The Decorator

Volume XLIV No. 1

McLean, VA

Fall-Winter 1989-90



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



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

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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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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

JOSHUA WILDER STENCILLED BANJO. The box tablet depicts the capture of the PENGUIN by the HORNET, March 23, 1815, Captain James Biddle commanding. The PENGUIN is virtually destroyed, according to the limner.

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Mailing Address

Museum of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration

19 Dove Street, Albany, NY 12210

1-518-462-1676

Director: Margaret Coffin

EDITORIAL

I shall take advantage of this page to share with you some impressions of a delightful trip to England and Wales. There were twenty-nine of us—members and friends of HSEAD plus a very able driver and a wonderful British guide. We visited many museums and places of historic interest, drove through miles of beautiful countryside, had opportunities to do some shopping, and enjoyed some mighty fine fare.

Our British guide often gave us bits of English history as we drove along and, after a particularly challenging afternoon in Pontypool, honored us with a poem to fit the occasion. Only a member of HSEAD would appreciate this quest.

"Ode to Pontypool"

by Valerie "Williams-Wordsworth"

I quite believed I was no fool 'Til I searched for the gates at Pontypool. If I had known what I would see-Pontypool gates: one, two and three. And Brian was not pleased with me As he drove round continuously. At last I found my busy "charges" Photographing Pontypool garbage And now at night when I do sleep I ask the Lord my soul to keep I see before my sleeping eyes Pontypool gates of every size. And when I reach the pearly gates Where hopefully the Lord awaits I'll say "Oh Lord please let me in And free me from this search for tin". He'll say "The Pearly Gates so grand I brought here from a celtic land. So end your search oh Valerie dear The Pontypool Gates I have up here!"

BANJO TABLETS -THE WAR OF 1812 REVISITED

by Jerome C. Groskin

It is often interesting to look beyond the mechanical and artistic features of antique clocks to other matters that enable us to appreciate these clocks more fully; a little research will sometimes uncover facts of great historic significance that otherwise would escape attention. This is particularly so of banjo clocks. Mechanically, early banjos are marvels of simplicity and efficiency, and have not been improved upon in the approximately one hundred and sixty-five years since their invention. Artistically, early banjos are perhaps as pleasing and well designed as any clocks ever made. But there is more to them than that. The banio is a completely American clock, having no counterpart anywhere in the world and owing its origin entirely to the inventive genius of Simon Willard, who obtained his patent February 8, 1802. Being so thoroughly American, it is not surprising that the banjos of the first quarter of the 19th Century should somehow reflect the intense patriotism and nationalism of the free America of that era-a patriotism and nationalism that perhaps have not been experienced here since. During that period, our young nation was struggling to establish itself among the nations of the world by creating its own domestic industry and by consuming products of its own manufacture. The effort created great pride among Americans in American-made products, and gave enormous impetus to ingenuity and inventiveness. The banjo clock was born and grew up in this environment.

There is little wonder, therefore, that the artists of the early 1800's often decorated the glass tablets of banjo clocks with patriotic scenes and symbols. The eagle, the shield, and the figure of Liberty holding the liberty pole surmounted with the liberty cap (Fig. 1) are some of the decorations adopted. But undoubtedly the most popular of all the reverse paintings must have been those depicting naval engagements of the War of 1812. And the artists did not have far to look for their models, as there were readily available many engravings made from the oil paintings of Thomas Birch of Philadelphia (1779-1851), America's first marine artist.

Birch became well known for his contemporary paintings of American naval engagements in the War of 1812, including those of the battles between the CONSTITUTION and the GUERRIERE (Fig. 2), the WASP and the FROLIC, the UNITED STATES and the MACEDONIAN, the HORNET and the PEACOCK, and the FRIGATE CONSTITUTION ESCAPING FROM A BRITISH SQUADRON, and others. The ship portraiture in these paintings is very accurate, although Birch

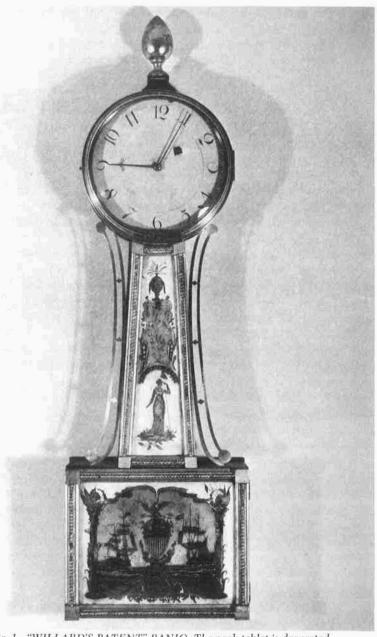


Fig. 1 "WILLARD'S PATENT" BANJO. The neck tablet is decorated with a figure of Liberty, holding a "liberty pole" surmounted by a "liberty cap." The box tablet is marked "SURRENDER OF THE GUERRIERE." Also depicted is the name Commodore Isaac Hull, commanding officer of the CONSTITUTION

apparently had no personal knowledge of the sea. His method was to talk with those who went to sea, and to make on-the-spot sketches of shipping on rivers and harbors. Particular naval engagements were described to Birch by naval officers, and from these descriptions he would make sketches and then paintings. One version of the CONSTITUTION'S ESCAPE is known to have been painted for Commodore Isaac Hull, her commanding officer. It is interesting to note, in (Fig. 1), that the artist of this beautiful tablet has included Hull's name on his reverse painting of the SURRENDER OF THE GUERRIERE.

The War of 1812 was fought primarily over opposite views of the United States and Great Britain as to the rights of belligerents and neutrals on the sea. There was the British system of impressing crews for menof-war, which had been customary practice in the British navy and which had caused much bitterness when the British extended the policy to the search of American ships for British seamen. Of course, due to impressment in the British navy, many British seamen deserted and sailed under the American flag. Also, Great Britain held that she had the right to search any neutral ship for property and the nationals of her enemies.

From the first it became apparent that the war was destined to be a conflict on the sea coast and the ocean. It was assumed that the United States would act for the most part on the defensive, and Great Britain would rely chiefly upon her navy; the condition of both nations was such as to provoke this sort of warfare. On the one side was the British armament, superior to any in the world, and on the other an exposed sea coast, a few fortresses and a navy of almost insignificant proportions. After the Revolution, especially during the administration of Jefferson, the military spirit was discouraged and the defenses of the country fell into decay. Our navy, such as it was, was widely scattered and totally unprepared, with the exception of Commodore John Rodgers' squadron which sailed within an hour after war was declared and distracted the enemy and prevented him from approaching any principal American port. The world was truly astonished, therefore, when the American sailors, not waiting to be attacked, immediately went on the offensive against the mistress of the seas and proceeded to win a series of brilliant victories. As it turned out, our secret weapons consisted of a dedicated and loyal officers' corps, ships that were better designed and manned, and a fervent patriotism among both officers and crews.

Collectors of banjos are familiar with the rare and desirable tablet depicting the CONSTITUTION'S ESCAPE. This event occurred after the CONSTITUTION sailed from Annapolis with new gun crews and met Broke's squadron off the coast. The extraordinary seamanship of Commodore Isaac Hull and his first lieutenant, Morris, was here displayed

in escaping the British squadron by kedge hauling—the method of lowering a boat over the side and dropping a small anchor or "kedge" at a distance, by means of which the vessel is pulled along. Although it looked as if escape was impossible, Hull is reported to have told Morris: "Let's lay broadside to them, Mr. Morris, and fight the whole. If they sink us, we'll go down like men." But the CONSTITUTION escaped, to fight another day.

The most celebrated naval battle of the War of 1812, and the one most often found on banjo tablets, was that between the CONSTITUTION and the GUERRIERE (Figures 1 and 2). On August 19, 1812, the frigate CONSTITUTION, commanded by Hull, overtook the British sloop-of-war GUERRIERE off the coast of Massachusetts. Captain Dacres, who commanded the British vessel, had been boasting of his prowess and sending challenges to American vessels to come out and fight. The vessels maneuvered for a while, the CONSTITUTION closing with her opponent, until at close range she poured in a great broadside, sweeping the decks of the GUERRIERE and deciding the contest. Dacres, after losing fifteen men killed and sixty-three wounded, struck his colors and surrendered his shattered vessel as a prize. The American loss was seven killed and an equal number of wounded. On the following morning, the GUERRIERE, being unmanageable, was blown up; and Hull returned to port with his prisoners and spoils.

Although I have not seen a banjo tablet depicting the engagement between the American sloop-of-war WASP and the English brig FROLIC, I do not doubt that some were made, as Thomas Birch had painted this battle, and engravings were widely circulated. On October 18, 1812, the WASP, under command of Captain Jacob Jones, made contact with a fleet of British merchantmen off the coast of Virginia. The squadron was under convoy of the brig FROLIC, commanded by Captain Whinyates, who put his vessel between the merchantmen and the WASP and prepared for battle. In extremely rough water causing the muzzles of the guns to be submerged at times, a fierce fight took place lasting three-quarters of an hour, at the end of which both ships became nearly helpless; but the WASP moved in and delivered a final broadside which completely cleared the deck. The American crew, under Lieutenant James Biddle, of Philadelphia, then boarded the FROLIC and struck the British flag, as not a single British seaman was left above deck to do so. Congress voted Captain Jones a gold medal, and a silver one for each of his officers.

A short distance west of the Canary Islands, Commodore Stephen Decatur, commanding the frigate UNITED STATES, attacked the British frigate MACEDONIAN. After a long-range gunnery duel lasting two hours, in which the UNITED STATES was but little damaged, the

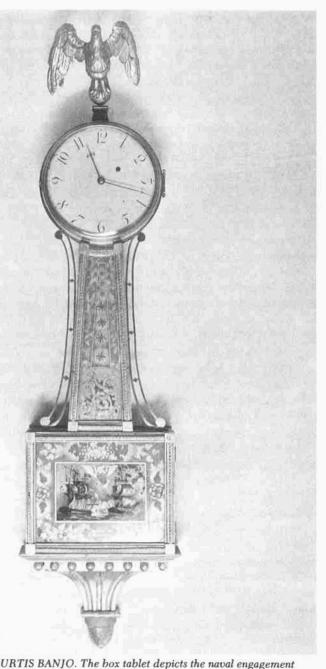


Fig. 2 LEMUEL CURTIS BANJO. The box tablet depicts the naval engagement between the CONSTITUTION and the GUERRIERE, August 19, 1812

MACEDONIAN surrendered, with a loss in killed and wounded of more than a hundred men. Thomas Birch's original oil painting of this battle has, until recently, hung in the President's office in the White House, and I do not doubt that there are in existence banjo tablets of the engagement.

Of great importance was the capture of the British frigate JAVA by the CONSTITUTION, now under command of Commodore Bainbridge. On December 29, 1812, the two vessels met off Salvador, on the coast of Brazil. A furious battle took place, continuing for two hours. Every mast was torn from the British ship, and her hull was riddled with shot. It is reported that her deck was made slippery with the blood of more than two hundred killed and wounded seamen. The vessel was reduced to a wreck before her flag was struck; then the crew and passengers, numbering upward of four hundred, were transferred to the CONSTITUTION, and the hull of the JAVA was burned at sea.

During the year 1812, two hundred and fifty British ships, carrying three thousand sailors, and cargoes of great value, were captured by the American cruisers. In these naval victories, the people of the United States enthusiastically saw the omens of complete overthrow of the dominion of Britain on the seas. The English were stunned. Their newspapers raged and declared that the time-honored flag of England had been disgraced "by a piece of striped bunting flying at the mastheads of a few fir-built frigates, manned by a handful of... and outlaws!"

The year 1813 brought more victories for the American ships. Off the coast of Demarara, on February 24, 1813, the sloop-of-war HORNET, commanded by Captain James Lawrence, made contact with the British brig PEACOCK. The ships were equally matched. A furious battle of fifteen minutes duration took place, and the PEACOCK, already sinking, struck her colors. While the Americans were trying to transfer the conquered crew, the brig sank out of sight.

On September 5, 1813, another British brig, the BOXER, cruising off the coast of Maine, was overhauled and captured by the American ENTERPRISE, commanded by Captain Burrows. The fight raged for three-quarters of an hour, when the BOXER surrendered. Captain Blyth, the British commander, was killed; and Captain Burrows was fatally wounded. The bodies of both officers were taken to Portland, Maine, and buried side by side with military honors.

Perhaps one of the tablets most sought after by banjo collectors is that depicting Commodore Oliver H. Perry's victory on Lake Erie (Fig. 3). This victory gave the Americans full control of the lake, which, until then, had been commanded by a British squadron of six vessels. A successful invasion of Canada could only be made by first gaining control of the lake, and this task was assigned to Commodore Perry of Rhode

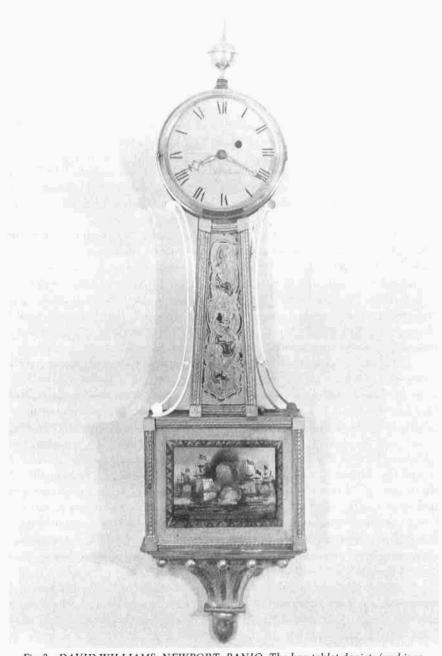


Fig. 3 DAVID WILLIAMS, NEWPORT, BANJO. The box tablet depicts (and is so marked) "PERRY'S VICTORY 1813." This tablet seems appropriate for a Newport banjo, as Commander Oliver H. Perry was a native of Rhode Island

Island—a young man twenty-seven years of age, who had never been in a naval battle. His opponent, Commodore Barclay, was a veteran from the sea-service of Europe. Energetically, Perry directed the construction of nine ships, at Presqu' Isle, Erie, Pennsylvania, and was soon afloat on the lake. On September 10, 1813, the two fleets met a short distance northwest of Put-in-Bay, South Bass Island, off the shore of Ohio. The fight was begun by the American squadron, Perry's flagship, the LAWRENCE, leading the attack. His principal opponent was the DETROIT, under the command of Barclay. The British guns were longer, had wider range and were better manned. The LAWRENCE was ruined; nearly all her guns were dismounted, masts torn away, and sailors killed. Between the other ships the battle was proceeding slowly, without much damage; but Barclay's flagship was almost as nearly wrecked as the LAWRENCE. At this point, it is reported that Perry, himself uninjured, put on his uniform, seized his banner, got overboard into an open boat, passed within close range of the enemy's ships, a storm of shot flying around him, and transferred his flag to the NIAGARA. It is said that a shout went up from the American fleet; it was the signal of victory. With the powerful NIAGARA still undamaged by the battle, Perry bore down upon the enemy's line, drove right through the middle, discharging broadsides right and left. In fifteen minutes the work was done: the British fleet was helpless. Perry then returned to the deck of the LAWRENCE and there received the surrender. And then he sent to General Harrison this famous dispatch:

"We have met the enemy and they are ours—two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop."

The last naval battle of the war took place between the HORNET and the PENGUIN on March 23, 1815, off the island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic (see cover). Actually, the war had already ended December 24, 1814, with the Treaty of Ghent, but communications were not what they are today. As the American vessel, the HORNET, was about to anchor off the island, Captain James Biddle sighted a sail. He hove to and let her approach to within close range, when she hoisted English colors. Biddle answered with an immediate broadside. The firing was furious and the contest was necessarily short, lasting only twenty-two minutes. The HORNET'S accuracy and rate of fire was such that the British vessel, the brig PENGUIN, although equal in firepower, had no choice but to ram her opponent. She thrust her bowsprit in between the HORNET'S main and mizzen rigging, and thus afforded an ideal opportunity for boarding. But no boarders came. Instead, the senior British lieutenant, the captain having been killed, shouted that he surrendered. As Biddle mounted the taffrail to speak to the lieutenant, he was shot from a range of twelve yards by a British sailor, who was instantly killed by two American marines who had sighted him as he fired. The shot struck Biddle's chin, grazed his neck, and went out through his collar. By now he was covered with blood, having earlier been badly injured by flying splinters. Notwithstanding his condition, Biddle bandaged his neck with a shirt, and refused any help until his wounded men had been attended to. The PENGUIN had been so badly shot up that, after the removal of a carved figure of a penguin which he sent to his father as a trophy, Biddle ordered her scuttled. It was not until June 9, 1815, upon arriving at Salvador, Brazil, for refitting, that Biddle learned that peace had been declared and that he had received a promotion five months before.

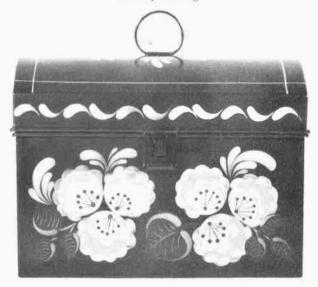
The war had gained for America the recognition of her naval power. The American flag would henceforth be honored on every ocean.

SOURCES

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MEMBERS "A" AWARDS McLean, VA-Fall 1989

Country Painting



Dorothy Fillmore

Stencilling on Wood



Joyce E. Holzer

Stencilling on Wood



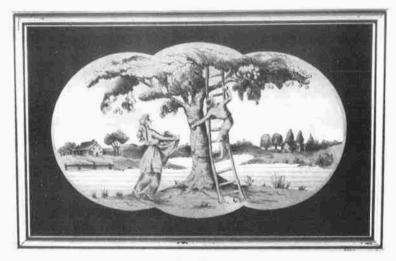
Elaine Dalzell

Glass Stencilled Border



Carolyn Hedge

Glass Gold Leaf Panel



Helen Thieme

MASTER CRAFTSMAN AWARD

Victorian Flower Painting

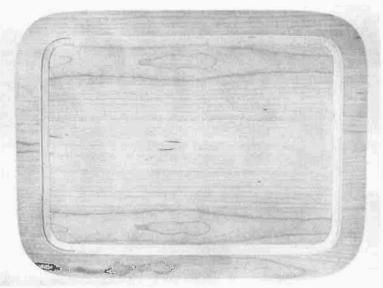


Carolyn Hedge

REPRODUCTION AWARD



Original Tray used for Reproduction Award - Courtesy Sara Tiffany



Reproduction Award - Edward Stone Sandwich edge Tray 18%" x 24%"

MEMBERS "B" AWARDS McLean, VA-Fall 1989

Country Painting

Ann Baker (2 pieces) Anna Day

Pontypool

Arminda Tavares

Freehand Bronze

Sara Tiffany

Glass Stencilled Border

Elaine Dalzell

Special Class

Roberta Edrington

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD 1989

Martha and Robert Wilbur

Doll

CAREER AWARD 1989

Jane Bolster

PRESIDENT'S AWARD BOX 1989

Ruth Brown
Dorothy Hutchings
Ann Parliman
Beatrice Casmer (in memoriam)

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McLean, Virginia-Fall 1989

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Mattilene A. Lawrence
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—Pauline Robinson
Geraldine M. Rossner

Barbara Schramm





THE BOOKSHELF

The Stencilled House, by Lyn Le Grice. Photographs by Michael and David Murray. Simon & Schuster Inc. New York 1988. \$24.95. 175 pages. Two or more colored photographs per page.

Last summer I was fortunate to take a workshop with Lyn Le Grice in Cornwall and visit the Stencilled House as part of the course. The house in question is an old Customs House in Penzance and not only is it in a romantic place but it is also a romantic house. It is very old, probably 16th century or earlier. It has later Georgian and even Victorian additions. It is full of odd corners, lovely windows set deep into the wall, several staircases and uneven floors. For Lyn, who is probably the foremost stenciller in Britain and Europe, it was a wonderful place to decorate. I thought it was enchanting and waited eagerly for her book to be published. When it came out at Christmas I was not disappointed. The text is beautifully written and full of ideas and historical allusions. The color photography by Michael and David Murray which appears on every page, does full justice to the author's work and her exceptional color sense.

Lyn starts the book with an introduction which explains how she got the ideas for the stencils for each room from kitchen to nursery. All the stencils are new and original and evolve from different periods. With the furniture and accessories she chooses, they suit each room perfectly. They are very different, but all are done with non toxic fast drying spray paint puffed on in short sharp bursts from an aerosol can. Sometimes as many as five colors are used and there is no drying period between. The walls are soft in color and often ragged or marbled. The following ten chapters are about each room in the house. Each chapter has a layout of the room with stencils positioned on walls and floor. Lyn explains how she made the draperies, the floorcloth in the nursery and the shades in the dining room and how she painted and decorated some rather mundane furniture with a wonderful effect. The dining room is one of my favorite rooms. It is decorated with festoons of grapes and old columns in each corner. The idea for this room came from a recently discovered stencilled room in Cornwall. More and more old stencils are coming to light in England and it is interesting to note that they are very similar to our American wall stencils and were done at about the same time. There is a photo of this one in the book and the colors are still clear and lively as it was done with a gloss paint—a very common medium in England. Another interesting piece is the fireboard in the sitting room. The theme in this room is based on crewel embroidery and stump work—a traditional form of raised embroidery practised in the 15th to 17th century. The fireboard was originally done on plaster board, but as the result was rather flat, the board was covered with velvet and stencilled which produced a much softer effect.

The book ends with an explanation of Lyn's techniques. She calls it "Work in Progress" and explains what she does step by step in a clear and concise manner. I think Guild Members would enjoy trying this method of stencilling. I found one of the most rewarding facets of it was learning to make my own designs from flowers and leaves I had gathered before my classes. It was the most difficult and time consuming part of the course, but the stencils were not hard to cut and the stencilling, once one had learned how to do it, produced a lovely image with great depth. All the designs were drawn directly on manilla card, improved upon with magic markers, cross hatched to make the design stand out and then cut. There is also a glossary of terms and a place where supplies can be purchased in the USA. I highly recommend the Stencilled House and also suggest that if any Guild Members are ever in England they should visit Penzance and see this lovely house for themselves.

Mary Rob

American Furniture 1680-1880. From the Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art, by William Voss Elder III and Jayne E. Stokes. The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1987. 183pp. 6 color plates; remaining photos black and white.

This book guides the reader through the extensive Early American collection in The Baltimore Museum of Art. The chapters are logically divided into various furniture categories. "Seating Furniture" covers chairs, settees, and sofas. As you would expect the "Baltimore Chair" style is particularly well documented in this chapter and the members of our Society will enjoy examining the various painted scenes which are found on the slats of these elegant chairs. Some of the early stately homes in Baltimore are carefully painted on one particularly fine set of chairs.

"Case Furniture" is extensively covered in the next chapter. Highboys, dressing tables, chests, chests on chests and even linen presses are pictured and described in detail. Many members may recall a talk on the celebrated "Pimm" chest by the Marks at the Tarrytown, New York Meeting. The Baltimore Museum of Art owns a similar one which was also made in Boston. This piece is one of the few items featured in a color plate.

The next chapter undertakes the category of "Desks", followed by a chapter on "Clocks". Of very special note is the picture and history of two Massachusetts shelf clocks with the same reverse glass paintings of a little girl and her lamb. We have all seen the "brother" of this reverse glass painting picturing Little Boy Blue and his lamb. The two examples of these similar clocks were made by two different clock makers. One was possibly made for a bride in that it is a white presentation clock and the other was most likely made for the trade. The accompanying information provides all the pertinent details about the makers, decorators when known, and the provenance in a very informative manner.

Chapter five is devoted to "The Table" and the final chapter includes all the remaining items which don't easily fall into any of the above categories under the title "Miscellaneous". This is an excellent soft cover guide to American furniture to 1880. Furniture makers, their dates, associates, and customers are well documented in the articles accompanying the photos of the pieces in the collection. Extensive notes and bibliography resources are listed after each description. This book duplicates in some aspects an earlier work also put out by the Baltimore Museum of Art, entitled Baltimore Painted Furniture 1800-1840. This book was printed in 1972, and it is still available in some museum bookstores. It highlights furniture crafted during a shorter span of years, but with greater detail. Both are excellent guides to the beginnings of the subject of our Society. They should whet your appetite to view the major collection in Baltimore.

Margaret Rodgers

The Country Diary Book of Stencilling, by Jane Cheshire-Rowena Stott. Webb and Bower Ltd. 9 Colleton Cresent, Exeter, Devon EX2 4BY, England in association with Michael Joseph Ltd. 27 Wright's Lane, London W8 5TZ. 1989 160 pp. Color photographs and patterns. \$24.95.

This volume could easily be dismissed as yet another among the many books on imaginative graining, simple wall stencils, and other modern adaptations of E.A.D. work. However, the first chapter makes the book a worthwhile purchase. It deals with the history of stencilling in a very concise and clear manner by leading the reader from the first stencils of Japan and China, through the early work in Europe, and then into simple printing employing stencils, finally completing the journey with the use of stencils in America. Some modern adaptations are also dealt with in this chapter. The photos contained within the entire book are very good and are accompanied with excellent descriptions. The author obviously has conducted extensive research on her subject.

The following chapters include subjects such as materials. Although the book is a British publication, the terms are familiar. The supplies are today's products, and the various types of paints, varnishes, and papers are all listed with their proper usage. Also included in this chapter are various hints on the correct way to attack a project as well as the items required to complete it in good order.

The remaining chapters deal with various projects. The directions are clear and easy to follow. The accompanying photos and line drawings provide the reader with good examples of the end results. Such undertakings as furniture graining, the stencilling of theorems, wall stencilling and stencilling on floors are all well documented and explained. This would be a very handy book to have in your library if you are contemplating some work in the area of modern stencilling or if you wish to review the history of this particular form of the decorative arts.

At the conclusion of the book the reader is invited to further expand his knowledge via a comprehensive list of recommended books, many of which are old favorites. A useful catalogue of suppliers located both in England and in the United States rounds out this instructive book. The effect is to remind us of our common heritage.

Margaret Rodgers

Khokhloma Folk Painting, Aurora Art Publishers, Leningrad, 1980. Printed in USSR, translated by Rosemary Svetlichny.

This book is like an album containing 111 color prints of antique and modern designs found on Khokhloma wooden tableware and furniture. The name Khokhloma is derived from the Volga mercantile village of Khokhloma. There is a 14 page text in English, with footnotes, which takes you from conception of this Russian peasant art in the 17th century to its evolution today.

Due to the need for cheap and durable tableware and due to the abundance of timber in the area, the peasant craftsmen and women developed their own art of turning, carving and painting wood. These inventive Russian peasants created Khokhloma in imitation of very expensive gold-decorated utensils which were beyond their reach. They could not afford real gold leaf, so they developed a process using metal powders, like our aluminum or silver powder, which were then coated with heat resistant oil colors and varnish and fired in kilns. The heat turned the varnish yellow, the "silver" into "gold".

The design motifs consist of floral and plain geometric patterns, clusters of berries interwoven with sweeping grasses and golden tendrils usually executed in distinctive scarlet, black and gold colors. By the midnineteenth century, the principles of Khokhloma technology had been laid down and the characteristic designs and compositional patterns were established. They followed various principles depending upon the type, size and function of the article to be decorated. The cheapest bowls found in peasant homes bore very simple designs, stenciled and painted with brush strokes. The grass or feathery leaves were used for more sophisticated articles such as gold dishes, kegs and wooden panels.

By 1855, the production was streamlined. For example, one village would make wooden blocks, from which another would turn the bowls or carve the spoons, and a third village painted them. There were over 500 turners' workshops in the Semionov district alone. By 1880 there were twenty thousand artists engaged in spoon production and thirty-five million spoons were painted each year. Khokhloma wooden ware was sold all over Russia and exported abroad to Paris, London, Berlin and Chicago.

Popular though it was, the craft suffered a serious crisis at the turn of the century. This was caused by a rise in the cost of timber and greater competition from factory made tableware, compelling the craftsmen to produce only the cheapest articles. As a result, their skills deteriorated. After the Russian Revolution, the Soviet government showed a deep concern for the future of this folk art, and supported it with grants and raw materials. They regrouped the craftsmen into larger collectives, in spacious well-lit workshops. They also opened the Semionov School of Khokhloma Art, where their "secret" techniques and traditions are still being taught today.

A wonderful book. You will especially enjoy the colorful designs and will be able to date and identify the type of painting on your own Khokhloma pieces, if you own any, by comparing them to the illustrations in this book.

Tasha Paul

Finishing Touches, by Jessica Ridley. Charles Scribner's Sons, Macmillan Publishing Company, 866 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022. 1988. 128pp, all color photographs, \$27.50.

Finishing Touches charts the course which permits the reader to navigate accurately all the steps needed to refinish almost anything with paint, brushes, feathers, gold leaf, and varnishes. Chapter contents include decorative painting, stencils, tortoiseshell, bamboo, marble and stone,

wood-graining, and gilding. The excellent color photographs assist the reader in visualizing the appearance of the final product. The many "before", "during" and "after" series of photographs even include pictures of all the supplies required for an authentically completed piece of furniture. Under these photos are listed the name of each item and the amount to be used. One of the most interesting directions advises how much paint to squeeze out of the tube measured in fractions of an inch. This makes the recipe very easy to follow. Among the items illustrated with respect to refinishing are everything from lamps with moldings, to watering cans, and from chairs with fake bamboo to red tortoiseshell lampshades. The adaptations of these types of decorating are endless and the author examines in detail each method employed. The handy hints which are separately placed in lined boxes at the end of the directions provide an excellent quick reference. The probable pitfalls are dealt with forthrightly as well as the results of any deviation from the preceding directions.

Finishing Touches is among the better books which deal with the above types of decorative painting. There are many others on the market at present. Most homes nowadays contain some sort of home decorated items. Some are very well done. The demand for knowledgeable directions and for ideas on what to do and how to do it has increased dramatically in the past few years as well as the rocks and shoals of inaccurate and inappropriate reproductions. With this book as a guide the craftsperson can safely sail to a professionally satisfying destination.

Margaret Rodgers



NOTICE FROM THE TRUSTEES

SPRING MEETING 1990 Newport Marriott Hotel, Newport, RI April 22-24, 1990

FALL MEETING 1990 Sheraton Stamford Hotel, Stamford, CT September 21-23, 1990

SPRING MEETING 1991 Desmond Americana, Albany, NY April 26-28, 1991

NOTICES

By-Laws Article IV Section 2.

> Additional nominations for the election of Trustees may be made in writing by petition signed by 30 or more members with voting privileges and filed with the Secretary at least 21 days before such Annual Meeting.

Anyone desiring to become a member must write to the Applicant Chairman for the necessary forms.

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 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.)

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.

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.)

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.

MEETINGS:

Taping of HSEAD, Inc. functions is not permitted.

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

NEW POLICY

Applications for membership in HSEAD will be accepted at *any* time. If the applicant wishes to submit articles for judging at the Spring Meeting, the application must be received by January 1. If the applicant wishes to submit articles for judging at the Fall Meeting, the application must be received by July 1. Applicant fees cover the period July 1 to June 30.

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SCHEDULE OF MEMBERSHIP DUES OF THE H.S.E.A.D., INC. Effective July 1, 1990

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SHIRLEY BERMAN, Massapequa Park, NY — Pontypool

JANE BOLSTER, Berwyn, PA — country painting, stencilling, glass painting, and freehand bronze.

MARYJANE CLARK, Norwell, MA — stencilling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, Pontypool, glass painting, Victorian flower painting.

MARGARET COFFIN, Saratoga Springs, NY - country painting.

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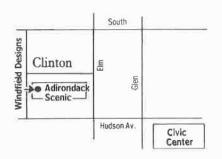
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