known that NYSHA needed more space at the Farmers’ Museum forcing HSEAD to begin to look elsewhere to locate the Museum Collections (AR 1977-8:3). The Annual Report of 1979-80 noted a fundraising event to benefit the Museum made possible by selling color copies of four of Walter Wright’s bellows patterns, another testament to the value and desirability of his carefully executed patterns.

During 1980, the move to the Albany, NY location was accomplished, and Doris Fry described the new location (see AR 1980-81:32-3). It was also during the 1980s that two more major Collections were given to the Society.



*Stenciled Box Pattern from Mrs. Harberson
by Ellen Sabine*

The Ellen Sabine Pattern Collection / 1984

The third major personal Pattern Collection of some 1,131 items came from that of Ellen Sabine, noted HSEAD author and teacher. Ellen Sabine, born in New York City, was a graduate of Pratt Institute and the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts. She was a commercial artist in New York City and London for 21 years. In 1948 she became a teacher of early American decoration at the Ballard School of the Central Branch of the YWCA in NYC where she taught for twenty-five years. She became a member of HSEAD and began to develop her Pattern Collection by traveling to museums, historical societies and private homes. During this time, she wrote three books dealing with her research interests: *American Antique Decoration*, 1956; *American Folk Art*, 1958; *Early American Decorative Patterns and How to Paint Them*, 1962.



*Railroad, River Boat, Christmas Sleigh from Katherine Hatch
by Ellen Sabine*



Thomas Stothard Bouquet



Thomas Stothard Rose

*Theorem patterns by Ellen Sabine from old Stothard Engravings
(Thomas Stothard, 1755-1784, English painter, illustrator and engraver)*

Her gift to HSEAD was announced at the April 1984 Trustees' Meeting in Albany, New York (AR 1983-4:18). Her sister, Hilda Borscherding, noted the Collection appraised at \$12,194.00; it was cataloged and mounted and most patterns were documented and signed by Ellen. This Collection features an extensive Fraktur Pattern Collection with most documented as to where Sabine recorded them. Her stencil patterns show her skills with cutting and color washes. Shell and bird patterns are also significant to her Collection. Her death was noted inside the cover of the 1986-7 Annual Report.



*Fraktur from "Index of American Design"
color supplied by Ellen Sabine*



*'New York Blue' Country Painting Pattern by Gina Martin
(Mrs. Sherwood Martin, Charter Member #51)*

The Virginia Martin Collection / 1988

Gina Martin, from Connecticut, was a researcher and a very generous one at that. Her devotion to her own work and that of the Society is evident by her actions. For some 50 years she had been conducting extensive research into the origins of country tin painting designs. During that time she was also very active in HSEAD. A Charter Member, she served as Standards & Judging Chair, Trustee and was instrumental in establishing the HSEAD School and the Teacher Certification Program. Additionally, she was able to earn the HSEAD Master Craftsman and Master Teacher Awards.

Martin began donating to the Society in 1980 when she generously donated her "research materials on American painted tin;" the gift was accepted at the Cherry Hill, New Jersey Trustees Meeting in May 1980 (AR 1979-80:21). In the Museum Report 1983-4, Curator, Doris Fry, reported "tin and papi-



*Asphaltum Ground Trunk Pattern
copied by Gina Martin,
from Original owned by
Robert Boyce, Conn.*

er mache articles valued at \$6,000 [given] by Gina Martin.” Gina also gave patterns to the Lending Library of Design noted by Dolores Furnari (AR 1985-6:13). Later she gave HSEAD her 8,000 photographs and negatives of these tin pieces and other originals; this was reported in the 1986-7 Museum Report (AR 1986-7:38). Most wonderfully, in 1988 she gave a “collection of country painting patterns, books and a collection of patterns of original stenciled and painted walls (AR 1987-8:25-6). This then was the fourth major personal Pattern Collection donated to HSEAD.

Gina Martin was a busy woman; ads can be seen in *The Decorator* for her business of selling wall stencils (D 6:2, p.44, 1952). She was also given permission to sell from her large Collection of theorem patterns at meet-



Side of Trunk with Country Painting Borders by Gina Martin Shown with Original



Bread Basket Pattern and Detail by Gina Martin Original owned by Liz Church, Conn.

ings (ex.: AR 1984-5:8 and AR 1985-6:17). Her Collection of some 110 theorem patterns was purchased to become, if not the foundation for the HSEAD theorem business, a definite boost to it, as reported by Barbara Quirk at the Trustees meeting in Parsippany, New Jersey in the spring of 1993 (AR 1992-3:11).

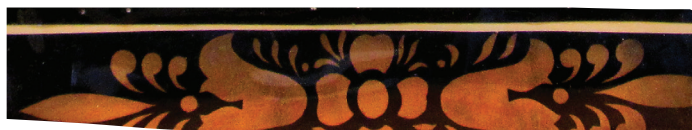
Until very recently there has been little written in the HSEAD Annual Reports or *The Decorator* about these last two Collections mainly because the closing of the HSEAD Museum in Albany in 1991 effectively removed them from active utilization for research, exhibition, or other purposes. In the Museum Report for 1988-9, Margaret Coffin, Museum Director, repeated Martha Muller's view that the "Museum Collection is the Society's best investment... our most significant contribution to public education... in proper line with our Historical title." In 2007, the publication by HSEAD of the last volume of the four volumes entitled *American Painted Tinware* by Gina Martin and Lois Tucker was completed. These volumes represent the culmination of the research carried on by Mrs. Martin, over a 50 year period, and continued by Mrs. Tucker, utilizing the many photographs, notes and patterns now located in the Gina Martin Collections of the HSEAD Archives. The now classic *American Painted Tinware* four volume set is a fine example of HSEAD's educational efforts.



Detail of Freehand Bronze Tray Pattern by Gina Martin

The HSEAD Historical Pattern Archive

It was only a few short years after Margaret Coffin's statement calling the Museum Collection the Society's best investment, when the building being occupied by the HSEAD Albany Museum was to be



Signed Hitchcock, late Pattern Designs 1845-50 by Ellen Sabine

sold, that the Society in 1991 relinquished its Collections of artifacts, research and patterns, closed the Museum and signed over the Originals Collections to the ownership and care of the Museum of American Folk Art (MAFA), now the American Folk Art Museum (AFAM) in NYC. Dorothy Hamblett stated in her last appraisal that the Collections (original artifacts, patterns and research) were valued at about \$350,000 (AR 1990-1:9). During preparations for the closing of the Albany Museum plans were made to hold an auction of some items from the Originals Collection. With the approval of the Museum Committee some articles, “not top-quality pieces,” were selected for the auction. A substantial sum of \$53,610 was realized with \$50,000 used to purchase a CD for the HSEAD Endowment Fund (AR 1990-1:32).

Conditions were set forth to govern the transfer of materials to their new location including warranties stating that “the Museum of Ameri-



*Chair Back Stencil Pattern by Ellen Sabine
Historic New England*

can Folk Art will not be able to sell or encumber any part of this Collection. This is to protect the Board and the Society” (AR 1990-1:14-15). It appears then that HSEAD was still trying very hard to be protective of these Collections. Things could not be de-accessioned by MAFA without first refusal by the Society. The Legal Committee working with Atty. Rupert on the conditions of the agreement with the Museum were: Shirley Baer, Helen Thieme, Dorothy Hamblett, Joyce Holzer and Dolores Furnari (AR 1990-1:16). Although HSEAD was unable to maintain its Museum and its Collections any longer, this group was intent upon protecting the original artifacts, patterns and research for the future.

Members Deborah Lambeth and then Alice Smith, worked with the Museum as consultants to set up policies for HSEAD member use and study of the Collections. HSEAD wanted its members to be able to visit NYC to utilize the resources.

Because so many members had given generously of their original decorated objects to build the Artifacts/Originals Collection, it was felt that publishing a catalogue of this Collection at AFAM would be an appropriate and appreciated way to honor those who gave and a convenient way to see the objects. Toward this end



*Large Chippendale Tray,
White background with Birds
by Walter Wright*

\$11,500 was donated to AFAM for the project. Those funds were returned to HSEAD and so noted at the September 2010 trustees’ meeting in Killington, Vermont. Here were also noted three offers to produce the catalogue. As the text had already been completed the cost would be mainly for the photography and layout. Although this project has not been carried out, the use of originally planned on-demand online printing might help to bring it to fruition in the future, eliminating costs of printing storing and mailing.

While the Collections were located at AFAM in New York our initial contract with the Museum was extended several times as the Mu-

seum dealt with the construction and occupation of a new building. In 2007, as the contract period was to finally end in 2010, President Sandra Cohen began efforts to affect a positive outcome and a new contract going forward. She worked with the help of the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts,' Attorney Lawrence Kaye, to negotiate a new agreement and contract concerning the HSEAD donated collections there. Although HSEAD was not in a position to obtain the return of the original artifacts, HSEAD accepted the return of the patterns and research to its care and protection.

With no extra space available at their office location at the Farmers' Museum, space was secured at Old Sturbridge Village through the continued efforts of President Cohen. Thus, in the summer of 2010, the Research and Pattern Collections were moved to their new home at the newly established HSEAD Research Center at the David Wight House, Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Mass.



*Chippendale Tray Original, E (Emilie) Underhill, 1954
(Mrs. Andrew Underhill, Charter Member #13)
Walter Wright Collection*

The collections could now be studied more conveniently. Lois Tucker's 2011 article in *The Decorator*, "HSEAD's Archives at the David Wight House" described the rich resources (D 65:1, p.6-11, 2011), created and put together by members who devoted so much of their lives to documenting designs and collecting research materials.

With the 2010 establishment and formal opening in October of 2011 of the HSEAD Research Center at Old Sturbridge Village another occasion was available to celebrate the Walter Wright Pattern Collection. An article in *The Decorator*, "The Legacy of Walter Wright, Charter Member and President of HSEAD 1959-1961" by Sandra Cohen introduced Walter and his pattern legacy to those who had never seen the patterns nor known of Mr. Wright (D 66:1, p.28-35, 2012). At HSEAD annual meetings from 2011 to 2013, samples from the HSEAD Pattern Collec-



Victorian Flower Painted Pattern Archival Notes state "Round Gothic Tray, (Chip. Bowl?) original owned by Jessica Bond 1956." This identical pattern appears in the HSEAD Lending Library of Design Catalog, (VFP 038) pg. 76 as an 11 inch diameter tray by Jessica Bond.

tion have been exhibited for all to see and enjoy. In 2013, for the Annual Meeting in Albany, HSEAD was given the privilege of holding a silent auction of a selection of Walter Wright artifacts in conjunction with his sister's estate. Again, we see the loyalty and respect the Wright family had for HSEAD and its mission and members. To complement this auction an exhibit was mounted of eleven Wright patterns and also two trays: one a reproduction of one of his patterns and the other an original Wright decorated tray. Additionally, the convenience for study at the HSEAD Research Center afforded closer examination of the Gina Martin Pattern Collection by Virginia O'Brien; her article appeared in *The Decorator* 67:2, p.28-32, 2013 and was entitled "Gina Martin's Country Tin Patterns (A Legacy at the David Wight House)."

The contract with Old Sturbridge Village and the HSEAD presence at the David Wight House there came to an end in 2018. The HSEAD Research Center Collections had to be stored for several months while the governing body searched for a new location. An individual building was purchased by HSEAD in Schenectady, New York. At the Fall Working Seminar in Rutland, Vermont in September 2018, it was an-

nounced that it was hoped that the Collections could eventually be consulted again in the spring of 2019. This facility will be the central location for our artifacts, archives, research collections, supplies and office. The ownership of a building by the Society represents a new frontier where member services can be streamlined and where research and the patterns can both be consulted in pleasant surroundings.

HSEAD has not wavered in its 73 years of protecting these Pattern Collections now an Historical Archive of early decorative painted designs, a unique collection. Historiographic, the archive sets forth the history with both designs and notations and forms a large primary source for study. The continuously developing HSEAD Lending Library of Design and its Photograph Collections assist in many ways to provide access to designs, but these painted patterns, many, themselves, works of art, have an intrinsic value and the added benefit of being available as a whole for study and inspiration. Their value as part of the decorative material culture of the United States engenders respect for the organization preserving them, and their research significance increases as time passes. They serve as a testament to a specific type of decorative and craft fashion, and as artifacts, they can be studied as to their place in culture over time. Additionally, the patterns document many artifacts that are no longer used or difficult to locate. As Brazer, Wright, Sabine and Martin sought to record and preserve designs, their added notations and documentation help to reveal inter-relationships and life styles, life styles that in the end have formed the very foundation of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration.



Valerie Burnham Oliver is a retired librarian and serves as researcher and Historian of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration.

Painted White Clock Dials

A History

by Astrid Donnellan



*Scenic detail of Thomas Osborne Clock
Made for Simon Willard's Shop*

The importance of genuine art technique and excellent craftsmanship cannot be stressed enough. Having restored antique clock dials for many museums, dealers of the trade and average collectors since 1985, my experience has taught me to appreciate the unique beauty of each and every dial I hold in my hands. Two hundred and fifty years ago, someone gave ample thought to designing the decorated area surrounding the graphics, and each deserve to be restored and preserved.

British made tall clock dials are classified as British Folk Art by historians of Horology. The art work on these dials dates from approximately 1770 to 1850. The manufacture of sheet iron that encompasses our English decorative pieces coincides with those years. The main center of dial painting was done by the industrial artists located in Birmingham where clockmakers from surrounding towns and hamlets purchased their plain and decorated dials. Many designs and decorative techniques found on these dials were from the same hands of the artists who decorated Japanned Ware, illustrating techniques such as gold leaf, floral art, stormont, freehand bronze and transparent oil colors. Canvas

painting was considered fine art and had its roots in cultural Europe beginning c.1300. Folk art, on the other hand, would be self-taught, and the work is decorative.



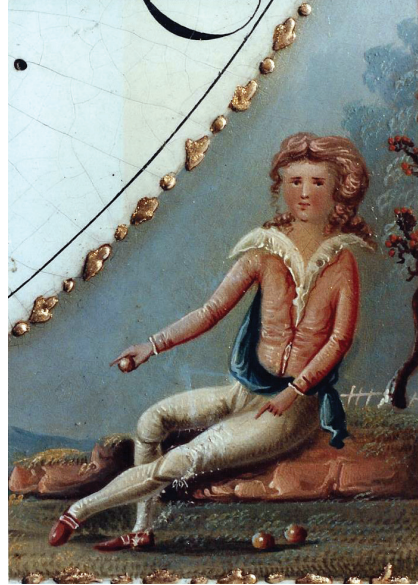
*Decorated White Clock Dial
Signed Simon Willard*

purchase a tall clock with a white dial that they could see, whereas they couldn't clearly see a tarnished brass dial in a dim candle lit room. White Dial Clocks remained popular for approximately a hundred years.

These dials had a Japanned surface hardened by a heat process that is often mistaken for a fired enameled surface associated with the manufacture of Battersea Enameled Ware. Brass dials were popular before the white dial which was called the "inferior country cousin" compared to the engraved brass dial. The white dial, fashioned between 1760 to 1780 on a whim by a group of clockmakers, was inexpensive to produce and became very popular with the general public with whom the brass dial lost favor. Children soon learned how to tell time because so many families were able to



*Left: Shepherd in Arch with
Delicate Floral Spandrels
Right: Summertime Spandrel Depicting
Maid with Rosy Cheeks and Ample Thighs*



Spandrels Portraying Young Men (Rare) with Detail

The Industrial Revolution (1750 to 1850) ensured steady employment for people living in the Midlands of Birmingham and Wales. Employment was bountiful in the North Midlands, and many families thrived in businesses such as iron, textiles, shipbuilding and engineering. Families with available cash were eager to purchase the new fashionable tall clock with the white dial.

The earliest manufacturer who advertised to the public was the firm of Osborne and Wilson around 1770 in Birmingham, England. Their partnership lasted only five years and each went his separate way. However, in 1778 Thomas Osborne decided to continue his trade of clock making, and soon afterwards, James Wilson opened his own business. Many of these Osborne and Wilson dials were exported to America c.1800 for the Willard family of clockmakers.

Dial painting is a separate trade from dial making, and painters were hired for that specialty. The best and most experienced artists worked for Thomas Osborne, exhibiting finely painted scenics together with fruit and delicate flowers.

As time and the manufacture of dials progressed, the delicacy of the flowers became larger and simpler. After 1825, dial decoration became heavier and brighter in color.

A popular subject for spandrels was the Four Seasons, each corner depicting a lady with pink cheeks, a tiny mouth and ample thighs. The



Silver Leaf under transparent colors of clothing creates a luminous effect.

seasonal themes were gardening for summer and snow for winter. Occasionally, men would be depicted in the four spandrels.

Another decorative technique often seen is a “luminous dial.” The clothes of these figures had an under layer of silver leaf to create brilliance. To this surface a layer of transparent color was applied to give the clothing on the subject a luminous appearance.



Battle of Waterloo

Ships were popular around 1815, and one that intrigued me was the Battle of Waterloo, 1815. The entire battle is depicted not only on the dial plate itself, but included the area of the moon disc. History was being made, and now there was a painted scenic surface to document the event.

If, in the manufacture of the dial, an imperfection occurred on the surface, the artist would paint a fly, or sometimes a tiny bee or

a little butterfly, to cover it. These were known as a “fly dial”... rare indeed!

The shape of the dial could be square, square with an arched top, oval or square with a break-arch. The break-arch shows the moon-phase luna arch and accommodates the moon disc. Wales and Scotland, as well as Birmingham, be-



“Fly Dial” Detail

came centers of manufacture. The rolled iron sheet was prepared with a lead base paint to prevent rust. The dial surface was painted white, a light blue or slightly green white, but it was still referred to as a white dial. Many of the clocks were made by people not necessarily in the trade. Men who were employed in other trades or their own businesses built clocks in the winter months for extra income.

Decoration on early white dials was sparse. They were, after all, white dials and you will find simple designs in a minimum of decoration usually with gold leaf and delicate motifs.

Osborn dials are identified with delicate painted birds. However, some people were superstitious about having pictures of birds in their home.

By 1800 or 1805, dials were becoming more colorful, and by 1830 the four spandrels and arch painting were joined, and the only white area was the dial center with the numerals.

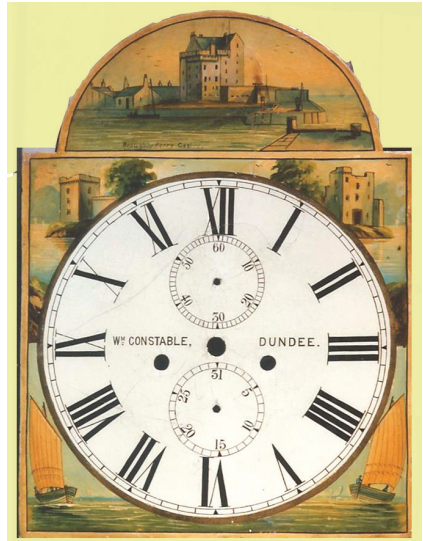
Decoration varied; some depicted battle scenes, hunting scenes and biblical themes, to name a few, and geometric and fan designs decorated spandrels.



*Early White Dial
with Gold Leaf Decoration on Gesso*



*Left: Exotic Bird in Floral Spray, Typical Osborne Decoration
Right: No Arabic Numbers Surrounding Roman Numerals
Entire Dial Painted Land and Seascape*



Automata or moving parts of figures enjoyed popularity for a time. The one pictured here shows a gentleman with eyes moving left and right to the beat of the movement. The owner of the clock told me his young children were scared to death of being in the room alone with this clock.

The clockmaker's name was written on the front of the dial or impressed on the false plate behind the dial. The dial artist very rarely, if ever, signed his work. Dials painted for the Willard Clock making family of Boston were generally signed on the back of the dial. I have seen signatures of John Minott, John R. Penniman and Spencer Nolen who were employed as ornamental painters for the Willard family.



Automata Dial

Roman numerals were the norm, but Arabic numbers were used for a short time, 1820 to 1830. The two circular spare shapes at the top of the dial on a break arch were not intended to be hemispheres at the beginning and were decorated at times.



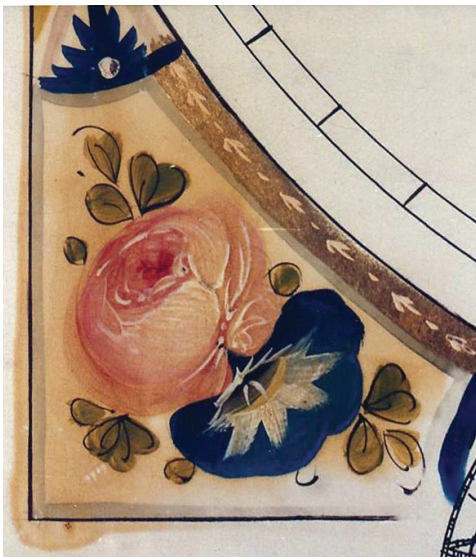
Decorated Circular Shapes on Top of a Break Arch

Later they exhibited hemispheres applied with a transfer printed process.

The decorative painting was sealed with a coat of varnish to protect the art work. The varnish would turn dark as time passed, leading many people to think that the decorative paintings were decals. However, the graphics, once completed on the dial, were never varnished. This is the

reason the graphics on many antique dials have worn off.

While reviewing HSEAD standards for painted clock dials, I have tried to understand the difficult job of being a judge for clock dials for the Society. The time track and graphics of the numerals, as well as the application of surface paint and the hand rubbed finish are all judged by a stated standard for clock dials. However, if a member replicates the theme from an original dial, the decorations would be difficult to judge by



Yellowing Rose on Spandrel (Caused by Varnish) Thought to be a Decal

our standards on craftsmanship. This would be difficult because when a judge is attempting to evaluate floral decoration interpreted for Pontypool technique, the authentic clock dial's floral decoration would not necessarily be true Pontypool flowers as interpreted in the standards for judging Pontypool.

Flowers painted on these clock dials were not as pronounced as we appreciate and replicate them on our Pontypool trays, and the artistry on the clock dial is more simple and loose compared to the refinement we are accustomed to seeing for judging Pontypool flower painting on trays manufactured in Pontypool, Wales. From the information provided in the horology publications, it would appear that the majority of dials with floral decoration came out of Birmingham where the industrial artists worked. Should members' painted clock dials come in for judging, it is possible that it wouldn't exhibit flowers that could be judged as true Pontypool technique. The decoration might be a geometric design in the spandrels with no gold leaf, freehand bronze or any standard technique required by HSEAD.

How does one judge this type of work? After my research and consideration, it appears to me that the quality of the painted clock dial must be judged for quality craftsmanship in replicating the floral design on the original and not according to the Society's standards for Pontypool and other categories.

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Astrid Donnellan is a Master Teacher, Master Craftsman (of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration) and artist who also restores antiques with early American decoration.

Moses Eaton, Jr. and The Stenciled Stag of Holden House

by Polly Tarbell Bartow

Among the many New England itinerant stencilers, the best documented are Moses Eaton and his son, Moses Eaton, Jr. Moses Eaton, born in 1753, served in the American Revolution and lived in Needham, Mass. until moving to a farm in Hancock, NH in 1792. By this time he was 40 years old and seems to have kept busy with his stenciling trade near his new home. There are a number of homes in the Hancock, Dublin and Peterboro, New Hampshire areas with stenciled walls probably stenciled by Eaton, Sr. who died in 1833.

Eaton's son, Moses Eaton, Jr. was born in 1796, and after learning the art of stenciling from his father, he began traveling the countryside as a teenager through New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine. Stenciling by him has been identified in the Maine towns of Alewife, North Saco, Sebec, Sidney, Kennebunk, Falmouth, Waldoboro, East Vasselboro, Blue Hill and Buckfield. At age 39, he bought a farm in Harrisville, New Hampshire and settled there with his wife, Rebecca and three children. He decorated the parlor of his own home using red and green patterns and motifs on a soft raspberry background. In his later years he farmed and, on occasion, continued his stenciling journeys around New England. Eaton died in 1886 at the age of 90, and his descendants continued to live in the house until 2002. In 2005, Polly Forcier, an artist and member of The Historical Society of Early American Decoration and known for her research on wall stenciling, restored the parlor walls for the new owners.



*Moses Eaton, Jr. Stencil Kit
Collection of Historic New England*

Early American stenciling can be broadly grouped into two genres, Classical and Folk Art. Classical was reflective of Early Classical Re-



*Stenciled Wall
from Mansel Alcock House
Hancock, New Hampshire*

vival design popular during the Federal Period and is characterized by swag and festoon friezes, border designs outlining architectural features, corner fans, guilloche style motifs and even urns. A wall from the Mansel Alcock House in Hancock, New Hampshire displays the patriotic swag and pendant border and the lovely flower spray. Various botanicals include the running oak leaf border, the oak leaf spray and leaves and flowers along the chair rail. A wonderful fragment on plaster from the Smithsonian American Art Collection shows sunflower motifs and other typical botanical elements. The Historic New England Collection includes a

fragment incorporating pineapple and vertical border. Another fragment in the Historic New England Collection shows lovely delicate botanical designs.

Folk Art is typically an all-over design of motifs often borrowed from nature. Leaves, flowers, flower baskets, trees, birds and vines along with horizontal and vertical borders were used. The designs are often primitive and naïve, but infinitely appealing. Moses Eaton designs are among the best known of the Folk Art style incorporating themes from nature such as the weeping willow (with or without a bird), pineapple, flower basket (also with or without a bird), oak leaves, maple leaves, roses, sunflowers and vines. Various geometrics were used for borders, yet some designs seem to be unique to Eaton and his followers.

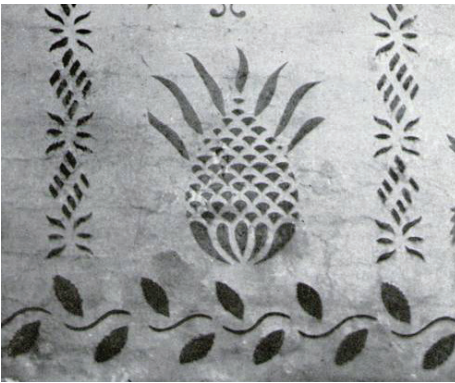


Hall Wall Stencil, Otisfield House

With a number of itinerant stencilers working in New England during early and mid 1800's, how do you know if you are looking at



Stenciled Pineapple, Otisfield House



*Known Moses Eaton
Stenciled Pinapple*



Front Parlor, Otisfield House

stenciling executed by Moses Eaton Jr.? I had the opportunity to flex my research muscles not long ago when I tackled a project that brought me face to face with that very question. The 1812 cape style Holden House in Otisfield, Maine has original stenciling that had been attributed to Eaton, Jr., and the Otisfield Historical Society asked me to investigate the claim. This little project turned into an interesting mystery!

In his book, *Oxford County, Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture* author Randall Bennett states, “This well-preserved farmstead is particularly notable for its authentic early nineteenth century exterior qualities and for its interior wall stenciling attributed to Moses Eaton, an itinerant New Hampshire stenciler who probably executed them in the late 1820s or early 1830s.” My first piece of evidence was that the stenciling is attributed to Eaton in a book authored by this well known Maine historian. Because the book did not mention who made the attribution, I called the author and asked. He explained that he relied on information gathered by a volunteer who was told the Eaton story by

the homeowner... not much to go on there.

Next, I examined photographs of the stenciling taken by Otisfield Historical Society members as part of an architectural survey. The

stenciling seemed characteristic of Eaton's work and showed pineapple, weeping willow, flower basket, flower spray and border designs similar to Eaton's. Very encouraging!

As I studied the photos, one motif stood out, a pair of leaping stags positioned over a doorway. I couldn't recall seeing the stag in lists of designs used by Eaton, thus I turned to my library of books on the subject, in particular, Polly Forcier's catalogue of Eaton designs and Janet Waring's 1937 book, *Early American Stencil Decorations*, on wall stenciling. The stag was not there. I sent Ms. Forcier the photo of the stag wall. She confirmed that the stag is a mystery and, in her words, "wonderfully curious." She also commented that the frieze seen on the stag wall had echoes of Eaton's work but was not a replica of any known Eaton frieze. I later contacted Linda Lefko, President of the Center for Painted Walls Preservation, Inc and posed the same question. She, too has never seen deer or stags in a stenciled frieze although she has seen other animals, such as horses, in wall murals. The puzzle was becoming more complicated.

It was time to see the Holden House and stencils for myself. Three areas downstairs have stencil decorations visible. The central hall has a pattern of pineapples alternating with floral sprays executed in panels separated by geometric borders. The stenciling is done in red and green on a yellow ground. The front parlor is painted soft gray, and the motifs used include pineapple, weeping willow with two styles of bird, flower basket, vertical borders to separate the panels and a frieze. Colors are red, green and yellow. A small room behind the front parlor is painted pink, and the stencils include two styles of floral sprays, vertical border, trees, frieze and the stags. Their colors are red and yellow.

The owners explained the ownership history of the home and the story of the stencils as told to them by an elderly former owner. She inherited the farm from her father who bought it from descendants of the original owner. Family tradition holds that the stenciling was done by Moses Eaton. We had a wonderful family story, but there was no definitive authentication.

My research thus far took me from family story, to books on local history and Moses Eaton's work, to consultation with two known experts, to inspection of the stencils themselves. My next step seemed clear. I needed to put motifs from the Holden House side-by-side with known Eaton stencils to see how they compared.



*Known Moses Eaton
Bird Pattern*



*Imposed Bird in Tree
Not Moses Eaton Style*

No written records have been discovered, however Eaton's stencil kit has survived. Historic New England owns the kit, a wooden box containing 78 stencils made of heavy brown paper used to make 40 complete designs ranging from a large weeping willow to small hearts, diamonds and circles. Researchers have positively matched stencils from the kit to stencil designs found in various homes. Would the Holden House stencils match, also?

First, I examined the pineapple found in the center hall. The design seen here is not the one usually found in Maine, but does resemble the pineapple found in a house in North Saco, Maine by Eaton. Close, but it was obviously not the same stencil.

Next, I looked at the flower basket seen in the parlor room. The basket handles are missing in the Holden House, but otherwise it seems very much the same. In the same room are several weeping willows with bird, a

common Eaton motif, but here the differences with known Eaton work are more striking. Eaton is not known to have placed his bird superimposed over a tree, he always perched the bird on top. There are two styles of bird in a willow tree in the Holden House, and both are executed with the bird super-imposed in the middle of the tree, clearly not typical of Eaton.

The border in the stag room was more promising. It looks identical to the stencil in Eaton's kit. He apparently found this border design very useful as it appears frequently in homes known to have been decorated by him. The frieze in the front parlor also seems identical to Eaton's work as does the vertical border used in the hallway. The yellow floral motif seen on the stag wall is extremely close, but not identical to the known Eaton work.

Finally, there was the unique stag design seen nowhere else in Eaton's known work. Perhaps Eaton borrowed the stag stencil or cut one just for this house at the request of the owner. That is possible. However, taken with Polly Forcier's comment about the authenticity of the frieze on the same wall and the obvious differences in some of the other stencil motifs, I thought that there was ample room to question whether Eaton executed these lovely designs.



*Stencilled Leaping Stags
over Doorway, Holden House*

But what about the proud family story attributing the painting to Moses Eaton? Perhaps Eaton is the true artist, but maybe there is another explanation. When all things Early American were undergoing a periodic surge in popularity in the early 20th century, any antique wall stenciling became known as Moses Eaton style or simply Moses Eaton stenciling. By the early 20th century, Eaton was the most well known stenciler because he was so well documented, but he was by no means the only decorative artist doing quality work in New England.

As a young man, Erastus Gates, a stenciler in the 1830's, learned from the more experienced Eaton and cut his own stencils using many of Eaton's designs. Gates' territory overlapped Eaton's and it is possible that he made his way to Otisfield. There were many others who copied Eaton's designs, and we may never know for certain who decorated the Holden House. What is certain is that these are beautifully painted and well preserved examples of early 19th century Folk Art stenciling in the Moses Eaton style. The rural Maine town of Otisfield is lucky to claim them as part of its history.

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Polly Tarbell Bartow is Vice Pres. and Convention Planner of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration. She is Vice Pres., Program Chair and Newsletter Editor for the Bell Hill Meetinghouse Assoc. and the Treasurer of the Otisfield Historical Society.

Bronze Stenciling

Are We Doing It Right?

by Lois Tucker

An article from an old newspaper was sent to me by one of my students because she thought it might pique my interest. She was quite right! The article is from the Providence, Rhode Island *Sunday Journal* dated February 10, 1946 and titled "Lost Art Rediscovered. Harry B. Sherman, Providence Antiquarian, Believes He Has Found the Secret of the Early American Stencilers."

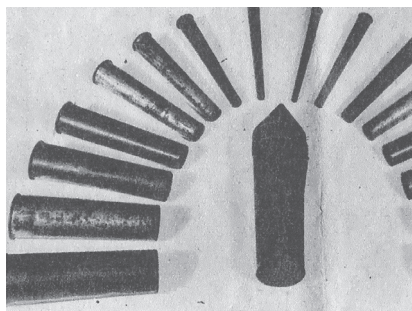
The reporter, Henry F. Riley, asks in the first paragraph, "Are the country's outstanding authorities on early American stenciling wrong in the technique they advocate? Have American women been spending hours stenciling a tray, a Hitchcock chair or other pieces of furniture when the work can be done by the original method in a matter of minutes? Are modern craftsmen merely imitating instead of reproducing the work of the early stencilers?"

Mr. Sherman believed that stenciling technique of the early 19th century ended about 1840. He also felt the art form of stenciling was a secret process which was lost when the artisans died-out leaving no record. According to Mr. Sherman, the process advocated by Esther Brazier and Janet Waring, which used velvet pads to apply the stenciling powders, was too time consuming to be practical. Many small inexpensive items made in large quantities would have thus been cost prohibitive. Mr. Sherman explained that he pursued the authentic technique because



Sunday Journal Article

he was very dissatisfied with the results of restoration work he had done on his personal antique pieces. He noticed that on the original work, the powders looked like separate particles, while on the restored work, minute streaks were seen, suggestive of being brushed over with a velvet pad. As connoisseurs of the period spoke of stenciling as a lost art, Mr. Sherman decided to recover it.



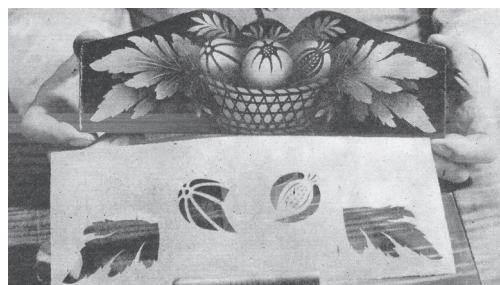
*Array of Distributors Designed
by Mr. Sherman*

ings to accommodate the size of the powder grains and the speed at which they were released. The ‘distributors’ were basically metal tubes with wire mesh of various sizes affixed to one end. The distributor would release the powder onto the tacky surface when gently tapped. He was able to perfect the technique of creating multiple unit stencil designs. Using a transparent collar to prevent the powders from flying around too much, he tapped his distributor. The powder fell downward, through the stencil, and onto the tacky varnish. He continued



*Mr. Sherman ‘Distributing’ Bronze
Powders*

to build the design by changing stencils and powder colors. The simple basket with fruit and leaves stenciled on the clock top piece took him a little more than five minutes to complete. Mr. Sherman’s distributors were so successful at accomplishing bronze stenciling that he was granted a patent for them. However, the Patent Office did not have a record of stenciling ever having been done in such a manner.



Stencil and Finished Bronzed Powder Design

I really wish I could examine a piece done by Mr. Sherman. One

very important element that must be lacking in his pieces is the polish that should be put on the powders. The old pieces done with bronzing powders have a brilliant shiny quality that can only be achieved by rubbing over the powder, either with velvet, suede, bobs or brushes. In order to make the powder shine, the individual metallic particles must be aligned and flattened on the surface. As they initially become attached to the surface tack, the particles adhere in a chaotic jumble much like pick-up-sticks dumped from a can. The particles have to be flattened so that their surfaces will be able to reflect the light. This is the polishing that we achieve by using a velvet, or by using a brush or stomp when highlighting freehand bronze units. Of course, the streaks that Mr. Sherman saw in the restored pieces were likely caused by the craftsman working a varnish tack that was too wet — a common problem of the stencilers in the 1930-40s period.

I was very active in the antiques business from the late 1960s, and I never came across anything remotely resembling Mr. Sherman's distributors. He did, however, find a set of antique tools very similar indeed to what he had made, and they worked for him in the same manner. If these tools really were used for powders, then I wonder if they really date in the last half of the 19th century and were used for the less intricate designs such as one-piece stencils seen on tin trunks, spice sets, coffee and tea canisters, etc. This was the period of the Industrial Revolution and "quick" was the desired result. I cannot see how the complicated, intricate, many-unit designs done during the golden age of stenciling could have been accomplished using distributors like these. However, the idea is interesting to ponder. Maybe we really don't have all the answers!

Editor's Note: Joseph Rice, artist and designer found this interesting reference in *The Art of the Painted Finish for Furniture & Decoration* by Isabel O'Neil, William Morrow & Company, Inc., NY, 1971, P. 223. Her article on "Flitters" states:

"Flitters, charcoal or gold powders may be applied to some parts of the design, most aptly to mountains, boulders, rocks, clouds. Application of the powders and charcoal to sized areas is done with a velvet bob or finger from a palette of velvet. The flitters require a sieve. Stiff paper is rolled into a tube that is 4 inches long with a diameter from 1/2 to 3/4 and is pasted firmly. A fine mesh of cheesecloth which acts as the sieve is glued over

one end. The other end is cut off at a 45 degree angle. Into this tube the flitters, fragments of gold, are poured and a gentle tapping sprinkles them through the meshed end onto the sized area. Any outlying scatterings are swept with a tamper to the top and sides of the sized areas, thus deepening the edges of the motif and emphasizing the shadow and form. After the first application has dried, the area may be re-sized and additional flitters of silver or differing gold tones applied.”

This improvised tool might somewhat resemble Mr. Sherman’s “distributors” and description of his process.

Source:

Providence Rhode Island *Sunday Journal*, “Lost Art Rediscovered” by Henry F. Reilly, photographs by Harold E. Winslow; Feb. 10, 1946.



Lois Tucker is an HSEAD Specialist in Country Painting and a Certified Teacher in Country Painting, Stenciling and Free Hand Bronze. Tucker is co-author of *American Painted Tinware: A Guide to Its Identification* published by HSEAD.

Historic Deerfield's Collection

A Celebration of American Antiquity

by Sandra Cohen

Inhabiting Historic Deerfield's twelve Museum Houses, dating from the early 18th century to the mid 19th century and its Memorial Hall Museum, is a vast array of furniture, textiles and needlework, silver and porcelain and decorative arts collected over the years. These antique treasures represent a modest (in number only) sampling of the Museum's 28,000 artifacts. Ranging from simple household necessities and common implements to a decor that reflects affluence and artifice, the objects are always inspiring for their ingenuity, charming for their simplicity and exquisite in their craftsmanship. They remind us of times gone by, but also of shared interests, concerns and values.

At our Annual Membership Meeting in the Spring, Historic Deerfield opened its doors to some of the houses as well as Memorial Hall to accommodate our members, offering us tours and an opportunity to see many of the houses' furnishings. In addition, Deerfield offered to contribute pictures and details about the Collection to share with our members through *The Decorator*. To compliment the theme of our meeting, many of the works seen here are by women.

A Theorem painting of flowers in a basket is a lovely rendition of



*Theorem Painting by Emily A. Cooley, c. 1825; Watercolor and Ink on Velvet;
Historic Deerfield Collection*

watercolor and ink stenciled on velvet, and it is special because Theorems were rarely signed, and this one bears the name of the young woman who painted it. This c.1825 Theorem in watercolor and ink was painted by Emily when she was in her 20's; her name is stamped on the bottom, "Emily A. Cooley." Emily (1793-1870) was the daughter of Eli and Chloe (Allen) Cooley, a South Deerfield farming family. Although the roses are browning, her skillfully cut stencils, leaves and delicate shading are still evident.

There is an interesting reference to Almira Lincoln Phelps' commentary in her book, *The Fireside Friend or Female Student: Being Advice to Young Ladies*, where she urges young ladies to avoid "these almost wholly mechanical operations." She does admit that the results create 'handsome pictures,' but "smacked of debased factory work, ... one step removed from the industrial process..."



*Drawings, Ruth Henshaw Bascom and Reverend Ezekiel Bascom
by Ruth Henshaw Bascom*

Ruth Henshaw Miles Bascom (1772-1848), a prolific profile artist, was born in Leicester, Massachusetts and raised in Worcester. She was the eldest of ten children born to William Henshaw (1735-1820) and Phebe Swan Henshaw (1753-1801). William was an American patriot, served in the French and Indian War and was appointed Adjutant General and Minuteman Organizer during the Revolution. Ruth married Asa Miles, Dartmouth professor in 1804 who died prematurely two years later. She then married the prominent Reverend Ezekiel Bascom who "traveled extensively throughout England and the United States." Her

father, a meticulous record keeper, probably had an influence on her habit of keeping daily records, and her diary, started at the age of seventeen, continued throughout her lifetime. Her accurate accounts of fifty-seven years (Ruth Henshaw Miles Bascom Diaries, 1789-1847 in the Manuscript Collection of the American Antiquarian Society) recorded details of her life, weather reports, local events and visits from friends as well as frequent travels and time she spent “tracing shadows,” that is, drawing profiles. Ruth spent the early years of marriage supporting her husband, and her first ‘recording’ appears in 1819. However, her years as a student at Leicester Academy and close relationship with artist, Ethan Allen Greenwood, speak to her early interest in painting.

A portrait of Reverend Ezekiel Bascom and a self-portrait are fine examples of Ruth’s talent and interest in color, detailed attire and facial features, and they treat us to images of Ruth and her husband. Ruth painted more than two hundred profile portraits mostly found in western Mass., and she accepted commissions and was willing to travel to paint her subjects. Bascom’s profile paintings often convey a benevolent portrayal of her subjects.

Mary Earle Gould (1885-1972), an author, may be familiar to many of us. She graduated from Wheaton Seminary (Wheaton College) in 1906 with a degree in music, performing, lecturing and teaching piano for many years. However, in the 1930’s, she developed a serious interest in antiques, building a Collection over the span of the next forty years that filled her home in Worcester, Mass. She devoted her time to researching early American lifestyle and furnishings, and in 1934, she began a prolific



*Cut corner trays, early mid-19th century;
Mary Earle Gould Bequest;
Historic Deerfield Collection*



Hadley Chest c. 1715-1720, Hadley or Hatfield, Mass. area; red maple, beech, chestnut, red oak, white pine, basswood, cherry, sugar maple, sycamore, paint and iron; Gift of Dr. Ogden B. Carter, Jr.; Historic Deerfield Collection

writing career, submitting articles to *The Magazine Antiques*, *Hobbies*, *The Spinning Wheel*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Worcester Telegram/Gazette*. Many of us own a copy of her books, *Antique Tin & Tole Ware* and *The Early American House*, published by Tuttle in 1958. Her Collection, of more than 1,200 items, included the two decorated cut corner trays pictured here. Her Collection was donated to the Hancock Shaker Village in Western Mass. in 1967. These two trays are currently in Deerfield's Collection.

This colorful "Hadley Chest" bears the initials, "HD," of the young lady, Hepzibah Dickinson (1696-1761), future wife of Jonathan Belding (1694-1778). Parents purchased these chests for their daughters to store their linens and other preparatory keepsakes for setting-up their future households, much like today's 'hope chests.' The initials bear her maiden name to commemorate her identity and family lineage. The chest is colorful and vibrant with decorative and symbolic carvings meant to convey good fortune. They were "inspired by the English carving traditions that immigrant woodworkers brought to the region" and adopted by the Connecticut River Valley joiners who began making decorated case furniture.

Families paid more for the painted, and somewhat abstract, relief carving which is skillfully and symmetrically applied and punctuated with a few hearts for the happy occasion.

Henry Wood Irving (1851-1941), a Hartford, Conn. collector, originated the term ‘Hadley Chest’ after he found a chest in an old house in Hadley, Mass. in 1883. The Hadley Chests “form the largest surviving group of joined furniture from early America... supporting a craft tradition that lasted eighty years until the 1740’s.”

Sarah Leavitt (1797-1837), daughter of Judge Jonathan and Emelia Leavitt, a prominent Greenfield, Mass. family, attended Deerfield Academy in the Spring and Summer of 1808 (tuition receipts confirm), and her instructor, Jerusha Mather Williams probably drafted this design for her. Sarah proceeded by replicating an English 1777 stipple engraving, “Cupid Bound by Nymphs” by William Ryland that was based

on artist Angelica Kauffman’s painting, “The Punishment of Cupid.” A reproduction of an original,... sounds a little like the Society’s work, doesn’t it? Like many young girls, Sarah’s education included these artistic handicraft skills, and her face-screen, which is affixed to an exquisite, adjustable cherry tripod, is an endorsement of refinement as well as an exceptional furnishing for a parlor fireplace. Wrapped gold, metallic threads are woven into birds, delicate ties and ferns and also spell the creator’s name; gold sequins surround an oval border. The narrative is executed in watercolor on an ivory silk background. As the date on Cupid’s quiver indicates, Sarah painted this when she was just thirteen years old.



Pole Screen, Embroidery and Painting by Sarah Leavitt, c. 1810; textile; wrapped metallic silk thread; off-white plain weave silk; metallic sequins; watercolors; wood; cherry; Historic Deerfield Collection

Not many personal details are known about cabinetmaker, William Lloyd (1779-1845), one of the best furniture makers in the Springfield area; Lloyd often signed and labeled his cabinets, and several of his fine pieces are owned by the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum. This particular tall case clock, circa 1802-1810, has a label that reads

much like an advertisement, and states in part, “Where may be had elegant Clock/Cases, Book-Cases, Desks,....” and more. He is referred to as “Springfield’s most successful cabinetmaker.” Lloyd hired from a number of itinerant painters, and the back of this white-painted clock

dial are the initials, “JP,” that are believed to belong to John Ritto Penniman (1782-1841) who painted the floral crest and spandrels.

A mention must be made here about “JP.” In 1803 John Ritto Penniman, at the age of twenty, was working in Roxbury, Mass. as a decorative artist working for John Doggett, carver and looking glass maker. Doggett’s ledger indicates that Penniman purchased numerous books of gold leaf from him. Unfortunately, this reference is often typical of the limited information available of one of the most skillful decorative artists in the country at this time. References such as, “Penniman, friend and associate of Gilbert Stuart,” (J.R.P. named his only son, Gilbert Stuart Penniman), “Penniman, an ingenious painter of signs,” “The eminent Mr. Penniman of Boston,” and “John R. Penniman, painter and general draughtsman.” In 1827 a lengthy reference to J.R. Penniman appeared in the *Saturday Evening Globe*: “Mr. Penniman began his career in 1804 and since that time he has been allowed by old and experienced artists and the public to excel in portrait, historical, allegorical, landscape, fancy and, in fact, every branch of painting, ...and his talents as a draftsman are unequalled in this country.” (from an article about John Ritto Penniman by Mabel M. Swan)



Tall Clock, William Lloyd, c.1802-1810, Springfield, Mass. Cherry, pine; brass, iron, steel and paint; Historic Deerfield Collection

American clock collections would not be complete without a piece from three generations of Willard Family of clockmakers, Benjamin (the eldest and first), Aaron and Simon. Simon's experimentation resulted in smaller movements and a patented design in 1801 for what became known as the wall hanging Banjo Clock. Deerfield's Simon Willard Shelf Clock, c 1800-1805, is an elegant example of fine craftsmanship and accuracy in time-keeping. Such attributes built the family's reputation for quality and elegant cabinetry. The Willard's growing business prompted them to work with suppliers for accessories: John Doggett of Roxbury provided gilded eagles, balls, swags, pedestals, etc., and Spenser Nolan and John Ritto Penniman provided expertise "in pigments, varnish and how to conceive their works backwards," especially for reverse glass decoration.

This shelf clock, with the demeanor of a tall case clock, brass finials, top feet and handles, stands solidly on a pedestal base. Ornate gilding and inscribed quotes lend to a formal heritage. Quotes state: "Tempus Rerum Imperator" (Time Commands All Things) and "Opifer Que Per Orbem Dico" (I am spoken of all over the world as one who brings help).

An important feature of New England homes, the fireplace, whether the large open-hearthed areas for cooking or the smaller ones, for cozy parlors and common areas, was a welcoming source for warmth and sustenance. Like many features in New England homes, its sizes and quantity varied. In the early 18th century, a

Shelf Clock by Simon Willard, c. 1800-1805, Roxbury, Mass.; Mahogany, white pine, cherry, brass, iron, steel, glass, paint, gilding and graphite; Gift of the Estate of Mrs. W. Scott Cluett; Historic Deerfield Collection





Fireboard with landscape painting by Catherine Wells, c. 1826, Deerfield, Mass.; watercolor on paper; mounted on wood; Historic Deerfield Collection

painted landscape or scenic depicting the homestead or a village and other familiar sites were often placed above the mantel on paneled fireplace walls. Painted fireboards, also known as chimney boards, became prolific after 1790. These were placed directly in front of the fireplace opening in the summer to possibly protect the room from drafts, soot and other unwanted elements and were often decorated by itinerant artists as well as by young residents of the households.

Catherine Wells (1805-1891), daughter of Quartus and Rhoda Wells of Deerfield was a student at Deerfield Academy in 1826 and learned watercolor landscape painting from Jane Pigeon who “using a delicate stipple technique worked with a fine brush within a line drawing. This method was similar to that of embroidered pictures wrought within inked designs.” This sounds similar to the technique used in the Society’s new category, Women’s Painted Furniture. It’s believed that Pigeon learned this technique while a student herself at Deerfield Academy from Jerusha Mather Williams in 1808. The “Irish Scenery” design, perhaps from an engraved 18th century print was considered an appropriate subject for young girls, according to Almira Lincoln Phelps, a former female academy teacher; she later elaborated on this etiquette in her book in 1840, *The Fireside Friend or Female Student*. Perhaps initially painted to be framed and hung on a wall, the watercolor was ultimately glued to a wooden backing and surrounded with wallpaper borders.

This short overview illustrates only a few of the stunning examples of artwork from Historic Deerfield's Collection that have inspired many of us to support museums dedicated to this genre and to admire and appreciate the stories behind early American arts and crafts. I extend my appreciation and gratitude to Anne Lanning, Christine Ritok, Penny Leveritt and their colleagues for their help and permission to use these photos and for sending me information on history, background and captions for these pieces. My wording in quotes comes directly from information about the works' extended captions that they sent to me. These few works clearly whet our appetites, and their charm and stories leave us wanting to see and know more about Historic Deerfield's Collection.



Sandra Cohen is Editor of *The Decorator* and a Docent at the Worcester Art Museum.

Riley Whiting

Wag-on-the-Wall Clock

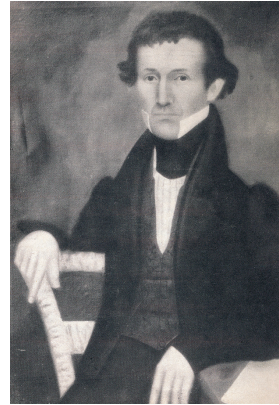
by Patricia Evans

To be given one Riley Whiting Wag-on-the-Wall Clock is something, but to have two of them... Now, that is a story.

My friends, Burt and Sandy Rolewicz have a shop, “Just Like Grandma’s,” on Rte. 5 in Ver-



The 1883 Riley Whiting Wag-on-the-Wall Clock has a painted white dial; clock has wooden works and exposed weights and pendulum.



Portrait of Riley Whiting

non, New York where he works as a tinsmith who also repairs clocks (30 years plus). Sandy replaces cane, splint, reed and rush seats in chairs and

also tackles upholstery. Both share a strong interest in history and antiques, and Sandy is a member of Questers, a national, historical organization that studies, preserves and conserves historical artifacts and landmarks.

Betsy O’Neil, a member of Sandy’s Questers’ Chapter, asked her if Burt could repair her clocks. During their visit to Betsy’s to repair the grandfather clock she also asked if they would be interested in a clock that had been in the family for years and that she had stored in a box. Nobody in her family wanted it! The minute they saw it, they were amazed by the signature on the dial that read, “R. Whiting, Winchester.” They responded excitedly saying, “We would love it” and offered to buy it. Betsy refused saying, “Money doesn’t mean anything to me; I just want to give it to someone who will enjoy it.”

Burt proceeded to fix the family heirloom and placed it in his shop. Every now and then, Betsy would stop by his shop to see the clock. After

a year, Burt told Betsy, “We are bringing the clock to our home; too many people want to buy it, and I keep telling them it is not for sale.” Sandy always told Betsy that the 1883 Riley Whiting Wagon-the-Wall was her favorite clock in their home, perched on a wall overlooking their great room, where the pendulum swings just a whisker above the chair rail.



*Gold Strip on Painted Clock Dial
Indicating R. Whiting Winchester*

Meanwhile, the next strand of our story begins... Bud Harnacker, a long time friend of theirs and an antiques dealer, was traveling to Newfoundland with his wife, Glenda. One evening, close to 8 P.M., Burt received a call from Bud. “Burt, my motorcycle is broken down, and I’m stuck on Rte. 81. Glenda stayed with the bike while I got a ride

to this pay phone.” (Remember those days!) “Can you come and get us; it is getting dark fast.” Burt immediately loaded his pick-up with some planks and headed North to rescue his friends and their bike. Bud was grateful and told Burt, “I owe you one.”



The painted decoration on the tall case Riley Whiting with a white painted clock dial shows painted decoration with gold leaf in the four spandrels, a single flower above the 6 and a gold basket of red flowers at the top.

Before continuing my delightful narrative, here is a little background on Riley Whiting Clocks. A major field of manufacturing in Western Conn., especially in the Winchester area, was clock making. Riley Whiting (1785-1835), a Connecticut craftsman, worked with his two older brothers-in-law to produce clocks with wooden clock parts, an innovation by the clockmaker, Eli Terry. By 1819 he fully owned the business and was one

of the largest producers of wooden works clocks after 1820, producing clocks with wooden works until he died. Metal parts were costly and difficult to obtain, and this less costly technique allowed them to efficiently and economically produce clocks that were inexpensive. More affordable, Whiting's clocks were sold by merchants and peddlers, facilitating delivery and expanding the market, throughout New England, New York and even into the Midwest. Buyers could avoid the expense of a case and hang the clocks on walls, pendulums exposed and wag-on-the-wall, or they could pay a craftsmen to make the cabinet. Often a note affixed inside the cabinet would convey who made the clock works, the dial and the case, as well as who may have decorated the dial. The approach of Terry and Whiting is said to have greatly expanded the market for tall case clocks in the early decades of the 19th century.

Now, I will continue my story. Not too many years after Burt rescued him, Bud made a decision to leave the antiques business and showed-up at Burt's shop with his truck loaded with clocks. "It's pay-back time," Bud said. Was it ever!

One of those clocks was an 1883 Riley Whiting clock with wooden works! Burt managed to get it running, but he really wanted it to be in a case. He'd been looking at pictures of Riley Whiting grandfather clock cases in lovely dark cherry, and that was what he wanted.

It's here that the story becomes even more serendipitous. A family



The 1883 Riley Whiting Clock is signed on a gold banner on a painted white dial in a reproduction tall clock case with a cherry finish replicated by the author, Patricia Evans.

friend, Russ Dougherty, stopped by sometime later, and he had a tale to tell. “I had some furniture stored in an old trailer and didn’t know that the roof got a hole in it. Rain and snow had gotten in all over the grandfather clock. The clock’s mechanics are ruined, but could you use the case?” The oak case was warped, but it was exactly the style conducive to his Riley Whiting clock that Burt wanted. The long door had a glass panel that Burt replaced with the front of an oak dresser drawer. When the case was dried, and after a year of being clamped, my friends, Burt and Sandy called me to refinish the light oak to look like dark cherry.

Now, for the last chapter in my saga... Thoughtfully applying my skills at achieving an authentic look, I stripped and sanded the case and then applied Lockwood, antiqued, black cherry dye for the base coat. After that dried, I rubbed it with a dark, walnut oil-base stain, similar to a burnt umber color that gave me the old cherry color I wanted. Next, I applied three coats of oil-based varnish and followed with a rubdown with 0000 steel wool and Soft Soap for a nice glow. Soft Soap was a jelly-like product that was used, instead of a wax, by the Harden Furniture Company. It was produced by Qwick-Clean and when applied with steel wool and water, one avoided the streakiness that often occurred with wax. For an added touch, Burt replaced the new glass in the top of the clock with lovely, old, wavy glass.

Thus, two Riley Whiting clocks have undergone a loving restoration and a near authentic reproduction due to a series of fortuitous events as well as a pay-it-forward opportunity. My friends not only own a Riley Whiting Wag-on-the-Wall Clock and a Cherry Tall Case (Grandfather) Clock with Whiting wooden works, they have a delightful narrative to add to the clocks’ unusual and distinguished provenance.

Source:

Bailey, Chris. *Two Hundred Years of American Clocks and Watches*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.



Patricia Evans is a member of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration and was the owner of Furniture Doctor in McConnellsville, New York, restoring antiques for 33 years.

Book Shelf

Historic Deerfield, A Portrait of Early America by Elizabeth Stillinger

Published by Penguin Group, Dutton Studio Books, New York, 1992. Hardcover, 206 pgs.

Overview by Sandra Cohen



Village of Deerfield, 1877, painting by J.W. Chimney

In 1936, Helen and Henry Flynt of Greenwich, Connecticut visited Deerfield with the intention of enrolling their son in Deerfield Academy. They were immediately captivated by the charm of a colonial village setting, with its early 18th and 19th century Connecticut Valley houses built during prosperous times by successful area farmers, homes that were then, sadly, in disrepair. The Flynts were drawn to the village's rural landscape, the variety of farm houses as well as stately, colonial styled homes, shaded by enormous centuries-old elms along its mile long Main Street established in 1671. The Flynts conveyed their interest to Deerfield Academy's Headmaster, Frank Boyden, who immediately saw a fortuitous opportunity that would succeed in benefiting the Academy and hopefully, salvage and revive an American treasure steeped in history.

The story of Historic Deerfield is reminiscent of the beneficial timing of John and Abby Rockefeller's trip in 1926 to visit old plantations along the James River. An orchestrated detour to Williamsburg, Virginia elicited the same emotional response and commitment to revitalize the historic area that evolved into Colonial Williamsburg (*Decorator*, Vol. 73 No.2). Serendipity, interest in contributing to a meaningful project that would continue to benefit generations, as well as the generous philanthropy of magnanimous benefactors had, again, played an important role in the establishment of a landmark, American history art museum, Historic Deerfield.

Elizabeth Stillinger's introduction, "A Sense of Place" conveys the alluring natural landscape of the Connecticut River Valley. She also reminds us of the violent struggles that tainted the process of early American settlement in Deerfield, (formerly known as the Pocumtuck Valley). The history of settlers in this area is steeped in stories of those who struggled with honing a homestead in the wilderness and who also had to suffer the dangerous consequences of encroaching on its indigenous native inhabitants. The resulting inevitable conflicts such as the Bloody Brook Massacre of 1675 (an attack by hundreds of Nipmuc and Pocumtuck tribesmen) and the French and Indian attack of 1704 are tragic and regrettable events in Deerfield's history and are acknowledged and documented in the Museum's archives and artifacts on display in the Museum's Memorial Hall.



Looking Glass with eagle finial and eglomise landscape of Mt. Vernon made in NYC or Albany, 1797-1815

George Sheldon's two volume narrative, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, is a thorough chronicle of Deerfield's past, the facts, events and information about daily life culled from local, county and state records, including diaries and letters and other sources. Sheldon was a descendent of Ensign John Sheldon, one of the earliest settlers who owned the Old Indian House and who managed to escape slaughter in the 1704 Massacre. He bravely led those captives, who had been taken to Canada, back to Deerfield. It was George Sheldon's interest in the stories and legends of 18th century Deerfield and his diligent tenacity that compelled him to collect and preserve memorials, books, papers and relics to illustrate and "perpetuate the history of the early settlers and of the race which vanished before them." Sheldon's house overflowed with his abundant collection that included furnishings and Indian relics. The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) would thus be established as a tribute to victims of the massacre and housed in the Memorial Hall Museum which opened its doors in 1880. "Not a single article is here preserved on account of its artistic qualities," stated George Sheldon, and "The Collection is founded on purely historical ones and is the direct memorial of the inhabitants of this valley, both Indian and Puritan."

Learning the stories of Deerfield's past, seeing the potential to restore its beauty and develop an important chapter in America's history excited and motivated Helen and Henry Flynt. They had wealth of friends eager to support this project along with continuing encouragement from Deerfield Academy's Frank and Helen Boyden. The Flynt's were familiar with Colonial Williamsburg, and correspondence ensued with Kenneth Chorley, Pres. of Col. Williamsburg and A.E. Kendrew, Head of its Architectural Dept. and both visited Deerfield in 1946. This same year, the Flynt's visited Henry Francis duPont's home, Winterthur, and in early 1947, they also visited the Metropolitan Museum's American Wing. These visits further inspired and fueled their vision. After visiting Winterthur, Henry Flynt wrote the following to Francis duPont: "The care with which you have assembled your collection, the artistic arrangement and the beauty of it all bespeak a real devotion to the finest things of our noble past... Our humble little effort to preserve Old Deerfield, Mass. has taken on renewed zeal because of our trip to Winterthur."

However, for the Flynts, it had been love at first sight and in 1936

they had started buying antiques and historical homes and giving them to Deerfield. In 1942, the Manning House was purchased followed by the Rossiter or “Pink House” in 1944; the Inn, Ashley Property and Allen House were purchased in 1945. Their real estate buying spree was in high gear, and the rest is beautifully illustrated with hundreds of pictures, artifacts and stories. The older pictures are in black and white, but there is a plethora of colorful photographs of the homes’ interiors and exteriors as well as text that takes you on an informative virtual tour, one that will entice you to visit in person.

As you page through the book, it is the variety of these homes and their exteriors that immediately delight the eye. Lining the street is a buffet of different architectural elements and painted facades of natural browns, antique yellows, New England reds, colonial whites and yes, a bird’s egg blue; some houses aesthetically parade colored trim on windows and perimeters. All make you smile, and this array of color also adorns the inside walls. The following are just a few of the highlights selected for their stunning examples of decorative artifacts.

The Stebbins House displays fine furniture from Boston and Connecticut, portraits by Erastus Salisbury Field and a painted dressing table.

The Wright House does not exclusively exhibit period settings, but has a handsome collection of formal decorative furnishings including the whimsically painted Hadley Chests, Chinese export porcelain, a New York Japanned finished looking glass, an Aaron Willard shelf clock with painted reverse



The Painted Dressing Table with Diminutive Box and Looking Glass mortised into top is on Loan from The Hascoe Foundation. French Wallpaper, from the Ruel Williams House in Maine, is a Rich Trompe l'Oeil Drapery Design.



Painted mural by Anna Williams while a student of Deerfield Academy

glass, crewel embroidered bedding and a looking glass with an eglomise landscape of Mount Vernon.

An 1830's bed chamber in the Wells-Thorn House has a charming set of yellow fancy Hitchcock Chairs and a pair of black, bronze-powder stenciled chairs. As an example of the extensive research behind the furnishing of the rooms in Historic Deerfield's houses, this particular room is based on its "study of forty four household inventories compiled between 1825 and 1835."

Last but not least is a mention of the mural in the William's House of Mt. Vernon, painted by his daughter Anna (age 11) a student at Deerfield Academy. In *Ornamental and Useful Accomplishments: Schoolgirl Education and Deerfield Academy, 1800-1830*, Suzanne L. Flynt (Suzanne was married to Henry Flynt's grandson) states that Anna used "several different painting techniques... with much of the foliage stenciled, and the fields painted with narrow horizontal strokes which appear to simulate embroidery stitches." This painting, a reproduction of an 1800 aquatint by Francis Jukes taken from a painting by Alexander Robertson, demonstrates her talent and ingenuity and speaks volumes to the intellect and artistic bent of this very young girl.

Stillinger informs us that in the late 19th century, Deerfield became an idyllic location with its bucolic landscape that attracted notable mem-

bers of the literary, arts and crafts movements. Visiting artists, including James Wells Champney and George Fuller and writers and lecturers such as George Washington Cable (speaking tours with Mark Twain) and Charles Dudley Warner (*Gilded Age, Tale of Today* co-author with Mark Twain). Readings, lectures and discussions on literature were daily offerings. In 1898 Margaret Whiting and Ellen Miller founded The Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework, dedicated to the revival of 18th century American Needlework. Today, Historic Deerfield continues to preserve its reputation in reviving these early arts and techniques and offers programs, lectures and studies in early American arts and crafts.

‘Sense of Place’ is echoed throughout Elizabeth Stillinger’s descriptions of the environment, houses and artifacts. Her tour takes us through archives of the area’s early inhabitants, their homes and stories and daily lives that are revealed

through the architecture, furnishings, decorative elements and their history. Like Colonial Williamsburg, Winterthur, Old Sturbridge Village, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts and others, these living Museums are figuratively a renaissance of American history and artistic vision allowing visitors to view and appreciate life in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

Stillinger’s book is both a delicious appetizer to your visit to Historic Deerfield or a rich substitute if a visit isn’t possible. The author’s ample footnotes and bibliography offer you further opportunities to explore. The background and stories surrounding Historic Deerfield’s history will enrich your knowledge, appreciation and empathy for all who participated in this chapter of America’s past.



Table Mat or Doily Deerfield Society of Blue and White Needlework (1896-1926) Blue and White Linen Embroidery, white, lain-weave linen Historic Deerfield Museums Collection Fund





Standards for Excellence

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration grants “A” and “B” and Reproduction Awards for those entries that show excellence in craftsmanship and meet the Society’s Standards” as outlined in more specific detail in *The Standards’ Manual*. The tradition of research and encouraging excellence through evaluation of members’ work began at the Fall Meeting at the Wellesley Hills Country Club, Wellesley, Mass. in 1947 (recorded in Vol. 1, No.2 of *The Decorator*).

The following excerpted overview offers a perspective of the guidelines (reviewed and revised with respect to ongoing research over the years) for recreating historically authentic reproductions submitted for Judging.

“The design of the article submitted must be authentic and appropriate for the piece in size, period and type of decoration. The work must demonstrate techniques that meet the requirements of the category.

The design must include adequate work to demonstrate the craftsman’s ability and to afford the judges enough painting to enable them to make their assessment.

The design and work must meet all General Requirements as well as the Category Requirements. If the design includes other techniques in addition to those of the category, each technique will be judged according to the requirements of that specific category.”

Congratulations and appreciation to all who choose to undergo this process.



Historical Society of Early American Decoration Master Teachers, Master Craftsmen and Specialists

HSEAD Master Teachers

Clark, Maryjane 1962	Hutchings, Dorothy 1969
Watts, Margaret 1965	Gross, Helen 1972
Martin, Gina 1968	Donnellan, Astrid 1994

HSEAD Master Craftsmen

Bond, Jessica H. 1952	Hutchings, Dorothy 1967
Martin, Virginia (Gina) 1952	Keegan, Cornelia (Phil) 1969
Underhill, Emilie 1952	Wallace, Louise 1970
Watts, Margaret 1952	Edrington, Roberta 1983
Clark, Maryjane 1957	Donnellan, Astrid 1983
Hague, Helen 1957	Lambeth, Deborah 1983
Drury, Bernice 1960	Sherman, Phyllis 1983
Murray, Maria 1960	Hedge, Carolyn 1989
Gross, Helen 1962	Heinz, Carol 2010
Cruze, Annetta 1964	Davis, Dortia 2012
Bums, Florence 1967	Brubaker, Linda 2017

HSEAD Specialists

Tucker, Lois / Country Painting 1993
Baker, Ann / Country Painting 1995
Roberta Edrington / Free Hand Bronze 1997
Victorian Flower Painting 2000
Buonato, Carol / Clock Dials 2004
Dimock, Anne / Reverse Glass 2012
Jewett, Parma / Country Painting 2016

Sources: *The Decorator*
Chair, The Standards and Judging Committee
Chair, Specialist Awards

Amherst, Massachusetts, Spring Exhibition 2019

Members' "A" Awards

Clock Dials
Lois Tucker



Country Painting
Debra Fitts

Country Painting
Linda Brubaker



Country Painting
Linda Brubaker

Members' "A" Awards

Country Painting
Linda Brubaker



Country Painting
Linda Sheldon

Free Hand Bronze
Roberta Edrington



Gilding on Glass
Polly Bartow

Members' "A" Awards

Metal Leaf
Linda Mason



Metal Leaf
Margaret Smith



Metal Leaf
Roberta Edrington



Pen Work
Polly Bartow

Members' "A" Awards

Reverse Painting On
Glass with Border
Kat Britt



Reverse Painting On
Glass With Border
Linda Brubaker

Stenciling On Wood
Dennis Lambert



Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Debra Fitts

Members' "A" Awards

Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Dennis Lambert



Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Diane Tanerillo

Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Diane Tanerillo



Members' "A" Awards

Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Linda Brubaker



Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Linda Brubaker



Theorem
Oil On Velvet
Linda Sheldon



Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Dennis Lambert

Members' "A" Awards

Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Linda Brubaker



Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Mary Avery

Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Rebecca Kidder



Victorian Flower
Painting
Carol Heinz

Members' "A" Awards

Victorian Flower
Painting
Margaret Smith



Victorian Flower
Painting
Roberta Edrington

Women's Painted
Furniture
Eve Marschark



Women's Painted
Furniture
Eve Marschark

Members' "A" Awards

Women's Painted
Furniture
Joan Briggs



Women's Painted
Furniture
Joan Welch

Women's Painted
Furniture
Nancy Toombs



Members' "A" Awards



Women's Painted
Furniture
Nancy Toombs



Women's Painted
Furniture
Patricia Olson



Women's Painted
Furniture
Patricia Evans

Members' "B" Awards

Clock Dials
Lois Tucker



Country Painting
Debra Fitts



Country Painting
Dennis Lambert



Country Painting
Dennis Lambert

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Dennis Lambert



Country Painting
Dennis Lambert

Country Painting
Linda Mason



Country Painting
Linda Mason

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Linda Mason



Country Painting
Lois Tucker



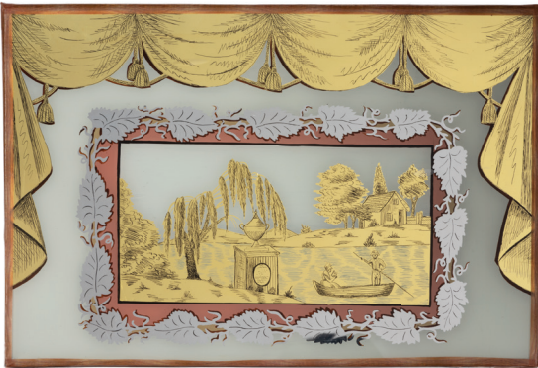
Country Painting
Mary Roth



Country Painting
Paula Humber

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Rebecca Kidder



Gilding on Glass
Anne Dimock

Pen Work
Susan Tash



Reverse Glass Painting
With Border
Anne Dimock

Members' "B" Awards

Stenciling on Tin
Dennis Lambert



Stenciling on Wood
Dennis Lambert

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Diane Tanerillo



Members' "B" Awards

Victorian Flower
Painting
Astrid Donnellan



Women's Painted
Furniture
Betsy Salm

Women's Painted
Furniture
Eve Marschark



Members' "B" Awards



Women's Painted
Furniture
Glenda Barcklow



Women's Painted
Furniture
Martha Dolan



Women's Painted
Furniture
Nancy Toombs

Members' "B" Awards



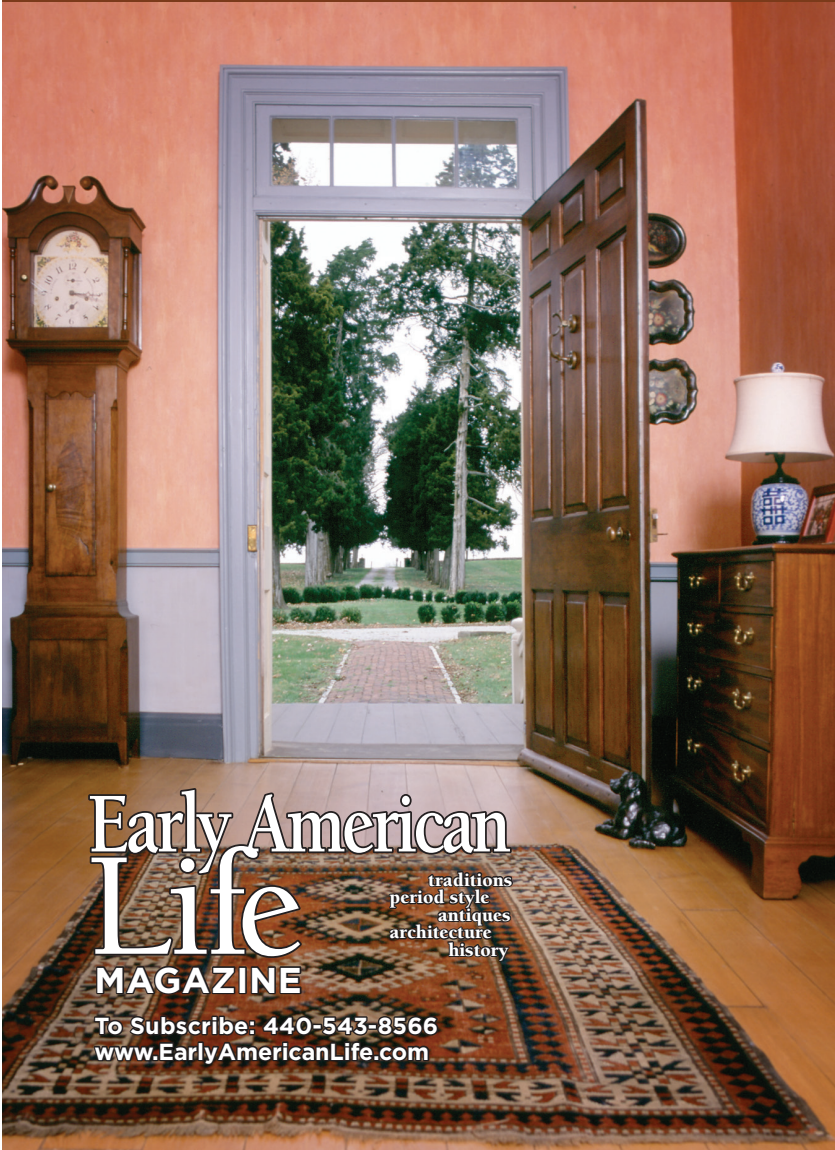
Women's Painted Furniture
Nancy Toombs



Women's Painted
Furniture
Phyllis Fittipaldi

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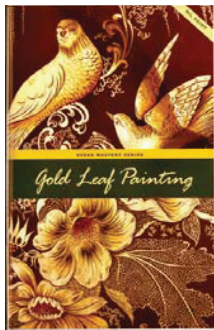
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# Historical Society of Early American Decoration

## *Products and Publications*



## Instructional Videos

Videos include pattern(s), materials/supply list, color data and instructions by “Masters” of the craft. Like having a teacher at your side, these videos allow you to learn or refresh your EAD skills.

|                                |      |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Country Painting (VHS tape)    | \$25 |
| Bronze Powder Stenciling (DVD) | \$40 |
| Freehand Bronze (DVD)          | \$40 |
| Clock Dials (DVD)              | \$40 |
| Theorem (DVD)                  | \$40 |
| Gold Leaf (DVD)                | \$40 |
| Reverse Glass Painting (DVD)   | \$40 |

## Publications

### **American Painted Tinware:**

#### **A Guide to Its Identification (Vol. I, II, III, IV), *hard cover***

This handsome, hard cover, four volume set is the only authoritative and comprehensive source on American painted tinware. A rich historical text, along with hundreds of full color photographs of original pieces and line illustrations of motifs and patterns, will allow you to visually identify the products of these regional tin shops.

\$55 each volume (plus S&H)

A list of HSEAD publications and supplies is available on the website or from the office in Cooperstown.



### *The Decorator (prices per available issue)*

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Vol. 1 - 46 .....             | \$7.50  |
| Vol. 47 - 58 .....            | \$9.00  |
| Vol. 59 - present issue ..... | \$20.00 |

*The Decorator* is included in the Membership Fee of \$40.00.



# Patterns and Supplies

Six stenciling and six country painting patterns are available and are appropriate for applicants. See images on HSEAD.org.

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Country Painting on Tinware | \$25 |
| Stenciling on Tinware       | \$25 |

**Theorem Kit** Includes tracing, laser cuts, color picture and instructions. Contact Office for price and information

## Schnader Chair Patterns

Freehand Bronze & Painted Chair Patterns (kit includes 8" x 12" digital color photo & tracing) \$12; Color Catalog of Patterns, \$25



## Trays

Steel, 13.5" X 18.25" (Appropriate size for Applicant stenciled patterns)  
~~\$12~~ reduced to **\$8** (plus shipping and handling)

# Gifts and Accessories

## Scarves

36" square silk twill

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Theorem Pattern Scarf | \$50 |
| Tray Pattern Scarf    | \$55 |



## HSEAD Charms

*(Available to HSEAD members only)*

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*Prices Available Upon Request*



Visit the HSEAD Store on [www.hsead.org](http://www.hsead.org)

For additional information and catalogue contact:

HSEAD

26 North College Street, Schenectady, NY 12305

Make Check payable to HSEAD, Inc.

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## Coming Soon Research Center's Grand Opening



*Historic Stockade District of Schenectady has a new neighbor*

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration (HSEAD) is pleased and proud to announce ownership of its new Research Center located at 26 North College St. in the Historic Stockade District of Schenectady, New York.

The Research Center is home to all of the Society's Archival Collections as well as its ongoing research, educational products and materials, the Lending Library of Design and Originals as well as displays of historically authentic early American decoration.

Preparations for our Grand Opening are underway. HSEAD will soon welcome its members, association friends and the public to visit and learn more about the legacy of early American decorative art and its history.

For more information about the HSEAD Research Center,  
please visit our website.

[www.hsead.org](http://www.hsead.org) or call (518) 372-2220

### 2020 Meetings

#### **Annual Membership Meeting**

Hyatt Hotel  
Rochester, New York  
May 1 - 3, 2020

#### **Working Seminar**

Winterthur,  
Mendenhall Hotel, Mendenhall, Pennsylvania  
Sept., 18 - 19, 2020

#### **Annual Membership Meeting**

The Landing Hotel  
Schenectady, New York  
April 23 - 25, 2021

#### **Working Seminar**

Wyndham Southbury  
Southbury, Connecticut  
September 16 - 19, 2021



## HSEAD Committee Chairs

|                                         |                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Applicant Chair .....                   | Mary Ellen Halsey                                    |
| Awards Chair .....                      | Debra Fitts                                          |
| Specialist .....                        | Lois Tucker                                          |
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| Custodian of Assets .....               | Dolores Furnari                                      |
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| Exhibition .....                        | Linda Sheldon                                        |
| Finance .....                           | James Brubaker                                       |
| Historian .....                         | Valerie Oliver                                       |
| Membership .....                        | Mary Roth                                            |
| Photographer .....                      | Andrew Gillis                                        |
| Publicity/Media .....                   | Susan Tash                                           |
| Publications                            |                                                      |
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| Decorator Editor .....                  | Sandra Cohen                                         |
| Newsletter & Meeting Publications ..... | Linda Sheldon                                        |
| Registration .....                      | Polly Bartow                                         |
| Schenectady Property Manager .....      | Kenneth Bartow                                       |
| Social Media Coordinators .....         | Kat Britt & Bonnie Gerard                            |
| Standards and Judging .....             | Linda Brubaker                                       |
| Theorem .....                           | Alexandra Perrot                                     |
| Penwork .....                           | Lois Tucker                                          |
| Women's Painted Furniture .....         | Eve Marschark                                        |
| Working Seminar .....                   | Shirley Hanley                                       |

# The Patterns

by Martha Muller, Editor

“From the time I attended Mrs. Brazer’s first class, I have had a great respect for her pattern portfolios...

Since I have had the privilege of checking and cataloging these patterns, this respect has grown to know no bounds...

Many of us have gotten our patterns the easy way—by copying hers. Those of us who have recorded designs from original articles, know that this takes two and three times as long and is much more difficult...

From the first it was evident that she strove for perfection in each line...

At this point it is impossible to tell how many actual patterns she had collected, through the course of the years. There are well over a thousand. This does not take into account the many fragments of patterns she carefully recorded in case they might some day fit into some whole picture...

The number is amazing and nothing can describe the precision with which they were cut. A thick package of tiny silhouettes completely took my breath away. There were butterflies, so delicate and airy, flowers, so fine and lacy, miniature scrolls, baskets of fruit, the littlest birds, all cut with that same expert precision...

I came to realize how much pleasure can be added to the mere collection of patterns, by a thorough examination into the history of each piece. There is always so much more to learn.

It is my sincere wish that it will become possible, in the near future, for all earnest students of this craft, to have the same opportunity to view and study Esther Brazer’s complete patterns for it would ever be a shining star of inspiration to us all.”

(Excerpted from *The Decorator*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Oct. 1946)





*Detail from a Country Painting Pattern for a Document Box by Gina Martin  
Original (shown) Owned by Helene Britt  
The detail is from a category of designs  
in the Collection subtitled, 'New York Blue' Patterns.*