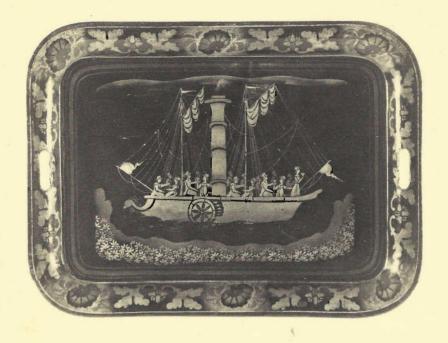
## The Decorator

Volume XXXI No. 1 Willow Grove, Pennsylvania Fall 1976



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



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

Organized in 1946 in Memory of Esther Stevens Brazer

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



# Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.

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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Table Screen with Painting Carried onto Glass.

Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

#### **EDITORIAL**

For several years America has been engaged in a nationwide study of the country's past in preparation for the bicentennial delebrations. Now we are more aware of the diverse influences that shaped this nation.

In this issue of The Decorator a study of English decoration, its sources and interpretations, may help to reveal our particular debt to that country. Shirley DeVoe identifies a ship used as decoration on an English tray. This identification suddenly changes our reaction to the ship; we now see it as a charming representation, a creation of the decorator's vision. Although we know it does not resemble an actual ship we accept and enjoy the ship motif. Virginia Wheelock offers possible answers for the sources of and inspiration for the ornamentation of another English tray. We recognize the forms of the motifs but realize that these are not representations of real objects. Here the arabesque creates cornucopia forms freed of all the usual meanings of the bounty of nature. It has become pure ornament.

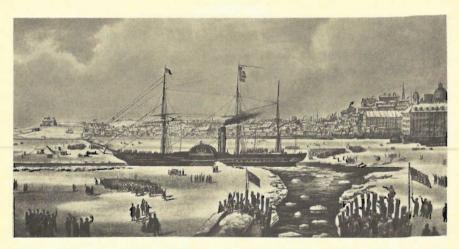
The joys of design are the ever recurring and changing themes, the unexpected new variations, the understanding of the influences of change, and the recognition as well as the acceptance of the new forms.

Avis B. Heatherington

#### THE CUNARD STEAM PADDLE SHIP BRITANNIA

by Shirley Spaulding DeVoe

In England, the industrial revolution which showed such promise was failing in the 1820's for lack of good transportation. Shipping Midland products by canal had begun at the end of the eighteenth century and was a great improvement over the slow, lumbering wagons. But it was clear in the early days of the railroads that the age of canals would be short. Of greater benefit to trade was not only the railroads but the steam ships, for then the manufactured goods could be conveyed to greater distances with more speed and at less cost. Naturally this benefit to industry was of national importance, so it was with justifiable pride in these events that the pioneer representatives of the new transportation systems were recorded by paint, transfers or stencils on the products of the English potteries and japanneries. For example, there is the familiar railroad tray, the tray illustrated, (See Cover Photograph) and I once saw a china plate on which was a black transfer picture of the Britannia.



Lithograph from an on-the-spot drawing by James S. King. Courtesy, The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Va. The Cunard Royal Mail Steamship *Britannia* as she appeared leaving her dock at East Boston February 3rd, 1844, bound from Boston to Liverpool. The original print bore this inscription "Dedicated by the Publishers to the Merchants of Boston who projected and paid for a canal cut in the ice 7 miles long 100 feet wide...".

Note: It was said that when the print first came out, the citizens of Boston were so incensed that the world should know that Boston Harbor ever froze over, that they called in as many of the prints as possible and destroyed them.

The Cunard Line which has been one of the leaders in trans-Atlantic travel, was established by Sir Samuel Cunard who was born in 1787. In 1838 he moved to England and the next year secured the American mail carrying contract from the British Admiralty. The original Cunard fleet consisted of four wood paddle steamers, each 207 feet long. One of these four was the Britannia. She began her maiden voyage on July 4, 1840, sailing from Liverpool for Boston and made what was justly considered a fast passage of 14 days and 8 hours. It was a year or two later that Charles Dickens came to America on the Britannia.

The stencilled design of the Britannia (See Cover Photograph) is naively portrayed. The oversized smokestack reaches to the sky and the out-of-proportion men and women passengers and sailors are perched and crowded on the ship — a good reason to celebrate with wine their fast passage and safe arrival in Boston Harbor. Under the painted and stippled waves can be seen the field of daisies commonly used as a base filler on many stencilled trays. A small flower spray was added at the right and left sides of the ship.

There is a colored lithograph of The Cunard Royal Mail Steamship *Britannia* (on preceding page) in the collection of the Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia. It was made from an on-the-spot drawing by James S. King in 1844. It is interesting to compare this picture with the japanner's version.





Original Papier-mache Tray by Thomas Illidge & Co. (Impressed "Illidge" on back). Richness of design created by use of six shades of bronzing powders. All bronzing done on transparent green base over black ground. Courtesy, Avis Heatherington.

### THE INFLUENCE OF LITERARY WORKS ON DECORATIVE DESIGN

by Virginia M. Wheelock

A beautifully executed tray of graceful and harmonious composition was made by Thomas Illidge & Co. of Wolverhampton, England (ca. 1818-1830). It will be examined both for its superb craftsmanship and for its possible literary and historical sources of decorative subject matter. The two vignettes painted on the tray represent two very different cultures, and presented here is one theory that suggests a possible explanation of this unusual combination.

From tales brought back by the Crusaders (1095-1261) the English people were fascinated by the rich and sumptuous luxury, the customs, and the peoples of the East. The 11th and 12th centuries saw the greatest power, creativity, and wealth in Constantinople. This city was the center of the Byzantine Empire and a cultural, commercial, and political force of the first magnitude, exerting an incalcuable influence far beyond its borders. Through the centuries the exotic and mysterious East lured travellers and traders from many lands.

Early in the 18th century, English architects had dispatched missions to Italy, to Greece and to Asia Minor. From 1787 to 1795 Thomas

Hope (1770-1831) made a grand tour which included Europe, Syria, and Turkey during which time he studied architecture and design, social manners and customs, and collected antiquities. In the hallway of his home was a full length portrait, painted by Sir William Beechey in 1798, in which Thomas Hope chose to be pictured wearing the richly-embroidered and ornate apparel of the East. (Hope was later to publish the book *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* in 1807, in which he introduced what came to be called the "neoclassical" or "Empire" style.

In addition to the knowledge of Far Eastern customs, the rest of the world began to learn and appreciate the distinctive qualities of artistic concept and form in Byzantine Art. The term Byzantine Art refers to that originating at or associated with Constantinople, and was one of great distinction, power and tenacity, and was imitated in every country. The style is extremely sophisticated and is the expression of



Portrait of Thomas Hope painted by Sir William Beechey. (Note Chibouque).

Courtesy, National Portrait Gallery, London.

a learned culture which enjoyed intellectual exercise, rhythmic accent, and a sense of movement. (The task of the artist was to present religious and social ideas in visual form to create equivalents of abstract dogmas, and to display them both for contemplation and for intellectual stimulation, and in so doing "afford pleasure to the eye and enrichment to the soul".

From 1809 to 1811, the young poet Lord Byron travelled to Portugal, Spain, Malta, Albania, Greece, Turkey and Asia Minor, spending much time in Athens, Constantinople, and Smyrna. It was during this period that Byron composed the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, an account of his journey in which the personal aspects of the narrative were undisguised. When these first cantos were published in 1812, it was the literary event of the year, perhaps of the century, and captivated all of England. Between the years 1812 and 1816, Byron wrote



DETAIL, VIGNETTE.

Gentleman: Silver coat and trousers; robe of dusted fire. Fine gold stump work and modelling done in burnt sienna. Copper kettle and silver cup and saucer both outlined with gold.

Chibouque: Gold stem, silver bowl, and silver smoke with gold stump shading.

Cornucopias: Thin dusting of greenish bronze with accents of fire and outlined in gold.

and published Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, and The Corsair. These poems gave a powerful impetus to the cult of the exotic and indicated that Byron had an intimate acquaintance with the higher and better side of Eastern life. Byron became a tremendous literary success and his works were widely read in England and in Europe. People were fascinated by the portrayal of the strange lands he depicted in his poems and the public became familiar with a new type of scenery and vocabulary.

With such a background, it is reasonable to suppose that the decoration on this tray could have drawn its inspiration from Byzantine Art and, in addition, capitalized on the popularity of Byron's Romantic poetry with its emphasis on Eastern culture. Thus, one vignette pictures a man in Turkish dress, with a turban on his head, and smoking a chibouque (a Turkish pipe used for smoking hemp, and which often had a jewel-encrusted bowl and a stem four or five feet long). He is seated near a stove upon which is an English-style teapot (ca. 1810-1820), a cup and a saucer . . . a curious artistic license since the Turks are better known as coffee drinkers. In *The Corsair*, Canto II, Verse 2,

#### Byron wrote:

"High in his hall reclines the turbaned Seyd; Around - the bearded chiefs he came to lead. Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff - Though to the rest the sober berry's juice The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems' use; The long chibouque's dissolving cloud supply, While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy."

Perhaps, in one of the editions of Byron's poetry, an engraving appeared depicting the above scene, which may have motivated the artist who decorated the tray?

The other vignette, more Romantic and classical in nature, shows a well-dressed young man and a maiden, both wearing a style of clothing typical of that of the last half of the 17th century. The young gentleman is dressed in the fashion of the well-to-do gentry, while the maiden's costume is that of a young peasant or serving girl. The maiden is carrying a water or wine jug of early design; the gentleman is holding what appears to be a traveller's staff, as he rests beside a Hermes post. (Hermes was the ancient Greek herald and messenger of the Gods, as well as the God of roads, commerce, invention, cunning and theft. In primitive days wooden posts were driven into the ground and



DETAIL, VIGNETTE.

Gentleman: Jacket; fire with silver color. Breeches; green copper color shaded with stump work and fine brush strokes of burnt sienna.

Maiden: Dress; green copper modelled with fire stump work. Fine burnt sienna brush strokes and gold stump work on silver apron, cuffs, collar, and cap.

Hermes Post: Shaded silver (or pale gold) with bright gold outline.

Borders on Flange: Flowers and Buds: Silver powder accented with fire at bases and gold stump work on petals — shaded with fine burnt sienna strokes. Single peony or rose: Silver powder polished with fire at center; stamens of two shades of bronzing powders — green copper tone in centers and reddish-copper on stem-like parts.

Small narrow border: Serrated leaf with gold shading toward stem; flowers of same color powder with fine white overstrokes. Extremely fine strokes of reddish copper color join and frame the leaves and flowers.

the upper end carved into a bust of Hermes. They were set up to mark the boundaries of lands, at the junction of roads, at the corners of streets, and as milestones. Later imitated in stone they were used as ornaments in Roman villa gardens. Still later, the Italians of the Renaissance revived the ancient custom and elaborated the Hermae into stately half-figure posts emerging from a sheath). Perhaps there is a story or poem laid at this earlier time that kindled the imagination of the craftsman who painted this pastoral scene at the Hermes post?



DETAIL, UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER.

Large floral motif: Stump and brush work in four shades of bronzing powders outlined with bright gold.



DETAIL, LOWER LEFT-HAND CORNER.

Large Chrysanthemum-like flowers: Shaggy petals of dark yellow gold with brighter gold stump work and brush shading. Fire at top of base-cup shading to base with stump work of fire. Yellow gold dots and very finely painted brush strokes of burnt sienna. Motif under flowers: Alternate bands of reddish copper and fire.



DETAIL, UPPER RIGHT-HAND CORNER.

Scrollwork on Floor: Large motifs outlined in rich yellow gold. Some leaves of reddish copper, other of greenish copper and outlined in lighter copper color.



DETAIL, LOWER RIGHT-HAND CORNER.

Flowers on Floor: Light gold with deeper gold stump work and fine burnt sienna and gold painted strokes.

The overall decoration on this magnificent tray could be an English version of the complicated system of ornamentation of Byzantine Art. The intricate design, under strict control, yet with constant motion, is very reminiscent of the early arabesque decoration composed of flowing lines and patterns of flowers, leaves, branches, and scrollwork fancifully intertwined. The tension of the design is released in the bursting forth of the shaggy chrysanthemum-like flowers on the left-hand side of the floor of the tray. It is interesting to note the continuing use of the cornucopia, in varying sizes, which reinforces the ever-evolving movement on the tray. (Here, the figure is not used as a symbol of plenty but purely as a decorative motif). The repeated helicoid theme of curling and spiraling forms throughout the composition is filled with movement, ever-growing only to terminate and reappear - a little altered in size and shape, but always the same restless moving form. This was Byron's fate, a restless spirit, a wanderer in search of he knew not what. Perhaps, in the development of the decorative plan, the artist attempted to convey his affinity to this fundamental characteristic in the personality of Byron?

As we continually search for sources of ornamentation on decorated articles, perhaps more consideration should be given to the possibility that literary works may have stimulated craftsmen to develop a particular theme and style representative of the prevailing taste of the times.

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Note: I am indebted to the Editor of The Decorator for her invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article.



Small Paneled Screen with large leaves of scrap pearl shell dotted with bright gold. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

#### THE SHELDON JAPAN SHOP, BIRMINGHAM

by Shirley Spaulding DeVoe

In 1965 the Birmingham Art Gallery, Birmingham, England, had on loan a collection of papers and japanned wares. They were the property of Mrs. P. E. Sheldon, widow of the grandson of the founder of a japan shop. This interesting collection is the only known group of japanners papers and designs to survive in Birmingham and they provide a glimpse of the patterns and media used by these craftsmen and also demonstrates for how long the industry survived.

In 1882, Ebenezer Sheldon, (1827-1902?), established a shop at 319 Bradford Street, Birmingham. It was one of the many small industries that was founded when the owner branched out on his own after gathering experience at a larger shop. However, there are no known records of his career with other firms. The only definite clue to his early work can be found in the trade directory of 1860 in which he is listed as a "blacker" a trade name for a japanner who coated articles with black varnish. This then must have been his part in the production of his wares, using free-lance or full time ornamenters.

In the Sheldon collection can be found business stationery, papier mache and japanned metal wares, numbered hand-drawn designs, paper templets, gold leaf transfer designs (to which bits of gold leaf still cling) and carefully pin-pricked outlines of designs. Figure one.

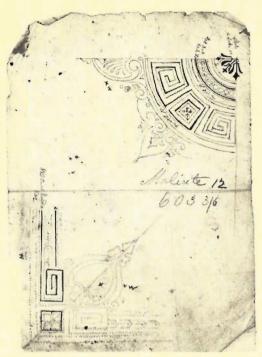


Fig. 1 — Pinpricked pattern used in Ebenezer Sheldon Shop showing popular Greek Key motif. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

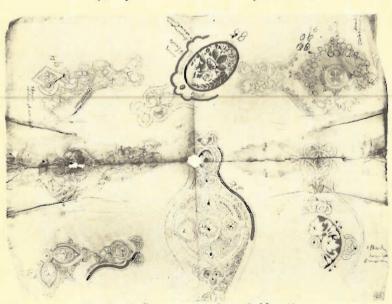


Fig. 2 — Bellows patterns from Sheldon Shop. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham



Fig. 4 — Front of Upright Work Cabinet from Sheldon Shop. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham



Fig. 3 — Top of Upright Work Cabinet from Sheldon Shop. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

On some of the drawings the colors, media and the names of workers and their specialties are inscribed. An X indicates the portion of the design on which pearl shell was to be laid Figure two.

Written on a tea caddy design is "landscape by Goodman — pearl building." This was George Goodman who had been apprenticed at Jennens & Bettridge's and was an experienced landscape painter. In 1852 Goodman obtained a patent for "ornamenting japanned annud papier mache wares by transferring thereto designs printed upon paper; the said designs being painted in oil colours from engraved plates". At Sheldon's shop the Goodman transfers were often printed and painted on a "stone coloured ground."

Two designs bear the name of Hinks, who was James Hinks, also an experienced landscape painter. Proof of this can be seen on the lid of a cabinet. He had been employed at Alsager & Neville's at an earlier time. In addition to painting a "building and river", Figure three, he was to paint a "building with domes" on a folio.

Other workers were Heath, who was to paint a "one holer inkstand"; Bennett to do an "upright building with pearl"; Elgin to decorate a cabinet with chrystanthemum sprays using straw color and pearl, then "staining lightly with lake" the mother-of-pearl. Figure five. Coloway was to use light brown on a pearl building; Ward to paint

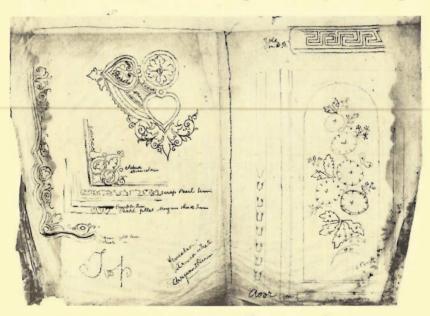


Fig. 5 — Drawings of Designs for Sheldon papier-mache wares. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

flowers; and the names John T. Hare and Hill appear on a basket design. T. Kirby painted a glove box and it was written that Morgan made a "thick pearl fillet" containing shaped and broken pearl shell.

"Straw colour" gold leaf was indicated for the gilding and on a separate paper was the name "Joseph Anton Seglitz, Metallschlager, in Furth", a Bavarian gold beater who possibly supplied Sheldon with metal leaf. Various shades of bronze powders were used for backgrounds and for the "strong and fine lines" (striping) that edged the articles.

The borders were of C scrolls or pearl shaped as hearts or flowers or of scrap pearl, often dotted with bright gold. Two that were unusual were a "three line key" and a rather angular version of a Hepplewhite brush stroke border. Added to the effulgent gold and pearl designs were borders of black and white dots and the Greek key, always popular with japanners and potters.

A circular motif is marked "12 inch amalakis" (sic) figure six. According to Webster an amalaka is the bulbous or melon-like form that

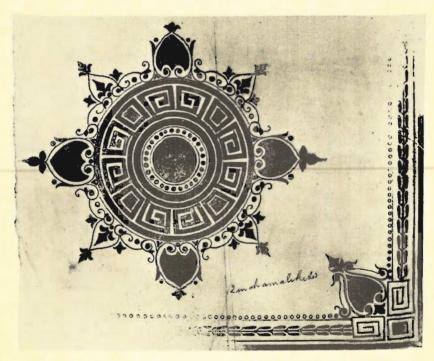


Fig. 6 – Transfer Pattern combining Greek key and
Amalakas in circular design.
Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham



Fig. 7 — Blotter Cover showing influence of Japanese Art. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

topped the *shikara* or towers of the medieval Indian temples. There was also a fuchsia and morning glory design marked no pearl and a moss rose within an oval wreath with a bow at the base. The leaves and bow were to be of pearl shell.

In the second half of the 19th century the decorative arts were influenced by Japanese art. This form of decoration was then known as "Japonism" and was used to some extent by the japanneries. The designs consisted of off center motifs and asymmetrical lines as shown in Figure seven.

With black and white the painters preferred warm colors; vermilion, carmine, lake, emerald and dark green, orange and violet.

With a few exceptions the finished articles were of thick paper panel and the wide variety of forms suggest that they were obtained in blanks from a specialty shop. There were bellows, work boxes, portfolios, blotters, desks, baskets, needle books, 20 inch round gothic tables, book slides, 10 inch netting boxes, cigar cases, glove and knit ting boxes, card cases, trays, mounted mirrors, small three and four paneled screens, napkin rings, crumb and pen trays, spectacle cases,



Photograph Album decorated in Sheldon Shop, late 19th century. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham



Fig. 8 — Spectacle cases, Card case, and Bellows (see pattern #95, Fig. 2) from Sheldon Shop.
Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

umbrella stands, cabinets, jewel boxes, and others typical of the late 19th century style. Figure eight.

An interesting note asserts that to finish a cabinet required five books of gold leaf, five hours of pearling and six days for finishing. A high gloss finish was the hallmark of all English papier mache.

In 1890, Ebenezer Jr., (1859-1930), became associated with his father. In 1878 he had been awarded a special prize for art, presented to him by the mayor of Birmingham. Figure nine. This perhaps accounts for the hand drawn designs that were dated before the opening of his father's shop. Young Sheldon was located at Balsall Heath while his father continued to work at the Bradford Street address. But Sheldon, Jr. directed the work of the firm from 1902, (probably at his father's death) and in time was joined by his son Percival Ebenezer, (1890-1954).

Realizing that the heyday of papier mache was over the Sheldons turned to enameling and electroplating as well as to the manufacture of mud guards for vehicles at a branch shop. There was little difference in the coating of metal with japan or enamel on a tray or mudguard, on a coach or automobile. Fortunately the young bicycle and motor vehicle industry required the work of japanners and filleters, thus permitting the Sheldons and other members of a dwindling industry to move on to a new one.

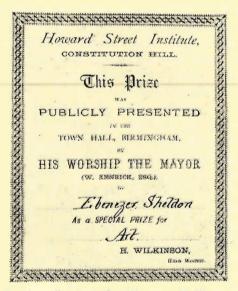


Fig. 9 — Award presented to Ebenezer Sheldon in 1878. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham

CLAY AND CO. beg to announce that they continue to manufacture their BEST PAPER TRAYS in the same superior style. and of that excellent quality which has their goods the most distinguished reputa-tion both for beauty and durability. To meet, however, the demands of the times, CLAY AND Co. have added to their Stock Second and Third Class Goods, including, among the latter. PAPIER MACHE TRAYS, from 17s. 6d. the set of three.

Every variety of Fancy JAPANNED PAPER GOODS,



17 & 18, KING-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

An Advertisement for Clay & Company.

#### HENRY CLAY OF BIRMINGHAM

by Shirley Spaulding DeVoe

Papier mache was produced in Birmingham in the first half of the 18th century in the great shops of John Taylor and John Baskerville but it was Henry Clay who brought the trade to a greater state of perfection than any who had preceded him. To quote W. H. Hutton, 1819: "Clay's paper work was celebrated throughout England and in most foreign markets." Josiah Wedgwood also approved of Clay's craftsmanship for in 1776 he said: "His manufacture will give him fame . . . before Rivals can interfere essentially."

Henry Clay was apprenticed at the Baskerville shop and while he was there Baskerville was experimenting with paper making seeking to acquire a paper of better quality for his printing. No doubt Clay's proximity to these experiments developed his interest in producing an improved paper panel for decorative articles. He was successful for on November 20, 1772 he received a patent, #1027, for his panel which was greatly superior to any earlier type. It was heat resistant, could be stove dried without warping and handled like wood. It was excellent for coach panels, furniture and tea-boards.

After he finished his apprenticeship at Baskervilles, Clay established his own shop in 1770, located "not far from the new church," and where until 1772 he had a partner named Gibbon. A writer in 1791 said of Clay's shop: "The panels were taken to a room resembling a

little timber yard antiquous to which is a very large workshop; cabinet makers form every article . . . sawing it out of paper and planing it with great exactness. It is then japanned and polished". It was there that the sedan chair, with panels on which was painted Guido Reni's Aurora and a set of console tables were made for Queen Charlotte. Then sometime in the year 1800 the king commissioned four large paper tea trays to be finely painted from four views belonging to the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, at 25 guineas each. Clay had a London



Detail of Back of Tray. Courtesy, Mrs. Danforth Miller.



Papier-mache Tray. Signed. Courtesy, Mrs. Danforth Miller.

agent (about whom more later) who was his contact with the royal couple. For his fine work Clay received royal recognition and his trays were then impressed with the royal crown over *Clay Patent* or over *Clay*.

Of the very large output of his wares, especially the very early ones, only a small percentage of them have survived or can be identified. A few are mentioned in contemporary diaries and letters without a satisfactory description of them.

In 1778, Horace Walpole recorded that he had purchased a tea chest of Clay's ware for which he had paid 3 guineas. On it was painted a light, airy design of loose feathers. Walpole also had at Strawberry Hill, his gothic residence, a highly varnished black writing table by Clay that was ornamented with a blue and white gothic pattern from a design by Paul Sandby. (1725-1809).

All the Birmingham industrialists welcomed visitors to their establishments and Clay was no exception. In his famous *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Boswell wrote briefly that on September 20, 1774, he with his friend Dr. Wheeler, "visited the manufacture of Papier-mache. The paper they use is smooth whited-brown; the varnish is polished with rottenstone — Wheeler gave me a tea-board".

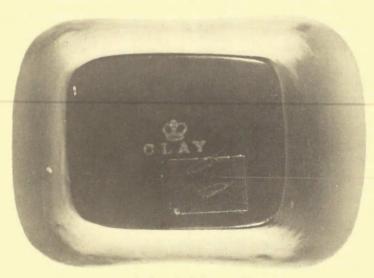
Anne Rushout, the daughter of Lord Northwick, was another visitor to the Clay shop. She noted in her diary on July 26, 1797, "After dinner we drove to Clay's papier-mache manufactory where they make bottle stands, boxes, tea-boards, salvers etc., in great perfection, the paintings are extremely well done, they stick the paper together with gum or size to a substance as hard as wood; they paint the pattern first then lay the gold leaf on with size which dries immediately and is afterward polished. There were a great many women employed in making buttons but the rooms were so hot we could not stay to examine the process."

It is interesting to note that at an early date these visitors referred to Clay's products as papier mache and not paper ware.

The majority of Clay's products were of papier mache but according to George Christophe Lichenstein he also produced or stocked tinware. In a letter to a friend in Germany, (quoted in Lacquer of the West by Hans Huth, 1971) Lichenstein wrote in 1775: "I saw Clay's manufacture. Here most excellent lacquered tinware is made which is now imitated in Brunswick [by Stobwasser] also paper boxes, caddies, panels for coaches, coffee trays and all sorts of vessels made and decorated with black with orange coloured figures in the manner of Etrurian vases — they are beautiful beyond words."



Papier-mache Counter Tray. Signed, "Clay" (under crown). Courtesy, Mrs. Joseph Watts.



Detail of Back of Counter Tray. Courtesy, Mrs. Joseph Watts.



Papier-mache Oval Tray, depicting the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche. Signed, "Clay Patent" (under crown). Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham.

Some very handsome products that to my knowledge have not, so far been seen, were the snuff-boxes, escritoires and dressing boxes i.e. vanity boxes, on which Clay had mounted Wedgwood's jasper medallions or "cameos" of eminent men. In 1776, Wedgwood said that Clay had "made three sets of Dressing Boxes very fully set with our Cameos, and wants his assortment made up complete again."

Henry Clay had a home in London located on the corner of King and Bedford Streets across from the churchyard of St. Paul's Covent Garden, and where he was in residence at the end of the 18th century. Some interesting facts about this period in Clay's life appear in The Journal of Mrs. Papendiek who was Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe and Reader to Queen Charlotte. In chapter V, page 123, she notes: "We started early in the morning, walked around the camps, (military camps stationed after the Gordon Riots, 1780) then drove to Mr. Clays in King Street where my father met us." Mrs. Papendiek's father was Clay's London agent who supplied the queen with "a stock of usefuls and ornamentals from Clay's factory." She said that they were most hospitably received by the family which consisted of father and son and three daughters. The eldest daughter was shortly to be married to Mr. King. Young Clay was described as "a delicate, agreeable and gentlemanly man."

From a further note in the journal we learn that "the elections brought Mr. Clay to town again, (from Birmingham) and with him a button which he had for some time been perfecting and now introduced. It was for gentlemen's mourning attire and improving by wear was in use for many years." This must have been the slate or stone button that Clay had patented in 1790. He had with him as well "improved snuff-boxes which were now made to open with hinges, miniatures being introduced or [a] setting of hair so by his button and his box a second fortune was rapidly accumulated."

The queen was interested in the new snuff-boxes "taking snuff being one of her weaknesses;" The king's interest was the button for in his youth "one of his favourite occupations had been turning [on a lathe] and button making." A German in Long Acre had taught him how to make a loop and attach it to a button; so upon this occasion the king said to Mr. Clay: 'Send several sets of buttons, for as I am called George the button maker I must give a lift to our trade.'

When at another time she was unable to accept an invitation to the Clay home she wrote: "Here ended our pleasant friendship. A farewell leave taking was all we ever saw again of dear Mr. Clay, for on quitting London after his last visit to the metropolis he remained in Birmingham and his son dying at an early age, he lived in retirement."



Papier-mache Counter Trays. Signed. "Clay" (under crown).

Author's Collection.

When Mrs. Papendiek was married she was the recipient of a "Clay tea-board, a waiter, bread basket, snuffer tray and four little [bottle] stands all alike; they were ornamented in silver. After fifty years," she said, "the tea-board is only just worn out."

From these notes in Mrs. Papendiek's journal it is evident that Clay was living in Covent Garden before 1802 when he sold his Birmingham business to his associates who moved it to London keeping the name as Clay & Co. and occupying the King Street premises. Trays made by the new firm have impressed on the back — Clay, King St., Covent Garden or Clay, London.

The Art Journal of 1854, p. 180 described a thermometer mounted on a case which when opened disclosed a place for an inkstand and two small drawers for writing materials. It also mentioned a tea caddy, and work box all from Mr. Clay's, Pall Mall. At this late date this was probably the location of the firm's showroom or of a retailer's shop.

Henry Clay became a rich and prominent citizen of Birmingham. He was High Sheriff of Warwickshire in 1788 and rode in an elegantly panelled coach with the body striped in chocolate and dark green. Like Baskerville's Clay's coach was drawn by cream coloured horses.

Clay died in 1812 but the Covent Garden firm continued to produce very handsome trays that sold from £16 to £115, until about 1860.

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Apollo Magazine, May 1956, Vol. 63, page 163.

The Selected Letters of Josiah Wedgwood, 1965 edited by Ann Finer & George Savage.

The Journal of Mrs. Papendiek, 1867, 2 vols. edited by her granddaughter Mrs. Vernon Deloes Broughton.



Bottle Stand (unsigned). Typical of work of Clay. Courtesy, City Museum and Art Gallery of Birmingham.

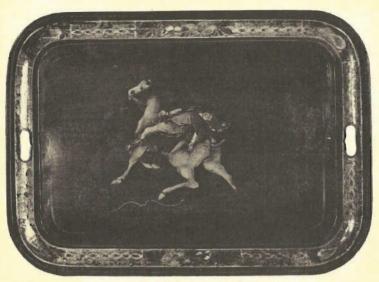
#### EVELYN M. HOLMES MEMORIAL COLLECTION OF MAINE TIN



In 1975 the Evelyn M. Holmes Collection of Maine Tin was established. As a basis for that collection Mrs. Avis Howell has generously donated to the Historical Society of Early American Decoration five original articles of Maine tin from the collection of her mother, Mrs. Evelyn M. Holmes. These five excellent examples of Maine tin (shown above) together with purchases to be made with donated funds are the beginnings of a special collection within the Museum Collection for the study of Maine tin and its distinguishing attributes. This gift will afford much pleasure and instruction to students of Country Painting as it was practiced in Maine and the Society is most grateful to Mrs. Howell.

Note: The Editor regrets failure to properly credit this gift in the Spring Issue of The Decorator.

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"A" Award — Special Class Helen Gross

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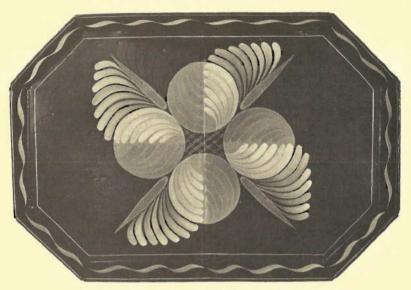


Phyllis Sherman

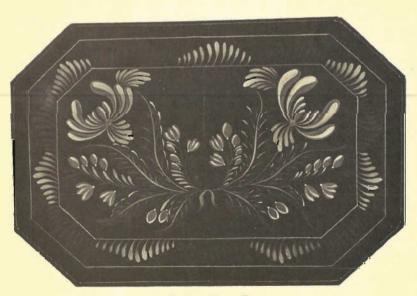


Jane Bolster

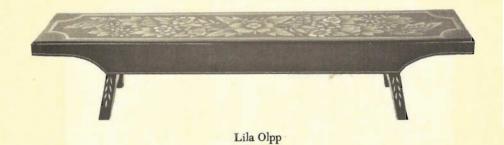
#### Country Painting



Jeanne Bolinder



Dolores Samsell



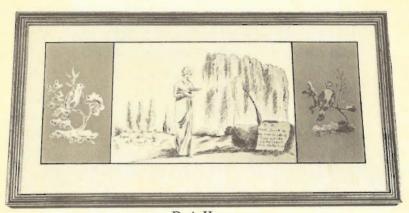


Peggy Waldman

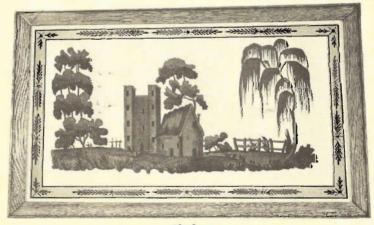
#### Glass Panel - Metal Leaf



Marjorie Hennessey



Doris Hynes



Shirley Bass

#### Glass Panel - Metal Leaf



Deborah Lambeth



Margaret Watts

#### Glass Panel - Metal Leaf



Harriette Hoolan



Eleanor Cook

#### Glass Panel - Stencilled Border

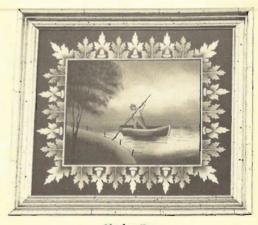


Astrid Thomas



Shirley Berman

Photograph of "A" Award Glass Panel — Stencilled Border by Marjorie Hennessey will appear in a later issue.



Shirley Bass

# Special Class



Margaret Watts



Helen Gross



# THE BOOKSHELF By Martha M. Wilbur

The American Eagle by Philip M. Isaacson New York Graphic Society, Boston, Mass. Published by Little, Brown and Company, pp. 210. Price \$29.50

The American Eagle is a large 9" x 11", scholarly, hardback book which traces the development of the eagle as the symbol of the newly independent colonies. The author, Mr. Isaacson, states in his preface "America needed a splendid symbol to exemplify their proud nationalism and the eagle met the need". In the early years, after its adoption for the great seal of the United States, the eagle was used on many items and in many forms.

The United States was not the first country to use the eagle as a symbol in their art and the author traces the influence of ancient Rome, France and England in many of the extant eagles on statues, ship figureheads and sternboards and in many other applications. Among the best known early American carvers of eagles in the round were Samuel MacIntire of Salem, Massachusetts and William Rush of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania whose different techniques are described. The author follows the development of both the emblemonic and naturalistic eagle in wood, metal, on paper, furniture, embroidery, in fact in many media.

For the decorator interested in the eagle as a symbol and as an art form this book is profusely illustrated in black and white and in color with full page enlargements which supplement the detailed text.

Fascinating Tin Toys for Girls 1820-1920

by Catherine Cook and Edith Morris
Published by the authors, 1975. Printed by Martha's Vineyard Printing
Co., Oak Bluffs, Mass.

Price \$8.50

Fascinating Tin Toys for Girls is a small paperback for collectors and casual readers with many photographs including several of decorated miniatures which are extremely interesting. The text is primarily a detailed description of the illustrations. There is a short glossary and bibliography included.

How to Care for Works of Art on Paper

by Francis Dolloff and Roy Perkinson

1971 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

Price \$1.50

This is an informative phamplet for anyone collecting, storing and caring for art work on paper. After a short history of paper making, a discussion follows of the enemies of paper and how these problems can be handled by proper care, matting, framing and storage. A list of suppliers of restoration materials and restoration services covers several pages, also included is a detailed bibliography.

Shop Drawings of Shaker Iron and Tinware by Ejner Handberg Berkshire Traveler Press, Stockbridge, Mass. 1976 \$3.50

A collection of line drawings and patterns (with a few photographs). This book is a valuable reference in identifying Shaker made tinware. The scale drawings are invaluable to the craftsman who is restoring lost or broken parts. There is no text; I suppose a picture is worth a thousand words.

#### NOTICES FROM TRUSTEES

SPRING MEETING Rochester, New York May 4, 5, 6, 1977

Meeting Chairman: Mrs. E. A. Nibbelink Program Chairman: Mrs. Anthony Venieris

#### FALL MEETING

Colonial Hilton, Wakefield, Massachusetts

September 21, 22, 23, 1977

Meeting Chairman: Mrs. G. E. Peach Program Chairman: Mrs. John Clinkman Hospitality Chairman: Mrs. Robert L. Smith

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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.

#### NOTICE:-

The By-Laws of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc., as revised July 19, 1961, provide in ARTICLE VI — Section 5, as follows:

Any member having voting privileges may vote in person or by absentee ballot filed with the secretary before the opening of such meeting but such absentee ballot shall only be allowable upon the election of trustees. The nominating committee shall file with the secretary at least 60 days before the annual meeting its report on nominations for trustees, which report shall be open to examination by any member prior to such annual meeting. Additional nominations for elections of trustees may be made in writing by the petition of any member with voting privileges signed by 20 or more other members with similar privileges and filed with the secretary at least 35 days before such annual meeting. No person shall be eligible for election as a trustee unless so nominated by said committee or by petition as above set forth. The secretary shall provide absentee ballots to any members applying for the same.

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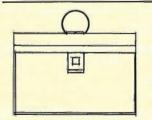
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