

The Decorator

Volume XXXVI No. 1

Albany, N.Y.

Fall 1981



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 there of 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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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Entrance to the Harmanus Bleecker Center, Albany, New York

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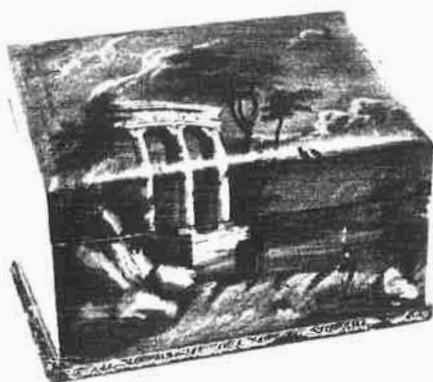
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Original Papier-Mache Letter Box with Freehand Bronze Decoration.
Courtesy, Joyce Holzer.

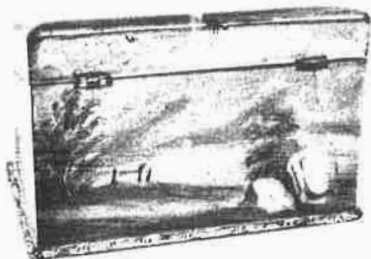
EDITORIAL

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Emily Heath, one of the founders of the Society and its first President. In her article, Mona Rowell pays tribute to Mrs. Heath and chronicles her many contributions to the Society.

The Society has been most fortunate to find a new location for its Museum Collection. The City of Albany, New York, has cooperated with the Society in providing accommodations for its collection in the Harmanus Bleecker Center. The article by Doris Fry, Curator, describes the exceedingly well-planned transformation and the facilities of the building which will fill the many needs of the Society.

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Virginia M. Wheelock



Back of Papier-Mache Letter Box.



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Virginia M. Wheelock



Back of Papier-Mache Letter Box.



Papier-Mache Card Tray. Courtesy, Virginia Martin

IN MEMORIAM

by Mona D. Rowell

Few people leave a legacy as historically significant as Emily Dodge Heath who was the driving force in the founding of the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild.

Following the death of their teacher in 1945, Emily brought together from various areas a group of Mrs. Brazer's loyal students, all inspired and resolved to "honor her memory and perpetuate her work." What could be more appropriate than a Guild devoted to this purpose!

As President from 1946 to 1948, Emily guided the Guild during its formative years. She served as a Director and Trustee for twelve years from 1946 to 1958, returning to the office of President from 1951 to 1953. During this important period, the Society was incorporated, significant policies and educational programs were formed, and the Museum became a reality. Before retiring from active service, Emily was instrumental in establishing a Headquarters and Museum at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York, a relationship which continued for twenty three years.

In recognition of her valuable service, the Board of Trustees named her an Honorary Trustee in 1963. In July 1971 the Board presented her the Distinguished Service Award with a plaque listing her many outstanding contributions, the highest award given by the Society.

Emily Heath was a vital part of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. May her accomplishments and dedication serve as an inspiration to all who carry on the work she so capably began.



View of the facade of the Hermanus Bleecker Center, Albany, New York.

THE SOCIETY'S MUSEUM COLLECTION in the Harmanus Bleecker Center

by Doris Fry

After two years of negotiating, planning and construction, the Museum of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration is complete. The Museum occupies the center part of the Harmanus Bleecker Center in Albany, New York, a building that was formerly the city's public library.

The architects, Einhorn, Yaffee and Prescott, created a plan retaining the best of the building while incorporating unmoveable parts in the design.

The colors of the marble entrance and terrazzo floor were carried out for the Museum, which is done in four shades of gray. The red letters of the sign reading, "Museum of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration", match the red velvet draperies covering the marble archways of the studio and audio-visual room. The gray tone also coordinates with the shade of the unique glass floor of the upper level.

The book stacks were used as they were, where possible, as in the storage areas. Around the stairway, the stacks support fourteen cases. Where feasible, glass was used to preserve the open look of the building. Upon entering the building, most of the exhibit is visible through the open-work in the iron railings which are placed across both the main and the upper floors.

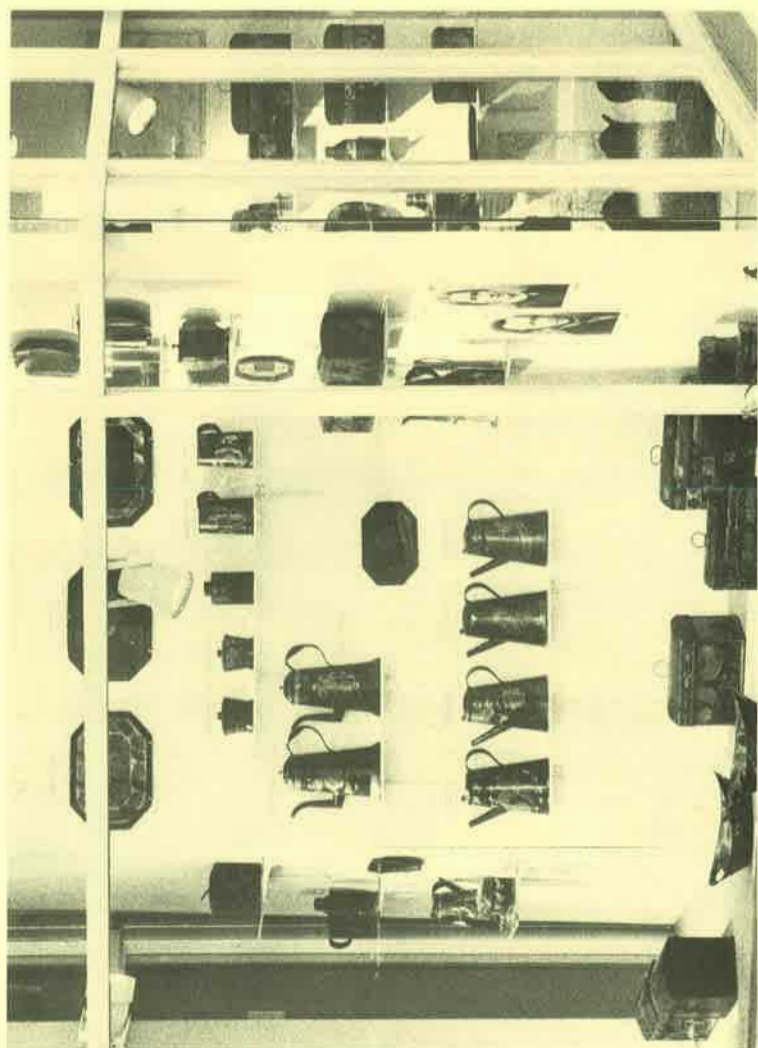
The entire Museum consists of four room-size exhibit areas, fourteen wall cases, and twelve cases adjacent to the stairway, which have glass on both sides, so that artifacts can be viewed front and back. In addition, there is a study storage area, a dead storage area, a library and a workroom. All of this is temperature and humidity controlled.



Main floor before reconstruction.



Library stacks in storage area before reconstruction.



Exhibition Area in the Harmanus Bleeker Center



Exhibition Area in the Harmanus Bleecker Center

The entire collection is behind glass, and there is a three-way security system throughout using contact, sonar and movement devices. The illumination is excellent, often providing a glow rather than a direct light.

The lighting is especially good in the workroom and, in conjunction with the windows, provides excellent working conditions. The room also contains all of the pattern files, one wall of closets, and a deep stainless steel sink. The library is carpeted and has one wall of shelves for the book collection.

Two exhibition areas are designed to give the appearance of rooms; one, containing the piano, with stencilled wall and floor; the other, with stencilled wall and canvas floor covering and fireplace. All stencilled wall and floor designs are authentic and were executed by members of HSEAD; the floor covering was donated by Albany International Corporation and gives a pleasant warmth to the exhibition. In the other two large exhibit spaces, the area is broken up with panels where the pieces of the collection can be placed close enough to the viewer so that the design may be seen clearly. The downstairs wall cases show the eight categories of decoration and the upstairs cases show Pontypool and Victorian ornamented pieces.

The study storage area has three stacks which are enclosed in plexiglass. Here are shown the pieces that were too large, damaged, or for which there was not enough room elsewhere. With the exception of the study storage area, the entire exhibit is labeled with descriptions of the pieces shown. In addition, there are many newspaper advertisements of the period, as well as photographs, blown-up to a large size for easy reading.

Since the Center is a city building, the City of Albany is responsible for payment of utility and janitorial services. The building is leased by the Albany Institute of History and Art, whose staff manage the building. Classes, lectures, and workshops are held regularly, and the bulletin that is published four times a year will include the Society's publicity. The two large studios on the first floor are available to the Society with advance notice.

The facilities provided in the Harmanus Bleecker Center will make possible a great many opportunities for new and innovative programs. Because the Museum Collection is so well presented, members, as well as the general public, will be able to study the artifacts and to gain increased appreciation of this field of the decorative arts.



Exhibition Area in the Harmanus Bleecker Center

THE ORNAMENTAL PAINTER

Neglected But Not Forgotten

1639-1860

by Avis B. Heatherington

The following article is based upon a background paper prepared for the opening of the Society's Museum in Albany. It is not the intent to list all known decorative painters in each major population center or hamlet but rather to convey an over-all impression of what was being done at certain times by these artists and artisans, using such contemporary documents as are available.

Who were America's ornamental painters, what were their contributions and what was their place in the society in which they lived? This is a subject which has, indeed, suffered "benign neglect" for truly we have few answers.

That they were considered as "Mechanicks", artisans who earned their livelihood by manual skills and labor, has placed them outside the class of artists usually studied by art historians. While much has been written about such talented, well-trained and creative men as Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, Charles Wilson Peale and Gilbert Stuart, little attention has been given the American ornamental painter unless success as a limner had brought him fame. The Mechanics were generally men of humble origins, many of whom possessed great talent, were well-trained in their craft and were men of intelligence and ambition. Through frugality and industry they sought to improve their lot in life and many succeeded. Paul Revere was one such mechanic. He served as the first President of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association founded in 1795- "a society, which embraced the principal mechanics of all professions in Boston". In New York the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen (founded Nov. 17, 1785) served the same purposes. Its membership lists also include men from a wide range of the mechanical arts. Among them are the names of such well known men of the time as William T. Palmer, japanner and painter; Isaac Plum, sign and ornamental painter; William Mott, fancy chair painter; Alexander Patterson, fancy chair gilder; Solomon Pancoast, chair painter; and such cabinet makers and chair makers as William Ash, Michael Allison, Duncan Phyfe and John Tallman. Also listed are pianoforte makers, engravers, looking-glass makers, sign painters, coach painters, gilders, and stationers. They were a tightly knit group in case of need and were often politically active.

The work of the 17th century painter-stainer, heraldic painter included painting houses, fences, cannon, heraldic devices on personal possessions, staining furniture and the all-important mortuary art for

the elaborate funeral processions of the time. Many, also, were limners who recorded the faces of both the living and the dead. All other ornamental and routine painting as was required by the townspeople fell within their line of work.

In the 18th century the native-born, together with the trained immigrant, practiced these mechanical arts and some eventually found portraiture more to their liking. James Thomas Flexner in his *History of American Painting* writes: "Indeed, the professional painters were concerned with every branch of the decorative arts, either as practitioner or instructors . . . What proportion of the artists' income came from portraits, what proportion from other activities, can only be guessed at from a complex of inconclusive evidence. There seems to have been a good demand for the craft aspect of the painters' trade- house, coach and sign painting and for the decorative wall-panels and fire-boards. On the more self-conscious level, however, portraits seem to have been the best moneymakers." In reviewing the lives of these "professional painters" it becomes obvious that nearly all were first apprenticed to a sign, carriage or other ornamental painter and then later received instruction in the art of portraiture. Some, however, were self-taught or virtually so.

A young man was bound out to a master in an apprenticeship at about age 14 with a full indenture period of from four to eight years. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the restrictions of the old guild systems had become much more flexible for all groups except those legally bound out by the courts, which included orphans and bastards. The intent was to provide them with training in a craft by which they might earn a living. The apprentice lived in his master's house, was provided clothing, taught to read, write and cipher as well as the "mysteries" or trade secrets of his master's art. The apprentice to an ornamental painter would have learned the art of grinding paints and mixing them by daily practice, the secrets of making brushes, how to draw and paint various necessary ornamental devices, define space, do gilding-both water and oil, and possibly some engraving. We know the names of only a few of these masters but we do know something about what kind of men some were from an account written in 1794 when Tench Coxe wrote the following in his *View of the United State of America*: "A large proportion of the manufacturers in the United States consists of person, who were journeymen and in a few instances were foremen in the work-shops and manufactories of Europe; who having been skillful, sober, frugal and having thus saved a little money, have set up for themselves with great advantage in America". Needless to say others used the apprentice as a laborer, teaching him little and

many apprentices were in fact abused, as records show. Many ran away, either from abuse or boredom.

Any list of those "professional painters", as Mr. Flexner refers to them, should contain such names in the 17th and 18th centuries as the many Duyckincks of New York City; Nehemiah Partridge, Thomas Johnston and Thomas Childs of Boston; Matthew Pratt, Gustavus Hesselius of Philadelphia and for the 19th century Ezra Ames of Worcester, Mass. and Albany, New York; John Ritto Penniman of Boston; Edward Hicks of Pennsylvania, Henry Smith Mount of New York and many, many more. These were, except for Hicks, urban painters, all well-trained in their craft and yet all were classed as artisans. How these men perceived their place in the society of the day is revealed in their own words. The artist, John Singleton Copley, was a Bostonian of true genius whose portrait commissions kept him fully occupied and he had married well, yet in 1767, seven years before he was to leave for England, he was not happy about the role of the painter in Boston: "The people generally regard it as no more than any other useful trade, as they sometimes term it, like that of a Carpenter or shew maker, not as one of the most noble Arts in the World".

By the 19th century the role of the portrait, landscape and history painter had changed for men with professional training but the ornamental painter and the self-taught limner continued to be classed as artisans. A tale recorded by the artist William Sidney Mount best illustrates the dichotomy of the times. He had been apprenticed in 1824 to his brother, Henry Smith Mount (1802-1841) a sign and ornamental painter of New York City and with whom he studied for three years. He writes: "I took pleasure in my new vocation and discussed on the merits of a sign with as much zeal as a picture dealer would on the merits of an old master . . . I remember at this period a young man of my acquaintance (sort of an upper (sic) crust) offended me by reflecting upon my profession- but I had my revenge by drawing him selling oysters at a stand. The likeness was so inveterate and ludicrous that he ever after eyed me at a distance." Both in the cities and in the country there were to be found those who were less well trained or less able and of course those able men who were just not too enterprising. They all supported their families as best they could by painting fire buckets, Masonic insignia, signs, carriages, chairs, houses, fences, ships, gilding and any other odd job that was to be found.

There were also men who were wanderers by nature and we find that many ornamental painters, both trained and self-taught, were of this sort. Some were also limners and combined their talents while they traveled from place to place seeking employment. They drew likenesses,

painted and stenciled floors and walls, painted window shades or whatever else was offered.

There was much on-the-job training by the early 19th century. The marked increase in population had created a need for more goods and services. The new manufacturies, both large and small, differed from the earlier craftsman's shop where goods had been produced for sale in the shop or at the customer's order. The new establishments aimed at the mass market both in volume and price. Quality might not be so important as before so local workers could be brought in and trained to do whatever task needed to be done. Either the master himself or one or two journeymen could train and supervise the workers who had no wage agreements among themselves as had become customary in the earlier shops. The cost of the finished product would be considerably less. Lambert Hichcock trained women to stencil chairs in his chair factory where the styles were all similar, the designs established and the stenciler had no need to make decisions about laying out patterns that would be appropriate to the size and shape of the piece to be stenciled. She went from chair to chair repeating whatever design was to be stenciled on that particular style chair. She had no training in ornamental work outside the limited area in which she worked. In the same way women (and some men) learned to paint clock dials in the clock factories of Connecticut. Probably some of those women possessed talent of some degree as did the women who "flowered" the japanned tin made in the tin shops of Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania.

Another group of ornamental painters which should not be overlooked even though of amateur status are the wives and daughters of the upper classes who filled their idle time in learning japanning, painting on glass, velvet and wood, studying music and languages and learning to embroider in the female seminaries and special classes offered by teachers throughout the cities. Some may have achieved a certain degree of proficiency. Some of the teachers may have been able, certainly their advertisements make them appear to have been, whether native-born Americans or "from London".

America's ornamental painters have left us many visual records but little else. In the craft tradition, few signed their work. The task of sorting and identifying these men and their work has occupied researchers for many years and the project is only begun. We do know, however, that for the professional ornamental painter, whether 1638 or 1824, the work and apprenticeship training had changed little except in style. Paint had to be ground and mixed, doors had to be painted and signs had to be made.

Evert Duyckinck (the First) (1621-1702), one of the earliest orna-

mental painters of whom we have some knowledge, was the founder of a "dynasty" of four generations of a remarkably talented family of artisans and artists in New York City. He had come to New Amsterdam from Westphalia (Holland) in 1638 at the age of 17 as a painter, glazier, stained-glass maker and limner. In his shop he trained his youngest son Gerrit (1660-1710) and his grandsons Evert (1677-1727) (the Third) and Gerardus, I (1695-1746?). In 1736 Gerardus, I placed the following advertisement in the NEW YORK WEEKLY JOURNAL: "Looking-glasses new Silvered and the frames plaine, Japn'd or Flowered . . . made and sold, - all manner of work done". He had apparently also trained a son for following the father's death in 1746 Gerardus Duyckinck, II placed the following advertisement in the NEW YORK POST BOY in August 1846: ". . . To carry on the business of his late Father, deceased viz. Limning Painting Varnishing Japanning Gilding and silvering of Looking-glasses all done in the best manner". The above advertisements tell us much about what these men were doing as artisans and the many extant portraits attributed to various members of this family attest to their skill as limners.

Boston appears to have had many well trained ornamental painters in the late 17th and early 18th century. The popularity of japanned furniture in that city may have explained the presence of a large number of japanners. One of the first of whom we have some knowledge is Thomas Child, who was born in England where, from 1671-1679, he served his apprenticeship under a member of the London Company of Painter-Stainers. In 1679 he was admitted to the Company as a member. He arrived in Boston by 1685 and was married there in 1688. It is believed that he painted the various heraldic devices that decorated the foreheads and sides of the horses that drew the mourning-coach in the funeral procession of Col. Samuel Shrimpton in 1698. Much of his daily work was of a more prosaic sort as the records of Kings Chapel, Boston reveal: 1689- Painting window frames; July 1702- Paid for an hour glass 12d; 1722, Novbr.22. Paid Mr. Childe for painting ye hour glass. 3 shillings. (An explanation of this hour glass appears in the records of 1714 when the Vestry accepted the gift of a clock "The clock given by 'the Gentlemen of the British Society' took the place of the great brass mounted hour glass which used to stand by the preacher's hand, to be turned by him when the sands ran out, in admonition to him and the congregation.") That the above mentioned Childe may well have been Thomas Child is borne out by a later entry where he is paid for painting window shutters in the church and also in 1702 the records of the Boston selectmen ordered that Mr. Thomas Child do the following work "abt. the Latten Schoolmaster's House vizt. finish the Gate and prime the fence, finish the Out side work of the House. And to prime the Inside

work of the Same, and to be paid what is reasonable for Said work." In 1706 he billed the provincial council for priming and painting 20 carriages for the new cannon at Castle William. It would also be reasonable to assume that he also painted signs since the one he used before his Mill Bridge shop was a particularly handsome one. He had either imported or brought with him the guild coat of arms of the London Company of Painters-Stainers, a beautifully carved work. Child either added another piece to it himself or had it done and used it as his shop sign until his death on November 10, 1706.

By 1713 another ornamental painter Nehemiah Partridge was working in Boston with a shop on the Mill Bridge almost next door to that of Katherine Child, widow of Thomas Child, who was still carrying on the business. Prior to 1699 Partridge as a youth of 16 had come to Boston from Portsmouth or Dover, New Hampshire.

The identity of his master is not known but considering his age upon coming to Boston he may have been apprenticed at that time and Thomas Child may have been a possibility. There were, however, several others who should be considered. He describes himself as a Japanner in an advertisement in the BOSTON NEWS-LETTER, September 21/28, 1713: "All Sorts of Paints and Oyl to be Sold, by Wholesale and Retayle by Nehemiah Partridge *Japanner* upon the Mill Bridge, Boston, likewise all Sorts of *Japanning*, Painting, and all Sorts of Dials to be made and done by the Said Partridge at reasonable Rates". He did not stay long in Boston or apparently in his trade as a japanner or painter for in 1718 he was made a Freeman in New York City when he gave his occupation as limner and says that he was the former master to James Smith, apprentice, not saying in what trade. Recent studies by Mrs. Mary Black, Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the New-York Historical Society leads her to believe that Nehemiah Partridge was the artist who painted the many so-called "Aetatis Suae" portraits in Newport, Albany, and in Virginia. If she is correct he, like the Duyckincks of New York, may have been both artist and artisan although Partridge appears to have been less settled.

A few years later in Boston we find another well known ornamental painter of the colonial period, the Boston born Thomas Johnston (1708-1767). He was a japanner, heraldic painter, engraver, printer, designer of gravestones and organ builder. His trade card, of his own design, is quite specific about his work as a japanner in 1732: "Thomas Johnson (sic), Japanner at the Golden Lyon in Ann Street Boston . . . Japan work of All Sorts, as Chests of Draws, Chamber & Dressing Tables, Tea Tables, Writing Desks, Book-Cases, Clock Cases &c. ". A bill in 1762 to Samuel P. Savage describes other work that he did as follows: "To Collouring & Varnishing a Table, To Painting a Bedstead green, To

fixing Roles on to Six large Mapps, Colouring and Varnishing ditto" and in May 1736 he charged the same customer "to painting yr Silling (sic) Room Twice Over and to Gilt Paper for a Screen." Thomas Johnston, like Evert Duyckinck in New York, trained his sons Benjamin, John, William and Thomas, Jr. and also his son-in-law Daniel Rea, Jr. The latter and John Johnston were in partnership as ornamental painters until 1789 and their advertisements indicate that they not only did the usual line of work but also painted clock dials and floor cloths in "cubes, yellow and black diamonds and turkey Fatchion". While no portraits have been attributed to the father, another apprentice, John Greenwood, painted over one hundred portraits before age 31. Another interesting fact about the line of work performed by these men appears in an advertisement in the BOSTON GAZETTE of December 18, 1758: "This is to inform the Publick, That David Mason, Jappanner, has open'd Shop under Messieurs Edes and Gill's Printing Office: where all Sorts of Painting, Japanning, Gilding and Varnishing are done; Coats of Arms, Drawings on Sattin (sic) or Canvis (sic) for Embroidering; also Pictures fram'd after the neatest Manner . . .". The reference to drawings for embroideries specifies a service which was often available to needleworkers.

Late in the 18th century another artisan arrived in Boston from Philadelphia in the person of Daniel Bartling who had been trained as a coach and sign painter. An advertisement in the COLUMBIAN CENTINEL for December 6, 1796, however, makes him appear to be an expert gilder: ". . . in addition to the common modes of gilding, he performs the following Ornamental Articles, viz . . . Gilding on Glass, Burnished gold or silver letters for persons names; Do of merchandise for shop windows; Do No's on Houses; Do for ornamenting rooms do on plate glass - - - for dial plates of clocks and timepieces, ornamented; do round the edges of looking-glass plates; do masonic emblems; do round the edge of picture glasses, with the name below; do crests, coats of arms, cyphers, &c. Oil-gilding on wood, Looking -glass frames elegantly gilt by a peculiar method, which has the appearance of burnished water gilding and will bear writing; do picture frames. &c."

A few years later Bartling's brother appeared in New Haven and his advertisement in the March 15, 1804 *Connecticut Herald* omitted nothing in the list of services offered: "B. Bartling and S. Hall respectively inform the gentlemen and ladies of New Haven that they will execute on mahogany furniture of every description, either old or new, that beautiful Chinese mode of Varnishing and Polishing in a manner that will last for years, and always retain pleasing and beautiful gloss without the old and laborious method of rubbing and brushing, which not only takes a great deal of time of the servant, but destroys and racks the strength of the furniture and defaces the natural color of the mahogany;

Also that truly elegant French Mode of Varnishing on plain or Stamped Paper Hangings, when fixed in rooms, which will secure the colors from fading, cause them to appear brighter, effectually prevent bugs and vermin from collecting in them, and bear washing without injury to the color of gloss. Likewise . . . that much admired imitation of stamped paper, done on the walls of rooms, far superior to the manner commonly practice in this state. Coaches, Chaises, Signs, Windsor and Fancy Chairs, Painted and Ornamented in a new and peculiar method, thereby rendering them vastly superior to those executed in the accustomed mode. Toilet tables, Bed Posts, Window and Bed Cornices and Firescreens, Ornamented in a manner which will render them more elegant and durable than by any means hereto devised. They will also enamel the names of persons on glass, in gold or silver letters, superior to common execution, and at a more reduced price than is at present given. Presuming that one of them is the first person, who in America, has assayed to perform the above mentioned arts, they flatter themselves, that, from the general satisfaction he has heretofore given in different parts of the United States, they will meet with the encouragement which the inhabitants of this City are ever ready to accord to native talents when endeavoring to introduce cheaply into use the knowledge of arts which combine utility with elegance." One presumes that advertising rates were cheaper then since they felt impelled to do a bit of boasting.

Pre-revolutionary Philadelphia was not without its share of trained and talented artisans although japanning did not enjoy the same popularity there as in Boston and even New York. James Claypoole (c.1720-1796), engraver, limner and general painter "practiced all the different branches of the painting business" according to his nephew the celebrated artist Matthew Pratt who served an apprenticeship under him. Claypoole had no doubt learned his craft from his father, a house painter and glazier. Although Pratt went to London and studied under Benjamin West he spent most of his life as a portrait painter in Philadelphia after his return in 1768. Many an artist has been reduced by economic circumstances to accept tasks usually accepted as those of the artisan. Apparently Pratt was no exception and the observations of William Dunlap in his *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* are most interesting "it is well known that many a good painter has condescended, and many a one been glad, to paint a sign". He continues: "I must insert with pleasure Mr. (John) Neagle's testimony to the merit of Pratt, (William) and it is the testimony of an excellent artist and a judicious man. 'I have seen the works of Pratt- portraits and other subjects. I remember many signs for public houses (now all gone) painted by his hand, and I assure you that they were by far the best signs I ever saw. They were of a higher character

than signs generally, well coloured, and well composed. They were like the work of an artist descended from a much higher department. One of a game-cock, admirably painted . . . One of the Continental Convention, which they say were good likenesses. One of Neptune, &c., for Lebanon gardens in South-street. One admirably executed Hunting Scene, with a sun-rise, in Arch Street. A Drovers' Scene, and others, most of them with verses at the bottom composed by himself. Pratt's signs . . . were broad in effect and loaded with colour. There is no niggling in his style or touch. I remember them well; for it was in a great measure his signs that stirred a spirit within me for the art, whenever I saw them which was frequent." How many signs he painted during his years as an active portrait painter we do not know but in 1796, at the age of 62 he entered in to a brief partnership with George Rutter, an heraldic and ornamental painter; Jeremiah Paul, painter of portraits, animals, signs and theatrical scenery and William Clarke, miniature and portrait painter. The firm of Pratt Rutter & Co. was formed "for the purpose of carrying on in the most extensive manner the different branches of portrait or other ornamental paintings: such as all kinds of emblematical, masonic, historical, and allegorical devices and designs for pictures; regimental colors, and standards; ship's flags, drums and every other decoration of that kind; . . . also fire buckets . . . coffin plates, japanned plates for merchants' counting houses."

Of this group William Dunlap records a description that is interesting and amusing. The letter is from John Wesley Jarvis, the artist, who as a youth in Philadelphia did some work for the firm: "About 1800, there were four painters in partnership . . . Jeremiah Paul was good (here Dunlap inserts: "Jarvis must mean compared to the others") Pratt was pretty good- he was generally useful. Clark was a miniature painter-Retter was a sign painter- but they would all occasionally work at anything, for at that time there were many fire-buckets and flags to be painted. When Stuart (Gilbert) painted Washington for Bingham, Paul thought it no disgrace to letter the books." Here again in Philadelphia we see the mingling of artists and artisan.

The Swedish-born Gustavus Hesselius (1682-1755) had received his art training before arriving in Delaware in 1711. He did not remain long in Delaware but moved on to Philadelphia, dividing his time between that city and Maryland for the rest of his life. While he painted portraits, altar pieces and romantic scenes inspired by engravings he appears to have had training in ornamental painting as the following advertisement in the PENNSYLVANIA PACKET for December 11th 1740 would suggest: "PAINTING done in the best MANNER, Gustavus Hesselius, from Stockholm, and John Winter, from London, viz. Coats of Arms drawn on Coaches, Chaises, &C, or any other kind of Ornaments,

Landskips, Signs, Shew-boards, Ship and House Painting, Gilding of all Sorts, Writing in Gold or Colour, old Pictures clean'd and mended, &c."

An advertisement in the MARYLAND GAZETTE for January 6th, 1774 brings to our attention the southern interest in an elegant household interior: "To the Ladies and Gentlemen, Samuel Rusbatch, late pupil to Robert Maberly, Esq., Coach and herald painter; and varnishers to their majesties and the royal family; proposith (under the direction of Joseph Horatio Anderson, architect in Annapolis) to carry on the various branches of coach and herald painting, varnishing and gilding (sic); as well plain as in the most decorated taste. Also painting in fresco, cire-obscuro, decorated ceilings for halls, vestibules, and saloons, either in festoons of fruits, flowers, figures, or trophies. Carved ornaments in deception, gilding (sic) and burnishing in the neatest manner, as well as house-painting in distemper as dead whites, as in the common colours, &c."

Again in the south a Mr. Warwell introduced himself to the residents of Charlestown, South Carolina in a notice in the *South Carolina Gazette* for January 21, 1766: "Warwell, painter, from London, intending to settle in this town, begs leave to inform the public that he has taken a house on the Point, opposite Governor Boone's and next door to Mr. Rose's, ship-carpenter; where he paints History Pieces, Altar Pieces, Landscapes, Sea Pieces, Flowers, Fruit, Heraldry, Coaches, Window blinds, Skreens, (sic) gilding. Pictures copied, cleansed, and mended Rooms painted in Oil or Water in a new Taste. Deceptive Temples, Triumphal arches, Obelisks, Statues, & c., for Groves and Gardens." Although Charlestown was not to enjoy the results of Mr. Warwell's talents for long, (he died on May 29, 1767), the advertisement tells us not only much about an ambitious artisan but also a vivid picture of high fashion of that time in Charlestown.

Great changes in the fifty years between 1790 and 1840 would alter life in this newly independent, expanding country; population would more than triple, greatly increasing demands for goods and services; transportation would be improved and expanded with new and better roads, a system of canals and, toward the end of the period, the railroads would arrive. All this resulted in increased westward expansion which provided the eastern craftsmen with a new and wider market for their goods and services. There, too, would be a great change in fashions and this would create a new look for the home and its furnishings. The marked increase in the use of pattern in home decoration, on walls, floors and furnishings, would provide employment for those ornamental painters who kept current on such matters. The change from painted and metal leaf decoration on "fancy chairs" of the early part of the period to that of stenciled ornament on chairs of Empire design took

place during the period. Gradually the small shop where "bespoke" work was produced gave way to the larger manufactories with mass production capacities whose products were usually less well made and finished. The need to dispose of the new, increased production led to the introduction of regular auction sales at established auction houses. By 1840 mass production and sales would be a part of American life. A great political change would occur during the period; the upper classes, the tastemakers and political leaders of the past, would lose much of their power with the election of the new, populist president, Andrew Jackson, in 1829. Yet throughout the entire period the ornamental painter would continue to provide goods and services.

In Albany, New York, the famed portrait painter, Ezra Ames (1768-1836) worked as an ornamental painter all his life. Born in Framingham, Massachusetts he moved to Worcester, Massachusetts at an early age and set himself up in business there before 1790. He moved to Albany, New York in 1795. The account books, of both his Worcester and Albany periods, show the following entries for ornamental work: "To painting a chimney . . . a sleigh . . . a sign . . . lettering a sign . . . a chaise . . . blinds . . . a room . . . furniture . . . stamping a floor . . . priming a gate . . . papering and painting a room . . . 4½ days labour . . . painting a waggon (sic) . . . writing the alphabet . . . varnishing bed posts . . . painting 2 clock faces . . . painting 2 buckets . . . painting chest of drawers . . . a portrait . . . 3 pairs of window shades . . . gilding a chaise . . . painting landscape and cyphers on the back and sides of a chaise . . . a timepiece face . . . a miniature and a piece of hairwork . . . painting tea canisters . . . painting and gilding a picture frame . . . painting and ornamenting 3 tin tea chests . . . lettering a plate for a coffin . . . priming window sash . . . painting window corniches (sic), painting a mourning piece . . . a fan light . . . painting and gilding a tin chandelier . . . painting stand colors for the cavalry . . . masonic aprons . . ." In fact, he was forever painting Masonic emblems. One often wonders how many artisans provided the service included in their advertisements but a study of the Ames Account Books at the New-York Historical Society shows that he did whatever ornamental work came his way. While art historians focus on his portraiture it is evident that ornamental painting provided his livelihood.

Thanks to Carol Damon Andrews we have, at last, the story of "John Ritto Penniman (1782-1841), an ingenious New England artist" (*THE MAGAZINE, ANTIQUES*, Vol. CXX, No. 1, July 1981). He, like Ezra Ames, did everything in the ornamental line as well as portraiture, recorded daily events of importance like the burning of the Exchange Coffee House, Boston in 1824; designed trade cards for the ornamental painters, Nolen and Curtis, The Boston Glass Manufactory and others;

painted the glass tablets in a Simon Willard "patent Timepiece" in 1811, did the gilt lettering on four tablets with the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer for Christ Church, Boston as well as others whose whereabouts are unknown; did the decoration on the nameboard of a piano by Babcock, Appleton, and Babcock, Boston; painted looking-glass tablets for John Doggett, Roxbury's looking-glass and frame maker among other things, also painted Doggett's sign, clock faces, a shell design on the top of a commode made by Thomas Seymour for Elizabeth Derby, drew the design for the seal for the City of Boston and one for the American Antiquarian Society, painted transparencies, military standards, designed innumerable certificates and even did the emblematic paintings and decorations for a fourth of July celebration at the Old South Meeting House in 1820. It is known that Penniman knew Gilbert Stuart when that artist lived in Roxbury and Boston, even naming his son after the celebrated artist. He was closely connected with the Willard clockmakers on Washington Street and the members of that group of cabinetmakers, looking-glass makers, clockmakers, carvers etc. known generally as the "Roxbury School". Penniman was made a member of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association in 1818. Newspaper advertisements in Portland, Maine, Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Boston reveal the wide range of his services, and the accounts of John Doggett, various church and public records and his own signed work support the claims made in the advertisements. One is impressed with the quality of his portraits and his drawings and the quality of the latter. It is perhaps this aspect of his work which sets him apart from many of the other ornamental painters. The ornamental work of Ezra Ames, as we know it today, appears to have been more utilitarian-chaises, buckets, window shades etc. - than that of Penniman but a detailed study of Ames production may prove otherwise. The two men knew one another, Penniman's brother lived in Lansingburgh, New York. After 140 years of "benign neglect" John Ritto Penniman has at last, through the investigations of Mrs. Andrews, come to be known for the able and productive man that he was for the greater part of his sixty years.

In the Boston Directories between 1820 and 1825 seventeen artisans listed themselves as "fancy" or "ornamental" painters and of these only five are names that one might recognize and these were members of the "Roxbury School". We know them primarily as clock glass and dial painters for Simon and Aaron Willard, Lemuel Curtis, Elnathan Taber, Abel Hutchins and John Sawin, the latter three brothers-in-law of Lemuel Curtis' brother, Samuel. To explain the very complicated relationships between these men and the ornamental painters who served them would take more space than is available here. They also painted

tablets for the manufacturers of looking-glasses whose establishments were close-by.

Samuel Curtis, (1788-1879) appears at age 18 to be in business on his own account as an ornamental painter doing tablets and enameled glasses for John Doggett. Before this he had been an employee of that looking-glass firm and possibly learned his craft there. By December 1806 he had entered into a partnership with another ornamental painter of the Roxbury School" Spencer Nolen, who for the previous two years, had been a partner with Aaron Willard, Jr. Curtis and Nolen would remain partners until about 1820 when Nolen moved to Philadelphia. They had been producing clock dials and tablets for the Willards and other local clockmakers as well as shipping dials up and down the coast. This business proved to be very lucrative for Samuel over his long working life and he amassed a considerable fortune, which apparently cannot be said of his brothers. He had expanded the business, however, into the making of looking-glasses and eventually invested into what became the Boston Watch Company in 1853. In Portland, Maine his work was considered equal to that of Penniman which received highest praise there.

Benjamin Curtis (c. 1795-?), brother of Samuel Curtis is first listed in the Boston Directories in 1818 as a "painter" but in 1822 he has joined with his brother Samuel and Charles Hubbard in an ornamental painting firm at 66 Market Street but the partnership was short lived, having been dissolved by April 5, 1823. The announcement gives an idea of their individual specialties: "Samuel Curtis continues his Manufactory of Clock Dials and Ornamental Glass Painting, at No. 66 Market Street. B.B. Curtis will continue at the old stand, No. 66 Market street — Military Standard, Sign and Fancy Painting &c. Charles Hubbard, has removed to No.8, State Street, where he will be happy to receive orders in all the above branches". In 1827 he, Benjamin Curtis, went to Burlington, Vermont where his older brother, Lemuel, had moved. Both Benjamin and Samuel painted glasses for their brother, some of which were signed, and also for the other clockmakers in Boston and elsewhere. Benjamin left Burlington in 1831 for New York City where he painted signs and in 1841 went to Philadelphia where he eventually became an artist.

Charles Hubbard (1801-1876), first listed in the Boston Directories in 1822 in the partnership with the Curtis brothers, continued to work in that city as an ornamental painter until 1869. He painted signs, military standards, masonic regalia and portraits as well as work in "all the above branches".

Aaron Willard, Jr. (1783-1864) learned clock making under his father but first appears about 1805-1806 with Spencer Nolen as clock

and sign painters. During this brief association Nolen married Willard's sister, not an unusual occurrence among this Roxbury group of artisans as we have already observed. By 1809 Willard is listed in the Directories as a clock manufacturer and in 1823 took over his father's business upon the latter's retirement. The glass tablets signed, "Willard and Nolen, Boston" were usually for patent timepieces or looking-glasses but painted clock dials and signs were among other items which they produced.

The list of painters in the "Roxbury School" would be incomplete without mentioning Charles Bullard (1794-1871) who is thought by some to have been trained by John Ritto Penniman. In 1816 Bullard opened a shop in the complex of buildings at 843 Washington Street owned and used by Aaron Willard in his clock business. Bullard continued his ornamental painting business in this shop until 1844.

Two other ornamental painters of Boston who also did portraits and landscapes attract our attention because of their detailed advertisements and their association with Portland, Maine. They are Charles (1800-1842) and William P. (active 1825-1831) Codman. Charles, believed to have been the son of William P., was born in Portland and died there but for a time in 1822-23 was in the ornamental painting business in Boston with William P. as indicated in the following advertisement which appeared in 1822 in the *Boston Annual Advertiser*: "ORNAMENTAL, FANCY, MILITARY STANDARDS AND SIGN PAINTERS, no.3, Pemberton Hill, Near the head of Market Street. Continue to carry on the various branches of Painting, viz. — Emblematic and common Signs, and lettering of every description. Glass painting, and Gilding on glass, for timepieces, looking glasses, needlework, &c. &c. Masonic Aprons of various patterns, Landscapes in oil and watercolors, Views of Gentlemen's Seats, Ornamental Designs for Business Cards, Drawing for Ladies Needlework; Also, figures and skies colored for the same. Transparencies for window and fireboards from Historical, Military, or Marine designs, Tea-Trays re-japaned and ornamented, Astral and other valuable lamps re-painted, and rendered equal in appearance to new, Ladies Indispensables ornamented in a variety of handsome patterns, oil Gilding, Bronzing and Varnishing . . . W.P. & C. CODMAN assure the public that every execution will be used on their part, to render satisfaction to those who may favor them with their patronage." (Please note "Tea-Trays re-japaned and ornamented.") Upon Charles' return to Portland he placed an advertisement with almost the same content in the PORTLAND ADVERTISER for November 25, 1823. He remained in Portland until his death. He exhibited his portraits and landscapes at the Boston Athenaeum, the National Academy and the Apollo Gallery as did other artists of the period.

William P. Codman is known to have been painting portraits in Maine as early as 1805. He married a Portland, Maine girl in Boston in 1791 but is not listed in the Boston Directories until the year of his death in 1831. It is apparent from the previously mentioned advertisement that he earned his living as an ornamental painter. It is also interesting that the Directory listings show William P. Codman and Benjamin B. Curtis at the same 64 Market Street address in 1825, Codman, listed as a "portrait painter" and Curtis as "Standard and fancy painter." Curtis' brother, Samuel, was at 66 Market Street that year so there would appear to have been some relationship between the Codmans and the "Roxbury School".

Another native of Maine, William Matthew Prior (1806-1873) would also leave Maine for Boston but not until he was past 35 years of age. Born in Bath, Maine he apparently went to Portland as a youth for he is known to have painted portraits there in 1824. While Prior is best remembered for his primitive portraits and the many paintings on glass of George Washington after Gilbert Stuart he actually did all sorts of ornamental paintings as his advertisement in the MAINE INQUIRER for June 1, 1830 shows: "Wm. M. PRIOR, Portrait Painter- Offers his services at the above business. Specimens of work to be seen over the Bath Book Store. Prices from \$10.00 to 25. Guilt (sic) Frames from \$3 to 10. Paintings and Prints framed at various prices. Military, Standard, Sign, Ornamental PAINTING as usual." A second notice appears in the April 5, 1831 issue of the same paper and included a reference, like that of the Codmans, to re-japanning (sic) and ornamenting tea trays: "FANCY, SIGN AND ORNAMENTAL PAINTING. Gentlemen wishing any work in the above line, can be cheerfully accommodated by calling at No. 1 Middle -street. N. B. - Old Tea Trays, Waiters &c., re-japanned (sic) and ornamented in a very tasty style. Also, drawings of Machineries of every description, executed in good order, at the very shortest notice." A letter from Prior's son reads in part ". . . my father painted portraits on canvas in oil . . . Being skilled in this glass painting from early training on mirrors and clock work, he turned to portraits on glass. You see as it was hard to make a living in those days and by working on glass he could get along faster, as he could seal them up by putting on the back and did not have wait for them to dry, but could sell them wet without damage." Prior's constant travels to obtain work after moving to Boston are well known but, as far as we know, during these travels he only painted portraits. It would be interesting to know whether the "Tea Trays, Waiters &c.", after being re-japanned by Prior or the Codmans would resemble the original and whether or not we would recognize them as not being in original condition.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, lying between Boston and Portland, also appears to have had its share of ornamental painters. On April 1, 8, 15, 1806 George Dame, about whom we have no further information, placed the following in the NEW HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE: "George Dame has taken the store formerly occupied by Capt. Hovney (lately the Post Office) Buck Street, where he intends to carry on the Painting Business in its various branches, Varnishing, Gilding, Ec. Coaches, chaises, signs, firebucket, fancy chairs, standards, et. painted in the neatest manner, looking glass, and picture frames painted and gilded, gilding on glass, dec. painting in Water Colors, and Gilding on Paper, Vellum, Silks etc. etc. also Portrait and Miniature painting, warrented likenesses-speamens (sic) may be seen at his shop N.B. He will endeavor (sic) to merit the approtation (sic) of those who may please to employ him and every favor will be duly acknowledged . . . Drawing School to commence April 17th if sufficient (sic) encouragement . . ." One would hope that Mr. Dame was better at his craft than at spelling.

In 1821 the *Portsmouth Business Directory* lists John B. Blunt (1798-1835), who is thought to have been a native of that city as an ornamental and portrait painter but he is known to have painted landscapes, marine pictures and miniatures as well. His account book which covers the years 1819-1826 shows the variety of work which he did as an ornamental painter. The entries are so similar to those already reviewed it is no surprise to find him painting fire buckets, signs, lettering a coffin, painting parts of a small carriage, staining a bedstead and on September 21, 1826 he records having painted 5 dozen tin boxes for the local druggest, Joshua Hubbard. Also included are entries for painting chairs and several for painting tables — no description of the kind of tables — also painting of portraits although no signed portraits by him are known today. He advertised in the NEW HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE for December 31, 1822 that he did "profiles, profile miniature pictures, landscapes and ornamental painting". His advertisement in the PORTSMOUTH DIRECTORY for 1827 tells us more: "Portrait and Miniature Painting, Military Standard do, Sign Painting, Plain and Ornamented, Landscape and Marine Painting, Masonic and Fancy do, Ships Ornaments Gilded and Painted, Oil and Burnish Gilding, Bronzing &c. &c." In "John S. Blunt" (THE MAGAZINE, ANTIQUES, November, 1977) Dr. Robert Bishop, Director of the Museum of American Folk Art postulates that a group of some 25 portraits were by the same hand that painted the portrait of a Captain Daniel Borden and his wife, Mary c. 1834 and that this unknown painter, whom Dr. Bishop calls the Borden Limner, and John S. Blunt were one and the same painter. If Dr. Bishop's thesis is correct John S. Blunt may have been the artist responsible for many more portraits and may emerge as another of

America's important folk artists. As with many others, ornamental painting may have provided his livelihood while portraiture and landscapes provided his pleasure.

No survey could neglect the colorful Rufus Porter (1792-1884), born in and for part of his life a resident of Massachusetts. An itinerant painter of portraits, and walls, designer of machinery, and publisher, his travels took him far and wide. Nina Fletcher Little, in *American Decorative Wall Painting 1700-1850* and *Rufus Porter, Rediscovered*, gives a full account of this unusual man's life. Mrs. Little and Janet Waring in her *Early American Stencils on Walls and Furniture* cover the wall stencilers like Moses Eaton. They do not appear to have been fully trained ornamental painters but rather specialists.

Who painted the clock glasses for the Connecticut clock makers has not yet been answered. Perhaps they were provided by Samuel Curtis's shop. We do know that the Pennsylvania clockmakers made purchases from him and from Spencer Nolen after 1820 when the latter moved to Philadelphia. It does not seem probable that the women who painted the dials would have painted the Terry pillar and scroll clock glasses. The work seems more that of a professional and more painted glasses were produced in Boston than anywhere else. To my knowledge no relationship has been established between the stencilers in such shops as the Hitchcock factory and those producing painted and stenciled tablets for clocks and looking glasses. In Connecticut, Shirley Spaulding DeVoe does establish some relationship between the tin shop painters and the clock face painters in *The Tinsmiths of Connecticut*. She also tells a great deal about many of the women who painted the designs on Japanned tin in the Filley shops and they seem to have been specialists rather than trained ornamental painters.

Nineteenth century Albany, New York and surrounding countryside had other ornamental painters than Ezra Ames although he may have been the best. It is difficult to distinguish between work done in New York City and that of Albany because so many craftsmen had places of business in both places or moved from one to the other with the advent of the Hudson River steamboats. One example would be the work of Chester Johnson. The the three known examples of his "Patent Sofa Bedstead" for which he received the patent on February 24, 1827 and which are stamped "C. Johnson. Patent" all have fine stenciled decoration as well as gold leaf motifs. While Johnson was listed in the *Albany Directories* from 1820-1827 he was in New York City at 188 Grand Street in 1830 when he received a premium for one of these sofas. The entry: "#198 Patent Sofa Bedstead, a handsome and very convenient article. Chester Johnson 188 Grand Street." Whether or not the three

sofas mentioned were made before or after his move to New York is not known. The description of his entry in the Third Annual Fair of the American Institute of the City of New York does not mention ornamentation. A John W. Johnston, coach, Sign and Ornamental Painter was listed in the *Albany Directory* for 1824 but we know nothing else about him.

Ransom Cook (1794-1881) of nearby Saratoga is known to have produced stenciled chairs in his shop and his account book indicates that he lettered fire buckets, painted and varnished a cutter, painted and lettered a sign, painted, gilded and bronzed two corniches (sic) and repaired and ornamented a rocker. His advertisement in the *SARATOGA SENTINEL* of June 9, 1843 explains his services: "RANSOM COOK Furniture Factory, House, Sign and Ornamental Painting On Broadway, one door south of Harmony Hall." Margaret Coffin in her researches (*THE DECORATOR*, Vol. XXXI No. 2) never was able to determine how much of the ornamental work done in the Cook shop was by Ransom himself and how much by other workmen. A set of stencils found in his Account Book may have been his or ones used by others. It is always difficult to know exactly who used stencils even when they were stamped or signed. A journeyman employee may have been the actual user of the owners stencils. Cook did not sign his chairs as a rule and none bearing stenciled designs similar to those in the attributed stencils are known. Like Codman and Prior his records show that he japanned tea trays but unlike them he does not indicate that they were re-ornamented.

One ornamental painter who did sign his work and about whom Deborah Lambeth has given us some biographical data (*THE DECORATOR*, Vol. XXXV No. 2) is Rufus Cole (1804-1874) of Broadalbin, west of Albany. His beautifully grained clock cases and boxes, signed R. COLE, have been admired by many but his identity was unknown. His Business Directors listing, like many others, merely reads "Painter House and Sign". We do not know at this time what other types of ornamental work he may have done.

"NOAH NORTH Carriage, Sign, House and Ornamental Painter" was the advertisement placed in the March 19, 1844 issue of the *LIVINGSTON COUNTY WHIG* by North, a resident of Mount Morris in western New York State. While we know nothing about his ornamental work his portraits frequently indicate part of a Hitchcock-style chair with stenciled decoration - in one such portrait the decoration is actually done on the canvas with bronzing powder through a stencil. His portraits and the advertisement would suggest that he had received some training in ornamental painting but to date we have only clues.

The nineteenth century in New York City produced much activity in the field of ornamental painting. But here, as in Boston and other cities, such directory listings as "painter" or "gilder and glazier" reveal little about the services offered.

William Palmer advertised frequently for more than thirty years and by studying these advertisements one gets a fairly good understanding of one ornamental painter's business in New York City in the early part of the nineteenth century. On June 3, 1800 in the *NEW YORK GAZETTE AND GENERAL ADVERTISER* he states: Wm. Palmer, Fancy Chair-Maker, &c. He removed from No. 24 Liberty-street to No. 3 Nassau-street in the rear of Federal Hall, where he continues to carry on the Fancy Chair and Cornice Business, &c.". On February 27, 1802 in the *REPUBLICAN WATCH TOWER*: "Fancy Chairs and Cornices William Palmer No. 3 Nassau-street . . . He has also some of the newest pattern Cornices, and a variety of other articles in the japan line. Old Chairs re-painted, regilt, &c. at the lowest price, and agreeable to any pattern. Ornamented painting and gilding neatly executed." On January 2, 1804 he announced his removal to No. 7 Wall-street where he remained for some thirty years and during which time he lists himself as a painter and japanner in the Directories but continues to advertise his fancy chairs. In 1813 the listing is William & E.P. Palmer, Painters and Japanners, 7 Wall-street.

An advertisement placed in the 1804 *New York Directory* by William Mott suggests that he, also, had done a full line of ornamental painting while employed at William Palmer's Shop: "WILLIAM MOTT, Fancy Chair Japanner, No. 51, Broad-Street, (late from Mr. Palmer's fancy chair store,) Respectfully informs his friends, and the public in general, that he carries on the above business in all its varieties, and from the knowledge and experience as a japanner flatters himself he will be able to give perfect satisfaction to those ladies and gentlemen who may favor him with their commands. CORNICES TABLES, BEDSTEADS, SETTEES, OLD CHAIRS, &c. &c. japanned and gilt in the newest style, to any pattern, and on the most reasonable terms. Sign and Ornamental Painting, Gilding and Varnishing on Wood and Metals, Gilding and Lettering on Glass. N.B. Fancy and mahogany chairs, settees, &c. caned with neatness and dispatch." The large firms such as Sleigh (James) & Pitcher (William), ornamental painters, gilders and glaziers; Clover (Lewis) & Parker (William), painters, gilders, glaziers, carvers and the fancy chair firm of Patterson and Dennis probably provided many of the same services. Smaller shops such as that of Thomas Megary, Joseph Weaver and Isaac Plum- all advertising as ornamental painters-provided the same services. Stencils bearing the name of Thomas

Gildersleeve, listed only as a gilder, have been found and this would indicate that the directory listings are incomplete.

A John Gatfield advertised: "John Gatfield House and Sign Painter, Gilder and Glazier 28 Nassau-street One door from the corner of Maiden Lane, New York. N. B. Room and Entry Walls Painted in oil, varnish and water colors." This tells us something of the services which he offered. There were other needs for the ornamental painter's services as revealed in an advertisement in the NEW YORK EVENING POST for January 2, 1824: "Pianofortes, warrented, manufactured and sold by Gibson and Davis at 216 Broadway opposite St. Pauls Church and at their manufactory at 61 Barclay-street - - - and may be ornamented in various ways. Gibson & Davis" This interesting advertisement raises a number of questions since the partnership presumably was dissolved in 1816 according to notices published at that time and does "may be ornamented in various ways" mean that ornamental work was done to the customers order at the pianoforte factory or was it taken to the ornamental painter? His services were also needed by Wheaton & Davis, chair and sofa manufacturers at No. 113 Fulton-street: "Mahogany, curled maple and rosewood chairs, sofas and couches plain and highly ornamented."

One New York ornamental painter about whom we have some information but who listed himself as "painter and glazier" was Lewis Child (c1781-1829). He is best known, however, through his work as a portrait painter, his marriage to Elizabeth Jarvis, sister of John Wesley Jarvis, the artist and as the teacher in ornamental painting of Henry Smith Mount, brother of William Sidney Mount the well known genre painter. No specific examples of ornamental painting have as yet been attributed to him.

Of Henry Smith Mount considerably more is known, thanks to the letter writing habit of his brother, William, and his membership in the National Academy of Design. Born at Setauket, Long Island in 1807 he was apprenticed to Lewis Child in New York City in 1819 to learn ornamental painting. In 1844 he took his brother, William, into his firm in New York as an apprentice in ornamental painting. William, who stayed at the apprenticeship for three years, writes as follows: "My brother, H.S. Mount and his partner, William Inslee, having a great variety of ornamental work such as Hat signs, banners, transparencies, and engine backs, requiring a vast deal of artistic skill, I was greatly benefitted by seeing their off hand manner of execution. Mr. Inslee had a great eye for colour and he was an able draftsman. He had a fine collection of pencil drawings executed by himself-also a set of large engravings, by Hogarth, which he took pleasure in showing me."

This gives a rather vivid picture of life in that shop. Henry Smith Mount, not only did ornamental painting but also still life, landscape, animal and figure painting some of which he exhibited at the National Academy of Design where he became an Associate Member in 1828. He continued an active interest in the New York art community and in 1836 was engaged by the great art patron, Luman Reed, to paint and ornament the doors to his picture gallery. The door panels were to contain scenes by his brother, William Sidney Mount, Thomas Cole, Asher Durand and Flagg (probably Henry Collins Flagg) but William Sidney declined for lack of time. Reed writes in a letter to William Sidney Mount, dated May 4, 1836, "Your Brother, Henry, is painting a Cattle piece on one of our Gallery doors. Durand and Cole are also at work." Henry S. Mount was in good company indeed!!!

There was a tremendous interest in design and pattern in New York in the eighteen twenties and thirties. The beautifully stenciled and gilded pieces of fine furniture which were produced almost exclusively here may have had some influence on the amateurs who attended classes offered by several women in the city. Their entries in the Third Annual Fair of the American Institute of the City of New York held in the city on October 13-14, 1830 are most revealing. While commercial firms entered floor cloths, pianos, clocks, tinware etc. the ladies took their share of premiums. In the introduction we read "to Miss Anthony, a pupil of Mrs. J. Russell, 496 Broadway, for a Gilt Centre Table with Chinese figures- first premium "and in the catalogue, premium #215 (the only entry by Miss Anthony)" 1 superior Scrap Table, Chinese figures and gilt, the best work of the kind exhibited at the Fair-Miss Anthony, a pupil of Mrs. Russell, Seminary, 496 Broadway." This center table was only one of many. The writer has often wondered just what Miss Anthony's table looked like and now possible there is an answer. In the recently published book, *American Furniture 1620 to the Present* by Jonathan L. Fairbanks and Elizabeth Bidwell there is shown a "Japanned Octagonal Pedestal Table" which is attributed to Albany, New York. The table is signed by Elisa Anthony and dated 1830. Could this have been entry #215 at the Fair in New York that same year? It is interesting that premiums were given for six other similar scrap tables as well as work tables, all entered by the ladies.

From this historical review one becomes aware of the cultural and economic importance of the ornamental painter and can begin to understand why he prospered at certain times and places when his special skills served a particular need. One such place and time was the first forty years of the nineteenth century in the greater Boston area. The group of Willard clockmakers in Roxbury and Boston created a need

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- Carlisle, Lilian Baker: *"New Biographical Findings on Curtis & Dunning, Girandole Clockmakers"*, Vol. X No. 2
- Black, Mary: *"Contributions Toward a History of Early Nineteenth Century New York Portraiture"*, Vol. XII No. 4
- Stewart, Patrick L.: *"The American Empire Style: Its Historical Background"*, Vol. X No. 2

The Asher Durand Papers — The New York Public Library

Microfilm copy of the William Sidney Mount Papers (Museums at Stony Brook)
 — New York Public Library

The Ezra Ames Papers at the New York Historical Society

The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York at the New York Historical Society

Various city directories and newspapers

CORNER OF FACTS

Samuel Gragg, Chairmaker

Contributed by Shirley Spaulding DeVoe

"The Boston fancy and Windsor chairmaker, Samuel Gragg, received a patent in 1808 for an 'elastic chair'. His use of bentwood for virtually all parts of a chair in order to realise the sinuous lines of Grecian design is probably unique in nineteenth century furniture-making. His bentwood productions are among the most creative examples of American high fashion painted furniture".

Yale University Art Gallery
New Haven, Connecticut

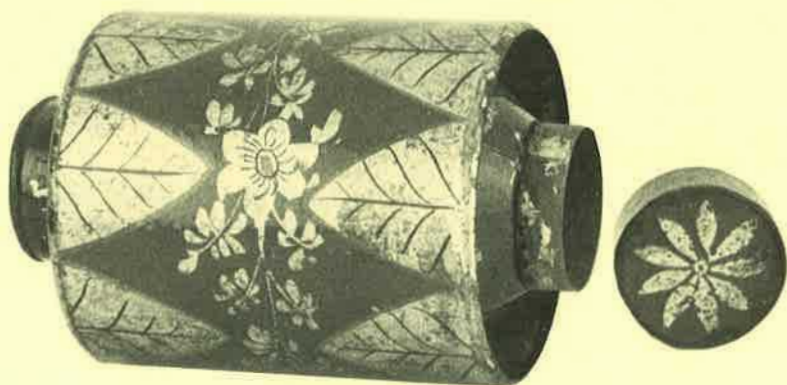


Samuel Gragg Side Chair.



Samuel Gragg Side Chair,
stamped "S. Gragg, Boston, Patent"

ORIGINAL ARTICLES DONATED TO H.S.E.A.D. INC.

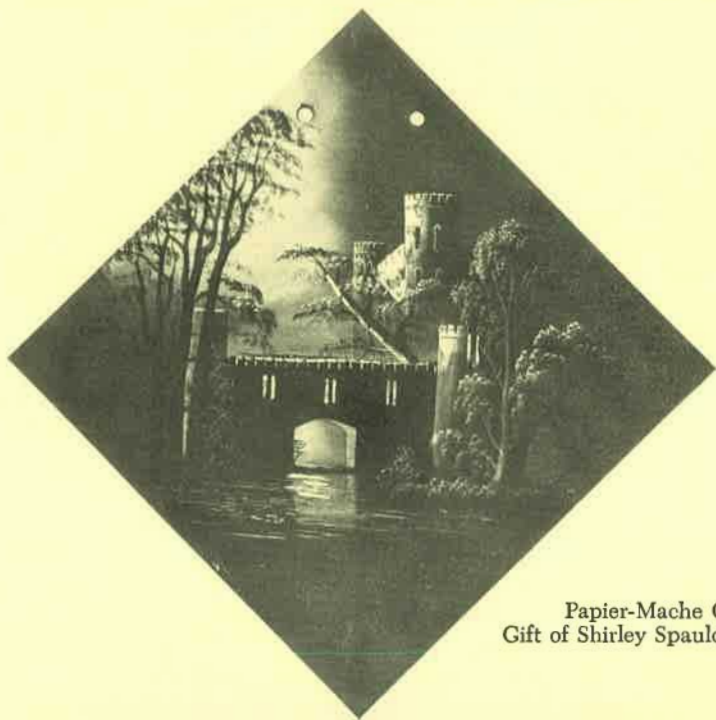


Double Tea Caddy — Ornamented with Metal Leaf
Gift of Laura Corvini

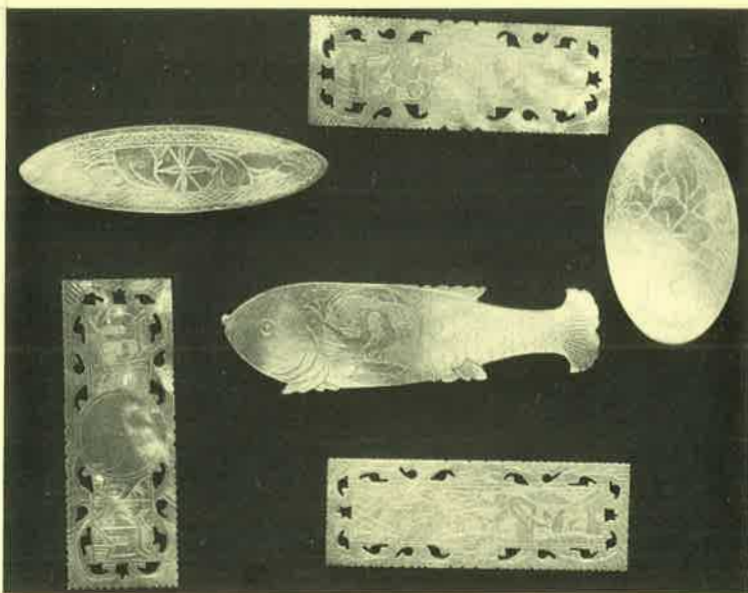


clock
inserts

Tin-Salesmen's samples for Tea Caddy
Gift of Shirley Spaulding DeVoe



Papier-Mache Cover
Gift of Shirley Spaulding DeVoe



Mother-of-Pearl Counters for the game of Loo, Gift of Shirley Spaulding DeVoe

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS MEMBERS

Albany, N.Y. — September 1981

Mrs. Chauncey E. Burns (Mary)	50 Ledge Rd., Burlington, VT 05401
Mrs. Dana J. Ellison (Catherine)	P.O. Box 298, Ludlow, VT 05149
Mrs. Thomas Hulsebosch (Mary)	45 Horicon Ave., Glens Falls, NY 12801
Mrs. Thomas E. Meath (Elizabeth)	36 North Rd., Glens Falls, NY 12801
Suellen Ostergaard,	27 Woodruff Rd., Morristown, N.J. 07950
Mrs. Bert A. Ross (Roberta)	1900 Townsend Ave., Charlotte, NC 28205
Mrs. Nicolas Theoharides (Cornelia)	2 Roderick Lane, Garden City, NY 11530

Master Craftsman's Award



Chippendale Painting — Phyllis Sherman

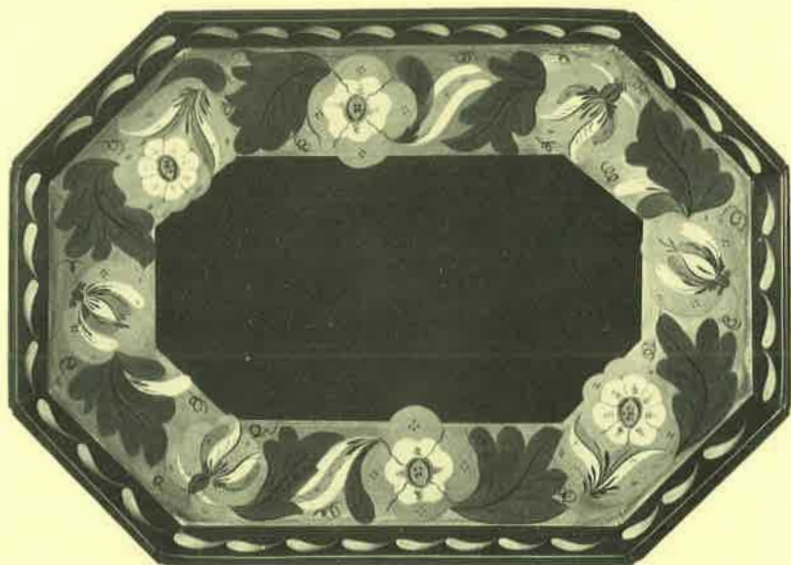
MEMBERS' "A" AWARDS
Albany, N.Y. — September 1981

Photographs by William J. Knorr

Country Painting



Sara Tiffany

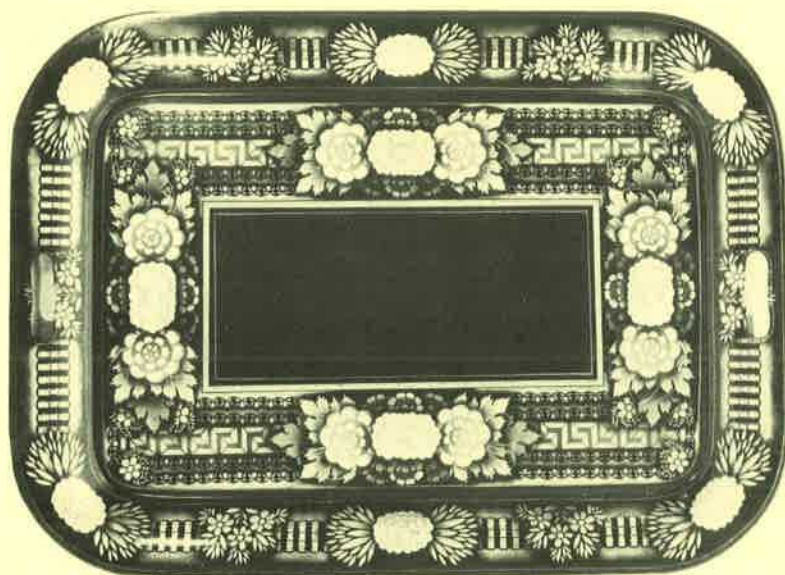


Joyce Holzer

Stencilling on Tin



Barbara Hood



Shirley Bass

Stencilling on Wood



Helen Thieme



Joyce Holzer

Glass Panel — Stencilled Border



Roberta Edrington



Ruth Adam



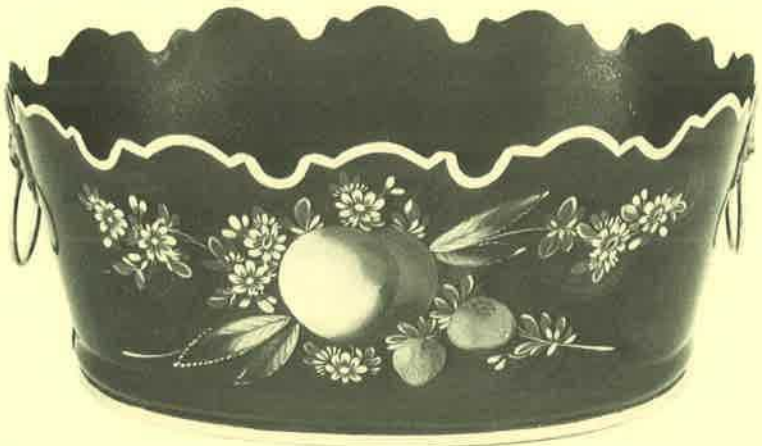
Roberta Edrington



Peggy Waldman



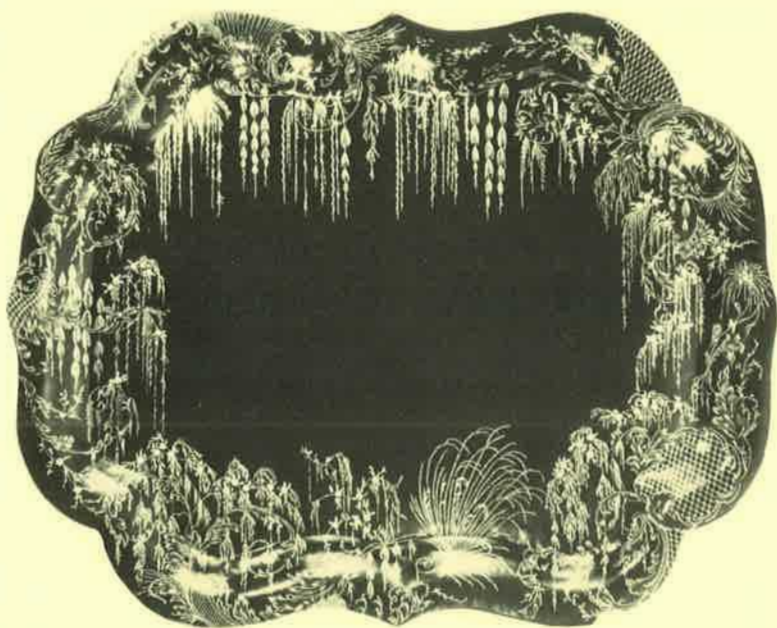
Astrid Thomas



Deborah Lambeth



Margaret Watts

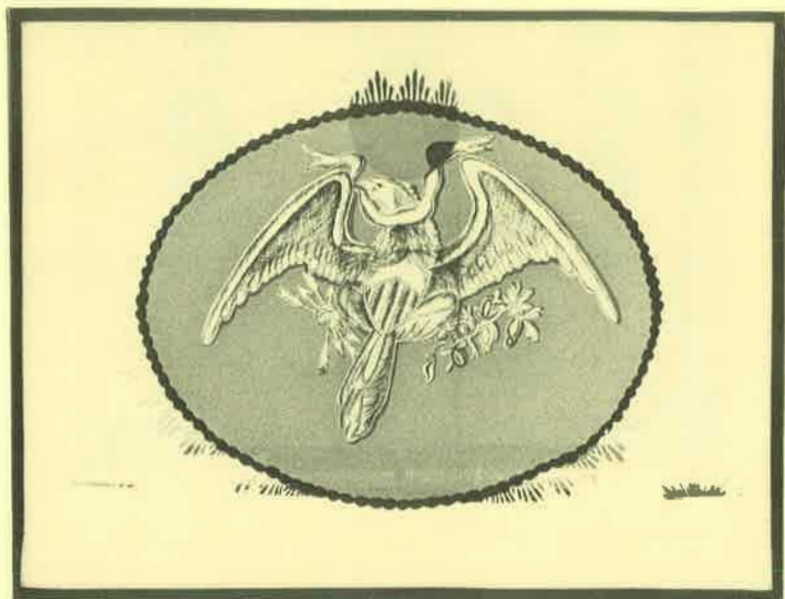


Helen Gross

"A" Award Not Previously Printed

Cherry Hill, NJ – May 1980

Glass Panel – Metal Leaf



Anne Gumaer

MEMBERS' "B" AWARDS

Country Painting

Shirley Berman
Jeanne Bolinder

Elaine Dalsell
Patricia Smith

Stencilling on Tin

Eleanor Cook

Lucia Murphy

Stencilling on Wood

Shirley Berman

Jeanne Bolinder

Eleanor Cook

Metal Leaf

Elaine Dalsell

Glass Panel – Stencilled Border

Rosemary Frueh

Glass Panel – Metal Leaf

Ruth Adam

Rosemary Frueh

Chippendale

Elizabeth Bach

Special Class

Maryjane Clark (2 pieces)

Margaret Watts



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by Carol Heinz

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Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., N.Y. 1981

by Jocasta Innes

Paint Magic by Jocasta Innes truly is a "one of a kind" book that will delight the seasoned decorator as well as the novice.

The author uses paint as a vehicle to produce various products ie., stencilled floors, sponged walls, lacquered finishes, tortoiseshelling, vinegar grained furniture and many more. Not only are the end products described, but there are 120 color photo illustrations plus detailed techniques and revival of old techniques and proper use of supplies. Emphasis is on the flexibility of paint and inexpensive techniques anyone can master.

Paint Magic fills a void and promises to be a necessity in the decorator's reference library.

FRANCIS GUY 1760 - 1820

Museum and Library of Maryland History
Maryland Historical Society

Stiles Tuttle Colwill

FRANCIS GUY 1760-1820 is a catalogue prepared by Stiles Tuttle Colwill in conjunction with an exhibition at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md., August 1981.

Francis Guy created wonderful historic landscapes during this country's early beginnings. He was a forerunner of the Hudson River School developing from a self-taught amateur at age 40 to a very good landscape artist.

Our interest in Francis Guy relates to the medallion landscapes found on the Findlay fancy chairs, settees and pier tables. The Findlays of Baltimore advertised from 1804-1807 the exclusive right to furnish "real views" taken on the spot for the patrons' chairs and furniture. Recent research indicates the same artist created the medallion landscapes, as many identical large landscape scenes were found — and signed by Francis Guy during the same period of time.

NOTICES FROM THE TRUSTEES

SPRING MEETING

Northampton Hilton Hotel, Northampton, MA

April 28, 29, 30, 1982

Meeting Chairman: Mrs. Merton D. Thompson

Program Chairman: Mrs. Philip L. Davis

FALL MEETING

Hershey Lodge, Hershey, PA

September 27, 28, 29, 1982

Meeting Chairman: Mrs. George E. Lewis

Program Chairman: Mrs. William E. Berkey

POLICIES

Use of Society Name and Seal

Exhibitions:

Chapters or Members may sponsor Exhibitions using the name of the Society with written permission of the Treasurer of the Society provided that only originals, "A" or "B" awards, approved portfolios of Certified Teachers and applicant pieces submitted within the last five years, are exhibited. Any exception will be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

Opinions or Criticisms:

Members should not use the name of the Society when writing personal opinions or criticisms to newspapers and magazines. Any matter requiring action by the Society should be referred to the President of the Society.

The Official Seal:

The Official Seal of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. shall not be duplicated or used by individuals or chapters.

(Exception: Upon application, Chapters will be granted permission to use the seal for the cover of their yearly program. Passed by the membership at Fall Meeting, 1966.)

Membership List:

Permission of the Board of Trustees must be obtained to release the Society's Membership List.

Meetings:

Taping of HSEAD, Inc. functions is not permitted.

New Policies

July, 1977 — There will be no refunds for meeting registrations, special, tours, and/or admission fees.

July, 1977 — An applicant may have three consecutive years in which to complete requirements for regular membership.

Sept. 1978 — Names of candidates for consideration by the Nominating Committee in the selection of nominations for the Board of Trustees must be sent to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee by September 1st.

Sept. 1980 — That the Standards and Judging Committees be separated into two committees, the Standards Committee to set the Standards of Craftsmanship and the Judging Committee to judge those articles submitted for judging according to the established standards.

Change in By-Laws

Article II

Section 4.

- a. Annual dues for active and associate members shall be payable as of July 1, which shall be the beginning of each fiscal year.
- b. If any member has not paid dues or other indebtedness to the Society by November 1, the membership shall be terminated. Reinstatement shall be at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To avoid delay in receiving THE DECORATOR and other Society mailings and adding to the already heavy mailing costs, please notify the 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.

BEQUESTS TO H.S.E.A.D., Inc.

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc. appreciates the generosity of its members as expressed through bequests. Such gifts serve as a memorial and also enable the Society to perpetuate the pursuits of the Society in the fields of education, history, preservation, publication, and research. While unrestricted gifts have more general uses, a member may designate a gift to serve a particular phase of endeavor.

Bequests should be left in proper legal form, as prepared by a lawyer, or following the general bequest form.

I give, devise and bequeath to the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc., an organization incorporated in the State of New York, the sum of \$..... to be used at the discretion of said corporation. (Or a specific purpose may be indicated.)

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- MRS. CHESTER ARMSTRONG, Ithaca, N.Y. — stenciling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, glass painting.
- MRS. WILLIAM BERKEY, Wayne, Pa. — country painting.
- MRS. JANE BOLSTER, Berwyn, Pa. — country painting, stenciling, glass painting.
- MRS. JOHN CLARK, Norwell, Mass. — stenciling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, lace edge painting, glass painting, Chippendale.
- MRS. AUSTIN EMERY, Setauket, N.Y. — country painting, glass painting.
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- MRS. JACK HENNESSEY, Albany, N.Y. — country painting.
- MRS. KENNETH HOOD, Holcomb, N.Y. — country painting.
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- MRS. ROBERT KEEGAN, Hudson, Ohio — country painting, stenciling, metal leaf, freehand bronze, lace edge painting, glass painting, chippendale.
- MRS. R. C. MARTIN, Charlotte, N.C. — country painting
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- MRS. ADRIAN LEA, Glens Falls, N.Y. — stenciling, country painting.
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