The Decorator

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Journal of the
Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.

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EDITORIAL

The fall meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, was another milestone for the Society. After much careful preparation on the part of a small committee, theorems were accepted for judging. (They will continue to be accepted annually, at our fall meetings.) A special committee, chaired by Arlene Lennox, evaluated the pieces submitted, and they made an impressive show!

One of the slide presentations, "Theorems, Old and New," was given by Frances Bernet. For your enjoyment, it is included in this issue. Much of her research took place at Colonial Williamsburg and at Old Sturbridge Village.

Another item of interest is the eagerly awaited book on Theorems written by Linda Lefko and Barbara Knickerbocker. It should be available next spring. So the "Theorem Celebration" continues.

The major article included in this issue is the result of extensive research by Patricia J. Keller. You might recall that she spoke to us on Pennsylvania-German dower chests at our meeting at King of Prussia, 1988. In the October issue of the magazine *"Antiques,"* you will find her article on "Black unicorn chests of Berks County, Pennsylvania." We are privileged to have her treatise here.

Jane Bolster

Oval white cannister, 7" x 4 3/4". Owner: Arlene Lennox.

DECORATIVE GRAINING IN OIL AND DISTEMPER:
Instructions "To The Trade"

The imitation of finished or polished wood grain by the application of layers of paint, color, shading and varnish was, in the 19th century, a branch of "Economical Painting" practiced first by housepainters and later by artisans specializing in the creation of this effect. In *The Cyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature* published in Philadelphia c. 1810–1824, Abraham Rees defined "Economical Painting" as "that application of artificial colours, compounded either with oils, or water, which is employed in preserving or embellishing houses, ships, furniture, etc. The term, economical, applies more immediately to the power which oil and varnishes possess, of preventing the action of the atmosphere upon wood, iron and stucco by interposing an artificial surface; but it is here intended to use the term more generally in allusion to the decorative part." Rees distinguished "Economical Painting" from "The Art of Painting," which he termed, "...the art of imitating the appearances of natural objects by means of artificial colours spread over a surface."[1] Following Rees' early 19th-century definitions, decorative grain-painting can be understood as a branch of economical painting incorporating artistic sensitivities and skills.

Writing in 1971, author Isabel O'Neil noted, "Little has been recorded about the art of painted finishes. Techniques employed by the master were acquired by the novice through long years of apprenticeship...There remain few treatises of the seventeenth century, written to instruct the ladies of that era..."[2] By the beginning of the 19th century the lack of availability of reliable information concerning those arts founded in chemistry, such as painting, gilding, and varnishing prompted The Society at Geneva for the Encouragement of the Arts, Agriculture and Commerce in 1804 to direct the Committee of Chemistry to "take into consideration those arts of which no methodical descriptions had been given by the Academy of Sciences at Paris."[3] In the preface to the publication resulting from this charge, Professor P.F. Tingrey described the limited understanding most artisans then had of the basic properties, principles and theories underlying the trades of painting, gilding and varnishing:

"The processes, however, employed at this period were agreeable to the experience of artists who had been engaged, for the most part, in those simple operations used for painting in distemper. The most intelligent confined themselves to a series of processes for which they were indebted to particular researches, or to communications from amateurs distinguished by their fortune or their knowledge, or which they obtained from venders (sic) of secrets, a kind of people who are very common in professions founded on chemical operations. Each process, therefore, bore evident marks of the ignorance or inexperience of the artist. Hence the differences observed in the colouring, brilliancy, consistence, tenacity or dryness...The operator, too easily satisfied with his first attempts, proceeded no further in the improvement of his art. The secret was more strictly observed, as it seemed to secure a certain resource to the industry and family of the possessor. Hence also that incoherence in the formulae which different works seemed to confirm, and which they extol as the properest for answering the intended purpose. Hence also, that immense collection of obscure recipes, said to be derived from the best sources, which artists of ability soon condemn, because they find them at variance with the true principles of the art...The interest of the practitioner, therefore, raised a barrier which prevented the art from approaching towards theory."[4]

Twenty-three years later, in 1827, Nathaniel Whittock began the preface to his volume, *The Decorative Painters' and Glaziers' Guide Containing the Most Approved Methods of Imitating Oak, Mahogany, Maple, Rose, Cedar, Coral and Every Other Kind of Fancy Wood...*, by describing the difficulties still confronting artisans in "the trade" when attempting to obtain reliable information concerning these branches of the arts. Whittock noted:

"So great is the supply of information at the present period, that it is usual to preface almost every Work on the various branches of art or science, with apologies for publishing another book, when so many on the same subjects have previously issued from the press. This is a task which the Author of this Work is spared, as the greater part of the information contained in the following pages, so far from being common, has been carefully kept even from those who eagerly desire to obtain it...The whole is presented to the Trade with a thorough confidence that it furnishes a useful body of information which has hitherto been a desideratum to the Decorative Painter and Glazer."[5]

Secrecy was still practiced regarding the receipts or recipes employed by decorative painters as late as 1872, when author John W. Masury wrote in *The American Grainers' Hand-Book:*

> "Formerly, the art of graining in oil colors was practiced comparatively by a few, and the knowledge of the pigments and other materials used was a real or pretended secret. The writer has seen a professed grainer involve himself in the utmost secrecy, and work in a mysterious way when simply mixing common brown wax with heater oil and turpentine to make what is called "megilp." These little "tricks of the trade," the quackery of the professors, are much less common now than in younger times. The printing age, and the book-making mania, have brought to light most of those occult compoundings, and placed what was once hidden knowledge within the reach of all."[6]

The decoration of houses, shop fronts, architectural elements, and furnishings grew in popularity during the first quarter of the 19th century in England and the United States. Nathaniel Whittock stated that in 1827, "there are few respectable houses erected, where the talent of the decorative painter is not called into action, in graining doors, shutters, wainscots, etc." Sensing an opportunity for enterprising artisans, Whittock exhorted in 1827 that, "...it would materially benefit every house painter to turn his attention to that branch of his profession called graining; and it is in the power of every one, who knows how to grind colours and handle a brush, to make some progress in the art, even if he does not attain proficiency."[7] Whittock noted that the nature of this work suited it well to the interiors of buildings, and to winter as well as summer employment. "In addition," wrote Whittock, "...furniture painting, which is now only done with cheapness and effect in London or other large towns, could be executed with elegance in every village, and would become a source of profitable and pleasing employment."[8] Whittock pointed to the possibility of expanding the horizons of the craft, citing the "great number of scarce and expensive foreign woods, that from their value cannot be commonly applied to the decoration of homes or made up into furniture, yet remain to be imitated and brought into use by the grainer."[9] Grain-painted decoration grew in popularity during the next several decades, prompting specialization of craft among painters; Masury noted in 1872,

> "Formerly the House Painter was supposed to include among his accomplishments the Art of Graining, as well as Sign painting, Gilding, and all other branches of the trade; but of late years it has become the custom for some to give undivided attention to these several branches for which they individually have, or seem to have, a special facility, taste, or predilection...This custom can obtain, of course, only in the larger places, there not being in small towns and villages sufficient work in any one branch to permit workmen to devote themselves entirely to a special department."[10]

During the 19th century, painters practicing the art of grain-painted decoration provided a growing audience for publications disseminating information on craft techniques and formulae for paints and varnishes. Henry Carey Baird's *The Painter, Gilder and Varnisher's Companion,* published in Philadelphia, was issued in sixteen different editions between c. 1850 and 1871; a chapter devoted to providing "Directions for Graining and Imitating Woods and Marbles" was added prior to the 16th edition, expanding on the previous editions' brief references limited to techniques for imitating two varieties of rosewood using a flat brush "such as you use for graining..."[11] By 1872, Masury wrote of grain-painting's popularity:

> "The disposition for grained work, which at one time declined materially, has of late years revived; and the fashion for this kind of painting is now more prevalent and general than ever before, the difference being simply that certain kinds of woods, as mahogany, rosewood and maple, which were once much desired, have been supplanted by an affection for light and dark oak and black walnut."[12]

The varieties of woods Whittock and Masury note as fashionable for imitation in decorative grain-painting, and the changes in popular taste in this faux finish treatment over the decades included within the 1827–1872 period bracketed by their respective publications, is consistent with changes in popular taste in the selection of actual hardwoods for use in constructing home interiors and furniture.

Painters who wished to achieve mastery of grain-painting technique were encouraged to "travel the long road of patient study, close observation, and practice, practice, practice."[13] To imitate with colors, the veins, grains and figures in a piece of fancy wood, was said to require the same faculties, the same development of perceptive power, and the

same skills and talents, as are required to portray the human face.[14] Workmen were advised to obtain several pieces of each type of wood selected for imitation, and to study these samples as preparation for executing the wood grain in paint. As to the quality of the wood samples selected for study, Masury offered the following:

> "The animal painter would not select from the flock the shabby specimens to show on his canvas. So the imitator of fancy woods should select, for imitation, the best which nature offers; those which are most pleasing to the eye, and most interesting as objects of study and observation. Natural deformities, except as curiosities, are not worth perpetuating."[15]

Workmen were reminded frequently that "In copying the natural wood, it is the *character* of the wood, and not the particular individual lines and spots"[16] which the painter should strive to imitate. Whittock noted, "No written directions could point out every variety of nature; but the workman once...taking care to have several pieces of the wood

Coral Wood

Spanish Mahogany

COURTESY, THE WINTERTHUR LIBRARY: PRINTED BOOK AND PERIODICAL COLLECTION

Illustrations 1, 2, 3, and 4
Whittock included hand-grained examples of the varieties of woods demonstrating the graining procedures detailed in the 1827 text. Executed in color and protected with finish layers, these samples frequently led the artisan step-by-step from ground color through first tint layer and glaze manipulations. Req-

he wishes to imitate before him while he is painting, as a guide, should he find himself at a loss, there is no doubt but a little practice will enable him to imitate (wood grain)...with satisfaction to himself and his employer."[17]

The proliferation of manuals for the trade during the 19th century provided instruction to the painter seeking to expand his repertoire of professional skills to include grain-painting, as well as gilding, varnishing, carriage painting, sign painting, furniture decoration, and preparation of stained glass windows. Some instruction books were obviously targeted to the novice; others clearly assume a basis of knowledge, and appear aimed at the more experienced decorator or painter. The volumes written for the novice painter-decorator provide the most useful information for understanding the methodology and theory underlying the grain-painting of furniture and architectural elements.

"The novice," wrote John Masury in 1872, "must not expect to make even a tolerable imitation of any fancy or common wood by the

Birds-Eye Maple

Mahogany

COURTESY, THE WINTERTHUR LIBRARY: PRINTED BOOK AND PERIODICAL COLLECTION

uisite material and recipes for mixing as well as detailed instructions for creating the desired wood-grain effects could be found in the accompanying chapter. Illustrations taken from Nathaniel Whittock, *The Decorative Painters' and Glaziers' Guide Containing the Most Approved Methods of Imitating Oak, Mahogany, Maple, Rose Cedar, Coral and Every Other Kind of Fancy Wood...* London, 1827.

simple application of graining color to a proper ground."[18] Skillful manipulation of the graining color utilizing specific tools and techniques, as well as successive selected layers of overgraining, mottling, stain, glaze and varnish coats followed the careful preparation of the priming and ground coats on the surfaces intended for decoration.

"The first thing the painter has to attend to in all fancy woods," wrote Whittock in 1827, "is to find out what is the lightest part...The lightest colour will, in all cases of wood, be the ground colour, and, of course, the colour of the last coat of paint laid on in preparing the work for graining..."[19] An 1882 publication lists the kinds of woods "principally imitated by grainers" and includes "...oak, curled maple, walnut, rosewood, and mahogany...and of course," the author continues, "the ground color to be used depends on the kind of wood to be imitated." The wood types and the pigments employed to create them are next listed:

> "for oak, white lead and ochre;
> for curled maple, white lead and a small quantity of ochre;
> for walnut, white lead and umber;
> for rosewood and mahogany, burnt ochre and colcothar (Indian red)..."[20]

This "last coat" was applied after first preparing the wood with a thin, penetrating priming coat and sequential layers of ground color. The color of the priming coat and the succeeding undercoats of paint was thought best selected with regard to the finishing color. Wrote Masury in an 1868 publication,

> "All work should be primed especially with regard to the finishing color...The succeeding coats should be as dark as may be with view to the proper shade of ground-work for the graining. In such case, if (as must happen in the ordinary course of events) the work becomes bruised or "chipped" by an accidental knock from a chair-leg or other article of house furniture—the general appearance of it is little impaired thereby. Quite the contrary, however, is the case if the underneath coats are white. Then, an accident of the kind before mentioned, shows a white spot, which staringly proclaims the work to be a delusion and a sham."[21]

Most authors advised the careful attention to the complete drying of the priming coat and the one or more layers of the ground coat before

the application of graining (or, as it was frequently called, veining) color. Before receiving the graining color, the workman was advised to smooth the topmost surface of the painted article with pumice.[22] The veining was then done, either with oil-paint or water-color; the latter was also known as distemper. Opinions as to whether oil or distemper was the best graining or veining mixture varied depending upon which author was consulted; distemper's water-solubility and resulting ease of correction was valued by some, while others favored the slow-drying and reworkable oil-based *megilp*.

Ease of workmanship was only one factor the painter was advised to consider when selecting the type of vehicle in which to suspend the graining color. Veining in an oil-based medium was encouraged for exterior work, such as shop-fronts and shutters, due to the superior durability and preservation properties of the materials employed. Distemper was suggested for use in the interior of houses, and for customers who were seeking inexpensive decoration for household furniture. Whittock wrote of grain-decorating furniture using a distemper recipe in 1827:

> "The foregoing method is only advisable where the painter has to deal with a customer who ties him down in price. In that case it is only honesty to himself, and not unfair to the employer, to perform the work in the cheapest way; but if a fair price is paid for painting chairs, it is of course better in all respects to paint them in oil; they will look well three times as long as they would if painted in distemper, and may be washed repeatedly without fear of disturbing the colour...Of course, the painter who takes the money for painting chairs, or any thing else, in oil, and executes them in distemper, can have no claim to the character of an honest man or a fair tradesman."[23]

Whittock favored the use of oil color over distemper for the application of graining, believing it much easier to manage by the inexperienced worker. Writing on the application of oil-based graining color to the prepared ground coat, Whittock instructed,

> "The graining colour...is spread very thinly over the whole surface to be grained. This colour is not a fluid, but a compound of various ingredients mixed together, to the consistence of thick treacle; this is called *megilp*. Megilps are prepared in various ways, according to the fancy of the painter..."[24]

Megilp was listed in 1890 in *The Century Dictionary* as variously spelled megilp, macgilp, magilph, magelp, maguilp, meggelup, megilph, megylph, miguilph; the term was defined as "a vehicle made of oil of turpentine and pale drying-oil in equal proportions. These ingredients gelatinize, and when mixed with oil colors give them a certain body and a pulpy transparency. Magilp may be made also of linseed drying-oil and mastic varnish, or of simple linseed-oil and sugar of lead, or of boiled oil, mastic varnish, and a little sugar of lead."[25] Additional spellings for the term are listed in *The Oxford English Dictionary,* published in 1933, including macgellup, majellup, McGilp, meguilp, megylp, macgelp, macgelph, macglyph, macgulp, magulp, and others.[26] Megilp was introduced to the artist's pallette in the 18th century, and was employed extensively during the 19th. Writing concerning megilp's use in the fine arts, author Ralph Mayer notes, "Although it was soon realized by intelligent craftsmen that the use of a mastic and linseed oil mixture was disastrous to the life of paintings, it continued in popularity for years, and the failure of many nineteenth-century pictures can be traced to its use as a painting medium. When mixed with oil colors, megilp imparts a marvelous unctuous, buttery working consistency to them, but the picture, after drying, is extremely liable to exhibit all sorts of erratic defects, such as cracking, blistering, turning brown, etc. An old film which contains megilp is so sensitive and soluble that it can be cleaned with solvents only by the most delicate and expert manipulations."[27] Mayer's comments on the defects found in oil paintings executed with megilp could as well have been describing problems found with some examples of grain-decorated furniture and accessories. Further analytical testing is required to determine whether students of 18th and 19th century grain-painted finishes on furniture will be able to differentiate those done with oil-based megilp media and those executed in distemper.

Whittock's 1827 publication provided its readers with a recipe for a megilp which has been "proved to be an excellent composition, and contains the same ingredients as most others; the only difference being in the quantities of the articles used in forming it."[28] Whittock's recipe:

"To make the megilp—Take eight ounces of sugar of lead and eight

ounces of rotten-stone, grind them together as stiffly as possible in linseed oil; then take sixteen ounces of white wax, and melt it gradually in an earthen pipkin, and when it is fluid pour in eight ounces of spirits of turpentine; mix this well with the wax, and then pour the contents of the pipkin on the grinding stone to get cold. When cold grind the rotten-stone and sugar of lead with the wax and turpentine, and it will form an excellent megilp; which, if kept in a jar with a mouth wide enough to admit a pallet (sic) knife and well secured from dust, will keep almost any length of time, and always be fit for use. When any of the megilp is required, take out a little at a time with the pallet knife, and if it is too stiff soften it with a little boiled oil."[29]

Some authors suggested adding small quantities of soap or whiting to the boiled-oil and turpentine mix to improve the megilp's consistency and "flow," as did the "practical painter" who authored *The Painter's Manual* in 1868.[30]

Painter's manuals of the later 19th century typically included formulae and detailed instructions to guide workers in the mixing and application of graining in both oil-based megilp mediums and in distemper or water-based color. *The Painter's Manual* instructed:

"For Distemper: the grain color is ground in ale, beer, vinegar, or whiskey; the object being to bind the color so it will not rub off. As a general theory, stale ale or beer is best. Whiskey, however, in cold weather, might be preferred, because it does not creep like other fluids; but if the ground work is rubbed over with whiskey it will be sufficient."[31]

Beer or sour beer was recommended frequently as a binder for the pigments, and was said to be "sufficiently glutinous" to serve in this capacity.[32] A mixture of soft water and gum arabic was the medium suggested by an 1874 publication.[33] "The water colors for veining," directed an 1882 manual, "are prepared by mixing—

"for oak, umber
for curled maple, burnt sienna
for walnut, umber
for rosewood, burnt sienna and umber
for mahogany, sienna, with a little red,
"with water, vinegar, or beer, and they are then
laid on according to the rules of the art."[34]

"The rules of the art" were spelled out very clearly by Whittock in his 1827 publication. Whittock wrote:

> "The practitioner will, therefore, bear in mind that in graining in this style (distemper) it is necessary,
>
> *1st* To have the work well cleansed from grease, &c. with soap and water.
>
> *2nd* To have the colours, brushes, wash leather, cloth, straight edge, and every thing else that he requires, all ready before he begins to grain, as the colour he is working with soon dries and will not bear retouching.
>
> *3rd* To have the appearance of the work he intends to do in mind before he commences so that he does not have to divide his thoughts by thinking of what he is going to do, and how he is going to perform it, at the same time; as the nature of the colour he is going to work with will not give time for deliberation, nor if suffered to get dry can it be altered without looking patchy.
>
> *4th* Never to grain too much at one time, as it will get dry and cannot be worked with effect; and here it may be proper to observe, that if the appearance of the work is not what the grainer wishes it to be, it will always be better to wash off the whole of the panel and grain it afresh, rather than try to alter or amend it, as it can seldom be effected even by persons who have had great practice..."[35]

Whittock acknowledged that, "...some grainers feeling the inconvenience of the distemper colour drying so quickly, use a sort of megilp by mixing a little soap, wax and turpentine with the colour ground in beer;" while other grainers brushed soapy lather over the surfaces to be grained in order to slow the drying process and render the graining color workable for a longer time.[36] Although these additions made the distemper graining color more workable, Whittock discouraged them as adulterations, and encouraged workmen to instead master the pure distemper media.

After spreading on the megilp or distemper graining color—called "rubbing in" by grainers,[37] the painter would next manipulate this color layer utilizing a variety of tools and techniques. Whittock noted that "every experienced grainer forms for himself a variety of tools that are useful in his particular style of painting."[38] The painters' manuals describe a broad range of graining tools and offer some discourse on their use. Combs, brushes, sponges, wash leather, goose quills,

sticks, fingers, bristles, putty, chamois, buckskin, and, in the later 19th century, "veining rollers" made of leather or rubber and provided with the pattern or texture of the wood, were each recommended for achieving particular graining patterns and effects.

Combs used for graining as described in the painters' manuals of the 19th century were cut from a variety of materials. Whittock described combs "made thicker than combs for the hair, and not so long in the tooth, as they have to bear a great weight when used with force...Combs of every kind can be procured at the comb-makers in London; but if the painter in the country cannot readily procure them, common large and small tooth combs...will, in the hands of a painter of observation, produce good work; as in most cases it is not the excellence of the tools, but the skill of the hand that wields them, that gives most effect."[39] Whittock was likely describing combs cut from leather, animal horn or tortoise shell, as was customary for hair-combs of the 19th century. Baird in 1869 wrote that, "Gutta percha is the best material for making combs; it is cheap, wears well, is easily cut into any size or form, and makes clean work,"[40] following this pronouncement with instructions for cutting combs from gutta percha sheets. Combs of cork were serviceable for short-term use, but were deemed objectionable for general applications as they soon wore out.[41] Combs irregularly cut or old combs with some of the teeth broken out were favored by Whittock, as he believed these better represented the varieties of thicknesses found in wood grain in its natural state.[42]

Whittock provided detailed instructions for using combs in creating paint-simulated wood grain with megilp:

> "A few minutes after the megilp has been spread over the surface to be grained, take the comb...and holding the handle firmly in one hand and guiding it with the other, draw it over the work, making the grain slant or look wavy..."[43]

Whittock suggested using combs in a series, from more coarsely cut to the most finely cut, varying the pressure applied to the comb while drawing it over the work, and applying a tremulous motion from time to time to vary the grain pattern. Then,

> "Having used the combs, take a piece of wash leather, and doubling it to a point, with a sharp touch take out the light parts...and

if the lines are wanted fine, put the leather on the point of a stick...Dabbing the end of the brush all over the work just combed...will spread and break the lines, and give a just resemblance to nature. Care should be taken not to spread the megilp over more than a yard square at a time, as it dries very fast, and is then unmanageable."[44]

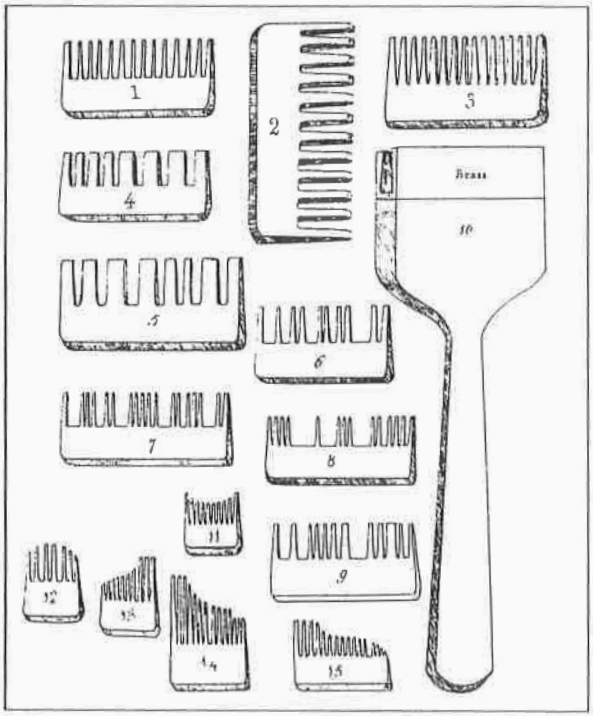

Illustration 5
Plate II, page 23, *The Decorative Painters' and Glaziers' Guide Containing the Most Approved Methods of Imitating Oak, Mahogany, Maple, Rose Cedar, Coral and Every Other Kind of Fancy Wood...* London, 1827. by Nathaniel Whittock.

This plate illustrates varieties of graining combs Whittock recommended as useful for effecting desired wood grain patterns. Whittock captioned Figures 1, 2, and 3 as the basic group of combs generally required for work on a plain surface. Figures 4, 5, and 6 were said to give grain patterns "nearer to nature" due to the irregularity of their form. Figures 7, 8, and 9 illustrate common combs ground down and teeth broken out irregularly, models for painters attempting to custom fashion combs for their work from available materials. Figure 10 illustrates the handle in which the combs were placed for use. Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14 are small combs suited for graining varieties of wood moldings.

Workmen were advised to take special care of their combs after use; Whittock recommended that combs be washed in turpentine and brushed with soap and water before storing, cautioning that once the megilp dried between the teeth of the comb, further cleaning was impossible and the comb was spoiled. He discouraged the practice of storing combs not in use in a cloth rubbed over with soft soap; this practice, he cautioned, may keep the teeth from warping, but the constant moisture will soon render the combs too flexible for use. Whittock recommended preserving clean combs by wrapping them in a piece of wash leather.[45]

Brushes were more frequently suggested for manipulating distemper graining colors than other tools, including combs. Whittock described the process of creating wood grain with distemper:

> "When the work is well cleaned, and in most cases allowed to get dry, take a little of the (pigment), ground in beer, to about the consistence of thick paste, on the palette. When the color is on the palette, it may be thinned to the consistence required by dipping a brush in beer and letting the liquid drop from it on the colour. (Then)...take a large tool [brush] and well filling it with colour, but not too wet, draw it over the panel you intend to grain first not in a straight line, but in a slanting and in some cases a wavy direction, letting the hand press heavily upon the brush so that the hairs may spread, as the tool in this case performs what the comb effects in oil, giving the appearance of various grains according to the handling of the brush. As soon as the colour is by this means spread over the panel, take a large dusting brush, and lightly beat the work with the points of the hairs...against the grain; this must be done very quickly with a light hand, and at the same time using proper judgement to vary the beating...When the panel is all blended together, the colour will have nearly become set, or what the gilders call tachy. At this time take a piece of damp wash leather folded to an edge, and take out the large masses of light...the grain beauty of this work consists of its being done with quickness and spirit."[46]

The Practical Painter and Instructor of 1874 provided directions for "shelling" distemper grain color, suggesting the use of a rose-pink graining color on a white lead ground:

> "Give the work two coats of white lead, and when dry, grain with rose pink ground in sour beer. Grain with a piece of putty; cover the work with rose pink, then roll the putty in your hands, holding one end, move the other up and down, thus forming shells which are

very beautiful; blend very light after making cuts...this is admirably adapted to boxes and other light work when executed with skill."[47]

The same manual offered these instructions for graining in imitation of curly maple:

"Take a piece of buckskin, wet in beer or water, stretch it over a piece of stiff pasteboard; by working it up and down across the work, coarse or fine curls will be produced; blend across the work softly..."[48]

Mahogany lights were to be "taken out" with a piece of sponge, while Whittock suggested creating the "eyes" in birds-eye maple by dabbling the fingers in vandyke brown, then dabbing them on the work.[49]

Following the drying of the graining color, whether oil or water-based, the grainer could use his "pencil" or thin camel's hair brush to put in the dark veins that cross the grain. Application of transparent colored glazes to add depth and tone to the grained work followed. Whittock suggested mixing the glazes of pigment ground in ale, applied with a flat varnish brush. "This distemper color," he wrote, "dries perfectly hard in few minutes after it is laid on..."[50] A manual from the later 19th century advised glazing the work with umber, sienna, crimson or even carmine toned lacquers.[51]

The final step in the graining process was the application of one or more finish coats of varnish. Whittock suggested that "the fine imitations of fancy wood should be varnished with copal dissolved in spirits (spirits of wine), if they are not exposed to the weather, and in oil of turpentine if they are."[52] *The Practical Painter and Instructor* recommended "giv(ing) the work two coats of varnish, the first quite thin, and go over it rapidly; the second coat can be put on very heavy. As a general thing, but two coats of varnish are given, but for furniture, where an extra gloss is required, give three coats."[53] These final finish layers not only aided in saturating the colored layers beneath with light for maximum decorative effect, but also protected the somewhat volatile graining materials from contact with airborne moisture and from abrasion and accretion of dirt and grime.

What did this labor-intensive decorative painting provide the workman as fruits of his wage-earning labors? *The Practical Painter* provided its readers with a scale for charging customers for this branch of service:

"How to Charge for Graining:

Charge according to the following rule, no matter what the number of coats:

For	priming	coat	*(per square yd.)*	12 1/2 cts.
"	second	"	" " "	12 1/2 "
"	third	"	" " "	12 1/2 "
"	graining	"	" " "	12 1/2 "
"	shading or glossing coat	"	" " "	12 1/2 "
"	varnishing	"	" " "	15 "
"	"	"	" " "	15 "

The above are the prices for each separate coat. Graining is usually turned off with two coats of color, then grained, shaded, and varnished, making five coats, which, you see by the above prices, will amount to 65 cents per square yard; but the charge must be made according to the number of coats."[54]

The practice of decorating architectural elements and furniture with paint-simulated wood graining continued through the end of the 19th century and into the early decades of the 20th century. The craft has received renewed attention in the last decade, with a number of recent instruction manuals and proprietary products introduced into the marketplace for amateur use. Professional specialists in the fields of faux finishes offer services to paint-decorate work in natural or fantasy grain patterns. Students of the decorative arts may gain a deeper appreciation of this crafts' current popularity and of the surviving objects of the "golden era" of grain painting by understanding them within the contexts of history and technical requirements.

Notes

1. Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature.* Philadelphia: Samuel F. Bradford and Murray, Fairman & Co., c. 1810-1824.

2. Isabel O'Neil, *The Art of the Painted Finish for Furniture and Decoration.* New York: William Morrow and Co., 1971.

3. P.F. Tingrey, *The Painter and Varnisher's Guide; OR A Treatise, Both in Theory and Practice,* on the Art of Making and Applying Varnishes; on the Different Kinds of Painting; and on the Method of Preparing Colours, Both Simple and Compound. London, 1804. Tingrey was identified on this work's title page as

Professor of Chemistry, Natural History and Mineralogy in the Academy of Geneva. **4.** Tingrey, p. xvi-xvii.

5. Nathaniel Whittock, The *Decorative Painters' and Glaziers' Guide Containing the Most Approved Methods of Imitating Oak, Mahogany, Maple, Rose Cedar, Coral and Every Other Kind of Fancy Wood...* London, 1827, p. iii-iv. The title page notes that Whittock was "assisted by the most experienced, practical artizans (sic) in every department of decorative Painting and Glazing" in the preparation of this work.

6. John W. Masury, *The American Grainers' Hand-Book* A Popular and Practical Treatise on the Art of Imitating Colored and Fancy Woods. John W. Masury & Son, New York: 1872 p. 11. **7.** Whittock, p. 47. **8.** Ibid. **9.** Ibid., p. 46.

10. Masury, p. 10.

11. Henry Carey Baird, *The Painter, Gilder and Varnisher's Companion.* Philadelphia, 1854 p. 168. **12.** Masury, p. 11. **13.** Ibid., p. 7. **14.** Ibid. **15.** Ibid., p. 9.

16. *The Painter's Manual By A Practical Painter.* Haney & Co., New York, 1868. p. 64. **17.** Whittock, p. 26. **18.** Masury, p. 8. **19.** Whittock, p. 21.

20. Erwin Andres, *A Practical Treatise on the Fabrication of Volatile and Fat Varnishes,* William T. Brannt, translator and editor. Philadelphia: Henry C. Baird & Co., 1882, p. 316.

21. John W. Masury, *How Shall We Paint Our Houses?* A Popular Treatise on the Art of House-Painting; Plain and Decorative. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1868, p. 51-52. **22.** Andres, p. 315-316. **23.** Whittock p. 72-73.

24. Whittock, p. 21.

25. William Dwight Whitney, *The Century Dictionary.* vol. IV (M-P). New York: The Century Company, c. 1890, p. 3572.

26. *The Oxford English Dictionary,* volume L-M; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933, p. 309.

27. Ralph Mayer, *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques.* New York: The Viking Press, 1980, p. 189. **28.** Whittock, p. 21. **29.** Whittock, p. 22.

30. "*A Practical Painter,*" p. 63. **31.** Ibid. **32.** Whittock, p. 27.

33. D.S. McDannell, *The Practical Painter and Instructor.* Chicago: Lakeside Publishing & Printing Company, 1874, p. 70.

34. Brannt, p. 316. **35.** Whittock, p. 30-31. **36.** Ibid.

37. F.B. Gardner, *How to Paint.* New York: Wells Publishing, 1875, p. 69.

38. Whittock, p. 42. **39.** Whittock, p. 22.

40. Henry Carey Baird, *The Painter, Gilder and Varnisher's Companion.* Philadelphia, Henry Carey Baird, 1871, p. 190-191. **41.** Ibid. **42.** Whittock, p. 22. **43.** Whittock, p. 23. **44.** Ibid. **45.** Whittock, p. 26-27.

46. Whittock, p. 28. *47.* McDannell, p. 71. *48.* Ibid. *49.* Whittock, p. 44.
50. Whittock, p. 23. *51.* Brannt, p. 317. *52.* Whittock, p. 89.
53. McDannell, p. 70. *54.* McDannell, p. 48.

DEFINITIONS:

The Oxford English Dictionary (second edition; Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989) offers the following excerpted information to assist readers with understanding this article:

1. Megilp; 1. A preparation (consisting usually of a mixture of linseed oil with turpentine or mastic varnish) employed as a vehicle for oil colours. 2. Verb: To varnish with megilp; to give to (oil colours) the quality which megilp is used to impart. (vol. IX)

2. Wash Leather: 1. A soft kind of leather, usually of split sheepskin, dressed to imitate chamois leather. (vol. XIX)

3. Gutta Percha: (Gutta; a gum, exudation, or inspissated juice. Percha (parcha: name of the forest tree which yields some of the gutta (guttah) of commerce). Gutta Percha: The inspissated juice of various trees found chiefly in the Malayan archipelago; now extensively used in the arts. (volume VI).

4. White Wax: (Wax: a substance (also distinctively called BEESWAX) produced by bees, and used by them as the material of the honeycomb.) White wax is a particular variety of wax. In 1601, Pliny wrote "The best wax is that which is called Punica...and is white. The next, in goodnesse is the yellowest..." Punic wax is a preparation used by painters believed to have been made by exposing yellow beeswax to the air for some time, then cooking it with repeated boilings and additions of sea water and potassium carbonate. The foamy mass was then poured into cold water, and afterward exposed in a basket to the bleaching action of sunlight...Punic is merely white refined beeswax. (OED, vol. XX and Ralph Mayer, *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*, third edition, New York: Viking Press, c. 1970, p. 412-413.)

5. Sugar of Lead: Lead acetate, an organic lead salt forming as a white crystalline substance on the lead metal surface.

(The author is indebted to paintings conservator Richard Wolbers, University of Delaware Art Conservation Program, for this information.)

THEOREMS, OLD AND NEW

Frances Bernet

It was a gentle rain, the temperature was high and, as a teenager, I was restless and went for a walk. Mother had given me a trip to the newly reconstructed Williamsburg in the late 1930's. As I came to a small house, obviously under reconstruction, I noticed the door was wide open and a woman was pushing large cartons around. I went to the door and asked if I could help. She said, "Of course, come in." The lady was Abby Rockefeller and she was unpacking and sorting some of her velvet theorem collection. I can still remember how stained and dirty some of them were. The frames varied and there were a few with mats. At the time I was an art student, but had never seen a theorem. I was fascinated with the work and she explained quite a bit about it.

This experience started my love affair with theorems. However, it wasn't until 1950 that I found a teacher of these lovely pieces. Marion Cooney and her husband had moved to our town of Glastonbury, Connecticut, three years before. I will always be grateful to her for her patience, her love of authenticity and her knowledge of the history of the work.

As early as 1700 the Chinese were producing work called *Poonah Painting* which was similar in appearance to the theorems produced in the 18th and 19th centuries in our country. The Chinese pounded the pulp of the tree to a paper thin substance, called pith, which had the look and texture of velvet. Pith that was not pounded so heavily was used by Chinese artists to paint landscapes and seascapes. The type of work done in China is unlike the theorems we have found in the work of the 18th and 19th century.

Theorems have been found in New England dating back to 1792. Books of instructions for theorem painting came from England as early as 1800. These were used in the early academies. The term Poonah Painting was soon dropped, as teachers realized the difference between their work and that of the Chinese.

A book entitled *"The Girl's Own Book"* by Mrs. L. Maria Child, was published in 1834. The formula she gives for making the stencil paper is much simpler than the horn paper described by Levina Urbino in her book. Mrs. Child says: "to take equal parts of copal, mastic and Ja-

pan varnish, add to the mixture half as much balsam of fir as there is of either of the varnishes, and a piece of white wax the size of a thimble; simmer these together 'til the wax is melted. If the composition is too thick, add a little spirits of turpentine. Put it upon one side of the paper while it is warm,...." I am sure that, if I had to go through all this, I would have very few theorems. How fortunate we are to have architect's linen and mylar. If you would like to know the complete formula, you can find it in her book.

Miss Urbino also gives instructions to make all colors necessary for theorems. For example: yellow is made by boiling a handful of French berries in a pint of water, adding a lump of alum. These colors were placed in individual saucers and formed the consistency of what we now call *gouache.* These colors of course were opaque. The colors were first applied with brushes similar to those we use for wall stencilling. Later it was discovered that they could pick up the color with a piece of velvet applying it to the theorem and blending the color in.

The next evolution was to use oil paints on the velvet, as they were now available in our republic. At this time only transparent colors were used. By mixing basic colors they obtained the hue desired and by rubbing a darker color over a lighter one, more pleasing effects were obtained. These are the theorems I love and copy. The greens in the composition were always mixed with transparent yellow, blue and burnt umber. Each leaf had an individual shading. To me there is nothing more uninteresting on a theorem than to see all the greens done with chromium oxide green. Today some artists use a substance mixed with the opaque oil color to soften them and to blend with the transparent color. This should be avoided by mixing the proper transparent colors together or overpainting with a darker transparent color. This helps to maintain the old look.

At this time it was also discovered that mica could be broken up and glued to the velvet on bowls and vases to make them sparkle. If not applied properly, the velvets found today show mica that has turned yellow and displeasing to the eye. Another displeasing effect is to find that the theorem has been glued to a backing. After about 20 years, rust spots begin to appear on the face of the theorem, and eventually the glue will "eat" most of the velvet.

About 1830, women's colleges began to appear and the private academies ceased to be since they could not offer the complete and varied subjects of the colleges. In all this talk of girls schools I couldn't help but wonder what happened to the boys. When I contacted Deerfield for slides, I found that many boys attended Deerfield Academy and proof of this is given in their Catalogue of 1826 which lists 37 males and 75 females in attendance.

Another interesting thing I discovered is that whenever theorems were taught in these schools, embroideries were also taught. This is no doubt the reason for combining the two arts in the theorem memorials.

In the mid 19th century inexpensive colored lithographs of *Currier and Ives* appeared and brought much competition to the amateur painter.

From 1800–1840 baskets of flowers, fruit, watermelon and vases of flowers were the most common subjects. Historians feel these early stencils were cut by the teacher and sold to the student for a small fee, thus earning a little extra income for the teacher.

One of the most well used books, *"Young Ladies Assistant,"* by Miss Turner states:

> "Flowers and fruit are certainly the most appropriate subjects for the velvet-scrub; but landscapes and figures may be executed with success. You must choose velvet of a thick texture and a short even nap. Pin it over the design, and trace it on the window; and if you are to paint a landscape, dilute the liquids which you intend for the sky and put them on with a sponge on the wrong side of the velvet; then strain it over a board and begin to paint, first laying on the light colors and afterwards shading with the darker, as you do in a mezzotinto, but without the theorem. Fruit and flowers are done in the same manner, except that you do not color the velvet on the wrong side, unless you wish to have a ground-wash."

At this time stencils were made with heavy paper, treated with alternate coats of shellac and oil which rendered the paper to a stiff substance, strong and waterproof. Many of these designs were sold as kits, thus earning extra money for the teacher. Girls also shared stencils and thus you see variations of the original designs.

It is also interesting to note that when only oils were used in theorems many students copied the still-life compositions of Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860).

One of the greatest collections of stencils, tools and theorems of water colors on paper I have ever seen is at Old Sturbridge Village. Last year (1990) the Fabric Curator assembled a display of these stencils cut by Lucy Goodale 1821–1841, which were given to the village by a member of her family. The original stencils, which I had the privilege of handling, are very fragile and brown in color. The brushes in the kit are similar to our wall stencil brushes. There is also dry pigment of some kind in a little box. I am so grateful to the Curatorial staff for allowing me to see this exhibit and I feel that if I had not been a member of HSEAD, I might not have seen it because it had to be brought out of their archives. Some of these stencils were cut with scissors and some with a jackknife. How fortunate we are to be able to cut our sharp outlines with steel knives such as surgeon's blades.

Oxidized theorems have always fascinated me and I have wondered if there were any way of telling what the original colors were. I finally decided to go to some conservators at museums. I have been fortunate to speak to two different conservators and the information was the same. Sometimes under a black light a color will appear and other times different chemicals can bring out a color, but that is taking a chance. There really is no way of telling exactly the original color unless one of the above means proves itself. Common sense will tell you that roses are of the red, white or yellow hues, leaves are green, etc. However, each man asked me why I would want to change the history of the piece, which is a learning experience for each artist. I personally never change the oxidation; I like to copy the composition as is. I do not like to dip my theorem in coffee or tea, as I like clean work in my home, also if every theorem is dipped in tea or coffee, somehow they all look alike and as the years go by the colors lessen. Today, with so much pollution in the air, all velvets are going to diminish in color, therefore we should rub our colors into the velvet firmly and let time do the natural coloring on the velvet background.

There are very few records of names of theorem painters. However, one is outstanding. Emma Jane Cady (1854-1933) is considered one of the greatest amateur painters of America. Her work was always fresh and eloquent. Her *"Fruit in a Glass Compote"* is one of the most reproduced paintings in America, and considered the finest example of

theorem painting and often considered a masterpiece worthy of Peale. Her *"Two Doves on a Branch"* 1890 is also an exquisite theorem. She used opaque watercolors similar to gouache, and sometimes used transparent watercolors along with gouache, which is quite a skill. Most of her life Emma Cady lived on a farm in East Chatham, N.Y. You will find an article about her in *Antiques Magazine* of February 1978.

For those of you from the Boston area, it is so interesting to find so much information about two schools in the area. One was the *Suzzana Rowson Academy* in Boston. The work done in this school is considered among the finest in young ladies' educational institutions in the early Republic. Embroidery work and theorems from this school still survive in many private collections. Miss Rowson was the Preceptress of the school and considered a great literary figure of her time. The Nov. 2, 1802 *"Columbian Sentinel"* carried the notice that Miss Rowson had taken a house on Winter Street, near the Mall, where she "purposes to teach young ladies reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and needle work." She also offered board and room to a few students. Before long she had over 100 students and many boarding students. Later another advertisement appeared stating that she was going to teach drawing. Painting and drawing were then advertised at a fee of $6.00 a quarter. Watercolors were predominant in the painting course. Each student was encouraged to do her own drawing and to make her own composition. From these the girls developed their own theorems. Some theorems were copied from wallpaper patterns and some from prints from England and France.

Another school was that of Miss Saunders and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Mass. Dorchester had been part of the city of Boston for more than 100 years. The early part of the 19th century found Dorchester a most elegant suburb. In 1803 Judith Saunders and Miss Beach moved from Gloucester to Dorchester to establish a school for young ladies. Exquisite needle work was stressed in this school. It is interesting to note that, as you do more research on these theorems, you find famous names of our early settlers such as Sargent, Adams and many generals of The American Revolution, which dispels the theory that girls were not educated in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

It is amazing to me how so many girls lived in these houses called Academies. In many of them girls slept two to a bed and four beds to a small room, and yet these schools were most exclusive. The Saunders and Beach Academy survived for more than 30 years. The house is still standing on Meeting House Hill, although no town records record the efforts of these two women. Both needle work and theorems were framed under glass. On the glass mat the words "Wrought at Miss Saunders and Miss Beach's Academy, Dorchester, Mass." were rendered in gold leaf by John Doggett. The total fee for a quarter at this school was $30.00 for reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, plain drawing, tambor, French language, embroidery, geography, and painting. Hair work on ivory, added to the above was 50 cents. After 1810 painting courses were in great demand and by 1822 advertising appeared for "Painting by Theorems on velvet, silk and paper with practical instructions in preparing the most brilliant colors suitable for the same and the method of making the theorems, grouping patterns and so forth."

The school purchased most of its supplies from John Doggett (1780–1857), then a young cabinet maker in Roxbury. In his ledger of May 26, 1809 there is record of all sorts of supplies he sold to this school, among which were books of gold and hand screens and varnish. He also enameled, lettered and decorated the glass for the girls. The frames ran from $1.00 for a sampler to $14.00 for a painting. The most expensive frames recorded were for Sarah Mercy, May 29, 1806 and Miss Emerson on August 25, 1808. Advertising in the *Columbian Sentinel*, April 30, 1814, Mr. Doggett also offered for sale white velvet and velvet color.

By 1822 much attention was focused on painting by theorems for which the tuition was an extra $4.00 per quarter. It was the opinion of the art teacher that when a student had mastered theorems she was prepared to paint on canvas.

From 1800–1840 two other Academies were well established: Sarah Pearse founded her Academy in Litchfield, Connecticut. She boarded her students in near by homes. The Patten Sisters Academy of Hartford, Conn. also was well established and prosperous.

Last, but, not least, I sincerely hope the Society will not over-kill

with perfection the charm and beauty of our early American theorems. After all, this was the reason for Abby Rockefeller establishing her museum in Colonial Williamsburg.

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Antiques Magazine—Sept. 1970, August 1976, February 1978

Theorem Painting by Levina Urbino—1833

Theorem Painting on Velvet by Anna C. Butler (Sturbridge)

American Folk Painters by John & Katherine Ebert

Fran thought that you would be interested to hear that Sturbridge Village plans to have an exhibition (opening in May 1992) entitled, "Know Your Neighbor." Portraits of adults and children who lived in the Sturbridge area from 1750 to 1850 (which is the period covered by Old Sturbridge Village) will be selected from their own collection as well as private collections and other museums.

Members "A" Awards
Worcester, Massachusetts – Fall 1991

Theorems

Peggy Waldman

Ardelle K. Steele

Inez Gornall

Helen Spear

Dolores Furnari

Dana Kenneally

Maxine O'Brien

Beth K. Martin

Alexandra Perrot

Molly Porter

Alice D. Smith

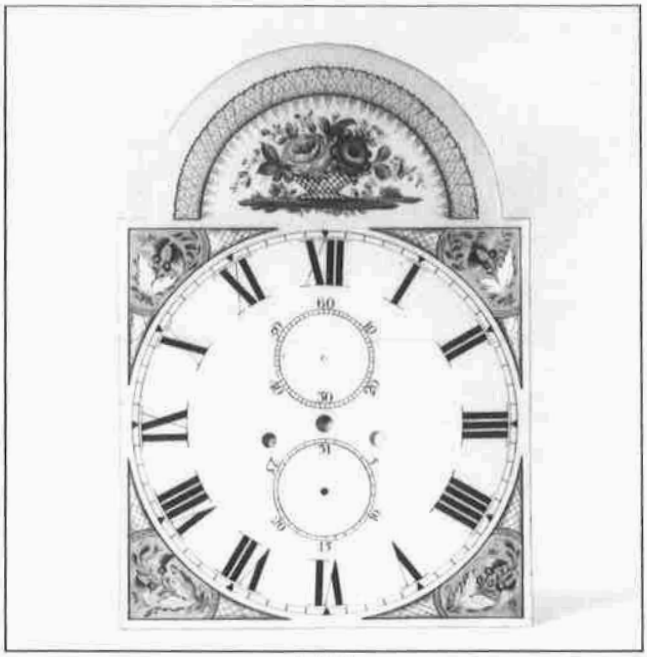
Helene Britt

Elizabeth Cooley

Frances Bernet

Country Painting
Dorothy Fillmore

Stencilling on Tin
Carol Heinz



Special Class
Margaret Watts

PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Spring 1991
Janet Smith, Museum Assistant

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS NEW MEMBERS
Worcester, Massachusetts
Fall, 1991
Gail M. Fancher, 91 Chardonnay Rd., Fairport, NY, 14450
Connie Gallo, 57 Simcoe St., Oyster Bay, NY, 11771
Cora Jean Longobardo, 270 Plainfield Rd., Edison, NJ, 08820-2912
Edith V. Parker, 13 Harkness Rd., Jaffrey, NH, 03452
Virginia Pearce, 2901 Hockley Dr., Hingham, MA, 02043

THE BOOKSHELF

Professional Painted Finishes
by Ina Brosseaux Marx, husband Allen and son Robert.
Watson-Guptill Publications, 1515 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10036. Cost $45.00. 288 pages. 500 color illustrations. 70 black and white illustrations. Bibliography, Glossary, Index.

Ina and Allen Marx are the directors and founders of The Finishing School, Great Neck, N.Y. My husband and I have taken several classes from them. They possess a wealth of information and eagerly share it. This is so evident as you peruse each chapter in the book. In general, *Professional Painted Finishes* gives step-by-step instruction in wall glazing, marbling, and a variety of painted and faux finishes.

The book is divided into three sections. Part one deals with the fundamentals one should concern oneself with before embarking on a project. Part two is jam-packed with technical information. Included in this section, they deal with glazing composition along with novelty effects as well as traditional techniques. Then comes a smorgasbord of marbling and graining impressions. Having chewed and digested these pages, you are now ready for Part three, "Professional Practice": the how-to's of starting your own business and being successful. They suggest it takes a commitment of time, energy, and money to learn the techniques and then build the business.

Glazing and marbling can be realistic as well as fanciful. It is a process that is always in a form of creative evolution. In our personal business, we perform these techniques, and the effects are wonderful if you allow the time. I was gratified that the Marx family has not succumbed to get-it-done-in-a-day type projects.

The book is a must for both the hobbyist and professional. It will not be read or comprehended in a day. It is worth the money just for

the reference information. Follow their instructions and you will be able to exhibit a marvelous project with great pride and accomplishment, along with a quiet sigh of personal pleasure. For only you will know the amount of thought and work that went in to it!

–Submitted by Nona Gehman

***Techniques In Reverse Glass Painting,** by Margaret J. Emery*
Quality Printing, Pittsfield, Massachusetts 1991. Cost $19.95. Soft cover, 129 pages. Color and black and white photos and diagrams. Available from The Mustard Seed Studio, 9 Blueberry Ridge Road, Setauket, NY 11733.

It is seldom that I have had the pleasure to review such an excellent book. *Techniques in Reverse Glass Painting* was written by Society mem-member Peg Emery and, to my knowledge, it is the first book totally devoted to Glass painting. Peg leads us through her step by step procedure for painting on glass.

First she delves into gold leaf as it is the initial procedure often employed on glasswork. While I know through experience that a teacher should be at a student's elbow when initially attempting to lay gold leaf on glass, I estimate that a tyro could do it in a reasonable manner by carefully reading and rereading Peg's superb book. All steps to prepare a glass for painting or gold leaf are carefully described. Detailed diagrams are employed where appropriate to assist the student in visualizing what must be done. Tips such as the use of the simple word "top" on the undecorated side of a glass are very useful. Bold type or underlining are used to emphasize special instructions. In each section there are helpful photos of complete originals and detailed close-ups of some portions to further illustrate a point.

Part three deals with stenciling on glass and takes the student through the process of tracing, cutting, and using a stencil. All steps are numbered on pages which will lie flat thanks to a multi-ringed binder. It was very thoughtful of Peg to arrange, print and bind her book in this convenient form.

Part four takes the reader into the application of paint to the glass. The types of paint to be used, the brushes, and the medium are all described. Again it is all step by step. Peg's vast practical teaching experience has permitted her to bring together all the pieces which puzzle the beginner. Nothing is left out. Especial emphasis is placed on

the delicate execution of sky and water. For that "just right" smooth application of paint, there are hints, suggestions and bold all-caps print notation for important instructions.

The second section of the book examines the repair and protection of original glass painting as well as care of your own masterpieces. So often a simple extra step such as remembering to use acid free board to back your glass can be the difference between a flaking product or one which holds its paint. Broken glass demands special attention, special glues and special procedures which are all carefully described. Peg and her husband have devoted considerable research on the best types of glue to use. A separate page of wares used in the conservation of glass lists the necessary items and the chemical names for adhesives, isolations, solvents and vehicles.

The third section should provide even the most timorous student the courage to cut their own glass. I know that it takes nerves of steel to use a glass cutter but, with practice, it is fairly easy and it surely saves time and energy. I am sure Peg has had her fair share of glass which hasn't quite snapped where the lines indicated it should. However with the detailed diagram she includes, everyone should give it a try.

The final section (IV) contains an alternative way of laying gold leaf on glass which was developed by Sara Tiffany, also of our Society. While one might not have all the various implements needed to brush the leaf on to the glass, Sara's procedure can also produce satisfactory results. Peg prefers the time honored method which has worked well for her and for her students. The choice is the reader's along with the adage that if it works for you then do it your way.

The appendices list supplies, where to buy them, reference readings, a glossary of terms used in the book and several colored photo examples which are excellent. Four patterns illustrating each of the techniques in the text bring this most worthwhile book to a close and believe me you'll wish for more! Get busy and order this one for yourself, for your students, for anyone remotely interested in reverse glass painting and for anyone who might just want to attempt something new in the craft of early American decorating. Try glass. You'll love it and Peg's book makes it that much more fun, enjoyable and easy.

–Peggy Rodgers

NOTICE FROM THE TRUSTEES

SPRING MEETING 1992

Sheraton Tara, Nashua, NH, April 26–28, 1992

FALL MEETING 1992

Sheraton Burlington Hotel, Burlington, VT, September 18–20, 1992

SPRING MEETING 1993

Sheraton Tara, Parsippany, NJ, April 30, May 1, 2, 1993

NOTICES

BY-LAWS

Article IV

Section 2 MEETINGS previously read: The Board of Trustees shall hold at least three regular meetings a year—now reads: at least two regular meetings a year.

Article IV

Section 6 POWERS—Section a: delete Museum Curator; Section b: delete to employ a Museum Director.

Article VII

Section 1 COMMITTEES—Delete Museum Acquisition Portfolio.
Change the next Article to read 8 instead of 7.

Article X

Section 1 and 2 Museum—Delete.

Article XI

Section 2 ENDOWMENT FUND previously read: The Endowment Fund earnings may be used to defray expenses for the Museum of HSEAD, Inc. and educational projects—now reads: to help defray expenses for HSEAD, Inc. educational projects.

BEQUESTS TO HSEAD, 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.

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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.

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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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