

THE DECORATOR

VOLUME IV—No. 2

DECEMBER, 1950



Chest by Johann Rank, 1789
Owned by Mr. and Mrs. Julian Milliman

Journal of the
Esther Stevens Brazer Guild
of the
Historical Society of Early
American Decoration, Inc.

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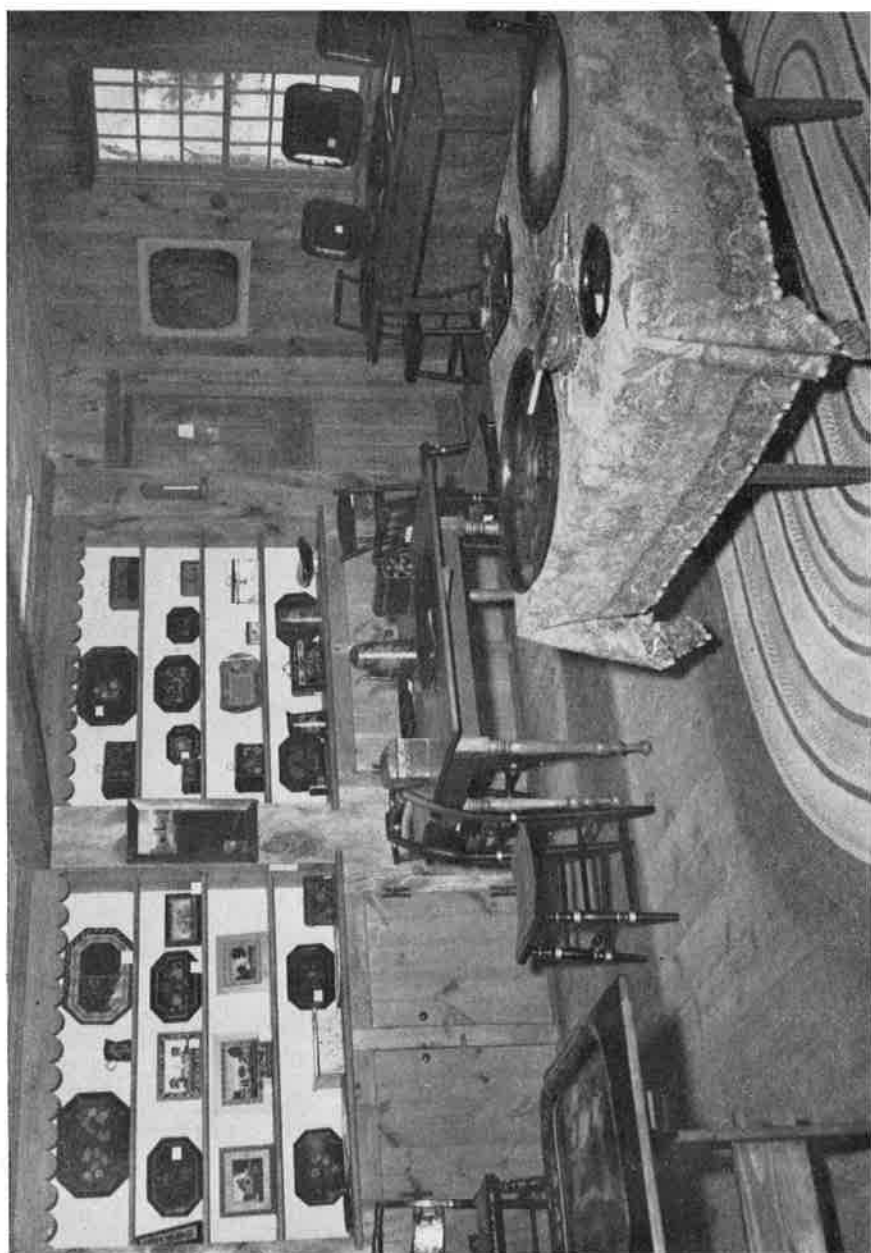
NUMBER 2

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General View of Exhibition at Sturbridge

EDITORIAL NOTES

One of our most successful meetings was that held at Old Sturbridge Village. Perhaps it was the weather, or the arrangements, or old friends, and new. Certainly the surroundings of fine antiques and painstaking restorations helped project us into the past and gave us a renewed perspective of our own Historical Society of Early American Decoration and of the importance which it may well assume in years to come. Our sincere thanks to the directors of Old Sturbridge Village and Mr. Earle Newton for their "Making History Come Alive."

Referring to the chest owned by Mr. and Mrs. Milliman, it is interesting to note that the decorator, Johann Rank, had sufficient pride in his workmanship to be willing to sign his name in the most conspicuous place, that is, the center of the front panel. And close by he gives credit to his teacher. Think of this the next time you are working on an article, and ask yourself if you would be willing to sign your name to the finished piece. A worthy goal for Guild members might be to turn out work which could be signed by the decorator with the added words "By my hand after Brazer." Our Master-craftsmen should be able to attain this, and every member should strive for that standard, remembering that all early decorators spent several years in apprenticeship.

Some of our newer members may not be aware of the policy of not using the name of the Guild in advertising or on business cards. It was voted at the Hanover meeting in 1947 that the Guild name should not be used by an individual, but only in connection with official Guild business, exhibitions sponsored by the Guild and Guild publications. We were asked to refrain from using it in any way which might imply approval or sponsorship by the Guild, until such time as qualifications and standards could be clarified.

Every one of us is proud of our membership in the Guild! If by restricting the use of the name for advertising purposes during our formative years it will have even greater significance as we progress, our patience will be well rewarded.

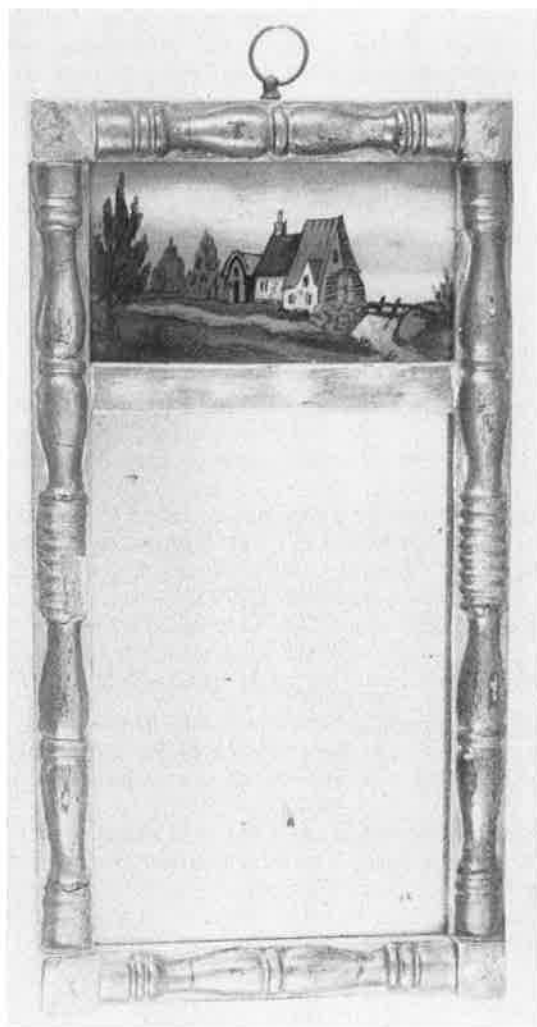
Our Fifth anniversary will be observed next spring with a special program and exhibition. It is not too early to start planning your entries for judging now. Be sure to study Early American Decoration, past Decorators and the Guidance Sheets on the classes you plan to enter. Write to Mrs. Gordon Scott, Uxbridge, Mass. for complete instructions.

COMING ISSUES

The article on cornice-boards is being written by Shirley DeVoe and Adele Ells, but is held up temporarily while additional photographs are being procured. It will be worth waiting for.

Mrs. Clyde Holmes is still doing research on the tables, but promises that we will have the article.

Mr. Everett Robinson, who discovered Olliver Filley, has written "A Tribute to Esther Stevens Brazer in Research". Mr. Robinson likes to "putter around with tin as a hobby—sort of a postman's holiday but also a fascinating past-time."



Miniature Antique Mirror

Owned by Mr. John Cass, Hopkinton, N. H.

The frame measures $9\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 inches, and the picture 2 x $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches

(Photo by courtesy of Mrs. Charles Auer)

GUEST EDITORIAL

What Does Being A Member of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild Mean To Me?

We hear this question at times as some Guild member finds it impossible to attend the Guild meetings and exhibition, therefore becomes discouraged. Such a question is a challenge to me to answer from my own experience.

My first answer is in appreciation of "The Decorator"—that little magazine that has become bigger and better since its beginning. It tells us of the doings of the Guild. It acquaints us with the accomplishments of its members, many of them responsible for the planning and success of the Guild. Also, it comes to us as part of what is offered when we pay our dues.

My own location is a long distance from the centers where there are large groups of members. I find many difficulties in arranging to leave home cares in order to attend Guild meetings. However, as those planning them have had the foresight and thoughtfulness to vary the locations in such a way that at some time the meetings are held within a few hours drive of us all—surely we cannot always miss them.

With determination to be present for part of the program, if not all—with what is offered to us on the full day's program, if you succeed in taking that one day from your office work or home, you will take back to that work a new interest that will ease the tension of daily routine.

You will find the atmosphere of the Guild busy and friendly. If you have missed a meeting contact those in your locality who have attended. They will be full of enthusiasm and enjoy telling you about it if you are a good listener. All Guild members have fun getting together with the others.

The spirit of Esther Brazer in sharing and helping others, is there for you. The Guild needs you and you need the Guild.

EVELYN M. HOLMES

DUES PAYABLE

Dues of \$3.00 for the year 1950-51 became payable July 1, 1950. If you wish to make an additional contribution please indicate whether it is to be credited to the Museum Fund or the general expenses. No bills are sent, though a reminder goes out in January to those whose dues remain unpaid.

This is the final issue of "The Decorator" included in the 1949-50 dues. No further copies will be sent to persons whose dues remain unpaid.

Make checks payable to the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild; remit to Mrs. Elizabeth Gordon, 98 So. Main St., Hanover, N. H.

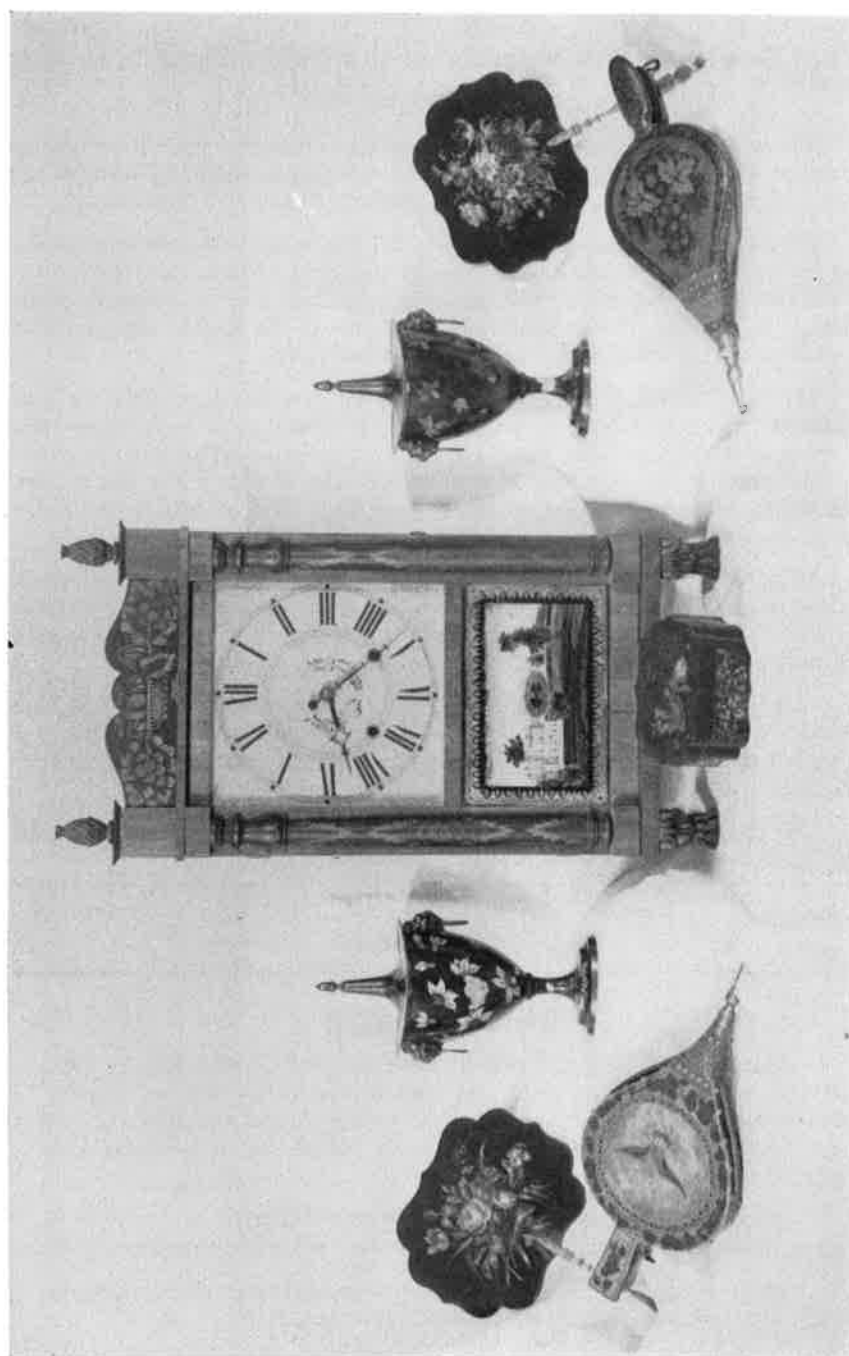


Plate I

AN EXHIBITION OF ORIGINALS

JESSICA H. BOND

One whole room at Mashapaug House in Sturbridge Village was filled with original decorated pieces. It was the finest and largest collection that has been seen at any Guild meeting. Almost any type was represented, from very fine and delicate English and French things to the simpler folk art of country painting. Every type of decorating we do in the Guild was represented, but space does not permit a review of all the items on display.

An early English tin coffee pot was worth noting because of its graceful shape, pierced base and very fine lace edge painting on tortoise-shell background. The border and trimmings around spout, lid and handle were of the finest craftsmanship.

There were several trays with lace edge decorations, no two with exactly the same style of painting. There was also a long narrow sewing table with a lace edge type decoration painted in small units all over the top.

There was a pair of Chippendale shaped fans in papier-mâché painted with semi-transparent filmy flowers and bronzed leaves highlighted with stump work. These are in the photograph Plate I. In the same picture on each side of the fans you will see a pair of English chestnut urns in painted pewter with lion head masks and ring handles. The decoration on a black background is in free-hand bronze flowers in silver with transparent red on top. In the early days these ornamental servers were used on New Year's Day for hot chestnuts and were passed around to the guests, or kept on the mantel. In Plate II in the center at top is another chestnut urn quite different from the first and said to be French. It is tin painted a light cream color and decorated with ships at sea in natural colors. The base has tiny flower sprays with brush stroke border and gold leaf striping.

A very brilliant tray attracted attention because of its splendid condition and unfaded coloring. It was a rectangular sandwich edge tray with gold leaf and bronzed leaf border, and a profusion of gold drips. The center was painted with a floral design and bird with silver leaf tail painted blue. The green leaves surrounding this looked as though they had been highlighted with a pure gold powder rather than a bronzing powder. So clear and bright was this tray that it would be fun to take it to those antique dealers who prefer to decorate their trays with radiator paint instead of gold leaf because they say it looks older.

A very large papier-mâché Windsor tray (center Plate II) was admired for its border of large burnished gold leaf sprays and white and red filmy poppies. To the right of the Windsor tray is a tea caddy with imitation tortoise-shell in dull vermillion and yellow ochre mottling. Around the sides of the lid is a delicate gold leaf border, and the tortoise-shell is again repeated on the top.

For the country tin student there were many well executed designs; coffee pots, tea caddies, and document boxes, one small one being a Zachariah Stevens (Plate II to the left of the Windsor tray). A variety in the shades of yellow brush strokes on country tin was interesting; some light chrome yellow, some more orange, and everywhere could be heard praise for the wonderful brush strokes and for the apparent ease with which they were done.



Plate II

Chestnut Urn Lace Edge Tray Small Chippendale Tray Lace Edge Tray Coffee Pot

Stencilling at its best was seen on a small wooden box. The polishing of highlights on the fruit was almost brilliant and the cutting of the stencils without a flaw.

It was fun seeing the original of Mrs. Brazer's stencilled Swing tray, complete with yellow striping on flange and bronzed band on floor!

The clock in Plate I has an excellent glass painting with finely etched gold leaf border. The center is a typical architectural scene and the pendulum oval unusually pretty. The clock itself has a stencilled top and sides.

A very useful article as well as oranmetal was a French plant stand, or jardiniere, with fancy scalloped top. The background was dark green with a yellow ochre design and bronze powder rubbed into it.

The inspiring thing about this assembly of originals was the lesson in design it gave us. These old-time craftsmen had an unfailing instinct for proportions and appropriateness which we in the Guild not only admire but which we continually strive to emulate.

THE DAY AFTER

EDITH HOLMES

It's the day after for me—the second day of the Sturbridge Village meeting for most of you dear Guild members. What a day it was, and how I envy you this morning.

If our Esther could have seen it as I saw it she would have thanked God that she had lived and given.

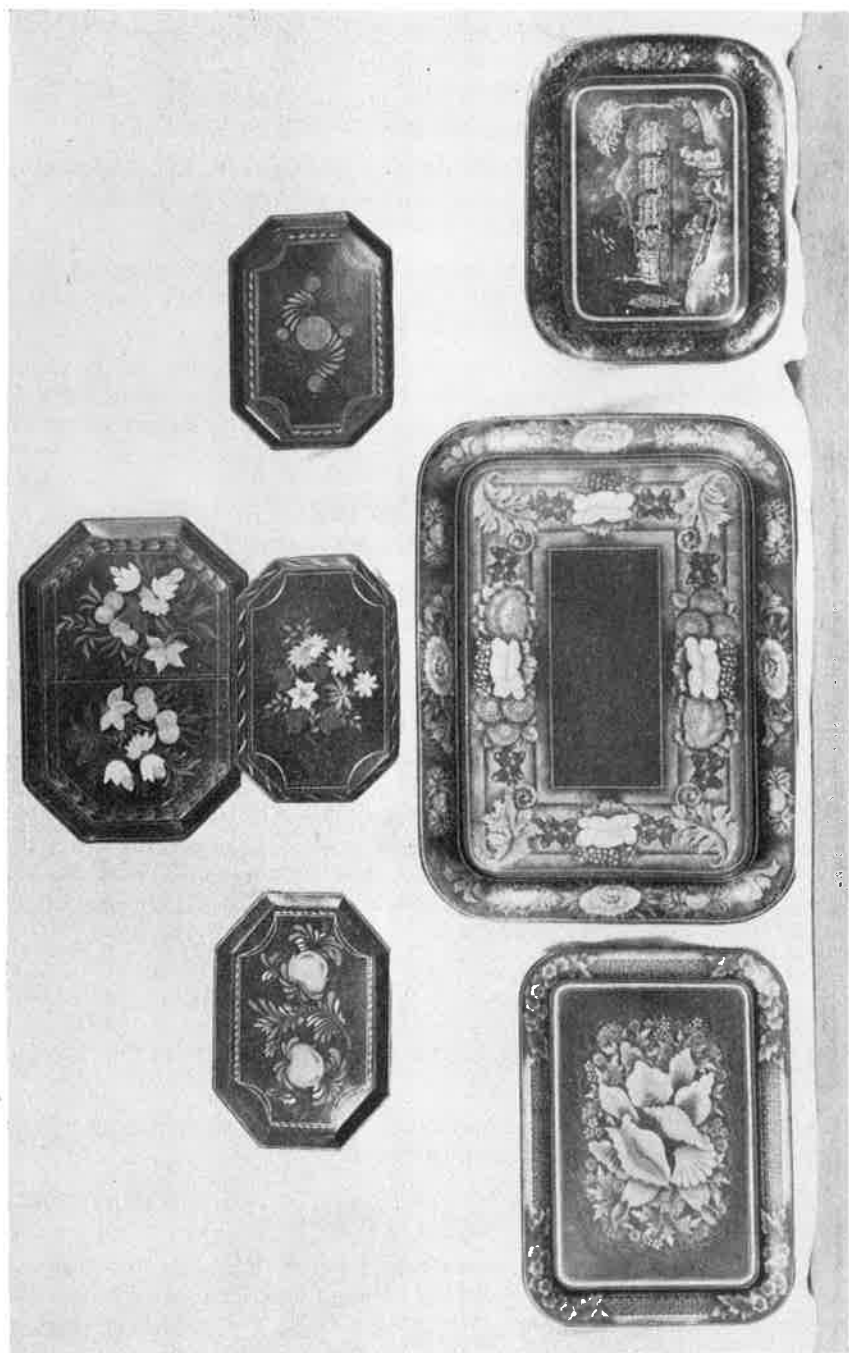
When I left Kingston I had my doubts about getting out of the car. Frank had gone to the Village early in the week to help Walter Wright unpack. He had told me about the beautiful originals, the applicants' work and the masterpieces of the members, so of course I wanted to see it all. I couldn't, but I got what I wanted most. I saw all of you. I saw Alice Plimpton, fresh as if she had had not one finger in the pie—beaming with justified pride and satisfaction that her efforts were such a success.

Almost before our old station wagon stopped beside the church in Sturbridge Village, Violet Scott popped up beside us; Emily Heath and Martha Muller on the other side, and Shirley DeVoe landed in the driver's seat. Bernice Drury and Ruth Coggins climbed in back and I soon felt like the Old Woman in the Shoe. I loved it!

It was just like that all day—until Miss Winchester vacuumed the village and every soul went into the church to hear her talk.

Then Frank and I said good-bye to the Village cop and started our ninety mile trek back to Kingston—so happy and so satisfied.

None of you could see the meeting as I saw it. You were too busy. As groups and individuals passed to and fro all those hours, the radiance and satisfaction on their faces showed that Esther's Guild is a growing, thriving Memorial.



Class "A" work in country tin and stencilling by applicants

THREE YEARS WITH THE GUILD PROGRAM

ISOBEL MACDUFFIE

It is interesting, at the end of three years, to look back upon our shortcomings, errors, and, if we may be pardoned, our accomplishments. With our assignment at Hanover as program chairman, we were hazy as to just what was expected. We consulted with our first president, Emily Heath, who pointed out that her job was a pioneer one, and that the field for the first officially appointed program chairman was wide open.

It seemed only natural to contemplate the aims of the Guild and to attempt through those programs to fulfill some of our objectives. Further discussion with the chairman of standards, Violet Scott, made it apparent that an educational program covering various phases of Early American Decoration was desirable. Because of the influx of European influences throughout our history, it was logical to study the sources of some of these influences.

With this in mind we obtained the services of Mr. Donald Shelley, curator of art for the New York Historical Society. In May, 1948, at Hartford, Connecticut, Mr. Shelley told of his particular interest in Pennsylvania Dutch and we were introduced to its various phases by beautiful slides. On the same program we heard Mr. John Kenny tell of his interesting restoration of the old Hitchcock chair factory, and of his intention of reopening it. Mrs. Mell Prescott deserves the credit for this "find" which "scooped" Life Magazine by three years! Mr. E. N. Robinson told of Oliver Filley, early tin-smith, whom you must all know intimately through the pages of the Decorator.

The gentleman who really "stole the show" at this meeting was suggested by Mrs. Vinton Ziegler. Mr. Christian Thomae came to our program as a representative of the Valentine Varnish Company. He was scheduled for a forty-five minute demonstration on varnishing, which extended to three hours by popular demand. Members refused to take time out for lunch, and finally sandwiches were ordered and brought to the meeting, while Mr. Thomae kept right on demonstrating and answering questions.

As a result of the Hartford meeting our suggestion box was filled with requests for demonstrations. The actual thinking of ideas for programs was taken over by the members themselves and the committee had only to fulfill as many as possible.

The meeting in the fall of 1948, under the guidance of our new president, Louise McAuliffe, was held at Poland Springs, Maine. This seemed very remote, so imagine our surprise when 140 members and guests had registered. Our main speaker was Mr. Bartlett Hayes, curator at the Addison Gallery in Andover, Massachusetts, and recognized authority on Early Americana. Miss Edith Fisher of Boston, introduced us to some of the folk art of Scandinavia, accompanying her talk with color slides. In the evening Mr. Floyd Lever, Jr., of the Carpenter-Morton Company spoke on "More About Varnish."

Again, the high-light of the meeting was the dual demonstration on two types of glass painting. "Country Painting on Glass" was capably shown by Muriel Link, while Irene Slater simultaneously gave a demonstration on "Gold Leaf Painting on Glass." They repeated three times.

It was fitting after a meeting in the country that our next one be in the city. Therefore, in the spring of 1949, the Guild held its annual meeting at White Plains under the capable guidance of Mrs. Herbert Coggins as local chairman. We were fortunate to continue our study of Pennsylvania Early Decoration with Mr. Earle Robacker speaking on the "Painted Tin of Pennsylvania." He and Mrs. Robacker exhibited their choice collection of early tinware. Because we had had only a glimpse of Scandinavia at Poland, your program chairman showed and described slides depicting some of the early folk art of that country, many articles of which are now in museums.

Six members generously gave their time to demonstrations of techniques: Elizabeth Gordon, backgrounds; Virginia Martin showed her wall stencils; Viola Burrows, her method for floating color; Bernice Drury solved some of the tricks of doing a good brush stroke; Walter Wright, freehand bronze; and Florence Wright gave a real professional touch with her method for demonstrating stencilling.

Under our new president, Helen Chivers, we met in September, 1949, in the lovely village of Kingston with its charming Cape Cod atmosphere. With our gracious hostess, Mrs. Arthur Holmes, one of Esther Brazer's oldest friends, it seemed more like attending a lovely social function than a routine meeting. It was fitting that we should also have invited Nina Fletcher Little whose talk was given in memory of Mrs. Brazer. She enjoyed doing research with Mrs. Brazer and among her slides was one of a room in her home with woodwork done by Esther Brazer. This room also appears in several publications, including Alice Winchester's book, "Living with Antiques."

Martha Muller showed some of Esther Brazer's patterns in their new mountings. Many of us who were accustomed to seeing these in class were thrilled to view them again. Their beauty is unsurpassed. We also had the privilege of hearing of the beginning of a new restoration which is taking place in Old Plymouth. Mr. Sidney Strickland spoke on the "Restoration of the 17th Century Pilgrim Houses" with authority, since he is the architect for this work.

Once again we asked several of our talented craftsmen to demonstrate: Jessica Bond did an intricate gold leaf design; Martha Muller demonstrated lace-edge painting; Gertrude Byram showed her method for doing gold leaf on glass; Emilie Underhill did freehand bronze; brush strokes and striping seemed very simple as done by Louise McAuliffe; and Audrey Woodman showed a very clever way of marbleizing papers, used so much in old wooden chests, linings in portfolios, etc.

Our account of the Sturbridge meeting appears on another page. We believe that we have helped our members become even more conscious of the various designs and their applications, and that most of us are anxious to know more of the historical backgrounds as pointed out by Shirley DeVoe. It is good to note how many of our craftsmen have specialized in one particular field, and have thus gained in individual prestige outside as well as within the Guild.

We believe we have paved the way for future committees, and feel we have gained much more than we could possibly have foreseen in the beginning. By pulling together, the Guild has potentialities for being the most influential organ in the field of Early American Decoration.

The tireless work of the demonstrators who have given of their time and talent has been sincerely appreciated by all who witnessed their contributions to our educational program. The tremendous amount of work by local committees which has gone on for months previous to our meeting assumes gigantic proportions in retrospect.

A Message to Guild Members:

I have recently sent you a letter telling you of the Committee Chairmen who will serve you this coming year.

Suddenly, for personal reasons, I find it necessary to resign as your President. It is with regret that I can not continue through the year. I wish to thank you all for your support during my term as President.

Mrs. Martha Muller, the 1st Vice President, will take over my duties. The office could not possibly be in more competent hands.

We are approaching our fifth birthday of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild. At this time we should think seriously of what we have accomplished and consider what more we wish to accomplish.

When we look at the high quality of the work submitted by applicants we realize the importance of the work of our Committee on Standards.

We are so very fortunate to have Mrs. Brazer's designs available for our use at Innerwick. To again be able to work with her designs is an inspiration not to be missed. I hope as many members as possible will avail themselves of this opportunity.

One little realizes, until a visit to Innerwick, the enormous amount of effort Martha Muller, Constance Klein and others have put into the work of making the designs ready for our use. You will see the results of the money spent to protect this collection.

I can not go on to enumerate the possibilities that come to my mind of things the Guild may accomplish, but they are many.

Please help the officers and the Board of Directors with your suggestions to make an ever better Esther Stevens Brazer Guild.

Faithfully Yours,

HELEN W. CHIVERS

September 1, 1950

SOME DO'S AND DON'T'S OF RESTORATION

ESTHER T. BROUGHTON

A visit to the home of a distant relative in Maine was the beginning of my interest in the restoration of painted tin, chairs, boxes, clocks, walls, floors and whatever else could hold a design. I came away from that visit with four old tin trays which had been used to catch the drippings from a badly damaged roof. They were in poor condition, but one was good enough to show a lovely gold leaf border under the varnish.

I had always had a zest for the collection of antiques in their original condition, the result, perhaps, of what is called "a collector attitude." Now, with the growing interest in restoration, the urge was strengthened to keep whatever remained of the original artist's work.

That first experience with the trays brought me face to face with two realities—that I knew absolutely nothing about restoration, and that there was a great deal of work involved. But by trial and error I have finally come to these conclusions:

1. Leave as much of the original background and design as possible.
2. Put on a protective coat to hold that design, after a thorough cleaning.
3. Make a perfect pattern of all you can see and then look over other designs in your portfolio to try and match the missing parts.
4. Be sure to clean all old rust or paint off of the bad spots that have to be filled in, smoothed off and then painted.
5. If the old pattern is so discolored as to be impossible to blend with the new, touch up as little as possible in order to blend the entire design.
6. Never try to restore an original tray, chair, box or what have you unless it is in a beautiful design and one that will be really be worth all your effort and trouble. Remember that the early designers sometimes were commercial and plebeian in their tastes, just as many people are today, so that what they produced would not be worth your trouble or work.

Many of the articles that come to me for restoration have been restored before. A set of signed Hitchcock chairs had been so changed as to the back slat that I had to take it down to the wood and see what the old outline might reveal. At least it was gratifying to find the usual fruit and leaf design which I was able to build upon. I kept all the design on the side rails and top cushion, but the front was gone. However, the old Hitchcock label and graining were preserved, and the chairs gaily took their place in the home where they always had been treasured.

Another hazard encounterd was the restoration of what is known as a parliament or curfew clock used in England. It stands, or in the proper sense hangs, about five feet long, with a face two feet wide and a more slender body to hold the enormous pendulum. It is all wood, usually of black or dark green, and uses a Chinese design in gold leaf. Even the numerals are in gold leaf.

In order to keep as much as possible of the old paint and raised design and the maker's signature, I had to smooth off the filler only as much as was absolutely necessary. Gradually in that way I obtained a fine foundation on which to complete the design already visible, but cracked and crumbling. As a result of this restoration, I was offered a very remunerative job doing Chinese design clocks, so the effort was really appreciated.

Another restoration that at first seemed impossible was a beautiful flat edge Chippendale tray that had been painted a heavy black over which was a Pennsylvania design put on in vivid reds and yellows. The owner did not feel there was any of the original design left, so told me to do whatever I believed best. I carefully lifted off the mass of paint and found underneath the beautiful bouquet in a gold leaf basket of "floating color" roses, fuchsias and dahlias. The owner was delighted and kept the tray as one of her prized possessions.

A banjo clock that had been crushed in shipment was another challenging job. Fortunately the glass had not been broken, so I had only to touch that up on the back, then proceed with re-doing the gold leaf ornaments and gold leafing.

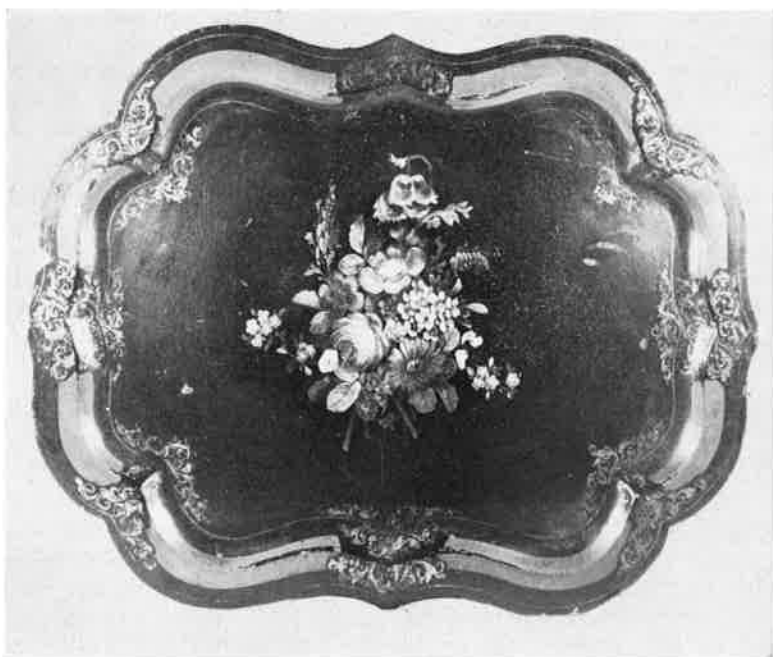
The typical banjo clock has a small raised border, usually carved of wood and attached to the case, then covered with gilder's whiting which forms the basis for the gold leaf. When this is broken in spots I do not make a complete new mold of the design broken off, but simply fill it in with a combination of whiting and glue, applied with a small, flat instrument. This is a fairly simple process.

My effort is to save as much as possible of the original, for I feel that an antique loses its value when too much has been replaced or changed.

Also, be sure that when you clean an article to be restored you get off all grease, wax, oil or foreign matter, or you will never get your new paint to dry. If one method of filler, paint or wash doesn't work, try others until you get the different elements to blend. Remember old paints and varnishes have a different base from the more recent and synthetic types, so that our new finishes may only lift off the design we have been so anxious to hold.

Finally, no restoration ever pays one in money for the time, research and sometimes heartbreak entailed. But for the person who is "antique minded," the payment comes in the satisfaction of seeing how much beauty you can restore to some precious object.

Finding and restoring such articles is a delightful hobby, and each new find is an added challenge. But the work is a responsibility as well as a pleasure. The Esther Stevens Blazer Guild has laid down standards that are high and exacting. No member should take restoration lightly. By constantly seeking to abide by those standards, he will not only add to his own pleasure in the work, but will help to restore to antique owners possessions of which they may be truly proud.



Papier Mache Tray, owned by Louise McAuliffe

The center of this tray is skillfully executed in the realistic manner characteristic of some of the fine English papier mâché decorators.

Martha Muller, curator of the Guild's "Esther Stevens Brazer Collection of Early American Designs" points out that it very closely resembles a pattern of an oval plaque, which is included in that collection.

A notation by Esther Brazer says that it was painted by Fred Waters who was born about 1825 in New York City and died there in 1912. The family says that he painted this (plaque) when he was 18. It is said that in 1850 he painted the ceiling of Castle Garden for Barnum at the time Jenny Lind sang there.

Mr. Waters' mother was an Englishwoman and he may have gone to England during some of his travels and have studied with a papier mâché painter. He is known to have done much mother-of-pearl work at a later date and also painted portraits.

DOCUMENTATION

CLARENCE W. BRAZER

A fault all too common on the part of philatelic writers, especially in this country, is their failure to give credit where credit is due. We refer particularly to the lack of documentation when making use of the research and knowledge of others, especially in the case of matter that is copyrighted. A writer who borrows such information should be careful to give its original source, citing name, date and publication, either in the text or as a footnote. A general credit given at the beginning or end of an article or book, without specific references, does not inform the reader who is the real author of particular information. To avoid any possible suspicion of plagiarism, particular items of fact, or opinion, should be completely documented and credited whenever possible. If not, then the writer should be careful to make clear just what is his own contribution and what is the work of others. By so doing the writer gives a reader confidence in his credibility and escapes responsibility for the errors of others that may later be discovered. No living person knows what actually transpired before he was born, except by the writings or by word of mouth, of those alive at the time; therefore, except for general knowledge taught us all, a reader is entitled to know *how* the writer knows. Who said it and when? The date is desirable as the original writer may have revised his early writing when later information became available.

Serious philatelic writing and research for important historical facts require much time and effort and are generally unremunerated. Sometimes authors pay for the acquisition of philatelic matter and also even for the privilege of presenting it and illustrations to their readers. In some instances contributions to periodicals are preliminary to later publication in a book. When not paid for they legally remain his property, so we are informed. Honesty and courtesy require that an author's permission be obtained prior to quoting or using important or extensive parts of his writing or illustrations, and any stipulations should be strictly complied with.

Ed. Note—Mr. Brazer's observations are applicable to writers in many fields in addition to philately. Our own generous contributors know that their greatest remuneration comes from satisfaction of a job well done and their contribution to the field of Early American Decoration.

"I have received the five back issues of the Decorator and seldom have I felt so rich. I have read them from cover to cover and am honored to be able to share in the proceedings of the Guild . . . Some day perhaps there will be a New Jersey chapter." . . . Ann Fast, Cranford, N. J.

"One of the reasons I hope to join the Guild is that members are so warm, friendly and helpful. Could it be that Mrs. Brazer was that way and her spirit lives on in the Guild?" . . . Marion Andrews, Garden City, N. Y.

A MUSEUM GIFT WILL BE A LIFT



Photo by courtesy of Marjorie Milliman

PENNSYLVANIA DOWER CHESTS

MARJORIE MILLMAN

Something of a man of mystery among decorators of Pennsylvania German dower chests, apparently, is Johann Rank.

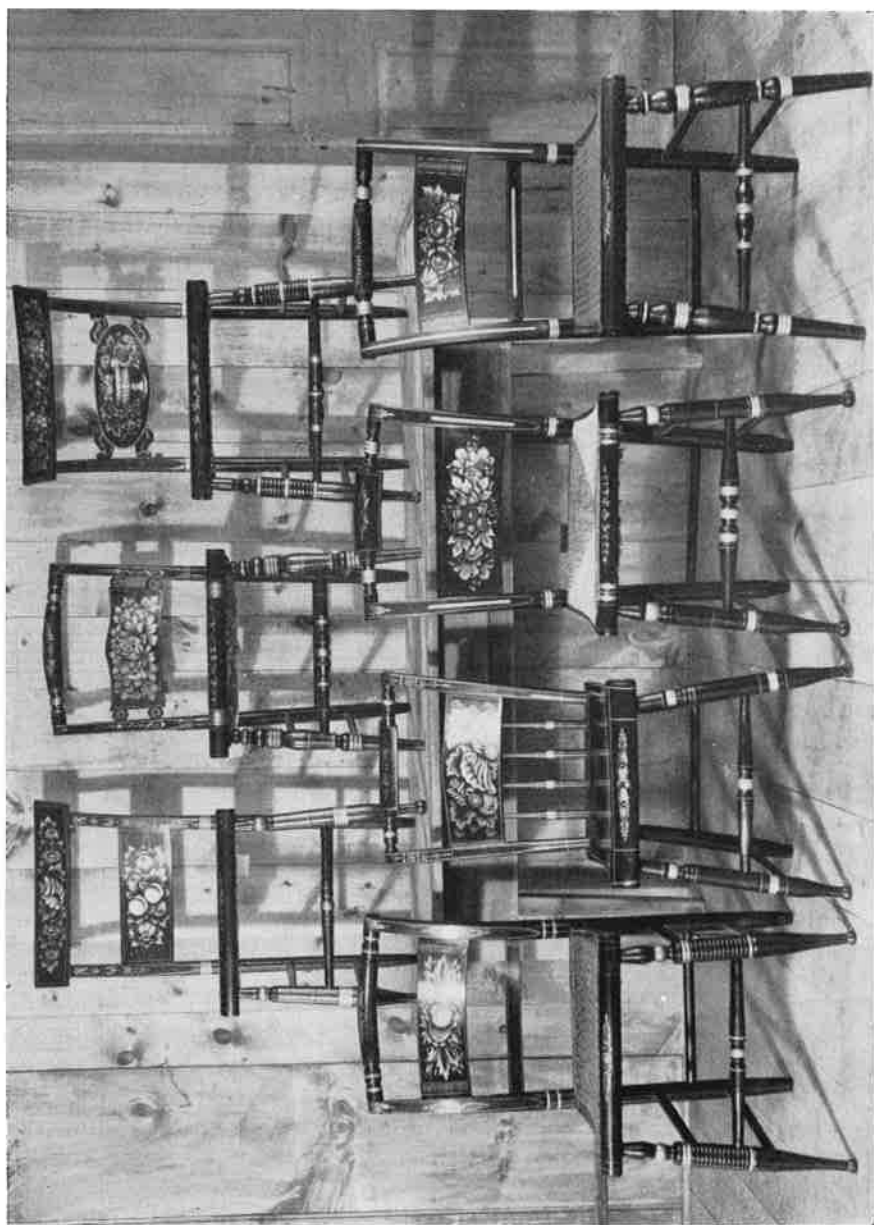
In the magazine "Antiques" for April 1927, Esther S. Fraser in an article "Pennsylvania German Dower Chests," mentioned Rank in connection with Christian Selzer, saying; "By 1795, at the latest we find that Christian Selzer had taken on several understudies. Son John was then 21 years old, and, as he was a house carpenter by trade, it seems more than likely that he was turning out chests during odd hours. Where he learned the carpenter's trade I cannot say, but I suspect that old Christian had himself been making the chests which he decorated in his shop behind his house, and that, as soon as possible, he initiated son John into the less enjoyable part of the work. There is a slight difference—in base molding only—between early Christian Selzer chests and the later ones of the 1790's. From that time on, Christian's chests and John's, as well as all the other Jonestown chests, are identical in every part of their construction including escutcheons and hinges. Only a few chests, mostly those by John the carpenter have been found with drawers below.

Johann Rank

But to go back to the understudies; Johann Rank appears to have done very well under his master's instructions, for he produced far from amateurishly, the standard mottled background, and he decorated his panels most creditably. So far I have seen few Johann Rank chests; one dated 1795 (almost the date of his marriage) one dated 1796, and another of date unknown. All are so similar in every minute particular that it is difficult to discern any differences among them. Rank could not have become a proficient decorator over night. Where, then, are his earlier attempts? And did he paint only for his bride? My husband and I possess one of the earlier chests decorated by Johann Rank. We bought it in Sheffield, Mass. The name, "Johann Rank," and the date "1789," are clearly discernible on the vase in the center panel of the chest. The vases on either side have German script. One inscription is illegible, but the other reads: "By his hand after Selzer."

About the same time we got our chest, another was brought to me for restoration. I had photographs taken of them both. In comparison with ours, it is more colorful and has recessed panels. Mrs. Edward A. Hart of West Hartford had bought it in Richmond, Virginia, where she was told it was a Pennsylvania chest. It has rather a Swedish feeling about it, and yet I have seen almost the identical designs painted on wooden door panels in the Pennsylvania collection in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

And thus the search continues for more pieces of information which will complete the picture puzzle about our early decorators.



"A" awards to members for stencilled chairs

FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING AT OLD STURBRIDGE VILLAGE

The fourth annual meeting of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild was held in the Meeting House at Old Sturbridge Village on May 13, 1950, Helen Chivers presiding.

The Secretary's minutes were read and accepted, and the treasurer's report read and ordered entered in the record. The committee reports were read, and accepted. Martha Muller had recommended that the use of the collection of patterns at Innerwick be made available to all members, and the directors had voted to have cards with full particulars sent to all members by Jean Wylie.

It was reported that there had been a discussion of possible fund-raising projects at meetings of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Council. Several suggestions for articles to be sold have been received, and it was decided that these suggestions must be presented to the Board well in advance of meetings for their authorization.

Mrs. Gates, Chairman of the Committee on Constitution and By-laws, presented the proposed revised Constitution and By-laws which were read by Mrs. Plimpton and Mrs. Palmer. These were accepted as read, with the exception of Article 1, Section 7 of the By-laws pertaining to dues which was submitted to a mail vote following the meeting.

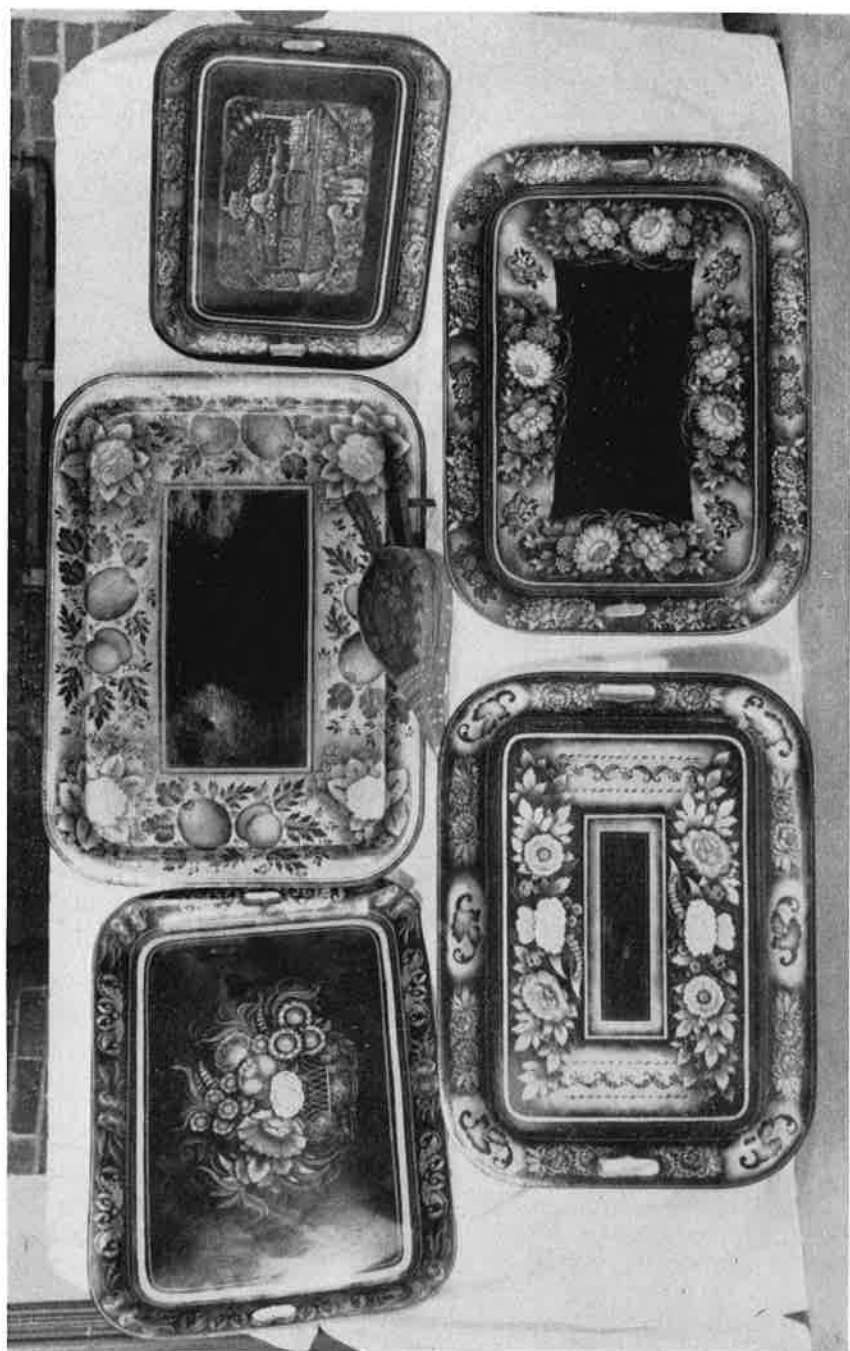
Marion Cooney, Chairman of the nominating committee, presented the following slate of directors for a three year term: Emilie Underhill, Elisabeth Safford, Frances Hughes, and Ruth Coggins. There were no further nominations and they were elected.

A vote of thanks was given Mrs. George Plimpton, General Chairman of the meeting, for her very excellent handling of all the details which make a successful meeting. Others who shared in the plans were Mrs. Harry MacDuffie, Program Chairman; Mrs. Gordon Scott, Chairman of Standards and Judging; Mrs. Lally Alexander who was most ably assisted by Mrs. Ruth Howe Wood.

The Guild also extended appreciation to the personnel of Old Sturbridge Village who had cooperated at all times to make this meeting a success. These were Mr. Earle Newton, Director of the Village; Mrs. George Wells, Director of Crafts; Mrs. James L. Newcomb, Chief of Hostesses; and Mr. Leonard Panaggio, Director of Publicity. Publick House came in for its share of our thanks for making our stay so pleasant.

The Directors met at noon, and at a brief meeting in the afternoon the new officers were presented. A complete list of officers, directors and committee chairmen follows.

(Condensed from reports of Alice Plimpton, Frances Hughes and Gladys Symington)



"A" awards in stencilling, to members

REPORT ON JUDGING

VIOLET MILNES SCOTT, *Chairman*

The Judging Committee met May 9, 10 and 11 at Mashapaug House in old Sturbridge Village. It was an excellent place in which to work and the committee was able to finish in ample time for the Exhibition because the exhibits had been so well arranged by the Exhibition Committee.

It was encouraging to see so many nice patterns in stencilling and country painting exhibited which covered all the points and suggestions on the Guidance Sheets as required for judging. A number of members exhibited for the first time which perhaps explains why there were more pieces in these classes than in gold leaf, free-hand bronze, lace edge and glass panels.

A study of past issues of the Decorator will be helpful before deciding what to prepare and submit for judging. The following are particularly recommended:

Volume II, No. 2, pages 32, 35, 41 and 42.

Volume III, No 1, pages 16 and 19.

Volume III, No. 2, pages 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18 and 21.

Volume IV, No. 1, pages 18, 20 and 24.

The Guild is determined, through the Decorator and its exhibitions at meetings to keep the standards in early decoration as found by Mrs. Brazer in her many years of painstaking research. She passed her knowledge on to her pupils, and it is our responsibility to uphold the standards set by her.

The public has a right to expect a thorough and scholarly approach to any job of restoration or reproduction by a Guild member. The work of the committee on standards has been directed toward this objective during the past four years, and we appreciate the cooperation of our members.

The Judges were:

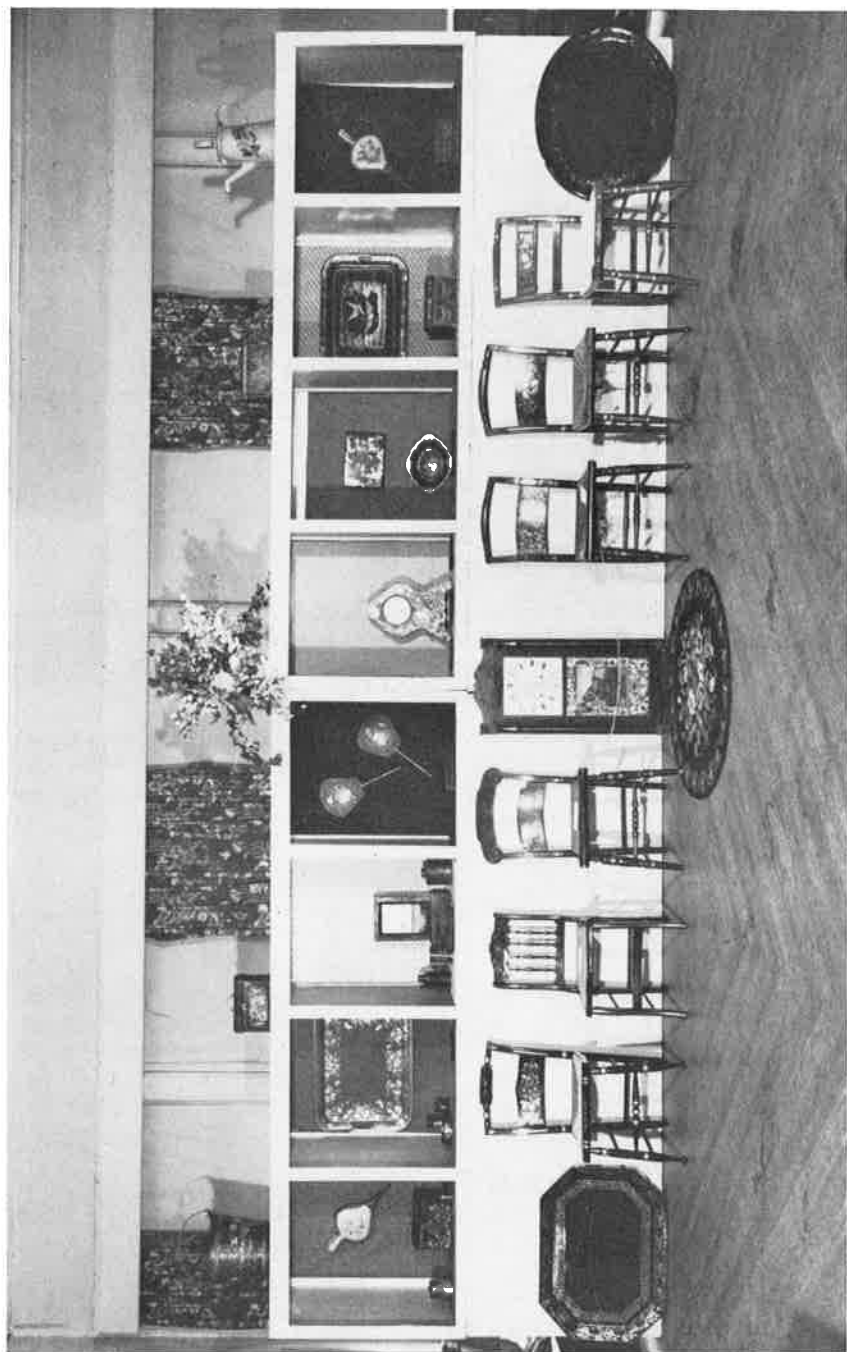
Adele Ells	N. H.
Dorothy Howard	N. H.
Bernice Drury	Vt.
Irene Slater	Vt.
Ruth Brown	Mass.
Esther Hall	Mass.

Virginia Martin	Conn.
Ruth Elder	Conn.
Gladys Symington	Conn.
Greta Kidner	N. Y.
Jessica Bond	Md.

Recorders:

Charlotte Arant	Ohio
Edith Hall	Vt.

Bertha Porter	N. H.
Margaret Murphy	D.C.



REPORT ON CHAPTERS

The Pioneer Chapter of Vermont and New Hampshire held a work meeting in Woodstock, Vermont, on April 12 and 13 with twenty-one members registering. There was an exhibit of originals, patterns were exchanged, and some added to the portfolio. Marbleized paper made by Frank Holmes was sold and proceeds of \$4.65 turned in to the Museum Fund. Bernice Drury gave some interesting history of an oval tray made at Greenwich, N. Y. The following officers were elected to serve one year: Viola Tanzi, president, and Esther Nicholson, secretary-treasurer.

The Fair-Chester Chapter of Connecticut held a meeting in February with no change of officers reported. Mrs. Rose Brandt gave a talk on Clocks, touching upon their history, types and makers. This chapter continues to add to its library of patterns, and finds much help in the discussions and criticisms of members' work.

The Long Island, N. Y. Chapter met on June first at the Garden City Casino in Garden City for luncheon and a business meeting.

The Charter Oak Chapter of Connecticut reports the election of officers: Mrs. Frederick E. Baker, President; Mrs. George Elder, Vice-President; Mrs. Donald Cooney, Treasurer; Mrs. Ray Fraperie, Secretary. They have raised and contributed \$25 to the Museum Fund.

Our newest chapter, the Pine Tree Chapter of Maine, has been formed through the interest and efforts of Mrs. Evelyn Holmes of Belfast, Maine. The first meeting was held April 20, 1950 at the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, Maine. The following officers were elected: Mrs. Evelyn Holmes, chairman; Mrs. Hazel Piper, Secretary. The portfolio of designs has been presented to the Farnsworth Museum. Great appreciation was expressed to those who contributed, and the chapter members hope that any Guild members travelling in Maine will stop to see the collection. Also enjoyed were several pieces of tinware, the original work of Zachariah Stevens, which were loaned by the Stevens family of Portland. The chapter sponsored an exhibition at the Massachusetts House Workshop, in Lincolnville, in August.

No news has been received from the Lexington Chapter, New York City.

Respectfully submitted,

THELMA C. RIGA (Reg. 12)
Chairman of Chapters

LONG ISLAND CHAPTER

The Long Island Chapter held its annual meeting June first, 1950, at the Garden City Casino, Garden City, Long Island, with over forty members present.

In the absence of the chairman, Mrs. Lewis Gordon, the Vice-Chairman, Miss Elizabeth Fox welcomed the guests as they were seated for luncheon. Our guest of honor was Mrs. Clarence Brazer. During the luncheon, Miss Fox asked each member to stand, give her name, and tell from where she had come so that members might become better acquainted with each other.

Mrs. James Gambee talked briefly about the Guild meeting at Old Sturbridge Village where visitors were charmed with the old buildings, the extensive collections of antiques, the lovely country and the two days of ideal weather. Mrs. Max Muller explained some of the procedure in the judging and answered many questions.

Mrs. F. R. Stanforth presented the following slate of officers: Chairman, Miss Elizabeth Fox; Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Robert Wyld; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. Lally Alexander. These officers were unanimously elected.

An exhibition of originals included some unusual articles. One signed Hitchcock chair in very good condition had a handsome stencil on it.

A sale had been arranged by members of the Mineola group for the benefit of the Museum Fund. Members donated pieces of tin, glass and china. After brisk buying, the few remaining articles were auctioned off, clearing a profit of over a hundred dollars for the Museum Fund.

EDITH ALEXANDER
Secretary-treasurer



If you can't collect enough bottle caps around the house, go to the hardware store and buy a boxful. Dump the contents into a dishpan and cover with hot water. Bring to a boil and boil it for at least ten minutes. The corks will all come out and rise to the top of the water, leaving the caps shiny and clean.

QUESTION BOX

Conducted by EMILIE UNDERHILL

Address all questions or suggestions to Mrs. Andrew M. Underhill, Bellport, L. I.

Question: Is the use of a mechanical striper acceptable on articles to be judged?

Answer: No. Striping on most old pieces was done by hand. If they could do it you must learn to do it too.

FROM MY MAIL BAG

Here is a good way to keep your velvet finger clean, when you are stencilling and using various shades of powder. Make a cuff of a triangular piece of velour, button or snap two of the corners under the wrist and the third point or corner goes down over the top of the hand. Bang the powder out of your velvet finger onto the top of your hand when you want a change of shade.

* * *

Some of us find flat black a curse to work with. The following suggestion was sent to me by someone who now sings instead of cusses while she works. Strain the flat black through a stocking. To a good half cupful add about ½ teaspoon of varnish. Stir well. The varnish acts as a binder.

* * *

Since the last issue I have had another suggestion to take care of the end of Scotch Tape. The button pressed on the end is alright until you drop it on the floor and it rolls under the desk, where in order to retrieve it you must needs lie on your stomach and grope hopelessly to find it, or run upstairs to get another. Try a nice flat paper clip, of which you should have many in your paint basket. If it falls on the floor—SO WHAT!—there are plenty nearby for a replacement.

* * *

If your Chrome in Japan reduces you to profanity either with a fountain of oil squirting from the tube or a dry crumbly mass under the turpentine in a jar, try a tube of Chrome in oil.

* * *

To transport a number of wet patterns home from a lesson or a "paint session" is sometimes quite a problem. The following suggestion will be very helpful. Take a large dress box, and in it, fit a shallower box to make a tray. The long sides of the second box must be loosened part way down at the corners and then folded over the sides of the large box about an inch. Secure with large two inch paper clips. You may fold the ends over in the same manner or cut them off. You now have four large areas on which to Scotch tape your patterns. Another suggestion along the same lines is the use of bottle caps secured between cardboards to keep work free from smearing.

* * *

To dip out varnish or servicersal from the can into small bottle caps or bottles, use wooden or pasteboard picnic spoons. They may be purchased at any dime store in packages of eight or a dozen.

COUNTRY TIN BOXES



Photos by courtesy of Mrs. Clyde Holmes

UNUSUAL ORIGINALS

VIRGINIA MILNE WHEELOCK

These photographs, taken by Esther Stevens Brazer for Mrs. Clyde Holmes in Belfast, Maine, show examples of two entirely different types of country painting from 1785 until 1830.

The box on the left has a typical Zachariah Stevens design with the natural forms of the leaves and flowers painted very freely with blended colors. The fine cross-hatching on the flowers shows the detail he used on the pieces he decorated for gifts and family presents. The lid is decorated with one of the varied brush stroke combinations found in the tin of Stevens Plains.

The box on the right has a very interesting pattern of the more conventional type, decorated for the trade and sold by the tin peddlers. The undertones of the leaves and flowers are painted in solid colors with the superimposed tones and brush strokes painted in later. The border shows the even brush strokes made by a practiced decorator.

THE MUSEUM FUND GROWS

It will pay you to keep an eye on the Museum Fund, and also to help with a few vitamins for its future nourishment.

At the Sturbridge meeting we sent \$110.00 to the Treasurer, for our Fund. The efforts and hard work of two of the members earned \$95 of that amount. Mrs. Clyde Holmes of Belfast, Maine, contributed prints, stencils, tracings of original designs, and photographs of originals, and a personal gift, all amounting to \$45.00; Mrs. Charles Auer of Concord, New Hampshire, contributed 100 stencil patterns, which were sold and \$50.00 realized to add to our coffers. Mrs. John McAuliffe contributed a personal gift of \$15.00.

Since the meeting the Fairchester Chapter has sent \$20.00 to the Fund, the discount earned from the sale of albums. The Long Island Chapter has sent \$127.00, proceeds from their sale and auction.

RUTH COGGINS
Chairman

AUCTION

The Museum Committee will hold an auction or sale of tin or wood—trays, boxes, or what-have-you; some old, some new, some originals.

Everyone please save or decorate a piece to be sold at our Spring meeting.

CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Mrs. Arthur Chivers	Mrs. John McAuliffe
Mrs. Carroll Drury	Mrs. Ralph McDermond
Mrs. Clyde Holmes	Miss Maria Murray
Mrs. Morton Kyle	Mrs. Frank Widger
Miss Florence Wright	

Note the following changes of addresses:

Village Tin Shop, to 1030 Main Street, South Hingham, Mass.

Gla-Son Paint Products, Inc., to 59 West 56th Street, N. Y. City

Gina Martin, 96 Ridgewood Road, Glastonbury, Conn.

We regret the loss by death of the following members:

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Cobb, Mrs. Sybil B.
Ferry Road, Saco, Maine

Cutler, Mrs. Edward R.
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Gooding, Mrs. George L.
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Harvey, Mrs. Arthur
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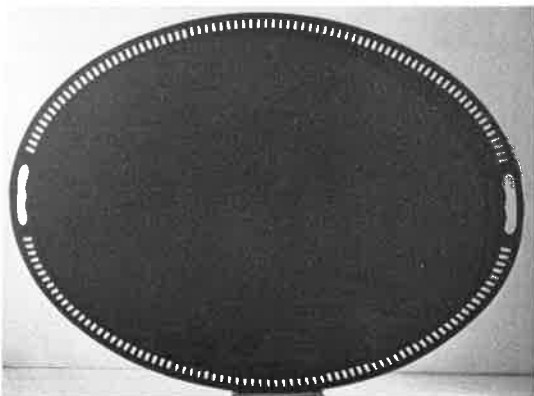
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