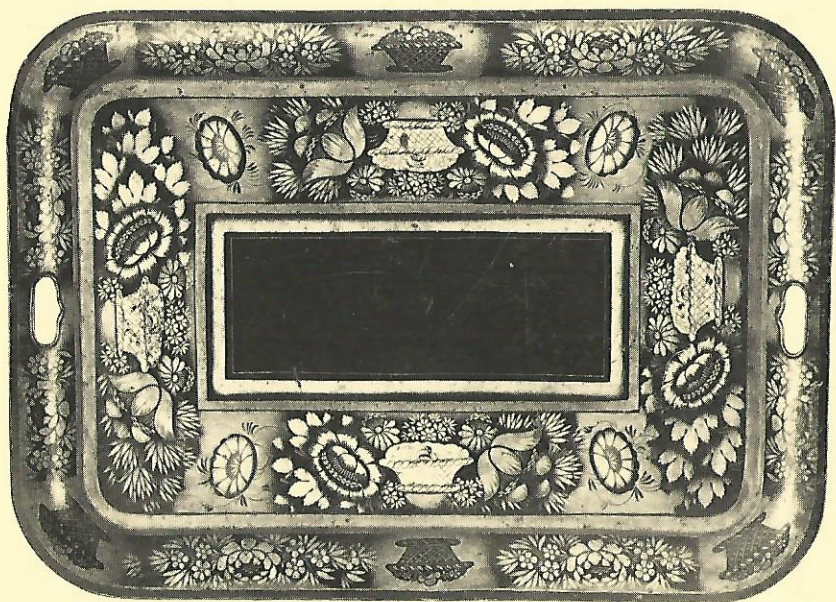


The Decorator

Volume XXIX No. 2

North Falmouth, Massachusetts

Spring 1975



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



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

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**Journal of the
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**Historical Society of
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A society organized to carry on the work and honor the memory of Esther Stevens Brazer, pioneer in the perpetuation of Early American Decoration as an art; to promote continued research in that field; to record and preserve examples of Early American Decoration; and to maintain such exhibits and publish such works on the subject of Early American Decoration and the history thereof as will further the appreciation of such art and the elevation of the standards of its reproduction and utilization. To assist in efforts public and private, in locating and preserving material pertinent to our work, and to cooperate with other societies in the accomplishment of purposes of mutual concern.

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Original Stencilled Tray — Courtesy, Mrs. Harold Syversen

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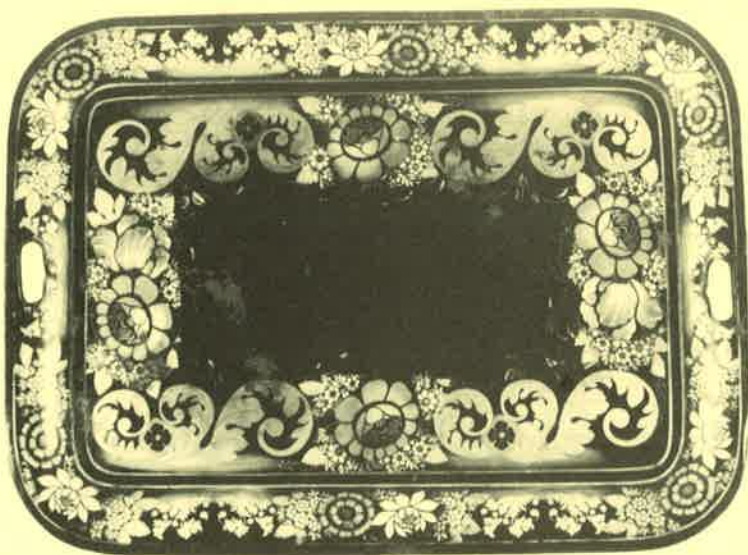
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Original Stencilled Tray
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EDITORIAL

Vision, that way of seeing things, is part sight, part emotion, part interest, part recollection, part recognition and part knowledge. This conditioning of one's vision is continuous throughout life and things mean one thing in one context, something else under other circumstances and at other times.

The sight of a church may stir profound religious feelings in some; in others the memory of early religious experiences of childhood; the recollections of a beautiful wedding or simply an æsthetic response to architectural forms seen in the structure itself. Each response is conditioned by many diverse personal factors of which the viewer may or may not be aware.

In this issue of *The DECORATOR* the Editor reviews ancient ornament and how it influenced early nineteenth century ornament in general and perhaps Early American Decoration in particular.

Avis Heatherington

HISTORIC ORNAMENT AND EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION

by Avis B. Heatherington

*"There is no such thing as ornament apart from its application. It is ornament relatively only to its place and purpose. In theory we may discuss it independently of them, in practice ornament is inseparable from the thing ornamented."*¹

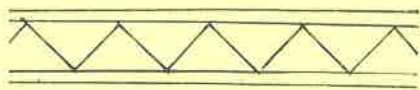
"What the modern designer and the student of styles alike need is a background of knowledge of how the modern styles have come into being; a solid historic foundation of acquaintance with the work of preceding ages, an understanding of the incalculable wealth of our inheritance from these ages, a developed power of critical discrimination and appreciation derived from the study of the masterpieces of design bequeathed us by the past." — These masterpieces are studied for their "value in helping to reveal the secrets of the glory of historic art, as exemplars by the study of which we may be able to penetrate to their true inner quality and thereby be helped to impart to the decorative art of our own time something of those qualities that have given a permanent life, a species of immortality to the works of past ages and other lands."²

"The history of ornament is the record of the origins and progressive developments of decorative design. By *decoration* is meant the adornment or embellishment of an object by purported modifications of its form or color. When decoration is effected by the repetition or combination of specific form-elements according to a predetermined scheme, the form-elements are called *motives*. Collectively they are denominated *ornament*, and when combined or repeated according to some definite geometric system, they are said to form a *pattern*. Pure *ornament* is that in which the decorative purpose wholly dominates the design, as distinguished from decorative painting and decorative sculpture, in which the decorative purpose is subordinate to the pictorial or sculptural representation of a fact, event or idea. Then there is a large field of decorative design which partakes somewhat of the character of both pure ornament and pictorial or sculptural representation. Such are symbolical and grotesque figures, masks, lions heads and much floral ornament, all of which are at once decorative and representative. Each example of such decoration must be classified according to its predominant purpose. A formally artificial arrangement of a grape vine shows it is intended as ornament and not as a picture. There are, however, many cases in which the purposes of representation and decoration are so evenly balanced that they may be with equal propriety assigned to either category."³

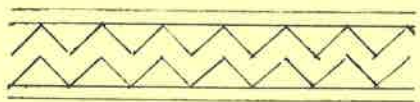
The appreciation of design and ornament in general is conditioned by many personal factors; the degree of understanding of principles of design; the knowledge of the methods of execution; the awareness of the historical background of both the object and the elements of the ornament employed; and finally the sense of how successfully the decorator has solved his problems of form, space and ornament. By "laying bare the very skeletons upon which the patterns are framed" the trained eye makes this judgment. Each review of the history of ornament provides new insights, new reactions and a new vision. This brief survey of early decorative motives and their uses in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, Renaissance Italy and France may help to stimulate a greater interest in and awareness of the motives, their form, their rendering and their use in Early American Decoration.

Since there is little reason to believe that the line drawings of the Palæolithic and Neolithic Ages influenced in any real way the ornament in early civilizations, the story must begin about 4000 B.C. in early Egypt. It continues throughout the civilizations of Greece, Rome, Italy and France down to the present day. In Greece the rather rigid, symbolic motives of Egypt were still used but evolved into more intricate forms having great freedom and a very graceful line. The unexcelled beauty of Greek ornament did not just happen but was rather the result of a passionate interest in form, line and harmonious beauty. Since the Egyptian ornament was one of symbolism and color, the carefully arranged hieroglyphic pictures and the symbolic motives combined to create beautiful decoration while at the same time conveying a message.

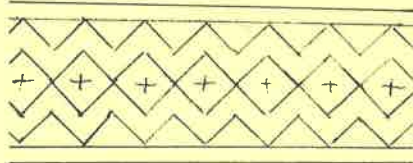
The zig-zag line, possibly derived from weaving, is found from the earliest periods and soon is repeated as a double zig-zag or is even tripled. It was also symmetrically doubled to give a row of squares with parallel borders, sometimes of alternating colors. Later, details in muted primary colors were added within the squares. On occasion the hexagon form, originally created by rush weaving in three directions, was used to give greater variation in pattern shapes and lines.



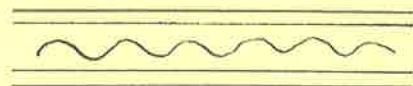
Zigzag line, single



Zigzag line, double

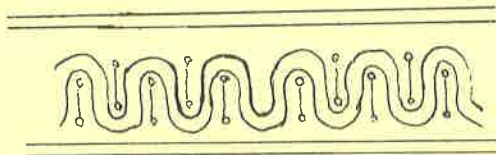


Symmetrical zigzag line

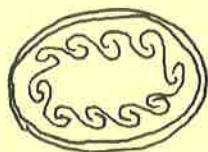


Wave line, single

By about 1500 B.C. the early zig-zag line had evolved into a wave line as the sharp angles had been rounded off resulting in a softer line but still filled with a sense of gentle movement. As these wave lines were doubled and trebled the interstitial spaces could be filled with other motives. There was always a certain geometric regularity in all Egyptian ornament as there continued to be in the basic structure of Greek, Roman and Italian Renaissance ornament which it so strongly influenced. There was a rigidity in the Egyptian ornament itself while in the later ornament the consistency of the underlying structure controlled but did not show in the ornament itself. We in turn have accepted the same disciplines from English and French ornament, both strongly influenced by study of the ancient forms and methods. In fact, these basic Egyptian motives have been used throughout all periods of recorded western history.



Wave line, double with ornament



Scarabaeus with detached spiral

The spiral or scroll appears early in Egyptian ornament. The spiral is considered generally to be the earlier form but it soon evolved into the scroll motive. Some students of historic Egyptian ornament have traced the spiral form to the lotus but others disagree with this attribution. There is certainty of its early date for it is found on the early amulets about 3000 B.C. These oval shaped amulets frequently showed a scarabaeus beetle in the center with hieroglyphics while the remaining space was filled with spirals. It is believed that this represents the beginnings of the spiral form as a pure decorative motive. W.M. Flinders Petrie in his *Egyptian Decorative Art* has given definite names to the various forms of the spiral motive: "when the lines are coiled closely in a circular curve — they may be termed *coils*; when lengthened out we may term them *hooks*; when lengthy in the body between the turns they are rather *links*. Where the line is broken at each spiral it is a *chain of spirals*; but where the same line is maintained unbroken throughout it is a *continuous spiral* and these are found in all varieties of coils, hooks or links. Sometimes the continuous line has separate ends, but more usually it is endless, returning into itself. These terms will suffice and distinguish the varieties, and enables us to speak of a spiral with definiteness."⁴

The detached spiral continued in use in Egyptian scarabaeus design over a long period and were drawn with great beauty at various periods. About 1800 B.C. the lotus flower and bud motive was incorporated into the angle of the spiral creating a very pleasing ornament. Often only the long side of the oval scarabaeus form was decorated with some form of spiral motive using other motives to fill the end spaces. Early in the First Empire period (3400-2160 B.C.) the use of the continuous spiral solved the problem of how best to use the scarabaeus space and resulted in outstanding ornament. Toward the end of this period the inscription ceased to be used and the scrolls became pure design, arranged in a symmetrical, connecting fashion and covered the entire area. These scrolls continued in use on the scarabaeus until about 1500 B.C.

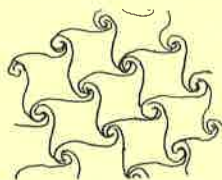


Scarabaeus with scrolls and hieroglyphics

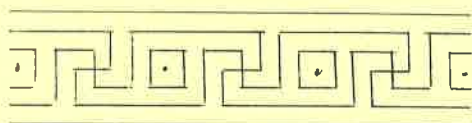


Scarabaeus with continuous scroll

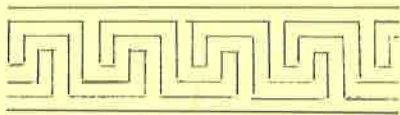
When the spiral was reversed at one end it formed an S-scroll motive which was used freely and effectively on walls and furniture until about 1150 B.C. By precise geometric placement of the S-scroll, beautiful vertical, horizontal and diagonal stripes were created. These provided an opportunity to use all sorts of color combinations. These designs were the beginnings of the geometric repeat patterns which we know as diaper pattern today and, as in the early periods, is totally dependent on the accuracy of the repeat for its success. It has been said that this type of "pattern is the natural outgrowth of repetition and in every case the lines of construction may be traced; they pronounce themselves, indeed with geometric precision." The S-scroll, evolute scroll or whatever name one uses (it has many), later was adapted and perfected by the Greeks and Romans. It is one of the most important motives in the history of western ornament. It has been passed on to us and is used freely in Early American Decoration.



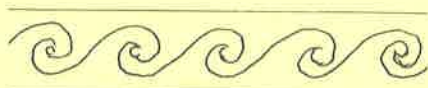
The quadruple spiral (early diaper)



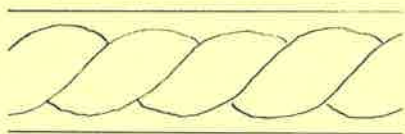
Angular fret or key



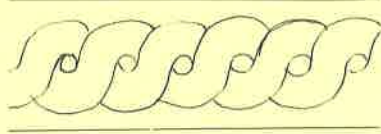
Angular fret or key



Wave border



Twisted rope

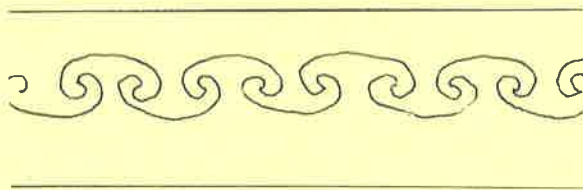


The guilloche

The angular fret or key motive was probably a woven interpretation of the scroll motive. The basket-work method of its production demanded the angular line. It became a standard Egyptian border motive and was borrowed by the Greeks and endless variations were used by them. The Egyptians used the fret as an anatomical framework for all-over pattern, filling the interstices with various ornamental motives. Other scroll-type border ornament found in Egypt but probably not original to that country were the wave motive, as distinct from the wave line, the twisted rope and the guilloche. These three motives were highly developed by the Greeks and Romans and still much in use today.

The Guilloche was in reality an interweaving of double or treble rows of spirals having a round “eye” at the center. The twisted rope was an interlocking of double or treble rows of spirals having an oval “eye” at the center. The two designs are totally different although based on the same spiral motive.

The C-scroll motive, found in other types of border ornament in early Egypt, seems to have originated in needlework. It too has a long history in ornament.



C-scroll

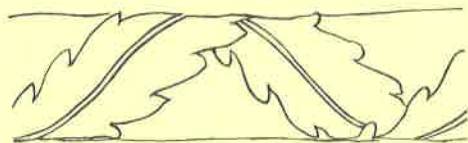


The rosette

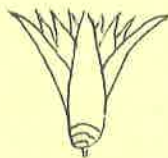
The circle was sometimes used within the square and added variety and interest of line but the use of complex interlocking circle motives was

not common in Egypt. Some authorities believe that this was because the Egyptians did not know about the compass and its uses. The usual round motive was either a rosette or daisy-like flower probably developed to fill the spaces of a quadruple spiral. The rosette motive alone is rare and seems to have been intended as an element of a pattern. Whatever the reason for the restrictive use of the circle, the straight and spiral lines were the dominant decorative lines in Egypt.

The chequer pattern, derived from the zig-zag line, was frequently used as the unseen scaffolding for the so-called "net-work" found frequently in Egypt by 1588 B.C. Within the unseen squares of this scaffold various shapes could be evolved with geometric precision whether it be partial circles, arcs of circles, the full circle or it could be any other appropriate motive. This controlled regularity of both the position and shape of the motive was part of the pattern but the square scaffolding was only implied. Today this same scaffolding provides the regularity of all repeat and diaper pattern, the relative proportion of motives and the rhythm and flow of all ornament. Little satisfactory decoration is developed without using the scaffold.



Leaf border (unseen scaffold)

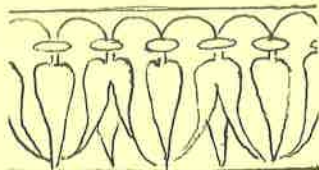


Lotus, conventionalized

It is impossible to think of Egyptian decorative art and forget the lotus in its unbelievable variety. While the evolute scroll was the most varied and useful geometrical design, nothing else from nature could compare with the lotus in its many manifestations and uses. In fact it has been credited as the source of all ornament and in 1891 *The Grammar Of The Lotus* by W.H. Goodrich was published and discussed this very thesis. While many students accept the belief of the sacred nature of the lotus in Egypt others disagree but all accept the beauty of this lovely motive with its many symbolic and decorative uses.



Lotus, derivative forms

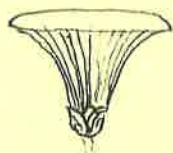


Lotus flower and bud motive
- a traditional border ornament

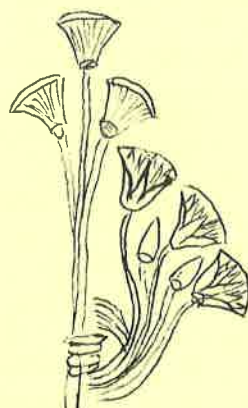
The River Nile, flowing 3473 miles from Lake Victoria in Uganda down to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea, brought with it soil and nutrients gathered along its course. As it nourished the crops, so it fed those beautiful water lilies which we know as the white (*Nymphaea cerulea*) and blue (*Nymphaea lotus*) of Egypt. In time the lotus, with its large blue or white petals around a yellow center and having four sepals became a symbol of the river.

Recordings of important ceremonial events show the stylized ever-present lotus motive and always with three of its four sepals. The earliest forms were highly stylized symbols but the usual later form used as ornament is bell shaped showing three sepals with three petals between the sepals. The later conventionalized form of this motive omits the bell form altogether and uses only the sepals, either straight or recurving, and at other times these sepals serve as petals and three more sepals are added at the base. One form uses the two outside sepals but the center one becomes the center of a fan of petals forming a palmette-like motive. Possibly no other flower motive has undergone so many evolutionary changes over such a long period of time and been used so frequently. It is difficult to recognize the lotus parentage in the stylized Greek anthemion or palmette motive. Frequently it seems more a lily or an iris form, but always the three sepals, that representation of the lotus, proclaims its origin.

The lotus border designs, with alternate flower and bud motives, provide a great variety of the most satisfying border ornament ever produced. This ancient design of bell-shaped motives, whether flower, tassel or some other unidentifiable object, remains through changing cultural styles of other historic periods. The bud continues as a round form but may be fragmented and seen as a bunch of grapes or such motive. This same lotus border becomes the tongue and dart ovulo moulding decoration of Greek and Roman architecture. This later decorative device is still in use today.

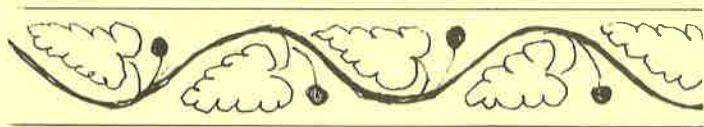


Papyrus, conventionalized form



Papyrus and lotus

The papyrus, another water plant of Egypt, also appears as a bell-shaped motive. This plant too became symbolic since it provided food, fuel, basket material and writing paper. It appears in ornament with the lotus. Multiple thin flower stems spring from the four calyx leaves, fanning out at the flower level to appear as a bell-shaped mass in profile. Since both the Egyptian lotus and papyrus in conventionalized form appear as bell shaped these motives are frequently confused.



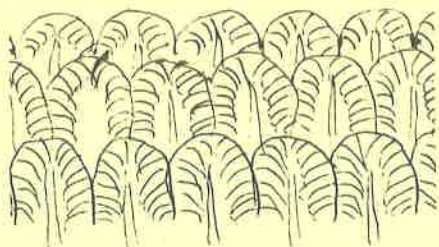
Vine border

Egyptian ornament made use of other natural plant forms such as the date palm, the convolvulus, the thistle of the fields, the grape and the vine. Later cultures continued to use these ancient forms but perhaps to render them differently. The Egyptian rose never quite seems to be a rose but rather a two dimensional geometric creation whose rendition changed with the method of decoration whether pottery glazes or stitching outline on leather or fabrics. At times it seems more a daisy than a rose when it fills the squares of a chequered background design. Other enclosed spaces were filled with crosses or dots while the midnight blue of the temple ceiling was covered with a glorious array of yellow five-pointed stars like the stars in the night sky.

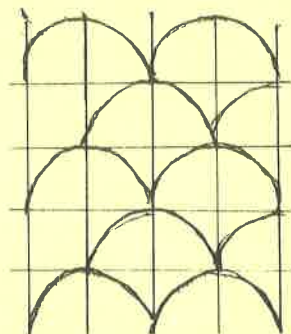
All human and animal forms depicted in Egyptian decoration are believed to be emblematic or symbolic, in fact there is some feeling that all Egyptian decorative motives were either symbolic or talismanic. Certainly the rigid caste system of Egyptian society promoted the use of the human-form-in-bondage as decoration. In reality it was probably the master's statement of his superior position rather than real ornament.

The feathered tribes are represented more by the vulture than the eagle which the Greeks and Romans first depicted in their ornament. The huge vulture, symbol of protection, maternal care and safety was a favorite lintel decoration of both the temples and royal tombs. Frequently the outstretched wing or wings were used with other symbolic forms to add further meaning as when the globe, symbol of the powerful sungoddess Ra, replaces the body of the bird. Then the power of the Ra is giving the protection. Sometimes the scarabaeus replaces the vulture body so it would seem that these motives were more symbolic than decorative. The feathers

of the wings are often used as a motive in both border and all-over designs and this is obviously the source of the historic feather motive known as imbrication which is still in use. There are several chevron designs which seem to have evolved from this motive. All-over imbrications resembling the tips of the feathers is seen on Egyptian clothing probably representing the protective warmth of the vulture. In later periods a similar pattern, known as scale, resembles the scales of a fish and was associated with the protective armor of war. Whether this pattern evolved from the feather imbrication is not known. It also is still in use.



Imbrications — feather



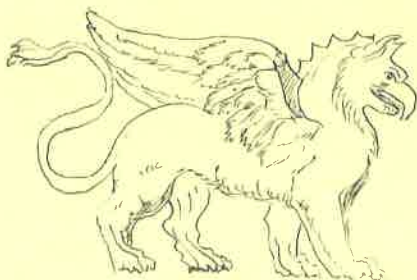
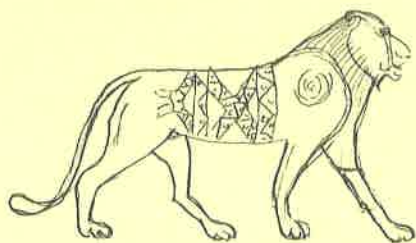
Imbrications — scale (with scaffolding)

The uraeus snake, or cobra, another much used symbolic motive was the emblem of the royal power of death and is frequently found alone as in a procession of uraei along the cornice of a royal building. It is seen also as a motive in designs composed of other royal symbols. The snake or serpent has continued in use taking on new meanings in Roman and Christian times and on occasion is pure ornament.

The lion, that noble beast of all time, held a commanding place in Egyptian decoration. Franz Meyer has described this animal admirably. "The lion was used in the Egyptian religion. The fact that the annual overflow of the Nile, so fertilizing and of such immense importance for the land, occurred at the time when the sun entered the sign of the Lion, brought the animal into relation with water, and led to representations on pails and other representations for water, etc. Egyptian art usually idealizes the Lion till he is unrecognizable; it represents him at rest; and the simple severe treatment of the mane (not unlike a ruff) gives him somewhat the appearance of the Lioness which does not possess one."⁶

The Lion assumes the altered forms of the monster motives in the androsphinx, the Lion's crouching body with a human head or that of the

criosphinx with that of a ram's head. In this form he is the guardian of the temples and the tombs. In Roman times the sphinx is seen with wings in a more erect position. In Assyrian, Greek and Roman decoration we also find the griffin motive with the Lion body and an eagle head, wings and either eagle or lion forelegs. Here the griffin symbolizes fire; in heraldry, wisdom and watchfulness are suggested by the same motive. The Lion head alone has also been a very familiar decorative element particularly in Greece, Rome, Italy and the later classical revival periods in Europe, England and America.



Griffin

The use of dieties and masks of dieties as symbolic ornament is also found in early Egyptian decoration and has been used ever since in the forms of heads, grotesques, grotesque masks and half figures changing the symbolic meanings according to the social climate of the times or perhaps losing all meaning and becoming pure ornament.

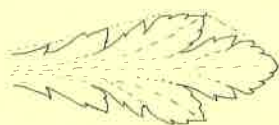
We have seen "a source for most of our familiar elements of design in the decoration which was used in Egypt long before any example that is known to us outside of that land. And it is to Egypt that we are logically bound to look as the origin of these motives. If, then, we seek the source of most of the various elements of the decoration which covers our walls, our floors, our dishes, our bookcovers and even our railway stations, we must begin by studying Egypt."

The study of the Egyptian beginnings trains the eye for later forms found in traditional ornament which have evolved into the motives we use in what we call Early American Decoration.

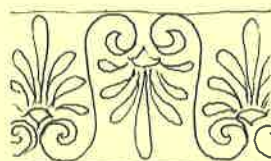
It is interesting to trace the early decorative motives and see what happens to them. There is always a certain excitement in recognizing something or someone in unfamiliar surroundings. In Greece and Rome one finds many of the same Egyptian motives but executed with a more perfect line. The changes were constant and gradual, always in search of that perfection of form which they cherished. "These qualities of plastic beauty,

grace and vivacity of rhythmic movement, structural fitness and artistic reserve, impart to Greek ornament a distinction which sets it apart from all other decorative styles, unless it be of the early Gothic period in France.”^a

There are but a limited number of primary Greek motives and the geometric ones of Egypt are those of Greece but with a new, less static line. The natural forms add the much admired acanthus leaf, drawn with such perfection as well as some differently rendered animal forms. The architectural motives are most important in Greek ornament and so perhaps should be added here. They include dentils, egg and dart (sometimes called tongue and dart) bead and reel, scales and the rinceau or branching scroll. Even the pottery vase forms have come down to us as a decorative motive and deserves as much study as the decorative motives with which it was ornamented.



Acanthus leaf



Anthemion border (a) open



Anthemion (closed)



Anthemion (diagonal) band

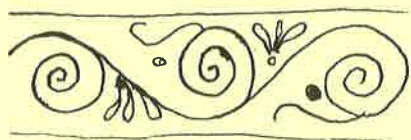
The lovely Greek anthemion with its perfection of line and proportion; the variety of its uses; its combinations; its placement have provided beautiful and interesting ornament. The Egyptian source motif, the lotus, failed to achieve the sense of growth, movement and so rhythm as it did in ancient Greece. This same rhythmic beauty was never again as inspiring even though the anthemion was a common motive in Roman, Renaissance and the later European Empire styles. The lovely anthemion bands, made

up of this motive alternating with some lotus-like form, were given unity, support and movement by the S-scroll in one of its many variations. In (a) we see the open anthemion, in (b) the closed anthemion and in (c) the diagonal position alternating with the highly developed S-scroll. Since the Greek anthemion was a painted motive it is of special interest today whether "country painting", stencilling or gold leaf decoration.

Since Greek ornament often consisted of successive bands or borders, usually the geometric band made up of the fret, zig-zag, parallel lines or concentric circles, alternated with a pictorial band or one of some lotus-derived motive. Striping separated the bands.

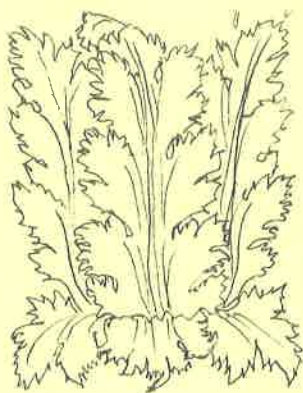
The spiral wave motive provided variety in shape as well as graceful movement; the fret gave stability with its square form and the straight or wavy-vine line brought a sense of growth and life.

The highly developed vine form known as the foliated scroll or rinceau combines the wavy line with alternating branching to fill the open areas. The early forms of the rinceau were of a simple, pleasing line, almost a scaffolding, while the later form was clothed in a complex arrangement of acanthus leaves, flowers, buds and sometimes even people and animals.



Rinceau (early)

The acanthus leaf, that ubiquitous motive in Roman, Renaissance and Empire decoration, first appears in early Greek decoration but its greatest changes came with the development of carved Greek ornament. In Roman and Renaissance times it covers the branching of the spiral scrolls; provides a round or oval cup-like start for growing stems; acts as a support for footed vases and urns; as a standing leaf it decorates architectural forms and clothes the winged half figures. In fact the acanthus leaf is everywhere as artificial foliage. The acanthus plant grows commonly in southern Europe and probably was the source of this leaf motive. Two varieties were known, one with a rounded leaf and the other pointed and both leaf tips are used in the highly developed ornamental motive. To the Greeks it was rendered as a slender form with pointed leaves. The Romans gave the motive a flowing, bending feel with definite "eyes" at the lobes and a more complex venation. It is seen in full view with or without partial leaf turnover, and in half leaf. The turnover provides a change in



Acanthus start



Acanthus leaf with "turn-over"

the growth line, a moment for the eye to hesitate on its way to the tip of the foliated acanthus scroll, rinceau or leaf. We have seen the acanthus leaf and we know it well!!

The guilloche, in its early forms, provides an interesting band motive which the Greeks used as moulding ornament. The later forms used several rows for the interlacing thus creating a wider band to cover the entire torus moulding.

The diagonal acanthus leaf scroll serves the same purpose on the torus moulding and also as a band motive.

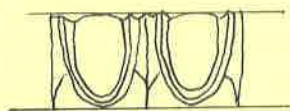


Acanthus in half leaf

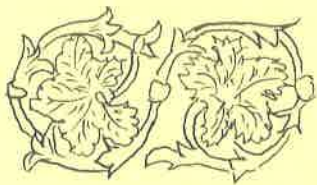


Acanthus leaf, diagonal border motive with alternating rosettes

The egg (or tongue) and dart motive is essentially an architectural form usually used to decorate ovulo mouldings but is found as a band or edge motive. Since it is believed to have evolved from the lotus and bud motive this may explain its use in other than architectural ornament.

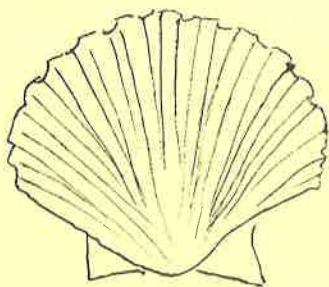


Egg and dart

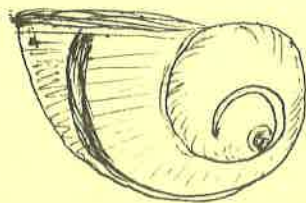


Foliated rinceau

The Romans were to use the same conventionalized ornament as the Greeks but to alter these motives to their own needs and tastes. One decorative motive which we owe to Roman ornament is the fruit festoon, garland or cluster, an imitation of the fruit hung between the skulls of ceremoniously slaughtered animals on the temples. The leaf festoon may be of olive, laurel or bay leaves with their fruit. The floral garland is probably of Renaissance origin.



Scallop shell



Nautilus shell

The shell motive also is probably of Renaissance origin and has continued in popularity to the present time. The nautilus, the snail and the scallop are the most frequently used shell motives.

The basic motives which we see frequently in Early American Decoration and need to understand thoroughly are found in historic ornament. The others have been devised in more recent times to fill the needs of other styles. The Egyptian vulture was a static symbol, the Greeks preferred the eagle and made him the thunderbolt carrier to Zeus. The eagle represented the imperial legions of Rome and France and we know him as the "American" eagle. He has been the standard of many, seen many forms for many uses and today we claim him as our own. The bee we must share with Napoleon Bonaparte. The pomogranate takes us back to Egypt and many cultures since and each time it was a symbolic motive. We find it as a frequent motive in English needlework. The lists could go on but the search for these historic motives in stencilled and painted ornament of the types employed in Early American Decoration should be interesting.

When one considers the type of decoration which we call "Country Painting" the first decoration to consider might be the stripe or straight line of ancient Egypt. It creates an ornament of its own, square, rectangular, oval or round. It defines the space. If doubled or trebled a band motive is produced and more strongly defines the space and shape of the area enclosed.

The brush stroke border presents many of the historic motives produced here according to its own methods. The rickrack border is the S-scroll produced by a turn of the brush in mid-stroke. It may be "fat and chunky" as seen in the Stevens Plains work or have more of the flow of the undulate line but is still the S-scroll. Some borders have separate brush strokes marching along the top of an unseen undulate line with even rhythm, shape and color. Sometimes the strokes stand at right angles to the stripe and resemble the serrations of the outside edge of the acanthus leaf as often used around shaped edges. The half anthemion appears also as a brushstroke border. The interesting and beautiful brush stroke border on some of the signed Mercy North work closely resembles the guilloche motive of Egypt, Greece and Rome. The painted undulate or wavy line appears often on a colored stripe.

The swag is used to give greater interest to the painted stripe as well as being used as a separate motive. It derives its form from the early festoon motive and later from drapery folds.



Fig. 1 — Original Cut Corner Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Earl Bach

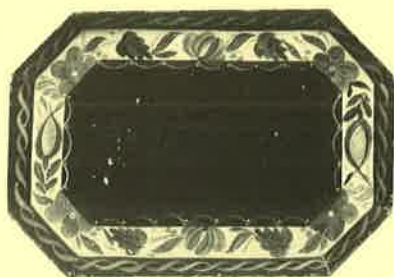


Fig. 3 — Original Cut Corner Tray
Courtesy, H.S.E.A.D., Inc.

The leaves, more often than not, are of the S-scroll form with another S-scroll to form the central vein (Fig. 1). Straight elongated leaves with small fruit on the stem resemble the laurel, bay and olive motives of ancient times.

The fruits and flowers may seem fanciful but often bear a surprisingly close resemblance to conventionalized ornament. In one of the motives



Fig. 2 — Original Bun Tray
 Courtesy, Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.

on a bun tray attributed to Minerva Butler (Fig. 2) there is a certain roundness of the fruit, the crest with the painted sepals, the cross strokes to express the bursted fruit and the dots to represent the seeds; that fruit surely is the pomegranate. This ancient rendering of the pomegranate in Persia and Renaissance Italy was later copied in German and English needlework and weaving. There are several other Maine floral renderings which bear a close resemblance to needlework designs taken from ancient sources.

In Pennsylvania designs, using alternating flower and leaf motives painted on white bands, the undulating line flows directly through the vein line from one leaf to the next (Fig. 1 and 3). Where a careful scaffold was prepared and followed there is an even rhythm around the band. In examples where obviously no preparation was made and the motives vary in size, shape and placement the decoration is much less satisfactory. The same is true of the symmetrical (Fig. 4) designs painted

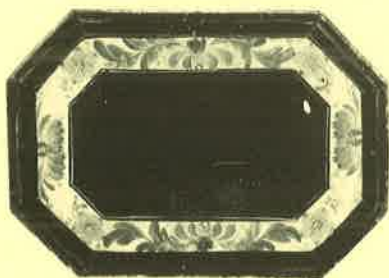


Fig. 4 — Original Cut Corner Tray
 Courtesy, H.S.E.A.D., Inc.



Fig. 5 — Original Cut Corner Tray
 Courtesy, Mrs. Adrian Lea

on these bands and any lack of balance upsets the entire design. The combined use of C-scrolls and S-scrolls (Fig. 5) provides an interesting border design with much rhythm and freedom.

The stencilled decoration of the Empire period makes use of many ancient motives as one might expect in this frankly derivative style.

The partial acanthus leaf in a vertical position creates a repeat border design and endless other designs when placed in a horizontal position (Fig. 6). The full acanthus leaf is everywhere; in silhouette (Fig. 7 and 8), forming a rope border (Fig. 8), alternating with floral motives where it is polished solid (Fig. 9) with no shading whatsoever. The most satisfactory of the scroll motives is made up of several parts, starting from a full leaf and growing and thrusting outward into a true rinceau (Fig. 10) having a beautiful line. In this ornament the "turn-over" is handled with much grace. In some later scrolls the "turn-over" was part of a one piece stencil and is placed far from the leaf body, creating meaningless shape with no relationship to anything until one realizes that it is a lost "turn-over" (Fig. 11) and mentally replaces where it belongs. No doubt the original rendering meant the "turn-over" to be cut as a separate stencil and placed to create the "turn-over".

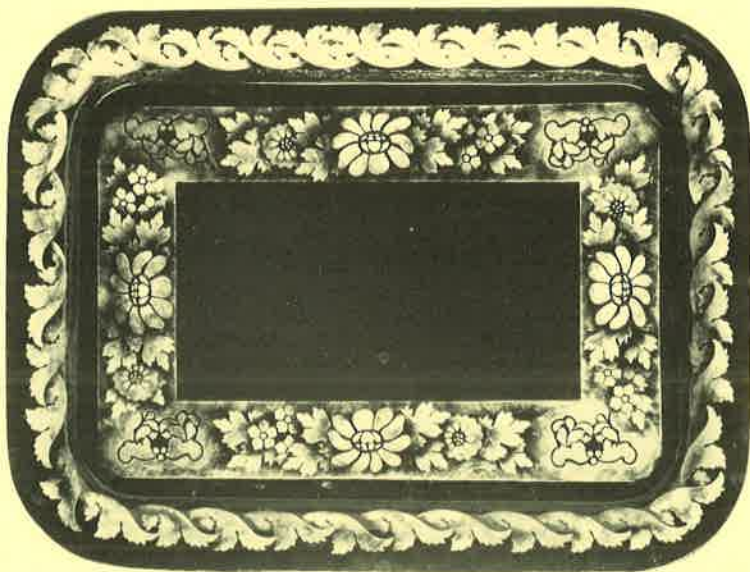


Fig. 6 — Original Stencilled Tray
Owner unknown



Fig. 8 — Original Stencilled Tray
Courtesy, Mr. Lewis Cook

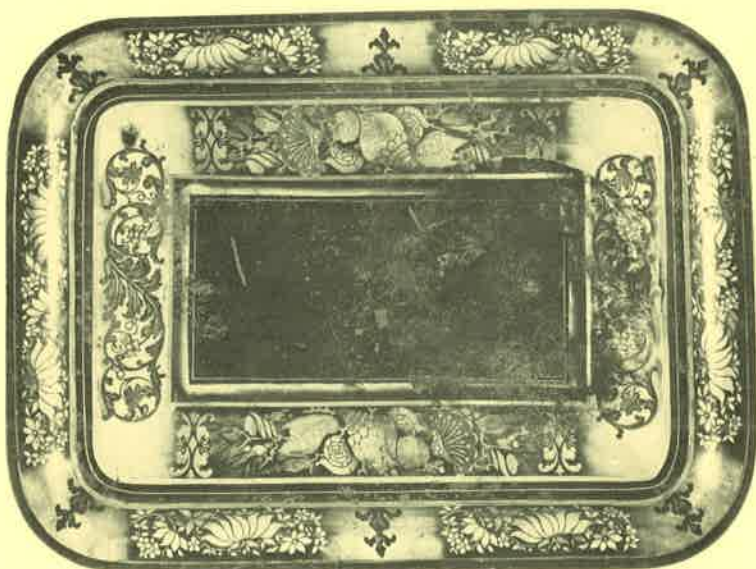


Fig. 7 — Original Stencilled Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Merton D. Thompson

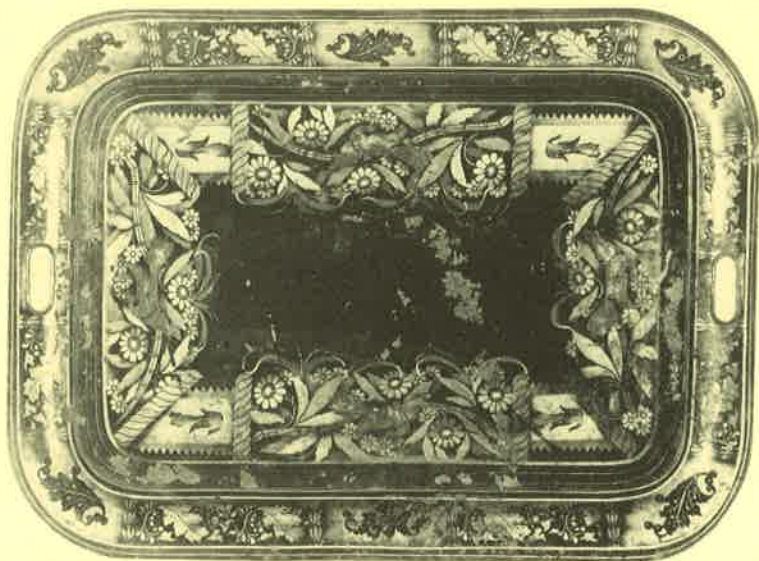


Fig. 9 — Original Stencilled Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Donald Hamblett



Fig. 10 — Original Stencilled Mirror
Courtesy, H.S.E.A.D., Inc.



Fig. 11 — Original Stencilled Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Philip Wheelock

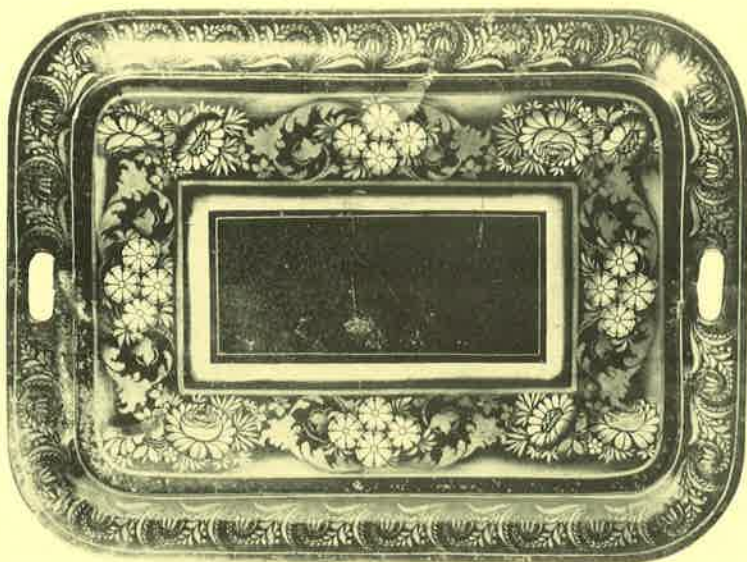


Fig. 12 — Original Stencilled Tray
Owner Unknown

The scroll is frequently seen without foliation in either the S-scroll or C-scroll form and is again polished solid as in the foliated version. An interesting variation of the scroll (Fig. 12) is also without shading and the beautiful stem line (implied) terminates in a floral motive. Occasionally the oak leaf assumes the scroll form but more often is used as foliage.

We find fragments of various diamond diaper patterns alternating with floral motives in the border ornament (Fig. 13) while the ancient scale motive is used in the border of the well known "kitten" tray. Another early geometric motive found in a variety of renderings is the fret (Fig. 14). An interesting array of other ancient motives are found in (Fig. 8), the twisted rope motive, a bamboo type motive, the zig-zag, dots and birds, both in silhouette and solid stencil.

Stencilled decoration is rich in the motives of antiquity since the style of that time was inspired by excavations of ancient ruins and by the ornament of the Empire period in France (Fig. 15). The inexpensive stencil could simulate the expensive ormolu mounts and the earlier gold leaf ornament and as the stencilling techniques improved beautiful ornament was produced. It was soon lost to the industrial revolution.

In the freehand use of bronzing powders many of the same old motives were used and this too is true of gold leaf ornament.

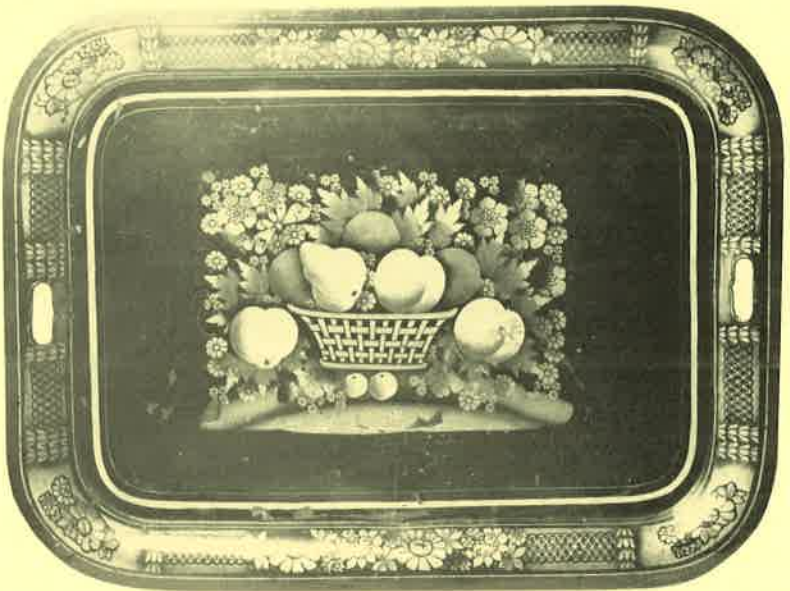


Fig. 13 — Original Stencilled Tray
Owner Unknown



Fig. 14 — Original Stencilled Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Donald Stark

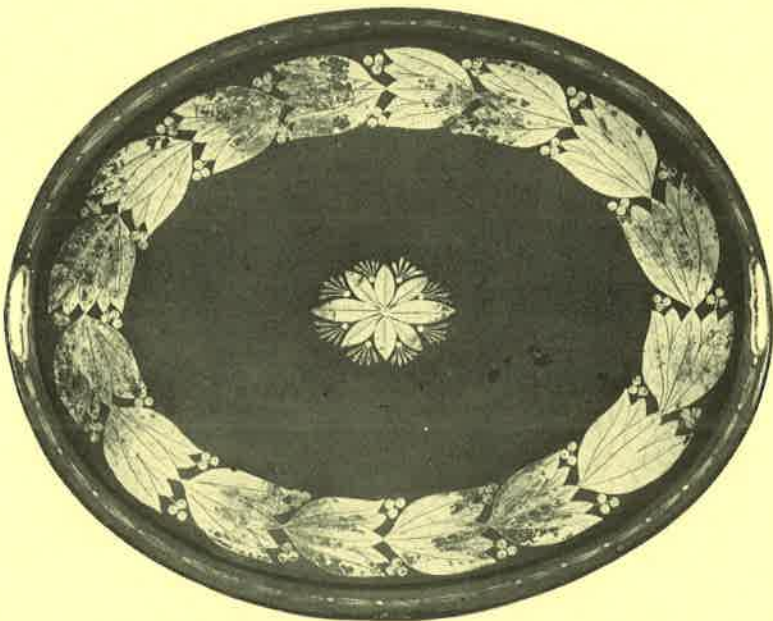


Fig. 15 — Original Metal Leaf Tray
Courtesy, Mrs. Earl Bach



Fig. 16 — Original Chippendale Tray
Courtesy, H.S.E.A.D., Inc.



Fig. 17 — Original Papier Mache Tray
Courtesy, Mr. Sidney Sawyer

The foliated scroll, both S-scroll and C-scroll shapes, is one of the most important motives in the Chippendale-type of decoration. It provides the framework for the Victorian floral painting. Here, however, it is an asymmetrical rendering of the scroll and quite foreign to the ornament of Egypt, Greece and Rome. It belongs to the European eighteenth century rococo ornament. The realistic treatment of the flowers in this decoration is also very different from the conventionalized floral ornament of antiquity (Fig. 16 and 17).

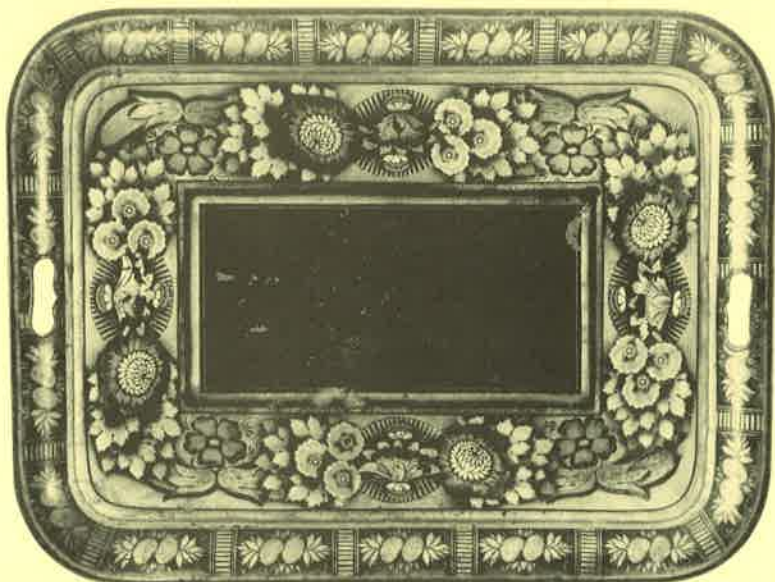
In any review there must be a stopping point even though many facets of the subject remain undiscussed and the same is true with the subject of historic ornament. The realization that there are few really new and original ideas in design is reinforced. Each age gives a fresh meaning, a new personality to its ornament but the same rules of growth, symmetry, balance and consistency are there with the same basic lines with which to work. The sense of perception becomes more acute as memory prods and we know that there was much beauty that we did not see and much pleasure that we missed.

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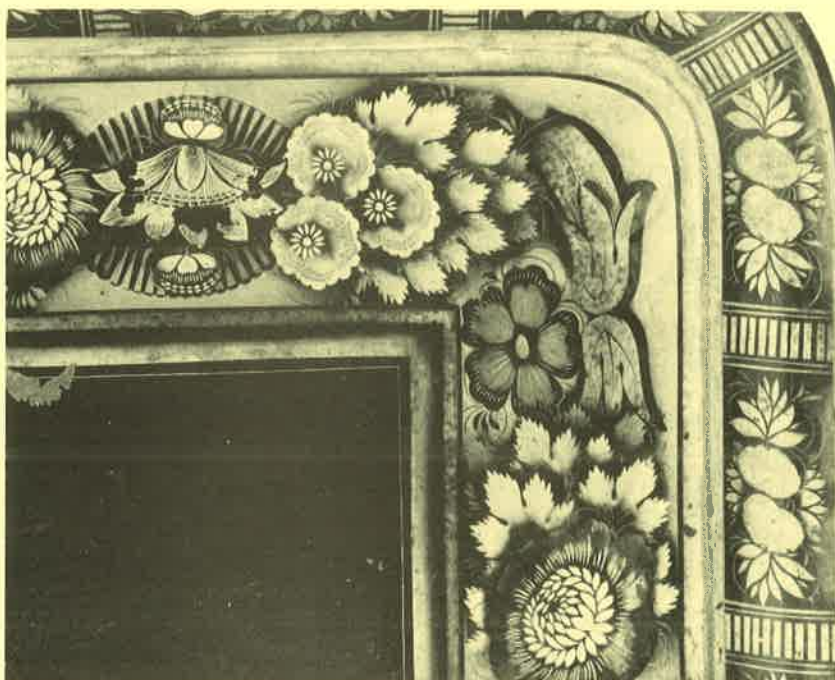
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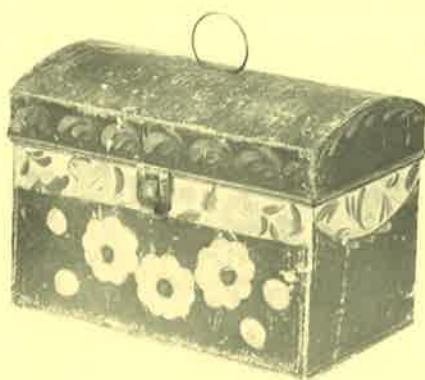


Original Stencilled Tray – Courtesy, Mrs. Harold Syversen



Detail of Stencilled Tray showing the use of parallel line-stops to separate the repeated fruit motives. The symmetrical husk motives on the floor are unusual.

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MEMBERS' "A" AWARDS

North Falmouth, Massachusetts — April, 1975

Country Painting



Ruth Berkey



Elizabeth Nibbelink



Carol Dunlap

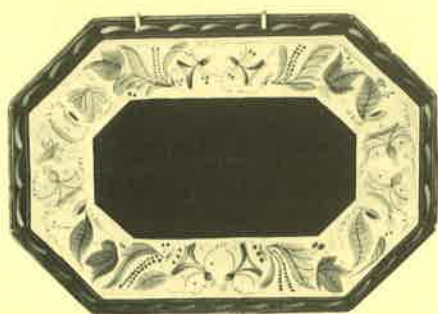


Dorothy Hallett

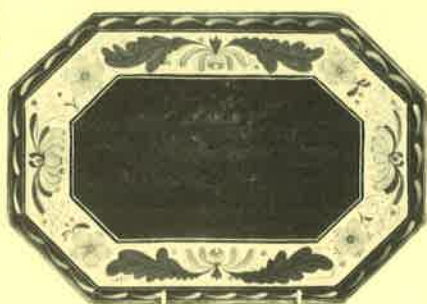


Norma Stark

Country Painting



Beth Martin



Beth Martin

Freehand Bronze Painting

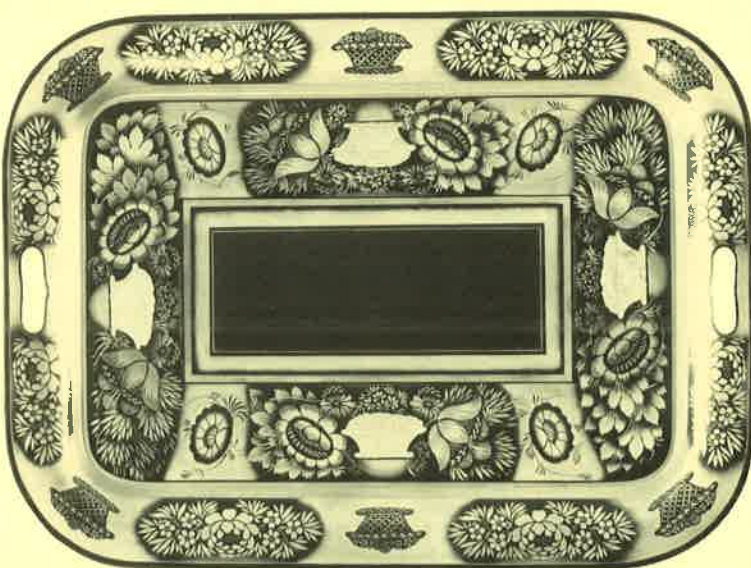


Astrid Thomas

Stencilling on Tin



Ruth Bush



Anna Day

Glass Panel — Metal Leaf Border



Margaret Watts

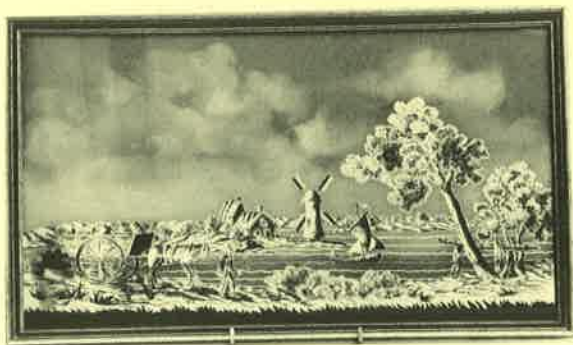
Glass Panel — Stencilled Border



Marion Poor



Margaret Watts

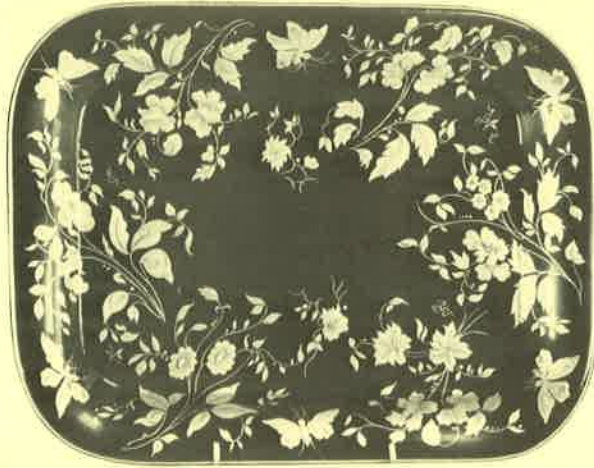


Ardelle Steele

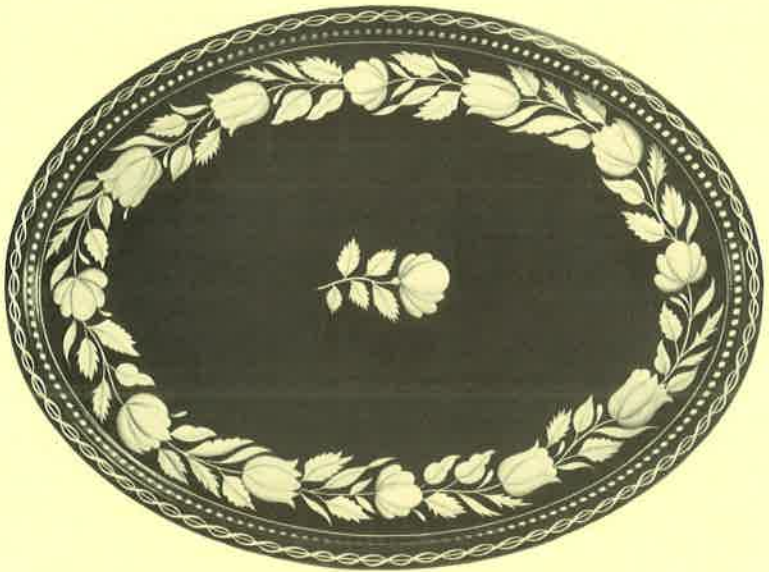


Margaret Emery

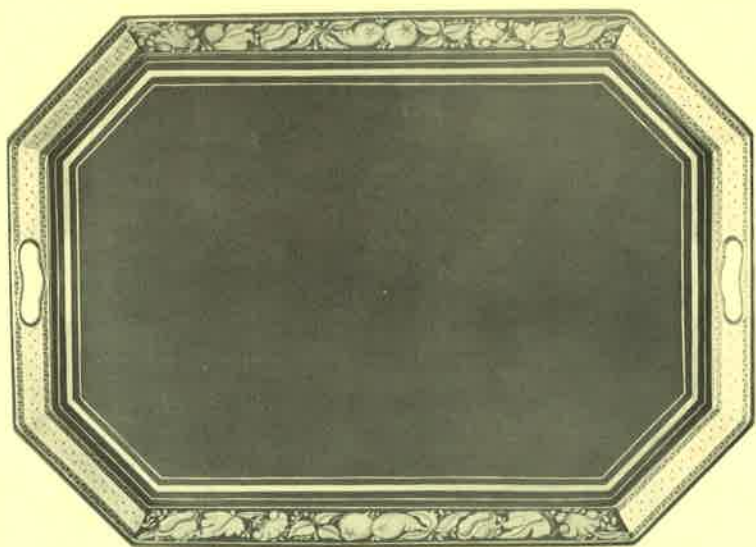
Metal Leaf Painting



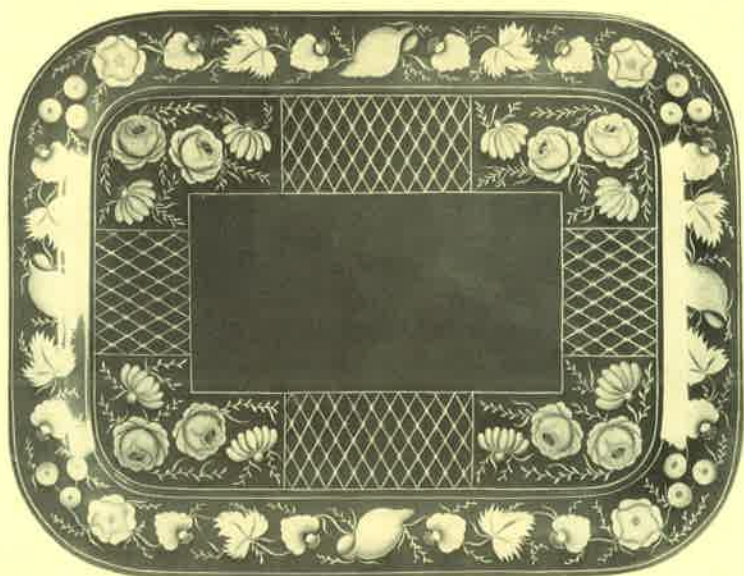
Laura Orcutt



Deborah Lambeth



Ruth Black



Phyllis Sherman

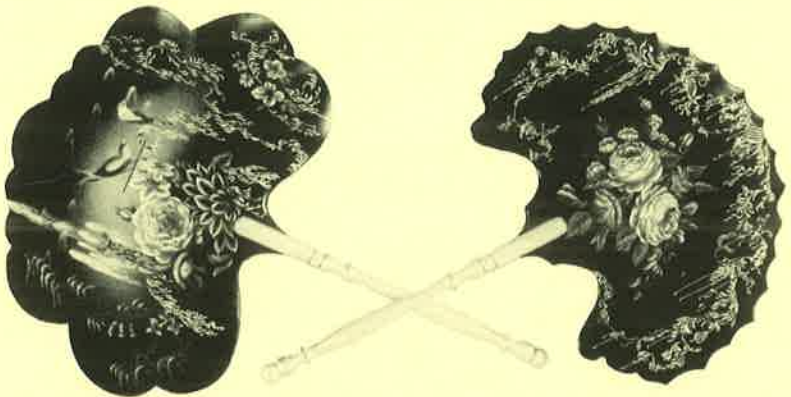
Special Class



Maryjane Clark



Louise Wallace



Helen Gross



THE BOOKSHELF

By Martha M. Wilbur

Painted Tinware We've Seen: Pennsylvania and New York; Volume I

Painted Tinware We've Seen: Connecticut and Maine; Volume II

By Margaret and Charles Coffin

Bird and Bottle Publishing, Galway, New York — 1974

\$5.75 each or \$11.00 for two volumes.

These two handbooks dealing with Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut and Maine decorated tinware contain a wealth of general information about the regional characteristics, the dating of a piece of tin by inscriptions written or scratched on the tin as well as listing the names of known shops and decorators. This interesting text adds much to the descriptions that accompany the thirty two illustrations in each volume. These handbooks, written by students who have studied American decorated tin for many years, are a valuable supplement to the *History and Folklore of American Country Tinware, 1700-1900*, an earlier publication by Mrs. Coffin.

Paul Revere's Boston: 1735-1818

Boston Museum of Fine Arts,

Department of American Decorative Arts
and Sculpture

Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Paperback, \$10.00 plus \$1.50 handling charges

also available in hard cover.

This catalogue of the Bi-Centennial Exhibition, Paul Revere's Boston: 1735-1818 currently on display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is an exciting book apart from the exhibition for which it was written. In the introduction, Walter Muir Whitehall writes "in Paul Revere's Boston, 1735-1818, the Museum of Fine Arts offers a unique picture of the town during the eighty-three years of the patriot's life" and one is fascinated as the personality of one contemporary citizen after another evolves.

The brief biographical introductions place these people in their various roles in the society in which they lived and worked; the portraits provide a record of their physical appearance at some stage of their lives and the photographs of their possessions reveal their individual tastes and styles. John Adams reveals something of himself in such quotations as "when John Adams arrived for the first time in London on October 26, 1783, he remarked of his quarters in Osborne's Adelphi Hotel: 'The Rooms and Furniture are more to my Taste than in Paris, because they are more like what I have been used to in America' ". An enormous amount of well documented research is interwoven with the photographs of line engravings, mezzotints, paintings, furniture, silver, and china.

In these pages one renews an acquaintance with John Ritto Penniman the painter and ornamenter. The workbox which he signed is shown as well as several other pieces of ornamented furniture which may have been the work of this fine craftsman. Documentation for these attributions is interesting.

There is no better way to describe this fine book than to quote from Mr. Whitehall: "By presenting objects of known provenance whenever possible, it helps bring the dead to life. It is, moreover, a proof that in recreating a segment of the past, paintings and objects of decorative art are quite as legitimate historical documents as books and manuscripts".

NOMINATIONS PLEASE

Each year members are given the opportunity to submit names for consideration by the Nominating Committee in selecting their nominations for the Board of Trustees. Four Trustees will be elected in May, 1976 at which time the terms of the following Trustees will expire:

Terms Expire 1976

Mrs. Russell Annabal
Mrs. H. S. Topping

Mrs. Ernest Greenhill
Mrs. George Watt

Please send names of your candidates to the chairman no later than November 30, 1975.

Mrs. Wayne F. Fry, Chairman
74 Mosher Road
Delmar, N.Y. 12054

NOTICES FROM TRUSTEES

FALL MEETING

September 24, 25, 26, 1975

Jug End, South Egremont, Massachusetts

Meeting Chairman: Mrs. Wayne Fry

Program Chairman: Mrs. Charles Coffin

SPRING MEETING

May 12, 13, 14, 1976

Otesaga Hotel, Cooperstown, New York

Policies:

Society slides may be loaned to members of the Society at the discretion of the Photography Chairman.

A Chapter may not change the name under which it was originally organized.

The Official Seal

The Official Seal of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. shall be used for official Society business only. Any exceptions to this policy must have the written consent of the Board of Trustees.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Teachers interested in Certification may have the new Minimum Requirements Form by writing to the Teacher Certification Chairman.

Notice: Please notify the chairman of the Teacher Certification Committee at least eight weeks before a meeting if you wish an appointment for an interview or plan to submit work to complete a category.

Teachers must now submit any incomplete work for certification within two meetings of their interviews.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify Membership Chairman promptly of any change of address.

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- MRS. F. EARL BACH, Glen Falls, N. Y.—Certified in: stencilling, country painting, freehand bronze.
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