American Painted Tinware
A Guide To Its Identification

VOLUME TWO

Gina Martin and Lois Tucker

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A PUBLICATION OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 99-85906
ISBN: 1-928855-02-6

Cover: Tin trunk manufactured at the tinshop of Zachariah B. Stevens. The decoration was executed by one of the Francis sisters (Sally, Hattie or Maria). Collection of Mary Beals.

Every author needs some underlying force that will quietly motivate her to finish the project—like an undercurrent always pushing forward even when you get bogged down. My husband, Donald, has been that force for me. He has not only kept me focused and not allowed the material to go too far afield, but he has also taken photographs, done the layout work, proofread, critiqued, suggested, corrected, edited and caused it all to come together in the end.

And so to Donald, this book is dedicated.

—Lois Tucker

THE AUTHORS:

GINA MARTIN has spent 50 years studying tinware and more recently seeking a means to positively identify the early American tinshops. She has thousands of photographs of more than 2000 pieces, thus documenting the characteristics in great detail. Mrs. Martin has applied to this field the research techniques of the fine arts historian in authenticating an old master.

Mrs. Martin is a charter member of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration. She served as a judge for several years and also as the Chairman of the Standards and Judging Committee. She is a Master Craftsman, one of the first group so certified by the Society. She was instrumental in developing both the HSEAD School Program and the Teacher Certification Program, and she herself is a Master Teacher. Mrs. Martin also served for several years on the Board of Trustees of the Society.

LOIS TUCKER has had an avid interest in American painted tinware for over 25 years. She began learning the art of duplicating this technique in 1973 and became a Society member in 1976. Her many years in the antiques business afforded her access to hundreds of original pieces in the hands of dealers and collectors. Studying, recording, and photographing these originals, as well as those in museums or at auction houses, has allowed her to amass a large file for research.

Mrs. Tucker received her Teacher Certification in Country Painting in 1985 and in Stencilling in 1987. She has served on several committees for the Society, and is currently a member of the Standards and Judging Committee. She is the instructor for the HSEAD School Program for Country Painting. In 1994, Mrs. Tucker became the first recipient of the Society's Specialist Award for Country Painting.

THE PUBLISHER:

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC: A society with affiliated chapters 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; to promote continued research in that field; to record and preserve examples of Early American Decoration; to maintain such exhibits and publish such works on the subject of Early American Decoration and the history thereof as will further the appreciation of such aart, and the elevation of the standards of its reproduction and utilization.

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.
c/o Beverly McCarthy, Administrative Assistant
61 West 62nd Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10023-7015

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VOLUME One
Berlin, Connecticut; Upson; S. North, and Butler Tinshops

VOLUME Three
Filley Tinshops of Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania

VOLUME Four
Miscellaneous and Unknown Tinshops

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this book to provide the information, characteristics, and identifying features that will enable the student of painted tinware to identify the shop where a piece was decorated. As the interest in American folk art has escalated in recent years, the need for verifying the authenticity of those items has similarly increased. The serious buyer wants to acquire a proven item and not just a piece that appears to be like some other object. Although some areas of folk art have already been reasonably documented, American painted tinware has not. It is hoped that this book will introduce a scholarly and rational approach for identifying decorated tinware, not just to geographical areas but to the tinshop in which the article was produced. It will no longer be necessary to call an item merely New England, New York, or Connecticut but to identify the object as being from a specific tinshop.

Beginning collectors and students of painted tinware will find herein ample examples and detailed illustrations to enable them to make these identifications. This book will guide them through the necessary steps by starting the identifying process with a known piece, and calling attention to additional distinctive features with each succeeding example. Experienced collectors and advanced students will find multiple examples of known tinware and will be able to hone more finely their skills of identification.

The painted characteristics which will be illustrated and referred to are usually best displayed on the fronts of trunks. In some instances the design on the end or top of the trunk will provide the distinguishing characteristics when the trunk front has a design in which similarities to more than one shop are found. For example in the chapter on the Stephen North shop (see *American Painted Tinware*, Volume One), the unique three-quarter striping on the end of a trunk is a defining feature. The student is urged to become familiar with trunks first, and then to use that knowledge to classify other types of pieces. The various motifs used in creating the design [flowers, leaves, borders, etc.] should be carefully studied and their correlation to the major design recognized.

Identification of an Unknown Item

The approach to identification should first be made from the overall decoration. The fronts of trunks and the major display areas of waiters, canisters and bread baskets provide the *feeling* that experienced students have when they first view a piece. It is probably a subconscious application of characteristics gained through examining many pieces. Beginners will develop this over time and the *feeling* is merely a starting point. There are often such similarities between shops, however, that the overall design might not give an immediate positive identification. It will

then be necessary to look for clues in the individual motifs or sometimes in the relationship between the several sections of the object, such as the peculiar Stephen North striping mentioned above. Distinction between painters can be shown in the simplest brushstrokes by the thickness of the paint, the shapes, and even the direction of the stroke. The shapes of flowers, fruits, berries and leaves are often the unique feature. The presence and execution of borders and bands, whether straight, curved, or scalloped, provide further differences. Obviously, the more characteristics which can be found, the more secure the identification to a particular tinshop becomes.

The reader should refer to the checklist in Appendix A for help in the tinshop identification process.

TÔLE OR TÔLEWARE (a misnomer)

It has become the practice by antiques dealers, auction houses, and the public in general to refer to this painted tin as tôle or tôleware. Tôle is the French word for sheet iron and the term is correctly used to denote heavy gauge iron trays and other metalware items produced and decorated in France during the 18th century. Tôle often had background colors of dark green, ivory, dark red, or black.

The term tôle does not correctly apply to the American tinplated sheet iron (or English tinplated ware). Our tinware should be referred to as either "American painted tinware," "japanned ware," or simply "country painted tin."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The second volume of *American Painted Tinware*, as with Volume One, could never have been completed without the help of the collectors, dealers, and all parties interested in American country tin who have been so generous in sharing their pieces with the authors.

We would like to thank the members of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration who through the years have brought their tinware to the Society's national meetings to be studied and photographed. We again thank Mona D. Rowell for her contribution to some of the history texts. Barbara King's time and effort spent in proofreading this volume are greatly appreciated by the authors. Helga Johnson has again been most generous with her time and photographic abilities. Roberta Ross, Lewis Scranton, Ross Trump, Mary Beals, Pat Hatch, and Camilla White have each gone out of their way in order to make their pieces available for inclusion in this volume.

Museums have also been generous in allowing their artifacts to be photographed for this book. A special thanks is offered to Ed Churchill, Curator, Maine State Museum; Frank White, Curator of Mechanical Art, Old Sturbridge Village; and Donald Fennimore, Curator of Metals at Winterthur.

Lastly we give a very special thank you to the Old Colony Chapter of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration. Through the generosity of their chapter members, it has been possible to have the Zachariah B. Steven's ledger professionally restored. The ledger, which dates from 1818 to 1824, was in horrendous condition with its very acid paper disintegrating at an alarming rate. It was much too fragile to even be handled at all. The restoration of this 190 year old ledger has been an invaluable service and has insured the continued availablility of this ledger and its contained information for future researchers.

gm & lt

INTRODUCTION

PHOTOGRAPHS

In choosing the photographs to be used in this book, a number of criteria had to be considered. The foremost of these was the presence of a distinguishing characteristic that fit within the sequence which follows the step-by-step progression from the first attributed piece through to the end. The photographs of original tinware represent fifty years of researching under all types of circumstances. Many pieces of tinware have been found at auction houses, antique shows, garage sales, flea markets, and other places that were not conducive to excellent photographic conditions. Throughout the book, the best photographs have been used to illustrate a particular characteristic. Tinware that is in the best condition has been used whenever possible.

LINE-DRAWN ILLUSTRATIONS

The drawings presented within this book are very detailed. Abbreviating these illustrative keys was for a time considered, but often only the most detailed study of a piece, and examination of all characteristics, can lead to an identification.

Each illustration has been drawn to scale, but that scale may vary from one drawing to the next. No attempt has been made to size each piece with its neighbor. The reader should use each drawing as a study for painted details only. Many of the antique pieces (especially trunks) from which these drawings were taken are now bent and mishapen. The drawings may reflect this.

All brushstrokes, dots, and other details demonstrated as solid black areas denote work painted on the original tinware with yellow pigment. Red, green, and all other colors are not separately distinguished. Units or strokes originally painted in any color other than yellow are illustrated merely as line drawings.

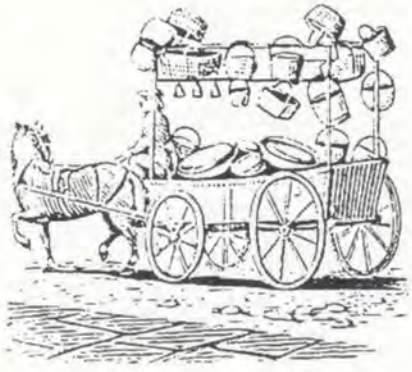
Painted bands, when present, have been shaded in the illustrations. Many bands, particularly on trunks, have a very complicated form. The shading helps to demonstrate the position of the band, often with an adjoining swag, and eliminate any confusion caused by stripe lines or other features included in the drawings.

Individual characteristics which have been underlined in the written section are considered to be unique to that particular tinshop. These specific strokes or techniques may be used as a single identifying feature for the shop, and very little else may be necessary to confirm the identification. It should be remembered, however, that the more features that can be established with certainty, the stronger the identification becomes.

The Role of the Peddlers

Peddling has been practiced for centuries; it was the simplest means of getting a product to the consumer. In colonial America, goods shipped from England and other ports were received by merchants in the larger cities. A peddler would purchase various small items from the merchant, pack them in baskets or small trunks that he could carry on his back, and trek off to the small farms and towns that had no merchant accessible to them. Edward Pattison, a Scottish immigrant in 1740, was the first practicing tinsmith in this country. He peddled his tinware from Berlin, Connecticut, in this fashion, along with small notions that were imported. He probably never realized that he was starting a peddling boom; but it was the manufacture of tinware that really made peddling a major business, and Connecticut tinware specifically gave rise to the Yankee Peddler.

Peddlers in the earliest period were usually self-employed. By the end of the American Revolution, the country addressed the problems of travel and began improving roads and building turnpikes. It became possible for travel to be done by horse and wagon, and it opened up a much larger market for the peddlers. Rivers and lakes were also being connected by canals. The peddler could now travel as far as 1500 miles in a season.[1] A two-horse wagon could haul two tons of tinware.[2] A wagon load could be the equivalent of $600 worth of tin or $2000 worth of general goods.[3] The whole system of peddling changed and expanded due to the ease of travel on the new turnpikes. The tinsmiths also learned to make changes as their sales were increasing so greatly. By working more tinners at a time, enough goods could be produced to keep 25 peddlers supplied for the season. The tinner, in most cases, also became a merchant; and he would supply his peddlers with Yankee notions, as well as his tinware. Other craftsmen congregated in towns, such as Berlin, that were tin centers because the tinman-merchant would buy their wares to stock his peddlers. Comb makers, pewterers, and brass workers, to name a few, settled in these growing towns. Many other towns in the Berlin area joined in this prosperous business venture —Meriden, Farmington, Middletown. The town of Bristol was a clock center; but peddlers there also wanted tinware and the other types of items, and so these various craftsmen settled in Bristol as well. This scene was happening all over New England, but Berlin, Connecticut was the country's peddling capital.



[1] Clouette and Roth. Bristol, Connecticut, *A Bicentennial History*, p. 49.
[2] Richardson Wright. *Hawkers & Walkers in Early America*, p. 72.
[3] Clouette and Roth. *op cit.*, p. 49.

A drivin' his tin peddler's cart
Pans a-bangin' up and' down,
Like they'd tear themselves
apart:
Kittles rattlin' underneath,
Coal-hods scrapin' out a song,
Makes a feller grit his teeth

When old Jason comes along.
And Jason gits the women's
ear,
Tellin' news an' talkin' dress;
Can't be peddlin' forty year,
An' not know 'em more or
less-
For he was just the slickest
scamp
Full of jokes as he could hold,
Says he, "I beat Alladin's lamp
a givin' out new stuff for old
Buy your rags for mor'n they're
worth,
Give yer bran new shiny tin,
Why, I'm the softest snap on
earth",
Says the old peddler with a grin.

Anonymous

The peddler traversed regular routes, planned according to the topography of the land as well as to the seasons. By the early 1800s, the manufacturing of tinware was moved to the South for the winter months. The tin workers would set up shop in southern towns, such as Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah, to make their tinware on site. The small notions would be brought with them from Connecticut to have on hand for the peddler's wagon. The peddler usually would work for a tinner as his agent, rather than being self-employed as he had in the earlier period. Contracts were drawn up between the tinman and his peddler as seen in the following: "Articles of agreement made and entered into by and between William and Samuel Yale of Meriden in New Haven county on the one part and Amos Francis of Wallingford in said county on the other part witnesseth, viz. I the said Amos Francis agree on my part to hawk, peddle, and vend such articles as the said Yales shall deliver me for the purpose in any part of the United States they shall see fit to send me for the term of ten months from the 1st day of October next and to furnish a good horse, waggon and harness and to be faithful in their said employ during said term of time to be fully completed and ended; And we the said William and Samuel agree to pay the said Amos Francis for his services thirty dollars per month certain wages, forty dollars per month, if said Francis clears it over and above the first cost of his load and expenses, and one-half of all profits over and above said forty dollars that he, the said Francis, shall actually clear. Dated at Meriden, this 3rd day of Sept. 1816."[4]

The February 14, 1831, contract between Erastus Hodges, a Connecticut clock maker, and his peddler Abel Wetmore shows an arrangement that was quite different from the tin peddler's contract. "This agreement made this day between Abel S. Wetmore of Winchester of one part and Erastus Hodges of Torrington of the other part witnessth that the said Abel S. Wetmore agrees to furnish himself with a good substantial horse and harness and also devote his own services to the business of travelling for the purpose of selling clocks and other merchandise or any other business that the parties agree upon for one year from this date.

"He is to be diligent, faithful, sober, and industrious in the business and frugal in his expenses, and to keep good and regular accounts of notes and money and all other property when requested by said Hodges. He is not to be required to travel outside of the United States and is at liberty to return home once in three months as the business may require. Said Hodges on his part agrees to furnish a good substantial wagon, and other vehicles such as may be wanted to convey clocks and other goods for him to use, and to pay him for all the services so rendered at the rate of twenty-five

[4] C. Bancroft Gillespie. *An Historic Record and Pictorial Description of the Town of Meriden Connecticut and Men Who Have Made It*, p. 347.

dollars per month, and I pay necessary expenses and for shoeing his horse and mending his harness."[5]

The earliest peddlers were young men with an adventurous nature. The hardships of traveling, as well as the dangers from man or animal, discouraged the older, and more conscientious, men from engaging in peddling. The young men were hardy but also had fewer scruples and were less concerned with the honesty of their sales pitch, especially when hawking to people whom they would most likely never see again. They were generally strong on sweet talk and flattery, but would manage to leave promptly after completing their sale. Obviously only a few bad apples in the barrel would start the perception that all peddlers were dishonest. They were accused of selling wooden nutmegs and cucumber seeds, oak-leaf cigars, clocks that wouldn't run, tinware that leaked, or realistically painted basswood hams. As the turnpikes opened up and travel by wagon became possible, older men took up the peddling trade. There would most likely have been bad apples in this group too, but probably not the numbers there had been previously. Nonetheless, their reputation was already sorely tarnished, and it would never totally be restored. Even today we look with a cautious eye at any traveling salesman who knocks on our door.

Many articles and books of the nineteenth century attacked the character of the peddler. In 1799 the Connecticut Courant, a newspaper of the Hartford area, published the following article that was signed "A Real Patriot": "Pedling in general, and especially tin-pedling is a growing evil, and has already become very pernicious to this state. It has injured, if not ruined the morals of a large proportion of young men in many of our towns, and is highly mischievous in its direst and almost universal operation.

"The object of the Pedlar is to get money; it is his interest to deceive and impose on his customers, and to practise all the arts of knavery; being generally unknown, he has no character to support, and not a single restraint to protect his integrity, but a conscience stunned with the outcries of avarice. The nature of his business effectually excludes him from the society of respectable men, subjects him to the company of the most depraved, and exposes him to the arts of designing individuals. He learns to lie and cheat as that branch of his profession, on which his success principally depends, and to drink, swear and gamble by the company he keeps. His large profits at times lead to dissipation, and he soon despises the moderate incomes of honest industry, so that he can never again compose himself to any regular calling.

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[5] Theodore B. Hodges. *Erastus Hodges 1781-1847.* pp. 202-203.

"It is a fact that many, if not most of them boast of their profligacy and glory in their address at imposing on the ignorant and unsuspicious; such certainly are already qualified for horse-stealing, or any other summary way to obtain supplies, when drinking, gaming or accident shall make it convenient.

"It therefore needs no uncommon foresight to predict that from this school of dishonesty, our prisons will soon be crowded, and that of the remainder, nine out of ten will at fifty years old be accounted the meanest class of men, without industry, temperance, truth or economy, bad husbands, bad fathers, bad neighbors, and bad members of society. This business therefore is contrary to the interest of the state; and it is wished that it may be speedily considered by the legislature. People will then be better supplied with tin-ware, and at a cheaper rate by merchants, whose profession and duty it is to be the factors of the country."

Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University, published his *Travels in New England and New York* in 1823. He also maligned the peddler, saying "many of the young men employed in this business part at an early period with both modesty and principle. Their sobriety is exchanged for cunning, and their decent behavior for coarse impudence." The peddler had become a target for any traveler, including visitors from Europe. In 1833 Thomas Hamilton, the English author of *Men and Manners in America*, said: "The whole race of Yankee peddlers in particular are proverbial for dishonesty. They go forth annually in the thousands to lie, cheat, swindle, in short, to get possession of their neighbor's property in any manner it can be done with impunity. Their ingenuity in deception is confessedly very great. They warrant broken watches to be the best time-keepers in the world, sell pinchbeck trinkets for gold, and always have a large assortment of wooden nutmegs and stagnant barometers." There were peddlers who may not have cheated their buyers, but instead cheated their own suppliers. Erastus Hodges had a clock peddler, George Carr, who absconded with most of the funds he had collected on a northern Maine trip in 1827.

It is interesting that, although peddling in general was maligned, it was specifically the tin peddlers who received the worst. Another publication of the nineteenth century says: "The Yankee Peddler must be a man intimately acquainted with 'human nature'; and his manners must be of that flexible kind which adjusts itself to all ages, both sexes and to all conditions. He must be grave and respectful with the clergyman, intelligent and polite with the squire, shrewd with the lawyer, jovial with the politician, frank and insinuating with the farmer, and full of flattery and devotion to the girls.....Some individuals devote themselves to a particular article; one man is a faithful follower of Father Time, and deals only in clocks. Much dreaded is he by many that fear him, distrust him, yet patronize

A YANKEE LYRIC

There is, in famous Yankee-land
A class of men ycleped tin-peddlers,
A shrewd, sarcastic band of busy meddlers;
They scour the country through and through,
Vending their wares, tin pots, tin pans,
Tin ovens, dippers, wash bowls, cans,
Tin whistles, kettles, or to boil or stew,
Tin warming platters for your fish and 'taters!
In short, if you look within his cart,
And gaze upon the tin
Which glitters there,
So bright and fair,
There is no danger in defying
You to go off without buying.

One of these cunning, keen-eyed gentry
Stopped at a tavern in the country
Just before night,
And called for bitters for himself, of course,
And fodder for his horse;
This done, our worthy wight
Informed the landlord that his purse was low,
Quite empty, I assure you, sir, and so
I wish you'd take your pay
In something in my way.

him. Another deals in confectionery; he is a favorite with the girls, with whom he drives sharp bargains while the 'old man' is absent in the field; a present of an ounce of snuff wins the heart of the 'old lady'. The tin peddler, who barters for rags in lieu of money, is a man in very bad repute among housewives; and yet somehow he contrives to do a thriving business. 'The horrid tin pedler', as he is called, rarely calls at a house without effecting his object; and many a lovely housewife's sideboard would look grim and dismal were it not replenished and rendered glittering by the visits of the tin peddler."[6]

The southern states were particularly resentful of the peddler, and it is said that he is the reason for "Damnyankee" becoming one word. The peddlers were often referred to as "those Damnyankees from Connecticut." The *Baltimore Niles Weekly Register* stated in an 1820 editorial that "Some of the southern states are jealous of the designs of the northern traveling peddlers. They are said to have increased of late to an alarming degree." A Charleston paper of the same period said: "If, as may be the case, these men should be political missionaries, they cannot be stopped too soon in their nefarious career."

The peddling business was generally a profitable venture for the adventurous young man, and there have been many well-known business magnates who started as peddlers in their early days. Adam Gimbel, the founder of Gimbel Brothers department stores peddled wares in Indiana. B. T. Babbitt, manufacturer of the famous soap, had been a peddler. C. P. Huntington, a co-founder of the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads, peddled his way across the country. John Boynton, founder of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, had been a tin peddler. Even Benedict Arnold peddled among the Dutch in the Hudson Valley and up into Canada.

We can see now how the Yankee peddler got the reputation that has always remained with him. It was probably unjust that the entire community of peddlers were condemned by the knavery of a few, but the reputation continued to grow as long as there were peddlers traveling the countryside.

The peddler's lot was by no means an easy one. If he persevered, and was good at his profession, he could do very well for himself. There were, however, many hardships and problems with which he must contend.

The peddlers of the late 17th and early 18th centuries traveled on foot. Roads in the frontiers were merely swaths cut through the forest, and traveling by horse was often not an option. Sleeping in the out-of-doors, with the dangers from wild animals or even Indians, made peddling an occupation for very stout-hearted men. Known as pack peddlers, they

Now Boniface supposed
himself a wag -
And when he saw that he was
sucked,
Was not dispirited, but plucked
Up courage and his trousers too!
Quoth he t'himself, I am not apt
to brag, tis true,
Bit I can stick a feather in my cap
By making fun of this Yankee
chap.
"Well, my good friend,
That we may end
This troublesome affair,
I'll take my pay in ware,
Provided that you've got that
suits
My inclination."
"No doubt of that," the peddler
cried,
Sans hesitation:
"Well, bring us in a pair of good
tin boots!"
"Tin boots," our Jonathan
espied
His landlord's spindle shanks,
And giving his good Genius
thanks
For the suggestion,
Ran out, returned, and then -
"By goles!
Yes, here's a pair of candle-
moulds!
They'll fit you without
question!"

by Hugh Peters

[6] Penrose Scull. *From Peddlers To Merchant Princes*. p. 32.

would carry on their backs two baskets or small trunks, weighing up to fifty pounds each when fully packed with small notions, such as needles, pins, combs, scissors, and buttons. Traveling from one settlement to another, they would hawk their wares, and return to a merchant to restock.

By the 1780s improvements in the road system made travel by ox cart or horse and wagon the preferred mode of transportation. Now the peddlers could take a larger supply of goods and even travel in a certain amount of comfort. Travel by wagon also added one more very important factor to the business. It allowed for the exchange of used, damaged, or unwanted items by the customer instead of cash payment for his purchases. Because cash money was a scarce commodity, the barter system became the standard process by which the peddler did his business; and he much preferred it just that way! The shrewd man kept himself current on the market prices, and took in the bartered goods (called truck) because he knew they would return a larger profit when sold than his original load was worth. In 1822 Harvey Filley at the Philadelphia tinshop wrote to his brother Oliver in Connecticut: "I don't take but a little cash when I can get truck for it is better than cash. Most all the truck is in demand, more can be made by having quantities and knowing the market."[7] The various items taken as truck had a ready market. Broken or damaged copper, brass, and pewter could be reprocessed into new items. Horns were needed by the comb makers, and hooves were used to make size and glues. Ashes were an important ingredient for making soap and fertilizer. Rags were necessary in the manufacture of fine rag paper. Feathers made the mattresses and pillows, and tallow and beeswax went for candles. Furs and pelts went to the hatters and clothiers. Wool and fleeces made flannels and yarns. Hides were sent to the tanneries, and southern cotton could be sold on the New York market. They even took in as barter foodstuffs, such as eggs, butter, cheese, corn, rye, and potatoes.

Although the turnpikes had been built, and did greatly improve the traveling conditions, bad weather could cause them to become nearly impassable. A clock peddler in central New York wrote to his outfitter in 1818: "On the journey I have been through clay, mud, and snow water and coach ruts most awefully and most woefully. Yours in deep mud, Alpha Hart."[8] Rodney Hill, a peddler out of Massachusetts, wrote to his supplier in June 1830: "From Bainbridge I arrived here today at 12 o'clock by driving 12 miles yesterday in the rain. In consequence of the heavy rains that have fallen in this country the past ten days the roads are tremendous bad. They are so rutted that I have been obliged to fasten a raop to the top of my box and hold on."[9]

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[7] Shirley Spaulding DeVoe. *The Tinsmiths of Connecticut*. p. 150.
[8] Theodore B. Hodges. *op. cit*. p. 205.
[9] Penrose Scull. *op. cit*. p. 31.

Problems could occur with the merchandise that the peddler received. Not all peddlers went directly to their suppliers to fill their wagons. Some would have their stock shipped to them in time to start their spring travels. Shipments could take a very long time, particularly if a sea voyage was involved. Delays in arriving at port were common, as well as disasters at sea. A rough voyage from New York to New Orleans could take nearly two months. Travel by water over extended periods of time could raise havoc with the merchandise. This was of particular concern with the clock shipments. An 1837 shipment from Connecticut took six months to reach Ohio. The peddler complained that "the wires are rusty, and many of them were swelled so that they will not run until I whittle & smooth the wheels."[10]

There could also be problems with the goods being damaged just from the peddlers' travel along the country roads, as well as the possibility that the merchandise may have been inferior to begin with. George Hubbard, a peddler for Richard Wilcox in Virginia, wrote in 1824 of his problem with his load: "I got my tin all saif to Cartersvill but a good deal of it was injured. It was brused and jamed up a good deal and I find a good deal of it leaks that is not brused. I went to one hows and the lady wanted 3 large wash boles. I had 5 and all leaked but one and so I lost the sail of them. And sum of it is vary badly maid." A disastrous clock shipment went to Erastus Hodges' Florida operation, which he supplied with clocks from various makers. His manager wrote in 1832: "I stated in my last letter about Alvord and Hopkins clocks failing. They will not run nor nothing can make them. I wish you to write me what is to be done with them."[11]

Oliver Filley in Bloomfield, Connecticut, wrote his jobber that he had put into a barrel 1416 canisters to fill it so as to keep the boxes from chafing. The jobber advised him "to pack the blacking boxes in a hogshead and cover with straw so that they may be pressed tight by the top," and "to use no paper between the articles, for paper might stick to the japaned boxes."[12]

The peddler also had personal dangers that were a threat to him in his travels. Thieves were a constant concern, but the highwayman on the open road was not the only way to be robbed. Richard Wilcox, in a letter to his brother back in Connecticut, writes from the Virginia operation in 1819 about his peddler George Hubbard: "As I informed you in my last letter that Mr Hubbard had gone over the mountain & was gone so long that I expected it would take all his load for expenses. It has turned out nearly so for he says that he had ninety-five dollars stollen from him. The case is so far as I can learn as follows — Hubbard and one of the peddlers from

With what a gay and tidy air
The tavern shows its painted sign,
Causing each traveler to stare
And cypher out the gold-leaf line.
And yonder is the merchant's stand,
Where, on the benches round the door,
Gather the story-telling band.
And all burst out in hearty roar
As some wild wag, at his tongue's rote
Deals the convulsive antedote.

Why is the dust in such a rage?
It is the yearly caravan
Of peddlers, on their pilgrimage
To southern marts; full of japan,
And tin, and wooden furniture,
That try to charm the passing eye;
And spices which, I'm very sure,
Ne'er saw the shores of Araby;
Well skilled in that smooth eloquence
Are they, which steals away your pence.

by John Nichols,
Connecticut bard

[10] Priscilla Kline. *New Light on the Yankee Peddler.* p. 86
[11] Theodore B. Hodges. *op. cit.* p. 247.
[12] Shirley Spaulding DeVoe. *The Art of the Tinsmith.* p. 205.

Woodbury who takes tin from Mr Yales shop by the name of Peter Sherman fell in company on Saturday & put out together over Sunday. Slept together in one bed. On Monday morning Sherman got up about day break and went out and come to bed again & got up before Hubbard did and when Hubbard got up, he found his pocketbook down in the middle of the bed and open which astonished him as he laid it under his head when he went to bed. And on examining his book he found he had lost all his money. he then goes to Sherman and says to Peter I have lost my money and I believe you have got it as nobody else could have gotten it. Peter then takes out his pocketbooks, opens it & says I have lost money too. Some words then between them so that the landlord got angry & told them that if one of them did not take the business up & do something about it, he would take them both, for by such evil report his house would get a bad name. Accordingly Hubbard took Sherman upon suspicion and by the advise of his council when they came into court, he dismissed him from arrest and takes him with a special writ for debt or money he had got of his. And bound him over to the Superior court to set in May, under one hundred dollars bond. Sherman got the money by the assistance of his brother which is peddling for Clark & Haskall and in the same place at the time. And after this Sherman gets a writ for Hubbard for false imprisonment." In 1823 Richard writes that his peddler Mr. Pardy has had his wagon broken into while at Fredricksburg, and two hundred twenty-five muskrat pelts were taken—supposedly by the Baltimore peddlers.

Personal illness was another concern for the peddler as well as the craftsmen. Quite often the first weeks after arrival at the southern station everyone was affected with dysentery. The peddler was always exposed to any disease that prevailed in the area where he was currently traveling. He also had to worry about illnesses that his friends and family may be suffering. David Kelsy, a peddler for the Wilcoxes, wrote in 1822: "Since I came home I found my family in a distressful situation. My youngest child, except the twins, to my great surprise I found dead and laid in a coffin. She was a daugter of three years and eight months old and the flower of my family. In the east part of town the tifus fever rages to a considerable degree. I yesterday attended the funeral of a young man who for the last three days was in the most excrutiating tortours. The disentery (that) has prevailed among us generally has now abated. My little girl died of the collery morbus."

Not only was the peddler worried about his health in general, but often times his very life was in danger. There are numerous reports of peddlers being murdered, and New York State had its share of such happenings. W. P. Webb states: "If tin peddlars are scarce these days, it is because a favorite pastime of Yorkers a generation ago was murdering these romantic

itinerants for their gold, and burying their bodies in abandoned wells or under the floors of deserted barns."[13]

A peddler who worked for himself had expenses that he was responsible for; but if he worked as an agent, most of these costs came out of the profits from the trip. His passage to a southern base was a major expense at the beginning of his season. Mr. Darling, another Wilcox peddler, sailed from New York to Norfolk for $25; and this included his horse and wagon. He also had to keep his wagon in good repair and to feed his horse and himself. Often he would stay at an inn or ordinary. His horse was probably his most important asset, for without the horse he was out of business. Sometimes, though, unexpected tragedy would strike. George Hubbard wrote to Richard Wilcox in 1824: "My morgin hors dyde yesterday as fat as a seal. he dide with the bots whitch was more to mea (than) loosing my pocketbook last winter but I had ought to bee thankful that I am blest with the best of helth and in the land of the living." Their horses and wagons were generally sold before the peddlers headed back north. If the tinman-merchant rented his site for the whole year, and storage space was available, the wagons still in good condition would be stored for use the next year.

The peddler also had license fees to pay, and through the years the licenses became so costly that the peddlers had difficulty in turning a profit. Various taxes were imposed from the earliest Colonial days, mainly for the purpose of curtailing foreign European peddlers; but as the Yankee peddler traveled into the areas away from his home, he too became the foreigner. Rhode Island imposed a heavy tax in 1700, and by 1713 forbid the selling of dry goods altogether. In 1728 the law was again altered to ban peddlers from selling anything within the state.

In 1717 Connecticut each peddler was taxed 20 shillings for every hundred pounds, but ten years later the local merchants felt it necessary to petition the governor "to suppress the multitudes of foreign or peregrine peddlers who flock into this Colony and travel up and down it with packs of goods to sell."[14] Even in the state that gave rise to the Yankee peddler, taxes or license fees became necessary. The merchants and store owners resented the fact that they paid property taxes, rents and other overhead charges, while the peddler did not have these expenses and could even undersell the merchant. In 1765 Connecticut increased the fee from £5 to £20. By 1770 all hawkers were forbidden to do business in Connecticut unless they dealt in furs or merchandise that was manufactured in the Connecticut Colony or neighboring colonies.

THE PACK PEDDLER

[13] Wheaton Phillips Webb. *Peddler's Protest*. p. 228.

[14] Richardson Wright. *op. cit.* p. 89

Pennsylvania had a 1730 statute that said any unlicensed peddler would be considered a felon. To obtain a license, the peddler had to have a character reference from his own county court. He also needed to put up a £40 bond and pay 25 shillings for his license if he rode a horse, and 15 shillings if he walked. By 1762 the foot peddler paid £1.1, and a peddler with a wagon paid £1.11. Louisiana charged peddlers $12 in 1820, as did New Hampshire. The 1825 Alabama license fees were approximately $40, and this was charged by each county the peddler entered. Mississippi's rates were comparable. Virginia laid a $16 county tax on dry goods peddlers in 1823 and $10 on tin, pewter, and other domestic peddlers. Even Canada laid a heavy fee on American peddlers, and Augustus Filley in New York wrote to his cousin Oliver in 1816 that there was no trade in upper Canada as the license on a two-horse team was $260 and $240 on a one-horse. Most of the state laws stipulated that the peddler could only sell goods that were locally produced. This fact, along with the New England winters, is why the Connecticut tinsmiths and clock makers set up shops in the southern towns. By operating within these states, their peddlers could bypass the heavy fees. Of course, the tinner did not abide completely to this policy as he only did part of the work on site. Many times the plain tinware would be manufactured there, but the japanned pieces would be shipped in from New England. The clock makers also were half-hearted about following the rules. Their cases, works, and painted glasses were shipped from Connecticut and only assembled on site. Some shops were even set up in Montreal to get around the Canadian charges.

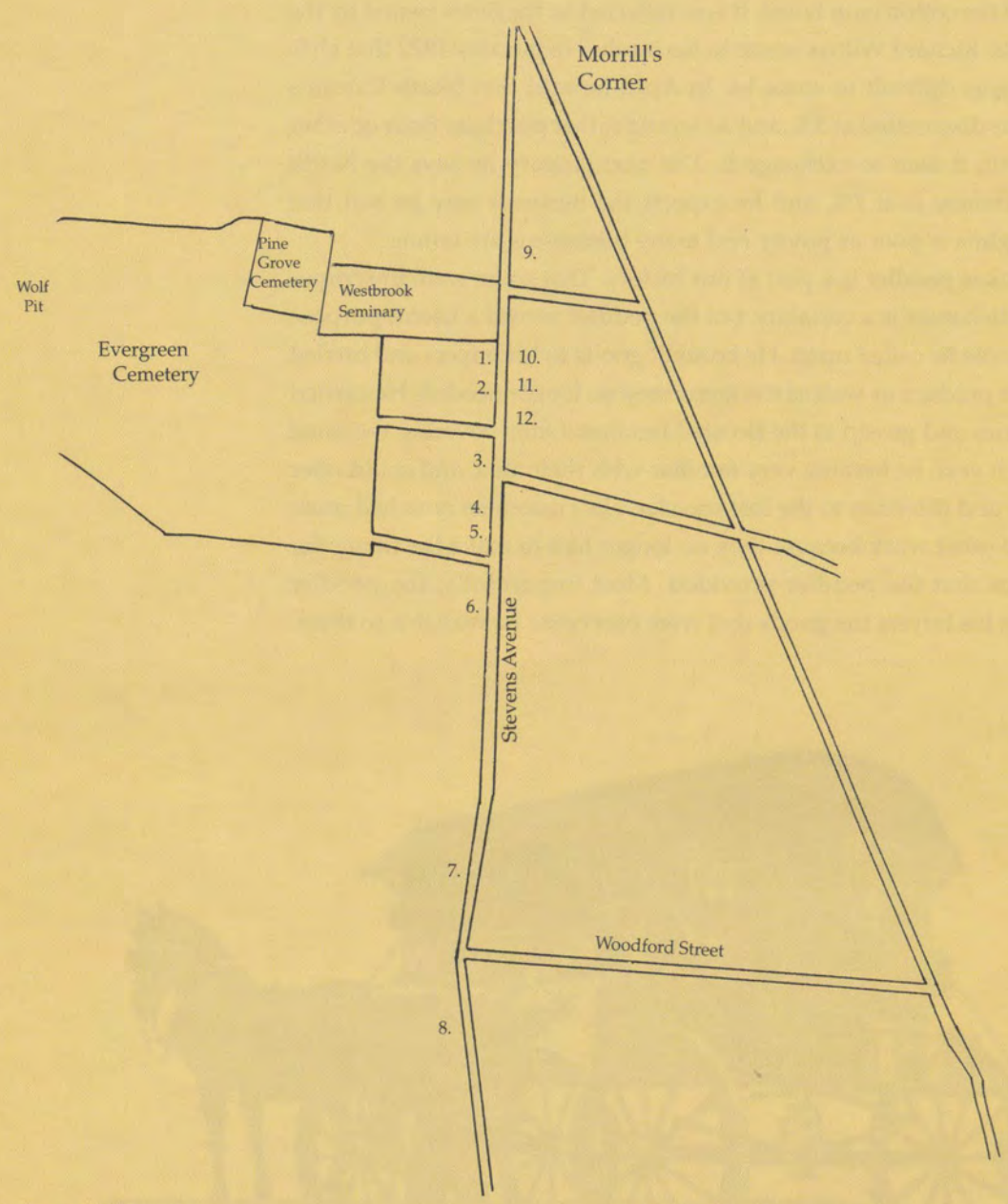
Although the peddlers of the nineteenth century took in a large amount of truck, they would also deal with cash. The people along the country roads most likely could not pay with cash, but the peddler had merchants in the towns for customers. These merchants could furnish cash, and a certain amount was needed for working expenses. Now the problem of getting the extra cash back to his outfitter posed more difficulties. Hand delivery was the preferred method. If there was someone in his area that the peddler knew to be traveling back to the home base, the cash could be entrusted to him for delivery. Oftentimes he must rely on the mails, but this was not a safe way to send specie. The mails were constantly being robbed, and those forced to use that means would cut the bills in half and send each part separately.

Sometimes the peddler would sell his merchandise on credit, and the customer would sign a note for the amount owed. These notes could in turn be circulated in the area, or even turned into banks. Local bank notes varied, however, in their value. The period from the War of 1812 until the bank failures of 1837 made dealing in notes drawn on southern banks undesirable. The notes from northern banks were preferred but not generally available to the peddlers in the South, and US currency was nearly

impossible to get. Notes from southern banks were usually discounted, and the peddler tried not to accept them at all. Because the South was a one-crop country, it was vulnerable to the effects of droughts and hard winters. If the cotton crop failed, it was reflected in the notes issued by the local banks. Richard Wilcox wrote to his brother in January 1822 that U. S. currency was difficult to come by. In April he said that North Carolina money was discounted at 5%, and he would rather purchase flour or other articles with it than to exchange it. The next January he says the North Carolina money is at 7%, and he expects the business may be bad that year. "Virginia is poor as povity and many businesses are failing."

The Yankee peddler is a part of our history. That some were unscrupulous and dishonest is a certainty, but the peddler served a useful purpose for the people he called upon. He brought goods to his buyers and carried away their produce as well as the items they no longer needed. He carried news, stories and gossip to the isolated families. Often covering the same routes each year, he became very familiar with their area, and could offer assistance and direction to the lost traveler. His customers now had more time to do other work because they no longer had to make the things for themselves that the peddler provided. Most importantly, the peddler brought to his buyers the goods that were otherwise unavailable to them.

Stevens Plains, Maine (circa 1830)



1. Zachariah B. Stevens
2. Oliver Buckley (first residence)
3. Thomas Brisco
4. Samuel B. Stevens
5. Isaac Sawyer Stevens Tavern
6. Alfred Stevens
7. Elijah North
8. Elisha North
9. Walter B. Goodrich (second residence)
10. Zachariah and Samuel Stevens' blacksmith and tinshops, general store
11. Rufus Dunham
12. Oliver Buckley (second residence)

History of Stevens Plains

Stevens Plains was situated in southern Maine in what was originally part of ancient Falmouth in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The old township included what is now Falmouth, Westbrook, Deering, Cape Elizabeth, Portland, South Portland, and many of the Casco Bay islands. The section that contained Stevens Plains was known as Falmouth until 1814 when it became part of Westbrook. In 1871 the section was again divided, and Stevens Plains became part of Deering. In 1993 Deering was incorporated with the city of Portland. The Plains was flat land situated on what is now Stevens Avenue, and it ran between what is known locally as Morrill's Corner and Woodford Street.

In the 1740s the first permanent settler of the Plains area was Zachariah Brackett [1716–1776]. His parents resided on a farm bordering the Back Cove, and Zachariah obtained the section of the farm that would later be known as Stevens Plains. He "commenced to fell the trees on the 'Pitch Pine Plains', a fifty acre tract of land adjoining on both sides of the road leading from Stroudwater to Presumpscot great dam."[1] Zachariah built a home with low walls highly banked with earth, a thatched roof, and sheepskin windows. Years later he was joined by Isaac Sawyer Stevens [1748–1820] who would marry Zachariah's daughter, Sarah Brackett [1749–1830].

Zachariah Brackett Stevens, the son of Isaac and Sarah (Brackett) Stevens, started the tin industry about the turn of the century. As his business succeeded, other tinsmiths were attracted to the area which was conveniently located on the main route between Boston and Augusta. Craftsmen of various trades were drawn to the area and included tinsmiths, comb makers, pewterers, brush makers, broom makers, and clock manufacturers. There were also blacksmith shops, carriage builders, a tannery, and other minor industries. Many of these businesses also needed peddlers, a lucrative occupation taken up mostly by Maine men. As the additional businesses came to set up shop there was soon a thriving town, similar to Berlin, Connecticut, but on a smaller scale. In fact, many of the new tradesmen who came to the Plains were from the Berlin area, thus illustrating that even in the early 19th century word travelled well. Stevens Plains was an up and coming place to set up shop, and that was a good reason to move from an area that was becoming too congested with craftsmen. Competition is usually considered healthy for business, but too much of it could be ruinous.

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[1] *Eastern Argus*, 1894.

Stevens Plains had many interesting facets to its history. In the 1840s Samuel F. B. Morse conducted some of his first experiments with the telegraph in a home on Stevens Avenue. Alfred A. Stevens [1836–1923], a grandson of Zachariah B., remembered the first telegraph wire that was strung across the field from Mr. Morse's room to the station on the avenue.

By the 1830s the town was becoming too crowded. As more new craftsmen arrived from other areas, the young local craftsmen or apprentices began to leave the Plains to open their businesses in other areas of Maine. Some went to Bangor, some to coastal towns, and others to areas along the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers. Stevens Plains was seeing a change, not only in the people manufacturing the various wares, but also in the popularity of the products themselves. Brittaniaware was beginning to take favor over pewter. High-backed, ornate ladies' combs were going out of fashion. The tinsmiths still could keep busy, especially with the tin kitchen and the tin bakers used for cooking meats and breads at the open hearth. It was the late 1830s when cook stoves and furnaces came into use, and the tinsmiths turned to making stove pipe. There was a distinct decline in the need for peddlers, however. This change in the business routine was a gradual process; so no one really suffered greatly, except possibly the peddlers. The first craftsmen who had come to the Plains were in their last days, and their younger successors were flexible enough to turn their attention to the newer business opportunities.

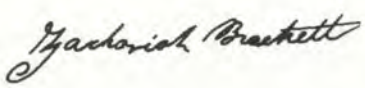
TINSMITHS


TIN WARE, ET CET.— TOOL MAKER. 100

ABNER HOWARD,
NO. 40, EXCHANGE STREET,
DEALER IN
JAPAN WARE
OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.
All kinds of Brushes constantly on hand.
TIN WARE,
Of every kind as well as SHEET IRON WORK, done to order, in good style, at short notice and on the most reasonable terms.
Britannia and Tin Ware repaired with neatness and despatch.

Portland Directory 1846

It is unlikely that all the tinsmiths who worked on the Plains made japanned or decorated tinware. There were many utilitarian articles customers required that would not have been japanned due to their intended use — such as basins, dippers, pails, milk pans, wash bowls, colanders, funnels, ladles, milk strainers, candlemolds, graters, cookie cutters, and various pans for cooking or baking. At this time only three Stevens Plains tinsmiths are known to have produced decorated pieces: Zachariah B. Stevens (see Chapter One), Oliver Buckley (see Chapter Three), and the North Brothers (see Chapter Four). With further research, we may learn that some of the other tinsmiths also produced decorated wares.


Zachariah Brackett

Brackett Family: Zachariah Brackett [1790–1832], a descendant of the original Plains Brackett family, was a tinsmith who was born near Morrill's Corner. He reported on the 1820 industrial census that his business used 200 boxes of tin plate, employed ten men and one boy, and produced all kinds of tinware with a market value of $5500. In the 1830's he left the Plains and moved to Penobscot County.

There were two other Bracketts who manufactured tinware at the Plains: Ona C. [1817–1852] and his brother Sewall [1819–1880]. By 1850 they were together in a partnership making tin pans and other tin items, as well as stoves and stove pipe. Ona C. moved to Pennsylvania and then to Illinois, but Sewall remained and continued the business in Maine until the 1870s.

Walter Buckley Goodrich: Walter [1802–1869] was the son of Joshua Goodrich and Nancy Buckley (the sister of Oliver) and had originally come to the Plains from Connecticut. Walter kept a journal in which he noted the highlights of his life: "Born May 19, 1802, at Wethersfield, Connecticut. Went to learn tinman's trade at the age of sixteen at Berlin, Connecticut. Left Berlin May 1823. Arrived at Lynn, Massachusetts, and worked eight months for E. A. Yale. Left Lynn for Westbrook, Maine, January 1824, commenced work for Oliver Buckley in February and worked for said Buckley until 1825. Commenced tin business with Oliver Buckley and dissolved in 1827. I purchased stock in trade. Built tin shop and barn in 1827. Married Maria Francis June 11, 1829. Commenced tin business with James A. Thompson, February 23, 1830."[2] Interestingly, this ledger was later used as the record book of the Universalist Church Society of Westbrook.[3]

Walter built his home, a two-story brick building, the year before he married. He was a very enterprising young man, and his ledger shows entries for working tinplate for Zachariah B. Stevens. His business made tin kitchens and bakers as well as coffee pots. Whether he made other types of tinware is not known. It is also unknown if he made japanned tinware. His journal does contain recipes for brightly-colored varnishes and directions for applying bronzing powders, but there is no definite information about his actually doing these processes in his business. Possibly these were merely notes that he had kept from his initial training.

Taking advantage of business opportunities, he sold his home in 1833, "reserving the shop on the premises," and he and Thompson moved to Augusta to engage in the tinware and stove trade. He sold out his interest in that business to Oliver Buckley's son Charles S. in 1835 and returned to the Plains to make cook stoves with Zachariah B. Stevens' son Alfred. In 1837 he again went to working tinplate for Oliver Buckley and continued until 1842. In the meantime he built another dwelling house for his family. From 1850 to 1852 he was making Brittaniaware with Freeman Porter. Walter had been a very active member of the Plains families and was greatly mourned when he died of consumption in 1869.

Pine Grove Cemetery marker:

Walter B. Goodrich
Died Aug. 4, 1869 Æ 67

[2] Brazer, Esther Stevens, The Tinsmiths of Stevens Plains, Part II
[3] *Deering News*, November 12, 1898.

Higgins Family: Elisha Higgins [1780–1868] was a tinsmith and carpenter who resided on the corner of Stevens Avenue and Woodford Street. Elisha is listed many times in Zachariah B. Stevens ledger as having purchased both plain and japanned tinware in the early 1820s. Three of his sons, Charles [b. 1809], Freeman [1825–1895], and George [b. 1828], were also in the tin business. Charles left the Plains in the 1830s for northern Maine, but his brothers remained.

Sawyer Family: This family was very early to the Plains, as were the Bracketts and the Stevens families, and there were quite a few tinsmiths named Sawyer. The brothers Isaac [1798–1873], Ebenezer B. [1807–1884], who married Elijah North's daughter Rhoda (see Chapter Four), and Charles [1817–1873] were all tinners. Isaac's sons Francis M. [1826–1894] and Alonzo [1833–1897] also continued the family tradition.

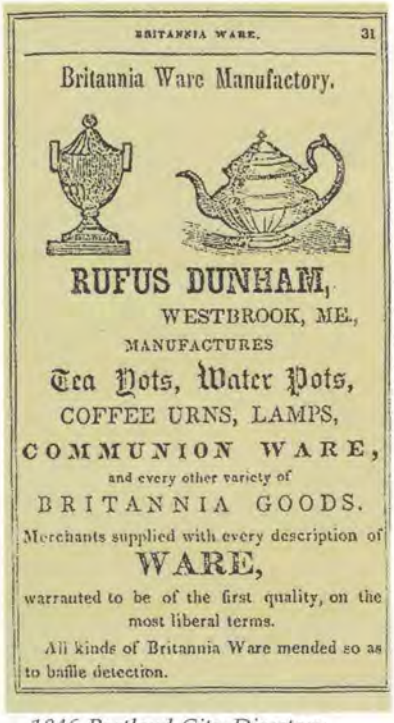
PEWTERERS

Porter Brothers: Allen and Freeman [1808–1887] Porter came from Connecticut and were the first to manufacture pewterware at the Plains. Allen came about 1830, and his brother joined him two years later. By 1835 they had formed a partnership, but Allen apparently stayed on only a few more years. He sold the business to his brother and returned to the Hartford area. Freeman Porter, who had married Oliver Buckley's daughter Mary Ann (see Chapter Three), continued the pewter business until the time of the Civil War.

Rufus Dunham: Rufus Dunham [1815–1893] was originally from Saco, Maine, and he arrived at the Plains when he was 16 years old. He had been compelled to leave home at the age of nine, when he went to live with a farmer who abused him. After an unusually severe beating with a harness strap by the drunken farmer, Rufus ran away to Portland. He found a job at the United States Hotel as a handy boy in the billiards room. He saw to his own education by attending night school. After visiting the Plains where he became enamored with all the merchandise that he saw in the windows of the various factories, he left Portland and moved to the Plains. At 16 years of age, he bound himself as an apprentice to the Porter brothers for his board, $50 in cash, and two suits of clothes per year. After two years he broke his contract on the grounds that he had not received the pay due him for overtime work. From 1833 to 1837 Rufus worked first in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and later in Poughkeepsie, New York. He returned to Stevens Plains with molds and tools and $800 in savings.

At the age of 22, and with his brother John, Rufus set up a business to produce tinware and pewter and to do silver plating. He sold to the Portland market but later started selling and trading in Canada. Although it was usually the practice to hire peddlers to take the wares to the public, Rufus often did his own peddling. The warm season was the time when most peddlers travelled, but Rufus found it possible to travel in the winter using the one passable road which went through Crawford Notch in the White Mountains to Montreal. This road was kept open by long lines of horse vans that transported goods from Canada to the port at Portland. By selling during the winter, Rufus was able to give his metal workers year-round employment. He would return from the long trip with pelts and skins, stockings and mittens, ox tails, hog bristles and cattle horns. He could dispose of most of the items to the other manufacturers in Stevens Plains, and the fur pelts (mainly beaver) he would send to Europe.

Rufus Dunham was an exceptional craftsman, and in 1838 he exhibited at the Mechanics Fair in Portland. He received a silver medal award for the best specimen of pewter (also called block tinware). As Rufus usually paid wages in cash, his shop attracted many of the best workmen who often worked for him their whole lives. He had as many has thirty workers in his shop. He was well noted for his ornate oil lamps, communion ware, coffee pots and teapots, candlesticks, tableware, shakers, soup tureens and ladles, castor frames, pitchers and mugs. Rufus continued his business at the Plains until his buildings were destroyed by a fire in 1861. He then leased a shop in Portland and continued the business with two of his sons. His first wife was Emmeline [1811–1840], the daughter of Zachariah Brackett Stevens, and his second wife was Emma B. Sargent [1826–1910]. In 1882 Rufus closed his business and retired.


BRITANNIA WARE. 31

Britannia Ware Manufactory.

RUFUS DUNHAM,
WESTBROOK, ME.,
MANUFACTURES
Tea Pots, Water Pots,
COFFEE URNS, LAMPS,
COMMUNION WARE,
and every other variety of
BRITANNIA GOODS.
Merchants supplied with every description of
WARE,
warranted to be of the first quality, on the most liberal terms.
All kinds of Britannia Ware mended so as to baffle detection.

1846 Portland City Directory.

COMB MAKERS

Woodford Brothers: Isaiah Woodford [1779–1819] and his brothers, Chauney [1774–1841] and Ebenezer [1782–1849], came from Farmington, Connecticut, and opened a comb factory at the Plains. To make horn combs, it was necessary to soak and then boil the horns. When they were soft, the hornsmith could cut the round horn open and flatten it out. Once he had fashioned his combs, they would be buffed with brick dust, sometimes stained to imitate tortoise shell, and finally polished with vinegar and rottenstone. The Woodfords' business proved very successful and their products were of exceptional quality. They soon had orders for as much as $1500 from New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. The business was later carried on in partnership with Samuel Jordan.

Isaiah married Margaret Sawyer, the daughter of Isaac. Chauney Woodford married Lucy Stevens, a sister of Zachariah B. (see Chapter

One), and Ebenezer married Mary Francis (see Chapter Two). Martha Woodford, the sister of these comb makers, was the wife of tinsmith Elijah North (See Chapter Four).

THE PLAINS PEDDLERS

Almost all the peddlers that worked for Stevens Plains businesses were native Mainers. They could have a very lucrative occupation as long as they dealt sharply. It has been said that far fewer tin peddlers were failures in life than college graduates. Letters sent in 1888 to the editor of the Portland Argus were written by old-time peddlers of the Plains who reminisced about the times when peddling was at its peak. "He (the peddler) was generally a green young man from the farm in the country who wanted to see the world and earn some money to buy some land or to start in with something else. But few followed the business long, if they possessed skill, they would soon get all the money they needed, or if they failed in skill and industry, they would drop out in the start. . . . The outfit was a horse, a "tin cart" and a pair of steelyards. This tin cart was four wheels, axle trees, arms and whiffle-tree like a light truck wagon, a large box for a body with an L in front to sit on. The body rested solid on the axle tree, a rack was fitted on the off side to fasten (truck) to, and a rod some three feet long, sharp at the upper end, was secured uprightly to the center of the back end of the box to string sheep skins to. Paint the cart red, fill up with tinware and "trinkets," hitch "Dobbin" in his place, mount the cart, boy, and be off on trading ground for a few weeks! Soon the horse and man returned, drawing the cart under a load of truck as large as a load of hay, consisting of paper rags, wool, wool skins, slats, hog's bristles, old copper, brass and block tin, and all sorts of peltry, etc. etc., generally double what they started off with. Paper rags were then worth from four to ten cents a pound. Sometimes the "truck" or "plunder" would come by water carriage from "downeast" to Portland. Those who traded with the peddler in those days paid him no money, but let him have at his own price such as they did not know what to do with. The horse and carts, the "tin team," improved from year to year until the business stopped."

The peddlers from the Plains did not travel to the southern states as did those from the Connecticut shops. These men had routes along the main highway to Montreal and would peddle through New Hampshire, Vermont, and into Québéc Province. Later routes took them along the coast of northern Maine and into New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Chapter One

THE STEVENS TINSHOP

[circa 1800–1842]
Stevens Plains, Maine

Z. B. Stevens

Zachariah Brackett Stevens [1778–1856] introduced the manufacture of tinware in the state of Maine. He was the son of Isaac Sawyer Stevens and Sarah Brackett (see History of Stevens Plains). Zachariah had been trained as a blacksmith by his father but later learned the tinsmithing trade. Exactly how he learned this trade, or where he may have received his training, is uncertain. Esther Stevens Brazer [1898–1945], who was Zachariah's great-great-granddaughter, did extensive research on this subject. She was not able to find documented evidence of his training; but the family maintained that he had resided for a time in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and may have received his training with Paul Revere. This supposition has some merit in that the Stevens family did certainly have a connection with the famed patriot of Boston.

Although Paul Revere was noted as a master silver and goldsmith, he was also involved with many types of metals, such as iron, brass, copper, and tin. A 1783 ledger of importation lists a large quantity of tinware that arrived from England— waiters, knife trays, and bread baskets. Mrs. Brazer had tried to determine if Revere had produced Pontypool-type trays, first importing the shaped waiters from England and then doing the hand-pierced edge in his shop.[1] She was not able to definitely verify this, but the research did confirm that Paul Revere was involved with tinware.

Philip Merritt Rose [1771–1800], the son of Revere's sister Mary, was a tinware decorator and had a shop in Boston.[2] Perhaps Philip worked on the imported waiters that came into Revere's shop. That Philip was acquainted with Zachariah seems a certainty as Philip was at Stevens Plains sometime after 1791. At that time he made two illuminated drawings for Zachariah's parents — one being a record of their marriage, and the other a family record of their children.

[1] Fraser, Esther Stevens, *Did Paul Revere Make Lace-Edge Trays?*
[2] Lord, Priscilla Sawyer, *The Folk Crafts of New England, p. 83*

Pine Grove Cemetery marker:

Zachariah B. Stevens,
Died May 17, 1856 Æ 78

Another connection of the Stevens family with Paul Revere was in the person of Thomas Brisco who married Revere's niece Sarah Rose (the sister of Philip). Thomas and his wife came to Stevens Plains, and he worked with Zachariah (see Chapter Two).

Though it is still not thoroughly substantiated where Zachariah received his training as a tinsmith, there is one more point that suggests he worked at Revere's shop. Several tinware pieces that have descended in the Stevens family have a history of being the work of Zachariah. The shape and style of some of these pieces goes beyond simple rural forms and strongly suggest the tinsmith was trained in an urban setting. Even the vast variety of tinware produced in Berlin, Connecticut, remained very simple in construction, and did not include pieces that required much technical ingenuity.

Zachariah married Miriam Pote Berry [1778–1865] in 1798. In 1800 he built his own home just up the road from his parents, and it is probably at this time that he erected his blacksmith and tin shops nearby. His tax assessment records for the year 1814 give us an idea of his taxable property: one house, one barn, one shop, one outhouse, half-house, 7 acres for mowing, 10 acres for pasture, 40 acres unimproved, two oxen, two cows, one horse, one chaise, and one swine. During the 1820s, he enlarged the house and built a new shop and general store across the street. He remained at this residence his whole life and raised his family there. Zachariah and Miriam had four children: Samuel Butler [1799–1848], Alfred [1801–1884], Emmeline [1811–1840] who married the pewterer Rufus Dunham (see History of Stevens Plains), and Cordelia [1821–1904] wife of Levi Q. Pierce [1815-1858] who was a tailor at Westbrook Village.

Masonic marker:
Z.B. Stevens

Zachariah may not have worked as a tinsmith himself for very long. His major occupation was that of a blacksmith, and he continued to run his blacksmithing shop until it was destroyed by fire in 1842. The early deed records for Cumberland County, Maine, list the occupation for each of the parties involved in a land transfer. Zachariah was first recorded in 1807, and from that time until his death, his occupation, as listed on many deeds, was blacksmith, yeoman, or gentleman. Not once was he referred to as a tin plate worker, although that term was used for Oliver Buckley, the North brothers, and other tinmen at the Plains. Perhaps Zachariah started his tinshop about the time he built his home and shop buildings. Thomas Brisco did join him in the early 1800s, and Zachariah may have been training other men. Samuel Clary was at the Plains by 1802 when he married Dolly Stevens, the daughter of Joshua. In 1804 Samuel Clary, tinman, bought a half acre of land with a house next to Thomas Brisco. Both Oliver Buckley and Elijah North were at the Plains as early as 1804 as they were the witnesses to the Clary deed, and Elijah's younger brother Elisha arrived by at least 1806. As the tinware business succeeded, Zachariah had need for a general store in order to deal with the bartered goods that were being

brought back by the peddlers. A ledger that he kept from 1818 to 1824 has been preserved (see Appendix D).

Zachariah was very active in the community and served in many offices for the town—coroner, selectman, deputy sheriff, and postmaster. He was a Freemason and also an active member of the Universalist Society. The church stood next door, and parish meetings were often held in his home.

Zachariah's house is no longer standing. The adjacent long building where the rags were sorted was torn down about 1900. The last remaining peddler's cart at Stevens Plains was destroyed at that same time.

Zacahriah B. Stevens homestead. Built in 1800.

Pine Grove Cemetery marker:

Samuel B. Stevens, died
July 24, 1848, age 49.
Sarah B. Stevens, his wife,
Nov. 11, 1799 – July 6 1890.
Harriet R. Francis
Feb. 24, 1795 – Oct 12, 1887

Samuel Butler Stevens

Samuel Butler Stevens [1799–1848] was married in 1820 to Sally Francis [1799–1890], the niece of Thomas and Sarah Brisco (see Chapter Two). He was trained as a tinsmith and a horn comb maker and may have worked in both trades in his younger years. By 1830 he had taken over his father's tin business. In that year he signed a six-month note for six boxes of 13 x 19 ∫" tin plate at $58.50. Samuel continued to run the tinshop until it was consumed by fire as reported in the Portland Argus for April 11, 1842: "Fire broke out this morning about two o'clock at Stevens Plains, in the blacksmith shop of Z. B. Stevens, and soon communicated to the tin-ware shop of his son Samuel B. Stevens. Both shops were consumed. Mr. S. B. Stevens lost his books, ware, tin plate, etc. amounting to $1500.00, insured for

$300.00. The fire extended to the shop of Rufus Dunham, block tin manufacture, which was also destroyed with contents. Loss $1000.00 to $1200.00. The citizens turned out with great spirit, and disputed the ground with the fire adversary so successfully that the buildings nearby contiguous to those destroyed were saved, including a large amount of property."

Samuel and Sally raised six children: Almina, Augustov E., Samuel Henry, Grenville M., Lilla Cathleen, and Frank G. In 1846 he formed a two-year partnership with N. Ross of Portland in the firm Pinkham & Ross, a grocery and general store. Samuel furnished $10,000 in capital. He spent his last years as a civil engineer and assisted in locating the lines for the York & Cumberland Railroad.

Alfred Stevens homestead and shop building. Originally built in 1806, it was purchased by Alfred in 1826.

Pine Grove Cemetery marker:

Alfred Stevens
Sept. 3, 1801 – Sept. 9, 1884
Nancy G. Buckley, his wife
Feb. 22, 1806 – Dec. 21, 1901

Alfred Stevens

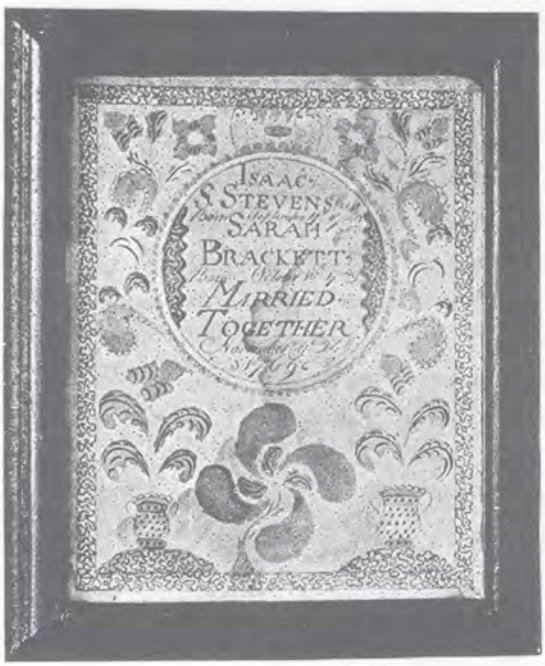
Alfred Stevens [1801–1884] learned the tin trade from his father. For a time he also worked in Brittaniaware with his brother-in-law, Rufus Dunham. Alfred had a tinshop beside his home on Stevens Avenue, and he sent out peddlers to trade his wares. He had purchased his home in 1826 when he married Nancy Goodrich Buckley [1806–1901], the daughter of Oliver (see Chapter Three). Their home was a two-and-half story center chimney cape in which they raised a family of six children: Sarah Buckley, Oran Beckley, Miriam Frances, Alfred Augustus, William Pitt, and Edward Clifton. Their house had a porch along the back that was used for the annual scouring of tinware with a solution of potash.[3] The large barn that

[3] *Portland Evening Express*, August 22, 1908.

was originally on the property had three sections, referred to as the horse barn, the truck barn, and the carriage house. This barn was torn down in 1890, and the house was razed in 1908. It is not known exactly what types of tinware Alfred produced, or whether any pieces were decorated. He was making tin cook stoves in 1835 when Walter B. Goodrich returned from his venture in Augusta to join him. Alfred worked his trade throughout his life, although he may have worked for others after about 1850. He is not listed in the US industrial censuses of that date or later. This would imply that he was no longer in business for himself, although the population census still showed his occupation as a tinner.

The 1832 Maine State report of manufacturing in the United States lists Samuel B. Stevens as producing annual merchandise valued at $2700, and Alfred Stevens at $1500. Zachariah was not on this list since by this time he had turned his tinware business over to this sons.

The three Stevens men, Zachariah, Samuel, and Alfred, as well as many others of this family who were descended from Isaac Sawyer Stevens, accounted for a large share of the the tinware products manufactured at Stevens Plains during the first half of the 19th century.



These family records of Isaac and Sarah Stevens were designed and illuminated by Philip Rose, the son of Paul Revere's sister Mary and brother of Sally Rose Briscoe. One is the marriage record and the other is entitled: "The Offspring of Isaac and Sarah Stevens."

STEVENS SHOP: Introduction to the Photographs

The tinware pieces that begin this section (Fig. 1.1) are descended through the Stevens family. Although the trinket box shown in Fig. 1.2 is not known to be from the family, it is nearly identical to another that does have a family history. Esther Brazer felt that these unusual tin forms (as well as several others that are not pictured) had been fashioned by Zachariah B. Stevens. Their provenance through Stevens family members into the 20th century certainly tends to verify this.

As to who may have done the painted decoration on these pieces, the evidence is not so clear. Mrs. Brazer attributed the decoration to Zachariah, which was likely a natural assumption as she believed he had done the tin work. It does not seem logical, however, to assume that he was the decorator. As mentioned in the early records of Falmouth, Zachariah's major trade throughout his life was that of a blacksmith and a storekeeper. It is difficult to imagine the large calloused hands of a blacksmith being able to accomplish the fine brushwork of dainty flowers and intricate tendrils. Even the handwriting in his ledger, though readable, does not exhibit the graceful flow one would expect to see from a hand that could paint such fine delicate strokes. It should also be remembered that early accounts of tinware decoration refer to the fact that young ladies did the "flowering."

A much more plausible candidate for the decorating of many of these pieces is Sarah (Rose) Brisco, wife of Thomas. She was the sister of Philip Merritt Rose, a known decorator, and it was she who taught her orphaned nieces to paint. Three of the nieces (Sally, Maria, and Harriet) are known to have painted for Zachariah. Possibly Zachariah's two daughters also learned to decorate.

The decoration on the unusual forms, such as Fig. 1.2, is more artistic than one usually finds on country painted tinware. The flowers are very realistic and often show great depth. Sarah (Rose) Brisco would have learned to paint in this fashion during her years in Boston, where she possibly learned at her Uncle Revere's shop (see Chapter Two). That "Aunt Sarah Brisco" and several of her nieces did decorate tinware at Stevens Plains is substantiated. That Zachariah B. Stevens painted his tinware is not substantiated, nor does it seem likely.

Fig. 1.1a. Vase 6" (15.2 cm). Light Asphaltum. One of a pair of lead-weighted, double cone-shaped vases believed to have been fashioned by Zachariah Stevens for his wife Miriam. The initials MS are painted within a diamond shape formed by a black stripe and tiny brushstrokes. Three rows of small black ribbon strokes are also seen. These vases remained for many years in the Stevens family. *Courtesy Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA*

Fig. 1.1b. Toy Basket 3" (7.6 cm). White. One of a pair cleverly constructed minature baskets that were family pieces. They are also believed to be the work of Zachariah Stevens. Each outward-turned side is decorated with a tiny spray of red and blue flowers. The ribbon border, as seen in Fig. 1.1a, is here painted in red. The original white background has had varnish applied, which has now turned yellow.

Courtesy Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA

Fig. 1.2a, 1.2b, and 1.2c. Trinket Box 9⅝" (24.1 cm). White. A box with tapered sides and rounded edges, it was originally painted white but now has yellowed with age. The design on the top (Fig. 1.2b) shows a floral spray of red, blue, and pink flowers. The leaves are painted with green and yellow colors that were blended while both pigments were wet. This wet technique is very typical of this tinshop. Flowers may also show this blending, as seen here on the blue blossoms. The front of the trinket box shows a vine of rosebuds (Fig. 1.2c) while the two sides have a vine of strawberries. The slanted edge of the lid has a running border of leaf groups and berries. Four other boxes of this style are known. *Private Collection*

Fig. 1.3a. Trunk 6 ⅝" (16.5 cm). Black. Strawberries and blended leaves have been seen previously. The large yellow flower has overtone painting in red and white, while its open center has dainty yellow stamens. Cherries, both single and double forms, are common motifs on Stevens shop pieces. The yellow border on the lid is a simplified version of that seen on Fig. 1.2. The style of this trunk, with the flat-top rather than the domed-top, is unique to this shop.

Collection of Kenneth and Paulette Tuttle

Fig. 1.3b. Bread Basket 13⅛" (33.3 cm). Black. The flowers on the floor and the ends of this bread basket are a variant of that seen in Fig 1.3a. Delicate flower buds are seen on the side panels along with blended flowers. Double cherries are also found.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

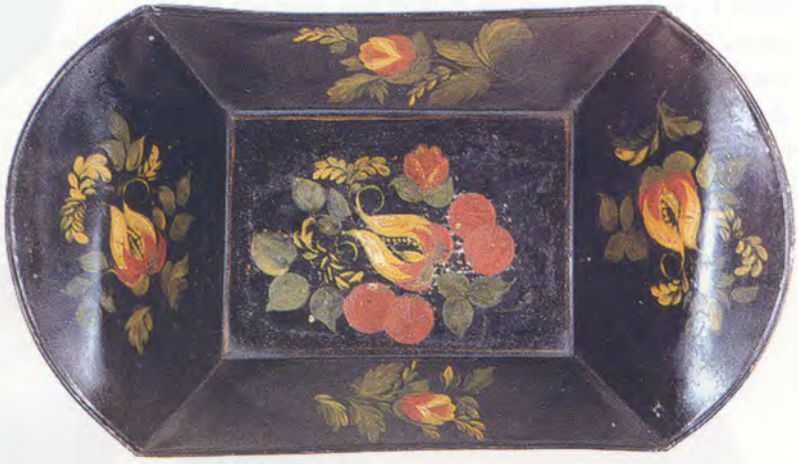


Fig. 1.4. Tea Canister 5" (12.7 cm). Black. Double cherries and blended leaves surround the large white flowers. Bright yellow and red colors are used for the overpainting. The thinness of the white mixture gives the flowers their filmy, transparent quality. The yellow pigment used by the decorators in this shop is a much lighter shade than found at other tinshops.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 1.5. Bread Basket 13⅜" (35.2 cm). Black. The leaves, cherries, and small flowers are now becoming familiar. Note the compact yellow rickrack strokes used to frame the side panels. The yellow sprig on the floor is also found on trunk ends.
Collection of Elizabeth Martel

Fig. 1.6. Trunk 8" (20.3 cm). Black. Yellow daffodils nestle among red flowers, buds, and double cherries. Here are seen the three-lobed blended leaves so often found on Stevens pieces. The pigments for the designs are generally very thin, and the black background easily shows through the motifs. This is especially true for salmon-pink color, white, and green leaves. Examine the areas where the leaves overlap the blossoms, and the thinness of their paint mixture becomes very apparent. Although this shop produced many flat-topped trunks in various sizes, the common dome-top was also made.
Collection of Barbara Crosby

Fig. 1.7. Trunk 7∫" (19.7 cm). Black. A large yellow flower and four buds are seen here. Blossoms formed by seven salmon-pink circles with crosshatched centers are another common motif. Note the large yellow blossom with a calyx formed by crosshatching.
Collection of Emily Underhill (deceased)

Fig. 1.8. Trunk 6½" (16.5 cm) Black. A single cherry is found at the bottom corners of this trunk. The flowers are half red and half yellow, and have cross hatching and dots at their centers. The leaves are painted with blended colors. Notice the serrated leaves below the hasp. *Lewis Scranton*

Fig 1.9. Coffee Pot 9" (22.9cm). Black. A yellow cornucopia has painted red accents. Strawberries, double cherries, and flowers are also present. Because the blended leaves are very thin in pigment, they are difficult to see against the black background. This flared spout coffeepot is the style found in Maine. The gooseneck or crooked spout pots were not manufactured at Stevens Plains.

Private Collection

Fig. 1.10. Tea Canister 6" (15.2 cm). Black. A white conch shell overpainted with red and yellow is nestled in a bed of red flowers and blended leaves. Tightly packed yellow rickrack is painted around the shoulder of the canister. Upright objects such as canisters, teapots and coffeepots usually have the same design (or a close variant) painted on each side. *Collection of Robert Chase*

Fig. 1.11. Trunk 6⅝" (16.5 cm). Black. This floral spray has two large yellow flowers accented with white and salmon-pink. Blended leaves and salmon colored daisies complete the design. Note the border on the lid face. *Collection of Flora Arnoldi*

Fig. 1.12. 2-sheet Waiter 18" (45.7 cm). Black. Stevens shop flowers are often composed of yellow and red units as seen here. Double cherries, another common motif, are also present. The border strokes framing the floor are the same as might be found on trunks. Note that the design is positioned in such a manner as to be always right-side-up whenever the waiter is stood on a long edge. *HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY*

Fig. 1.13. Trunk 9" (22.9 cm). White. Daisies with red petals (both thin and opaque) and thin green leaves adorn the front of this trunk. These are the only colors used on this piece. The use of white for a background color is not common for this shop; however, those found have the design overlap from the front of the trunk onto each end. The rickrack on the lid face, as well as the motif at the handle, are also seen in the Buckley shop. *Collection of Lois Tucker*

Fig. 1.14. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. The tomato, or love apple, is a motif used by many tinshops. Thin white strokes highlight this tomato, and alizarin and white overtones form the petals of the red flower. A profusion of white and yellow forget-me-nots fills in the design to cover the entire front.

Private Collection

Fig.1.15. Trunk 6˘" (15.6 cm). Black. The yellow lyre positioned under the hasp of this trunk is a rare motif. The three sets of double cherries clearly show the alizarin overtones which are usually very worn and difficult to discern. The small red flowers with alizarin and white overpainting are commonly found in various colors.

Collection of Ross Trump

Fig. 1.16. Trunk 10" (25.4 cm). Black. Although this large platform-top trunk was probably made in the Buckley shop (see Chapter Three), it has been decorated by a Stevens shop painter. The three large red flowers and myriad of forget-me-nots are like those seen in Fig. 1.14. Two flowers of red and yellow are also found. The three-stroke brushstroke grouping seen on the end is very typical of this shop.

Private Collection

Fig. 1.17. 1-sheet Waiter 12⅝" (31.8 cm). Black. The wreath is an unusual decorative arrangement. It is made up of red and yellow flowers with crosshatched centers. Blended leaves of green and yellow are placed between each flower. Note the two stripes on the floor. *Collection of Lois Tucker*

Fig. 1.18a. Bread Basket 8" (20.3 cm). Black. ***Fig. 1.18b.*** Tea Canister 4½" (11.4 cm). Black. The pierced or reticulated bread basket is a rare form. As the piercing was punched by hand, the process was most likely too time consuming for the tinsmith to consider pierced pieces as standard items. This design shows flowers of blended red and white, formed in the same manner as the leaves already mentioned. Strawberries, cherries, and three-lobed leaves complete the design. The decoration on the tea canister in Fig. 1.18b is similar but with blended blue flowers and red berries.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 1.19. Trunk 8 ½" (21.6 cm). Black. Conch shells were another unusual motif that was occasionally found on Stevens shop pieces. The design is made up of a yellow shell, double cherries, a red blossom, and blended leaves. The simple arrangement of these unit is used twice on this trunk front. *Collection of Ruth Carter*

Fig. 1.20a. Trunk 9" (22.9 cm). Black. Blended flowers are again seen and the buds are similar to those in Fig. 1.18b. The large four-petaled flowers are painted in the wet technique using white and salmon-pink. Yellow green blended leaves are added. This type of flower was also painted in the Buckley shop but the treatment of the leaves is different (see Chapter Three).

Collection of David Ramsey

Fig. 1.20b. Trunk 8∫" (22.2 cm). Black. The four-petalled flowers seen on this trunk face use the wet technique— one done in white/salmon-pink and one in white/blue. To the right is a morning glory painted with such intense blue as to be difficult to discern against the dark background. More clearly seen are the white strokes forming the inside of the trumpet. Note the identical border on these two trunks.

Collection of Mavis Blessing

Fig. 1.21. Trunk 8∫" (22.2 cm). Black. A yellow basket formed by lattice and dots is filled with blossoms. Blended blue flowers are seen at each side.

Coffin Collection at the National Museum of American History, Washington, DC

Fig. 1.22a. Tea Canister 5 ⅝" (14 cm). Black. A floral spray is found on each side of this canister. A daisy with both yellow and white petals sprouts delicate sprigs. The red flower has alizarin and white overpainting. The thinness of pigment used in painting the leaves is evident where the leaves overlap a flower.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 1.22b. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. The similarities of this trunk design to the previous canister are obvious. All elements of the floral spray can be found on each piece. It would seem very likely that each piece was decorated by the same painter.

Private Collection

Fig. 1.23a and 1.23b. Trunk 8⅝" (22 cm). Black. Yellow/red flowers hang delicately in the center of this design. The wispy white overpainting on the red flowers is commonly seen on Stevens shop pieces. Fig. 1.23b shows the end of this trunk with the three-stroke cluster so commonly found on Maine pieces. Note the brushstroke border.

Collection of Marion Poor (deceased)

Fig. 1.24. Tea Canister 9˘" (23.5 cm). Black. This large round canister has petalled blossoms painted red on one half of the flower and combinations of yellow and white on the other half. Crosshatched in the center, they are surrounded by blended three-lobed leaves and yellow leaflets. Large round canisters such this are not commonly found, but do exist with both Stevens shop and Buckley shop designs. *Collection of Gina Martin*

Fig. 1.25. Trunk 6˘" (15.6 cm). Black. The floral spray on the trunk front contains flowers and blended leaves. Note the blue petals on the flower below the hasp. The thinness of the pigment used in this shop is again clearly evident in both the yellow and blue strokes. An imaginative border is seen along the lid front.

Collection of Inez Gornall-Cloward

Fig. 1.26. Oval Trunk 7" (17.8 cm). Black. Oval trunks with a flat top were commonly made by this shop, as well as the Buckley shop. The central motif here is a blossom made up of a group of white circles overpainted with green and surrounded by red petals. Daisies, sprigs and blended leaves fill out the design. Note the border on the facing edge.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 1.27. 1-sheet Waiter 12¹/₈" (30.8 cm). Black. The waiter shows a floral spray design with a yellow flower overpainted with red and blue. The red petalled blossom is a motif that is often seen, as are the daisies and pomegranate. The leaves as well as the white daisies again illustrate the thinness of the pigments used in the design. Notice the striping around the floor. *Collection of Lynette Smith*

Fig. 1.28. Trunk 9˜" (23.5 cm). Black. Three white flowers accented with bright yellow and red strokes are seen on the front of this large trunk. Fine delicate yellow tendrils sprout between the petals. Red blossoms are overpainted with alizarin, white and yellow. The blended leaves are painted with a very thin mixture and are now difficult to see.
Private Collection

Fig. 1.29. Trunk 8∫" (22.2 cm). Yellow. This yellow flat-topped trunk has white flowers with dark red and white overpainting. The large leaves are shaped like those found on Buckley shop pieces, although there is no veining. Borders on light colored pieces are often painted in more than one color. Note the brass handle — a dresser pull that the tinsmith would have purchased from the local cabinet maker.
HSEAD Collection at the Museum of Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 1.30. Trunk 8∫" (22.2 cm). Black. White pigment used for the basecoat of flowers is generally quite thin and not opaque as seen here. Narrow feathery strokes of red and yellow accent the center line of each petal of the large white flower. Note the white crosshatching on the red flowers, as well as the yellow border.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 1.31. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. Similarities are seen to the trunk in Fig. 1.30. The red flowers, double cherries, and leaves are nearly identical. The feathery red and yellow strokes on the white blossoms are executed in the same manner.

Collection of Jane Stevens

Fig. 1.32a and 1.32b. Trunk 8∫" (22.5 cm). Black. This trunk design shows units that are similar to those found in Fig. 1.30 and Fig. 1.31. The top of the lid, Fig. 1.32b, has a floral spray painted in front of the handle. Such an elaborate design as this is not commonly found. *Anonymous*

Fig. 1.33. Trunk 8⅝" (21.6 cm). Black. This trunk shows a floral spray with a lovely soft blue blended flower with yellow dots. The red color on this blue flower, on close examination, appears to be an error made by the original decorator. The red blossoms are now a familiar unit. Leaves are painted as single strokes of blended green and yellow. *Private Collection*

Fig. 1.34a. Trunk 8⅞" (27.6 cm). Black. ***Fig. 1.34b.*** Trunk. Black. Floral sprays made up of a variety of flowers, often very realistic, are the usual designs found for this shop. A few pieces have been located, however, that exhibit only fruit motifs. Fig. 1.34a has strawberries, grapes, and a peach, whereas Fig. 1.34b shows cherries and peaches. *Collections of Elizabeth Martel and Anonymous*

Fig. 1.35. Trunk 7⅞" (19.7 cm). Black. Flowers and leaves of this type have been seen previously. Note the brushstroke border. The painting appears to have been accomplished very quickly, and yet done by a hand well practiced in applying brushstrokes.

Collection of Molly Porter (deceased)

Fig. 1.36. Trunk 2⁷/₈" (7.3cm). Yellow. This small trunk has red and blue flowers and buds. Both green and red colors are used on the border. This piece, along with others, was found in Zachariah Stevens' home.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art,New York, NY

Fig. 1.37a and 1.37b. Book Box 3¹/₈" (7.9 cm). Red and Yellow. These small book boxes are unique to Stevens Plains. Their exact purpose is not known, but one use may have been to hold matches for the fireplaces. They also may have been given as gifts, and there is often an initial painted on the back.

Collection of Molly Porter (deceased) and Private Collection

Fig. 1.38. Trunk 8∫" (22.2 cm). Black. The red flowers, double cherries, and blended leaves are very familiar now. The white flower has blue worked into the center section in the same manner discussed in Chapter Two, Figs. 2.16 and 2.22. *Collection of Lewis Scranton*

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STEVENS SHOP DECORATION

The following illustrations show the characteristics in greater detail than is possible with the photographs. The pigments used for the designs of this tinshop are quite thin. This allows for a blossom petal to be seen through an overlapping leaf, or for the background color of the tinware to be seen through the painted unit. Refer to page xii for the guide to interpretation of the line drawings.

Colors found on Stevens Shop pieces:

Red—vermilion or salmony pink
Green—medium, dark, or olive
Yellow—chrome light
White—thin for basecoats or as an overtone; occasionally opaque for flowers
Alizarin—thin as an overtone
Blue—found only occasionally; medium color

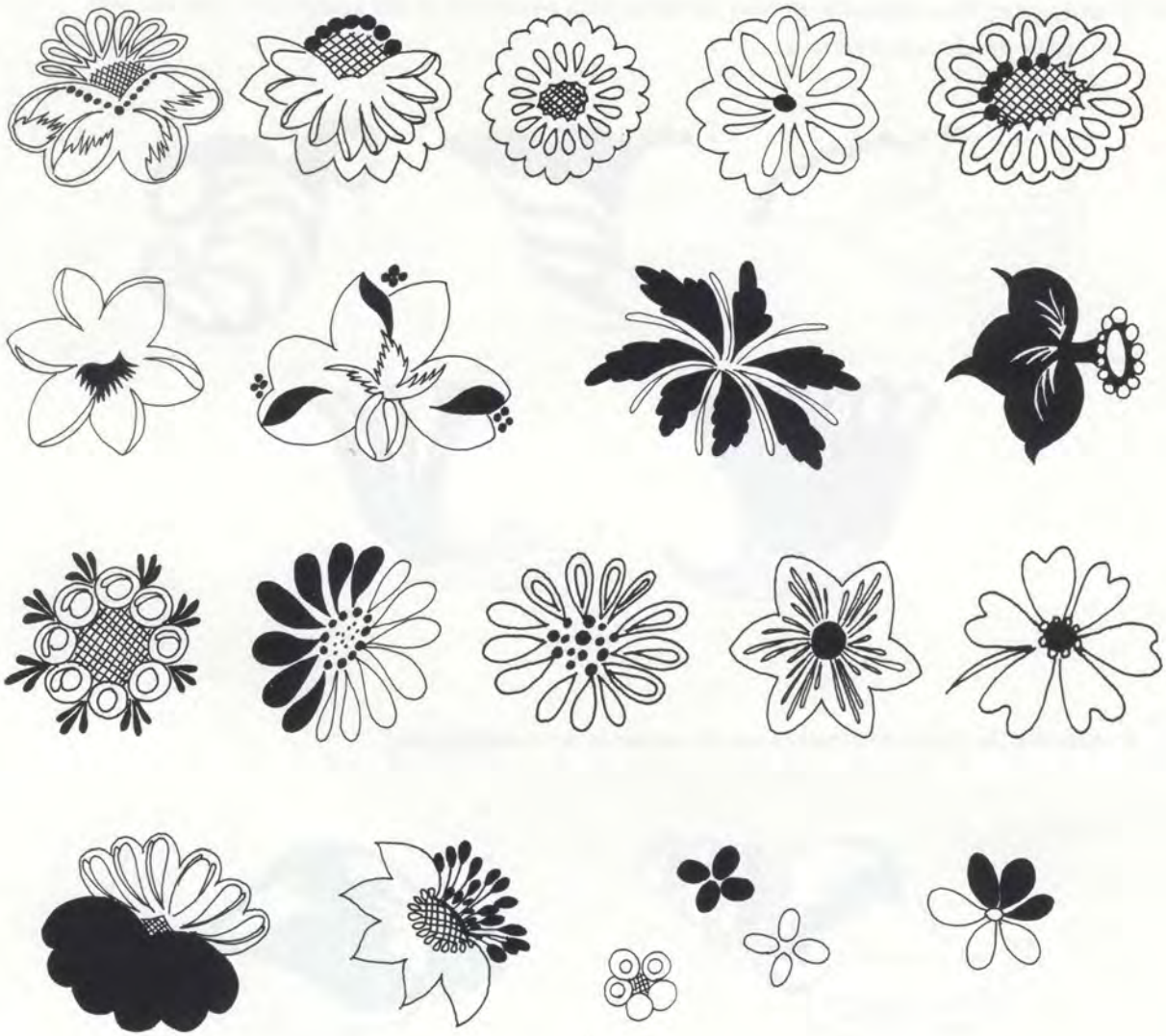
Types of decorated tinware found:

Trunk—rectangular flat-topped in various sizes
Trunk—rectangular dome-topped in various sizes
Trunk—oval flat-topped
Bread Basket—oval (plain or pierced); rectangular (5-piece, occasional unusual forms)
Coffee Pot—flared spout style (Rare)
Teapot—oval
Waiter—1-sheet and 2-sheet
Tea Canister—small oval or large round (Rare)
Book Box
Specialty Items—Trinket boxes and pin cushions were probably made for family members and not produced for the commercial trade.

Illustration selections and line drawings by Gina Martin and Lois Tucker

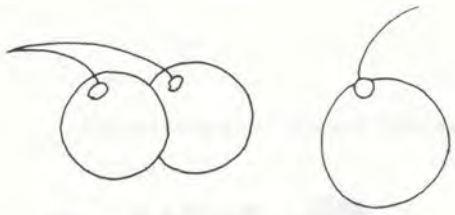
1. **Backgrounds:** Black is usual; occasionally white, yellow, or red (rare).
   Painted Bands: Not used in this shop.

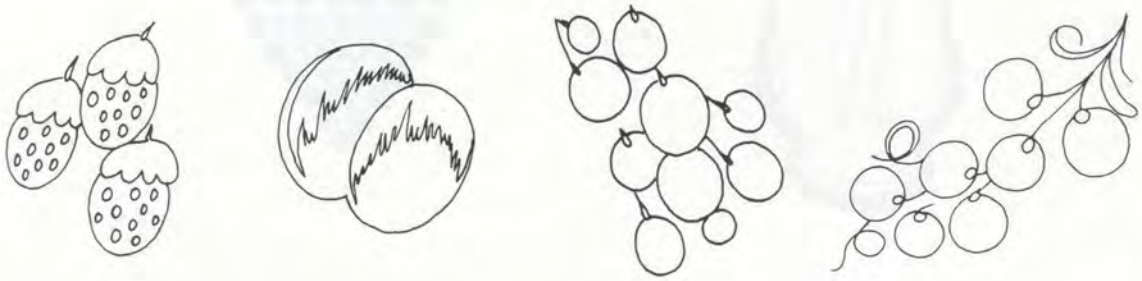
2. **Flowers:**
   a. Many recognizable forms are found, as well as "artistic" blossoms.
   b. Base coat colors are red, salmony pink, yellow, white, and occasionally blue. Overtones on red or salmony pink base coats are alizarin and white; on yellow base coats are red and white; and on white base coats are red and yellow.
   c. Groups of small forget-me-nots are used as space fillers.
   d. Crosshatching used in the centers of flowers.
   e. Flowers painted half-red and half-yellow are common.
   f. Wet-technique flowers using white with red, salmon-pink, or blue.
   g. Overtones may be painted as plain brushstrokes or strokes with feathery ends.



3. Fruits:

a. Cherries — single and double forms
b. Strawberries
c. Peaches
d. Blueberries
e. Grapes

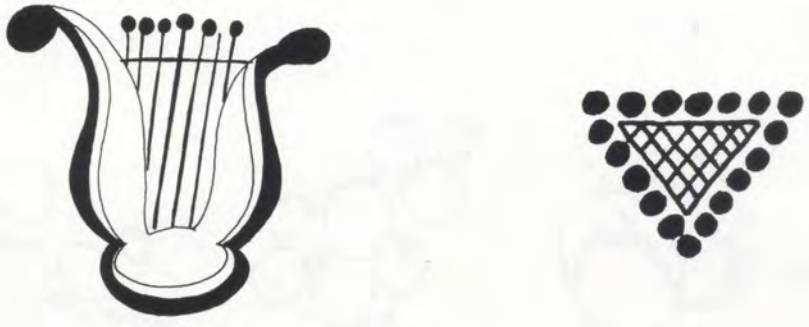




4. Cornucopias: Base coated in yellow or white with overtones of red and yellow. The red will have an alizarin overtone.

5. Conch Shells: Color treatments are the same as for cornucopias.

6. Lyre and Basket: Very rare motifs.



7. Leaves:

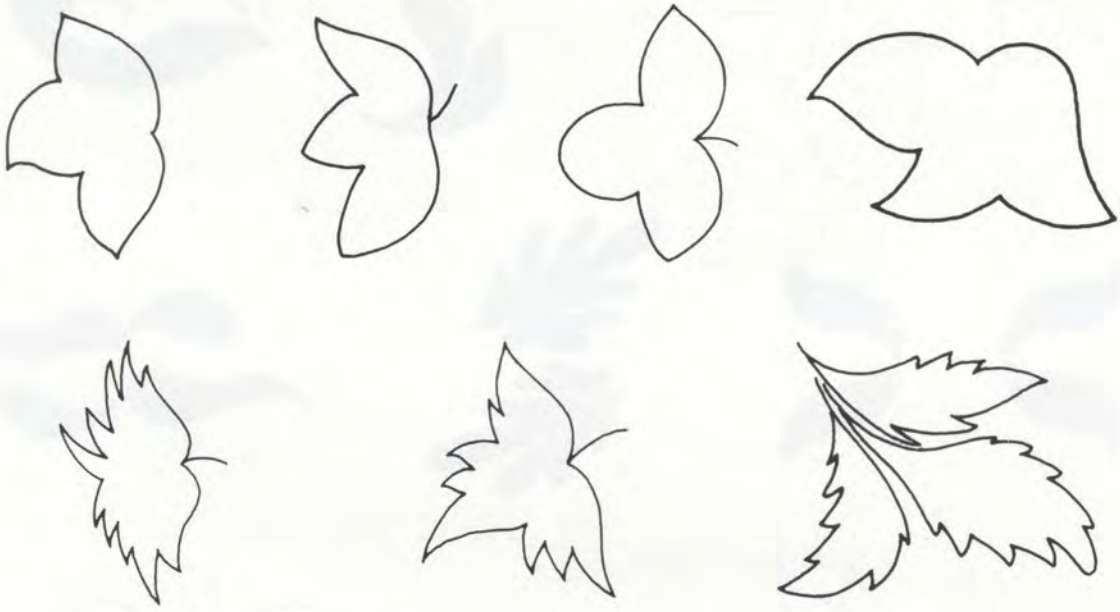
a. Pigment usually very thin.

b. Painted in wet-technique using green and yellow.

c. Three-petalled leaf form.

d. No veining.

e. Green and yellow sprigs used throughout the design.



8. Trunk Lids:

a. Brushstrokes in a simple arrangement around the handle.

Trunk Lids (cont.):

b. Elaborate floral or leaf sprig arrangement at the handle —possibly painted by one of the Francis sisters (See Chapter Two).

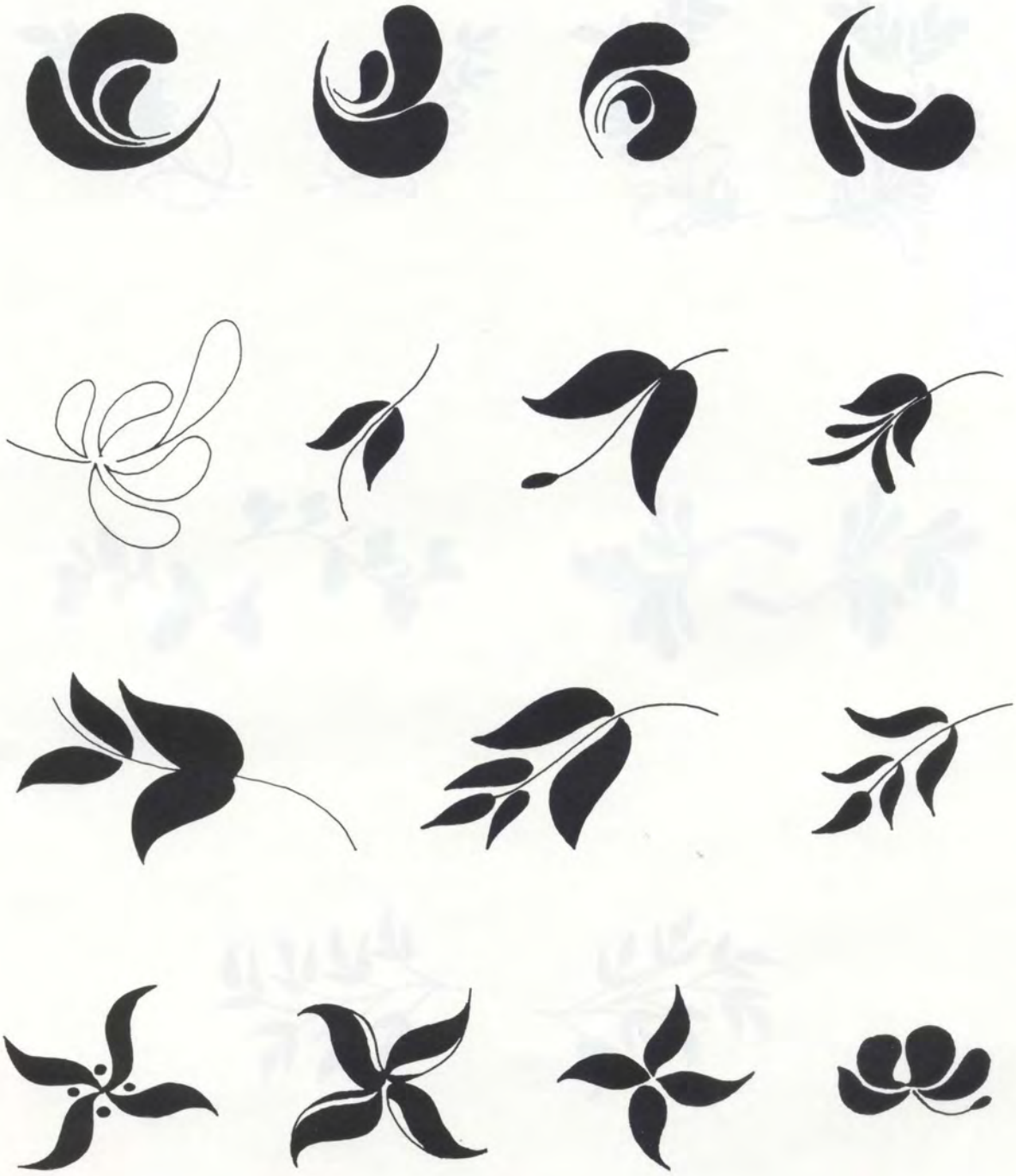
9. Trunk Ends:

a. Three-stroke grouping.

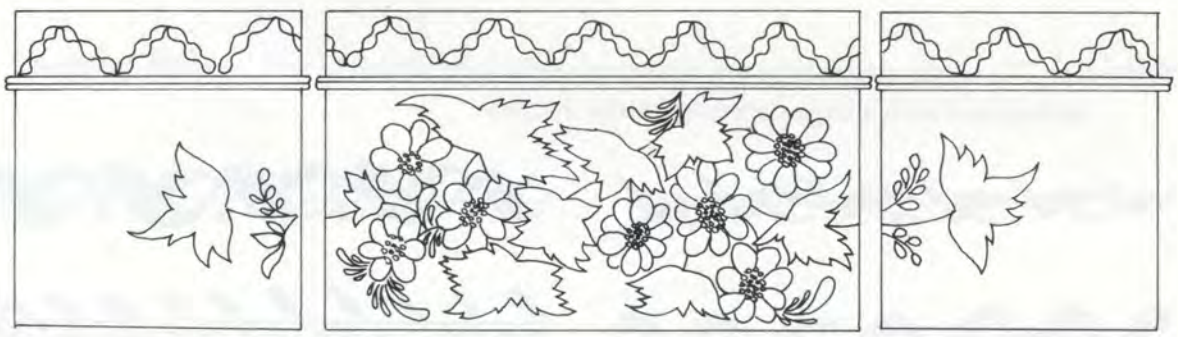
b. Leaf sprig.

c. Pinwheel.

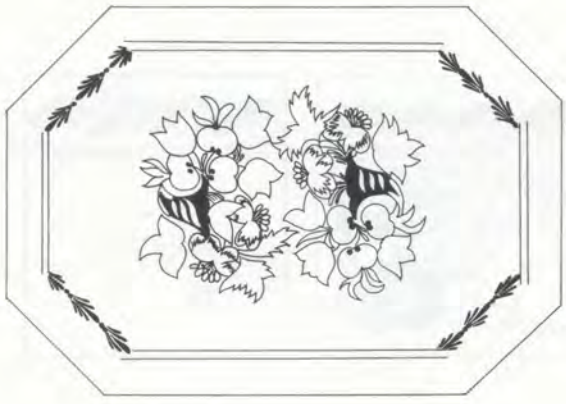
d. Crab flower.



10. **Overlapping Design:** Trunks with a light-colored background have the sprigs on each side of the design overlap the front corners of the trunk and finish off on the ends. The border design on the face of the lid may also overlap

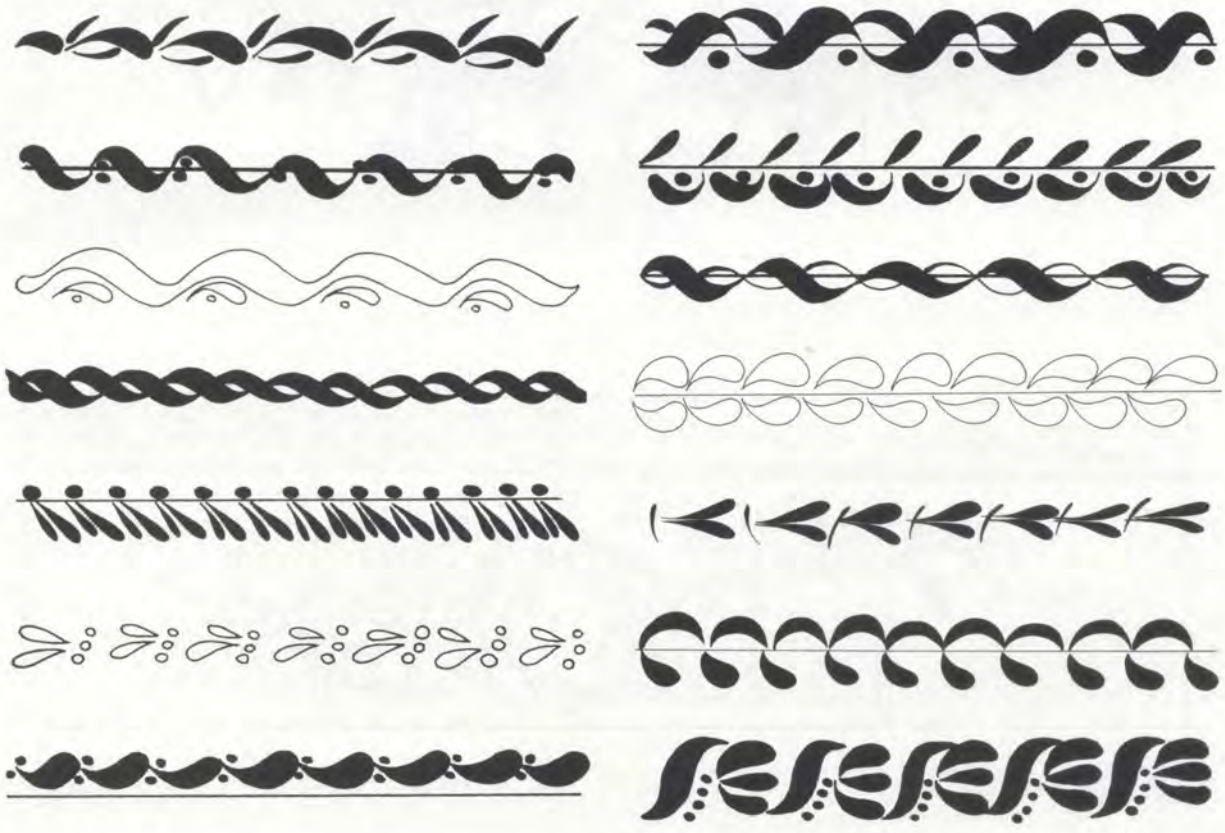


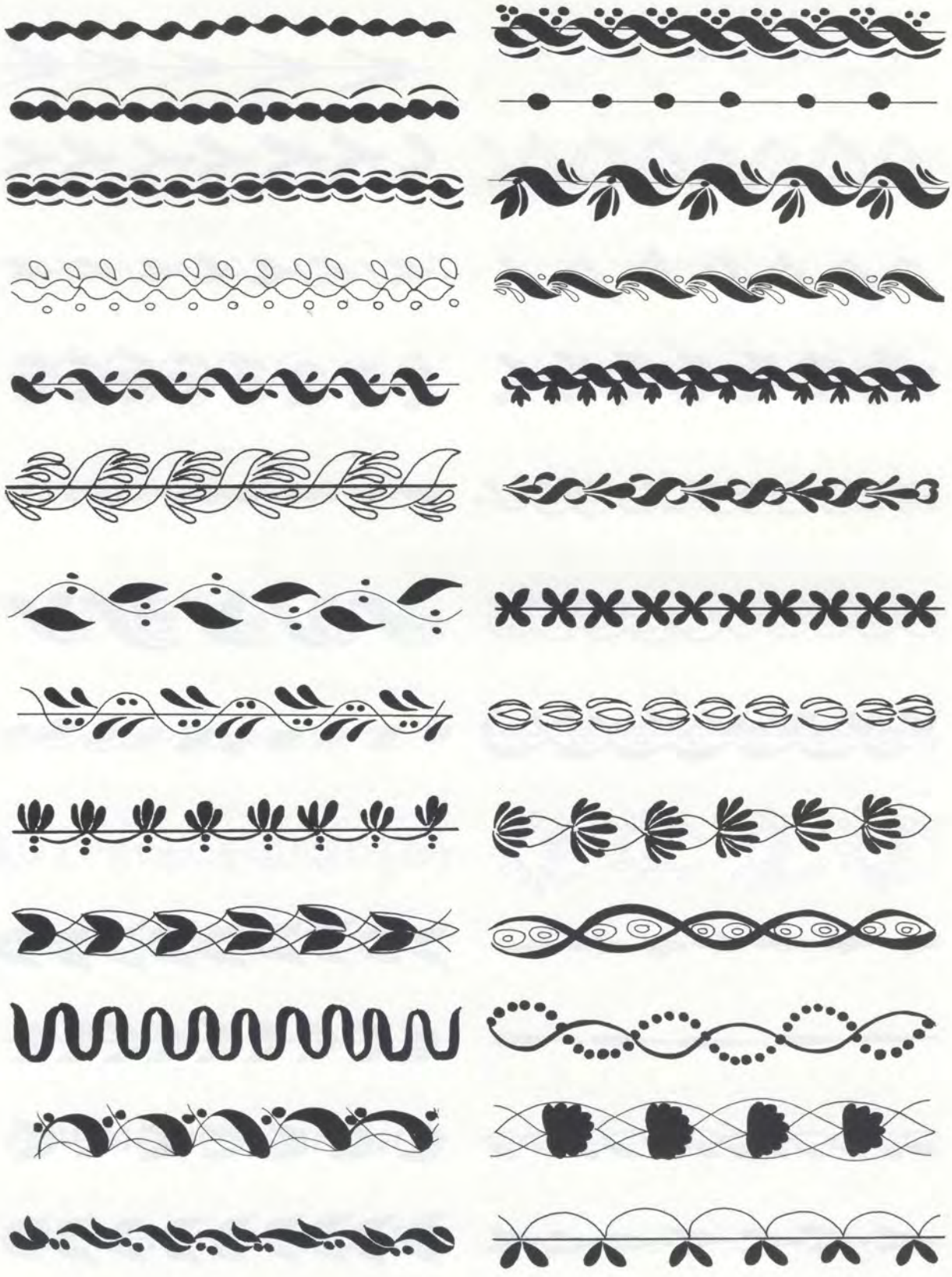
11. **Reversible design**: Found on 2-sheet waiters, the design configuration appears the same when the piece is displayed resting on either of its long edges. The painted design will never be considered upside down.



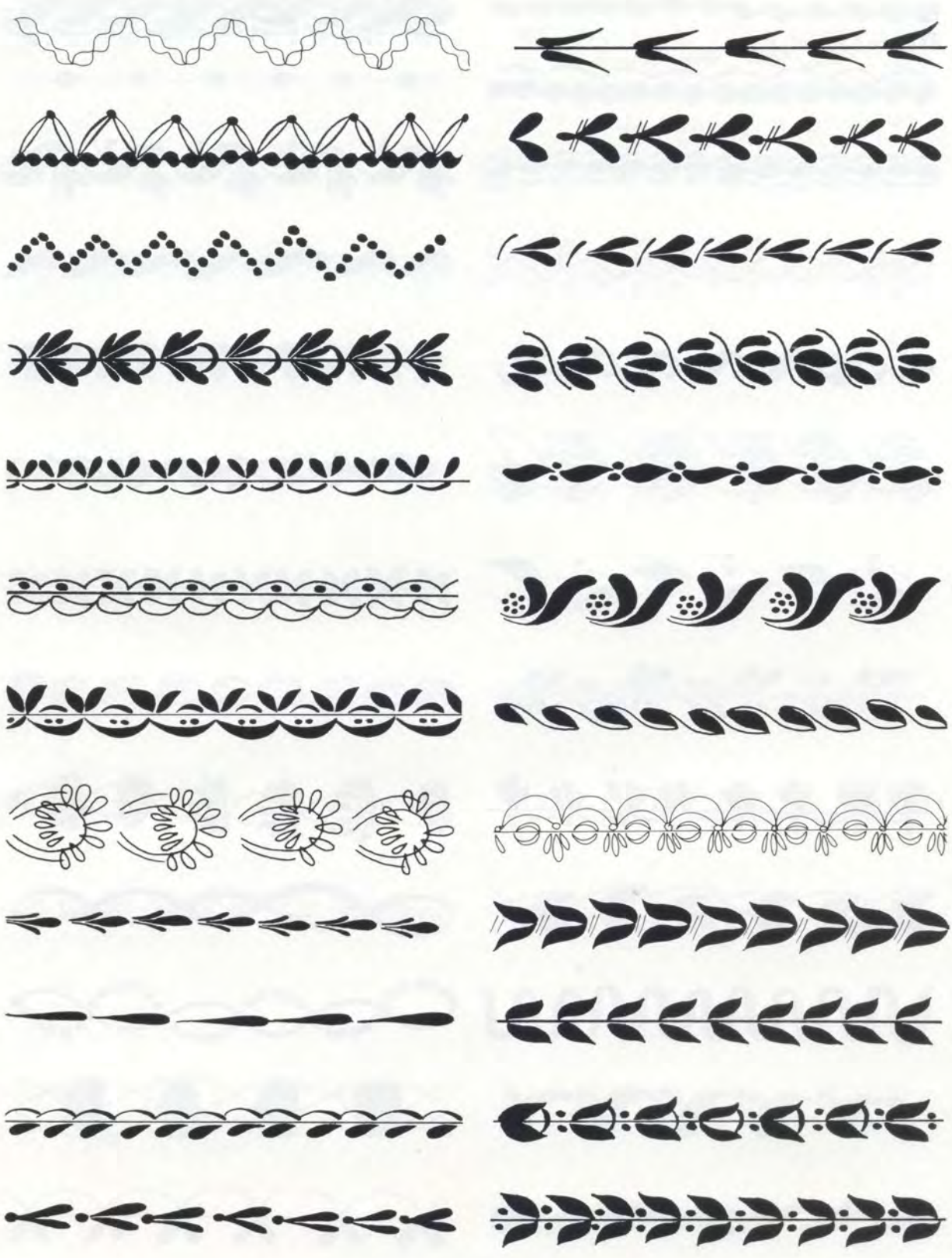
12. **Striping:** Not used extensively. When found, it is often poorly executed.

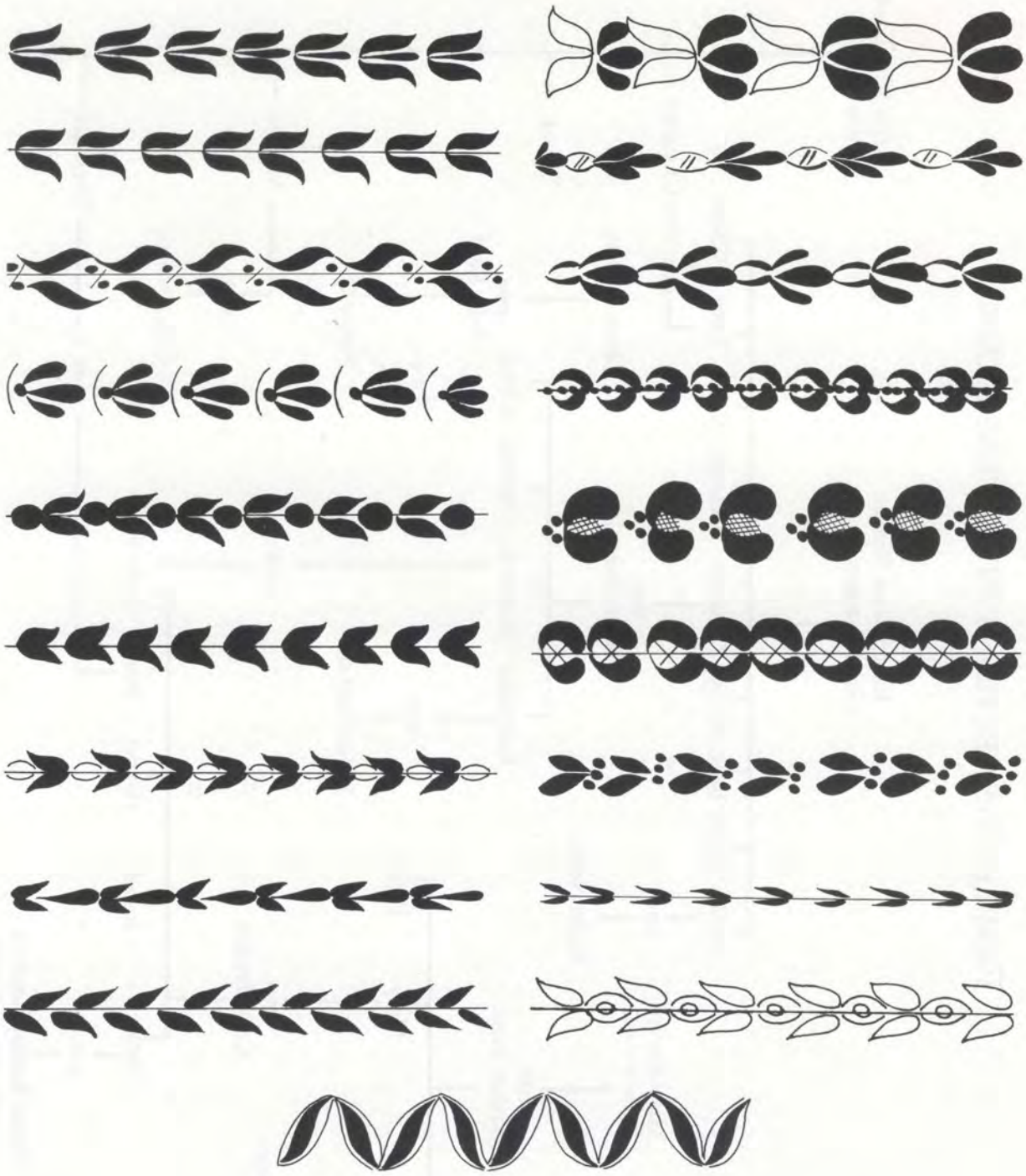
13. **Borders:** The border decorations are numerous—from very simple to very complex. No other tinshop had such a large variety of border designs.



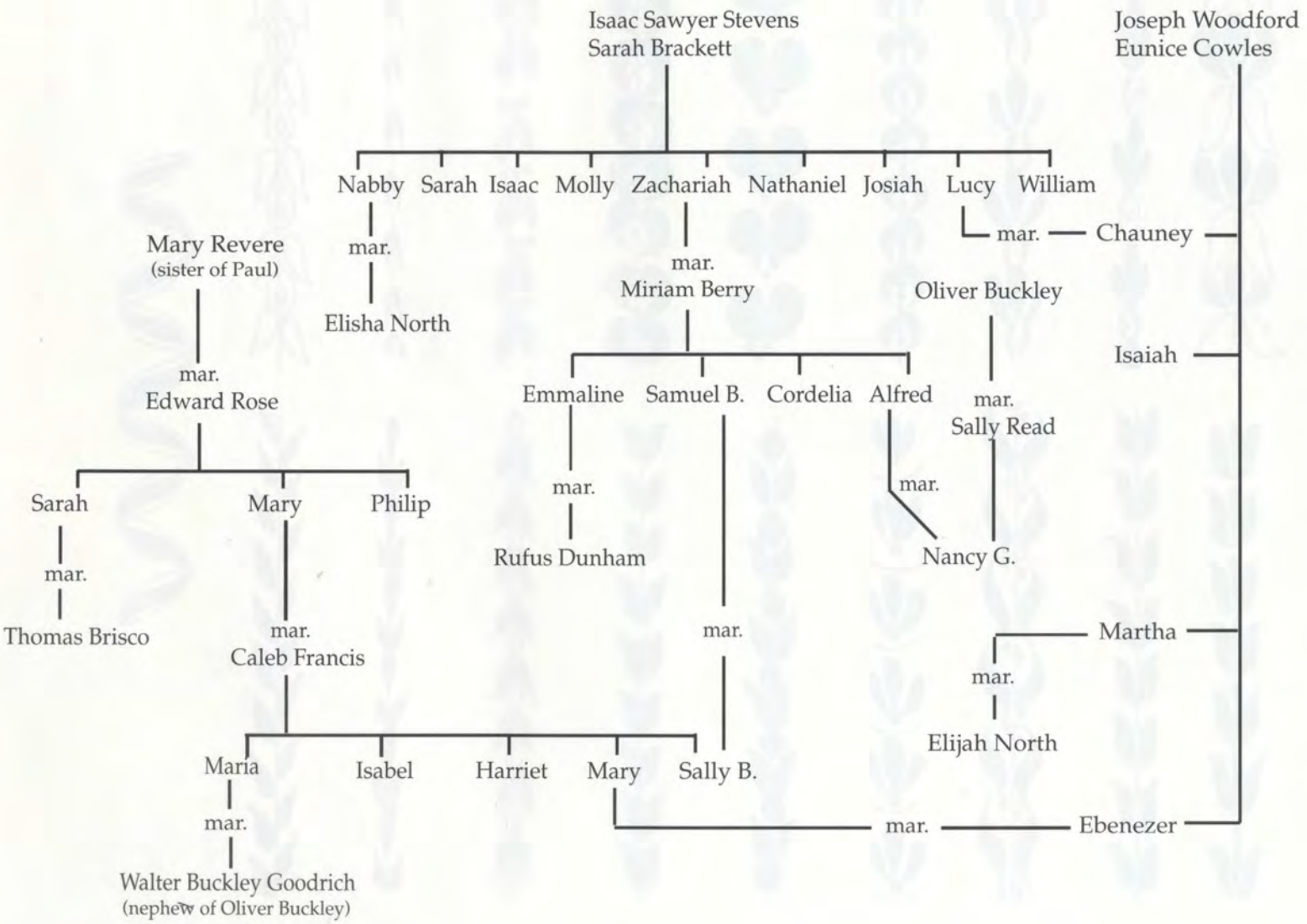


Borders





Family Connections In Stevens Plains



Chapter Two

Sarah Brisco & Her Nieces

THE FRANCIS SISTERS

Sarah (Rose) Brisco [1772–1822] was the daughter of Edward Rose and Mary Revere, and the wife of Thomas Brisco. She had been trained as a decorator in her youth and may have learned at the same time as her younger brother Philip. Quite possibly they each were trained under the guidance of their uncle, Paul Revere (see Chapter One).

Thomas Brisco [circa 1770–circa 1830] came with his wife to Stevens Plains in the early 1800s. He was reputed to be an Englishman who had learned the tinsmithing trade in his homeland. Other references say he was of Welsh origin. As his name cannot be located on the lists of persons entering this country, the mystery is not yet solved. We do know that he was in Boston in the early 1790s when he married Sarah Rose on February 20, 1791.

Some accounts say Thomas Brisco was the first tinware manufacturer at the Plains, although the Cumberland County deed records refer to him only as a yeoman or a trader. His exact date of arrival at the Plains is obscure, but it seems plausible that he arrived shortly after Zachariah B. Stevens began his tin business. Thomas owned land with a house by 1803, at which time he bought additional land adjoining what he already owned from Isaac Sawyer Stevens. Thomas and Sarah's home was a two-story, hip-roofed building just south of Zachariah's house and shop. Thomas' 1815 tax records listed one house, one barn, 1˘ acres of land for mowing or tillage, four acres unimproved land, one cow, and one horse. Thomas was probably in business with Zachariah Stevens, both of whom would have been making tinware during the initial stages of this soon-to-be thriving industry. Thomas was also a peddler who traveled his route in a two-wheeled cart. As cash money was not readily available from his customers, "he would banter them for their old dippers, receiving with them a

few pennies in exchange for new, go on his way rejoicing, presumably repairing some for future use, while others would be tossed to the roadside as rubbish, leaving his patrons delighted in the possession of a new drinking cup."[1]

Bailey Cemetery marker:

In Memory of Mrs. Sally Brisco died Aug 1, 1822 Æ 50

Sarah (Rose) Brisco had a sister Mary [1765–1804] who had married Caleb Francis [1766–1846] and they resided in Sterling, Massachusetts. Mary died shortly after the birth of her fifth daughter, and Thomas and Sarah Brisco took their five nieces, ranging in age from newborn to sixteen years, into their home at Stevens Plains. Aunt Sarah taught the girls to paint as each became old enough for the task, and Sarah herself likely continued to paint tinware for Zachariah and her husband. She died on August 1, 1822, and her obituary in the *Eastern Argus* says "Mrs. Sally Brisco, aged 50. In the death of Mrs. B. a husband is left to mourn the loss of a kind and faithful wife, five adopted children a tender and indulgent parent, relatives, neighbors and acquaintances, a true and worthy friend."

Mary Francis [1789–1871] was the oldest of the sisters, and she may not have painted, or if so, not for very long. She married the comb maker Ebenezer D. Woodford [1782–1849] on January 16, 1806, which was about one year after coming to Maine. The first of her eight children was born in the fall of that year, and it would seem that her time was kept busy with her new role as wife and mother.

Harriett Revere Francis [1795–1887] was a decorator of the Stevens' shop tinware. Hattie, as she was called, never married and lived her adult years with her sister Sally and family.

Isabel Francis [1797–1862] married Jesse Alden [1790–1835] in March 1820 when she was almost twenty-three years old. Although she married at an older age than was usual for that period, we do not know if this may have left her time for painting. There are no records that indicate she decorated as there are for three of her sisters.

Sally B. Francis [1799–1890] was the wife of Zachariah B. Stevens' son, Samuel Butler Stevens. She was a decorator of renown in the community and an article in the newspaper called her "a superior woman — a painter by nature of rare ability, as her work indicates."[2] Sally was Esther Brazer's great-grandmother, and the family history credits her with painting throughout her life. Her paints, brushes, and turpentine were always kept in readiness on a table in her front room. Her favorite motifs were roses. She not only painted them on tinware but also on chairs, tables, and door panels.

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[1] Brazer, Esther Stevens, The Tinsmiths of Stevens Plains, Part I

[2] *Deering News*, February 9, 1895

Five purchases by H. & M. Frances shown in Zachariah B. Stevens ledger for 1823, and marked "off" on the left side of the page as the charges were paid. The purchases list painting colors: rose pink, Prussian blue, orange lead, vermillion, chrome yellow, and white lead. Turpentine and varnish are also listed, as well as the charge to mending shoes.

Pine Grove Cemetery marker:

Maria Frances, wife of Walter B. Goodrich, died May 29, 1891
Æ 86 yr. 9 mo.

Maria Francis [1804–1891] painted tinware for the Stevens family, along with her sister Hattie. The ledger that Zachariah B. Stevens kept between 1818 and 1824 shows many entries for H & M Francis with their first entry dated February 1823 when they purchased paints and turpentine. This date is about six months after their Aunt Sarah died, and the girls must have started to purchase their own supplies. Among the items listed for them are varnish, oil, turpentine, and paints, as well as personal items. Maria became the wife of Walter B. Goodrich on June 11, 1829.

It is not known how long each of the sisters continued to decorate tinware, except for Sally (Francis) Stevens, who lived for over ninety years and painted most of her life. Hattie lived with Sally and certainly helped Sally maintain her household and raise her seven children. But Hattie may still have found time to paint tinware for the family business. Maria also could have painted for quite some time as she and Walter had a small family of just two children.

BRISCO–FRANCIS: Introduction to the Photographs

The trinket box shown in Fig. 2.1 was thought by Esther Braser to have been made by Thomas Brisco. The ball feet are a feature that is found on similar pieces from Wales. If Thomas was trained there, he would have known how to fashion such an item. It may also have come from Revere's shop, either made there or imported. The possibility must also be considered, however, that Zachariah B. Stevens could have fashioned it. Regardless of the actual manufacturer of this box, it descended through the Stevens family. The decoration on this box is very similar to Fig. 1.2 in Chapter One, and it seems that this may also be the work of Sarah (Rose) Brisco.

Fig. 2.2 is a family piece that was painted by Sally (Francis) Stevens, wife of Samuel B. Stevens and one of the five nieces of Sarah (Rose) Brisco. According to family history, Sally was a prolific painter of roses. The pieces shown that represent Sally's work demonstrate skillful technique and excellent brush control. Those pieces that have similar units but are less artistically executed are believed to be the work of Sally's sisters.

Fig. 2.1. Trinket Box 8¾" (22.2 cm). White. This unusual box has descended through the Stevens' family. Its decoration of wild roses and buds are similar in manner to Figs. 1.1b, 1.2a, 1.2b, and 1.2c in Chapter One. A lattice-work bowl and is seen, and there is also a lyre amid the blossoms at the back edge of the lid. This painting could well be the work of Sarah (Rose) Brisco.

Courtesy Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA

Fig. 2.2. Bread Basket 13½" (34.3 cm). Black. This piece was decorated by Sally (Francis) Stevens according to her granddaughter, Elizabeth Stevens. The rose was a favorite motif of Sally and is here shown with thin white strokes forming inner petals. The leaves have serrated edges and are veined in yellow as well as blue. The stems show yellow thorns, and crosshatching is used to fill the open spaces between the leaves and buds. A very fine yellow rickrack border is painted around the outer edge.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 2.3a and 2.3b. Trunks 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. Fig. 2.3a shows a design with large roses, buds, a group of salmon-pink berries, and serrated leaves with blue veining. The delicate roses, as well as a Stevens' family provenance, suggest this piece is the work of Sally (Francis) Stevens. Fig. 2.3b is another piece with a Stevens' family history and again shows a dainty rose with its buds. A large salmon-pink flower beside a group of forget-me-nots is also present. The serrated leaves are blended as those found on Stevens shop pieces, but veining is absent here. Note the yellow sprig on the trunk end. Both trunks appear to be the work of the same hand.

HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 2.4. Bread Basket 13½" (34.3 cm). Black. Stylized tulips are seen on this piece which also comes through the Sally (Francis) Stevens family. The daisy border has been found on other pieces decorated by Sally.
HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 2.5. Trunk 8½" (21.6 cm). Black. Blossoms and bud sprigs painted in yellow and thin salmon-pink adorn this trunk along with blended leaves. The large yellow flower has crosshatching in the center. Leaf treatment is similar to that seen in Fig. 2.3b. A delicate yellow border runs along the lid face and is a variant of that seen in Fig. 2.3a. Decoration of the top and ends is often more inventive on pieces done by the sisters than those shown in Chapter One. *Private Collection*

Fig 2.6. Bread Basket 13½" (34.3 cm). Black. A rose, tulip, and small buds adorn the floor of this bread basket. A large rose with leaves and a bud is painted on each end. The veined leaves on the floor are opaque and appear to have no blending with yellow. Note the turn-over of the large leaf tips. Yellow rickrack and rope strokes frame the sides and ends. Though similar in technique to known pieces of Sally (Francis) Stevens, the same craftsmanship is not exhibited here. Possibly this is the work of one of her sisters. *Private Collection*

Fig. 2.7. Trunk 6¼" (15.9 cm). Black. A close-up view of the trunk front shows a rose and tulip with their respective buds, as well as three thin white daisies. The large green leaves show yellow veins and a yellow stroke simulates a turned-over leaf tip.

Collection of Peg Watts (deceased)

Fig. 2.8. Trunk 8⅝" (21.9 cm). Black. This trunk front is covered with a profusion of roses and buds. The opaque olive green leaves have yellow veining

Collection of Ruth Carter

Fig. 2.9. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. The petalled salmon-pink flower and small forget-me-nots are similar to Fig. 2.3b. The red and white petalled flowers are expertly painted and have calyces at their bases, formed by yellow ovals with crosshatching. Once again the quality of the work on this piece suggests the hand of Sally (Francis) Stevens.

Collection of Madeline Hampton (deceased)

Fig. 2.10. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. The rosebuds and opaque yellow-veined leaves have been previously seen. The large yellow flowers are overpainted with red and white feathery strokes. Open centers are filled with crosshatching and a row of dots. Note the intricate border. The design on the top of the lid is similar to that seen in the lid of Fig. 2.3a. *Anonymous*

Fig. 2.11a. Oval Trunk 7⅛" (18.1 cm). White. The flat-topped oval trunk, a form unique to Stevens Plains, has a floral spray across the front. Some red petals are worked in the wet-technique using red and white. Leaves are more opaque here. Black is used for details and the border strokes.

Collection of Molly Porter (deceased)

Fig. 2.11b. Bread Basket 13⅝" (34.6 cm). White. There is a dainty small rose spray on the floor of the bread basket. The buds on the ends of the basket are like those seen on the oval trunk, and the borders are identical, although here painted in blue.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, DE

Fig. 2.12. 1-sheet Waiter 12½" (31.8 cm). Black. Yellow tulips and a large red rose dominate this floral spray. The flowers are overpainted with red, white, and alizarin. The tulips have blended pinkish overstrokes, the result of applying the white overtones onto the red overtones before the red was completely dry. Olive green leaves show yellow veining. The orientation of the design on this waiter is very unusual.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 2.13. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. Tulips and buds, forget-me-nots, and thin soft-blue flowers are found here. The red tulips are overpainted with yellow and white. The larger blue flower is overpainted with feathery strokes in a darker blue. Opaque leaves have yellow veins.

Collection of Ruth Coggins (deceased)

Fig. 2.14. Bread Basket 12" (30.5 cm). Black. The yellow flowers have dots positioned in the openings between the petals. Note the variations in the leaf veins. The border around the floor and upper edge is made up of small rope strokes. *Anonymous*

Fig. 2.15a and 2.15b. Bread Basket 11⅞" (30.2cm). Black. The two white tulips on the floor of this bread basket are overpainted with soft yellow and salmon pink. The small red flowers and veined leaves have been previously seen.

Anonymus

Fig. 2.16a and 2.16b. Trunk 8⅝" (21.9 cm). Black. This design exhibits the same features as Fig. 2.10. Feathery overpainting appears in white on the red flowers, and in both red and white on the yellow flowers. Two strawberries can be seen at the right. Under the hasp is a cluster of blue grapes which have been painted on a white base coat. The blue color was worked in before the white had completely dried. Fig. 2.16b shows the tightly packed brushstroke border framing the top of the lid. *Collection of Lois Tucker*

Fig. 2.17. 1-sheet Waiter 12⅝" (32.1 cm). Black. This close-up view of the floor design of the waiter shows a tulip that is similar to Fig. 2.15. The largest leaves are also similar; although veining, if it was originally there, is no longer evident. The double cherry and conch shell have been seen in Chapter One. As we know that the Francis sisters did their painting for the Stevens shop, can we presume that one of them is responsible for the shell and double cherry designs? *Private Collection*

Fig. 2.18. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. A bright yellow cornucopia overflows with flowers and strawberries. Feathery overpainting is again seen on the flowers, and the leaves have blended colors. *Private Collection*

Fig. 2.19a and *2.19b.* Trunk 8¾" (22.5 cm). Black. Yellow flowers have the red feathery overpainting as seen in previous examples. The red crab flowers on the right have also been seen. Most unusual is the green color rather than yellow used on the lid face and the top of the lid. *Collection of Lewis Scranton*

Fig. 2.20. Bread Basket 11¾" (29.8 cm). Black. The floor exhibits a rose with buds. The thin salmon flower is a variation of those seen in Figs. 2.3b and 2.9. The white flowers and buds are executed with very thin pigment, while the leaves are opaque. *Private Collection*

Fig. 2.21a and **2.21b.** 2-sheet Waiter 17⅞" (45.4 cm). Black. The leaves, flowers, and berries have previously been seen. The body of the conch shell in the center of the design is executed with gold bronzing powders, while the lip is painted red. The gold powders are now difficult to see, and the close-up view in Fig. 220b has been enhanced for better clarity. Walter B. Goodrich, a Connecticut tinner who came to the Plains, lists in his journal the instructions for applying bronzing powders. His wife was Maria Francis and possibly this piece is her work. *Collection of Emily Underhill (deceased)*

Fig. 2.22a and 2.22b. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. The two blue-grey flowers are painted on a white base in the same fashion as described for the grapes in Fig. 2.16a. Tulips are again seen, and seem to have been a favored motif for the Francis sisters. The brushstroke border on the lid face is the same as that in Fig. 2.16b. The remaining three flowers show similarities to those seen in Chapter One, and this fact may again help to attribute more specific motifs to the sisters. Note the interesting yellow crab flower on the trunk end. *Collection of Mary Beals*

Fig. 2.23. Trunk (platform-top) approximately 4" (10.1 cm). Trunk (dome-topped) approximately 9" (22.9 cm). White. Each of these trunks exhibits the style of buds, leaves, and sprigs as seen in Figs. 1.2 and 2.1. The large roses are similar to those in Fig. 2.2 and 2.3a. The trunks are decorated with a full design that incorporates much delicate brush work. The designs have an urban flavor and may be the work of Sarah Rose Brisco. Note the full design of sprigs and buds on the trunk lid. *Anonymous*

Fig. 2.24. Coffee Pot 9" (22.9 cm). Black. This flared spout coffee pot is decorated with border designs using red and yellow colors only. Other tinware pieces decorated in this manner have descended through the Stevens family.

Anonymus

CHARACTERISTICS OF BRISCO–FRANCIS DECORATION

The following illustrations show the characteristics in greater detail than is possible with the photographs. The pigments for the designs painted by the sisters can be found to be very thin and also opaque. The pieces that exhibit the work of a more expert hand are believed to be those done by Sally (Francis) Stevens as determined by family pieces that are known to have been painted by her. Refer to page xii for the guide to interpretation of the line drawings.

Colors found on Brisco-Francis pieces:

Red—vermilion and salmon-pink
Green—medium, olive, or blue-green
Yellow—chrome light
White—thin as overtone or basecoat
Alizarin—thin as overtone
Blue—found occasionally

Types of decorated tinware found:

Trunks—rectangular flat-topped, dome-topped (rare)
Trunks—oval flat-topped
Bread Basket—rectangular (5-piece) and oval
Coffee Pot—flared spout (Rare)
Waiters—1-sheet and 2-sheet
Tea Canister—oval
Specialty Items—trinket boxes and unusally shaped bread baskets

Illustration selections and line drawings by Gina Martin and Lois Tucker

1. Backgrounds: Black; occasionally white (rare).

2. Motifs:

a. Blossoms are often very realistic.

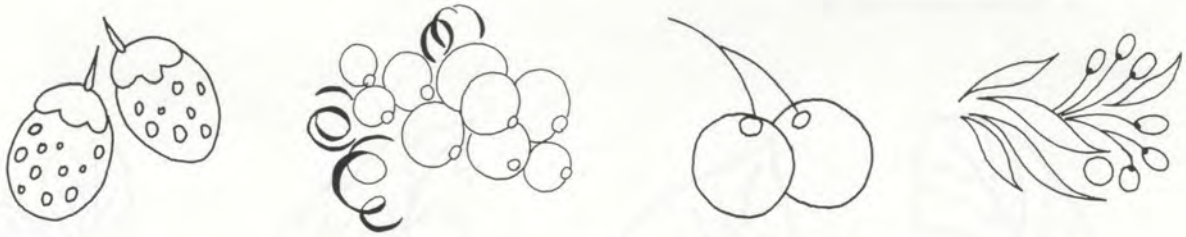
b. Roses and buds which may have thorny tendrils and stems.

c. Tulips.

2. Motifs (cont.):

d. Groupings of small daisies and forget-me-nots.
e. Interior center holes in flowers contain crosshatching and sometimes dots.
f. Calyxes with crosshatching.

g. Fruits - strawberries, grapes, double cherries and berries.



h. Conch shells and cornucopias.

3. Overtones:

a. Alizarin and white in the usual country painting manner.

b. Feathery shapes in many colors - red, white, yellow, or salmon.

4. Leaves:

a. Painted in wet-technique using green and yellow, without veins as seen in Chapter One.

b. Opaque greens with yellow and/or blue veins.

c. Opaque leaves are pointed, ovoid, or serrated.

d. Turned-over leaf tips.

5. Trunk Lids:

a. Brushstroke groups around handle are often more fanciful than those seen in the Stevens Shop.

b. Elaborate floral sprigs around handle.

c. Brushstroke groupings in the corners of striping occasionally found.

6. Trunk Ends (and Bread Basket Ends)

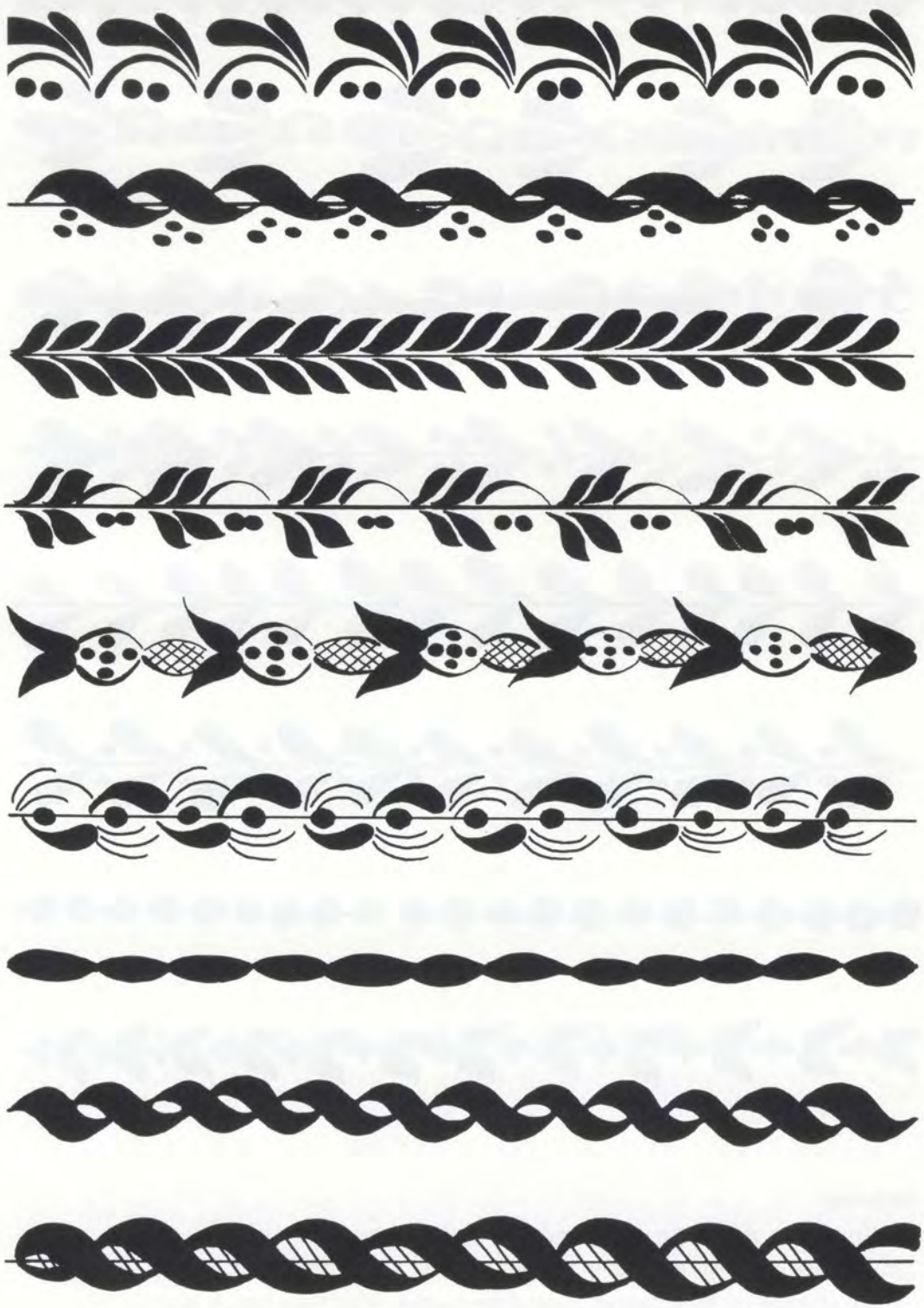
a. Trunk end usually undecorated other than border on edge of lid.

b. Three-stroke grouping so common in Stevens Shop is not used.

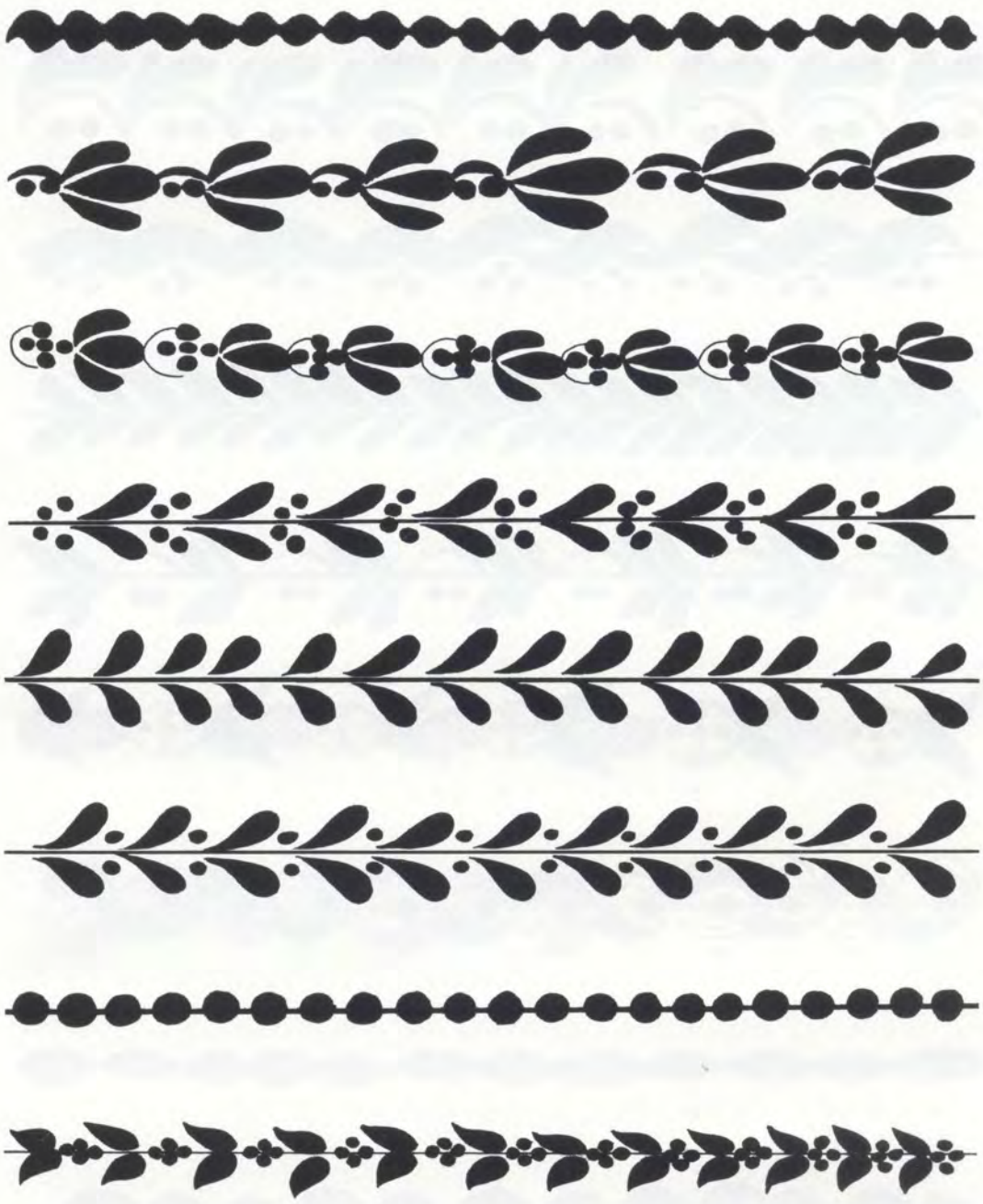
c. Bread basket ends may have an interesting floral sprig or brushstroke grouping.

7. Borders: Brushstroke borders are generally very imaginative and often more complex than those found at other tinshops. Many of the borders illustrated for the Stevens Shop were likely done by one or more of the Francis sisters.

Borders:



Borders:



8. Striping:

a. Trunk lids often have single or double striping around the edge.

b. Lid face often has a stripe in the center along which the border strokes are painted.

c. No striping on the fronts or ends of the trunks, other than item b. above.

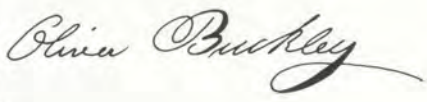
d. Waiters have single or double stripes on the floor.

Chapter Three

Oliver Buckley Tinshop

[circa 1807 – 1855]
Stevens Plains, Maine

Oliver Buckley, born August 22, 1782 in Rocky Hill (Wethersfield), Connecticut, was one of the children of Solomon Buckley [1747–1790] and Martha Williams [1754–1839]. In 1796 Oliver's widowed mother married secondly to Elizur Goodrich [1756–1798]. It may be about this time that Oliver began his tin apprenticeship, although records of this have not been found, nor is it known at which Berlin tinshop he trained. By the time Oliver came to Stevens Plains, his mother was again widowed. She traveled to Maine with him and remained there the rest of her life.



The first record of Oliver Buckley at Stevens Plains is November 22, 1804 when he and Elijah North witnessed a land purchase by Samuel Clary who was buying Thomas Brisco's first homestead. We can probably safely assume that at this early date both Oliver and Elijah were working for Zachariah B. Stevens in his newly established tin business. Oliver and Elijah, aged 22 and 23 respectively, were fresh from their apprenticeships and must have spent time honing their skills and acquring some capital with which they could eventually start their own businesses.

Oliver married Sally Read [1789–1828] on May 2, 1805. He was married in a double ceremony with his colleague Elijah North. Oliver and Sally raised six children: Nancy Goodrich [1806–1901]; Mary Ann [1808–1890]; Charles Sumner [born 1811]; Orin Beckley [1814–1852]; Edward William [1816–1824]; and Edward Melvin [1825–1913]. Charles S. and Edward M. were both tin plate workers like their father. Charles had bought Walter B. Goodrich's interest in the Augusta tin and stove business in 1835. After the death of his wife in 1852, he moved to Chicago. Daughter Nancy Goodrich Buckley married Alfred Stevens, son of Zachariah. In 1826 Mary Ann Buckley married William

Partridge [1800–1829]. She married secondly to Freeman Porter [1808–1887]. Both these men worked in the tin business. Referring to the Buckley sisters, the local newspaper said: "The widow of Alfred survives him in the 92 year of her age, is up first in the morning, and last to retire, seeks and peruses with avidity the morning paper, writes with a steady hand and takes as lively an interest in current events as any of the young, calling frequently upon her sister, Mrs. Porter, who resides a few rods distance and who, at 90, is equally as smart and bright as Mrs. Stevens."[1] It is intriguing that Oliver named a son Orin Beckley, as did Elijah North. Can that be a clue as to where these men had received their apprenticeships—at the Pattison shop which was managed by Oren Beckley (see *American Painted Tinware*, Volume One)?

In 1807 Oliver purchased land from Isaac Sawyer Stevens which is referred to in later deeds as "my homestead." This 1.5 acre lot was situated near the present entrance to Evergreen Cemetery. It was here that he built a one-story house for his new family. It is also near this time that he built his own shop and began to manufacture and peddle tinware. Oliver's brother Barzilla [born 1787] was also a tinplate worker at the Plains and may have worked with Oliver. Barzilla married Mary Hamon of Westbrook in 1824, and he seems to have stayed at the Plains until about 1830 when he moved to nearby Danville.

Oliver did well with his tinware business; and it seemed to expand each year, as evidenced by the industrial and town reports. The 1815 assessment for the town of Westbrook showed that Oliver had a house valued @ $500, barn @ $40, shop @ $100, 1½ acres of land @ $22, one cow @ $14, one horse @ $40, one chaise @ $60, and stock in trade @ $300—total $1076. When he filled in the questions on the 1820 industrial census, Oliver stated that he used $2100 worth of tinplate per year; employed twelve men, one woman, and three boys; paid $100 per year in wages; and manufactured tinware valued at $4200 per year. The 1832 report to the House of Representatives listed Oliver's business as valued at $5000. He, along with Zachariah Bracket, were the highest valued manufacturers on the list for Stevens Plains. In 1834 (after moving across the road to his second residence), Oliver was assessed for: new house and building @ $1100; old one-story house @ $100; 51 tons navigation and 16 acres Plains land @ $1,187; 40 plus acres of land @ $630; 10 acres mowing land @ $360; two chairs @ $160; two cows @ $30; one horse @ $75; two swine @ $10; and shares of bank stock @ $784—total $4418. Also assessed the same year was Oliver, together with his son Charles, who may have been doing the major part of the tinware business at this time : house, chaise and one acre land @ $1200;


Oliver Buckley,

INFORMS his friends and the public, that he has taken a shop opposite Mr. Robert Boyd's, on Middle street, where he intends carrying on the

TIN PLATE WORKING
AND
PLUMBING BUSINESS,

in its various branches—where a constant supply of TIN WARE will be kept on hand for sale. Any orders in his line will be promptly executed.

WANTED,

TWO active young Lads, from 14 to 16 years of age, as APPRENTICES to the above business.

Eastern Argus, March 30, 1815

[1] *Deering News*, September 17, 1898

old barn shop and truck @ $400; stock in trade @ $1000; and one cow @ $15—total $2615.

How long Oliver remained active in the tinware business is not known with certainty. The 1834 assessment indicates that his son was involved with the business, but Oliver is still listed as a tinplate worker on the 1850 population census. The industrial census for that same year reported that Oliver worked sixty boxes of tinplate, had two employees, and owned stock valued at $1300. On the 1860 industrial census he was no longer listed; however, on the population census for that year he is still called a "tinner." There is an entry made by Walter B. Goodrich in his 1851–1856 journal that says: "Buckley is out of stock so also is Goodrich and consequently Goodrich, Jr. is thrown upon his oars." Oliver Buckley died at age 90 in 1872 after having spent nearly seventy very successful and lucrative years at the Plains.

Pine Grove Cemetery marker: *Oliver Buckley, 1782–1872*

OLIVER BUCKLEY SHOP: Introduction to the Photographs

As is so often the case, no signed pieces of Buckley Shop tinware have come to light. The first piece shown (Fig. 3.1) is a trunk that has the scratched initials M. A. B. When Mrs. Brazer acquired this trunk in the 1930s, she believed it had been owned by Mary Ann Buckley. She thus attributed the tinware piece to be the work of Mary Ann's father, Oliver Buckley. The decoration has the geometrically balanced design and the alternating green and yellow leaflet arrangement so typical of Connecticut pieces. The platform-topped shape of this trunk lid also has been attributed to the Buckley shop. The salmon color of the flowers has become a standard characteristic for this shop as well, although the vermilion color is found also.

Fig. 3.1. Trunk 8½" (21.6 cm). Black. The shape of the lid on this trunk is referred to as a platform-top. It is a commonly found form from the Buckley shop. The decoration illustrates the geometrically balanced design that is so much a presence in Berlin, Connecticut motifs, the area where Oliver Buckley was trained. The central flower and its buds are painted in a salmon color with alizarin and white overtones. The stems have yellow leaflets on one side and green on the other side (another Connecticut trait). Yellow curliques are often found on Buckley pieces, and groups of tiny brushstrokes may be found within a loop.
HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 3.2a and 3.2b. Trunk 6½" (16.5 cm). Oval Trunk 9⅝" (24.4 cm). Black. The salmon color used on these and the previous trunk is a preferred color for this shop. Shades of olive green are also commonly found. The same design is seen in Fig. 3.2b but is now extended to fill a larger area. Heart shaped leaves with yellow veining are added. Note the 3-stroke grouping on the trunk end in Fig. 3.2a. This is a motif extensively used by this shop as well as the Stevens shop. *Collection of Natasha Paul and Margaret Willey (deceased)*

Fig. 3.3. Oval Teapot 5¼" (13.3 cm). Black. A large round salmon "rose" with alizarin and white overpainting is found on each side of this teapot. The arrangement of green leaflets on one side of the flower and yellow on the other side is again noted. The four large dots at the head of the blossom are often encountered on Buckley tinware, as is the yellow rickrack seen around the shoulder. This design has also been found on a tea canister.
HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 3.4. Oval Trunk 7" (17.8 cm). Black. Each of the large salmon blossoms has a row of buds along the right side. A wreath of graceful, alternating green and yellow strokes encloses the blossom.

Collection of Lewis Scranton

Fig. 3.5. 1-sheet Waiter. 12½" (31.8 cm). Black. Obvious similarities in the painting technique on this waiter can be seen in Fig. 1. The base of the flowers is a round green calyx with two rows of yellow dots. Rickrack and double striping are often used as the border around the floor of a waiter.

Collection of Lois Baker

Fig. 3.6. Trunk 13⅝" (34.6 cm). Black. The various motifs seen on this extra-large trunk are now familiar. The large central scalloped flower has a green center with yellow dots. The border on the front face of the lid consists of very tightly packed rickrack strokes. Note the exceptional unit on the trunk end.

Courtesy, Heritage Plantation, Sandwich, MA

Fig. 3.7. Trunk 8½" (21.6 cm). Black. Flowers made up of four or six brushstrokes are often found on Buckley pieces. The alizarin and white overtones are evident. Green centers in the flowers have yellow dots on one side only. The large leaves show a yellow highlighting stroke, and two styles of veining are seen. The yellow color used on Buckley pieces is generally of a darker shade than that used in other tinshops.

HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 3.8. 1-sheet Waiter. 12 3/8" (31.4 cm). Black. Brushstroke flowers are formed with three salmon petals and three white petals. Overtones on the flowers are alizarin and a more intense white than previously seen. The green centers now have yellow strokes as well as dots. The yellow brushstroke groups indicate the hand of an experienced decorator who is able to paint rhythmical strokes, begining with a large size and gradually diminishing to the width of a hair. *Collection of Barbara Quirk*

Fig. 3.9. Coffee Pot 9 1/4" (23.5 cm). Black. Two groups of salmon S-strokes, flanked by green strokes, are found on each side of this straight-spout coffee pot. A daisy made of large dots with extended yellow leaflets nests between them. Buds and leaves with yellow veins are also present. *HSEAD Collection at Museum of Folk Art, New York, NY*

Fig. 3.10. Trunk 9 3/4" (24.8 cm). Red. The three large flowers were formed with alizarin painted directly against the red background color. Each scalloped petal is edged with a white stroke and enhanced with fine yellow lines. The leaves and curliques have been previously seen. Small rickrack strokes are again used as borders painted in both yellow and black colors. Note the elaborate unit on the end, and the brass bail handle on the lid. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.11. Trunk 9" (22.9 cm). Black. The salmon color of these two blossoms is more orange-toned than the other examples shown. Overtones used on this color base-coat are a strong white (the outer petals) and a dark creamy yellow (strokes around the green center). No alizarin is used. The green and yellow leaflets exhibit a wonderful overall rhythm in which the brushstrokes in each grouping graduate in size, nest closely to their neighbors, and curve gracefully to an implied focal point. *Collection of Deborah Lambeth*

Fig. 3.12. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. Although the Buckley shop used shades of salmon on the majority of their tinware, the vermilion so often found in designs from other shops is occasionally encountered. The two white flowers have three green leaves with hairy serrations on their edges, and each contains a serrated yellow leaf. This fern-like leaf is often encountered on Buckley pieces, and the border based on large S-strokes is common. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.13. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. A cluster of strawberries adorns this trunk front. Extra large heart-shaped leaves are seen, as well as 3-lobed serrrated leaves. Curliques are found and an S-stroke border is used. *Collection of Lois Tucker*

Fig. 3.14a and 3.14b. Trunk 8½" (21.6 cm). Black. The salmon paint used for the base coat of flowers is often extremely thin in pigment. After the passage of nearly 200 years, the pigment may have deteriorated so much as to be nearly invisible. The inside circle of the left-hand flower illustrates this. The white overtone strokes are clearly seen, but the underlying circle is visible only by its outer rim. This coin-edge became thicker than the inner circle after the applied paint had settled out before drying. All that is easily seen now beneath the white overtones is the black background of the trunk. Fig. 3.14b shows the end design which is done with vermilion and dark yellow, as are the borders on the front face and the lid. It is not uncommon to find vermilion used on a piece along with salmon color. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.15. Oval Trunk 7" (17.8 cm). Black. Flowers and buds are painted with a very thin salmon base coat. Overtones of white and salmon are used to form the interior design. Again, no alizarin has been used. The wreath of green/yellow leaflets is similar to Fig. 3.4. The lid face border is done in yellow, but the design on the top of the lid is worked in vermilion.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 3.16. Trunk 12⅛" (30.8 cm). Black. This large trunk is virtually covered with design. The flowers are painted with the base coat and overtone colors as seen in Fig. 3.11. The large brushstroke flowers with green centers and rows of yellow dots have also been noted. The three flowers on the front have a heavy white stroke, two green strokes, and a large dark creamy yellow stroke that itself has a row of yellow dots. These extra large trunks have been found with both the Buckley and Stevens designs. When there is an overall design on the lid, no handle is present. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.17. Teapot 5" (12.7 cm). Black. A brushstroke flower painted in wet-technique is seen on this teapot The four-petaled blossom is a form that is often encountered. The yellow dot sprig extending from the head of this flower is another common feature. A similar design is found on the reverse side of the teapot.
HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 3.18. Match holder 7" (17.8 cm). Black. The brushstroke flowers have two rows of yellow dots in their centers, but there is no green used. Note the small yellow dot sprigs as seen in Fig. 3.17. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.19. Tea Canister 5¼" (13.3 cm). Black. The large flower has a yellow base coat with wet-technique blue/white outer petals. Some green leaflets are accented with yellow. Both sides of this oval canister are decorated.
Courtesy, Maine State Museum, MSM83.32.5

Fig. 3.20. Trunk 6¼" (15.9 cm). Black. The lovely flower on the right has been executed using a wet-technique in which the white and salmon were worked together. The green fern-like sepals are the same as those seen in Fig. 3.12.
Private Collection

Fig. 3.21. Trunk 8 3/4" (22.2 cm). Black. The flower color used here is another variant of the salmon shades. This color has some white in the mix which gives it a pinkish tone. Thin overtones are painted with alizarin and creamy white.
Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 3.22a, 3.22b, and 3.22c. Trunk 8 7/8" (22.5 cm). Black. This trunk has two wet-technique flowers done in the same manner as the canister in Fig 3.19. Small flowers are also found in the design. Large veined leaves and curliques are again noted. The designs on the lid (Fig. 3.22b) and on the end (Fig. 3.22c) are more elaborate than usually found.
Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 3.23a, 3.23b, and 3.23c. Trunk 12⅜" (31.4 cm). Black. This extra large trunk has a spray of flowers and buds across the front. Notice the small yellow dot flowers intermingled in the design. The narrow rickrack border on the lid face was seen in Figs. 3.6 and 3.10. The lid has curved stripes edged with rickrack and a brass handle with oval plate. The interior of the trunk is constructed with four compartments. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.24a Trunk 7¾" (19.7 cm). Black. ***Fig. 3.24b.*** Trunk, 7⅞" (20 cm.) Black. Painted band designs were done at this shop. These two trunks each have a salmon colored band alongside a green band. The overpainting on the bands is nearly identical. The yellow border below the green band has its largest stroke overlap the band. There are two shades of green shown in Fig. 3.24b, that of the band and a darker tone for the two veined leaves in the upper corners. Vermilion is used on the lid of each.

Collections of Ruth Coggins (deceased) and Madeleine Hampton (deceased)

Fig. 3.25. Trunk 8⅞" (22.5 cm). Black. Narrow white bands curve to form interlocking arcs on this platform-top trunk. Vermilion and dark yellow brushstroke groups fill the openings. This very simple geometrically balanced design is again reminiscent of a Berlin trained craftsman. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.26. Trunk 6⅝" (16.8 cm). Black. Another platform-top trunk with a narrow band design. Notice that no green is used on this trunk, nor on the previous example. Each of these trunks demonstrates the darker shade of yellow.
Collection of Beth Martin

Fig. 3.27. Book Box 3¼" (8.3 cm). Red. Many of these small books have been found, and they must have been a popular item for the tinshop. The designs are very simple and an initial is usually found on the reverse side. *Collection of Ruth Coggins (deceased)*

Fig. 3.28. Book Box 3¼" (8.3 cm). Yellow. Any color that the decorator had on the palette might have been used as the background color for these small books.
Collection of Molly Porter (deceased)

Fig. 3.29a and 3.29b. Book Boxes 3¼" (8.3 cm). Black. There seems to be no rule as to which side of the box received the main decoration. The pages of the book may be painted in a different color from the background of the book. *HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY, and Private Collection*

Fig. 3.30. Book Box 3¼" (8.3 cm). Olive Green. Wet-technique brushstroke flowers are painted against the green ground, and dark yellow is used for stems and leaflets.
HSEAD Collection at Museum of American Folk Art, New York, NY

Fig. 3.31. Book Box 3¼" (8.3 cm). Black. Only brushstroke groups and borders are used on the book box. Note the interesting treatment on the pages.
Collection of Margaret Willey (deceased)

Fig. 3.32. Book Box 3¼" (8.3 cm). White. The simple brushstroke flowers produce a very pleasing design. Several different initial letters have been found [C, L, T, E] and were probably for the owner's name.
Private Collection

Fig. 3.33. Book Box 3 1/4" (8.3 cm). Medium green. Four wet-technique buds with green sepals are attached to fine dark green stems. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.34. 1-sheet waiter. 12 1/8" (30.8 cm.). Black. The design is made up of four large and four small round flower units. Each has white overtones, and the large units also have a central S-stroke painted in green. Yellow dots abound throughout. Note the graceful brushstroke border using two different border types. *Private Collection*

Fig. 3.35. Tea Canister 4 3/4" (12.1 cm). Black. This tea canister has similar designs on each side. The two salmon flowers exhibit white and salmon overstrokes, which have yellow and green dots respectively. The fern-like leaflets are seen at the flower base. Note the dark shade of yellow often used at this shop. *Collection of Madeline Hampton (deceased)*

Fig. 3.36. Trunk 7 1/2" (19 cm.). Black. This simple design of salmon-colored buds swagged across the trunk front is again reminiscent of Berlin, Connecticut designs. Notice the vibrant vermilion color used to border the lid. Two yellow stripes are found on the facing edge of the lid. *Private Collection*

CHARARACTERISTICS OF THE BUCKLEY SHOP DECORATION

The following illustrations demonstrate in greater detail than the photographs the characteristics of designs found in the Buckley shop. The pigments used are quite thin. This is especially true for the salmon color used to base coat flowers. It may be so thin that it is now hardly perceptible against the black background of the tinware. Refer to page xii for the guide to interpretation of these line drawings. This shop has been divided into two groups— Group I, the floral group; and Group II, the painted band group. Some drawings in Group II demonstrate only one-half of the trunk front decoration, and it is understood that the other half is identical. There may be more than one color used for banding on the same piece. This is denoted in the drawings by using two tones of gray shading.

Colors found on Buckley Shop pieces:

Red—vermilion, salmon
Green—medium, dark, and olive; thin when used as overtone
Yellow—chrome medium and chrome dark
Alizarin—thin for overtones or base coat against red background
White—used for overtones or base coat (may be thin or heavy)
Blue—medium, not used often

Types of decorated tinware found:

Trunk—dome-topped (rectangular) in many sizes (may have brass handle)
Trunk—platform-topped (rectangular) in many sizes (may have brass handle)
Trunk—oval with flat top
Bread Basket—oval (occasionally pierced)
Tea Canister—small oval, large round
Teapot—oval
Coffee Pot—flared or straight spout
Waiter—1-sheet and 2-sheet
Match holder
Book Box

Illustration selections and line drawings by Gina Martin and Lois Tucker

GROUP I: Floral motifs, usually symmetrically balanced

1. Backgrounds: Black is usual, occasionally red. (Book boxes may be found in black, red, white, yellow, and green.)

2. Flowers:

a. Base coats in salmon color or vermilion, occasionally white. On red background the base coat is painted with alizarin.

b. Scalloped flowers formed by adding white petals around edge of a round red or salmon base coat.

c. Crab flowers often have a green leaf painted in center opening.

d. Flowers painted with salmon/white or blue/white wet technique.

e. Lollipop-shaped stamens in green.

f. White overtone strokes may be overpainted with green dots. Green overtone strokes may have yellow dots.

Flowers

3. Overtones:

a. Alizarin and white on salmon or red base coats.
b. Salmon and white on salmon base coats.
c. Creamy yellow and white on salmon base coats.
d. Thin green and white on salmon base coats.

4. Leaves:

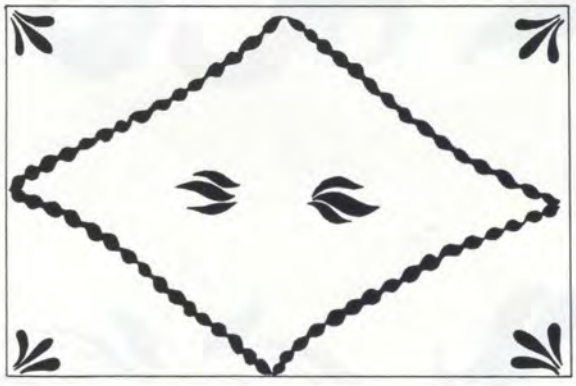
a. Heart-shaped with yellow veins and accents.
b. Leaflets as single brushstrokes.
c. Fern-like leaves (yellow on green or green on white).
d. Veins straight or curved.

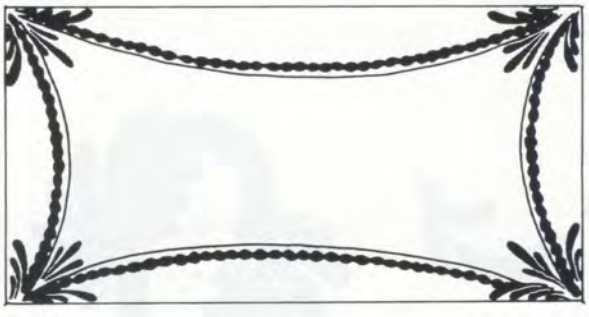
5. Space Fillers:

a. Sprigs of dots or wheat-like leaves.
b. Yellow dot flowers
c. Crosshatching.
d. Curliques which are often found with a cluster of tiny brushstrokes within a loop.

6. Trunk Lids:

a. Brushstrokes around the handle is most common.
b. Rickrack around outer edge.
c. Vermilion strokes often used along with yellow.
d. Single stripe may be used.





Trunk Lids: brushstroke motifs around handles

Trunk Lids: brushstroke motifs around handles

7. Trunk Ends:

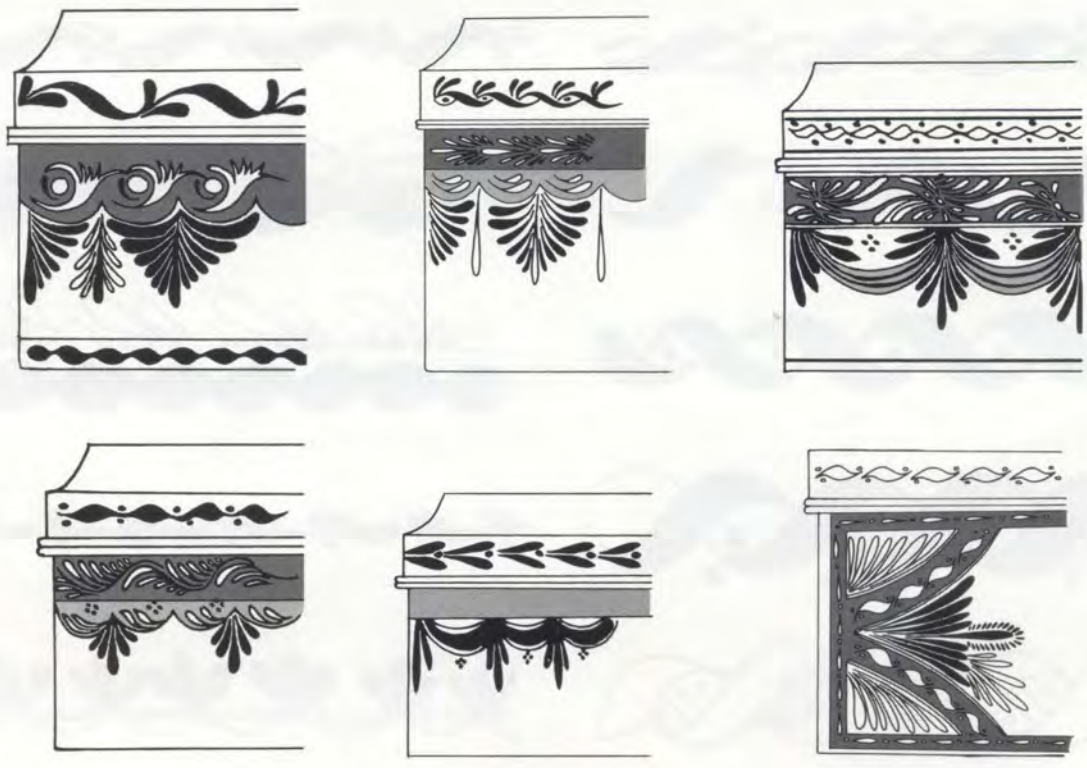
a. Three-stroke grouping is most common.
b. Brushstrokes in a diagonal.

8. **Striping:** Not commonly used, although trunk lids may be striped.

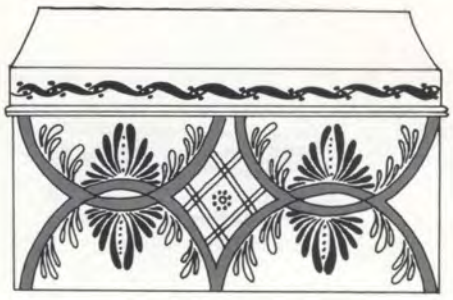
9. **Borders:** Usually painted in yellow; occasionally done in vermilion or white. Black is used against a red background.

GROUP II: Painted bands and arches. **[B]**

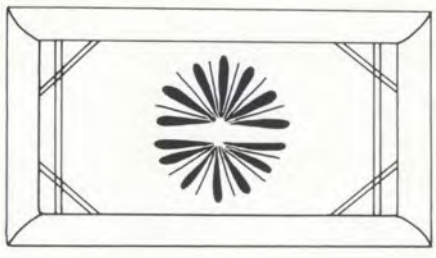
a. Designs painted on platform-topped and oval trunks. Occasionally found on dome-topped trunks.
b. Bands may be straight, swagged, or scalloped.
c. Two colors may be used for adjoining bands.
d. Trunk lids usually have brushstroke groupings around handle.
e. Striping on lids in single or double lines.



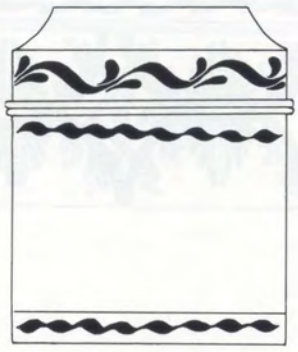
Painted Bands and Arches



Trunk Lids



Trunk Ends



Chapter Four

ELIJAH & ELISHA NORTH

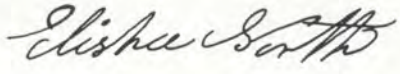
[circa 1806 – 1840]
Stevens Plains, Maine

Elijah and Elisha North were the sons of Samuel North and Lois Woodford of Berlin, Connecticut. Each received his tinsmith training in his home town, although it is not known at which of the many tinshops that occurred.

Elijah [1781–circa 1863] was at Stevens Plains by November 1804 when both he and Oliver Buckley witnessed a land sale between Isaac Sawyer Stevens and Samuel Clary who purchased one-half acre of land with house next to Thomas Brisco. All of these men probably worked for Zachariah B. Stevens at this point in time. In 1806 Clary sold this same parcel to Elijah and then left the area.

Oliver Buckley and Elijah possibly served their apprenticeships together as it appears they were close friends. Each took his bride in a double ceremony conducted by Rev. Caleb Bradley. The Reverend's diary states that on May 2, 1805, he "married two couples at the same time at Isaiah Woodford's." Elijah's bride was his cousin Martha Woodford [1784–1834] from Avon, Connecticut. She was the sister of Isaiah, Chauney, and Ebenezer Woodford, the combmakers.

Elisha North [1783–1845] came to the Plains about 1806. His name begins to be found in the records as he and his brother bought several land parcels. Elijah may have been waiting for his younger brother to join him so that they could get their own tinshop business underway. It can be established with certainty that the North brothers had a business of their own, either together or separately, and were not merely employees of Stevens or Buckley. An accounting of how the locals dealt with the problem of wolves and the destruction to their flocks mentions the tin shop. "There were at least three places in old Falmouth where deep pits were dug to decoy wolves into by a bait consisting of a live sheep in a cage, so secured that when the wolves leaped for the



sheep they landed in the pit which was concealed by brushwood which also prevented the animals from climbing out....Two of these pits were on the land of John Flake, now enclosed in Evergreen Cemetery....In my shooting days sixty years ago (i. e. 1870), I went there looking for woodcock and wondered at these large pits which were made a receptacle for tin chips from the tinshops of Buckley and North."[1]

The 1820 industrial census also verifies the existence of the North tinshop. Elisha seems to have been the business manager as it is his name that appears in the records and accounts of the period. On the census he reported having ten men, four women, and six boys in his employ with annual salaries of $1600 paid out. One of the men that may have been working for Elisha was Silas North [1774–1839]. He was a cousin from Berlin and was at the Plains until at least 1822 when his first wife died there. In the report of manufacturers in the United States sent to the House of Representatives in 1832, Elisha North's business was valued at $2100 and Elijah North's at $1000.

The brothers had begun their venture on the property they purchased from Samuel Clary in 1806. This property was the house and land where Thomas Brisco had resided when he first came to the Plains, and in 1816 they sold this piece back to Brisco. About 1808 Elisha bought land at Brighton's Corner; and here he opened a small store where he sold tinware, combs, etc., and also had his shop. His house was a two-story structure that became an inn when the Presumpscot Trotting Park Association was incorporated. The house was destroyed by fire in 1878.

The Norths sent out peddlers with their wares, as did the other craftsmen at the Plains. It is not known whether or not the Norths made a large quantity of decorated tinware. Although the 1820 industrial census lists four women employees, who would have been the painters, very few of these pieces have been found. There could be several explanations for this. Firstly, decorated tin in any quantity was not continued over a long period of time. As both the Stevens and Buckley shops produced a great deal of japanned tin, the Norths may have turned the bulk of their efforts to tinware items that would not have required decoration. Secondly, it is possible that the paints used were not chemically durable. If the pieces have not withstood the test of time, they will no longer be in evidence for the researcher or collector. Thirdly, the pieces may have been peddled so far to the north and into Canada as to be not easily located today.

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[1] Norton, Arthur H., *Proceedings of Portland Society of Natural History*, Vol. IV, pg. 47.

Elisha North [1783–1845] married, on November 8, 1807, Abigail (Nabby) Stevens [1791–1825], the youngest sister of Zachariah B. Stevens. They had an adopted daughter, Rosilla, and then sons Samuel and Josiah Stevens. After Nabby died, Elisha married second to Nancy Bradbury, a schoolteacher who resided with the family. Two more children, Abbie S. and Edward, were born to them. Son Samuel had a tin and stove shop for many years. Son Josiah S. drove the delivery wagon for E. D. Woodford's comb factory and later was also involved in the tin and stove business. Elisha may have ceased his tin business about 1837. At that time he sold to Samuel B. Stevens a four acre parcel "in a right angle with the road and in line with the northeast corner of my truck barn, so called.....together with the buildings excepting the oil cloth shop, so called." Records from this time until his death in 1845 refer to Elisha as a yeoman or gentleman rather than a tinner. In his later years Elisha's health was not good, and he was described in 1841 as a poor, asthmatical invalid.

Elijah North apparently left the Plains about twelve years after his arrival. By 1815 he had liquidated all his properties in Maine. He returned to Connecticut, and his last three children were born there. In 1829 he returned to the Plains, purchased a one-half acre lot from Zachariah B. Stevens and built a one-story house. He later built a two-story building that was used as his shop. Elijah and Martha had a family of eight surviving children: Marie, Lois, Sophia, Rhoda, Silas, Emily, Oren Beckley, and Abigail. Martha North died in 1834 and Elijah married secondly to Sophie Warren, a widow from Gorham, Maine.

It is curious that Elijah named one of his sons Oren Beckley North. It causes one to speculate about Elijah's possible connection with the Pattison shop in Berlin, Connecticut, which Oren Beckley managed for Shubael Pattison (see *American Painted Tinware*, Volume One). Did Elijah and his brother (and possibly their friend Oliver Buckley) learn their trade in the Pattison shop along with Oren Beckley?

The North name is no longer evident in the Portland area. Other than the small number of decorated tinware pieces that come to light, there is very little evidence left to show that Elisha and Elijah and their families were ever at Stevens Plains.

ELIJAH & ELISHA NORTH SHOP

Introduction to the Photographs

The designs attributed to the North brothers of Stevens Plains show a very strong influence of Berlin, Connecticut training, especially in the designs of Berlin Groups I and III (see *American Painted Tinware,* Volume One). No pieces have been located that are signed, nor have there been any pieces found with a family provenance. The originals that are here attributed to the Elisha and Elijah North's shop have all come to light in southern Maine, strongly suggesting that area to be their place of origin. These designs do not have features that are representative of the Buckley shop, and Stevens shop designs (and those of the Francis sisters as well) are entirely different as there was no Connecticut influence involved in their creation. As it is well established that the Norths had girls working for them (and it was the girls who usually did the flowering), this group of decorated pieces is attributed to the tinshop of Elisha and Elijah North.

The construction of the tinware pieces from this shop is different from that of items made in other shops. Handles on the trunk lids are made of a heavy gauge wire. They are not round as usually seen, but are oblong. The opening for the hand to grasp is quite large, so that all fingers will easily fit into the handle. Trunks are of shorter height than expected for their depth, and this results in a squatty appearance. A similarly shaped trunk was seen in the Aaron Butler shop of Greenville, New York (see *American Painted Tinware,* Volume One). The cut-out hand holes found on bread baskets are finished off on the back side in a different manner as well (see Fig. 4.2b).

Fig. 4.1. Trunk 7 3/4" (19.7 cm). Black. This trunk has a red band across the front on which is a large alizarin ribbon stroke and white dots. It is very reminiscent of those painted in Berlin, Connecticut (See *American Painted Tinware*, Volume One). Below the band are groupings of dark yellow brushstrokes with the master stroke (the first and largest painted in the group) forming a nearly complete circle. This circle-stroke is very characteristic and can be considered a signature for this shop. Note the oblong shaped handle. *Collection of Roberta Ross*

Fig. 4.2a and 4.2b. Bread Basket 11" (27.9 cm). Black. The geometrically balanced design on this oval bread basket also exhibits a strong influence of Connecticut training. The central motif has alizarin brushstroke groups initiated with a circle-stroke. Two red units have crescent shaped overtones, while the other two have alizarin covering one-half their surfaces. Fig. 4.2b shows the unusual construction of the hand hole where the cut-out piece of tin is merely folded back rather than taken off. *Collection of Lois Tucker*

Fig. 4.3a, 4.3b, and 4.3c. Trunk 8 7/8" (22.5 cm). Black. The red band across the upper edge also extends down each side of the front. It has red swags below it with yellow crosshatching in the open spaces. Alizarin and white overtones enhance the band, with the circle-stroke groupings at the upper corners. An arc of red circles with crescent overtones runs across the lower front. Note the way the hasp opening has been cut and folded over to the front - another unusual construction feature of this shop. Figs. 4.3b and 4.3c show the large yellow strokes used to decorate the top and ends. *Collection of Kenneth and Paulette Tuttle*

Fig. 4.4a and 4.4b. Trunk 8¾" (22.2 cm). Black. The row of round red units across the top edge of this trunk is the same as that seen in Fig. 4.3a. Groups of dark yellow brushstrokes hang down between them, and rows of dots are seen at the upper edge. A row of red units are joined together by very graceful S-stroke stems edged with leaflets. Fig. 4.4b shows the lid decoration which uses the circle-stroke on each side of the handle.

Collection of Lois Tucker

Fig. 4.5a, 4.5b and 4.5c. Trunk 7¾" (19.7 cm). Black. The design across this trunk front is nearly identical to the previous example. The height and width of the trunk are nearly equal, and this results in a shorter, squatty appearance.

Collection of JoAnn Baird

Fig. 4.6a and 4.6b. 1-sheet Waiter 12¼" (30.8 cm). Black. The central flower on this waiter exhibits the circle-stroke painted in the alizarin grouping. Green color was not used on the previous examples, but a floral design will have some green leaves with yellow veining. The small buds have alizarin covering one-half their surfaces and alizarin dots on the other half. The floral spray designs from this shop do not contain brushstroke groups which form leaflets, either in yellow or green. In their stead will be curliques and squiggles amid the stems. Fig. 4.6b is a closer view of the central design showing the graceful rhythm of the overtone strokes.

Collection of Zilla Lea (deceased)

Fig. 4.7. Trunk 8¼" (21 cm). Black. A broad scalloped red band curves across the trunk front. Alizarin and white overtones are seen, and dark yellow dots edge the red scallops. Clusters of four white dots have been seen on previous examples. Yellow dots are seen along the edges of the scallops as in Fig. 4.3. The lid and ends are decorated the same as Fig. 4.5.

Private Collection

Fig. 4.8. 2-sheet Waiter 17½" (44.5 cm). Black. This waiter, though showing signs of wear, exhibits a floral spray with a large rose. Its central opening is filled with yellow crosshatching. The buds have overtone treatments as previously seen. Green pigments are thin, as illustrated when the leaf overlaps a red flower. Yellow squiggles with long undulating tails are used as fillers throughout the design. *Collection of Patricia Hatch*

CHARACTERISTICS OF ELIJAH & ELISHA NORTH SHOP DECORATION

The following illustrations show the characteristics in greater detail than is possible with the photographs. Notations marked with a **[B]** depict a characteristic displaying strong influence of Berlin, Connecticut training. Refer to page xii for the guide to interpretation of line drawings.

Colors found on E. North pieces:

Red—vermilion, orange vermilion
Green—medium or dark, usually thin; found only on floral spray designs
Yellow—dark ochre
White—thin for overtones
Alizarin—thin for overtones

Types of decorated tinware found:

Trunks—dome-topped in various sizes, including extra large; brass handles occasionally found
Waiters—1-sheet and 2-sheet
Bread Baskets—oval

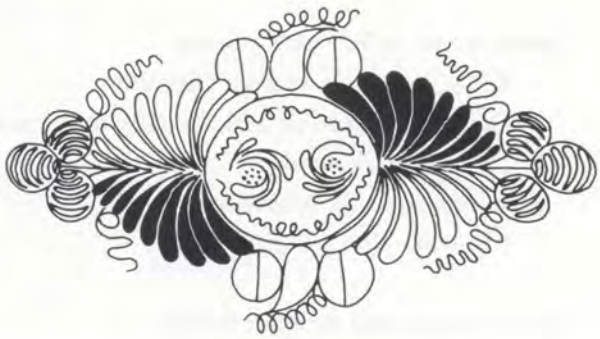
Illustration selections and line drawings by Lois Tucker

One-sheet waiter with a floral design.

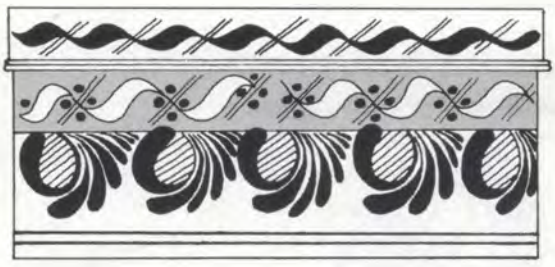
1. Background: Black.

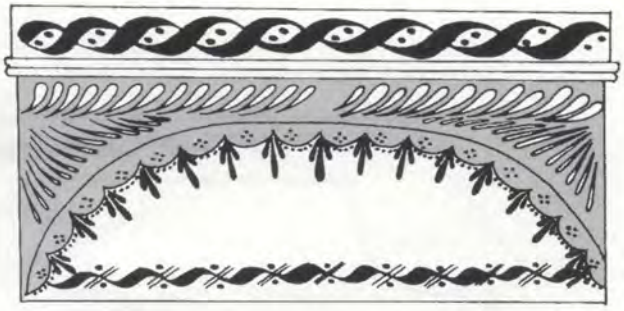
2. Designs:

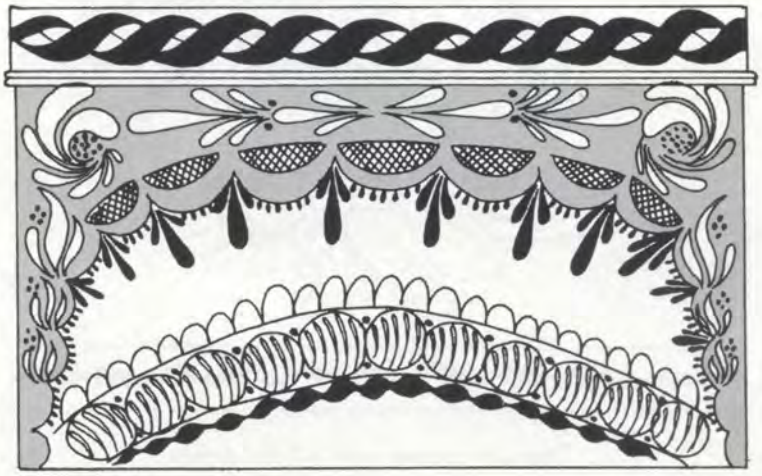
a. Geometrically balanced. **[B]**



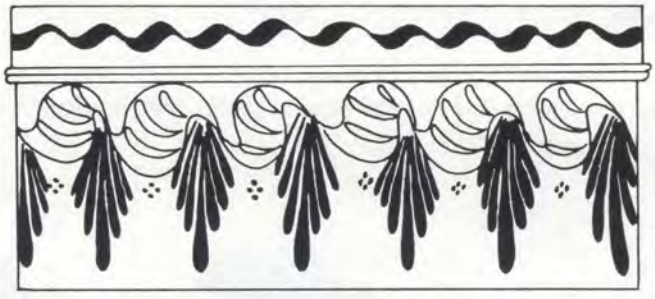
b. Red Bands - straight, arched, or scalloped. **[B]**







c. Round red or S-shaped units arranged in a row. **[B]**



d. Floral spray.

3. Overtones on Red:

a. Alizarin and white used; occasionally yellow.

b. Crescent shaped on round units. **[B]**

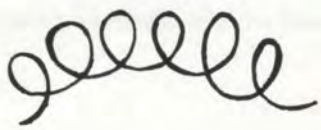
c. Buds often have alizarin covering one-half their area. **[B]**

d. Circle-stroke in alizarin (master stroke of a group which forms a circle from its head to its tail).

4. Leaves: ovoid or pointed, with yellow striping.

5. Space fillers:

a. Curliques.



b. Squiggles usually formed by one loop with a long wavy tail. **[B]**

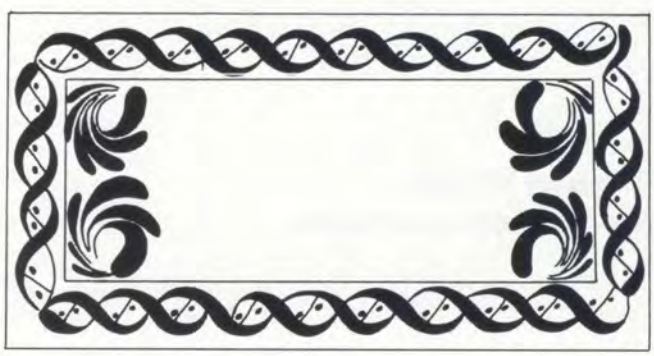
c. Groups of dots.

6. Trunk Lids:

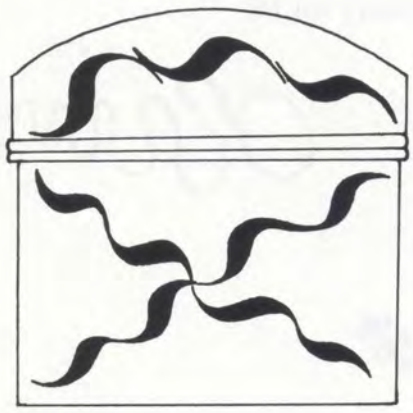
a. Ribbon stroke along the outer edges.

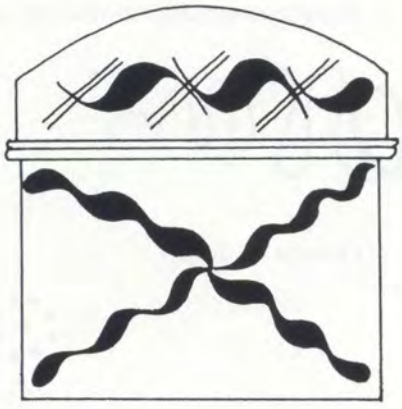
b. Brushstroke clusters in the corners which may contain the circle-stroke.

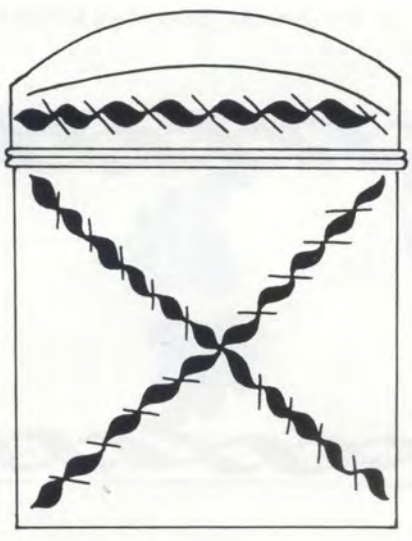
c. Brushstroke groupings around the handle occasionally found.



6. **Trunk Ends:** An X formed with ribbon strokes is the most commonly found treatment; occasionally the X is formed with brushstroke groups of three.







7. **Borders:**
   a. Waiters have borders on their floor; flanges are left plain.
   b. Ribbon stroke and S-stroke are the most commonly found borders.

8. **Striping:**
   a. Trunk lids are striped in a rectangle.
   b. Trunk lower front edge occasionally has a stripe.

APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST FOR TINSHOP IDENTIFICATION: This checklist has been designed solely for the purpose of leading the identification process in the proper direction. An unknown piece of japanned ware can be inspected to determine the basic elements of its characteristics. These in turn should be located on the checklist to discover which shop may have been the manufacturer. By then turning to the section of the book that deals with that particular tinshop, the reader should be able to confirm the identity after studying the photographs and the drawings. It may require checking several shops before a final determination can be made, as certain characteristics were used by more than one shop. An expanded checklist will be included in future volumes in order to put those additional shops along with their distinctive characteristics into this checklist. The number in parenthesis following the shop name indicates in which volume of *American Painted Tinware* that shop is included.

		Berlin (1)	Upson (1)	S. North (1)	Butler (1)	Stevens (2)	Francis (2)	Buckley (2)	E. North (2)
Background	Asphaltum	x	x	x	x				
	Asphaltum (mottled)			x					
	Black	x			x	x	x	x	x
	Crystalizing		x						
	Red	x	x		x	x	x	x	
	Other colors		x			x	x	x	
Painted Bands	White	x	x	x	x			x	
	Red	x		x				x	x
	Blue	x							
	Green	x		x					
	Pink			x					
	Yellow ($^1/_4$" wide)		x						
	Straight	x	x	x	x			x	x
	Scalloped							x	x
	Swagged	x	x	x					x
	Unusual shapes and complicated forms	x	x	x					
	Green swag alongside a red swag	x							
Flower Forms	Roses with extended upper petals	x		x					
	Lobular-shaped blossoms	x							
	Heart-shaped blossoms	x							
	Groups of four round buds	x							
	Scallop-edged flowers	x	x	x					
	Open centers		x						
	Morning glories		x						
	Single stroke petals with center petals very large			x					
	Tulips with curved back petals				x				
	Star-shaped flowers				x				
	Stamens within flower centers		x						
	Flowers very realistic					x	x		
Stems (flower)	Red	x		x	x				

		Berlin (1)	Upson (1)	S. North (1)	Butler (1)	Stevens (2)	Francis (2)	Buckley (2)	E. North (2)
Fruits	Peaches		x						
	Grapes		x				x		
	Cherries (single)		x		x	x	x		
	Cherries (double)					x	x		
	Pears		x						
	Blueberries					x	x		
	Strawberries				x	x	x		
Misc. Motifs	Shells		x	x		x	x		
	Basket				x	x			
	Cornucopia					x	x		
	Lyre					x			
Overtones	'Cobra' stroke	x							
	Alizarin painted over one half of bud	x							
	Pinwheel shaped	x		x					
	Ribbon stroke	x							
	Crescent-shaped (narrow)	x							
	Crosswise-to-lower positioning	x							
	Large swag across whole flower	x							
	Chevron groupings	x		x					
	Dark blue on white band			x					
	Candy-stripe arrangement	x		x					
	Fingered-off technique		x						
	White overtones in two layers				x				
	White stroke with white dots inside				x				
	Scallop-edged		x						
	Feathery ends						x		
Leaves	Round or oval	x	x	x	x		x		
	Pointed	x	x	x	x		x		
	Serrated	x	x		x		x		
	Three-lobed		x			x	x		
	Elongated forms			x	x				
	Turned-over tips		x				x		
	Split center opening		x						
	Yellow accents or outlining	x		x	x				
	Blue highlight				x				
	Narrow with long tendrils			x					
	Veining in black		x		x				
	Veining in blue						x		
	No veining					x			
	Cross veins as curved lines		x						
	Wet-technique					x	x		

		Berlin (1)	Upson (1)	S. North (1)	Butler (1)	Stevens (2)	Francis (2)	Buckley (2)	E. North (2)
Accents	'Signature' squiggles		x						
	Undulating squiggles	x							
	Curliques along stem lines	x							
	Dots and dot circles			x	x				
	Zig-zags			x	x				
	Hash lines on stems				x				
	Cross-hatching in double lines	x			x				
	Green accents on white units		x						
Trunk Ends	Single round flower and leaflets	x							
	Floral spray	x		x	x				
	Horizontal rows of border strokes	x							
	Diagonal row of strokes	x		x					
	Scalloped yellow line with teardrops	x	x						
	Swag and tassel arrangement			x					
	Painted band on uppermost edge				x				
	Ribbon stroke - compact and tightly formed	x					x		
	Ribbon stroke along all edges of trunk	x							
	Ribbon stroke forming large X	x							
	Four round units and leaflets	x							
	Three-stroke 'C' arrangement					x		x	
Trunk Lids	Wide stripe around outer edge			x					
	Four or more groupings around handle			x					
	Multicolored groupings around handle			x					
	Brushstroke cluster flowers along stripe lines		x						
	Asymmetrical groupings at handle			x					
	Ribbon stroke in blue	x							
	Narrow red band around edge	x							
Borders	Lattice fence (with or without dots)	x		x					
	White berries with yellow brushstroke groups	x							
	Red berries with green or red brushstroke groups			x					
	Two or more colors used	x	x	x					
	Green ribbon	x							
	Red ribbon			x					
	Very elaborate arrangement of strokes				x	x			
	No border on front lid face	x							
Striping	Red stripe along white band		x	x					
	Double striping	x	x				x		
	Along two or three edges of trunk end			x					
	Wide stripe around edge of trunk lid			x					
	Not commonly found				x	x			
Designs	Geometrically balanced	x						x	x
	Wrap-around			x					
	Overlapped					x			
Unusual Technique	Semi-impasto painting	x							

APPENDIX B

TINPLATE WORKERS at Stevens Plains who operated between 1800 and 1880. These names have been gleaned from various sources such as: censuses, genealogies, deed records, local histories, and old newspapers. Doubtless there are many others who should be included on this list.

Allen, Robert
Ayer, E. L.
Babb, Joseph H.
Bailey, George S.
Bedell, John H.
Brackett, Ona C.
Brackett, Sewall
Briggs, Edward W.
Brown, Joseph C.
Brown, Joseph E.
Buckley, Barzilla
Buckley, Edward M.
Buckley, Horace
Buckley, Oliver
Buckley, Oran B.
Burgess, John
Clary, Samuel
Cobb, Amos H.
Cobb, Enoch
Cobb, William
Cook, Albert G.
Cook, Gerry
Felton, Steven
Gerry, Pelitah M.
Goodrich, Walter B.
Haggett, Rufus B.
Hawes, Charles B.
Hayes, Charles H.
Hersey, Samuel S.
Higgins, Elisha
Higgins, George
Howard, Augustus S.
Howard, George B.
Howard, Hiram
Kimball, Freeman F.
Kimball, Roy R.
Knight, Albert
Knight, Charles P.
Knight, Sumner
Leach, Almond
Merrill, Edmund P.
Merrill, Joseph
Newman, Edward
Newman, John
North, Elijah
North, Elisha
North, Samuel
Pattridge, Jesse
Pearson, Henry
Quincey, Charles
Rackliff, Chandler, Jr.
Raymond, Harlow M.
Riggs, Thomas J.
Ring, Fredrick A.
Ring, John C.
Sawyer, Hiram
Sawyer, Ebenezer B.
Sawyer, Charles S.
Sawyer, Francis
Sawyer, Hiram
Sawyer, William F.
Small, Albion W.
Snow, Temple
Stevens, Alfred
Stevens, Henry W.
Stevens, Samuel B.
Stevens, Zachariah B.
Stinson, John
Swett, Rollin
Walker, Joseph P.
Welsh, Nathaniel
White, Orlando
Winslow, Albion
Winsor, Johnd
Woodford, Albert H.

APPENDIX C

THE MEN WHO PEDDLED for the tinsmiths and other craftsmen of Stevens Plains quite often tried their hands at working tinplate. Many of these names can be found on the list in Appendix B. The following list is most certainly incomplete.

Allen, Robert
Babb, Joseph H.
Bailey, Lafayette
Billings, Henry S.
Briggs, Albion P.
Brisco, Thomas
Cash, Andrew J.
Chick, William C.
Crocker, Albert
Duddy, Richard
Felton, Steven
Fuller, Augustus
Gammon, Ira W.
Gould, Nathan
Hackett, David
Hanson, Daniel
Hanson, Elijah
Leavitt, Peter
Mayburry, Simeon
Mayhew, Thomas
McIntosh, Joseph W.
McMann, Daniel
Megwise, Samuel
Merrill, Joseph
Merrill, William C.
Patch, David
Pennel, John
Pulsifer, Richard
Robinson, David
Robinson, Levi
Sawyer, Alonzo
Sprague, Simon J.
Thorn, David
Verrill, George
White, Nathan E.
Whitmore, Orin
Willis, Jacob
Winslow, William
Woodsman, David
Woodsman, Nathan

APPENDIX D

ZACHARIAH B. STEVENS' LEDGER, used during the period from August 14, 1818 through December 1824, contains the entries he made for purchases at his "general store" and of the monies paid to him by his customers against their accounts. This ledger is part of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration's material at the Museum of American Folk Art in New York City.

Covered pail
3-quart coffee pot
Tin kettle
Tin collander
Tin sieve
Tin graters
Wash tubs
Pepper box
Misc. tin
Toast dish
Lantern
Dippers
Waiter
Teapot
Quarts (measures)
6-joint stove funnel

Shoe thread
Cloth
Umbrella
Handkerchief
Draws (trousers)
Footings (socks)
Mittens
Coats
Stockings

Shoes
Hat
Lamp trimmers
Horse shoes
Halter
Cord wood
Horse hide
Calf skin
Sheep skin
Feathers
Oil
Horns
Combs
Rags

Books
Bibles
Brass thimble
Paper reams
Yarn and wool
Flax (combed)
Tallow
Lead
Old pewter
Brass
Boards

Pine wood
Carpenter's tools

Butter and lard
Cheese
Pork
Beef
Veal
Mutton
Fish
Flour
Meal
Corn
Peas
Beans
Onions
Potatoes
Cabbage
Blueberries, dried
Apples, dried
Honey
Clover seed
Chocolate
Tea
Coffee
Vinegar

The ledger also lists charges to customers for specific services, such as:

To frame a barn.
Provide a chaise to Portland.
Provide a wagon to the Falls.
Mending stove, coffee pot, and pail.
To put on board the Sloop Milledgeville two barrels of pewter, copper, and brass.
Making a vest and pantaloons.

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY

Asphaltum: A refined form of the petroleum derivative asphalt. It is mixed with a varnish medium and used as a background coating. It is semi-transparent and produces an amber color when applied to shiny tin. Asphaltum darkens considerably with age, and few original pieces found today demonstrate the color as it was when first applied. This darkening will also affect the design colors, causing them to appear darker than they may really be due to their own aging processes.

Candy-striping strokes: The term generally refers to overtone S-strokes on a painted band. They are in a nearly straight vertical position, and usually in two alternating colors. The result is that of the type of striping on candy canes or barber poles.

Chevron strokes: Groups of strokes arranged in V-formation. They may be used as overtone strokes on a painted band, or as border strokes along the front edge of a trunk lid.

Cobra stroke: An overtone stroke on red painted units found in some Berlin area designs. The stroke is made up of a broad head and undulating tail that diminishes in width to its end. This stroke resembles the coiled cobra used by snake charmers.

Crab flower: A blossom formed usually by 4 or 6 petals, each painted with a single brush stroke that does not touch its neighbor. The centers of these flowers often contain yellow strokes, crosshatching or dots, and may even contain a green leaf.

Crystallized tin: A technique of treating a clean, warm, shiny tin surface with muriatic acid, sulphuric acid, and water. This produces spangles on the tin surface that will sparkle when the asphaltum or colored varnish is applied over it.

Fingering technique: A painting process whereby the sharp edge of a color is softened out by dabbing it with a finger at the time of application. Fingerprints are readily visible when this technique has been used.

Hash marks or hash lines: Small accent marks, usually in groups of two or three, that are positioned on stems of flowers or the base of leaflet groups.

Ladle stroke: A brushstroke with a long arched tail. The stroke resembles a soup ladle in side view. This stroke is often found on pieces from the Stephen North shop. A larger version of it can be found on some pieces from Berlin CT.

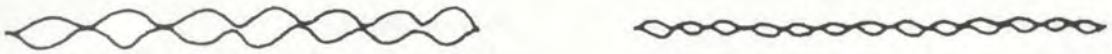
Lattice fence stroke: Half-circle loops, which may or may not be slightly overlapping, that are painted with thin lines. Usually in yellow, they are positioned on a stripe line or edging a painted band. They may also have a teardrop-shaped stroke at the points where they join.

Lollypop-stamens: Stamens are painted green against a white circle within a flower. They are straight, with a round head, and fan out from a common base.

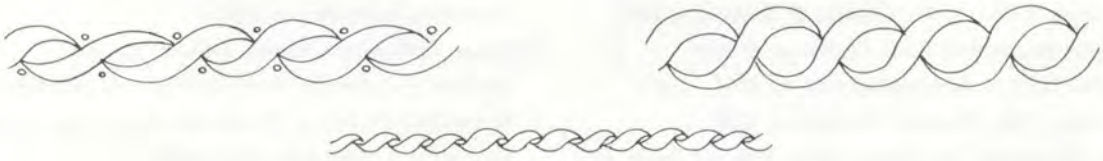
Mottled asphaltum: A mottled asphaltum background is a form of graining used on country painted tinware. It is accomplished by an additional application of asphaltum gently dabbed on, or sometimes dabbed and slightly dragged with a wide, irregularly edged brush. The dabbing is placed at intervals and may run horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. The mottling will cover the entire piece of tinware, excepting the bottom.

Ribbon stroke: A type of elongated border stroke that resembles a twisted ribbon.

Rickrack stroke: A variation of the ribbon stroke, but it is painted with each ribbon twist much closer together. Rickrack is sometimes found painted with very small, as well as tightly packed, strokes. The term rickrack has been coined from the sewing ribbon used by seamstresses.



Rope stroke: A stroke most often used for borders and made up of S-shaped strokes which connect to each other. The result gives the appearance of a twisted rope or cable. These strokes are often very broad.



S stroke: A single brushstroke shaped like the letter S. It may be very curved or it may be elongated to the point of being almost straight.

Semi-impasto painting: A technique produced by thick painting, not ordinarily found on country painted pieces. The process, which results in a relief or dimensional look to the strokes, is accomplished by the use of a heavier paint medium.

Wet painted technique: A painting technique that incorporates the use of two colors loaded onto the paintbrush at one time. The unit is painted on the tin with this mixture, and the two distinct colors are easily apparent. The unit is not worked over as that would cause the two colors to mix together. (Refer to Fig. 1.2.) This technique is not commonly found in country painting; but was used extensively in the Stevens Shop.

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