

The
DECORATOR



*Tray presented to Church House of Hartford by
Miss Alice Haynes*

**JOURNAL OF THE
ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER GUILD
AND
SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN
DECORATION**

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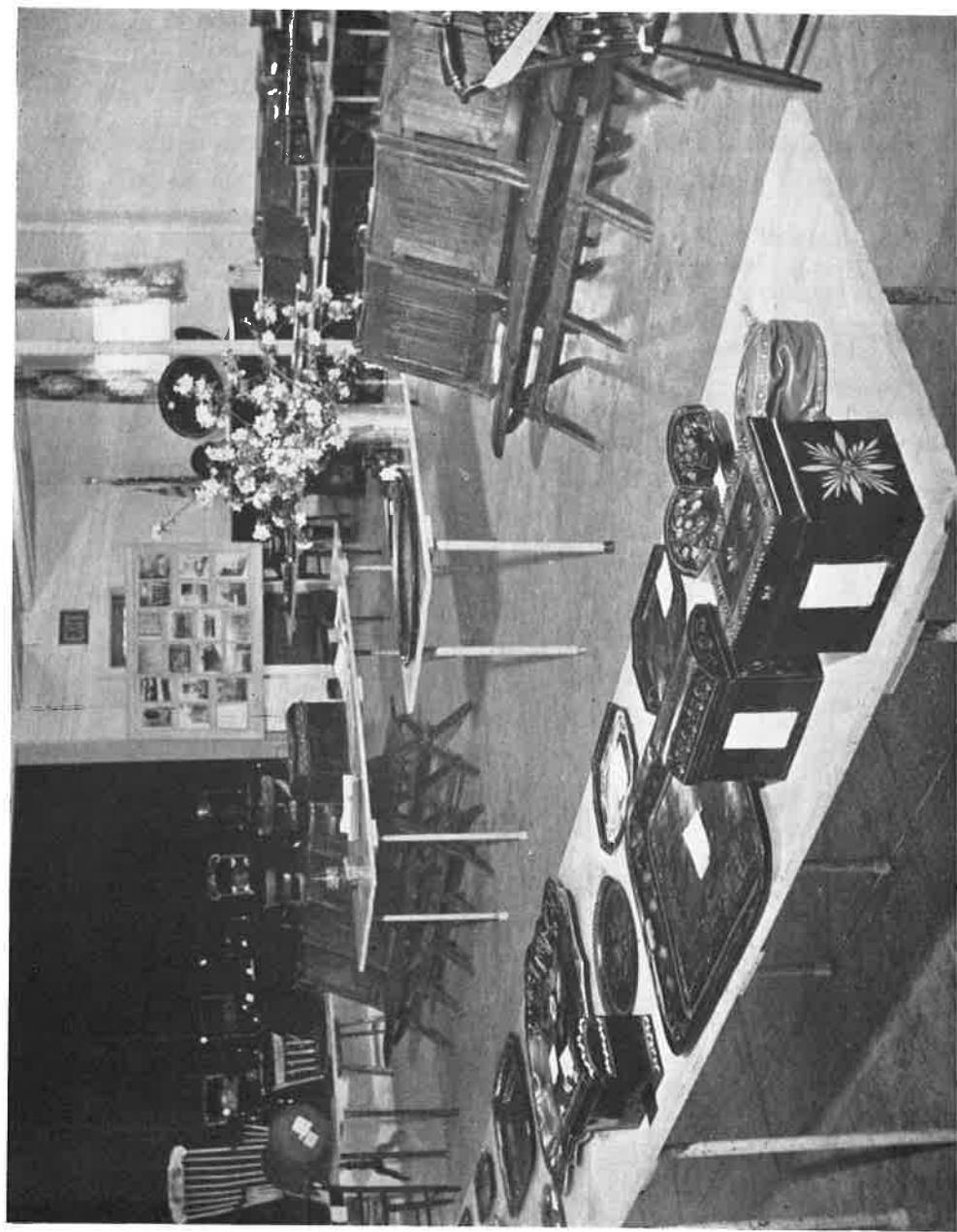
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EDITORIAL NOTES

Two full years have gone by, since the creation of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild and, to most everybody, it probably seems quite a natural thing, that in such a short time, the Guild has grown from a small original group of a half dozen persons, to a society of almost six hundred members.

The Guild has five chapters, the Pioneer Chapter, Springfield, Vt., the Charter Oak Chapter, Hartford, Conn., the Housatonic-Appawamus Chapter, Greenwich, Conn., the New York City Chapter, and the Long Island Chapter formed in Garden City, L. I. Some of these groups are already flourishing and some are in the process of being built into active groups, meeting for discussion and painting.

The Guild has had five large meetings, at Darien, Conn., Wellesley Hills, Mass., New York City, N. Y., Hanover, New Hampshire, and the last one at West Hartford, Conn. Each meeting has been a rewarding experience for members, who have had the opportunity to see and hear what is being done in the way of early American decorating in different localities. We have had such fine speakers as Miss Alice Winchester, editor of *Antiques Magazine*, Mr. Charles Messer Stowe, *Antiques* editor of the *New York Sun* and Mr. Donald Shelley, Curator of the New York Historical Society Museum. Exhibits of decorated pieces have been featured at each meeting. Guild sponsored exhibits have also been held at the Storowtown Eastern States Exposition, at Springfield, Mass., one at the Sweat Memorial Art Museum, Portland, Me., one at Carpenter Hall, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H. and two at the Suffolk County Museum, at Stony Brook, L. I. It has been obvious that each succeeding exhibit has shown a definite desire for progress on the part of exhibitors toward a goal of fine craftsmanship. The attaining of this goal has been aided by the fine judging program carried on at each meeting, with much elaborate planning and much arduous labor by Violet Milnes Scott and the Board of Judges.

The Guild has been presented with the entire collection of patterns, photographs and related materials of Esther Stevens Brazer and entrusted with their care, maintenance and future use. This complete record of Early American decoration furnishes to members a fund of knowledge for reference and research work. A fine gift of seven pieces of original Ann Butler tinware has been received by the Guild, presented as a memorial to Mrs. Arthur Oldham by her daughters, Miss Esther Oldham and Mrs. Anne Oldham Borntraeger. Contributions have been received from members to establish a fund to provide a permanent home for these valuable gifts and the Board of Directors has specified a sum of money to provide fireproof protection for the Brazer collection.

The Guild has been incorporated in the State of New York under the name of The Society of Early American Decoration.

This is the fourth issue of THE DECORATOR, journal of the association, to be printed and sent to members.

This is but a brief resume of the progress made by the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, since its conception. To me, it is astounding. I believe we are well on the way toward carrying out the Guild's main purpose, that is, to establish a society worthy to carry on the name and work of Esther Brazer. The amount of work involved in carrying out this program and in setting up the Guild as an organized unit was also astounding to me. Needless to say, much effort was required to bring about this growth and this success.

Let's give credit where it is due, to our first president, Emily Heath. Under her guidance, and because of the hours she willingly spent writing and answering letters, planning and working out details, travelling around to make personal contacts with the different groups, and, in general, getting everybody enthusiastic, the Guild has flourished.

We also want to acknowledge, here, the advice, guidance and patience of Burt Heath, whose cooperation could always be counted on. We hope he gets all his favorite dinners served to him, from now on.

Some time back, when I was grumbling about how hectic things had become, Emily gave me a little poem to read, of which I recall the title and a few lines that said:

It would not be at all amiss if we
Took one whole day to live deliberately.

.....

We would face days ahead in better mood
For living one bright day in quietude.

"A Day of Quietude" R. Crowell

I hope she finds the time to have her "Day of Quietude" before we get her too busy on Guild projects, again.



IN THE NEXT ISSUES

ADAPTATIONS	<i>Walter Wright</i>
SHELLS IN DECORATION.....	<i>Emilie Underhill</i>
GLASS PAINTING.....	<i>Emily Heath</i>
WHO SAYS ASPHALTUM WON'T DRY?.....	<i>Bernice Drury</i>

THE GILD OF YESTERDAY

Virginia Milnes Wheelock

Inasmuch as the ancient "gild" is the prototype of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, it might be enlightening to discover just what was the purpose and function of these old-time gilds.

Throughout the centuries, we find that man's associative spirit has caused sponsorship of gilds and fraternities. From ancient Rome there are records of groups formed by men with a common interest. There, the free citizen was given the right of organization based on similarity of craft. These so-called craft groups were perhaps self-organized, because of necessity, common pursuits, and the need for protection. Activities included: regulation and supervision of apprentices; 'collective bargaining'; collective stoppage of work in case of grievances; feasting in common on occasions; exclusion of non-members; giving of funeral benefits to members; paying of homage to a patron god whose attributes were nearest the craft in question; observances of religious festivals, processions, and sacrifices. As the gilds' power increased, they were able to exert considerable pressure on the politics of the day.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe regressed toward barbarism; cities were deserted, production and distribution of wealth was practically gone; desolation, fear and lawlessness took the upper hand, and industry and commerce languished or vanished. Several hundred years—the Dark Ages—passed before men slowly began to reteach themselves forgotten skills, and craftsmanship again appeared on the industrial horizon. In the 10th century, skilled workmen again met together for the practical reason of self-preservation, plus the fact of common interests. At this time, however, the organization was mostly within the merchant class.

With the 12th century, gilds began to appear throughout Europe and had similar functions and organizations. There were three types of gilds: religious or benevolent, merchant, and craft. The religious and merchant gilds came into existence after the Norman Conquest and spread rapidly. The craft gild was later in developing and made its first appearance half a century after the merchant gild. Although the merchant and the craft gilds were essentially practical, there always remained religious tinges to them both.

Gild organization reached its height in England and it was there that the greatest wealth of information on gild development was found. In England, the Gild Merchant, as it was called, was closely allied with the growth of cities and towns and had a tremendous influence on local government as well as on the development of trade and industry. In addition to his entrance requirements, each member had to take an oath of fealty to observe the gild laws, to uphold its privileges, to obey its officers, to respect its confidences, and to refuse aid to non-gildsmen. At the annual, semi-annual, or quarterly meetings, new members were admitted, punish-

ment for infringements of the statutes was meted out, new ordinances were made, and social activities of eating, drinking and making merry were enjoyed. Good works and devotional exercises were included as well, but these were less prominent than the practical aspects. The revenue of the gild consisted in entrance fees, fines, assessments, and certain tolls. Non-gildsmen paid a local toll on wares, either bought or sold, and were forbidden to keep shops or retail their merchandise. With free commercial enterprise so well shackled, gild tyranny resulted in a tightly fettered group of rigid protections, promoting hostility and jealousy between neighboring towns.

There seems to have been little or no organic connection between the merchant and the craft gild; the merchant gild merely provided an opportunity for the artisans to meet and band together. Master craftsmen, belonging to the Gild Merchant, were regarded as merchants . . . selling their products made from raw materials. Gradually, as more and more artisans came together, sub-gilds began to form within the larger gild. In time, although craftsmen remained associated with the Gild Merchant, its strength was lessened as new craft fraternities were formed. Unlike the merchant gild, the craft gilds had no political function and no independent government or jurisdiction over their trade. The gild merely regulated trade standards and was subject to general control by the town officials. By the 14th and 15th centuries, with rapid development and specialization in industry, the general gild merchant was supplanted by distinct bodies of craft gilds, which reached their peak of power in the 14th century during the time of Edward III.

The organization and function of the craft gilds was patterned somewhat after the merchant gild, with suitable modifications dependent on the craft involved. Elected by the members, the gild officials supervised the quality of the wares, in order to insure good and honest workmanship. Ordinances were made regulating the hours of labor, and terms of admission to the gild. Members made periodical payments to a fund and participated in religious observances, although again, the regulation of industry was always paramount to the social and religious aims. The chief object of the craft gilds was to oversee the phases of manufacture, and to control the monopoly of working and dealing in a particular branch of industry. Training in the craft gild was divided into the following stages:

- 1) The apprentice, who served a period from three to eleven years, learning the trade from the master. The number that the master could teach at one time was limited, thereby limiting the number that could participate in that trade.
- 2) The journeyman who worked for a master under similar conditions as the apprentice, but was allowed to move about more freely and received wages for his work.
- 3) The master was the all important person. To qualify as a master one had to pass a rigid examination. (Yet even as a master craftsman, in the social framework of the medieval city, a man was still considered in the laboring class.)

Thus the craft gild included all artisans in one branch of industry in a particular town, and by the 14th century, each branch had its gild in every town.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, these separate gilds began to amalgamate. All craft gilds in a particular town might be joined together, and jointly regulate the trade monopolies of that town. In this fashion, it came to more nearly resemble the power of the former general gild merchant. (It was said that in London, there were over 100 craft gilds.)

Crumbling of the gilds was first evident in the 16th and 17th centuries. Under more modern economics, more industrial organization, and the extension of the domestic system of manufacture, the gilds lost their usefulness. Desire for individual liberty and free enterprise led men to abandon the gild with its rigid control. (Some fraternities still retained their influence in spite of the new factory system and the division between capital and industry, as for example, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, which still regulates silver production for England.)

In more recent times, Walter A. Dyer's *Early American Craftsman* gives account of the early Yankee artisan. The master carpenter, for example, combined the present professions of architect, contractor, builder, decorator, and artisan. The guild in Boston, which met at Carpenter's Hall, was comprised of men of intellect who were masters of their calling. As Mr. Dyer states, "Beneath the carpenter's work lay the true spirit of craftsmanship inherent in the Yankee artisan—the impulse to do things as well as they could be done." And again, "The Salem master carpenters had access to the best architectural books of the period, but they were not slavish copyists. They adapted the best that they found, and the style suffered not in its translation at their hands."

Today, there has sprung up a Modern Furniture Maker's Guild. In the October 1938 *House Beautiful*, there is a brief description of this guild, which reads as follows: "Grand Rapids had always been known, and justly, for the fine quality of the furniture which comes from it. In the recent troubled years, it has not always been so easy to maintain standards of quality. In the furniture business the temptation to go along with corner-cutters must often have been strong. For in furniture not even the experts can tell from the outside how honestly the hidden structure is made. This, to a certain type of mind, is an invitation to cheat . . . which makes the stand of the Grand Rapids Furniture Maker's Guild the more remarkable. The ten manufacturers who are banded together under this name, who tag their products with its insignia, are pledged to produce furniture above reproach in quality."

We find guilds in the musical world of today, such as the Guild of Piano Teachers, and the American Guild of Organists, requiring compliance to a high standard of workmanship for the elevation and preservation of their trade. Although on a very much larger scale of membership, the organization and purposes of the American Guild of Organists are akin to those of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild.

The objects of the Organists' Guild are: "To advance the cause of worthy church music; to elevate the status of church duties, and opportunities as conductors of worship; to raise the standard of efficiency of organists by examinations in organ playing, in the theory of music and in general musical knowledge and in choir training; and to grant certificates as Fellows, Associates, or Choir Masters to members of the Guild who pass such examinations; to provide members with opportunities for meeting, for the discussion of professional topics; and to do other such lawful things as are incidental to the purposes of the Guild." Upon joining the Guild, the member becomes a Colleague and is eligible to take the examinations which constitute the real work and represent the true standards of the Guild. These examinations, in practical and theoretical musical study, are progressively difficult, culminating in the Fellowship, one of the most comprehensive musical examinations given in this country. Marked improvement in standards of organ playing and choral work have been observed throughout the country. Festivals, lectures, discussions, and social activities are among the work sponsored by the Guild. Today, this guild has grown to such proportions that there is now a chapter in each state.

Thus we see that throughout the centuries, men have come together for a common purpose in pursuit of a common goal, and for mutual protection. Whether their function was one of economic necessity, or to regulate monopolies, everywhere there is evidence of the pride men have in the work of their hands and of the desire to protect that work.

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THE TRAIN CAR DOOR

Esther Stevens Brazer

Those of us who have known Mrs. Brazer and have seen her coming to classes, laden down with basket and portfolios, have heard her hearty laugh and enjoyed her marvelous sense of humor, will find this account of one of her travelling experiences, very amusing. It was found among her papers and given to the Guild by Mr. Brazer.

A Dr. Talmage has said "There are wit, humor, and enduring vivacity among God's people", and this is certainly a fair description of Esther Stevens Brazer.

Accustomed as I am to travel, yesterday's trip bade fair to be just like many another jaunt I have undertaken with my bulky teaching material. I climbed aboard at Springfield, where the train car step seemed abnormally high—boosting myself, my suitcase and my large portfolio, with a vast amount of will power, up to the car platform. The train was crowded, as all trains are the day after a holiday week-end. No porters had been in sight at the station, all of them, no doubt, having found a bevy of customers in the college girl groups returning to their classrooms.

Stumbling on to the train just ahead of me was a middle aged laboring man of uncertain ancestry, whose past few hours had been spent in a state of sponginess near a bottle of cheap whiskey. He selected a seat next to the car entrance where he was (supposedly) protected from drafts by the lavatory for women and where he could reach the ice water tank with little or no effort.

There were very few empty seats, so I started my journey by occupying the aisle side of a lady's plush compartment. It crowded her a bit since my proportions may be mildly described as ample. At the next station, I noticed that the other front seat was being vacated near the spot where I had parked my bulky baggage. Out of thoughtful consideration for my crowded seat-mate, I moved over to this front row emplacement. Too soon I realized that this thoughtfulness was my undoing—from a spot where I had been a quiet spectator in a passive audience, I had unwittingly moved into the scene of action.

This car, it appeared, was NOT one of the modern variety where the master minds have carefully placed two lavatories at the entrance door so that all seats are shielded from drafts emanating from the train car door. THIS car had only one lavatory, playing puss in the corner, at each end. And the door! Ah, it opened up exactly right to throw full breezes upon the occupants of the left front seat. And here I had seated myself! "But of course," thought I, "this is only temporary. The car door will not remain open. It is only because the train is standing in the station. It will not be necessary for me to fight goose flesh endlessly!"

Just then, with a lurch, the train started, jerked again and then took on gradual momentum. Conductors outside in the vestibule whammed hinged metal platforms down over the car steps and shut the outside doors. "Now!" thought I. "NOW they will surely close the other door and there will be no need to put my coat on!" We pulled up to a 40 mile an hour speed; breezes whistled through the car at an increasing pace and the damp icy chill of bad weather struck through to my inner marrow. Conductors came and went without making the slightest effort

at door closing. My inebriated predecessor set up a terrific sneezing fit, for which there seemed to be no termination.

I finally arose and shut the door. It was not as easily done as it is to write the words. The floor clamp which held the door open, was well and truly designed to hold the door. And hold it, it did with a vengeance. I finally gave a mighty heave and shut the door with a bang, returning to my seat with the slight flicker of a smile, remembering what an amusing exhibition my tugging must have made to the assembled multitude all seated *facing* me. Before I had caught my breath again, the door flew open and in pranced a high-heeled, red-hatted lady with a high blonde hair-do, a lengthy double silver fox, draped slinkily about her shoulders. As both her hands were filled with suitcases and her eyes were looking hungrily for a vacant seat, it became apparent that she could not be bothered with trying to shut the door. So she left it swinging back and forth on its stalwart hinges.

"Perhaps the door will lurch hard enough on some of these curves to swing really shut and latch itself," thought I. So I waited hopefully. I might have known better. It never did latch of its own free will, as a last little push seemed necessary to perform the miracle. So with a slight grin of chagrin, I arose and shut the door in a dignified and resigned manner. Facing my spectators once more as I returned to my seat, I noticed several smiles appearing at the tops of cheekbones in the vicinity of kindly pairs of eyes.

I reached for my magazine and settled down to what I fondly hoped was a stretch of comfortable reading. Soon I discovered that the door was not a solid door. It was built with a pane of glass at the top which could be raised and lowered with two snap buttons. At this point, with a strange shuffling noise, the snap buttons disengaged themselves and lowered the glass precipitately. The inebriated laborer started sneezing again, long, loud and limitlessly. I felt it was hopeless—but I arose once more and tried to raise the glass to its former position. When I turned back to my seat, I noticed one young man with convulsive shoulders, politely trying to hide his laughing face behind his hand. I didn't blame him. The door and I were getting to be quite a comedy team.

Pulling into another station, our train took on a new stream of humanity. Many were in khaki uniforms—some were rouged and lipsticked young ladies—some were older, capable looking women who were probably secretaries to executives, or buyers for department stores. One lady carrying two umbrellas, asked to share my seat, while her friend placed herself just behind. Business men with brief cases were followed by trainmen who tried to settle down their charges.

As the train pulled out of this station, my seat companion looked at the wide open door and then said to me, "Of course, the conductor will close it!"

"You're an optimist!" I said ruefully. "Ever since Springfield I've been closing it constantly—"

"We'll take turns then!" she remarked as she tugged at the door knob and tried to disengage the floor fastener. She had no sooner reached her seat than desultory groups of dissatisfied passengers began to pass through, in search of seats (wholly unobtainable) where they could sit together

and chat in neighborly fashion. Each group would leave the door open for my seat partner and me to take turns in closing. Once in a great while, someone would take the trouble to close the door to the exact position in which he found it. But such a person was rare indeed. We finally fell to discussing how each person showed up his or her characteristics by the way each shut the door or failed to give it a thought. One or two conductors really did close the door, at which point we good-humoredly cheered. Eventually, we took to the game of sizing up each person who appeared in the doorway and began to bet upon whether or not he would close the door.

At New Haven again the open door discharged passengers and took on many new candidates for our little drama. A number of soldiers settled down in the seat by my inebriated neighbor who welcomed them vociferously—in the midst of new sneezes. Once more the train picked up speed, the vestibule doors whammed shut and we began to wonder who would close our inner door upon which our comfort depended. Quietly, efficiently, up rose a colored soldier who closed it politely. I turned to my seat-mate and said, "You can tell a gentleman, no matter what his color."

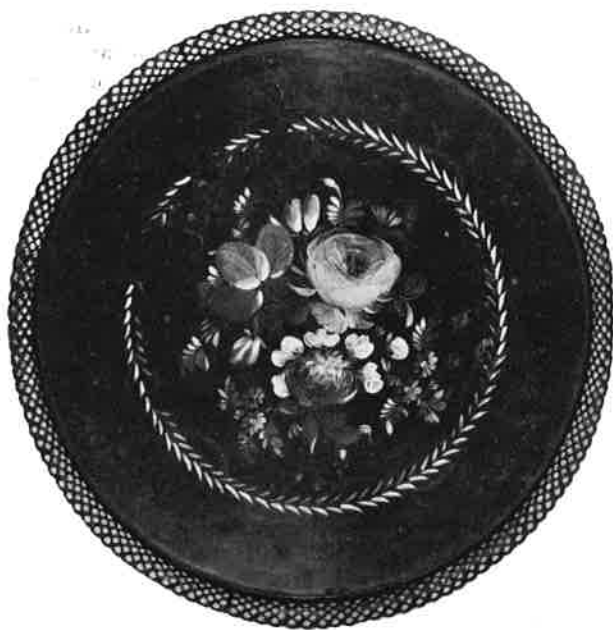
But alas, more restless pairs of people came looking for tete-a-tete seats and our door needed to be shut after them constantly. To one group of young girls, I sang out, "Girls, how about closing that door?" But they sauntered on as if they hadn't heard a single word. Then came a trimly dressed young man in a uniform that really fitted him. He shut the door carefully, turning the knob even, to be sure of its proper closing. Miracle of all miracles! There was about him the air of an officer. Quickly the colored soldiers appraised his uniform, guessing perhaps that a salute was due him. But there was no insignia of rank. So they began their banter. "Hi, Georgia boy! Le's see you. Brown on yo' suit—brass buttons on yo' coat—chicken on your hat!" . . . At this point, many faces were showing open laughter at the natural minstrel show material. "Chicken on yo' hat indeed!" I looked and saw it was the American Eagle—the sacred emblem of these United States.

Suddenly the door was open again—slammed into its floor socket by a heavy individual who probably was a successful contractor. A ruthless man who marched through the car as though he could order about 5000 men and 1000 steam shovels at a clip. The colored boys looked after him and shook their heads. Surely *he* would not turn back and close the draughty door. So the colored comedian undertook to shut it. He pulled and tugged. No release. He shoved and pulled and shoved again. No soap. Then he retreated several yards and advanced with mighty tread, hooking his shoulder suddenly behind the edge of the door and dislodging it from the floor clamp. Spreading out both arms he made a great play at shutting the door completely and for all time. Then he turned around and shook his head. "That door am just like the Japs. You shoot and shoot, you push and push—but it ain't until you blitz it dat you get it!"

In future, I may elect to ride in the middle or at the rear of a car. But I am sure that I shall miss a lot of comedy and the many chances to observe human nature which made yesterday's journey one that passed rapidly.



Tray owned by Mrs. Llewellyn Jones



Tray owned by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Fisher

UNUSUAL ORIGINALS

Virginia Milnes Wheelock, Editor

The rectangular tray pictured opposite, is owned by Mrs. Llewellyn Jones of Gardner, Mass. It has an *original* lace edge design upon it, and so it appears to be the exception that proves the rule.

"All types of painting from early delicate gold-leaf and bronze work to late stencilled bronze are found on these trays, (the rectangular) as though they were popular through most of the periods in which we have an interest. The only kind of design that would look inappropriate on this form of tray is a lace-edge pattern."

From Early American Decoration, Esther Stevens Brazier, p. 153

The picture of the 17½ inch round lace-edge tray was sent in by Gina Martin of Glastonbury, Conn., and the tray is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Fisher, North Street, Litchfield, Conn.

Instead of the customary crimson over silver leaf, this tray has vermillion patches to make up the tortoise-shell background. Generally, the chrysanthemum makes its appearance on the Chippendale tray, but we find it here, painted in vermillion and alizarin, in combination with a filmy bluish-white rose. The large leaves do not appear to be over a red background, although this fact could not be definitely ascertained. All the small flowers and buds are painted in the traditional blue. The small leaves appear almost flat in color.

Surrounding the center design, the wreath is made of brush strokes, vermillion inside and white outside. Barely discernible in the photograph, the circle line is green, and the whole wreath is interwoven with green brush strokes.

The Chippendale tray pictured on the cover was presented to the Church Home of Hartford, Ridge Rd. Residence, by Miss Alice Haynes and was originally the property of her grandmother, Mrs. Phoebe Ann Smith Johnson, Durham, Conn. It can be traced back to 1850. The photograph was sent in by Gina Martin, Glastonbury, Conn.

On this 28½ inch Chippendale, the dusted background is made up of silver-gold in the center with copper powder at the edge. The leaves are a very dark green, almost black, with dusted centers. Both the bird and the buds are white with transparent colored overtones. The daisy is yellow with transparent green wash in the center; the two blue flowers, painted in flat technique with a dark varying wash of blue; there are three black flowers, which show up with startling effect against the bronzed ground, and they all contain bright red strokes in a flat technique with a wash of alizarin over most of the flower. The tray is finished off by a gold-leaf border on the outer flange of the tray.

Members of the Guild were privileged to see both the round lace-edge and the Chippendale tray at the Hartford meeting.

SYMBOLS TO LIVE BY

The inspiring talk given by Mr. Donald Shelley at our second annual meeting, in which he traced the sources of the patterns the early decorators used over and over, led me to ponder on what significance these symbols had, that their constant use created a tradition. It almost seemed that tangible motifs became intangible symbols and that they were used with a purpose, as an inspiration and a guide. So I have written these little verses.

BEATRICE S. BRUCE
2nd Annual Meeting,
West Hartford, Conn.
May 13th-14th, '48

As long as we live we have something to do
A goal to accomplish, a dream to make true.
With tools to guide our mind and hand
We trace a pattern, fulfill a plan.

The Flower, the Leaf, the Heart and the Star
Symbols—a heritage richer by far
Than a purse of gold.
They pulse with Life, they can never grow old.

THE FLOWER

To walk in beauty, so fresh, so free
Riches for all to enjoy, who will see.

THE LEAF

The Leaf, reaching out with open hand
To accept Life's challenge, be it lowly or grand.

THE HEART

The Heart to live Life, be it easy or hard
To do one's duty, to fear one's God.

THE STAR

The Star, twinkling, as much as to say
I am your guide, be fearless, be gay."

Of all the work that produces results, nine-tenths must be drudgery. There is no work, from the highest to the lowest, which can be done well by any man who is unwilling to make that sacrifice.—Anonymous.

THE COUNTRY TIN OF OLIVER FILLEY

Everett N. Robinson

Editor's Note — The following article is the talk, in part, given in West Hartford by Mr. Robinson to the Guild meeting. We are grateful to him for letting us print it here, and hope that in the future, we may have more about Oliver Filley to report.

It is a very auspicious omen for this recently established Hartford Chapter of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, that, concurrently with its entertainment of the main Guild in West Hartford, a complete set of the records of a japanner and tinsmith, Oliver Filley, 1781-1846, should be discovered, together with many samples of his craft. These Oliver Filley documents, discovered among the heirlooms of his descendants, have been donated to the Connecticut State Library and, together with others still in the possession of the Bidwell family, constitute one of the most complete and authentic records extant on the early American enterprise of producing tinware, not only of its decoration, peddling, the methods of production, costs and selling prices, but also of the conditions prevailing in the years 1811 to 1822.

Interwoven in the warp and woof of this industrial pattern is the history of the times. The War of 1812 is continuously in the background of the picture as presented by these letters and records and in their similarity to present times conditions prevalent then are doubly interesting to us. We learn that, had the fighting come inland in Hartford, Captain Filley with his forty militiamen, would have been alerted and become actively engaged in battle. Fortunately enough, the fighting never got closer than Essex where the British Marines landed and burned 28 ships, during this period. As it is, his letters and records are full of wartime conditions, shortages because of interruption of commerce with Great Britain, inflation difficulties with currency, lack of reserves in materials and supplies, and almost complete collapse in banking and credit arrangements. But thru it all, goes the shuttle of Yankee ingenuity and persistency and, with unabated energy, they carried on "business as usual", while America freed herself of the last vestige of dependence on England. America was actively engaged in fighting for independence in world commerce and was asserting her right to a "hands off" policy from Great Britain who was an arrogant mistress of the seas. Madison was president, but Monroe was to be next elected and the Monroe Doctrine was to objectify American isolation.

It is in this period that we find Oliver Filley, at 28 years of age, already established in a commercial career. He was the son of a land owner in Bloomfield. Thru successful operations in peddling, (the early American mercantile manner) he had gained a foothold in commerce and was associated closely with such well-known personages as T. D. Boardman of Hartford, who was trained by and successor to his uncle Danforth Boardman of fame in Connecticut pewter, the Norths of Berlin, famous in gunsmithing, the Wilcoxes and Pattisons, also of Berlin, known for tinsmithing and machinery, and of Seth Peck, of Southington, also

noteworthy for tinsmithing. As Oliver was also well known in Hartford among the banking and political circles of his day, his papers and records are of great value in shedding light on the dim records of the past and will add much to the historical prestige of the State Public Library, where they will be placed. Too often, historical documents are in attics, inaccessible for reference, and not in libraries. We are indeed fortunate that the Bidwell family has made them available to us in this manner and it is my purpose, in presenting this paper before the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild meeting in Hartford, to report this new finding and to analyze these records in both tinsmithing and japanning.

It has been the technique of writers of best sellers on this subject to treat with copious doses of imagination, those phases of tinsmithing and decorating, about which they have known so little in facts and records. Humorous and anecdotal stories have been used to keep reader interest and to gloss over the very little in detail that was actually known of the past. To dwell exclusively on the wooden nutmeg, the antics of the tinkers in the taverns, or the eccentricities of the inventor and their naive advertising methods and showmanship, is to make the mistake of over-emphasis. To get straight in our concepts that G. Fox, Peck, Stowe & Wilcox, Seth Thomas, International Silver and many others, are but the present establishments whose humble beginnings were in pack peddling and journeymen mechanics is to turn back the pages of time with fuller understanding. Today's Fuller Brush Man, also of Hartford, proves the old time efficiency of peddling, by his remarkable success in merchandising brushes. Tin peddling contained all of the elements of primitive distribution, public relations and advertising and was the American foundation of all those crafts or professions in later developments.

Back of 1850 was the period of the Guilds. The Pattisons arrived in this country and settled in Connecticut as Guild trained whitesmith mechanics. They trained their men in the same tradition, that of England. Elsewhere, in Pennsylvania, the trend was more traditionally German and in New York, Dutch, but the differences in the tin were rather in form than in technique and the Guild of one European country was quite similar to that of the others. It was the period of slavery and of voluntary or semivoluntary servitude. Workmen were bound and apprentices indentured. It was the period of Early America, "the collectible period", when handcrafting was at its best and japanning and decorating at its artistic zenith. Oliver Filley opened a tinshop and sent out his peddlers from Bloomfield (formerly Wintonbury) in addition to operating his japanning establishment.

Tinsmithing had become a highly specialized branch of whitesmithing but oftentimes was tied in with other crafts. Pewterers, plumbers, coppersmiths, silver and goldsmiths and even hornsmiths were often first one and then the other, in actual practice and the jack of all trades, the tinker, was always among them. Even the blacksmith in iron sometimes turned his hand to copper or tin plate and it was a tinsmith working in wrought iron and copper, Deacon Shem Drowne, who became immortalized for his grasshopper weather vane atop Fanueil Hall in Boston. It is

easier to get information from the findings published on pewter, wrought iron, copper and brass than to find anything on tin. Tinsmithing seems to be a poor relation in records and Paul Revere lanterns are classified as sheet iron tin-plate by the wrought iron writers. Thus, also, are lost nearly all of the records on the large trays, as they were made of so-called tole or sheet-iron and not tin-plated. Somehow, Chippendale, Georgian, Rectangular, Gallery and Octagonal trays should be included as tinware and are thus popularly considered, but they cannot be legitimately classified as such. They require a heavier grade of metal because of their size and they are processed by different tools. Trays were not made in America in the period 1811-22 and the first tray factory in the United States was started in 1837. Up to that time all large trays were imported from England and France and were mostly of so-called tole metal which is a tin and iron alloy, not a tin-plated metal and is entirely different, as is brass different from copper. Thus is Americana garbled among antiquarian conceptions.

Tinware seemed to be considered beneath the dignity of the pewter writers and was pushed aside by the wrought iron, copper and silver writers alike. Yet, tinware is so typically American, so essentially a democratic and liberated product that it might well be the industrial emblem of the nation instead of being used merely in the seal of the town of Berlin, which is about all that is left of this once flourishing industry begun there by Pattison in 1740.

Tinware, tinpeddling and japanning epitomize the America, after the Revolution, freed of kingly restraint in style and manner and democratically supplying everyone with necessities that make life easier. This production was brought within the reach of the lowliest farm wife by barter and a touch of beauty was added to grace the lives of the most rustic existence with japanning. Tin plate was spontaneously accepted as a better, lighter, cleaner, and brighter object that soon replaced pewter, wrought iron and copper. It was not only cheaper and more attractive, but best of all, it required no scouring or polishing to keep it that way. The tinpeddlers fulfilled a mission in American tradition that cannot be overlooked by the recorders of its democracy. It was the beginning of a new mode of distribution and, in the short space of one century, it was this humble beginning of method and policy, that was to outstrip the old world in progress. The tinsmiths showed America the way.

Tin or, as it should be more accurately called, tin-plate is a very special kind of sheet iron, protectively coated with pure tin. The iron itself is charcoal fired to remove carbon and other impurities to a spongy metal state and is then beaten or hammered and rolled to a sheet form, thus making malleable iron of very high quality, uniform in characteristics, soft, pliable and easily formed. This method is more expensive than others and produces a higher quality product than iron such as was used in the making of stoves, stovepipes and other sheet metal fabrications. To differentiate it from this coarse ordinary sheet iron it was called "black tin", even before the tin coating had been applied, in the records of Oliver Filley. This black tin was used in places where intense heat would other-

wise melt off the tin coating, as in oven drip-pans, etc. This may account for the common mistake of assuming that tin rusts, which is as ridiculous a misconception as to say that paint rusts. Tin never rusts, but it is the metal beneath it which has become exposed, that rusts. The metal tin is most commonly known as tin foil, after it has been rolled thin. Tin is not affected by food or fruit acids and does not form the poisonous salts and oxides as does brass, copper, silver or lead. It is, therefore, a perfect protective coating for all food containers as the 20th century tin can will attest. Tin coating or plating may be applied to any metal easily by first melting and then either dipping or wiping. Before the electroplating process had been invented it was tin that was most satisfactory for, such plating.

Tin plate was made up in small size sheets, due to the process of manufacture and a very important fact to know, is that prior to about 1830, nearly all the tin sheets were of a size 10" by 14" as they were imported from England. The popular misconception that the old tinsmith conserved metal by piecing is entirely erroneous. If a sheet larger than 10" by 14" was required, it necessitated piecing or seaming to get a large enough piece of metal. It therefore dates an antique piece of tinware to before 1830 if it is seamed, when the stretchout dimensions exceed 14" as in some teapots and some tray waiters. These dimensions were so accepted that Oliver Filley records name sizes of articles as half-sheet, sheet and two sheet tray waiters, sheet funnels and half sheet tumblers, etc. The sheet size also determined the shape of the article to a marked degree. Tin plate manufacture was begun in America in 1820, but years passed before the demand for it could be met by the domestic output. After 1830 sheet sizes became larger and the need for piecing was eliminated. It is interesting to know that the grading of the weights of the metal was done by shaking the sheet and listening to the tone pitch of its thunder. Gauges have been invented for that today, and this sheet shaking process is used in our times only to create the sound of thunder by the prop man in radio and on the stage.

The period between 1825 to 1845 produced nearly all machines for cutting, forming, beading, turning, braking, cutting circles, slitting, stamping and rolling metals. Edwin Pattison in Berlin had none of them and made everything with a hammer and anvil and such hand tools as shears, punches, chisels and folding tongs. It was in 1804 that Eli Parsons of Dedham invented the first machine and this machine was the foundation of Oliver Filley's equipment. The story of the invention of this machine has been told and retold, but no treatise on tinware is complete without it, so that it will bear retelling once more. In 1804, there was a compulsory church attendance law in Massachusetts that required that everyone must go to church at least one Sunday a month. According to the story, it was on his church attending Sunday that Eli Parsons, the inventor, went sound asleep while the preacher droned on and on. Parsons started dreaming. Waked up with a start at the climax, in which the preacher had worked up a thunderous crescendo, Eli jumped up, ran down the aisle, wildly waving his arms and shouting, "I've got it, I've got it". Thus did the inventor dream up the solution to the tin working industry, in sanctified

slumber of the enforced church attendance. Tho' this machine may be said to have started to revolutionize the industry, it was still long before the machine era. Oliver Filley was just beyond the hand crafting stage but not yet in the machine age. He can still be considered a hand craftsman.

This is the general background of the tin industry for those times. It appears, from stories told by his descendants that Oliver Filley was considered a plunger in speculation among his conservative farmer neighbors and often shocked them by the magnitude of his purchases. Apparently he was capable of making many a good deal. It was in this vein that in 1815 he secured for \$20.00 the patent rights for the tin-working machine from Seth Peck of Southington and the records of the patent rights have a Seth Peck signature, dated back to 1804 from Eli Parsons and Calvin Whiting. Both of the latter were originally from Berlin, where they had received their tinsmith training from the Pattison craftsmen. It remains a Hartford County, Connecticut industry in its origin.

This is the same patent that is so well known among antiquarians, that of Eli Parsons and Calvin Whiting. This machine, by crank handle turning thru gears and with edged wheels for grippers, turns over edges for seaming or wiring and is still in use with very few improvements and modifications in sheet metal shops today.

It was with this machine that Oliver Filley branched out from his japanning business and added a tin shop to his japanning and peddling establishment. By 1815, he had already been making tinware for some time and had established a branch shop in Lansingburg in partnership with his cousin Augustus Filley, for the Canada trade. The letters necessary to keep Oliver Filley informed about business progress in Bloomfield are the most enlightening of his records. Much of the business was of a trade secret order and was kept in his head. The art of japanning was never told anyone until a promise of complete silence was exacted. The craft of tinning was also very closely held and limited to a privileged few. No one would tell when they knew what the processes and formulas were for self-protective reasons. So it remains a mystery today and has almost become a lost art. Many of the secrets have been taken to the grave, undisclosed, unrecorded, many more may yet sometime be found out.

In all, the records comprise 27 letters, 3 inventories, and 5 documents, and an account book. It is enough source material to write a book. But there is not the time now to read all of them. There are indenture papers showing the terms and manners of acquiring apprentices in 1811. They show that japanning was a secret trade or craft and that it required a long and closely supervised training. Only those of great promise were selected for apprentice training. They speak in their letters of buying boys and the price was \$5.00 to \$5.50, the standard for the times. In England, at this time, the father would have to pay the employer and the rate was in accordance with the fame of the craftsman, who was to train the apprentice. Contracts were made with those not apprenticed and already partially trained and skilled. All of the tinpeddlers were work-

ing under contract for Oliver Filley. Goods were sold outright to independent peddlers such as Phelps and Adams, who were often mentioned. As the roads of the time were passable only for seven months of the year, the tin peddlers' contracts were for May 15th to November 15th. A trip to Canada required a peddler, who knew trails and countrysides as did the old Indian scouts, as there were no bridges, grading, railroads and only few canals. It was a difficult and hazardous occupation, the only means of transportation other than by boat, was by wagon and even wagon springs had not yet been invented. Twelve miles a day was considered a good average. The trip took months, oftentimes. A long list of tin peddlers is included in the inventory, where they are listed as debtors, with notes due.

The journeymen tinsmiths worked for an average daily pay of \$1.00 but were expected to turn out a certain amount of finished tinware each day worked. Those who produced more, received more wages, those capable of producing less, received less. The account book gives a picture of what the rates were and how much was produced by each worker. Most of the names mentioned as journeymen mechanics were Berlin trained and many were secured through Wilcox, so often mentioned in the letters.

Also found is a complete list of all articles produced by the Filley Tinsmiths. Small articles, such as pill boxes and pepper boxes, were made out of scrap metal by the apprentices as a training method by which they acquired their skill. Cooky cutters, pastry cups, blacking boxes were other items made by them and the workmanship on them is often found to be much inferior and they sold very cheaply. A list of tin articles manufactured is as follows:

Basin bowls in three sizes.

Boxes—Flour, Sugar, Pill, Candle, Pepper, Spice, Nest of Round and Oval Sugar Boxes.

Cannisters in two sizes.

Cups—Flat cups in different sizes, molasses, milk and shaving cups.

Candle Sticks—Large and small back, Spring, Stand-up, large and small Raised bottom, and Square bottom.

Dippers—in different sizes.

Funnels—in different sizes.

Kettles—in three sizes.

Lanterns—Glass and pan lanterns.

Measures—in all sizes.

Moulds—Candle moulds in two sizes, Moulds of any capacity to order.

Pots—Coffee pots in three sizes, Crooked spout coffee pots, Small tea pots, Small water pots, Large sailor pots.

Pans—Milk pans in seven sizes, Round pans, Square pans, Round and square bread pans, Oval toast pans, Cheese pans, Oval Sauce pans, Pastry and Bath pans.

Pails—in six sizes.

Skimmers—in two sizes.

Toys—Pins, cups, pails, horses.

Tumblers—in three sizes.

Trunks—Nests in four sizes and any size to order.

Waiters (trays)—in three sizes, specified as $\frac{1}{2}$ sheet, sheet and 2 sheet, and small rimmed trays.

Scallop Cans—(or oyster cans) in two sizes.

Sugar Scoops—Large and small.

Pitchers—Large and small.

Pudding bags in two sizes, Collanders, Pot lids, Milk strainers, dip-pers, Graters, Lamp fillers, Link sausage fillers, Savealls, Reflectors, Stoves, Dutch buckets, Stove elbows, Dust pans, Glue pots, Water ladles, Blowhorns, Needle cases, Tumbler drainers and strainers.

The patterns for all these items vary somewhat but are remarkably similar to those of other shops in that the workmen traveled around from shop to shop and the patterns were all perfected to get the most out of the 10" by 14" metal sheet. The crooked spout coffee pot was an Oliver Brunson pattern and is Pennsylvania German in its origin. Brunson was Filley's master mechanic and made only coffee pots and the more difficult articles. His production records show him to be slow but painstaking. The Dutch buckets were his also. While most of the journeymen worked only for a few months, Brunson stayed on over a period of years. Brunson's work shows evidence that he was guild trained. The Norths of Berlin journeymen could out-produce him by double. Obviously, Oliver Filley needed both kinds of worker for japanning and plainware.

By careful perusal of the journal, it can be determined that the wholesale selling price for these articles was about six or seven times the labor cost and, that while the metal cost varied, it ran to about five to eight cents per sheet. It shows a gross profit of 300 to 500%. The peddlars profits were added to that. In tinware production, the capital was tripled every year and it is not surprising that these early tin magnates piled up substantial fortunes in a few years time, some of which are the basis of many present industrial holdings in Connecticut. It was during this period that John Jacob Astor used to occasionally go along with Shubel Pattison of Berlin on his tin peddling trips thru Canada, to engage in the profitable fur trade.

Tucked away in the inventories is some information that we have often wished for. Mrs. Brazer, in her book "Early American Decoration", mentions a cheap spirit varnish, which she suspected as perhaps being shellac. She mentions its poor quality and its fading characteristics and admonishes that care should be exercised in its removal for restoration purposes. Had she had access to the Filley papers, she would have known just what it was and why. We find an entry there:

To one barrel of varnish—\$39.26.

To the use of 1 kettle, coal resin and making same—\$3.00.

and one other entry:

4 qts. best copal varnish—\$10.00.

It tells the answer. Copal varnish was too expensive to use, except for the "flowering". For other purposes, the cheap \$39.26 a barrel, or 79 cents per quart kind was used. So it was not shellac, as Mrs. Brazer thought, but melted resin with spirits of turpentine added and if a colored background was desired, vermilion pigment was added. It became japan, when baked hard in the Filley shops. It was the secret formula that they would never tell. By figuring the costs of resin and turpentine at that time the exact proportion could be easily found. This kind of research makes antiques so interesting. It is a pleasure to be able to settle this mystery for you with the Filley papers.

Further, that entry of Allen Buckley—for a set of molasses cup punches—\$5.00—tells us how they could make those pieces so rapidly and cheaply. They were not cut out from a pattern with shears but were punched out with special cutting punches. It solves the mystery of how they could be cut so perfectly. Furthermore, it confirms the theory that Buckley who started making bench shears, hand tools, mallets, etc., in 1735 in Berlin, was an acquaintance of the Filleys, and so another point in the background is established. That brings in the Pattisons, Buckley, Wilcox and Peck.

Two camel hair brushes at \$2.00 is an entry that is also enlightening. Values of today are from ten to fifteen times higher than they were then and that brings the costs of brushes to \$10.00 or \$15.00. A brush would cost a day's pay. Good varnish would cost \$25.00 per quart. This alone would discourage amateurs in the business.

Also noteworthy is the fact that japanning was considered as just the background color and the decoration was a different process entirely. Japan varnish and decorating paint were also mentioned separately as was the "making of paints and varnishes". Most important was the secrecy imposed. Japanning was considered both an art and a trade.

We have mentioned the letters of Augustus Filley, cousin to Oliver, and the man who had charge of the Lansingburgh branch of the tinware business. They are most eloquently explanatory of the phases of the relationship between the newly established branch and the home office. Some of these letters follow.

Cpt. Oliver Filley
Simsbury, Connecticut
To be left at Hartford Post Office

Lansingburgh, July 17, 1815

Cpt. Filley. I inform, we are well except Hubbard. He has a little disintary but not much, unwell & no tin work. I have had to let 4 or eight pedlars go without anything. Johnstown Adams loaded Friday with \$600 & took every thing but a few flat ware & Mr. Dunbar was here Sat-

urday & had to go home & two or three want tin this week. If I had last week and week before \$2000 worth of tin I would have sold it. We have worked 72 boxes here but none to be bought here short of \$19.50 & wire 25 cents. I wish you to get Abijah North if money will get him as Asohet cant stay no longer than September 1st & none to be got about here. The City wants workmen. Offer 1.75 cents per day for work. I could sell as much tin as one more could make, and Japan. Mr. Elijah Kellogg wants jappaned tin sent to him if you can furnish him I shall write to him about it. I have bought some tin I wrote to you before, 27 boxes & have \$1000 dollars in the bank besides. If Fuller comes up I wish you to take his money & I can let him have it here & buy me some tin as soon as possible & wire, as it will not be best to buy at \$19.50 when \$18 will get it up. I cannot leave here at present. I do not know when. I suppose the money I sent you by Mr. Griswold, you have; with the rest of my silver I sold for 121½ per cent. I have not much more to write only the Canady pedlars wanted more tin than I could let them have. They sell milk pans in Canada common size for \$1. round pans 75 cents & other things in proportion. I lay out to come down the first of August & if you buy a lot of tin buy for me. If you take money out of the Bank, I can replace it any time. Tell Charles Seymour we have had no letters from home since you wrote in July & none from Fuller but Abijah North must be had at some price or other. Ben makes 2 dozen of small dippers in day & 3 dozen of pound flat cups. Luther earns 40 dollars per month & Asohet hard upon \$60. Deming is something like being sea sick. He got frightened last week & was going home because of the smallpox. He is one day upon one thing, & another, other! he is not so regular as some men but works pretty steady but wants to be here & there & all ways. He makes 6 dozens of milkpans in day. Uncle Warren staid here three days & slept in the shop nights & there were five pedlars here & all wanted tin & the old man stood ground but their fret will be over in month though it will do well here I think—write a little oftener if you please. I have been a little unwell. It has been hot enough last week to kill father.

A. Filley

Cpt. was here last Friday—Albany City tinmen was here Thursday & wanted 200 dollars jap. tin, but none for them at present—write back as soon as possible.

In this letter tin has increased to 191½c and wire to 25c because of war shortages. Abijah North, who was the first journeyman mechanic Augustus Filley asked for, is of the North gun family of Berlin. The North family history showed him to be also a gunsmith and to have worked in the North pistol shop in 1813. 6 dozen of these milk pans in 1 day is double the standard rate. Deming is fast but unreliable as a mechanic. Canada is a very good market for tin. They can get \$1 for a milk pan that costs 8c to make and everything else in proportion.

Lansingburgh 20 Sept. 1815

Cpt. Oliver Filley
Hartford, Conn.

I inform you we are all well & hope that these few lines will find you as they leave us in part. As for work I have not much work tin on hand. I shall not have an assortment of japan tin for my pedlars & what to do without. I have Harry here. I dont know if I can keep Hubbard & Harvy to work & Harry has got along so he will paint pretty well & to put him to work at tin it wont answer but I cant tell what to do. Mills has been here & wants japan tin as soon as possible but how I shall manage I cant tell if Deming comes back & Harvy comes on I shall not want Sam but if you think best to send on Deming & Harvy & keep Sam then I think it will be best but if Sam will not stay. I believe it will be best to keep Deming there but I want Harvy here as soon as possible or we shall lose our pedlars this fall for it is impossible to get along without he comes immediately on. Hubbard will stay untill his time is out & will stay longer but Burns has wrote to him that he wants him & he is tempted to go. If he cant stay but I shall not let him go untill his time is out & I dont know but Harvy will get so as to do a great share of the painting. I have had some thoughts of sending Harvy down. Let him paint there untill Hubbard time is out unless I have somebody else to work & how that will do I cant tell. You must say or write to me about it. Hubbard is very unstrung & what to do with him I cant tell. If I had not come on here I should almost be tempted to brake up but as it is it seems to be a pity. I think it will not do at any rate I am full of trouble to keep things going on & no one to work but Luther. We have not got so as to keep house & shall not untill next week. You cant tell how Deming will be unless you have seen him, but he said he will see you. Whisky he has, but I am thinking that I cant have one workman on here. Soon we shall load our pedlars but I cant load them. There was not so much tin work as I expected there would be. As there was no one to work on the japan but Deming & I have not a good assortment or at least shall not have after another load is taken & that will be this week. I have stated some of my difficulties and you may guess at the rest. I cant work much myself & you may send up what ones you think best but some one must come up or we might as well stop as to carry on without workmen. Write as soon as you receive this.

Augustus Filley

I expect that Johnstown pedler in soon & cant load them I cant write no more—The Devil begins with workmen.

Deming agreed to come back but he is unsteady as the wind in notions.

Cpt. O. Filley

Lansingburgh June 14th 1816

I recd. yours a few days since & thought I would not answer you untill Luther went down. I have been unwell this week with a very bad cold & never had a worse one & want you should, if possible, when Harry & Luther get down, if any way can, let Harvey and Harry make a barrell of varnish & ship it down as soon as possible for I cant buy spirits of turpentine here short of \$1.25 a gallon & if you can possibly make it I wish you would. As for money I have had the toughest times to send what I did to N. York & get along, I ever had in my life. I expected some in so I could send by Luther but I have the promise of some in the morning but if I get disappointed I will send you some by Tuesday or Thursday in letter if possible but I never see such times for money & will be. This cold turn-back has scart people to death & Wedburn, Cpt. Holts brother, was here last week he engaged 4 load of tin at L8—5 weeks in Harwinton & some sell in that quarter at etc., etc., so I have seen some peddlars that I know told me as a fact, etc., etc. I tell you never such cries for money the best of men have. There note protested at the bank but as fast as I can get I will pay all debts full & discount so as to be out of most of the trouble but pedlars cannot get money if it is not to be had. I have my tin & will 1st-22 of June. As for Israel he says the devil with tin & what-to do with him I cant tell. I have talked to him today hard enough & shall try all ways to make him do but do not expect I can but Luther will tell you. What I expect it will be dull, dull, dull and no money but I will try all ways & try to get a little but I want you to blow my horn in the mouth & dont let the boys have it all to talk about. Chester Phelps owes me \$200 & Cummings \$300 Waren \$400 I think I must get soon but Chester send me word that it was out of his power to do anything at present. I had a letter from Warren that no money could be got & never such times before. Nutt has not been out of Canada yet but writes he soon will come. I have had some news from some money that will come in 10 days. I have five cross box of tin over my proportion in the lot & I have some stored in Burts store piled up & perhaps there may be a box or two amongst it. If so I will inform you next letter. But I do not think there is—I should have thought that Hartford bills that I sent to N York would never get the discount, the best 11 or 12 specie bills—but cannot be helped I want you to start Harry back as soon as possible & as for money I shall send as fast as I can.

A. Filley

NB When you get pay for that horse, turn Warren loose for the worst times for money that ever was known.

Here the gossip of the peddlers seems to annoy Augustus. They talk of big business but can't pay their bills. All business was done on credit with notes, usually for a 4 to 6 months period.

The Harry mentioned is the apprentice boy of 1811 and in other letters Augustus says his work is very good.

Israel is an apprentice boy who is a problem to Augustus. He has complained of his misconduct to Oliver to whom he is indentured. Oliver has written to him and the answer of Israel is next.

May the 29 1816

Mr. Oliver Filley
Windsor Connecticut
To be left on Hartford Post Office

Worthy Master, I take the liberty to rite to you and let you know that I am well and in good spirits. I received a line from you this afternoon by Mr. Brown and you informed that I try to do too much in a day and dont do my work well. I must say myself that it has not been so good as it otto bee along back but I intend to do my work better and have, I dare say, that Mr. Filley made it as bad as it was full, tho he never found any fault with my pails nor dishkittles. It was the pans that he found the most folt with. It is quite sick by now here. The people are taken verry sudden. There has several dide in this place lately. I like living here very well indeed. I have not got acquainted much now I dont want to. Those I have got acquainted with I like very much. I shall endeavor to do as well for you as I can and I shall ever respect you as a friend for you was a friend to me in time of need and if you want me to go to the south, I wish that you would let me. I know that I can calculate upon going and Mr. Hall says if you want him to go you must let him know before his time is out here. So I end my letter and I wish that you would give my best respects to Mrs. Filley and all the fameely but Almira, and her I dont care anything about. So I am with respect, your apprentice

Israel Horsfield

Cpt. Oliver Filley

It is rather obvious that Israel wants to go to Philadelphia. The smallpox epidemic is mentioned again. Smallpox and Augustus are too much for Israel.

Cpt. Oliver Filley
Simsbury Connecticut

Nov. 26 1815

I have not more than ten minutes to write & will inform you that I wrote you a letter with one hundred dollars in it last week & wanted you to write so I could know something about affairs. No hundred plate tin to be bot in Albany for you. Tin is 21 dollars with ten percent. I can load some pedlars if you send them on soon—I think as for workmen I can spare you one if I could get them to go—but Larken & Hall I do not know but I shall send them back. I had some dispute with Larken about his work and told him plain English that as for tin being worked as he made some of it, I would not have it & he might go to work for you if he thought that you wanted him. Backed up but I would not have it so he might do as he pleased. I wont be tormented with bad work, if I clean

out the whole of them. I have sold about all the tin I have worked so far but I think I can spare one hand to you if we can find one that will go & perhaps you will have two come, if they dont do there work better. The varnish and thirty boxes of tin I need—but—money is scarce the banks stop discount. York I wanted & he has not come in yet. Harvey G. Filley was here Friday & he wanted about \$90 tin. He worked at Barber. He had money with him but he went down below to swap horses & has not been back since. I want you to inform me about how tin sells at what price I sell, I have not re'd your letter in answer to the last. I wanted you to send up the note of Phelps by Fuller—but send the first opportunity.

Sunday morning Nov 26 1815

A. Filley

Tin has gone up to \$21 now. This letter illustrates how the journey-men mechanics were shifted back and forth among the tin shops. All of the men lived at the home of A. Filley and quarreled among themselves and with Filley like members of a family. Harvey Filley is the son of Oliver and later went to Philadelphia and established a branch there for Pennsylvania and southern trade.

Lansingburgh Feb. 20th 1816

Cpt. Oliver Filley
Windsor
State of Blue Laws

Cpt. Filley

With great pains & sighing I inform you that money is beyond my reach at present. I expected that I should have been able to have sent you \$1000, for Adams & Chester owed in that amount & have not had a cent from them & every body falls short of paying their debts as they expected but it cannot be long before I must have money. I have been to see all my debts that I felt the most fearful of & have them I think pretty scared but such times never was known & such prices never heard for money. The best men fail of paying. I have \$3000 that ought to be paid & is now due or pretty much due at this time which I expected I should have had, but not any by me hardly enough to buy wood etc. but I do not owe much here only to workmen. I bought 12 boxes of plate ninety days discount without interest & I intend to work along so as not to be crowded I hope again. I think I must have some money in soon & as soon as I get any will send you all I can & as fast as I can. I expected Mills from Canada & some money but none comes & it is of no use to sue when people have a disposition to pay & cant pay which is the case now a days & as for workmen I wont pay such wages another season that is truth. I suppose you will pull or wear the rest of your hair off but I cannot do no more than I can & have done every thing to collect money but

it is not to be had. Deming is growling around & wants to work. I suppose next summer he will want I suppose \$26 but it will not bear. I shall not do much about any thing untill you come up only keep along & collect all I can so good bye

sincerely

A. Filley

Much can be learned about business conditions prevalent in these years, from the entire collection of letters. The Lansingburgh branch was closed in the summer of 1816, but opened shortly afterwards, when conditions improved. We learn of the difficulty in finding journeymen who could use the newly invented turning machine. The old men of the hand-crafting order are not satisfactory. The smallpox epidemic is mentioned frequently. It is interesting to note how much difficulty was had with the different craftsmen. Some were slow, some good, some too fast, some dissatisfied with their locality and so it went.

That Oliver Filley was one of the first japanners of Hartford vicinity, is obvious. Whether or not one is interested in tinsmithing or in decorating and collecting tin, the records of Oliver Filley are important antiquarian documents.

Tho they are as yet not catalogued, they may well prove to be a milestone in Hartford County antiquarian history, when completely assembled. We are grateful to the Bidwell family of Hartford for making them available to us.

From his epitaph in the cemetery plot in Bloomfield, we learn that Oliver Filley died, December 9th, 1846—aged 62.

*A Life of Toil and Pain
Exchanged for Eternal Rest*

I hope that you have enjoyed Oliver Filley as I have. I am sure that he would have given you a benediction to carry on in the spirit of good craftsmanship of your leader.

THE RESTORATION OF THE LAMBERT HITCHCOCK CHAIR FACTORY

John T. Kenney

Resume of the talk given by Mr. Kenney at West Hartford, May 13, 1948

On a fishing trip in the summer of 1946 I was attracted to the old mill which stands on the bank of the Farmington River in what is now Riverton village. The building was in deplorable condition, windows broken, roof leaking and foliage grown higher than the three story structure itself. Nevertheless as I knew, it was the original factory of Lambert Hitchcock and therein he made the first Hitchcock chairs. I felt that as such it had a great potential and upon my return to Hartford I interested a good friend of mine, Mr. Richard Coombs, who is a woodworker, in the project of restoring and developing this century old business.

For nearly two years now we have been at work. We have not as yet completed a single chair. The first, as a matter of fact, will be ready about Labor Day. We have attempted to make our restoration complete and that is a considerable task. There are either 20 or 21 wood pieces in a Hitchcock, depending on whether or not the narrow slat is used in the back and each and every one of these pieces must be treated exactly so or the result is not true Hitchcock but Hitchcock 'type'. After all, Hitchcock was production minded even in his day and he set up his shop (quite differently from Duncan Phyfe) to obtain production. His patterns are of course Sheraton's mostly, but his object was production of a solid, fancy chair. In fact, if we ever reach his quantities we will be doing exceptionally well. He made about 15,000 per year, or about 50 per day. Our first production will be perhaps 20 per day.

Just as Lambert Hitchcock's chairs have so well withstood time and wear, so his factory also has stood up against the ravages of time, after one has discovered that structurally it has always been sound. It is all brick and the foundation stones are immense.

We have set apart one room which will be open to the public and will use it as a display room for our samples and the originals from which we are deriving our patterns. Also this room will contain all the Americana connected with Hitchcock which we have been able to collect. I read to the Guild from the place book of Eunice Alford Hitchcock a poem, beautifully written by Lambert, entitled "Choice of a Wife". We feel that its expression is indicative of the character of the man who so beautifully developed the stencil decorations which you of the Guild know so well.

As stated, we are using exact measurements for our replicas and we are doing real rush seats, of course. No cane, however. We are not spray painting inasmuch as we want the brush and the hand-work result.

A number of the very finest stores in the country have sent their representatives to us in recent months and all have said that we have obtained one of the very few real things in the furniture industry. We will sell most of our production to a limited number of stores, reserving some to sell ourselves right at the factory. Later we intend making cabinet furniture to supplement the chairs. It is a little known fact that Lambert Hitchcock did make 'tables and stands of all descriptions' and we will make some of the very same.

LETTER FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE GUILD

Our mutual interest in the subject of Early American Decoration led to the organization of the Guild, with its present membership of over five hundred. Revived largely by the efforts of Esther Stevens Brazer, this craft has been popularized and widely publicized by her students, grand students, great grand students and other distant relatives.

It is a considerable responsibility to put into effect what we hope will prove to be the best ways of serving such a large group of people and this task can only be accomplished by the team-work of our members.

I should like to thank everyone for the encouragement given me and the Board of Directors during these formative years. I know that you will continue to give your support and cooperation to our new President, Louise McAuliffe. She has a wide background of organization experience and should be able to guide us well. Let's give her a big hand.

Good luck, Louise!

Emily Heath

DUES PAYABLE

Dues for the Year 1948-1949 became payable June 30. No notices will be sent out to members, so please remit to Helen W. Chivers, 15 North Balch St., Hanover, N. H., unless you have already done so.

Unless Guild members notify the Business Manager of THE DECORATOR, Miss Jean Wylie, 10 Hillside Ave., Noroton, Conn., of a change of address, no copies of the publication will reach them.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow-Guild Members:

I wish that I could sit down and talk with each one of you individually about our Guild, and catch your vision of the possibilities of mutual helpfulness and service in the preservation of Early American Decoration, but of course this is impossible.

We are indebted to our able and gracious Martha Muller for the compiling of this Decorator, and I trust you who receive it will read it from cover to cover.

The past two years brought many challenges, all of which you met unflinchingly. This new year with a new president, may hold many more, but together we will go forward to meet them.

It has been a rare privilege to work with the fine women who have served the Guild. Each one has done so in her particular capacity, which seemed best for the Guild.

We are rich in the heritage of the research work of the late Esther Stevens Brazer. May we not individually, as Guild members, be alert to uncover further sources of early decorations and thereby carry on the heritage? It is my hope that any such material will be brought to the Fall Meeting and at that time plans formulated for a permanent Guild portfolio to supplement the portfolio of the late Esther Stevens Brazer.

Congratulations to our newly formed chapters that are already meeting, exchanging ideas and sharing patterns among themselves.

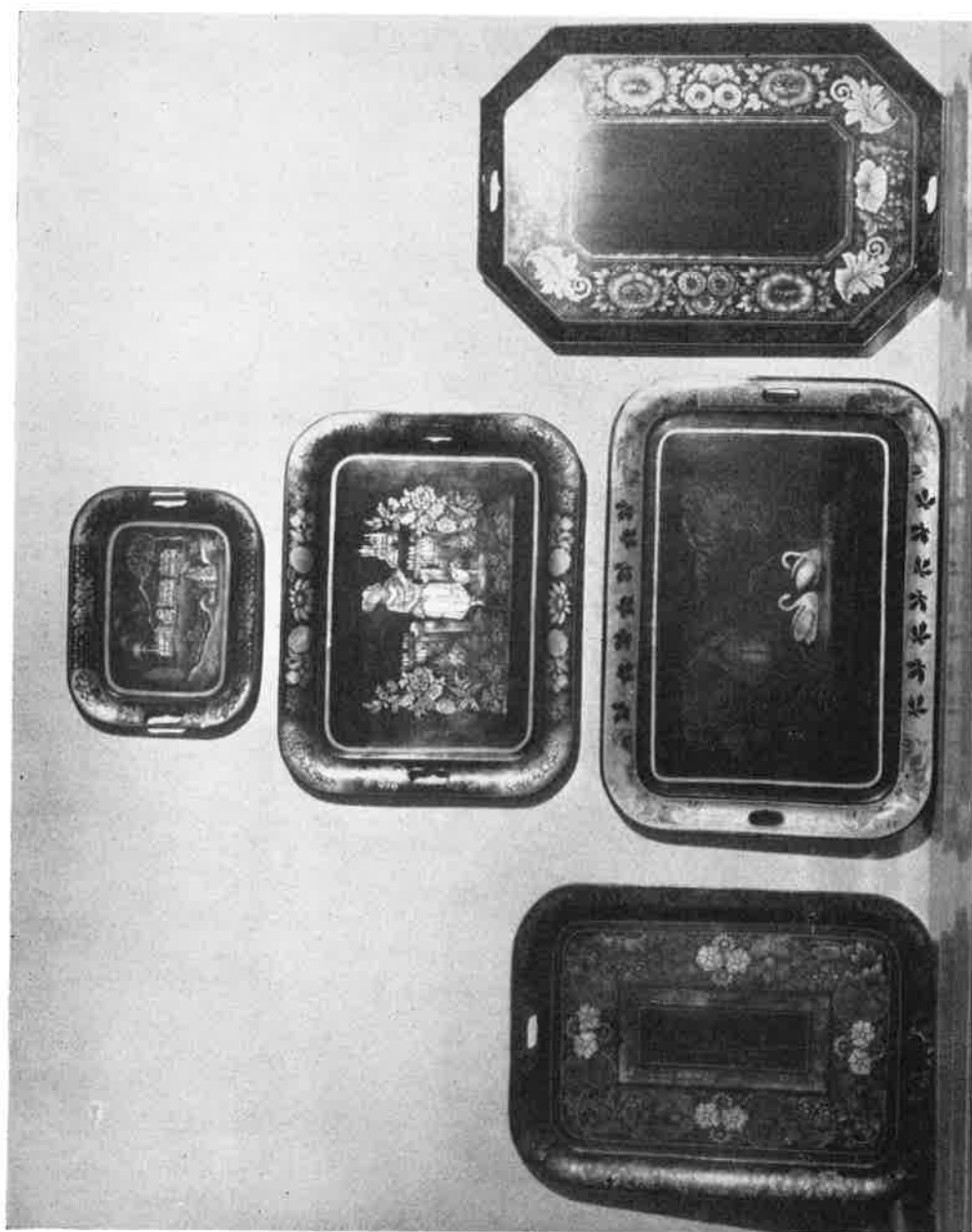
As we faithfully reproduce an authentic pattern, we are bringing into our homes some of the beauty that our forbears knew and cherished.

My deep affection with best wishes for happiness goes to each member of our far-flung organization as we enter this new Guild year together.

This is your Guild and as your president, I want to do my part to make our organization worthwhile and helpful. Won't you help, both by suggestion and constructive criticism?

Faithfully yours,

H. Louise McAuliffe



REPORTS OF GUILD MEETINGS

Directors Meeting, Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, New York City and "Innerwick"—March 19-20, 1948.

All Directors were present, except Mrs. George Plimpton, who voted by proxy.

Treasurer's Report—Mrs. Arthur Chivers.

Savings Account	\$2608.48
Checking Account	303.00

Total	\$2911.48
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\$327.00 of this total is held in the Museum fund.

Report on the Decorator—Mrs. Max Muller.

Decorators on hand—V. 1, No. 1 (10 for permanent file, none for sale). V. 1, No. 2, 175. V. 2, No. 1, 620.

Membership Report—Charter members, 176. Regular members, 278. Total, 454.

Applications pending—79.

As Article I, Section II, of the By-laws, reads quote: "At its option the Membership Committee may ask applicants to submit samples of their work." It was voted that: All future applicants for membership shall be required to submit two finished articles—one stencilled, one country tin. These will be considered by the Membership Committee and the Directors previous to the next regular meeting following the receipt of application.

Exhibitions—Mrs. Andrew Underhill.

Permission was granted to Mrs. Underhill and Mrs. Muller to arrange an exhibition of work at the Suffolk County Museum, Stony Brook, L. I., in the summer of 1948.

Standards—Mrs. Gordon Scott.

It was recommended that because of our rapidly growing membership, only 3 articles per member may be submitted for judging at Hartford, and it was so voted.

Incorporation—Mrs. S. Burton Heath, President.

1. Mrs. Heath presented Certificate of Incorporation in New York State under the name of "The Society of Early American Decoration, Inc." Because the word "Historical" was not granted, the Society is not tax exempt. The Secretary of State has ruled that Historical Societies must be incorporated under the approval of the State Board of Education. It was voted to make another attempt to do so. Expense to date \$100.00.

2. In accordance with the vote of the Hanover Meeting, the Directors named themselves Trustees of the Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.
3. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Andrew Underhill and seconded by Mrs. Arthur Chivers, it was voted to accept Mr. Clarence Brazer's Deed of Gift for the Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.
4. Mrs. Max Muller was elected Curator of the Society.

Fireproof Storage for the protection of Brazer Portfolio and related material was considered and the board awaits recommendations from Mrs. Max Muller, Curator.

Mailing Cartons: It was voted that Mrs. Andrew Underhill expend \$45.00 to purchase mailing cartons for resale to members.

Plans for Hartford Meeting, May 13-14, as submitted by Mrs. Mell Prescott, Chairman of the Charter Oak Branch, were approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernice Drury, Secretary

May 10, 1948

With all Directors voting, the list of applicants published in the President's March letter were admitted to membership.

Bernice Drury, Secretary

Directors Meeting, Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, May 12, 1948—West Hartford, Connecticut.

All Directors were present, except Mrs. George DeVoe, whose resignation was read and accepted with regret.

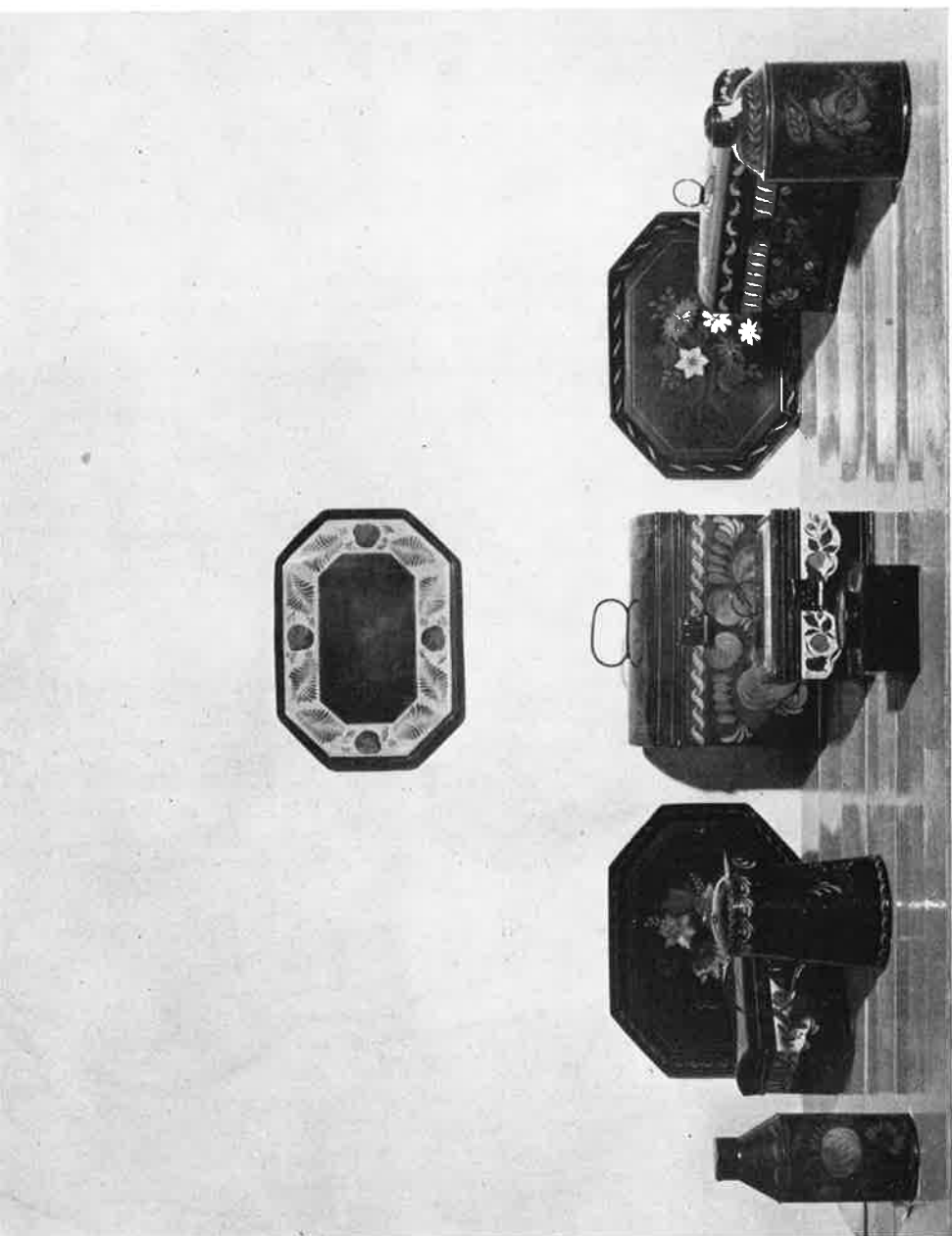
Upon a motion made by Mrs. John McAuliffe and seconded by Mrs. Arthur Chivers, the Trustees voted unanimously to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees accept the Clarence W. Brazer Deed of Gift of April 29, 1948, of the patterns, photographs and related material, to be known as "The Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Designs", and we hereby accept the terms therein.

A motion was made by Mrs. Gordon Scott, seconded by Mrs. Arthur Chivers and voted by the Directors to appropriate a sum not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00) for fireproof cabinets and protection of the "Esther Stevens Brazer Collection fo Early American Designs".

For better representation of our rapidly growing membership, it was voted that an amendment to the Constitution be drawn up to increase the number of Directors by three (3). Notice to be sent each member (see By-Laws, Article VI Amendments).

Bernice Drury, Secretary



Country tin awards given to Jessica Bond, Virginia Marin, Mell Prescott, Mrs. Harley Riga, Lucille Stuart, Violet Scott, Emilie Underhill, Virginia Wheelock.

The Board of Directors Meeting, May 14, 1948, West Hartford, Connecticut.

Guild elected Directors for 1948-1951: Mrs. Gordon Scott, Uxbridge, Mass.; Mrs. Arthur Chivers, Hanover, N. H.; Mr. Walter Wright, Montpelier, Vt.

1948-1950 (unexpired term of Mrs. George DeVoe): Mrs. R. H. Symington, Rockville, Conn.

1947-1950: Mrs. Andrew Underhill, New York City; Mrs. G. L. Plimpton, Wilbraham, Mass.

1946-1949: Mrs. S. Burton Heath, Darien, Conn.; Mrs. Max Muller, Beechhurst, Long Island, N. Y.; Mrs. John McAuliffe, Newton Highlands, Mass.

It was recommended that no system of succession be followed in election of officers.

Officers duly elected for 1948-1949:

President—Mrs. John McAuliffe.

1st Vice President—Mrs. Arthur Chivers.

2nd Vice President—Mrs. Andrew Underhill.

Recording Secretary—Mrs. R. H. Symington.

Corresponding Secretary—Mrs. G. L. Plimpton.

Treasurer—(to be announced).

New applicants:

Mrs. Gordon Scott recommended that the Judging Committee rate new applicants' work during the training period before the Guild Exhibitions. That any applicant, whose two pieces received less than a C, be sent an Associate Membership Card and asked to submit more work at a later date. Upon a motion by Mrs. John McAuliffe, the Directors voted to accept Mrs. Scott's recommendation.

Mrs. Max Muller offered the following resolution to our retiring President, Mrs. S. Burton Heath. This was unanimously adopted:

Whereas:

Emily Heath, as first President of the Guild, has freely given much of her time during these two years to its organization, and

Whereas:

We, her Board of Directors, realize that the Guild owes its very existence to her untiring efforts

Be it resolved:

That we tender to her our sincere thanks and that a copy of this resolution be spread upon the Minutes.

Bernice Drury, Secretary

2nd Annual Meeting, Esther Stevens Brazer Guild, May 13-14, 1948
—West Hartford, Connecticut.

Mrs. S. Burton Heath, President, extended greeting to 173 members present.

Mrs. Mell Prescott, Chairman of Arrangements and President of the Charter Oak Branch, welcomed the Guild in the name of the Hostess Chapter.

Mrs. Carroll Drury, Secretary, read the Minutes of two Directors Meetings—March 19th in New York, and May 12th in West Hartford.

Mrs. Arthur Chivers, Treasurer, reported:

Total receipts	\$4436.77
Total disbursements	1740.37

Balance on hand May 8, 1948.....	\$2696.40
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Of this \$332.00 is held in Museum Fund.

Report read and placed on file.

Mrs. John McAuliffe, Finance—No report.

Mrs. R. S. Christie, Membership: Charter, 178; Regular, 359; Honorary, 2; Associate, 6; Total, 545.

Applications pending, 37.

Mrs. Walter Burrows, Chapters—announced the formation of two new Chapters:

No. 4—New York City Chapter.

No. 5—Long Island Chapter, Garden City, L. I.

Mrs. Edgar Knapp moved, Mrs. Mell Prescott seconded, and the Guild voted to admit these two Chapters to membership.

The Connecticut River Chapter will henceforth be known as "The Pioneer Chapter".

Mrs. Max Muller, Publications—stated that the Decorator would publish a Summer and a Winter Issue. As Curator, she announced that plans were proceeding to carry out the terms of Mr. Brazer's Deed of Gift and efforts would be made to make the Collection of Designs available to members.

Mrs. Andrew Underhill, Exhibitions Chairman, reported that an exhibition was held in November at the Sweat Memorial Art Museum, Portland, Maine, arranged in memory of Esther Stevens Brazer by Mrs. Clyde Holmes.

Mrs. Gordon Scott, Standards Chairman, reported that no new classes will be opened for judging in October; however, judging sheets are being prepared on Glass Painting for future use.

Mrs. George L. Plimpton, Property Chairman, reported that a committee of fifteen members has been chosen. No occasion for this Property Committee to meet had arisen until Guild Incorporation was complete.

The President asked for a vote of confidence on action taken at Directors Meetings. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Thomas Davis, the Guild expressed its approval on the action of the Board requiring that new applicants submit two finished articles—one stencilled, one country tin.

Mrs. John Klein moved and the Guild voted to ratify the action of the Board to appropriate a sum not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1000.00) for fireproof cabinets and protection of the "Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Designs".

Mrs. John Klein moved, Mrs. Arthur Chivers seconded, and the Guild voted to accept the recommendation from the Board that the number of Directors be increased by three (3), and that the present Nominating Committee be held active until such time as these Directors are elected.

Report of Nominating Committee:

Chairman, Mrs. Henry Hughes, Watervliet, N. Y.
Mrs. Lally Alexander, Garden City, Long Island, N. Y.
Mrs. Vinton Ziegler, Elmsford, N. Y.
Mrs. Carl Cushing, Bethel, Vt.
Mrs. Norman Crowey, Charlestown, N. H.
Mrs. John Buck, Wethersfield, Conn.
Mrs. Arthur Holmes, Kingston, Mass.

A slate as follows was presented:

Directors 1948-1951: Mrs. Gordon Scott, Mrs. Arthur Chivers, Mr. Walter Wright.

Director 1948-1950 to fill unexpired term of Mrs. George DeVoe—Mrs. R. H. Symington.

There being no nominations from the floor, Mrs. Harley Riga moved and it was voted that the Secretary cast a ballot in favor of the slate.

It was also voted that the Ann Butler Tin Collection and The Scroll remain on Exhibition and then be housed at "Innerwyck".

The business meeting recessed.

Business: May 14, 1948—West Hartford, Connecticut.

Mrs. Carroll Drury, Secretary read slate of officers elected at Directors Meeting May 14, 1948:

President—Mrs. John McAuliffe, Newton Highlands, Mass.
1st Vice President—Mrs. Arthur Chivers, Hanover, N. H.
2nd Vice President—Mrs. Andrew Underhill, Long Island, N. Y.

Recording Secretary—Mrs. R. H. Symington, Rockville, Conn.
Corresponding Secretary—Mrs. G. L. Plimpton, Wilbraham, Mass.
Treasurer—(to be announced).

Mrs. Gordon Scott (Standards) reported that 113 pieces were judged—38 “A” awards were given. 45 Originals and former “A” awards were exhibited. Guests attending Exhibition numbered 197.

Regular membership cards will be sent to those new applicants receiving a C award or better.

Associate membership cards will be sent to other new applicants.

Associate members will be asked to submit further work if they desire to become active members.

Mrs. Ruth Kephart moved and the Guild voted to thank the Committee members of the Charter Oak Branch for the thoughtful and very pleasant arrangements made by them for this, our second Annual Meeting.

Mrs. Alfred Ells moved that a Committee be appointed to investigate a meeting place for October. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.

Bernice Drury, Secretary

Officers of the Charter Oak Branch are: Chairman, Mrs. Mell Prescott; 1st Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Donald Cooney; 2nd Vice-President, Mrs. Sherwood Martin; Secretary, Genevieve Waters; Treasurer, Mrs. George Elder.

Committees for the Annual Meeting were:

Accommodations: Mrs. Morgan Pease.

Luncheon: Chairman, Mrs. Donald Cooney; Mrs. Henry Brockway, Mrs. Joseph B. Champlin, Mrs. Mark Hart, Mrs. Sidney Prince, Mrs. Fred Ray.

Accommodations for Displays: Chairman, Mrs. S. C. Walter; Mrs. Edgar T. Glass, Mrs. Wynn Rossiter.

Exhibition Committee: Chairman, Mrs. R. H. Symington; Mrs. John S. Buck, Mrs. James Callery, Mrs. Francine Christ, Mrs. Sherwood Martin, Mrs. W. L. Munroe, Mrs. Mell Prescott, Mrs. H. W. Seldon.

Registration Committee: Chairman, Mrs. H. W. Selden; Mrs. A. C. Berg, Mrs. G. S. Elder, Mrs. A. J. Gleed, Mrs. C. F. Killem.

Following the Business Session, the Meeting was turned over to Mrs. Harry MacDuffie, Chairman of Program, to whom much credit is due for engaging such an interesting and instructive group of speakers.

Mr. John Kenny told of his purchase and plans for continuing the old Hitchcock Chair Factory in Riverton, Connecticut.

Mr. Donald Shelley, Curator of Art N. Y. Historical Society, and himself a descendant of the Pennsylvania Germans, lectured on Pennsylvania Dutch Designs and their probable origin.

Slides shown were divided into three groups:

1. Background origin—medieval manuscripts in Fraktur.
2. Pennsylvania Dutch musical manuscripts, certificates of birth, marriage and death.
3. Full color slides of Dower Chests, Tinware, China, etc.

Mr. E. N. Robinson's subject was Old Tinsmiths and Old Tinware.

In the midst of a circle of chairs, Mr. Tomae, an old time salesman, demonstrated varnishing and painting techniques to an absorbed audience, informally answering many questions.

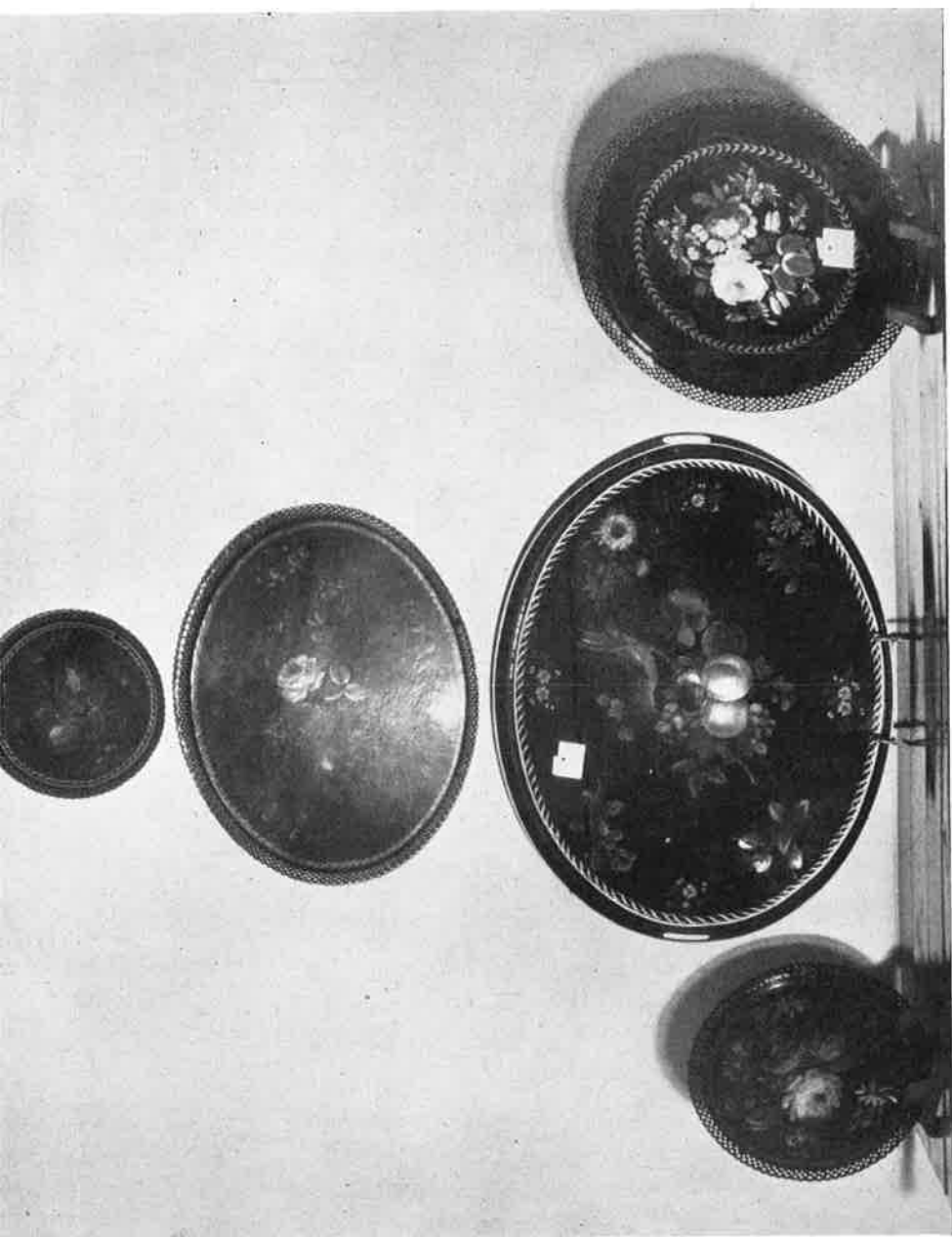
Mrs. John McAuliffe conducted a forum on Teaching Problems.

A judging panel composed of: Mrs. Eugene Bond, Mrs. Alfred Ells, Miss Lucille Stuart and Mr. Walter Wright, showed examples of work submitted which did not receive awards because they did not cover all points in judging sheets.

Guild members were shown an exhibition of commercial tinware. The list compiled of supplies and addresses should be of much help to Guild Members.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernice Drury, Secretary



Lace edge A awards were given to Jessica Bond, Bernice Drury, Virginia Martin, Martha Muller, Mell Prescott

REPORT OF THE JUDGING COMMITTEE

Violet Milnes Scott, Chairman

The Judging Committee met at nine o'clock on May 11th and 12th at the First Baptist Church, West Hartford, Connecticut.

The first day, the problems of judging, the guidance sheets and points considered were discussed. Original pieces of decorated work were studied for the various techniques used in the classes open for judging. Two rooms had been arranged by the Exhibition Committee, with the Exhibit divided into classes and numbered for the benefit of the judges. The judges were divided into two groups, one group judged stencilling on wood and country painting, while the second group judged stencilling on tin, free hand bronze and gold leaf.

The second day, seven judges were selected to judge lace edge painting while the remaining judges chose pieces not covering all points to be discussed at the judging forum. At the end of the judging period, the Committee tallied the scores, filled out the individual judging sheets, and placed the A awards:

Stencilling on tin.....	5 A awards	25 Submitted
Stencilling on wood	11 A awards	23 Submitted
Country painting	10 A awards	27 Submitted
Free hand bronze	1 A award	12 Submitted
Gold leaf painting	4 A awards	13 Submitted
Lace edge painting	5 A awards	13 Submitted

The interest in exhibits for Judging has grown with the Guild. A number of members who have not exhibited, checked the blanks sent before the meeting, signifying interest in Master Craftsman and in submitting work. In order that these members, new applicants and those already working for a Master Craftsman award, may exhibit work no new classes will be added until the fall of 1949. Classes in stencilling, country painting, free hand bronze, gold leaf painting and lace edge painting will be judged in the fall of 1948.

The Committee hopes that teachers will assist new applicants in judging work by the points on the guidance sheets before work is submitted at a Guild Exhibition.

Guidance sheets are available to all Guild members upon request.

JUDGES

Vermont—Mrs. George Abbott, Mr. Walter Wright.

New Hampshire—Mrs. Alfred Ells, Mrs. Elizabeth Gordon.

Massachusetts—Mrs. Robert Dana, Miss Susan Hills.

Connecticut—Mrs. Walter Burrows, Mrs. Henry Selden, Mrs. R. H. Symington.

New York—Mrs. Philip Broughton, Mrs. L. R. Stanforth, Miss Lucille Stuart.

Maryland—Mrs. Eugene Bond.

No photographs are available of the Free Hand Bronze and Gold Leaf Painting A awards, due to an unforeseen accident. A Awards in these groups were given to:

Free Hand Bronze: Emily Heath.

Gold Leaf Painting: Kathryn MacArthur, Irene Slater, Lucille Stuart, Emilie Underhill.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CRAFTSMAN AWARD

I. Stencilling

Submit for judging

1. The article covering all points (tin)
2. Wooden article covering all points except transparent color

II. Country Painting

Submit for judging

1. Tin article covering all points
2. Article covering all points

III. Free Hand Bronze

Submit for judging

1. One article covering all points

IV. Gold Leaf Painting

Submit for judging

1. One article covering all points

V. Lace Edge Painting

Submit for judging

1. One article covering all points

VI. Glass Painting

Submit for judging

1. One article covering all points

VII. Chippendale Painting

Submit for judging

1. One article covering all points

EXHIBITS SUBMITTED FOR JUDGING

A. For Craftsman Award

1. Must include all points outlined on Guidance Sheet.
2. Should have typical traditional design on conventional article for class to be judged.
3. Must be large enough to fully demonstrate Craftsman's ability.
4. Should have detailed history written on Exhibit card noting anything unusual copied from original.
5. Must have right hand side of Exhibit card attached to back of article. Left hand side to be detached at Exhibit.
6. Should be carefully boxed and packed. Return mailing cards sent in container.
7. Creative adaptations entered under Creative adaptation class.

B. For Constructive Criticism

1. Any work in classes open for judging.
2. Work not covering all points.
3. Work submitted before and improved to be considered for Craftsman award.

REPORT OF THE EXHIBITIONS COMMITTEE

Since the exhibition in Hanover last fall, the Guild has had two shows, one in Portland, Maine and the other in West Hartford. At this writing there is one being planned for June at the Suffolk Museum, Stony Brook, L. I.

Month of November 1947: Sweat Memorial Art Museum, Portland, Maine. A section of the Exhibition of the Maine Crafts and Decorative Arts was given over to the Guild and was arranged in memory of Esther Stevens Brazer by Mrs. Clyde Holmes.

There were several pieces painted by Mrs. Brazer which had been loaned by Mr. Clarence Brazer, Miss Oldham, Mrs. Ells and Mrs. John Allen, a large collection of work by Guild members which was sent from the Hanover exhibition, and the work of five Guild members from Maine together with articles decorated by their pupils.

Mr. C. A. Pierce, who had worked for George Lord, the old man who taught Esther Brazer the traditional methods of stencilling with bronze powders, exhibited several examples of his work.

The exhibition was most successful and created great interest.

May 13th and 14th, 1948: First Baptist Church, West Hartford, Conn. With each Guild meeting and coincident exhibition, there is a marked step forward in the quality and perfection of the work of our members. This progress was evident at the West Hartford Show. There were 113 articles judged and 38 craftsman's awards won. This is a good percentage considering the high standards required. Twelve or more excellently stencilled chairs were a gratifying sight. Besides the pieces which were submitted for judging, there were 45 originals and former A awards. The display of many fine old lace edge trays as well as a large collection of original country tin created much interest and enthusiasm. In spite of the inclement weather on both days, 370 persons attended the exhibition, which is proof of the constant growing interest in Early American Decoration.

For some future date inquiries have been made regarding a show in New York City. Various galleries and clubs have been approached and I have had a talk with Mr. R. W. G. Vail of the New York Historical Society. His interest is primarily in the original pieces and he will only consider an exhibition of perhaps 2/3 originals and 1/3 reproductions. There is no available time at the museum until 1949 which will give us a chance to gather together an outstanding collection. New York and other large cities should have the opportunity of viewing just such an exhibition after seeing the gift "shoppe" and department store variety of tole ware and stencilled chairs on display.

Respectfully submitted,

Emilie Underhill

THE ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER MEMORIAL EXHIBITION AT THE SWEAT MUSEUM

Mildred Burrage

The exhibition of stenciled and painted furniture, tin trays, and other objects shown as part of the Exhibition of Maine Crafts and Decorative Arts at the L. D. M. Sweat Memorial Art Museum, 111 High St., Portland, is causing great interest as such a comprehensive showing of this revival of an old art has never been seen in Portland before. The exhibition has been arranged in memory of Esther Stevens Brazer who did more than any one else, by her painting and writing, to bring this about.

Esther Stevens, who later became Mrs. Clarence W. Brazer, was born in Portland, April 7, 1898, and died in Flushing, N. Y., Oct. 30, 1945. Members of the Stevens family have been active in Maine since before the Revolution, and many of them have shown marked artistic ability. They were among the earliest settlers of Stevens Plains, the old name of a community situated three or four miles from Portland, in the direction of Westbrook of which it was formerly a part. Isaac Sawyer Stevens built his tavern in the Plains in 1769. His son, Zachariah, established himself as a tinsmith there in 1789, and began to produce attractively decorated tin ware which met with great success. The work was carried on in turn by his son, Samuel, who married a grand niece of Paul Revere, Mrs. Brazer's great grandmother, and herself a decorator of charming pieces. For over half a century there was productive craftsmanship in this little Maine town.

Mrs. Brazer became greatly interested in this family achievement. She had marked artistic ability as a young girl, and had studied at the Portland Society of Art, (which incidentally is now lodged in her grandfather's house) at Miss Wheeler's School in Providence, and at Columbia University. She began to do research work on how the stenciling of chairs was originally done. She cut wooden blocks and printed wall paper with old designs by the eighteenth century method. She cut over a thousand stencils from old patterns, and stenciled and painted the most beautiful trays and boxes. Gradually all phases of what we now call Early American Decoration became her field. Old Zachariah Stevens would be proud indeed if he could see this descendant's work hanging in the Sweat Museum today, so faithfully did she follow the traditional methods.

Her interest in this study led to writing and teaching. She wrote many articles for *ANTIQUES* and other magazines, and finally she published the authoritative work, "EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION",—of which a new edition is just coming from the press.

She began to teach after she had mastered the techniques of what was an all but lost art, and the exhibition at the Sweat Museum bears witness to the success of her efforts, showing as it does the work of her pupils, pupils of pupils, and followers. She was a generous and helpful spirit and her works live after her.

At the exhibition her own beautiful work is shown in the painted tin trays, and the pattern for a Chippendale tray lent by Mr. Clarence W. Brazer; the furniture and painted tin pieces lent by Miss Esther Oldham of Wellesley Hills, Mass.; the furniture lent by Mrs. A. Edward Ells of York Village; the painted and stenciled tin, and the stencil on glass lent by her cousin, Mrs. John H. Allen, Cape Elizabeth.

The Esther Stevens Brazer Guild of Early American Decoration has sent a varied collection of the work of its members from the recently closed exhibition at the Carpenter Art Gallery, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H. The Guild was formed in May, 1946 by eighty of Mrs. Brazer's former pupils. It is "an organization of persons interested in the art of stenciling and painting tin ware, furniture, and other objects as practised by the early decorators, particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries here and in other countries." The members carry on her high tradition of craftsmanship, particularly in the use of gold leaf and the painting and stenciling with bronze powders.

Among the Maine craftsmen exhibiting their work are four members of the Guild. Mrs. Evelyn M. Holmes of Belfast was an old friend of Mrs. Brazer, and worked with her in the early days of the research period. She teaches Mrs. Brazer's methods and is active in the Guild. As a member of the Sponsoring Committee of the Exhibition she had charge of the arrangement of the Brazer room. She shows a charming painted table, a late Sheraton chair, a little stenciled stool, a pen tray, and a very unusual rose colored tea caddy on which she worked with Mrs. Brazer long before her famous book was published. Five of her pupils exhibit,—Mrs. Louise Farnham, Rockport, Maine, Mrs. Beatrice Durham Monson, Miss Pauline Clement, Belfast; Mrs. Martha Sherman, Belfast; and Mrs. Harold H. Todd, Jr., Belfast.

Mrs. A. Edward Ells, a Guild Member whose summer studio is in York Village, studied with Mrs. Brazer for six years and has taught a great deal, especially for the New Hampshire League of Arts and Crafts. She shows a Hitchcock chair, a large tray, and two unusual cornice boards, one for a Venetian blind, and one painted on glass, reproductions of early designs.

Mrs. Eleana V. MacInnis is another Guild member from Lincolnville who exhibits a yellow rocker and a green trunk painted in gay colors.

Mrs. J. Charles Andrews of North Waterford is the fourth member, and shows a gay collection of small painted pieces. Her sister, Miss Constance Warren, former President of Sarah Lawrence College, is exhibiting painted trays for sale for the benefit of The Development Fund of the college. These ladies carry on the art of painting and stenciling on tin in their great grandfather's house, built in 1789 and occupied continuously by his descendants.

From Brunswick Mrs. Paul Nixon sends a very handsome tray done in the Chippendale manner, another in the Gothic taste, and a third with a stencil design, also a yellow box decorated with country painting. Mrs. Nixon studied in the first class with Mrs. Gilbert Jones. Mrs. George C. Lord of Wells adds three pieces of the same gay type of Country Painting.

Mrs. Donald Rosencrantz of North Edgecomb sends a Hitchcock chair beautifully restored to its original design, a green stenciled chair, and an old box painted in the early nineteenth century manner.

Mrs. Joseph T. Sayward of Kennebunk sends a group of old tin pieces, redecorated, as does Mrs. A. C. Whalen of Newcastle. Mrs. Edward Lincoln of Portland shows a large round painted tin tray. Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kellogg of "The Anchorage", North Edgecomb show both stenciled and painted pieces, a large and interesting collection.

Mr. John Winchell of Limestone exhibits a stenciled fiddle back chair, and Mrs. Susan D. Andersen of Stockton Springs, an unusual small Hitchcock chair for a child.

An interesting link with the traditions of the past is found in the work of Mr. C. A. Pierce of Portland. Mr. Pierce as a young man worked for George Lord, a Portland boy who started to paint furniture when he was seventeen, and Lambert Hitchcock who made the Hitchcock chairs was still alive. Mr. Lord lived to be a very old man, and was eighty-seven when he taught Mrs. Brazer the traditional methods of stenciling with bronze powder, etc. Mr. Pierce is exhibiting a coffee table, a Hitchcock chair, three trays, and a group of Mr. Lord's patterns for stenciling chair backs.

In design and technique this exhibition goes back almost two hundred years. It shows a feeling for the work of the past, and an unwillingness to let an inherited skill go. We recognize with appreciation how one woman's influence has been largely responsible for preserving tradition and bringing it into continuing usefulness in our world today. Estner Stevens Brazer should be long remembered in her native State.

From any . . . success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary.---Walt Whitman in *Song of the Open Road*.

QUESTION BOX

Question: Why does surface of black paper peel off when lifting up the stencil?

Answer: The varnish used may be a slow varnish or too old. A good spar varnish seems to give best results.

Question: What is a good carbon or transfer paper for white trays?

Answer: Use old carbon paper which has been very much typed on. Dust with heavy face powder. This keeps the rest of the transfer paper from smudging the light background.

Another good transfer paper for light colored trays may be made by completely covering a sheet of tracing paper with long strokes of a medium lead pencil (about an H4). Rub well into the paper with a piece of cotton or Kleenex.

Question: Please give the trade name of the most satisfactory 24 hr. varnish?

Answer: Trade names cannot be given in the Decorator. A good water and alcohol resistant spar varnish is best.

Question: If the first place to make and decorate tin plate was Pontypool, why is it said that the lace edge is the earliest type of decorated tray? How does the date of a typical Pontypool design compare with that of a lace edge?

Answer: Lace edge trays were reputed to be the first trays manufactured in this country. They were imported around 1785 by Paul Revere and their manufacture was started by him at this time. Pontypool was the name of the town in England where the first manufacture of rolled sheet iron was established in 1664. Tin plating followed shortly thereafter and the subsequent production of trays and other household and decorative articles. There is great confusion in many minds concerning Pontypool trays. Many shapes and patterns originated there, among the latter, the solid gold leaf band with fruits, flowers, or conventional scrolls superimposed. The pattern and not the shape derived its name from Pontypool. Lace edge and gallery trays date from about 1730 in England, next to follow were the Gothic or Chippendales and the sandwich edge rectangulars, about 1760, and the octagonals a few years later. These octagonals must not be confused with their American cousins the coffin trays, which were smaller, shallower and rural in their decoration.

Question: What is the best way to mend a stencil that is torn?

Answer: Use clear nail polish to bind the two edges together. If the tear is bad, try to form a patch with the polish to cover a small area around the break and when dry, recut the stencil in that portion.

Suggestions from my mail box:

To warm a tray, put it on an electric pad.

A few drops of tincture of benzoin, plus a little turpentine added to thickened varnish thinned it. It was a fine medium with a little oil color for applying gold powder.

When no stripping brush is available, one can be made from the hairs pulled from the raccoon collar of your last winter's coat. (A word of advice! Don't be too enthusiastic! Coats with fur collars may be more difficult to get than stripers next winter!) Mount with liquid solder and wind tight with thread. For more information, please contact Mrs. M. J. Curran, 16 Simon Street, Babylon, Long Island, N. Y.

To keep varnish brush dust proof and pliable, after using, clean with turpentine and immediately wrap in aluminum foil.

Questions asked at the Hartford meeting:

Question: Is there any good substitute for asphaltum for lace edge trays?

Answer: Alizarin and umber in Japan mixed with flat black gives the same effect.

Mixing a little japan drier with asphaltum helps to dry it quicker.

Question: How can I prevent varnish from crawling on asphaltum?

Answer: To 1 cup of water add 1 tsp. of turpentine. Go over the surface with a sponge and then varnish.

Question: Can you paint glazed shelf paper for stencil patterns?

Answer: Use dead flat black or flat black lacquer. Heavy glazed covers from magazines may be used also. X-ray plates painted with flat black and black oil cloth were other suggestions. X-ray plates are useful for tracing when cleaned with a solution of soda and water. Any doctor on duty at a hospital should be able to get them for you for nothing.

Question: What brand of paint do you use when painting a tray white?

Answer: Brands cannot be given. A good flat white should be used. Finish with a clear white varnish.

Question: How do you prepare the main slat on a Hitchcock chair? Do you use a wood filler?

Answer: You may use shellac as a primer or the bottom of a can of flat black, powdered pumice and varnish or gold size mixed to a paste to fill in bad scars or scratches.

Question: Can you really make a varnish ball work? Will you explain how?

Answer: A tedious job! One must stand by and pick up the flecks of dust as they drop on the varnished surface until it is finally set.

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Wanted: Old tin coffee pot with a long angled spout. Please send a drawing of what you have. Emilie Underhill, Bellport, L. I.


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For Sale: Pieces of early tin for decorating. Marjorie Milliman, Weatogue, Conn.

Not enough wants and swaps for the column this issue. Too bad. I have received answers to previous ads. and have acquired what I desired as well as making a couple of very nice friendships through the swap box. So please take advantage of this easy way of antiquing and exchanging thoughts and things. Emilie Underhill.

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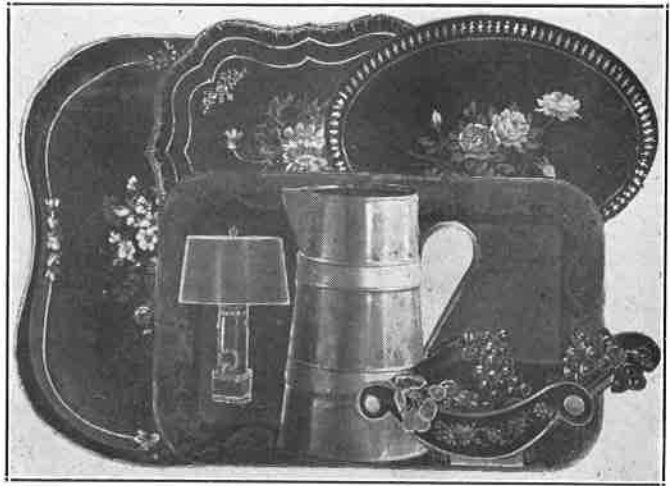
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