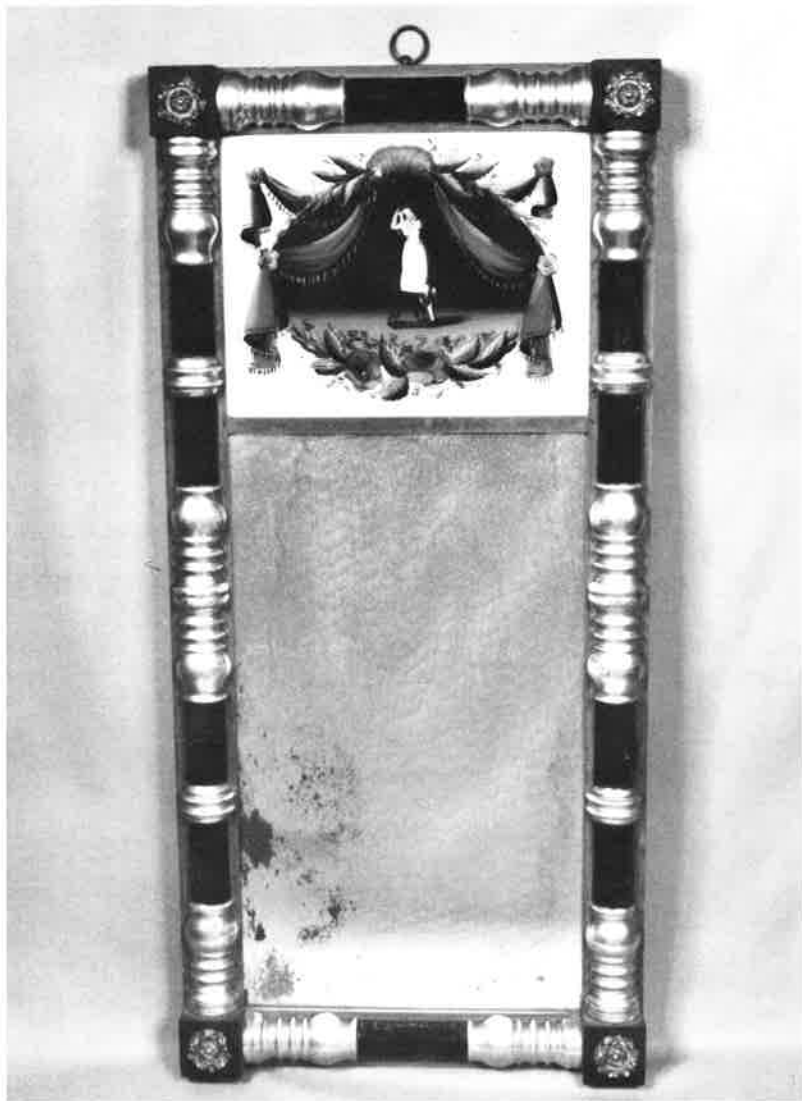


The Decorator

Volume XLIV No. 2

Newport, RI

Spring-Summer 1990



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



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EARLY AMERICAN DECORATION, INC.

*Organized in 1946 in Memory of
Esther Stevens Brazer*

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



**Historical Society of
Early American Decoration, Inc.**

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

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THE DECORATOR

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Empire Looking Glass, c. 1830. Gift of Phyllis Sherman

PRICE PER ISSUE

All Volumes — \$6.00

Send check to Lois Tucker, Elm Street, Box 429, North Berwick, ME 03906

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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

We are privileged to have an article submitted by Margaret Bleeker Blades who is Museum Curator at the Chester County Historical Society in West Chester, Pennsylvania, approximately thirty-five miles west of Philadelphia. Having been associated with this museum over a number of years, it is gratifying to see the remarkable shift in recognizing the need for greater care and expertise in conserving and preserving its collections.

Of special interest to our membership is the portrait by the young Benjamin West. When you consider that this painting was done when West was about fifteen years old, it is impressive to see such early evidence of his talent.

To refresh your memory on Benjamin West, most of his early working years were spent in Pennsylvania. In 1760, with the encouragement of the Reverend William Smith, the first Provost of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), he took passage on a ship sailing to Italy. After three years of study there, he went to England where his paintings were so well received that he decided to remain.

By the time the English Royal Academy was formed in 1768, Benjamin West had achieved a reputation as England's leading historical painter. In 1792 West became president of the Academy.

The inspiration for the name tags at a recent HSEAD convention at King of Prussia was taken from West's painting, WILLIAM PENN'S TREATY WITH THE INDIANS. Two of Benjamin West's paintings, CHRIST REJECTED and DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE, can be seen at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, in Philadelphia.



BEFORE AND AFTER: THE CONSERVATOR'S TOUCH

by Margaret Bleecker Blades, Museum Curator

Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA

An object's appearance before and after conservation treatment often gives the impression that a magical change has happened. In reality, complex scientific processes have taken place. Scientific examination and treatment of objects is an on-going project for the Chester County Historical Society (CCHS) whose charter purpose directs the Society to collect, preserve and interpret historically or aesthetically significant locally-made, used, or owned objects, documents, photographs, and records. A current exhibit at CCHS, *Before and After: The Conservator's Touch* highlights a selection of items in the collections which have benefitted from professional conservation treatment. This exhibition, open to the public through November 10, 1990, presents a rare opportunity to get an insider's view of museum conservation.

Conservation is the science of repairing and caring for objects. Preventive conservation includes proper storage, handling and exhibition. Conservation treatment includes numerous steps of examination, scientific processes, and documentation of the procedures used. Looking at an object after treatment, the conservator's work is quite often undetectable to the eye. Central principles of conservation science dictate that all treatments must be reversible, that the materials used must not permanently alter or damage the substance of the item, and that the work of the conservator must not obscure the work of the original craftsman or artist.

Treatment might be limited to cleaning and cosmetic repairs, as in the case of a spice box on frame. A large chip out of one drawer's lower right corner of the bottom right drawer continued into the drawer front. A piece of crotch walnut was selected to match the grain of the wood on the drawer front. The break edge was slightly smoothed, the patch was glued on, and the finish was blended to conceal the repair line. The repair did not affect the structure of the spice box, but did improve its appearance. Fig. 1.

Samplers, re-framed before CCHS' 1984 exhibit of this important needlework collection, were matted using all acid-free materials in order to minimize damage to the objects from the materials used in their framing. The painstaking procedure involves construction of a rigid, acid-free backing, covered with washed unbleached muslin. The sampler is then lightly placed on this muslin with the threads of the sampler fabric lined up parallel to the threads of the muslin. The sampler is then carefully stitched to the muslin. Five representatives from the CCHS' collection of approximately 250 samplers are included in this exhibition.



*Fig. 1 – Before Treatment: Spice Box on Frame, Delaware Valley 1740-1760. Note damage to lower right corner of lower drawer. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.
Photo – George J. Fistrovich*



Fig. 2 - After Treatment: "Birth Certificate or Taufschein of Magdalena Whistler." Attributed to Soly Deo Gloria, Artist, Charlestown, Chester County, ca. 1790. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo - George J. Fistrovich.

Often, though, more sophisticated scientific analysis of an object's composition is necessary before even a basic repair may begin. A fraktur, the birth certificate for Magdalena Whistler, was one such case. Testing revealed that paints of the red flowers and the green vines were not stable; the pigment was becoming powdery and was flaking. Chemical solvents strengthened these colored areas before the remaining surface was cleaned by hand with a vinyl eraser. Repairs included the addition of new paper, colored with watercolor and pastel to blend with the original, to fill areas where the original was missing. Fig. 2.

Another nineteenth century fraktur had an extremely fragile paper support which was buckled and creased. Through time, the paper was becoming more brittle and had several tears; small amounts of original material had flaked away, in several areas on the bottom and along the right side. Fig. 3. This fraktur was smoothed and flattened, and the pigments chemically stabilized before cleaning of the surface began. Additional treatment called for removal of surface dirt, reinforcement of the support, and filling in and toning with watercolor and pastels all of the chipped edges Fig. 4.

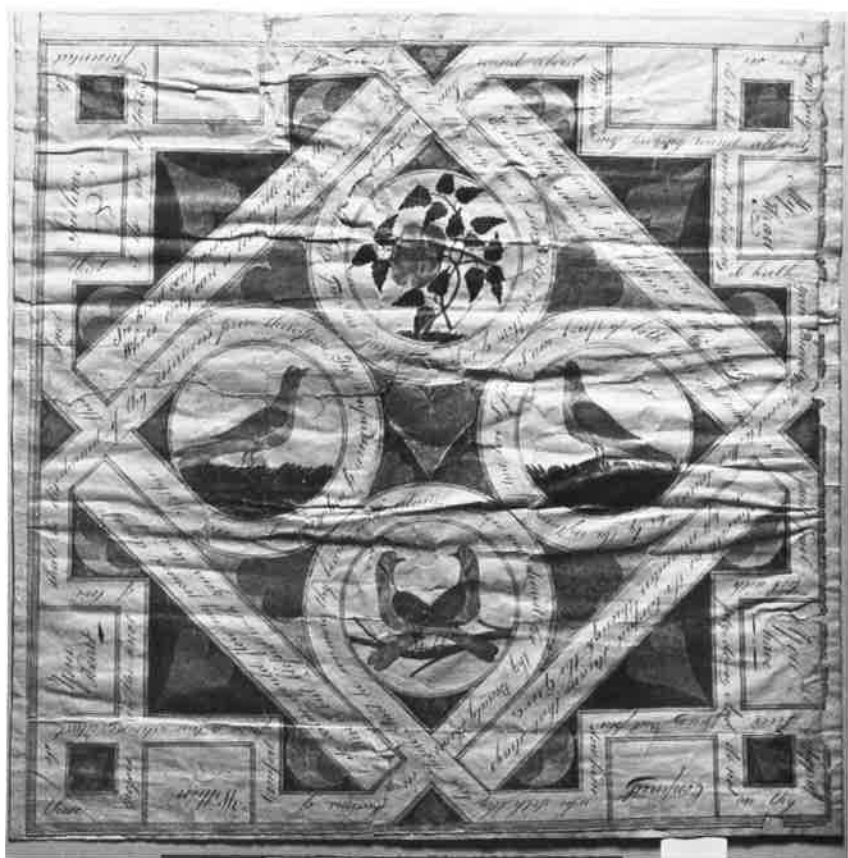


Fig. 3 – Before Treatment: Fraktur, “True Love’s Knot with Birds,” Chester County, Pennsylvania, ca, 1820-1830. This photo shows the creasing and buckling of the paper support. Several years are visible at the bottom and along the right side. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo – George J. Fistrovich.

Oil on canvas paintings are also represented in the exhibition. Internationally famous artist Benjamin West (1738-1820) spent his early years in Marple, Pennsylvania, then part of Chester County. West’s father, John, kept a tavern. John Morris, a comfortably established farmer and weaver, was among their neighbors. The two canvases thought to be West’s earliest surviving paintings are portraits of two children of John and Elizabeth (Taylor) Morris; Robert Morris, aged three, holding a dead rabbit; and Jane Morris, age five, holding a small bowl of flowers. While Robert was in reasonably sound condition, Jane was not. A ca. 1930 restoration was removed to reveal what remained of West’s original work.

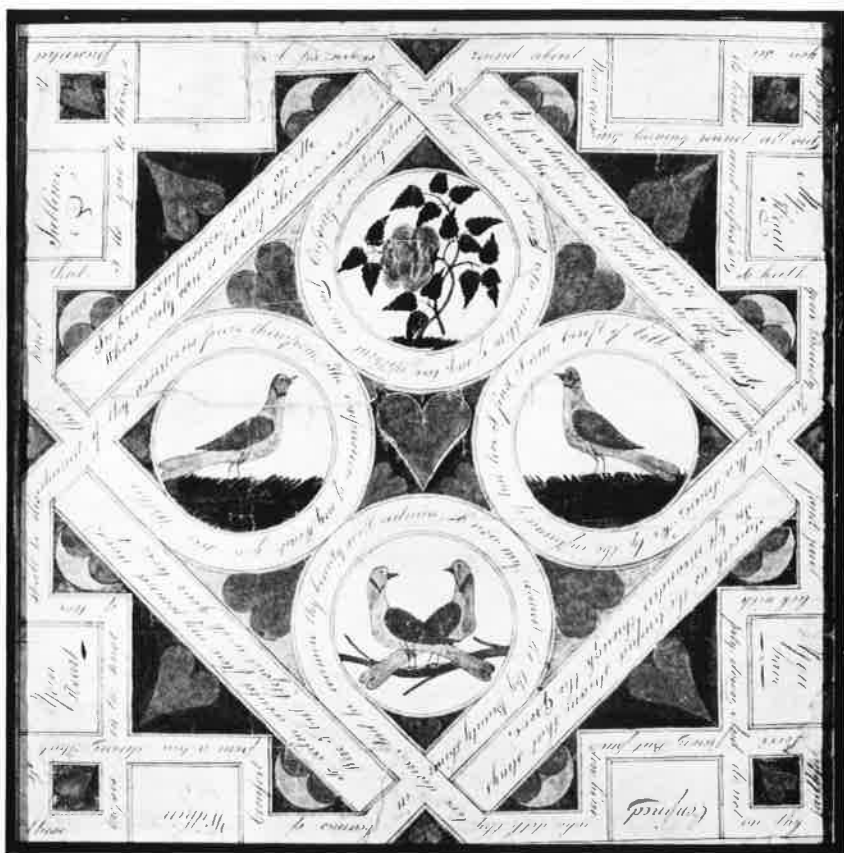


Fig. 4 - After Treatment: "True Love's Knot with Birds," Chester County, Pennsylvania, ca. 1820-1830. The fraktur was smoothed and flattened, pigments were stabilized, surface dirt was removed, the reverse was reinforced, and areas where the paper backing was missing were filled in and colored with watercolor and pastels. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo - George J. Fistrovich.

Fig. 5. After a careful cleaning, application of a new wax lining, and careful in-painting (application of new paint only in the areas where original paint is missing), Jane Morris reclaimed her clear, fresh appearance. Fig. 6.

Two silk signal flags of the First Pennsylvania Cavalry also presented challenges. The two guidons, or signal flags, from the First Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteers were attached to boards each measuring 25 x 31 inches when acquired by CCHS. A conservator analyzed the glue and



*Fig. 5 - Portrait of Jane Morris, age five, by Benjamin West, ca. 1753, before conservation.
Oil on canvas. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA.
Photo - Joseph Amarotico*

determined what could be used to soften the adhesive without damaging the silk flag. Time-consuming, meticulous procedures were used to remove the flags from their damaging mounts, secure the painted surfaces, flatten the flags, identify the original dimensions of the flag, and to provide a safe background, all of which will lessen the risk of further damage. Fig. 7. This new backing, of colored silk crepline, is cut to the flag's full dimensions of 27 x 40 inches and visually fills in areas where original fabric was lost. Fig. 8.



Fig. 6 – Portrait of Jane Morris, by Benjamin West, after conservation. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo – George J. Fistrovich

Objects in the collection are identified for conservation by one of several processes. During the research and design of an exhibition, an object might be chosen for display, but be in need of either cosmetic repairs or of stabilization to make it exhibitable. CCHS has received several generous grants from state and federal agencies for cataloguing of collections. Written into these grants is funding for consulting conservators who specialize in examination and/or treatment of the objects on which the grant project focuses. Members and friends of the Society have also been generous in their support of conservation activities at CCHS. During the past five years, CCHS has secured both public and



Fig. 7 – Before Treatment: Signal Flag, 1861. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo - Textile Preservation Associates.

private funding to do in-depth research and conservation work on seating furniture, silver, ceramics, dolls, pewter, case furniture, works of art on paper, quilts, coverlets, samplers, agricultural tools and equipment, clothing, and paintings. Numerous exhibitions have evolved from this research, and collections objects have undergone professional conservation treatment for each exhibition.

All material objects decay in time. This exhibition offers a “behind the scenes” glimpse at CCHS’ conservation activities and efforts to preserve its collections for the future. The Chester County Historical Society is located at 225 North High Street, West Chester, PA. It is open to the public on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 10am to 4pm; Wednesday from 1pm to 8 pm; Saturday from 10am to 4pm; and Sunday from 12 noon to 4pm. Please call 215/692-4800 for additional information.

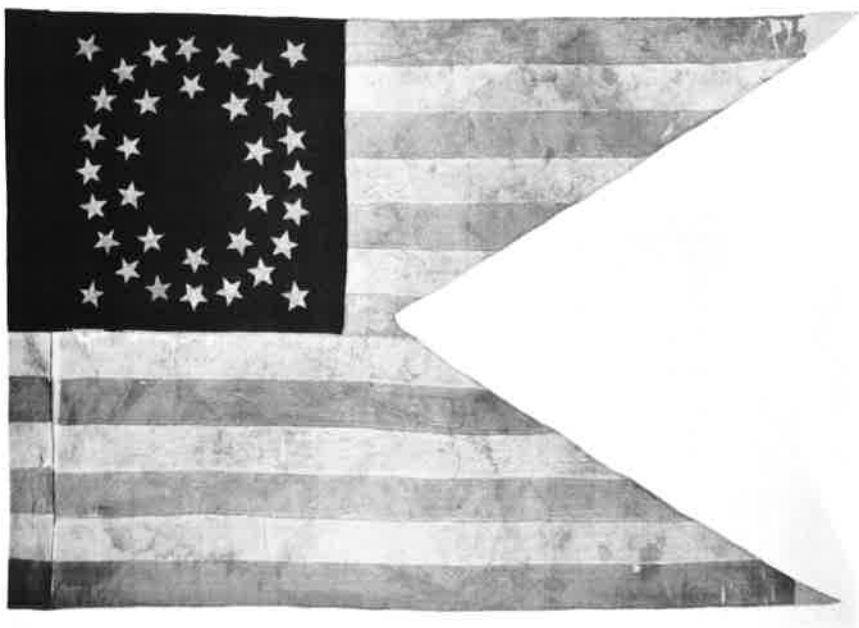
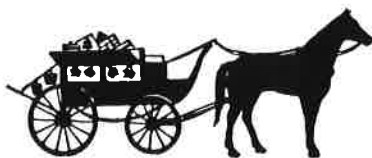


Fig. 8 – After Treatment: Signal Flag, 1861. A backing of crepeline fabric in the outline of the original shape of the flag gives it the appearance of its full size. Chester County Historical Society, West Chester, PA. Photo – George J. Fistrovich.



BOSTON'S CUSTOM HOUSE TOWER CLOCK, A LANDMARK RESTORED

by Astrid C. Donnellan

It was indeed an honor to be asked to join other dedicated historians in the restoration of the U.S. Custom House Tower Clock on Boston's waterfront. As acquaintances were made with these historians and tower clock restorers, the illustrious history of the building and its tower emerged.

Boston Edison Co. donated the cost of the restoration project to the people of Boston. The original building was built in 1847 at 2 India Street. The tower clock, manufactured by the Howard Clock Co. of Boston, was installed when the tower was added to the original building in 1915. The tower stands 29 stories, made of granite and was Boston's first skyscraper. The clock had not been in operation for ten years.

The Custom House played an important role in government finances during the early history of the country. Customs duties collected on goods entering the country were a major source of revenue for the federal government and the port of Boston accounted for one-fifth of the money collected. It served as the port of Boston's thriving maritime activities during the latter half of the nineteenth century. India Wharf, headquarters for the rich China Trade was nearby. The Custom House once housed employees of the Coast Guard and Federal Communications Commission as well as custom officials. During the original construction of the building several tunnels were built underground; and these were said to have been a means of escape for custom agents. At one time, workmen uncovered mysterious documents concealed behind a wall of a sealed-off tunnel. The documents were quickly whisked away by government officials and their contents never revealed.

The tower dominated the city skyline for much of the twentieth century. Although newer buildings have dwarfed the tower in stature, its prestige has continued as a city landmark. With the lighting of the tower, it once again has taken its place as an outstanding piece of architecture.

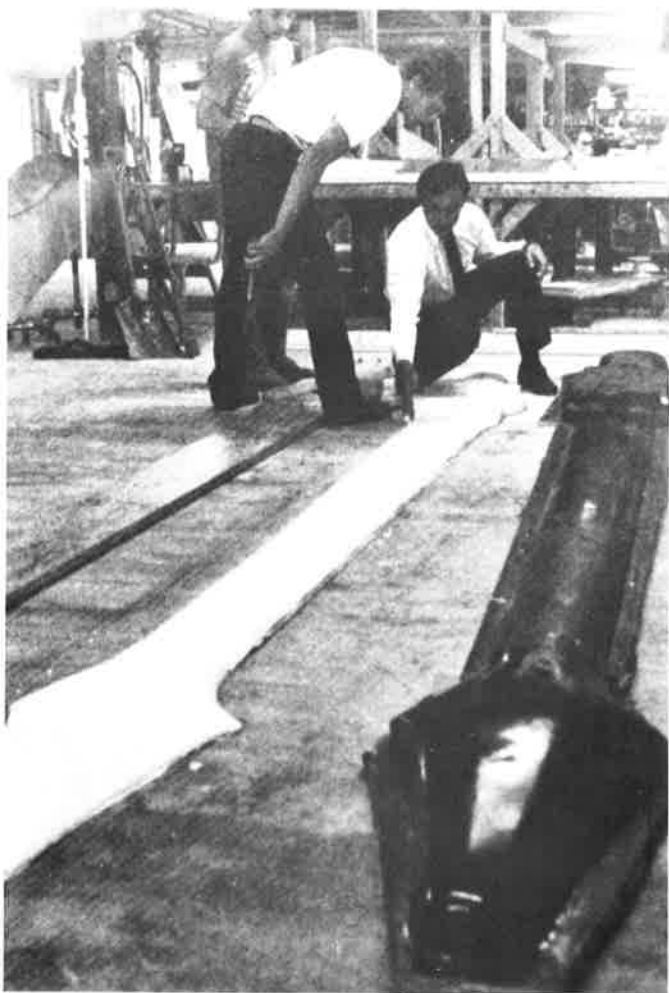
The restoration began when the city of Boston purchased the building for \$11 million from the General Services Administration which had declared the Custom House surplus government property, and the U. S. Customs Service was relocated elsewhere in the city. One of the biggest challenges in the restoration project was to remove and lower the 14 foot and 11 foot hands of the clock from their perch 25 stories above the ground. Two workers from the Boston Chimney and Tower Co. hung from rope chairs outside the building and attached ropes to the hands so they could be lowered.



David Hochstrasser (left) and his brother, Ross, assemble the repaired works of the clock.

Ross and David Hochstrasser of the Scituate Tower Clock Co. disassembled, cleaned and repaired the clock's weight-driven mechanism. The main gear which drives the 9 foot pendulum was recast in bronze. The clock faces, all four of them, are 22 feet in diameter. They contain 3 foot gold colored glass Arabic numbers and sixty circular glass minute-markers. The hands are made of birch. The minute hands, 14 feet long, had to be replaced because of the effects of wind and vibration. Arcor, Inc., of Rockland, Massachusetts used a minute hand in the best condition to make a mold for the new hands. Into this mold was poured a new advanced plastic amalgam similar to that used in advanced defense hardware. The new hands will be lighter and more aerodynamic in design and will cut ten pounds from the weight of each hand.

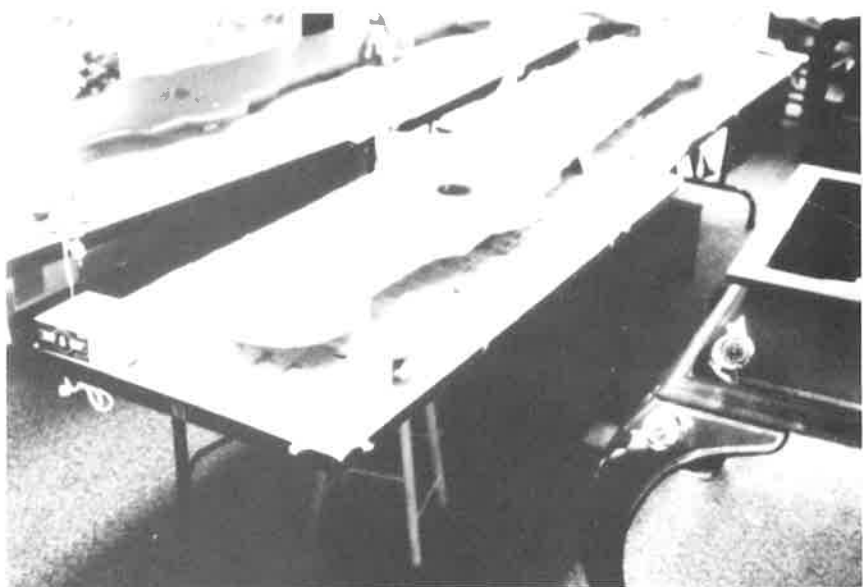
My role in the restoration was to prepare a sealed surface ready for gold leafing of the hands. The hands were delivered to me four hands at a time. Exterior oil base primer was applied to both sides of each hand. A slow oil size was used as the gold leaf medium. The entire project took 60 books of gold leaf or 1500 sheets.



A 14 foot minute hand is removed from its mold.

Also involved as part of the restoration was the preparation of the iron base used to house the gears, pendulum and the seventy pound weight. The base was sandblasted, primed and painted the typical green color and the design in gold leaf was taken from the old Howard Co. catalog.

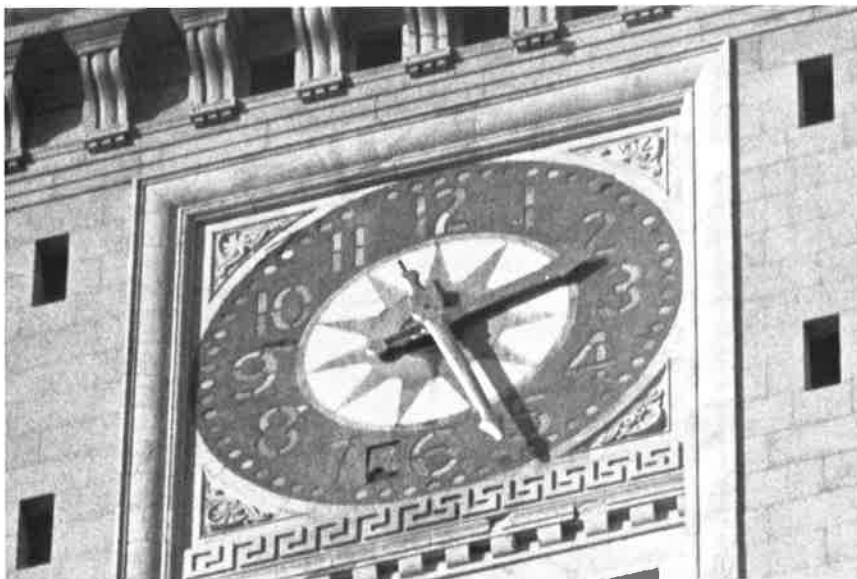
To culminate this historic and memorable milestone, the Boston Edison Co., along with Mayor Raymond Flynn and dignitaries from the Boston Landmarks Commission held a tower lighting ceremony complete with laser light show on October 30, 1987.



Gold leaf work in progress. Photo shows the hour hands, one in primer, the other with gold size and partial gilding.



Applying 23K gold leaf to the iron base which supports the clock movements.



*One of the four clockfaces with its newly gold-leaved hands installed.
Each face is 22 feet in diameter.*



Boston's Custom House Tower with the refurbished hands installed.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN*

Deborah Lambeth, Curator

This is a wonderful new exhibit at the HSEAD Museum, showing antique decorated pieces with members' reproductions along side the originals.

The main exhibit is displayed against vivid gray wainscoting and peach walls. Visitors frequently enthuse about the colors used in display areas. Every area of our work is shown in the exhibit plus an example and reproduction of a Theorem, (two cats in sepia tones), and a clock dial reproduced on a box demonstrating the arch on the top of the box and the spandrels along the sides of the box. There are several Pontypool pieces, including a verriere, a breadbasket and some trays. These originals are owned by HSEAD.

One of our recent acquisitions, a stenciled box, (see THE DECORATOR Fall-Winter 1988-1989, page 3), and replica are also displayed. Victorian painted boxes, face screens, pen trays, and Gothic trays are included in a great variety of shapes.

Thanks to the generosity of the membership there was an overflow, and selected pieces have been displayed in the cases next to the stairs. Fragile glass examples are housed in these cases also.

The local PBS station, WMHT, visited the Museum and interviewed and filmed Margaret Coffin, our Director, with respect to the new exhibit. Also included in the program was coverage of a wall painting class in action. The film was broadcast Thanksgiving night.

Visitors from at least thirteen states outside of New York and from Denmark, Finland, France, England, West Germany and Spain have studied this exhibit and raved about it: "incredible", "beautifully displayed", "unique", "absolutely gorgeous". The legend which explains the exhibit "Today's popularity of 'country' decorative arts" demonstrates the truth of this exhibit's title. Our Society's goals include promoting "preservation, documentation, exhibition and interpretation" of the Society's artifacts and other materials which "illuminates the history of early American decoration." Our members' careful replication of early painting exhibited here reflects these goals "Everything Old is New Again" and the artistry of the past is preserved.

From song, Alice's Restaurant, by Arlo Guthrie



ART MATERIALS CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

by Tasha Paul

Art materials can expose those who use them to fumes, dusts, sprays and chemicals that can cause severe lung, kidney, liver, nerve or brain damage, cancer or blood disorders. The toxins can enter the body through the skin, respiratory tract or mouth. Small doses can accumulate through repeated exposure until health is obviously and perhaps irrevocably impaired. Even after severe symptoms develop, patients may go from doctor to doctor for years before their condition is properly diagnosed and its true cause revealed.

Most of these dangers can be controlled, by knowing the materials you are working with and taking precautions. Always read the labels and warnings on the products that you use.

PIGMENTS

Pigments are contained in oil paints, acrylics, alkyds, pastels, chalks, watercolors and more. The hazards of pigments have been well established because they are made up of metals such as lead, cadmium chromium etc. or are synthesized from organic chemicals which are also toxic. Pigments are most hazardous in their raw, powdered state since they can be inhaled as a dust or can contact the skin in this concentrated form. Every effort should be made to avoid techniques which use powdered pigments.

Hazards of some common pigments:

Lead pigments - Do not use

Chrome green

Naples yellow

Chrome yellow

Gesso (lead white)

Flake white (white lead)

Litharge (pure lead oxide)

Pigments associated with cancer - Replace or use with caution

Cadmium red

Cadmium yellow

Chrome yellow

Phthalo blue

Pigments with moderate hazards - Use with caution

Burnt umber

Raw umber

Paints are pigments mixed with a vehicle or base. Gesso is a white pigment such as lead white mixed with a vehicle. Vehicles are designed to hold the pigments in the paint while you use them and to bind the pigments to tin, wood, paper or other surfaces. Therefore, once pigments are in a liquid mixture they are not free to be inhaled by the artist. Pigments will not evaporate into the air. Pigments in paints and gesso are not hazardous to the artist if paints and gesso are not made airborne by spraying, sanding or heating, and if they are kept off the skin and out of the mouth.

VEHICLE HAZARDS

Common vehicles include oils, wax, water, casein, egg yolk, acrylic (water based and solvent based) and alkyd. Vehicle ingredients can be divided into volatile (will evaporate) and non-volatile components. Ingredients which are non-volatile cannot be inhaled and present no significant hazard to artists. Volatile vehicles on the other hand can be inhaled by artists while they work or while paints are drying. For example, acrylic paints usually contain stabilizers which release ammonia and a formaldehyde preservative.

Solvents containing paints, varnishes, paint strippers, mediums, and shellac, and solvents such as turpentine, paint thinner, mineral spirits and alcohols are probably the most hazardous materials painters use. All the solvents in these products are fire hazards and very toxic when inhaled or ingested. Skin contact with solvents, such as cleaning paint-smear hands with turpentine can cause skin damage and dermatitis (cracked skin and open sores that won't heal). Exposure to paint stripper containing methylene chloride which forms poisonous carbon monoxide in the body can be deadly. Breathing fumes from turpentine and other such vapors may be responsible for chronic cough, stuffy and runny noses, swollen lips and eyes, shortness of breath, tiredness and many other serious conditions.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

1. Use water-based products whenever possible.
2. The work area must be well ventilated – experts say “a fan vented to the outside is a must.”
3. Avoid dusty procedures – when sanding wear a dust mask and gloves to prevent “paint dust” absorption through nose and skin. Wet mop floors and surfaces. Do not sweep dust. Sanding is best done outdoors.
4. If a paint stripper is used – wear a paint respirator and proper gloves – work outdoors.
5. Choose brushing and dipping techniques over spraying paints, varnishes and sealers. If you must spray, wear a paint respirator and work outdoors.
6. Avoid skin contact with paints and pigments by using barrier creams or wearing proper gloves. (Especially when wiping off antiquing glaze). Do not finger-blend paints – use a brush, Q-tip or cosmetic sponge applicator. Wash off paint splashes with baby oil followed by soap and water, with non-irritating waterless hand cleaners, or with plain soap and water. NEVER use solvents or bleaches directly on the skin. Never use solvents in the palm of your hand to clean brushes.
7. Wear protective clothing and leave these garments in the studio. Wash them separately from other laundry.

8. Avoid ingestion of materials by eating, drinking and smoking *away* from the studio after you have washed your hands. Never point brushes with lips or hold brush handles in your teeth.
9. Keep containers of paint, powdered pigments, solvents, etc. closed except when you are using them. Odorless solvents are *not* safer. They compound the danger by eliminating the “odor warning.” Do not soak brushes in open containers of solvent.
10. Discard solvent-soiled towels and rags in tightly sealed containers or plastic bags.
11. Dirty solvents (turpentine, mineral spirits, etc.) can be poured into a large pan containing kitty litter and allowed to evaporate outdoors. Once the solvent has evaporated, the residue can be put in the trash.
12. If you wear soft contact lenses and are working around solvents (formaldehyde especially), wear safety goggles or glasses. The soft lenses absorb the vapors which etch the plastic so that they wet unevenly and become cloudy.
13. Pregnant women should not expose themselves to oil paints, varnishes, solvents or strippers because the toxic substances in these materials can cross the placenta and harm the fetus even if the mother is unaffected. The same is true of nursing mothers, who can pass toxins to their babies through breast milk.
14. Bronze powders—This is the “warning label” on rich gold lining: “Contains finely divided copper or copper alloy. Avoid inhalation. Use only with adequate ventilation. Avoid contact with eyes and prolonged or repeated contact with skin. Wash hands thoroughly after use.”

Despite the passage last year of a federal art hazards labeling act, as yet few product labels contain a full list of toxic ingredients and adequate warnings about their dangers. The law takes effect in November 1990, but practically speaking it takes years to develop safety criteria and get it onto labels. So the label may still say “Use only in a well ventilated area,” “Keep out of reach of small children,” “Avoid contact with skin,” “Fatal if swallowed” or “Flammable—keep away from heat.”

Hopefully soon the spray adhesive warning will say “Contains n-hexane, a volatile toxin that can cause permanent nerve damage if frequently inhaled”. That solvent container will warn “Contains methyl alcohol, which can cause blindness if not used with adequate ventilation”, and another product will read “Contains cadmium, which can cause severe breathing difficulties.”

Not only do you need to know your product, you need to know yourself. You should be in tune with subtle changes in your body. No one knows you as well as you know yourself. Listen to your body. Be aware that different chemicals affect people differently. Your friend may be able

to use turpentine constantly while you develop headaches anytime you are near an open bottle. You may use a petroleum distillate with no problems at all while someone else may experience numbness in their arms after extended use of it.

Be a label-reader. Ignorance, not knowledge, is dangerous and being health-conscious does not mean you have to give up your art.

References

HEALTH HAZARDS MANUAL FOR ARTISTS, Michael McCann, PhD (New York: Nick Lyons Books, 1985)

Artist Beware, Michael McCann, PhD (New York: Watson Guptill, 1979)

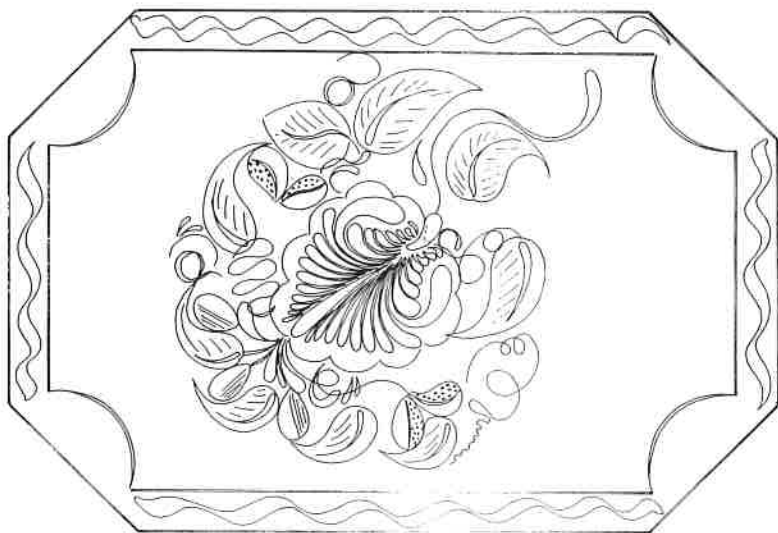
ART HAZARDS NEWS June, July and August issues, 1985 Published by Center for Safety in the Arts, 5 Beekman Street, Suite 1030, New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 227-6220.

The Artist Foundation, 8 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116 has a list of physicians in Massachusetts that are trained in occupational health. Will also supply brochures on painting hazards upon request.

FROM THE JUDGING AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

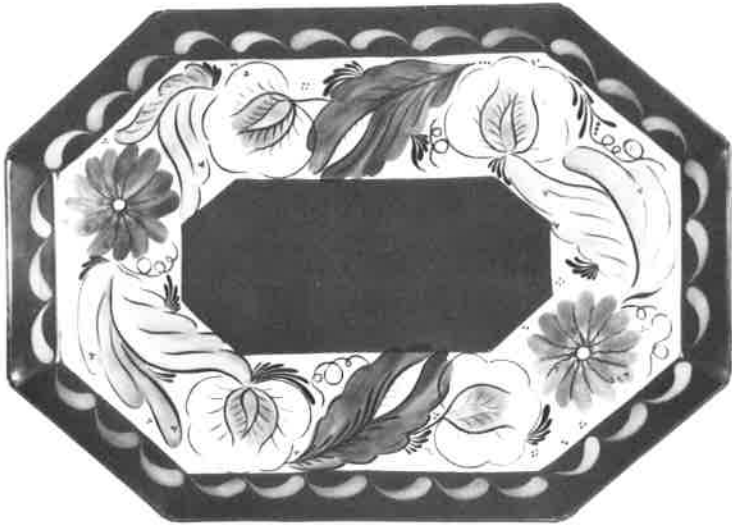
Carolyn Hedge, Chairman

This design is no longer acceptable for a Member's Award. Although it has many overtones, it has no clusters of brush strokes.



MEMBERS "A" AWARDS
Newport, RI - Spring 1990

Country Painting



Kathy Hutcheson



Ann Baker

Country Painting



Carol Heinz



Lois Tucker

Country Painting



Lois Tucker



Gene Gardner

Stencilling on Wood



Mae Fisher



Dorcas Layport

Stencilling on Wood



Joyce Holzer

Stencilling on Tin



Gene Gardner

Metal Leaf



Arminda Tavares

Freehand Bronze



Patricia Smith

Freehand Bronze



Roberta Edrington

Glass Gold Leaf Panel



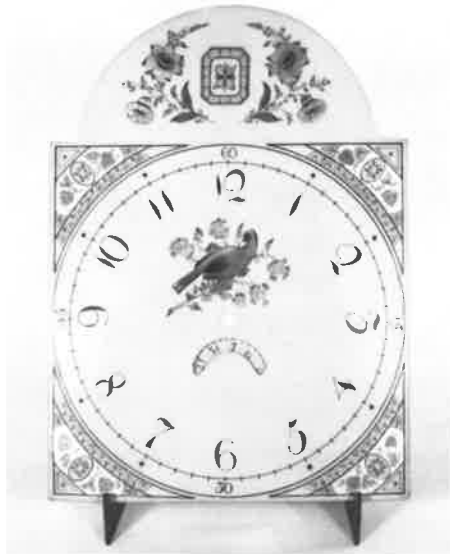
Elaine Dalzell

Glass - Gold Leaf Panel

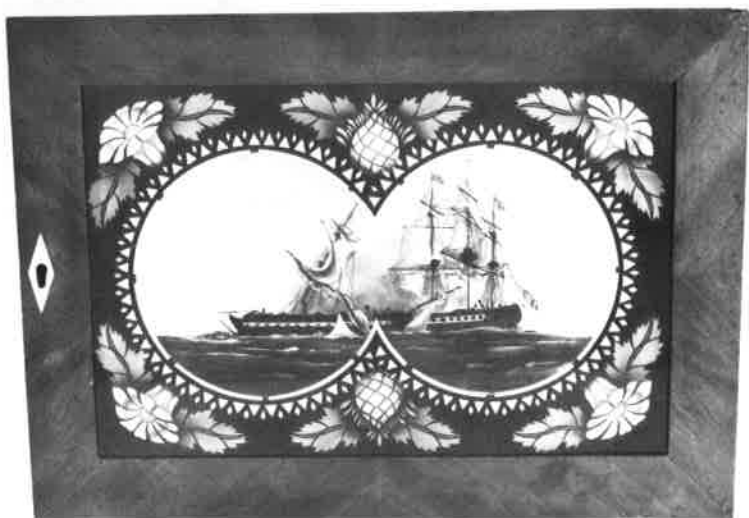


Dorothy Hallett

Special Class



Margaret Watts



Margaret Watts

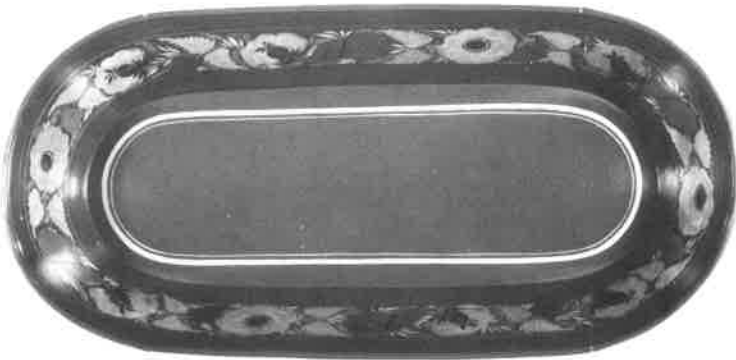


Roberta Edrington

Special Class



Astrid Donnellan



Deborah Lambeth

Country Painting A Award to Sandra Strong and Special Class Award to Astrid Donnellan will appear in the Fall Issue.

REPRODUCTION AWARD



Robert Ruess – Original Courtesy of Molly Porter



Robert Ruess – Original Courtesy of Molly Porter



L. Steven Porter – Original courtesy of Molly Porter

MEMBERS “B” AWARDS

Newport, RI – Spring 1990

Country Painting

Dorothy Fillmore

Virginia O'Brien

Ann Baker

Stencilling on Tin

Elaine Dalzell

Stencilling on Wood

Mae Fisher

Dolores Samsell

Janet Sickel

Trudy Valentine

Metal Leaf Painting

Janet Watkins

Pontypool

Arminda Tavares

Trudy Valentine

Glass Gold Leaf Panel

Dorothy Hallett

Glass Stencilled Border

Ruth Flowers

Sharon Krauss

CAREER AWARD 1990

Theresa Cory

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Nina Fletcher Little

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H.S.E.A.D. Acquisition



1989 Acquisition. One of a pair of chairs attributed to Ranson Cook, Saratoga Springs.

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS MEMBERS

Newport, R.I. – Spring 1990

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THE BOOKSHELF

Penwork: The Triumph of Line. Catalog of an exhibition on behalf of the Historic House Trust of New York City. October 12-November 10, 1989. Hyde Park Antiques, Ltd. 836 Broadway (at 13th Street), New York, NY 10003-4899. Tel. 212-477-0033. Fax 212-477-1781. 40 pp. Color and black and white photos. \$10.00 pp.

Penwork will be a familiar form of decoration for all of the members of the Society who were able to attend the McLean meeting in October 1989. Thanks in great part to the superb lecture and demonstration by Martha Wilbur, illuminating the mysteries of how, when, and where, this fascinating and strikingly beautiful form of decoration has been essayed by many of us for the first time. The table decorations and some of the raffle prizes provided all present with an "hands on" example of modern penwork and perhaps inspired some to go home and try adding penwork to our oeuvre.

As noted in the lead-in, *Penwork: The Triumph of Line* is the catalog from an exhibition held for the Historic House Trust of New York City in that city during the fall of 1989. It can be obtained in a matter of days from Hyde Park Antiques. The many photos illustrating the items on display are detailed, true, and vivid. The selection of photos provides the reader with a broad variety of examples of the craft. Each item, pictured or not, is completely described in the concise text which is keyed to the photographs where appropriate. Several of the items pictured amazed me. I couldn't understand how an artist could decorate a large piece of furniture such as the two part cabinet displayed on the front cover. It is truly magnificent (a phrase by no means overworked in this instance), and entirely covered with penwork employing classical themes. Most of the items are small such as boxes and face screens, but there are several elaborate tables featured as well.

The text contains all manner of useful and educational information dedicated to the history of penwork. The influences of the times and commercial trade with exotic lands such as India and China are clearly described. Some of the geographic areas which became well known for

this form of decoration include Scotland, England, France, and Italy. Penwork has been discovered on furniture from ancient Egypt and again found in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The craft was practiced by many artisans but reached its high-point in popularity in Britain during the 1820's. Well bred young ladies of the upper classes were often competent in executing some of the designs when not taking tea with the likes of Jane Austen in Bath.

All who read this booklet will enjoy this work and come away with a much better appreciation of the art of Penwork. I have attempted to duplicate some of the simpler pieces and I can assure you that it is an excellent way to spend a few days working on something that will be admired and appreciated. The skills learned will translate into improved technique in all areas of endeavor. This excellent catalog will open new doors for those of the membership who would like to dip their pens into a slightly different and beautiful expression of their craft.

Margaret Rodgers

Victorian Patterns and Designs in Full Color. All 100 Plates from "The Practical Decorator and Ornamentist", by George Ashdown Audsley and Maurice Ashdown Audsley. Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1988. 100pp. Color plates. \$12.95.

Racinet's Historic Ornament in Full Color. All 100 Plates from L'Ornement Polychrome; Series I, by August Racinet. Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd St., Mineola, N.Y. 11501. \$12.95. 100pp. All color plates.

We owe Dover Publications a great debt of gratitude. Once again they have reissued some classic works of the past which would no longer be available to us if it were not for their persistence and perspicacity. Two such reproductions reviewed below.

Victorian Patterns and Designs in Full Color contains a chromolithographic collection which was first published in 1892 by Blackie and Son, Ltd., Glasgow. These finely designed patterns are all in full color and were originally used as flat ornamented designs for the interiors of houses. These are all very usable patterns as they encompass Greek, Neo-Greek, Free Renaissance, Medieval, Gothic, Oriental Japanese, as well as conventional styles. This soft cover edition would be of great help to the modeler, the plasterer, the stone carver and the wood carver, the inlayer, the cabinetmaker, the potter, the engraver, the lithographer and to every other workman who is concerned in any way with ornamental design. Surely we can profitably add Early American Decorators to that long list.

Albert Charles August Racinet (1825-1893) wrote *Historic Ornament* in ten installments between the years 1869 and 1873. The second edition was published in 1875 which suggests that in those days there was a great demand for these designs. Such interest carries over today among the members of our Society. The book contains a wide selection of designs. Motifs from borders, tiles, carved wood panels, busts, inlay, hardware and plasterwork are included. If that is not enough for you there are also coffered units, diaper patterns, borders, rosettes, corner units, floral geometric units as well as both Victorian and Greek key. Artists, illustrators, graphic designers, as well as craftspeople, will find the detailed illustrations very useful. Every plate is clearly labeled with its origin.

These two soft cover books, with their full color plates of various designs, form a natural pair. They should prove useful to many members of our Society who could use just a bit more inspiration in order to design their own patterns on floors, walls, ceilings, and any other area which strikes their fancy.

These publications are the latest in a long series of classics in our genre, resurrected and presented to us at reasonable cost by Dover books. Many thanks to them—we need all the support that we can get!

Margaret Rodgers

English Furniture, Decoration, Woodwork, and Allied Arts, by Thomas Arthur Strange. Studio Editions, Best Seller Publications Limited, Princess House, 50 Eastcastle St., London W1N7AP. 1986. 368pp, Black and White drawings, \$45.00.

English Furniture, Decoration, Woodwork, and Allied Arts leads the reader through the 17th, 18th, and into the early 19th century periods of English furniture styles, designers, and architects. This journey is illustrated extensively with many black and white line drawings. The author divides each century into early, middle, and late periods. Sir Christopher Wren appropriately heads the parade, and his designs are featured over several pages including everything from the turnings on table and chair legs to cabinetwork, ceilings, bedhangings, grates, and even candelabra. A listing of all the architects, designers, and authors whose works are illustrated within the book, as well as a synopsis of pieces illustrated, is very helpful for research.

You will find many familiar names in this book. Sheraton, Chippendale, Angelica Kaufman, Robert and James Adam, and Hepplewhite have extensive sections devoted to them. A brief text introduces the reader to the type and style of each designer. Many detailed drawings of everything from tall case clocks to memorial tablets, from ironwork domes in the Chinese manner to vases and pedestals, and from chimney pieces to all types of furniture illustrate his or her work. For the current decorator who desires inspiration from these giants of the past and their tried and true designs, this book is well worth forty-five dollars. For the historians among us the comprehensive collection of intricate line drawings which make each period's distinctive styles come alive, the book is also well worth the rather hefty price.

Margaret Rodgers

Zhostovo Art, by I. Boguslavskaya, B. Grafov, Leningrad 1979. Russian text.

This book is very similar to *Russian Hand-Painted Trays* (reviewed in the Decorator, Spring-Summer 1989). Its 103 color illustrations of antique and contemporary trays are captioned in four languages; English, Russian, French and German. The caption describes the piece, dates it and gives the workshop or artist's name. If you turn to page 138, there is additional detailed documentation for each piece. However, it is written in Russian. It describes the materials employed in decorating the piece, gives its size in centimeters, any identifying marks or stamps found on the back, which museum owns the piece, the inventory number and the donor's name.

For example: Illustration 1 "Oval Tray, mid-19th century, Workshop of E. Belyaev in Zhostovo" On page 138 under number 1; "Oval Tray, mid-19th century, workshop of Egor Belyaev in Zhostovo 1830-1885. Metal, mother of pearl, oils, bronze powders, varnish, 62 x 50 x 2.8, The Government Russian Museum, Leningrad, Inventory No. P-3890 donated by O.G. Gregory from Leningrad."

On pages 142-147 are photos and short biographies of 32 artists involved in tray decorating. Following this section are summaries of the text in English, French and German.

I highly recommend these books from a historic and artistic point of view. To me, they point out the universality of tray painting and its evolution. However, I guarantee that you will enjoy looking at the pictures and copying some of the designs.

Tasha Paul

NOTICE FROM THE TRUSTEES

FALL MEETING 1990

**Sheraton Stamford Hotel and Towers, Stamford, CT
September 21-23, 1990**

SPRING MEETING 1991

**Desmond Americana, Albany, NY
April 26-28, 1991**

FALL MEETING 1991

**Worcester Marriott, Worcester, MA
September 14-16, 1991**

NOTICES

By-Laws - Special Notice

In January 1990 the Board of Trustees revised the current By-Laws to bring them up to today's standards, and had them reviewed by our attorney.

In April 1990 at the Annual Meeting these changes were read to the membership. It was at this meeting that they were approved by the Board of Trustees. These will be made available to the membership as soon as they are printed.

NOMINATIONS PLEASE:

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

Shirley Berman
Dolores Furnari

Dorothy Hamblett
Margaret Wehner

Please send the names of your candidates to the Chairman before the Fall Meeting and sign your name and Membership number.

Nominating Chairman:

Mrs. Elaine Dalzell, 5 Countryside Court, Silver Spring, MD 20904

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To avoid delay in receiving THE DECORATOR and other Society mailings and thus adding to the already heavy mailing costs, please notify the Membership Chairman promptly of any change of address.

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.)

MEETINGS:

Taping of HSEAD, Inc. functions is not permitted.

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

MEMBERSHIP LIST

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

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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HELEN GROSS, Sebring, FL
DOROTHY HUTCHINGS, Tucson, AZ
GINA MARTIN, South Windsor, CT
MARGARET WATTS, Toms River, NJ

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MARGARET WATTS, Toms River, NJ

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

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- JANICE ALDRICH, Keene, NH — country painting, stencilling.
- SHIRLEY BERMAN, Carmel, NY — Pontypool
- JANE BOLSTER, Berwyn, PA — country painting, stencilling, glass painting, and free-hand 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.
- MARGARET EMERY, Averill Park, NY — country painting, glass painting.
- DORIS FRY, Delmar, NY — country painting, stencilling, metal leaf.
- DOLORES FURNARI, Brandon, VT — stencilling, country painting.
- DOROTHY HALLETT, Bourne, MA — country painting.
- MARJORIE HENNESSEY, Albany, NY — country painting.
- BARBARA HOOD, Hammondsport, NY — country painting.
- HARRIETTE HOOLAN, Oyster Bay, NY — country painting, stencilling.
- DOROTHY HUTCHINGS, Tucson, AZ — country painting, stencilling, metal leaf, free-hand bronze, Pontypool, glass painting, Victorian flower painting.
- HELGA JOHNSON, New City, NY — country painting.
- CORNELIA KEEGAN, Hudson, OH — country painting, stencilling, metal leaf, freehand bronze, Pontypool, glass painting.
- ARLENE LENNOX, Marblehead, MA — country painting, stencilling, Pontypool.
- BETH MARTIN, Charlotte, NC — country painting, glass painting.
- LUCINDA PERRIN, Canandaigua, NY — country painting.
- MARION POOR, Augusta, ME — country painting, stencilling.
- CAROLYN REID, Averill Park, NY — country painting.
- MONA ROWELL, Pepperell, MA — stencilling, country painting, Pontypool.
- NORMA STARK, Glens Falls, NY — country painting.
- ARKIE STEELE, Chatham, NJ — country painting.
- HARRIET SYVERSEN, Closter, NJ — stencilling, country painting, Pontypool.
- ASTRID DONNELLAN, Hingham, MA — country painting, stencilling, Pontypool, glass painting.
- SARA TIFFANY, Hilton Head Island, SC — country painting.
- LOIS TUCKER, North Berwick, ME — country painting, stencilling.
- ALICE WALL, Plymouth, MA — country painting, stencilling.
- MARGARET WATTS, Toms River, NJ — stencilling, country painting, metal leaf, free-hand bronze, glass painting, Pontypool, Victorian flower painting.

Retired Certified Teachers who are willing to serve as Consultants:

- ELIZABETH BACH, Glens Falls, NY — country painting, stencilling, freehand bronze.
- HELEN GROSS, Sebring, FL — country painting, stencilling, Pontypool, glass painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, Victorian flower painting.
- GINA MARTIN, Vernon, CT — stencilling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, glass painting, Pontypool, Victorian flower painting.

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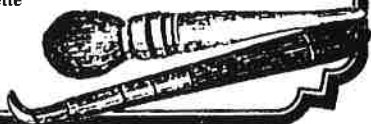
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