The Decorator

Volume LI No. 2 Ogunquit, ME Spring 1997

Journal of the

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Front cover photograph: NY Filley coffee pot. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of David A. Schorsch American Antiques, Inc.

Back cover photograph: Pennsylvania coffee pot. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of David A. Schorsch American Antiques, Inc.

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Contents

The Decorator is published twice a year by The Historical Society of Early American Decoration. Subscription rate is $15.00 for two issues (add $3 per year for Canada).

Make check payable to HSEAD, Inc., and mail to:
Lois Tucker
Box 429
No. Berwick, ME 03906

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.

Mission Statement

Vision: HSEAD will be, and will become recognized as, a preeminent national authority on early American decoration.

Mission: HSEAD will maintain a core membership of practicing guild artists supported by active programs of education, research, and exhibitions to perpetuate and expand the unique skills and knowledge of early American decoration.

Business Address:

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.
c/o Beverly McCarthy, Administrative Assistant
61 West 62nd Street, 3rd floor
New York, New York 10023-7015
212-586-6663

Editor's Notes

The long awaited book on how to identify country tin is in production and should be available before fall. Gina Martin began the project more than twenty years ago. Since then, she has been assisted by Avis Heatherington, Mona Rowell and Lois Tucker.

In pulling this project together and getting the material into book form, Lois Tucker has done a great deal of research. She has uncovered some new information on the Pattisons which is included in the new book: *American Painted Tinware: A Guide to Its Identification.* Some of that information is included in this issue of *The Decorator.*

David Schorsch who lectured on decorated tinware and furniture at our meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York, has kindly let us use photographs of the two coffee pots shown on the front and back covers of this issue. We appreciate his generosity in sharing his collection of photographs, and knowledge, with HSEAD.

An article on Wolverhampton and the Old Hall Japan works by Yvonne Jones is reprinted from the British magazine *Antique Collecting.* It is an informative and beautifully illustrated piece.

Health Hazards in the Studio is a timely and important article for all painters. It includes tips from an artist who developed health problems from exposure to certain paints, solvents, etc.

Beginning with this issue, we will add two new features: "Judging & Standards," a column written by the Judging chairs, and "MJ's Notebook," with notes from Maryjane Clark.

When space permits, an original pattern or motifs will be used. A pattern traced by Esther Stevens Brazer from an original one sheet waiter can be found on page 29. It is part of the Brazer Collection now at the Museum of American Folk Art.

The line drawing on page 34 of a motif from a gold leaf tray was done by Elaine Dalzell. Other motifs from the tray will be used in future issues of *The Decorator.*

Shirley S. Baer, Editor

Schedule of HSEAD, Inc.
Membership Dues
Effective July 1, 1990

Guild Members	$35.00
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Awards

President's Award Box

Diane Stone Margaret Call

Career

Astrid Donnellan

Specialist - Freehand Bronze

Roberta Edrington

Certifications

Stenciling
Dorothy Hamblett

Future Meetings

Fall Meeting 1997
Williamsburg, VA
September 21-23, 1997 (Sunday-Tuesday)

Spring Meeting 1998
Nashua, NH
April 24-26, 1998 (Friday-Sunday)

Freehand bronze tray by Roberta Edrington included in Specialist Award display, Ogunquit, 1997.

Edward Pattison, First American Tinsmith

by Lois Tucker

An excerpt from Chapter 1 of
American Painted Tinware: A Guide to Its Identification

The origin of tinware manufacture in America is attributed to Edward Pattison. It is impossible today to ascertain how many individual tinshops were operating in the Berlin area. As Edward Pattison trained the local men in the trade, they in turn took on apprentices to learn the tin business. This process continued, multiplied, and produced untold numbers of tinmen working within this area of Connecticut. The identity of the vast majority of them is lost in obscurity. Those who had a successful business that lasted for a number of years generally made their mark on the history of Berlin so that some information of their existence and operations can be found in the local records and among archival material.

In 1813 the major tinners in Berlin decided that it was necessary for them to reach an agreement on the pricing of their products. On June 16 a list of the minimum price at which a piece of plain or japanned tinware would be sold was agreed upon by Shubael Pattison, Orin Beckley, Samuel Pattison, John Dunham, Samuel Gilbert, John Goodrich Sr., Aziel Belden, John Buckman, John Hubbard, Benjamin Wilcox, Samuel Kelsey, and Patrick Clark...

The Berlin trunk shown above is unusual in its design and excellent condition. Owned by Lois Tucker.

Pattison Family

According to Kenneth Manning Pattison: "In the early 1700s Edward Pattison together with his wife and children fled to Dungannon, County of Tyrone in Northern Ireland to escape the religious and political persecution that was so rampant in his native Scotland. It was his plan to emigrate to the North American colonies. There he planned to use his knowledge of tinware manufacturing to support his family and establish a home for his wife and five children. Unfortunately the mother died shortly after their arrival in Ireland. In 1738 the eldest son Edward journeyed to Boston and spent some time making enquiries for the family. In his absence tragedy struck again with the death of the father. Returning to Ireland, Edward persuaded his brothers and sisters that opportunities in the colonies would be to their liking. Preparations made and passage purchased, Edward, William, Anna, Noah and Jennie embarked. Landing on the east coast they proceeded overland to the Connecticut Colony and the area now called Berlin."[1]

William worked with Edward in the tin business during the early years, but he eventually turned to blacksmithing in order to make the tools required by the growing number of tinsmiths.[2] He settled first in Wethersfield, then in Kensington, New Britain and Worthington. Berlin itself had been incorporated from these latter three parishes in 1785. William married Sarah Dunham and in later years was rated as one of the wealthiest men in his parish. Edward's sister, Anna, who was 16 years old when she emigrated, married Amos Galpin of Berlin in 1745. Noah and Jennie Pattison eventually moved to the southern states.

Edward Pattison established his tinware business soon after his arrival in Berlin. It would seem likely that he brought his supplies with him. The means for a family to make a living in the New World would be a major consideration for any who planned to emigrate. The supplies or necessary tools needed for this livelihood would undoubtedly account for a large part of their freight.

Edward's home was on Hart Street (later named Lower Lane) and his shop, which his neighbors called the Bang-All, was next to the house. In order to sell his wares, he would load his utensils into baskets fitted on his horse, and then travel from house to house in the area. His business grew, and by 1760 he hired other men to help him and to learn the art of the whitesmith. Since the tinplate that Edward used was imported from Great Britain, the Revolutionary War put a temporary halt to Edward's enterprise. Whether or not Edward served in the Revolution is unclear. The muster rolls list both an Edward and a William, but there is no indication as to which Edward and William this is. The names could

1 Pattison, Kenneth Manning, Pattison- *A Family Chronicle 1480-1992*, p. 23.
2 Ibid., p. 36.

refer to Edward's and William's sons, who were 17 and 16 years old respectively at the start of the war. The fact that Edward wrote his will in July 1776 might indicate that he planned to serve, if only briefly. During part of the war, he peddled notions such as scissors, thimbles, buttons, pins, combs and brass.[3]

When the war was over, Edward resumed tinsmithing and now hired peddlers to carry the tinware to the South and West. The men Edward had trained were also making tin to be peddled far and wide, as well as training more apprentices themselves. The business became a large enterprise for the town, and was a major factor in the success of Berlin's becoming a large commercial center for all types of trade common for that period. By the early 1820s, Berlin industries that correlated with the tin business consisted of 12 tinshops, 6 tinner's tools shops, 9 blacksmiths, and 9 carriage and wagon makers. Many other businesses thrived in the town as well: such as cabinet and carpenter shops; clock and watch shops; hat factory; milliner, tailor, and dress shops; cobbler shops; book binderies; tanneries; drug, grocery, dry goods, and general merchandise stores; cider mills; comb maker shop; cooper shop; slaughter house; spectacle maker shop; stove factories; the brandy distillery, taverns and saloons; and a whipping post.

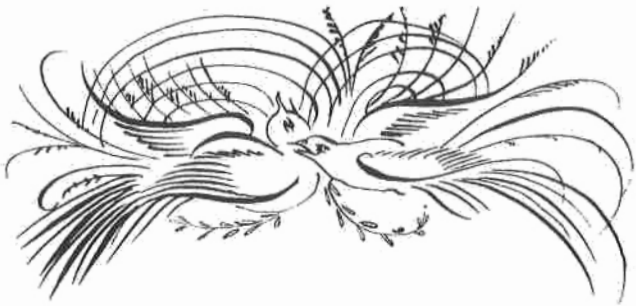
In 1751 Edward Pattison (circa 1720-1787) married Elizabeth Hills (circa 1732-1804). They had six children: Rhoda (b.1755), Lucretia (b. 1757), Edward (b.1759), Lois (b.1762), Shubael (b. 1764), and Elizabeth (b. 1768). Edward died in 1787, and his will left his tin business to his two sons. Although we have no record of the types of tinware that Edward produced, his estate inventory does list some items: eight tin canisters, four tin kettles, tin tea kettle, two tin candlesticks, a load of tin, a number of tin patterns, and tinner's tools.

Shubael Pattison (1764-1828) and Edward Pattison Jr. (1759-1809) continued their father's business but it is not known if Edward Jr. remained with his brother for long. He had died insolvent and many of the local tinmen were listed among the creditors against his estate. This might imply that he was not a part of his brother's successful business at the time of his death. In 1797 Shubael built a larger shop on the south corner of his land, and was advertising under the name of Shubael Pattison and Samuel Porter III. The partnership with Samuel Porter (1762-1818) lasted until a few years before Samuel's death. Shubael then became associated with his son-in-law, Elisha Peck, who served as proprietor of the general mercantile store. For a time Patrick Clark, a Meriden tinner, had been associated with Pattison and Porter enterprise. Shubael's business was large and successful; and his peddlers and their wagon loads were even sent into Canada to sell, and to trade for furs. Shubael is said to have been accompanied by John Jacob Astor on some of the Cana-

3 Kern, Laura, *Berlin Ct: What Is Special About It?*

dian trips. With the furs acquired on these trips, he would hire girls from the Berlin area to make muffs, mittens, and other articles for the store.

In 1787 Shubael married Sarah Hart (1769-1846), the daughter of Zachariah Hart, his father's neighbor. They had ten children, eight of whom survived: Harriet (1788-1847), Chloe (b. 1790), Samuel (b. 1792), Lucy (b. 1794), Ira (1796-1818), Julia (b. 1799), Sarah (b.1802), and Lois (b. 1807). His son Samuel and two of his sons-in-law, Elisha Peck and Orin Beckley, were very much involved with Shubael in the business.



Judging and Standards

by Roberta Edrington

Country Painting

If in doubt that the amount of striping is sufficient, a stripe should be put on the back or bottom of the piece, following the lines of construction.

Freehand Bronze

Freehand bronzed trays with flower petals outlined in gold leaf must contain other freehand bronze units large enough to be judged.

Reminder: Please read and study the Standard's category requirements before completing a piece.

The Wolverhampton Style

Products of the Old Hall Japan Works

by Yvonne Jones

The manufacture of articles from papier mâché, tin, wood, iron and slate, and their subsequent finishing or 'japanning' with thick 'japan' varnish, was an important Midlands industry during the 18th and 19th centuries. Most japanners concentrated on the manufacture of papier mâché and tinware, and the best remembered today are the Birmingham factories of Henry Clay and their ultimate successors, Jennens & Bettridge; in fact any fine but unmarked articles are frequently and unhesitatingly attributed to these factories or, in the case of tinware, to the Pontypool Japan Works in South Wales. Such assumptions can be very misleading as may be seen by focusing upon only one of their rival firms: the Old Hall Japan Works in Wolverhampton.

The Wolverhampton japanners were best known for the production of tinware and seem not to have taken up the manufacture of papier mâché until late in the 18th century or possibly early 19th century. Oval painted trays, often quite indistinguishable from those made at Pontypool, were the mainstays of the early period (figure 1), while trays of various shapes and sizes, coal vases, toilet sets and trunks of every type, formed the bulk of later output. By 1817, Wolverhampton goods were in demand at home and abroad, and several hundred hands were employed

Plate 1. Study for a Memorial to Earl Howe, a tin-plate panel painted by Edward Bird, probably at the Japan & Pontypool Manufactory, Bristol, c.1799, 12in. x 9⅝in. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton, Photo: Phoebe Phillips Editions Ltd.)

Figure 1 Tin tray painted with "Rebecca at the Well" and made by Obadiah & William Ryton at the Old Hall Japan Works, Wolverhampton, c. 1800, 22in. x 28in. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

'in making the most elegant and expensive tea-trays, both paper and iron, plate warmers, tea and coffee pots, caddies, inkstands etc...' The industry became such an important staple of the district, that when Queen Victoria visited in 1866 to unveil the statue of her late Consort, Prince Albert, one of three triumphal archways erected to symbolise the source of the town's prosperity, was devoted to japanned ware. Coal vases, baths, papier mâché goods and general hardware supplied by the Old Hall Works and its close rival, the Merridale Works, were 'arranged in a very artistic design' over the entire archway, 'the effect of which was very pleasing and quite unique'.

The Old Hall Works was picturesquely set in a moated Elizabethan mansion which had stood empty for a number of years before Taylor & Jones established a factory there in about 1767, to make japanned tinware. It was a relatively short-lived concern and they were succeeded by William and Obadiah Ryton in 1783.

By contemporary standards, the Ryton factory was a substantial operation with twenty-three apprentices, the most celebrated of whom was Edward Bird (1772-1819), who was taken on at the age of thirteen or fourteen to paint tea trays. The tin rounder in figure 2, is traditionally thought to have been painted by Bird at the Old Hall, but most of the japanned articles which can be reliably attributed to him, date from the period when he was employed at the Japan & Pontypool Manufactory, on Temple Back, Bristol (plate 1). Cuthbert Bede, writing in 1880 about early painted tea trays, commented that he had 'seen at Wolverhampton some of Bird's tea-trays which, it is needless to say, were distinguished by the excellence of the central painting, and which were highly prized by their possessors, who in some cases, had cut out the painting and had it framed

Figure 2. Tinplate rounder said to have been painted by Edward Bird, late 18th century, 9 in. diameter. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

like a picture.' The tray illustrated here (figure 3), which is spuriously signed Edward Bird, appears to have suffered such a fate.

The Rytons also employed George Wallis (1811-1891) to paint the centres of their best trays. Although there is no record of any trays painted by Wallis for the Old Hall, he is known to have designed several articles for Rytons, including an oval scalloped iron tray shape in honour of Queen Victoria's coronation in 1837. Wallis had left Wolverhampton in 1832, but returned in 1838 to organise the Exhibition of Art & Manufacture at which several local japanners exhibited. He was later appointed Keeper of the Art Treasures at South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), but continued to write critical essays and comments upon the japanning industry.

Figure 3 (Right). Tin tray base painted with a scene from Lawrence Sterne's 'Tristam Shandy', made at the Old Hall, late 18th century, 24in. x 31in. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton).

Some idea of the goods made during the Ryton partnership may be gleaned from a letter written by Obadiah during a selling trip in 1792, informing his brother that he had sold 'a good many trays and most of the sort that get the most money', (figure 1). This would have pleased William whose principle of business was ' . . . to manufacture a good article, pay a good price to his workmen and to expect a reasonable return from his customer'. In the same letter, Obadiah expressed his concern that the factory should stock up with a good supply of quadrille sets (known today as counter trays) and oval candlesticks, and wrote of his optimism in securing an order for jacks. The mention of kitchen jacks for roasting meat is especially interesting for throughout the history of the industry japanners could not rely on decorative wares alone and most factories produced a wide range of utilitarian articles to bolster trade.

Figure 5. Japanned papier mâché tray painted with flowers and sprigged in gilt and colour. Made by Walton & Co., at the Old Hall, Wolverhampton, c. 1845. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

Figure 4. Tin tray with yellow crystallised ground printed in black; maker unknown. Second half 19th century, 10 1/4in. diameter. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

In 1820, two years after his brother's death, William Ryton was joined in partnership by Benjamin Walton whose surname became synonymous with the Old Hall for the remainder of its history. Ryton & Walton were soon granted a licence to make papier mâché tea trays and by 1827, advertised themselves as 'japanners of all kinds of Pontipool goods, also general japanners on paper, tin and iron, tin and iron-plate workers, manufacturers of Vallet's chrystallised *(sic)* articles, also of steel saddle trees and panels...' In common with other japanners at the time, Ryton & Walton used the name 'Pontipool' to distinguish finely decorated japanned tinware from more utilitarian, everyday articles; its use did not indicate any link with the Welsh factory.

The small tray shown in figure 4 belongs to a group known as 'crystallised tinware'. It was made according to the patent granted to Louis Felix Vallet of London, in 1817, which Ryton & Walton mentioned in their advertisement. The crystalline effect was achieved by washing

Figure 6. Engraved paper label from the back of a 'Patent Crystal Tray', c. 1850. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

the blank or undecorated article with warm soapy water, rinsing it and then heating and coating the surface with a mixture of water and muriatic and sulphuric acids, prior to staining it with colours such as verdigris, lake or yellow. It remained a popular style of decoration for many years and was no doubt also adopted by other manufacturers.

The mark 'Ryton & Walton, Wolverhampton' is sometimes found printed in white Gothic script on the bases of so called rectangular 'sandwich-edge' trays. These trays, with slightly everted shallow edges 'sandwiched' between their bases and broad horizontal edges, come in a variety of sizes and are generally of good quality. As they appear never to show the marks of other manufacturers, it is tempting to suggest that all papier mâché trays of this shape and period (1820-42), were made by this firm'.* A set of travellers' samples (in a private collection in America) showing small edge sections of such trays, displays a selection of rich gold leaf border patterns and demonstrates the quality of workmanship customarily associated with them.

Benjamin Walton became sole proprietor of the Old Hall Works in 1842. He set about changing the styles of decoration and in particular, introduced a method of 'bronzing', '...a new and pleasing style of ornamentation (which) had a marvellous run for a number of years', and came to be known as 'the Wolverhampton style', although it was quickly copied by rival firms in Birmingham. Rich, glittering effects were '...obtained by judicious use of transparent colour upon pure gold and silver' and later, by using aluminium as a base. Bronzing was thought especially suitable for 'a selection of interior and exterior views of the old baronial halls of England, and the various cathedrals and landscapes too, were admirably rendered in the same material, the skies in particular being singularly effective and

Figure 7. Flat tin-plate samples of tea caddy fronts, made at the Old Hall Works, mid-19th century, 4 3/4in. x 6 1/2 in. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

* Author's Note, May 1997: Since writing this, I have seen a similarly shaped tray marked Jennens & Bettridge.

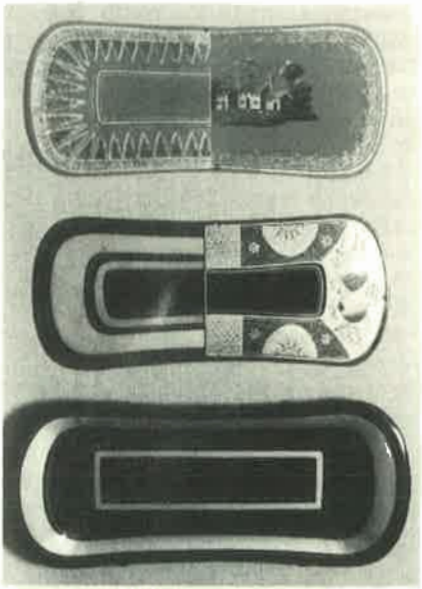


Figure 8. Flat tin-plate samples of snuffer trays, made at the Old Hall Works, mid-19th century, and a snuffers tray of similar type (tray: 4 1/2 in. x 10 1/2 in.). (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton)

natural'. An alternative method, and more restrained use of bronzing may be seen in figure 5.

Walton also brought in new artists, the most respected of whom was Edwin Haselar, whose standing was such that he was given his own workshop and six apprentices. Haselar had worked previously for Jennens & Bettridge in Birmingham, where he had introduced 'natural' flower painting in the centre of articles. This style was contemporary with developments in ceramic decoration and it is thus not surprising that Walton looked to the Potteries to find new artists. For example, in the collection of West Midlands japanned ware at Bantock House Museum in Wolverhampton is a very large papier mâché panel made at the Old Hall and decorated with a basket of flowers, which is said to have been painted by Richard Steele, a former ceramic artist. Another artist, named Voss, was brought over from Dusseldorf to paint landscapes and

Plate 2. Ladies cabinet in the 'Moresque' style (height 14 1/2 in.), and a pair of 'Etruscan' vases (height 12 1/2 in.), each made from papier mâché at the Old Hall Works, Wolverhampton, c. 1851. (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton. Photo: Phoebe Phillips Editions Ltd.)

is said to have visited popular beauty spots such as Dovedale, Llangollen and the Conway Estuary, for his pictures.

B. Walton & Co. was declared bankrupt during the depression of the mid-1840s and its stock was auctioned in a sale which lasted twenty-one days. It attracted buyers from all over the country and doubtless rival firms bought undecorated articles to be finished in their own factories. The sale was subsequently found to have been unnecessary and the firm was revived in 1847 by Benjamin's son, as Frederick Walton & Co.

Figure 9. An employee at the Old Hall Works proudly showing a tin-plate dish cover; mid-19th century. (Private collection)

'Frederick Walton proved himself to be a man of great capacity. He improved the business considerably, introducing many much needed and important reforms.' The firm had recovered sufficiently by 1849 to exhibit at the Birmingham Exposition of Art when it was said of their display that 'the brilliant execution of the painting and the great cleverness and judgement with which the ornamental lines and patterns are adapted to the forms they decorate, are admirable... in most of what Mr Walton exhibits, the artists hand and mind are developed, working in fresh and healthy unity of purpose'. The chief exhibits were a large campana shaped vase and ten smaller 'Etruscan' vases, identical in shape to those shown in plate 2. It scarcely seems credible that such vases should be attempted in papier mâché, but during the period leading up to the Great Exhibition of 1851, manufacturers stretched materials to their limits in order to produce ever more striking and spectacular objects with which to outshine their rivals.

Since it is difficult to imagine how such vases were made from papier mâché, it may be useful to briefly describe the process. The main body was made by pasting and layering sheets of specially made 'making paper' over a wooden mould of the desired shape. When half the intended thickness was reached, the paper covered mould was placed in an oven to dry very slowly. The paper shell was removed from the mould by a horizontal cut and rejoined by glue and by continuing to build with the remaining sheets of making paper. The neck was made separately, probably by moulding paper on to a round section of wood until sufficiently thick to be turned and shaped; the handles and weighted tin feet were added separately.

In about 1850, Waltons introduced their 'Patent Crystal Trays'. These oval trays had papier mâché frames and a decorative painting or print inserted between a wooden base and a protective glass top. They were very vulnerable and few seem to have withstood the ravages of time. A set of three graduated 'crystal' trays is in the collection at Bantock House Museum, the largest of which bears a large engraved paper label (figure 6).

Figures 7 and 8 show a range of tinplate samples of tea caddies and snuffers trays made at the Old Hall between 1840 and 1850. They are painted on one side only and were packed into japanned tin boxes which the japan master took on his annual selling tour of the country. Except in the case of irregularly shaped articles such as caddies, each sample shows two distinct designs, and an unexpectedly wide range of background colours in addition to the more usual black, for example, vermilion, green, ochre and simulated marble.

Some of the objects exhibited in Birmingham in 1849, were shown again in London at the Great Exhibition; in particular a set of trays named 'The Seasons', a series of wine trays and an 'Alhambric' series. The Alhambric or 'Moresque' style was mentioned frequently in contemporary reports and an example of this style of decoration may be seen in the cabinet illustrated in plate 2.

Plate 3. Ladies cabinet, papier mâché decorated with pearl and gold leaf, and containing needlework and jewellery trays, six drawers and a writing slope. Made at the Old Hall, c.1851 (height 15 1/2 in.) (Bantock House Museum, Wolverhampton. Photo: Phoebe Phillips Editions Ltd.)

Also exhibited were a papier mâché vase, six feet high and three and a half feet wide, a set of 'national' trays showing views of Windsor Castle, Holyrood House and Glengarry Castle, and another set painted with 'outlines of Faust' which one critic did 'not feel inclined to praise'. Although not generally associated with furniture, Walton shows some papier mâché loo tables, and a 'cabinet... inlaid and ornamented', which is possibly the one shown in plate 3. This cabinet was given to Bantock House Museum

by a daughter of Joseph Jones who is known to have made such an article for Frederick Walton to exhibit in 1851.

Besides papier mâché, Walton & Co. exhibited a wide range of tinware, including dish covers (figure 9) and a patent enamelled footbath, toilet pail and can, printed in colour, a process which the catalogue described as 'recent'. The patent referred to was probably that filed by Walton in 1847, for enamelling and ornamenting sheet-iron articles in substitution of japanning, tinning and so on. It appears to have been unprofitable which is perhaps why so few examples have survived, although a particularly striking and attractive set, printed with pastoral scenes in dark blue on a pale blue ground was sold in London in recent years.

Like most japanners in Wolverhampton Walton & Co made a wide range of coal boxes; according to their shape, they were variously named as vases, scoops, purdonians and boxes, and given further names such as Watteau or Stafford, to identify their style. They were often very elaborate contrivances, sometimes enhanced by inset glass panels and sometimes ornamented with photographs.

The oval tray in figure 10 has a celebrated but sad history! It was made in 1852 for presentation to Queen Victoria who was scheduled to stop briefly at Wolverhampton during a train journey to London. Frederick Walton appointed Edwin Haselar to paint the tray with roses, shamrocks and thistles, and 'All was ready and waiting at the station when Her Majesty's train drew up. There was to be a stoppage of only three minutes and this was nearly up before the opportunity came, when the tray, laden with the finest hot-house grapes, was passed into the carriage. Forthwith the grapes were swept on, to the table and the tray handed back through the window of the starting train.' The tray was hastily presented instead to the Mayoress who was standing nearby. How true this story is will never be known. It was first told by George Dickinson in his book *English Papier Mâché* (1925), for which he had spoken with many former Old Hall employees. Perhaps so long after the event, they felt free to tell what actually happened; contemporary newspapers reported only its presentation to the Mayoress.

In spite of Walton's comments in 1853, that 'Materials were high, Trade was bad and the competition fearful! *(sic)*,' he continued to push his factory to ever higher standards, so that by 1869, it was described as 'the most interesting, if not the most extensive manufactory' in Wolverhampton. Furthermore, its influence was widespread and according to the report of the Children's Employment Commission in 1862, many Wolverhampton firms had been founded by men trained at the Old Hall.

The Old Hall works closed in 1882; 'At the present day there is but a small demand for fine work and but few good men work at it'. A four-day sale of japanned tinware, papier mâché and other goods was held at the

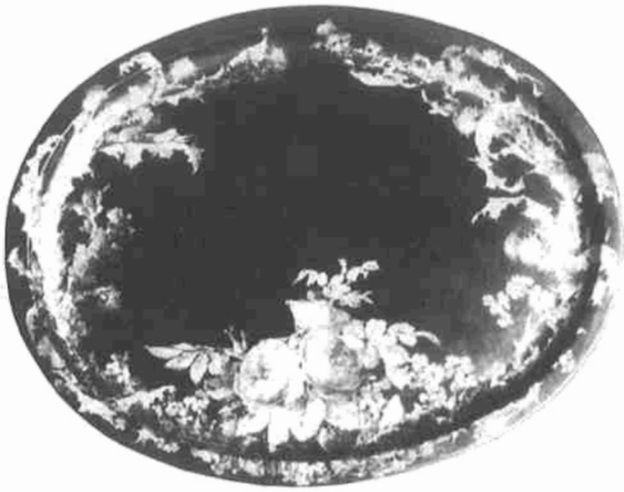


Figure 10. Papier mâché tray, lettered on the back "This Waiter was used on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit to Wolverhampton Oct. 14th 1852. Wm. Warner Esqr. Mayor. Presented to Mrs. Warner by the Manufacturers Fred. Walton & Co." 20in. x 26in. (Private collection)

Old Hall early in 1883 and 'satisfactory prices' were realised. The hall was demolished later in the same year.

The manufacturers at the Old Hall may have been less innovatory than their major rivals in Birmingham, but in terms of their technical skills and artistry, it is sad that they should have been so overlooked

Editor's Note on Prices

18th and early 19th century tin and papier mâché' have for long been highly collectable and similarly priced, but recently, Victorian wares have come into their own. Good examples from any period now command high prices, particularly if marked or unusually shaped or coloured. The collector has to compete with the interior decorator and it is not uncommon for fine trays, for example, to realise over £1,000 at auction nor for attractive coal boxes to be sold for similar sums. However, there is still room for the collector of more modest means, but even here if damaged, worn or over painted pieces are to be avoided collectors will have to spend over £100 for attractive items. Nevertheless, there is still the chance of finding a bargain lurking in a tray of oddments or indeed a choice dish or tray containing them.

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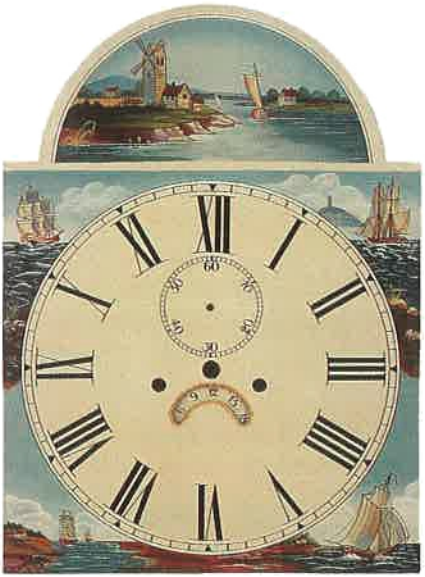
Members' "A" Awards



Carol Buonato

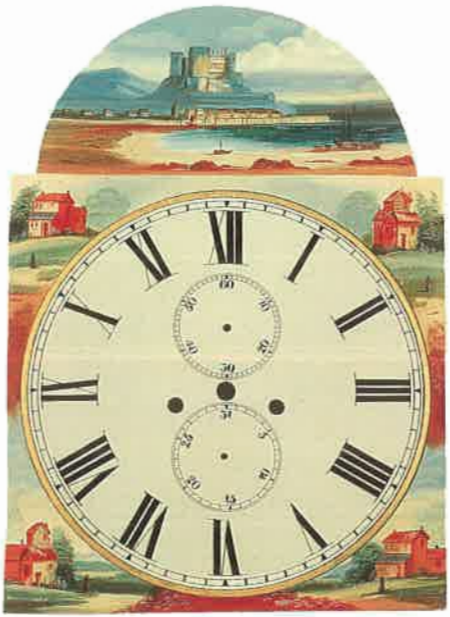
Clock Dial

Mae Fisher

Glass with Border

Ann Baker

Glass Gold Leaf Panel



Carol Buonato

Clock Dial

Astrid Donnellan

Special Class

(photo by Helga Johnson)

Members' "B" Awards

Stenciling on Wood

Nancy Corcoran **Mary Rob**

Victorian Flower Painting

Roberta Edrington

Special Class

Astrid Donnellan

Applicants Accepted as Guild Members

Mary H. Bailey
Karen Brace
Michele A. Johnson
Charlotte Read
Mary Ellen Weber

Specialist Award in Freehand Bronze

Roberta Edrington

Roberta Edrington graduated from Douglass College with a degree in art. After college she attended the Parsons School of Design.

She became a guild member of HSEAD in 1965 and a Master Craftsman in 1983. She is currently Chairman of Standards and Judging for HSEAD.

She has been teaching both HSEAD techniques and fine art for about thirty years. Roberta is our first member to become a specialist in freehand bronze work.

The Bookshelf

American Banjo Clocks
by Steven P. Petrucelli and Kenneth A. Sposato.

Reviewed by Margaret K. Rodgers

Adams Brown Company, Inc., Cranbury, New Jersey 1995. 204 pp. Hardback, 304 black and white photos. Glossary of Terms, References and Index. $50.00.

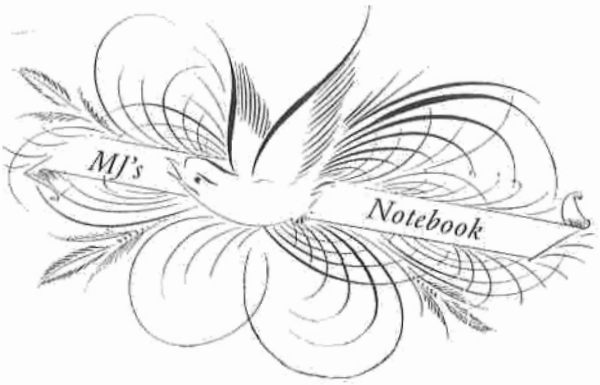
As a rule, I try not to read book reports written by others prior to reviewing the same volume, believing that their impressions might unduly influence my own assessment. However, I am making an exception with this report. The August 1996 issue of the *NAWCC Bulletin* (National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors, Inc.), contains a long review written by Donn Haven Lathrop in which he roundly criticizes this book for too many errors, misspellings and misused words. He refutes some of the information concerning the clock makers, including family relationships, the places they worked, dates, technical details, and horological terminology.

Now my knowledge of the inner workings and hidden mechanisms of time keepers parallels my expertise concerning the far side of the moon. What I and so many of you enjoy and can appreciate with varying degrees of acumen, is the decorative work done on these lovely timepieces. This book contains hundreds of photos, most of them excellent reproductions, of many types of banjo clocks. There are several excellent close up shots of reverse painted tablets. I wish that it had been printed in color. It might have doubled or more the cost, but it would have been even more impressive as a record of early American ornamentation.

The authors start with a short history of the American banjo clock, and its evolution through the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth continuing up to today. The first chapter deals with clock makers.

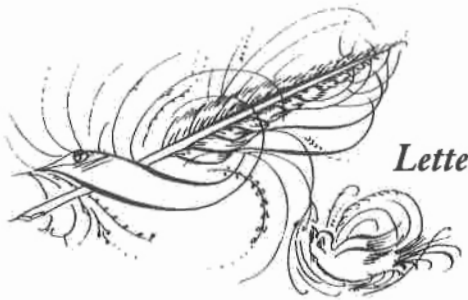
A short biography of each one includes many names familiar through our work and from articles in *The Decorator*. The authors proceed to divide the banjo's history into four distinct periods of time. The first generation clocks are circa 1802-1815 and include the Willards. The second generation clocks follow c.1815-1835. Separate chapters address related early case forms including the diamond head and girandole, and the lyre cases. Next come mid nineteenth century and production clocks, which include the Tiffts and Howards, and finally the twentieth century including many recent makers of reproduction banjos.

The most useful and enjoyable aspect of this book consists of reviewing the hundreds of photos matching a pattern from many years back with the type of banjo it originally came from. Mr. Lathrop may well be correct with respect to his concerns regarding technical accuracy. However, the wealth of photography covering a wide variety and chronology of banjo clocks proved very useful to me as a practicing restorer and decorator of early American clocks. With that caveat understood, I can recommend this book for the professional library of any of our membership who work in this area.



by Maryjane Clark

The pattern on the facing page is a New England type, one piece stencil copied by Esther Stevens Brazer from an original one sheet waiter. The pattern is part of the Brazer Collection at the Museum of American Folk Art. The original pattern was probably stenciled in silver.



Letter from Birmingham

by Yvonne Jones

The following letter written by Messrs. Boulton & Fothergill combines an interesting mix of aesthetic integrity and commercial acumen:

London Edwd Scales, Strand 28th Septr 1771

We are duly fav[d] with yours of 26 ins[t] curr[t] in ans[r] to which we beg leave to advise you not to have the Tea Urn Japan'd for whenever they are filled with boiling Water the room they are in becomes likes (sic) a Jappaners Shop from the disagreeable smell the hot water causes. Mess[rs] Gibbons & Clay have been long endeavouring to remedy this evil but [I] believe they have partly given it up however we do not pretend to dictate we only give you our sentiments but must observe that we cannot take upon us to make the necessary tools for the foot you have sent and it being such a great uncouth ugly thing that we should never attempt to make use of it ourselves and the expense of the tools to make it would cost twice the value of the Urn when made. If you think a simple elegant antique foot of our own (some that you have not seen) would do we will make you one to your time and may have it Jappan'd if you please, but we think if [it] was a Dutch brown with a Plated or Silver cock & button it would be better than japan however in this we shall be entirely guided by you - in expectation of your answer We remain

Boulton & Fothergill*

*Note: Boulton set up partnership with Fothergill in 1761.

*Matthew Boulton Papers, Letter Book E, pp 303-4. Birmingham Reference Library.

Health and Safety in the Artist's Studio

by Ingrid M. Sanborn

Health and safety in the artist's studio rarely concerned me. I never acknowledged the hazardous nature of artist's materials and refused to wear personal protective gear such as gloves or a respirator because they seemed to hamper my freedom of expression. These attitudes carried from my childhood through middle age without alteration. My way of thinking has changed. For the past six years I have lived with an illness. I struggle daily with an immune system that is deficient. In order to continue to be able to do my work, I have had to alter my living and working life-styles in a major way. I hope this short article will be a wake-up call to others who still have attitudes similar to those I used to have. With foresight and awareness you can reduce or avoid some of the hazards associated with art work.

The first thing that you must understand is that many of the materials routinely used by artists are toxic to the body. This includes solvents, dusts, toxic metals, etc. They can affect the body primarily through inhalation or absorption through the skin. Some of the typical symptoms of overexposure include headaches, dizziness, loss of balance, numbness, inability to concentrate, memory loss, reddening, drying of the skin, irritation of the mucous membranes, coughing, shortness of breath, and the appearance of new allergies. Any of these symptoms may be indications of toxicity. Pay attention to how you are feeling!

Some simple work practices include:

1. Ventilate! To prevent inhalation exposure, the artists studio should always have a good flow of air that continuously removes any toxins from the work area. Try to capture fumes or dusts as close to the point of generation as possible, before they become widely dispersed in the atmosphere of the studio. Common sense can achieve this. Sophisticated technology is not necessarily a requirement.

The author's daughter, Greta, is shown wearing a respirator fitted with a cartridge.

For better protection, Ingrid uses a supplied air respirator

My daughter and I use a ventilated work table. It is a box to which an exhaust fan is attached and which has an expanded metal top surface. When working with paints, strippers or solvents, the fumes, being heavier than air, are readily captured by the air flow that is continuously being drawn vertically downward through the open mesh of the top surface. Therefore the fumes are exhausted to the outside of the building before they can disperse in the work area. An exhaust hood or booth can also be used. A source of fresh air being available at an opposite end of the studio helps these systems to function most effectively.

2. Wear gloves! To prevent exposure due to absorption through the skin, the artist should always wear skin protection. Depending on what materials you are using, there are different glove materials that are available and appropriate. Always be sure that the glove material is resistant to the substance being employed. For example, organic solvents are the biggest problem for me. Nitrile gloves (made for surgical and industrial use) are generally recommended for prevention of skin contact with most solvents. *A physician's surgical glove is not an appropriate material to prevent skin exposure to solvents.* Material Safety Data Sheets that can be obtained from your supplier of work materials will recommend the proper type of glove material to prevent exposure.

3. Use personal breathing protection! To prevent inhalation of any fugitive dusts, mists or vapors, always use breathing protection such as is afforded by the use of a respirator. **Caution!** Always be sure that the respirator you use is appropriate for the hazardous materials being handled. That is, a respirator that is designed to capture dust particles will do nothing to capture organic solvent vapors. The reverse is also true.

Since my major potential exposure is from organic solvent vapors, I use a respirator fitted with cartridges designed for control of such materials when the exposure potential is small. Most respirators will accommodate different cartridges by unscrewing one kind and attaching another. In addition to using the right cartridge, you must keep it clean.

Change the cartridges periodically to insure that they continue to do their job. For myself, that is about once each month, depending on the level of use. If you use a cartridge that has exceeded its capacity to absorb a toxic material, it is no better than using no protection at all. For more complete protection, a supplied air respirator can be used. It is a face mask to which clean air from outdoors or some other clean area is continuously pumped. Absorptive cartridges are not necessary.

When working with substantial amounts of potential solvent exposure, where a cartridge respirator would rapidly become saturated, I have to use a supplied air respirator. This is because of the sensitivity to solvents that I have developed over the years.

Whenever art classes are being held, the use of adequate and appropriate ventilation along with the use of personal protective gear are a must. *Be aware of what others are doing around you.* You cannot know what tolerance levels exist within different people. They can vary from one individual to the next. As our environment accumulates more and more chemicals and other pollutants, more and more individuals will develop greater sensitivities to such materials. Health precautions as I have described here will become an absolute necessity. Take the precautions now that are needed to maintain a healthy environment. Prevention of health risks should be the concern of every artist and craftsperson today.

Note: A good source of protective gear such as gloves, respirators, etc., is Lab Safety Supply Inc. P.O. Box 1368 Janesville, WI 53547-1368, telephone 1-800-356-0783. Call and ask for their catalog or consult a local supplier.

Ingrid Sanborn and her daughter, Greta, specialize in the restoration of reverse painting on glass and painted furniture. They have a studio in West Newbury, MA.

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Janice Aldrich, Keene, NH ..... country painting, stenciling
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Dortia Davis, Perkinsville, VT ..... country painting, stenciling
Astrid Donnellan, Hingham, MA .... country painting, freehand bronze, glass painting, metal leaf, stenciling, Pontypool, Victorian flower painting
Sherry Dotter, Lebanon, NJ ..... country painting (applicants only)
Margaret Emery, Averill Park, NY ..... country painting, glass painting
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Carolyn Reid, Averill Park, NY ..... country painting
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Dolores Samsell, Warren, NJ ..... country painting
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Harriet Syversen, Closter, NJ ..... country painting, stenciling, Pontypool

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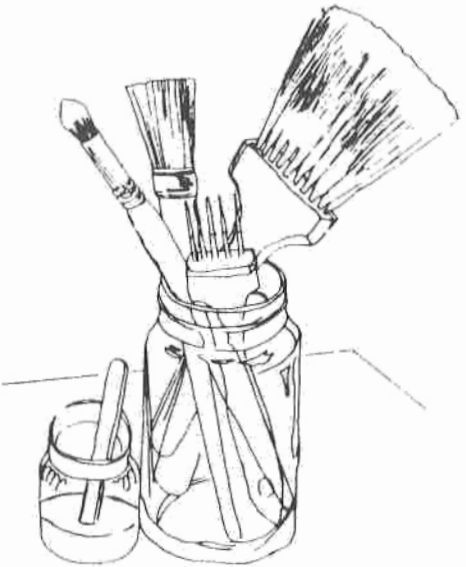

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