The Decorator

Volume L No. 2 Saratoga Springs, NY Spring/Summer 1996

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

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

A society with affiliated chapters 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; 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, 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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If you are interested in joining our Guild, or would like further information, such as the address of local Chapters, please contact the Administrative Assistant listed on the Table of Contents page.

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Photography.....Helga Johnson
Design & Production.....Bette S. Baker
"A" Awards Photographer: Clayton Photography

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Back Cover: Esther Stevens , 1930.

THE DECORATOR is published twice a year by *The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.* Subscription rate is $15.00 for two issues (add $5.99 per year for Canada).
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EDITORIAL

In celebration of our fiftieth anniversary, this issue of *The Decorator* is dedicated to the memory of Esther Stevens Brazer.

In honoring her, it is only fitting that we learn more about her. Several articles about Esther Stevens Brazer have appeared in *The Decorator,* and I have chosen two to be reprinted in this issue. The first, "My Story," was written by Esther Stevens Brazer and was found in her desk after her death. The second article, "Esther Stevens Brazer," by Violet Scott, chronicles her life and works.

My desire to learn more about the life of Esther Stevens led me to research letters written by her former students and to consult her two daughters, Constance Fraser and Diana Fraser Seamans. For over a year, it has been my privilege to communicate with both daughters. They have been extremely helpful and forthright in helping me learn more about their mother. Both Connie and Diana have been most generous in sharing their thoughts, memories, and the few existing family pictures which now appear in this issue. I hope the article, "Esther Stevens Brazer, the Woman," will help one to better know and understand the woman in whose honor our Society was founded.

In addition to the articles on Esther Stevens Brazer, the first half of an article on tin peddlers appears in this issue. In Part 1 of "The Maligned Yankee Peddler", Lois Tucker traces her roots back to a tin peddler. She writes of the lives and reputations of the early peddlers and their influence on society. It is an interesting and informative article. Part 2 will follow in the next issue of *The Decorator.*

Janet Miller and Janet Hobbie have generously donated pieces to the HSEAD collection at the Museum of American Folk Art. Both pieces are shown in this issue. To be the new editor is an honor, not only to hold that position but to follow in the footsteps of the gifted and dedicated editors who have preceded me. Your articles, suggestions, and comments will always be welcome. With your help, we will strive to maintain *The Decorator's* high standard of excellence.

—Shirley S. Baer

MY STORY

ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER

This is my story: I started out in life by being a frail child (believe it or not), the daughter of a mother who was a brilliant writer and a founder of women's clubs in the days when women's place was in the home. My father was fond of music and of raising flowers; the musical strain was left out of my composition, but I love to make flowers blossom and can do so in just a fraction of the time that it took my father to grow them. You see I work in paint. During my childhood I was forever painting wildflowers, so often it was purple asters that my family came to call them "purple Esthers." This flower painting prolificacy led my family to believe that Esther was going to be an artist like her aunt who had really painted pictures accepted by and hung in the Paris Salon, and like her great grandmother who painted beautiful flower pictures now hanging on the walls of each of her descendants' homes.

When I was ten years of age, my mother died suddenly; during the next years I was stricken with a baffling illness that kept me much of the time in bed. To distract my mind, I had a special teacher in design, composition, and in color who evidently gave me fundamental sound training in both these branches of art. In my teens, I became famous around my home town for the books I called for at the public library. I never came home from there except with black hands, for I would read books that had lain on the shelves for years undusted. Books on archaeology, on the crafts of the American Indian, on Greek mythology, and drama. I had a toy theatre with dolls accurately costumed in Grecian robes I had seen from patterns drawn on Greek vases. I had an insatiable interest in constructing things, particularly those which my father described as not being feasible. I took an unholy delight in showing him that same idea would work in spite of everything.

When I had my first year of high school, I turned up my nose at the science course they offered to girl students in the college-preparatory course, and insisted on taking the boys' course as I figured I really might learn something. I was the only girl in a class of forty boys, and did I learn! Maybe that is why I have been able to find workable solutions to the prac-

Esther Stevens at 14 months.

Esther Stevens, age 4 years.

tical problems I have been up against in my research. After I finished my college preparatory course, I took a year's training at the Portland Art School. Then I enrolled as a special student at Columbia University. There I discovered that a certain very fine interior-decoration course was scheduled for senior students, and I put up a great clamor to take that course. The authorities told me I could not have it since I had not gone through the three-year preliminary course, but I made myself so objectionable that they threw up their hands, and I enrolled in the course. At the end of the term I was one of three students asked to exhibit my drawings. I was headed for a year's apprenticeship in my aunt's interior-decorating shop, but then the war broke out, and I realized that I should find a means to become rapidly self supporting. The student advisor at Columbia suggested that I take a special statistics course they were organizing for war service, which brought me to my post as statistician on the Shipping Board.

Several years later, I emerged from a serious illness with the realization that I had a serious handicap that bid fair to alter my life completely. In my attempt to re-adjust mentally to those limited conditions, I turned to the idea that I should take up my art work again. Then suddenly, while I was cleaning off an old Hitchcock chair, a fascinating old bronze stenciled design jumped into view. The next day I uncovered a stenciled pattern on the top of my neighbor's clock. It suddenly dawned on me that this painting was different from any technique I had known, and I should try to reproduce it. I tried every means I could devise, with no success. Then

one time, while I was visiting in my home town of Portland, I went to see several collectors who had stenciled chairs I wished to examine. Each one of these collectors remarked, "Well, if you really want to know about stenciling, you should go see George Lord." So I hunted up Mr. Lord at his home on Munjoy Hill and found him painting as usual, in spite of his eighty-seven venerable years. He was really deaf, but his eye had lost none of its keenness, and his hand has lost none of its skill, since the days when at seventeen he had been made foreman of the chair-painting section of a local furniture factory. I explained to Mr. Lord how the shading of stencil work had baffled me, and how much I wanted to know the method by which it had been done originally. I could figure that his stenciling days had just been beginning when Lambert Hitchcock was finishing his career of making stenciled chairs in Connecticut. Mr. Lord evidently figured that he might not be decorating much longer, and that it would be well to show the trick to someone whose interest was as keen as mine. So he varnished a piece of black paper, and reached up on a high shelf for his folders of stencils marked flowers, leaves, and scrolls. From these folders he selected some eight or nine units, and then opened up his cigar box in which he kept his bronze powders separated by little partitions. I watched him work for about fifteen minutes, and departed, to take up the practise of bronze stenciling at home during more leisurely hours. The little tricks he had shown me were enough to reveal the whole process, and I could figure everything out from there. If I had had longer to work with him, I am sure there were lots of freehand tricks he could have shown me.

As my interest in stencil designs increased, I realized that there were many other kinds of patterns accomplished by freehand methods, and I began to make records of all old painted designs that I could find available. For some reason, books had been very disappointing, since black and white illustrations often fail to give the details that an artist requires. Then I made the acquaintance of Homer Eaton Keyes, long beloved Editor of the magazine *Antiques*, who encouraged me to pursue my studies because he found in me the unusual combination of a good research mind, an art training, a love of history, and a keen interest in antiques. He showed me that I could be a pioneer in this field of antique painted design, and he guided me constantly in my research. He told me that I should start the life-long task of collecting material toward a history of early American decorative design, a task that seemed utterly beyond my

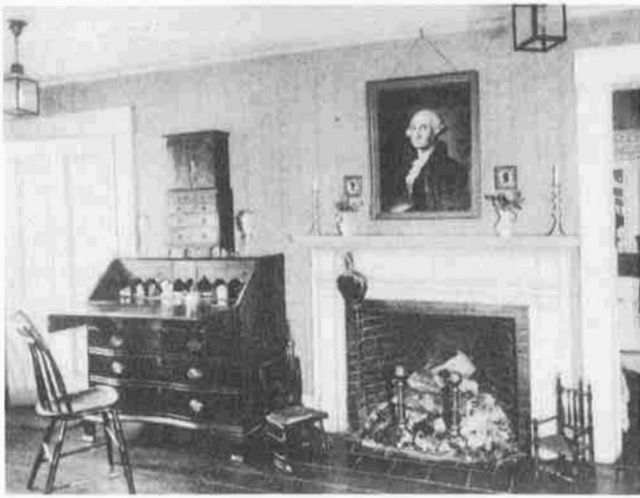
abilities when he first proposed it. Next I had the rare good fortune of meeting an architect friend of his, Clarence Brazer, who joined Mr. Keyes in the scholarly education of my mind. Dr. Brazer taught me to know old houses, to read dates in mouldings and construction, to know the makers of fine Philadelphia furniture.

In the course of my career, I have done many unexpected things. While I was restoring the Hicks House in Cambridge I began wondering just what the original paper might have looked like when Mrs. Hicks picked it for her walls. Then I happened to observe that great wads of paper stripped from the walls of an upstairs bedroom were lying about the floor, some of the scraps being stiff enough to give the impression that they were built up of many layers. These thick scraps floated in the bathtub, and lo and behold! out of this "waste" I found remnants of fifteen layers of wallpaper. Most researchers would have stopped here, but I went on to the hand reproduction of the three oldest designs, because they so ideally suited the simple forthrightness of the house. Two of these papers were stenciled, which produced no problem for me, just called upon my store of patience to reproduce in the square or blocks each as they had been made originally. But the other was a block-printed pattern and I soon found that what I needed for the printing of so large a block was a rotary press. No letter press was large enough to take the pattern. I tried a large twelve-gallon crock, but no amount of experimenting would make its wavy surface print evenly. Finally, the idea dawned upon me that sewer pipe was cast in a mould, and should therefore have an evener surface. I have forgotten now where I got that eventful section of pipe, but I know that when I wrapped the linoleum block around it and got my first successful print from it, nothing under heaven would have been able to delay my printing the whole room full of paper.

John Hicks House, occupied by the Frasers from 1922 to 1928—1930.

I had been experimenting to get the print for six whole weeks, and in one afternoon and evening the printing job was accomplished. Later, when I moved to a different old house in Cambridge, my paperhanger, his son, and I worked two days steaming off that paper and putting it in place on the walls of the new house.

For years, as I collected the old patterns, I planned to follow out Mr. Keyes' suggestion to write a history of American design. During this time I worked hard at my restoring and writing, but turned down all requests to teach students my methods. It was Dr. Brazer who finally persuaded me that as a teacher I would learn far more from teaching my students, and incidentally, I would be doing antiques themselves a lot of good by spreading the gospel of how they ought to be painted. I am frank to say that Dr. Brazer has been a great factor in my development, and in showing me that a book on techniques would establish a great reputation for me. Unless of course, he added, I planned to lie down on the job and stop developing my own skill.



Living room of the John Hicks House. This is the wallpaper described by ESB in" My Story". Esther later steamed it off and placed it in the library of the Gray Gardens House (Hall's Tavern).

In the midst of all my restoring of tinware, it never dawned on me that I had an ancestor who made and painted gay tin boxes. It was the reading of an article in the magazine Antiques, written by a collector who had done research on the pewterers of Stevens Plains, that tipped me off concerning my great great grandfather, Zachariah Stevens. Just what his relationship in business was with the patriot silversmith, Paul Revere, I am not quite sure, but I know that Revere's nephew, Phillip Rose, was at Stevens Plains about 1786 when Zachariah married and built his home there. Zachariah's son (my great grandfather), also a tinsmith of Stevens Plains, married a niece of Phillip Rose, who was also a grand niece of Paul Revere. Thus it appears that I have a double inheritance of an artis-

tic strain, and the craftsmanship that bursts out in our family once in every generation is the same fine art strain that Revere himself was working with. I am descended from Paul Revere's sister Mary, who married Edward Rose, an English ship captain, and became the mother of the above-mentioned Phillip Rose, a travelling decorator who was probably responsible for many stencil and freehand decorated walls in Maine and Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Perhaps this inheritance is responsible for the pride I take in matching the skill of old-time craftsmen. That I am able to cut such tiny stencil patterns with scissors amazes most people. But I am blessed with wonderful eyesight, and have not yet been forced to wear glasses.

People say that I am a good teacher, that in my classes anything seems possible for the student to accomplish. It is probably because I believe that people learn best by doing; so going through all the motions in painting a design, the various processes became quite understandable and natural. I like teaching, for it brings me in touch with many personalities and my observation of designs is spread over a wider and wider experience. Students bring in so many patterns, or the remains of them, that I might never see if I gave up teaching.

What more is there to say, except about my home! named "Innerwick." This house was originally built by the Hoogland's (or Hegeman's) Col. Archibald Hamilton, and sold in 1762 to a Tory from Innerwick in Scotland, who had married the daughter of the next to last British Governor Colden, of New York. Hamilton was in command of Queens County Militia and Hessians who were camped near here during the Revolutionary War on Long Island. On Christmas Eve, 1779, while he was preparing a farewell party to entertain his brother officers, evacuating next day, the house caught fire and burned to the ground. Some say that it was set on fire by irate townspeople who objected to his arrogant Tory ways, but Dr. Brazer points out that this was known to have been a fearfully cold winter, and he thinks that they built too large a fire to get warm. Anyhow, we have a mystery here, for we not only have the 1780 main house which Col. Hamilton rebuilt immediately, but we have a far older ell, with a great brick oven and fireplace that date back to the 1680's when New York was still Dutch. The brick in the large fireplace of my studio is Dutch brick, known by its peculiar dimensions, and originally covered with Delft tiles. I keep a fire burning here in the old kitchen I use as a studio on winter mornings, and the students enjoy the atmosphere of

Esther & Clarence Brazer, date unknown.

this early, crudely finished room. We like the house not only because it is the second oldest in Flushing, but it gives us a chance to have all our old things around us in a setting where they are most at home. I would not know myself if I did not have an old house to live in and feel with to recreate artistic rooms in the old styles I know so well. It seems to me that I can better restore the old appearance of a piece when I work here in this house surrounded by antiques which have lived through the years that made history.

This article was found in Mrs. Brazer's desk and published in The Decorator, October 1951 (Vol. V, No.2).

ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER

by Violet Milnes Scott

The first issue of *The Decorator*, published in October 1946, contained a fascinating article, *Esther Stevens Brazer*, written by Edith Holmes, in which she told of Esther Stevens Brazer and the outstanding events in her life. It is unfortunate that there are no more copies of the first issue for today's Guild members, since the following outline can only show the tremendous amount of research and effort Mrs. Brazer spent in bringing the history of early American Decoration to life.

Born...April 17, 1898, in Portland, Maine.

Daughter of Augustus Stevens of Portland, Maine, and Harriet Belt of Wilmington, Delaware.

Descendant of Paul Revere, Sr., of Boston, Massachusetts, and Zachariah Stevens of Stevens Plains, Maine, who established decorated tinware industry in Maine, in 1798.

Educated...in Portland schools.

Graduated from Wayneflete School for Girls.

Studied at Portland Art School, connected with the Sweat Memorial Art Museum. The school (was) formerly Stevens' Portland home.

Took course in Interior Decoration at Columbia University, New York

Research Worker...on filing for Government Fleet Corporation in New York, World War I.

Married...Cecil E. Fraser of Cambridge, Massachusetts, September 1, 1920 Daughter Diana born October, 1921. Daughter Constance born January, 1925.

John Hicks House...Dunster St., Cambridge, Massachusetts, occupied by the Frasers in 1921. House moved to Boylston and South St., Cambridge, in December 1928. Funds for transfer provided by Cambridge Historical Society.

Boston Traveler...Saturday, June 9, 1923, published article on research and restorations done by Mrs. Fraser in Hicks House, on old wall papers and decorations.

Homer E. Keyes...Editor of *The Magazine Antiques*, encouraged Mrs. Fraser to write articles for magazine.

The Magazine Antiques...published first articles.
The Golden Age of Stencilling, April, 1922.

Excavating Old Time Wallpapers, May, 1923.

The magazine published Mrs. Brazer's articles until her death, October 30, 1945.

The following list of articles written by her appeared in *The Decorator*, Vol. I. No. 2., and is reprinted here:

April '22, *The Golden Age of Stencilling* (p. 162)

May '23, *Excavating Old-Time Wall Papers* (p. 216)

June '24, *The Sheraton Fancy Chair, I790–1817* (p. 302)

September '24, *The Period of Stencilling, 1817-1835* (p. 141)

January '25, *The Decadent Period, I835–1845* (p. 15)

July '25, *Pennsylvania Bride Boxes and Dower Chests, Part I*

August '25, Same as above, *Part II* (p. 79)

September '26, *A Lancaster Pennsylvania Chest* (p. 203)

February '27, *Pennsylvania German Dower Chests, Part I* (p. 119)

April '27, Same as above, *Part II* (p. 280-2)

June '27, *Some Problems of the Chests* (p. 474)

February '28, *The American Rocking Chair* (p. 115)

April '28, *Some Decorated Woodenware of the I830's* (p. 289)

May '29, *A Pedigreed Lacquered Highboy* (p. 398)

October '29, *The Elimination of Hotchkiss* (p. 303)

April '30, *Pioneer Furniture from Hampton, N. H.* (p. 312)

April '31, *Some Colonial and Early American Decorative Floors* (p. 296)

April '33, *Tantalizing Chests of Taunton* (p. 135)

March '36, *Zachariah Brackett Stevens* (p. 98)

August '36, *Random Notes on Hitchcock and His Competitors* (p. 63)

February '37, *Did Paul Revere Make Lace-Edge Trays?* (p. 76)

June '39, *Tinsmiths of Stevens Plains, Part I* (p. 294)

September '39, Same as above, Part II (p. 134)

May '43, *The Early Boston Japanners* (p. 208)
August '45, *Butler Tinware from Brandy Hill, Greenville, N. Y.* (p. 84)

September '45, Covers; also, signed and dated, a painted wall in Connecticut (p. 138) and Murals in Upper New York State (p. 148)

Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin... *Pennsylvania German Painted Chests*, November, 1925, described Brazer collection on exhibit at museum.

Saturday Evening Post...What is New in the Antiques Game, May 7, 1927.
Published...*The American Rocking Chair,* as co-author with Mr. Walter Dyer, 1928.

Old Hall Tavern...Duxbury, Massachusetts, bought by Frasers and moved to 20 Gray Gardens West in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mrs. Fraser decorated the walls, floors, furniture, and tin with authentic designs collected from original pieces. Recorded patterns and techniques and continued research on old methods and craftsmen.

First Classes...in decorating started in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 1931.

Class in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts, 1932.

Class at Gray Gardens, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1934.

Class at Weston, Massachusetts, 1934.

Married...Clarence W. Brazer, June 30, 1937, and moved to New York.
Large Classes...formed in New York;
Mineola, Long Island;
Montclair, New Jersey;
Springfield, Massachusetts;
New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut; and Hanover, New Hampshire. Continued teaching old pupils in Cambridge, Boston vicinity, and Wellesley.

Innerwick...Flushing, L. I., New York.
Bought by Brazers in 1938, second oldest house in Flushing, built about 1680. Three-story portion rebuilt after fire in 1780. Redecorated with stencilled and painted walls and stairs by Mrs. Brazer.

Collection of Stevens Plains, Me., tin exhibited in old buttery.

Original kitchen ell, 1680, with large fireplace, used as studio and library for Early American Decoration.

Open to visitors during Flushing Tercentenary, 1945, Esther Stevens Brazer Guild invited to Open House, May, 1947.

Published...*Early American Decoration,*
October 15, 1940.
Basic Instructions for Home Painting in the Early American Manner, August, 1943, Revised April, 1945, Illustrations added, 1948.

Seven Authentic Stencil Patterns for Hitchcock Type Chairs and Rockers, 1945.

Articles appeared in:

Esther Fraser, 1930.

Avocations, 1938.
Good Housekeeping, 1941.
Woman's Day, 1946.

Contributor...*The Evening Transcript*, Boston, Mass., Antiques Page.

The Evening Sun, New York, Antiques Page.

The Boston Evening American, Antic A Day, Series, 1930.

Interior Decorator...of First Congregational Church Parish House, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Private Pavilion of Cambridge Hospital.

Delaware County Court House, Media, Pennsylvania, 1930.

Allyn K. Ford House, Minneapolis, Minn., a house designed by Clarence W. Brazer, and for which he received Minn. A.I.A. award for best house built 1925 to 1930.

Restored...Painted chests shown in Metropolitan Museum in New York City, and Pennsylvania Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Lecturer...Connecticut Historical Society, New Haven, Conn., 1935.

New Jersey Antiquarian Society, Montclair, New Jersey.

Special lecturer at Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, New York, on *Early American Decoration.*

Exhibited...at Harrison Gray Otis House, home of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.
The Junior League in Boston, Massachusetts.

The George Walter Vincent Smith Art Gallery, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Societies...Cambridge Historical Society.
Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Georgian Society, Fogg Museum, Harvard University.

New York Historical Society.

New York Society of Craftsmen, Cooperstown, N. Y.

Who's Who in the East, Larkin, Roosevelt, and Larkin, Ltd., Boston, 1943. See page 454.

(Reprinted from *The Decorator*, Vol. V, No. 2, October 1951)

ESTHER STEVENS BRAZER, THE WOMAN

by Shirley S. Baer

She was a frail and delicate child. Unlike her sister and cousins, she was unable to attend boarding schools. As a young child, she spent much of her time in bed, tended by nurses and tutored by special teachers. She was an avid reader, an artist, and, like her mother, a woman ahead of her time. Yet this frail and delicate child grew into a woman who became a pioneer in the field of art, known and respected as an authority on early American decoration, a writer, and an author who would have a national organization named after her. She was Esther Stevens Brazer.

Esther Stevens was born April 7, 1898, in Portland Maine. She was the younger daughter of Harriet Belt of Wilmington, Delaware, and Samuel Augustus Stevens of Portland, Maine. Esther's love of art and writing came naturally. "Her mother was a brilliant woman who had published two novels by the time she was 21. However, because such pursuits were not considered ladylike coming from her class, her own mother made her promise never to publish again. She knew Mark Twain and other literary lights of the day."[1]

Esther's father, Samuel Augustus Stevens, owned a wagon wheel factory. When approached to start making wheels for automobiles, he declined and added "they (cars) won't last long." His wagon wheel factory was the last in New England. Samuel Augustus also owned wood lots which supplied him with the various woods needed for the wagon wheels. (Esther would later tell her daughters how she remembered the smells of the different woods in the wood house.)

When Esther was ten years old, her mother died. Upon her mother's death, "the three aunties as they were called (her father's sisters), Elizabeth, Julia and Almena, came to live with them and supervise the two girls as well as manage the household... Elizabeth was a talented artist of sufficient stature to have a painting hung in the Salon in Paris. She traveled regularly summers to France and Italy to paint, often in the company of Mary C. Wheeler from Concord, MA (later the founder of the

Esther Stevens and her mother at a summer cottage on Great Diamond Island, Casco Bay, Maine. Date unknown.

Esther Fraser with her first daughter, Diana. Late 1921 or early 1922.

Wheeler School in Providence, RI)."[2] It is uncertain which of the three aunts was the one with the decorator shop mentioned in Esther's article, "My Story", but it was thought to probably be Julia. "They were all artistic, having inherited their talent directly from their mother, Jane Tyler Stevens, who painted charming Victorian style flower paintings and was known to have retreated to her bedroom to paint when the children sorely tried her patience. It was said she kept them out by pulling a bureau across in front of the door."[3]

After her mother's death, Esther suffered from a "baffling illness"[4] which kept her in bed for two years. The diagnosis was finally made by her nurse. The cause of her long illness was a bladder stone which was then surgically removed. The later "serious illness with the realization that I had a serious handicap..."[5] is unknown to her daughters.

At the age of twenty-two, Esther Stevens married Cecil E. Fraser, a young graduate student working on his MBA at Harvard University. Cecil Fraser was a generous and indulgent husband who supported Esther in everything she did. In 1921 the Frasers rented the John Hicks House in Cambridge, which was owned by Harvard. It was here that Esther's interest in antiques and early American decoration flourished. While restoring the Hicks House , she found remnants of fifteen layers of wallpaper and became curious about what the original wallpaper had looked like. She went on to hand-reproduce the three oldest designs she had found. Her daughter, Diana, says her mother stripped the walls of many layers of wallpaper down to the original layer, which she then reproduced by recreating the pattern on linoleum blocks. She then printed it by placing the paper and inked block on the floor and standing on it to produce sufficient pressure for the print.

Her first article for *The Magazine Antiques*, entitled "The Golden Age of

Esther Stevens Fraser in her studio at the Hicks house in Cambridge. Photograph stamped June 1928.

Stencilling," was published in 1922. The following year, the Boston Traveler published an article on her research and restoration of the Hicks house.

About 1927, Harvard planned to tear down the entire block on which the Hicks house stood to build a gymnasium. Esther Stevens Fraser "rallied all the antiquarians in Cambridge and Boston to persuade Harvard to save the house. They reluctantly consented, and the house was moved in two sections to its present location on the corner of Boylston and South Streets two blocks away. This was a prodigious feat in those days involving mule power and huge rollers resembling telephone poles, and progressively raising it on timbers to keep it from cracking as it was moved down an incline. The house is now the library for the Harvard dormitory (Kirkland House) next to it."[6] Because the house was moved with all of the furnishings inside, the only insurance the Frasers could get for the move was marine insurance.

The Frasers lived in the John Hicks House with their two daughters, Diana and Constance, until 1930 when Cecil Fraser decided to leave Harvard. Unable to find an available antique house in Cambridge to house the antiques she and her husband had collected, Esther found a house in Duxbury, MA, about fifty miles away. It was known as Hall's Tavern, which had been built between 1790 and 1804, and had been unoccupied for some time. The tavern was moved by a process called "flaking" in which the building is taken apart timber by timber. Margery

Hall Tavern in Duxbury, Mass., was purchased by the Frasers and moved to Cambridge in 1930.

Gray Gardens House, Cambridge, Mass. (known as Hall Tavern in Duxbury)

MacMillan writes in her history of old houses in Duxbury, the following account: "Mrs.Cecil E. Fraser...interested her husband, a professor at the Harvard Business School, in purchasing Hall's Tavern which he did for $4500. The house was flaked and took 35 truck loads, insured by Lloyds of London, and moved to Gray Gardens West in Cambridge at a cost of $18,850. The house was reconstructed under the watchful eye of Mr. Clarence W. Brazer, a student of colonial architecture and an authority on early American furniture." [7]

Constance Fraser, her younger daughter writes:

"Mother's interest in early Americana extended into most aspects of her life and activities. It seemed to keep developing and expanding. She was never idle. Her hands were always busy. When we would go for appointments—like to the orthodontist—she would open her bag, pull out a piece of carefully protected vellum on which she had previously drawn, and start cutting out her stencils while we waited. This always created curiosity amongst the others, and animated conversations and sharings passed the time pleasantly for all. Outings were often different. I remember big picnic baskets and lots of empty cardboard cartons, as mother and I and two carloads of her student friends took off for Sandwich. There among the ruins and dump hills of the old Sandwich Glass Factory, we dug and collected broken pieces of glass for half a day. There was hardly a better or surer way to authenticate Sandwich Glass for collectors than to have samples of the colors and the patterns they actually produced.

"Mother furnished our house with antiques, which meant that our children's furniture was antique as well. My desk was a small version of a Governor Winthrop desk. We had two children's chairs, one on either side of the fireplace. One was a stenciled Hitchcock rocker and the other a Sheraton style arm chair that she had painted yellow with gold leaf and a black and white design. Most of our toys were also antiques, dolls' beds and dressers, and a delicately painted china tea set and dishes. Two special favorites of mine were a William Tell bank, and a set of pick-up sticks made of whalebone. Loading a penny on William Tell's gun and releasing it by pressing his left foot always assured that the penny would fly across the little strip of ground toward the tree trunk where his son stood, and knock the apple off his son's head as the penny disappeared in the hole in the tree trunk. The pick-up sticks were carved out of whalebone by a whaler seaman, probably as he returned to port after an expedition. Many were intricately carved in different shapes along with the more ordinary harpoons. There were just enough hooks and barbs to make it a game of challenge and skill.

"When I used to go antiquing with mother, she encouraged my interest in miniatures and I would busy myself exploring for them while she pursued her searches. We had a lovely collection of miniatures that was housed in a small cabinet that sat on the top of her desk, and I still have some of them in a small glass display cabinet."

Esther continued writing articles for *The Magazine Antiques* and began teaching in 1931. She had met Clarence Brazer through the editor of *The Magazine Antiques* and worked with him on several projects during the

Esther with her two daughters, Connie (left) and Diana (right), July 1934.

Esther Stevens Brazer around 1940.

early thirties. They married in 1937 after her divorce from Cecil Fraser. The two daughters remained with their father.

When she divorced Cecil Fraser, Esther was already recognized as an authority on early American decoration. *The Magazine Antiques* had published twenty-one of her articles and she was being sought out for lectures and restorations. Nina Fletcher Little contacted her about restoration work in the Littles' summer home known as "Cogswell Grant," in Essex, Mass. Nina Fletcher Little would later dedicate her book, *American Decorative Wall Painting 1700-1850*, to the memory of Esther Stevens Brazer.

In 1938, Esther and Clarence Brazer purchased "Innerwick" in Flushing, New York. "Innerwick" was the perfect setting for Esther's decorative talents, her stenciled walls, her studio, her antiques and those of Clarence Brazer. She continued to write articles for *The Magazine Antiques*, and to teach students in Boston, New Haven, Hartford and elsewhere. In 1940, her book, *Early American Decoration*, was published. This was followed by two booklets: *Basic Instructions for Home Painting in the Early American Manner*, in 1943, and *Early American Designs for Stenciled Chairs*, in 1945.

In 1940, she was diagnosed with cancer. She died in Flushing, New York, on October 30, 1945 at the age of forty-seven. Following her death, several of her students established the Esther Stevens Brazer Guild. Clarence Brazer offered Esther's collection, her patterns, stencils, photographs, and research material to the Guild, and it became the start of the Society's collection.

Clarence Brazer remarried, and upon his death the antiques Esther had collected, and those of Clarence Brazer, went to auction to provide funds for Clarence Brazer's widow. All of the items were sold, with pieces going to Winterthur, the Duponts, and others. Clarence Brazer's widow died of a heart attack the second day of the auction. The proceeds went to the widow's heirs.

Sadly, Cecil Fraser died within a year and a half of Esther's death.

In reflecting on their mother's life, Diana and Constance, said, "Research and preservation of early American decoration was the most important thing in mother's life. While it was difficult (for us) as children to be of lesser importance in her life, still we admire the extraordinary brilliance of her talent, the extensiveness of her research, and her ability to teach and inspire others. We are grateful that others have continued it. We truly appreciate all that the HSEAD Guild has done to preserve and continue the work that our mother began."

Note: Esther Stevens was born April 7, 1898 (not April 17); her father was Samuel Augustus Stevens, according to Esther's daughters, Diana & Constance.

1, 2, 3, 6 Quotes from Diana Fraser Seamans' and Constance Frasers' letters to the author.

4,5 Esther Stevens Brazer, "My Story" *The Decorator*, Vol. V, No. 2.

7 Margery MacMillan, *Stopping Places along Duxbury Roads*, Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, 1991

Esther Stevens Brazer (R) is shown in costume at an Open House in her home, Innerwick (probably 1945). The woman on the left is believed to be Elizabeth Safford.

MEMBERS' "A" AWARDS

Saratoga Springs, New York
Spring 1996

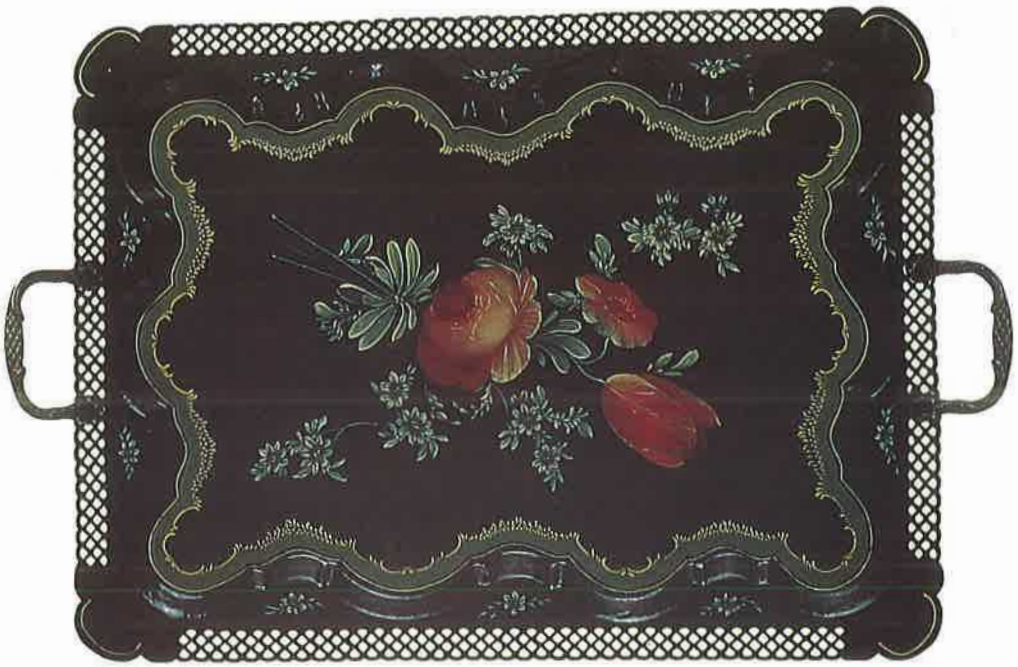
Joyce Holzer
STENCILING ON WOOD

Gene Gardner
STENCILING ON WOOD

Sandra Strong
COUNTRY PAINTING

Judy Thornton
COUNTRY PAINTING

Alice Smith
COUNTRY PAINTING



Phyllis Sherman
SPECIAL CLASS

Roberta Edrington
FREEHAND BRONZE

Roberta Edrington
FREEHAND BRONZE

Carol Heinz
GLASS WITH BORDER

Ann Baker
GLASS WITH BORDER

Judy Thornton
GLASS WITH BORDER

AWARDS

Saratoga Springs • Spring/Summer 1996

PRESIDENT'S AWARD BOX

Elaine Dalzell • Sandy Strong • Joan Austin • Polly Forcier

CAREER AWARD

Elizabeth Nibbelink

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Virginia (Gina) Martin

RESEARCH AWARD

Lois Tucker

APPLICANTS ACCEPTED AS NEW MEMBERS

Saratoga Springs, April, 1996

Mary Elizabeth Brown • Teresa Deno • Mary Jo Gimber
Jeanne M. Hopfenspirger • Parma Jewett• Natalie C. Malloy
Irene M. Reed • Margaret A. Wolk

MEMBERS' "B" AWARDS

Saratoga Springs, New York • Spring/Summer 1996

COUNTRY PAINTING
Dorothy Hallett • Dorma West

STENCILING ON TIN
Barbara Klimavich

GLASS WITH BORDER
Mary Ellen Halsey

PONTYPOOL
Shirley Berman

MASTER TEACHERS

Maryjane Clark, Norwell, MA
Astrid Donnellan, Hingham, MA
Helen Gross, Vero Beach, FL
Gina Martin, Vernon, CT
Margaret Watts, Toms River, NJ

MASTER CRAFTSMEN

Jessica Bond, Dorset, VT
Maryjane Clark, Norwell, MA
Astrid Donnellan, Hingham, MA
Roberta Edrington, Colonia, NJ
Helen Gross, Vero Beach, FL
Carolyn Hedge, Plymouth, MA
Cornelia Keegan, Hudson, OH
Deborah Lambeth, Schenectady, NY
Gina Martin, Vernon, CT
Phyllis Sherman, Glens Falls, NY
Louise Wallace, Fitchburg, MA
Margaret Watts, Toms River, NJ

SPECIALIST AWARD

Ann Baker, Westerly, RI
COUNTRY PAINTING

Lois Tucker, North Berwick, ME
COUNTRY PAINTING

ACTIVE CERTIFIED TEACHERS

JANICE ALDRICH, Keene, NH.....country painting, stenciling

SHIRLEY BERMAN, Carmel, NY.....Pontypool

JANE BOLSTER, Berwyn, PA.....country painting, stenciling, glass painting, freehand bronze

DORTIA DAVIS, Perkinsville,VT.....stenciling

ASTRID DONNELLAN, Hingham, MA.....country painting, stenciling Pontypool, glass painting, freehand bronze, metal leaf, Victorian flower painting

SHERRY DOTTER, Lebanon, NJ.....country painting

MARGARET EMERY, Averill Park, NY.....country painting, glass painting

DOLORES FURNARI, Brandon, VT.....stenciling, country painting

DOROTHY HALLETT, Bourne, MA.....country painting

BARBARA HOOD, Hammondsport, NY.....country painting

HARRIETTE HOOLAN, Oyster Bay, NY.....country painting, stenciling

HELGA JOHNSON, New City, NY.....country painting

CORNELIA KEEGAN, Hudson, OH.....country painting, stenciling, metal leaf, freehand bronze, Pontypool, glass painting

DORCAS LAYPORT, Mattapoisett, MA.....country painting

BETH MARTIN, Charlotte, NC.....country painting, glass painting

LUCINDA PERRIN, Canandaigua, NY.....country painting

CAROLYN REID, Averill Park, NY.....country painting

MONA ROWELL, Pepperell, MA.....stenciling, country painting, Pontypool

DOLORES SAMSELL, Warren, NJ.....country painting

NORMA STARK, Glens Falls, NY.....country painting

SARA TIFFANY, Hilton Head, SC.....country painting

LOIS TUCKER, North Berwick, ME.....country painting, stenciling

ALICE WALL, Plymouth, MA.....country painting, stenciling

MARGARET WATTS, Toms River, NJ.....stenciling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, glass painting, Pontypool, Victorian flower painting

Retired Certified Teachers who are willing to serve as Consultants:

ELIZABETH BACH, Glens Falls, NY.....country painting, stenciling, and freehand bronze

MARYJANE CLARK, Norwell, MA.....stenciling, country painting metal leaf, freehand bronze, Victorian flower painting

HELEN GROSS, Vero Beach, FL.....country painting, stenciling, Pontypool, glass painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, Victorian flower painting

GINA MARTIN, Vernon, CT.....stenciling, country painting, metal leaf, freehand bronze, glass painting, Pontypool, Victorian flower painting

HARRIET SYVERSEN, Closter, NJ.....stenciling, country painting, Pontypool

THE BOOKSHELF

Painted Dial Clocks 1770–1870

by Brian Loomes

Printed in England by
The Antique Collector's Club Ltd., Woodbridge, Suffolk. 1994.
279 pp, color and black and white photos. $65.00.

This book has two special qualities. First it is written in terms that the layman can understand. Consequently it will be enjoyed and be of value to a wide readership. Secondly, it covers the background in the development of the so-called white dial in many aspects including regional differences, cultural influences, and economic changes from the late eighteenth century up to 1870.

Beyond this, Brian Loomes provides a thorough background in distinguishing features of white dial clocks establishing what he calls Period One (1770-1800) and Period Three (1830-1870). Period Two is really a"transitional phase linking the different styles of Periods One and Two." He includes a check list of considerations to employ when attempting to ascertain the possible date of a clock. These include: arch decoration, corner decoration, numbering calendar, moon dial size, and hands.

Brian Loomes' first book devoted to clock dials was printed in 1974: *The White Dial Clock* which was the first and only book on this topic. His second book, *White Dial Clocks, The Complete Guide*, was a revised and enlarged version of his first book, published in 1981. *Painted Dial Clocks* is a "...completely new book covering painted dial clocks in greater detail incorporating all essential facts on the subject, including the latest researches and up-dating of the lists of dial makers." Many of the photographs are new and a good number of these are in color.

Of special interest (especially for those of us who are concerned with putting the appropriate dial in a given case), are the three chapters devot-

ed to styles of cases. These cover the same periods: I, II, and III described in earlier chapters.

Finally there are two charts. One shows long case clock dial features and the other shows long case clock case features. For instance, if you want a quick answer as to the time period when Roman numerals were used, when Arabic numerals were used, or when you could expect to find both, this chart will provide you with the appropriate information.

There is a wealth of new material in this excellent book.

—Jane Bolster

Long Case Painted Dial—Their History and Restoration

by M. F. Tennant

N.A.G. Press, London, 1995, 256 pp.
Available from Arlington Book Co.
2706 Elsmore Street, Fairfax, VA 22031-1409 Phone: (703) 280-2005

Throughout her career as a professional dial painter and restorer, Mrs. Tennant has scrupulously documented the dials that have come to her for restoration. Her book is a fine tribute to her years of work in this field.

Long Case Painted Dials covers the history, manufacture, decoration and distribution of tall case clock dials, starting around 1770 and continuing up until approximately 1870. Most of the text and pictures are devoted to various dial manufacturers in and around Birmingham, England. Irish, Scottish and American dial manufacturers are also mentioned. It's interesting to note that Mrs. Tennant refers to Robert Sayer's "The Ladies Amusement" by saying that "...the birds on the enamel dials seem to be directly copied from the fine engravings."

One section of the book covers the various types of damages that dials have incurred over the years, and discusses methods used to correct them. There are some good hints on techniques for restoring dials, but this book is not a "how-to" primer for the amateur. Her materials are identified by their English names (ex. "surgical spirits" is probably alcohol) and are not always easily translated into our American equivalents. While we do have many materials in common, it would be difficult to follow her instructions.

This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in clock dials. Mrs. Tennant has accumulated a wealth of information that she graciously shares with the reader.

—Carol B. Buonato

Red Bellows: Donated by Janet Miller to the HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art.

Pith Painting: Donated by Janet Hobbie to the HSEAD Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art.

Pith Painting

As early as 1700, the Chinese were producing work called pith painting. This work is similar to theorems executed in this country during the 18th and 19th centuries. Pith, made by the Chinese, is a thin paper-like material resembling the look and texture of velvet. It comes from the layer of pulp just under the outside bark of a tree. The pulp is pounded into tissue-thin sheets which provide the surface used for pith painting. A stenciling process was used to create the subject base to which exquisitely hand-painted watercolor details were added. This technique is believed to be the forerunner of those used in theorem painting in this country.

THE MALIGNED YANKEE PEDDLER

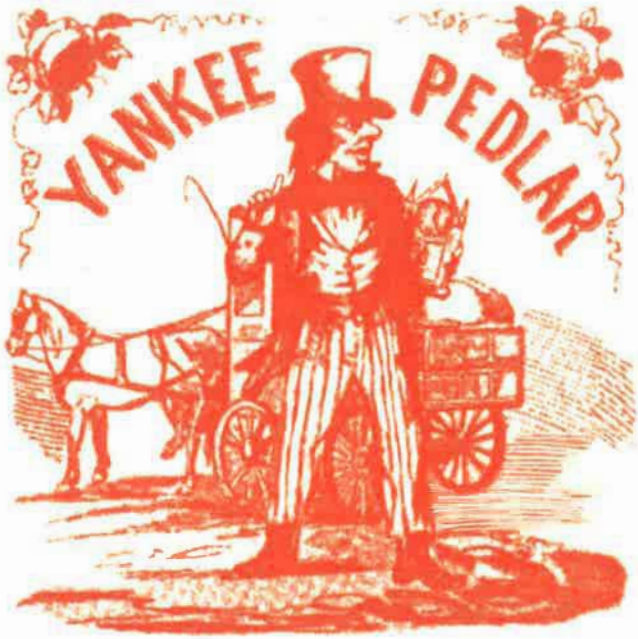
by Lois M. Tucker

PART I

I have always wondered if I might have something in my genes that attracts me to tinware. Interestingly I discovered a few years ago that my great-grandfather, Elijah B. Chase, was a tin peddler in Saratoga County, New York at the turn of this century. Most of the older family members of whom I might have inquired about him were gone, but I did get the impression that the family was not especially proud of his occupation. Obviously peddling was not highly regarded as a profession, and the stigma associated with the peddler intrigued me enough to wish to learn how that attitude may have come to pass. Searching back a century before Elijah went on the road, an appreciation of the times and the evolution of the popular opinion of the peddler began to take shape.

Peddling has been practiced for centuries. It was the simplest means to get a product to the consumer. In colonial America, goods shipped from England and other nations were usually received directly by the merchants in the larger cities. A peddler would purchase various small items from the merchant, pack them in baskets or small trunks that he could carry on his back, and trek off to the small farms and towns that had no merchant readily accessible to them. Edward Pattison, a Scottish immigrant in 1740, was the first practicing tinsmith in this country. He peddled his tinware from Berlin, Connecticut in this fashion, along with small imported notions. He probably never realized that he was starting a peddling boom, but it was the manufacture of tinware that really made peddling a major business, and Connecticut tinware specifically gave rise to the Yankee Peddler.

Peddlers in the earliest period were usually self-employed. By the end of the American Revolution, the new republic addressed the problem of travel, and began improving roads and building turnpikes. It became possible for travel to be done by horse and wagon, and it opened up a much larger market for the peddlers. Rivers and lakes were also being connected by canals. The peddler could now travel as far as 1,500 miles



This illustration of the Yankee pedlar was fashioned from the fictional character 'Sam Slick'. Author Thomas Haliburton's *The Clockmaker; or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick of Slickville*, first published in 1838, told of the escapades of the smooth talking, not-so-honest clock pedlar.

in a season.[1] A two-horse wagon could haul two tons of tinware.[2] A wagon load could represent as much as $600 worth of tin or $2,000 worth of general goods.[3] The whole system of peddling changed and expanded due to the easier travel on the new turnpikes.

The tinsmiths developed considerable flexibility as their sales greatly increased. By working more tinners at a time, enough goods could be produced to keep twenty-five peddlers supplied for the season. The tinner, in many cases, also became a merchant. He would supply his peddlers with Yankee notions, as well as his tinware. Other craftsmen congregated in tin centers, such as Berlin, to sell their wares to the tinman-merchant. Comb makers, pewterers and brass workers, to name a few, settled in the growing towns. Many other towns in the Berlin area joined in this prosperous business venture including Meriden, Farmington, and Middletown. The town of Bristol was a clock center, but peddlers there also wanted to carry

1. Clouette and Roth. Bristol, Connecticut, *A Bicentennial History*. p. 49.
2. Richardson Wright. *Hawkers & Walkers in Early America*. p. 72.
3. Clouette and Roth. *op. cit.*, p. 49.

tinware and other types of marketable items, and so various craftsmen settled in Bristol as well. This scene was happening all over New England, but Berlin, Connecticut was the country's peddling capitol.

The peddler traversed regular routes, planned according to the topography of the land as well as to the seasons. By the early 1800s the manufacturing of tinware was moved to the South for the winter months. The tin workers would set up shop in southern towns, such as Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah, to make their tinware on site. The small notions would be brought with them from Connecticut to have on hand for the peddler's wagon. The peddlers usually would work for a tinner as his agent, rather than being self-employed as in the earlier period. Contracts were drawn up between the tinman and his peddler such as the following:

> Articles of agreement made and entered into by and between William and Samuel Yale of Meriden in New Haven county on the one part and Amos Francis of Wallingford in said county on the other part witnesseth, viz. I the said Amos Francis agree on my part to hawk, peddle, and vend such articles as the said Yales shall deliver me for the purpose in any part of the United States they shall see fit to send me for the term of ten months from the 1st day of October next and to furnish a good horse, waggon and harness and to be faithful in their said employ during said term of time to be fully completed and ended; And we the said William and Samuel agree to pay the said Amos Francis for his services thirty dollars per month certain wages, forty dollars per month, if said Francis clears it over and above the first cost of his load and expenses, and one-half of all profits over and above said forty dollars that he, the said Francis, shall actually clear. Dated at Meriden, this 3rd day of Sept. 1816.[4]

The following contract of February 14, 1831, between Erastus Hodges, a Connecticut clock maker, and his peddler Abel Wetmore shows an arrangement that was quite different from the tin peddler's contract.

> This agreement made this day between Abel S. Wetmore of Winchester of one part and Erastus Hodges of Torrington of the other part witnessth that the said Abel S. Wetmore agrees to furnish himself with a good substantial horse and harness and also devote his own services to the business of travelling for the purpose of selling clocks and other merchandise or any other business that the parties agree upon for one year from this date.

4. C. Bancroft Gillespie. *An Historic Record and Pictorial Description of the Town of Meriden Connecticut and Men Who Have Made It*, cited on p. 347.

He is to be diligent, faithful, sober, and industrious in the business and frugal in his expenses, and to keep good and regular accounts of notes and money and all other property when requested by said Hodges. He is not to be required to travel outside of the United States and is at liberty to return home once in three months as the business may require. Said Hodges on his part agrees to furnish a good substantial wagon, and other vehicles such as may be wanted to convey clocks and other goods for him to use, and to pay him for all the services so rendered at the rate of twenty-five dollars per month, and I pay necessary expenses and for shoeing his horse and mending his harness.[5]

The earliest peddlers were youthful ambitious men of an adventurous nature. The rigors of the job made it necessary for the young to undertake the challenge. Months away from home and family, the hardships of traveling, as well as the dangers from man and animal, discouraged the older, and more conscientious, men from engaging in peddling. The young men were hardy but also had fewer scruples and were less concerned with the honesty of their sales pitch, especially when hawking to people whom they would most likely never see again. They were generally strong on sweet talk and flattery, but would manage to leave promptly after completing their sale. Obviously a few bad experiences could initiate a general perception that all peddlers were dishonest charlatans. They were often accused of selling wooden nutmegs and cucumber seeds, oak-leaf cigars, clocks that wouldn't run, tinware that leaked, or realistically painted basswood hams.

As the turnpikes opened up and travel by wagon became possible, older men took up the peddling trade. There would most likely have been some reprobates in this more mature group too, but probably not nearly the percentage there had been previously. Nonetheless, the villainous reputation of the peddler was already established, and it would never be totally restored. Even today we look cautiously at any traveling salesman who knocks on our door.

Many articles and books of the nineteenth century attacked the character of the peddler. In 1799 the *Connecticut Courant*, a newspaper of the Hartford area, published the following article that was signed "A Real Patriot":

Pedling in general, and especially tin-pedling is a growing evil, and P. 42 →

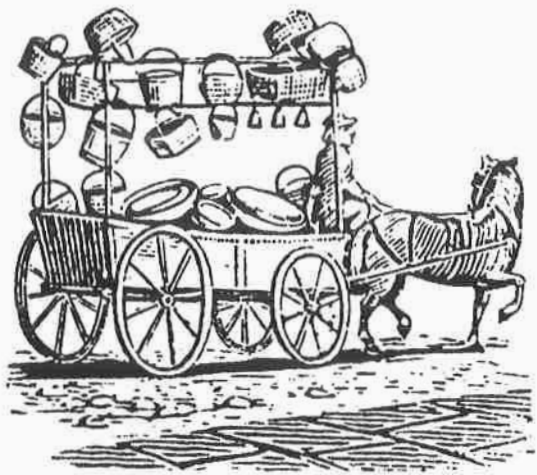
5. Theodore B. Hodges. *Erastus Hodges 1781-1847*, pp. 202-203.

has already become very pernicious to this state. It has injured, if not ruined the morals of a large proportion of young men in many of our towns, and is highly mischievous in its direst and almost universal operation.

The object of the Pedlar is to get money; it is his interest to deceive and impose on his customers, and to practise all the arts of knavery; being generally unknown, he has no character to support, and not a single restraint to protect his integrity, but a conscience stunned with the outcries of avarice. The nature of his business effectually excludes him from the society of respectable men, subjects him to the company of the most depraved, and exposes him to the arts of designing individuals. He learns to lie and cheat as that branch of his profession, on which his success principally depends, and to drink, swear and gamble by the company he keeps. His large profits at times lead to dissipation, and he soon despises the moderate incomes of honest industry, so that he can never again compose himself to any regular calling.

It is a fact that many, if not most of them boast of their profligacy and glory in their address at imposing on the ignorant and unsuspicious; such certainly are already qualified for horse-stealing, or any other summary way to obtain supplies, when drinking, gaming or accident shall make it convenient.

It therefore needs no uncommon foresight to predict that from this school of dishonesty, our prisons will soon be crowded, and that of the remainder, nine out of ten will at fifty years old be accounted the meanest class of men, without industry, temperance, truth or economy, bad husbands, bad fathers, bad neighbors, and bad members of society. This business therefore is contrary to the interest of the state; and it is wished that it may be speedily considered by the legislature. People will then be better supplied with tin-ware, and at a cheaper rate by merchants, whose profession and duty it is to be the factors of the country.



Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University, published his *Travels in New England and New York*, in 1823. In this work he maligned the peddler, saying "many of the young men employed in this business part at an early period with both modesty and

principle. Their sobriety is exchanged for cunning, and their decent behavior for coarse impudence." The peddler had become a target for any traveler, including visitors from Europe. In 1833 Thomas Hamilton, the English author of *Men and Manners in America*, said: "The whole race of Yankee peddlers in particular are proverbial for dishonesty. They go forth annually in the thousands to lie, cheat, swindle, in short, to get possession of their neighbor's property in any manner it can be done with impunity. Their ingenuity in deception is confessedly very great. They warrant broken watches to be the best time-keepers in the world, sell pinchbeck trinkets for gold, and always have a large assortment of wooden nutmegs and stagnant barometers." Some peddlers even cheated their own suppliers. Erastus Hodges employed a clock peddler, a Mr. George Carr, who absconded with most of the funds he had collected on a northern Maine trip in 1827.

It is interesting to note that although peddling in general was maligned, it was specifically the tin peddlers who received the worst treatment from the arbiters of polite society. Another publication of the nineteenth century contained:

> The Yankee Peddler must be a man intimately acquainted with "human nature"; and his manners must be of that flexible kind which adjusts itself to all ages, both sexes and to all conditions. He must be grave and respectful with the clergyman, intelligent and polite with the squire, shrewd with the lawyer, jovial with the politician, frank and insinuating with the farmer, and full of flattery and devotion to the girls... Some individuals devote themselves to a particular article; one man is a faithful follower of Father Time, and deals only in clocks. Much dreaded is he by many that fear him, distrust him, yet patronize him. Another deals in confectionery; he is a favorite with the girls, with whom he drives sharp bargains while the "old man" is absent in the field; a present of an ounce of snuff wins the heart of the "old lady." The tin peddler, who barters for rags in lieu of money, is a man in very bad repute among housewives; and yet somehow he contrives to do a thriving business. "The horrid tin pedler," as he is called, rarely calls at a house without effecting his object; and many a lovely housewife's sideboard would look grim and dismal were it not replenished and rendered glittering by the visits of the tin peddler.[6]

The southern states were particularly resentful of the peddler, and it is said that he is the reason for "Damnyankee" becoming one word. The peddlers were often referred to as "those Damnyankees from Connecticut." It was

6. Penrose Scull. *From Peddlers To Merchant Princes*, p. 32.

stated in *The Baltimore Niles Weekly Register* in an 1820 editorial that "Some of the southern states are jealous of the designs of the northern traveling peddlers. They are said to have increased of late to an alarming degree." It was reported in a Charleston paper of the same period that "If, as may be the case, these men should be political missionaries, they cannot be stopped too soon in their nefarious career."

The peddling business was generally a profitable venture for the adventurous young man, and there have been many well-known business magnates who started as a peddler in their early days. Adam Gimbel, the founder of Gimbel Brothers department stores peddled wares in Indiana. B.T. Babbitt, manufacturer of a famous soap, had been a peddler. C.P. Huntington, a co-founder of the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads peddled his way across the country. John Boynton, founder of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, started as a tin peddler. Even the notorious Benedict Arnold peddled among the Dutch in the Hudson valley and up into Canada.

Poor Elijah! As a result of my research I have gained considerable insight into the reason my great-grandfather was not a familiar topic of conversation at our family table. I can see now how the Yankee Peddler gained the rather sinister reputation that has remained with him to this day. It may have been unjust that the entire community of peddlers was condemned because of the knavery of a few, but, merited or not, this unsavory reputation continued to grow as long as there were peddlers traveling the countryside. In a future issue of *THE DECORATOR*, we will take a look at the challenge of peddling from the practitioner's point of view.

(To be continued)
Bibliography will follow Part 2

AMERICAN PAINTED TINWARE

A Guide To Its Identification

By Gina Martin & Lois Tucker

Volume I, available this winter, covers the beginning of the tin industry in Berlin, Connecticut and proceeds to the Upson Shop in Marion, CT, and the North and Butler Shops in New York.

With over 200 color plates of original tinware and a comprehensive identification guide including more than 600 line drawings, the authors trace the development of American painted tinware from its inception in the mid–18th century.

- Prepublication price until October 1, 1996—$35.00
- Price after October 1, 1996—$42.50

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13200 Forest Drive, Bowie, Md. 20715
301-464-8079

SCHNADER CHAIR PATTERNS

Freehand bronze and painted chair patterns are available by ordering by number from the list your Chapter has on file, or from the color display in the Exhibition Room at the Meeting.

Send $5.50 per pattern to:
Ruth Adam, 1 Chowning Place, Lexington, SC 29072

GOLD LEAF

SURFACE GLASS PATENT SILVER COMPOSITION ALUMINUM ROLL GOLD	M. SWIFT & SONS, INC. 10 LOVE LANE HARTFORD, CT 06141 TEL: 1-800-628-0380 FAX: 1-860-249-5934

Frances.