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*Front cover: Large vase made from papier mâché and jute by Adt Frères. Collection of the Musée au fil du Papier .
Back cover: Small papier mâché plate with daisies and butterfly. Collection of Shirley S. Baer.*

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Adt Brothers

Makers of Papier Mâché Pieces with Flower Decorations

Yvonne Jones



Papier mâché glove box with "Germany" impressed on bottom. Collection of Shirley S. Baer.

Back in 1998, HSEAD member, researcher, writer and collector, Martha Wilbur asked "Where were the papier mâché articles that have daisies and other flowers on them made?" (*The Decorator*, Vol. 53). The answer to this question, which has long puzzled collectors on both sides of the Atlantic, lies in France in the Municipal Museum of Pont-à-Mousson,¹ a small industrial town in the Meurthe-et-Moselle region of the northeast. There, in an imposing late 16th century house, in a small street behind the main square, is a museum within a museum: the *Musée au fil du Papier*.

It tells the histories of two paper-based industries which were important to the economy of Pont-à-Mousson in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One industry produced popular, mainly lithographic prints which, ranging from political commentaries to whimsical illustrations of traditional fairy stories, offer a vivid visual record of contemporary everyday life. The other, and the one of concern here, manufactured decorative papier mâché at the factory of Adt Brothers, makers of the daisy group of objects and other similar articles (Plates 1 & 2).

As Adt Brothers were the leading makers of papier mâché in 19th century France, it is upon their history that the museum naturally focuses. Nevertheless, in order to provide context, comparative examples of English and eastern papier mâché are shown alongside the Adt products. The museum, therefore, houses not only an important local history collection, but is home to the premier collection of papier mâché in France.

PAPIER MACHE PUFF BOXES.



Best Star Pattern.

	Per doz.	s.	d.
3 $\frac{1}{8}$ inch diameter ...	3	0	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " " "	3	6	



Best Chinese Pattern.

	Per doz.	s.	d.
2 $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter ...	3	6	
3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " " " "	4	0	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " " "	5	0	



Daisy Pattern

	Per doz.	s.	d.
2 $\frac{7}{8}$ inch Diameter...	3	6	
3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " " " "	4	0	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " " "	5	0	



Rose Pattern.

Black Ground, sprays of
Coloured Roses.

	Per doz.	s.	d.
2 $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter ..	3	6	
3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " " " "	4	0	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " " "	5	0	

Gold Ground, sprays of
Coloured Roses. Will not
tarnish.

	Per doz.	s.	d.
2 $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter ..	4	9	
3 $\frac{1}{8}$ " " " "	5	9	
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " " " "	7	0	



Oval, sprays of Coloured Roses
on black ground.
5/6 per dozen.

Oval, spray of Coloured Roses
on gold ground. Will not
tarnish.
7/- per dozen.



Oval Daisy Pattern.
5/6 per dozen.



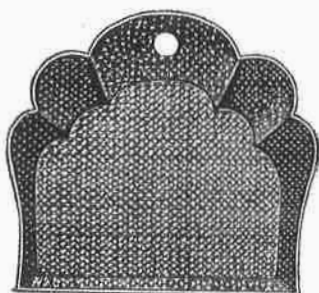
The "Cylinder."
3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. high.

	Per doz.	s.	d.
Rose patt. Black Ground	5	6	
" " Gold	7	0	



Oval "Louis XVI" Pattern.
Very elegant.
9/- per dozen.

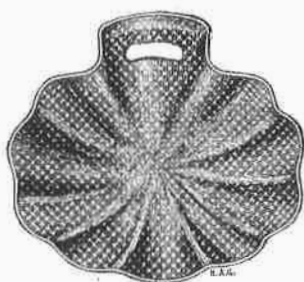
PAPIER MACHE CRUMB TRAYS & BRUSHES.



No. 41.

Black Ground, Bronze Stars.
Complete with Crumb Brush to match.
2/3 per set.

With Red Ground 2/4 per set.



No. 42.

Black Ground, Bronze Stars.
Complete with Crumb Brush to match.
2/3 per set.

With Red Ground 2/4 per set.



No. 43.

Gold, Chinese Pattern.
Complete with Crumb Brush to match.
3/1 per set.

With Red Ground 3/2 per set.



No. 44.

Gold, Chinese Pattern.
Complete with Crumb Brush to match.
3/1 per set.

With Red Ground 3/2 per set.

ESTABLISHED 1852.

The history of the Adt factory became entangled with the politics of the Franco-Prussian War. In 1870, an enterprise that began in Germany as Gebrüder Adt in 1839 ended in France as Adt Frères.² Whether their products are considered German or French, therefore, depends more upon when they were made than where. To save any confusion, the term *Adt Brothers* will be used here except when referring specifically to their German or French factories.

The firm had its origins in Ensheim, a small German town near Sarreguemines on the border with France. There, Mathias Adt (born 1715), a miller, carved wooden figures and snuff boxes as a hobby. He sold these boxes, or so-called *Müllerdosen* (miller boxes), to Michael Stein, the abbot of nearby Wadgassen, who in turn, sold them in local abbeys and convents where, in the 1740s, snuff-taking had become widespread. In consequence, the boxes came to be known as *Klosterdosen* or convent boxes.

Stein had purchased in Paris some papier mâché boxes made by Martin,* which he instructed Adt to imitate and improve upon. The resulting rectangular, black varnished boxes with painted lids were so successful that in about 1770, Stein set up a workshop for their manufacture under the direction of Johann-Peter Adt (1751-1806), a son of Mathias.



Plate 3: A handkerchief box. Collection of the Musée au fil du Papier.

*It may be supposed that this was Guillaume Martin, who is much better known today as a vernisseur of exquisite boxes and furniture (vernis Martin).



Plate 4: Tray with hand-painted decoration. Collection of the author.

Rival makers soon followed, and by 1800, the area around Ensheim and Sarreguemines was renowned for the production of snuff boxes. About 250 families were involved, making over 100,000 dozen boxes per year for the home market and for Italy, Russia and Turkey. Adt's workshop was the only one of any significance to survive the economic effects of the Napoleonic Wars and increasing competition from other German papier mâché manufacturers such as Stobwasser in Brunswick.

By the third generation, and under the guidance of Peter Adt III (1798-1879), Adt had become a major producer of papier mâché goods,



Plate 5: Tray with transfer-printed decoration. Collection of the author.



Plate 6: Papier mâché umbrella stand.
Collection of the Musée au fil du Papier.

showing regularly at fairs and exhibitions, and winning medals at Munich in 1835 and at Spire in 1837. A new factory was built at Ensheim in 1839, and in the same year, Adt's three sons named the business *Gebrüder Adt*.

In 1844, in order to evade French import duties, they built a factory in the French town of Forbach, in Lorraine, and another in the same town in 1853. Ensheim, however, continued to be their leading factory. At the Great Exhibition in London, for example, it was as "Adt Brothers of Ensheim," that they exhibited a range of papier mâché cigar and spectacles cases, glove boxes, work boxes and cash boxes. Nevertheless, their manufactures were more varied than this would suggest, for by then, Adt was making a wide range of japanned papier mâché articles, from trays to pedestal tables, from utilitarian goods to decorative panels for the salons and boudoirs of fashionable Parisiennes.



Plate 7: Handkerchief box, tea caddy and trinket box. Collection of the Musée au fil du Papier.

Pierre Adt IV (1820-1900), a committed Francophile, adopted French citizenship in 1865 and was made Mayor of Forbach in the same year. This placed him in an invidious position at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, and in 1871, when France was forced to cede Alsace and part of Lorraine to Germany, he resigned his mayoralty. With 200 of his loyal employees from Forbach, he built a new factory at Pont-à-Mousson in the French part of Lorraine. He restyled the company *Adt Frères* and, thenceforward looked upon this as his main factory. By the end of the 19th century, there were 860 “workers in lacquer” employed at the Pont-à-Mousson factory, 300 of whom were women and 70 were children, all working eleven-hour days. It was there and at Forbach that the flower-decorated wares about which Martha enquired were made from the late 1870s until about the First World War. The factory at Forbach supplied mostly the Russian, UK, Balkan, and North American markets, while the one at Pont-à-Mousson focused upon France and her overseas dependents.

Sometimes Adt marked their products with an impressed pattern number or, very occasionally, with an impressed or printed trade mark (*The Decorator*, 53-1). Generally, however, goods left the factory without any permanent form of identification—a short-coming for which the exhibits in the *Musée au fil du Papier* more than compensates. The product list of Adt Frères, like those of their English counterparts, was too extensive to enumerate here, and likewise, their shapes and decorative styles. There are however, certain characteristics of form and decoration which, if broadly summarized, may help in their identification.



Plate 8: A large box. Collection of the *Musée au fil du Papier*.



Plate 9: Snuff box made for the Egyptian market. Collection of the author.

Today, the most commonly found objects made by this firm are square handkerchief boxes (Plate 3) and rectangular glove boxes with brightly colored interiors, puff or powder boxes, wall pockets, hanging shelf brackets, pen trays, and crumb trays with matching brushes. In addition, there are small round dishes with plain or scalloped edges, round waiters, and rectangular trays with rounded corners (Plates 4 & 5). Other frequently found small articles are snuff boxes with hinged lids, spill vases, and spectacles cases. Larger objects that appear on the market from time to time are huge cylindrical umbrella stands (Plate 6) and nests of tables. Adt also made large numbers of variously shaped tiered tables comprising trays, of equal or graduated sizes, held in place by simulated bamboo legs.

Hand screens with pierced or fretted edges are among less frequently found but distinctive objects, as are rectangular tea caddies with hinged lids and rounded corners that have a striking simplicity of form among papier mâché caddies (Plate 7). Equally distinctive, but again less common, are liqueur cabinets. These take the form of small, often oval cabinets, each with a hinged lid which opens to reveal glass decanters, and two doors each fitted with brackets to hold a set of matching liqueur glasses. These cabinets are sometimes mistakenly believed to be English.

Mostly, however, it is by the decoration that Adt products from about 1880 are most readily identified. With the possible exception of liqueur cabinets, which appear always to have been painted with flower sprays and ornamented with gold leaf and pearl, the various styles of decoration were used across all their products and not confined to any particular article.

The most popular floral motifs used by this firm were daisies, sunflowers and lilies of the valley. Other much used designs were Japanese scenes, both tranquil and embattled (Plates 3 & 8). These were transfer-printed in gold and color and over-painted by hand with flesh tints that are so thickly applied that they stand in slight relief on the

surface. It is this over-painting which distinguishes them from articles of similar date and appearance made by *Thetford Pulp Ware* in the English county of Norfolk, whose transfer prints were never hand-colored.

Finally, in terms of decoration, the simplest and perhaps least expensive that Adt applied to their papier mâché goods was a transfer-printed pattern of all-over bronze stars against black and other colored grounds (Plate 2). To judge from the many examples which have survived, this pattern was produced in large numbers over many years.

A pen tray decorated with the pattern seen on Plate 9, and sold in England some years ago was printed *Gouvernement Egyptienne* on the underside, almost certainly as part of a large and official order. Such orders, and the production of advertising and souvenir goods for both French and foreign markets, and the manufacture of personalized products, constituted an important branch of Adt Frères business, and it is well represented in the museum. There are on display several snuff boxes, trays, and small items for the desk, printed in gilt with various designs and named for various companies, perhaps for distribution to their valued clients, and others decorated with Islamic symbols, for example, that were made for export to Turkey, or with subjects suitable for North Africa, a former French colony (Plate 9).

In addition to establishing the origin of the daisy pattern and other popular styles of decoration, the exhibits in the *Musée au fil du Papier* provide a solution to yet another puzzle, namely, the source of that large category of mainly small papier mâché articles decorated only with mother-of-pearl, pewter, or a combination of the two (Plate 10). These were also made by Adt, but during an earlier period. This style of decoration was generally, but not exclusively, used on snuff boxes, spectacles cases and powder boxes. At its simplest, the pearl stands alone, the iridescence of a simple flower sprig, for example, contrasting strongly with the plain japanned surface, or delicate motifs formed from pewter were arranged to form border patterns, or to create bold checkered effects for the centers of trays and other flatware. Pewter is a very malleable material and, like mother-of-pearl, it was applied to objects before



Plate 10: A selection of snuff boxes made by Adt Frères. Collection of the *Musée au fil du Papier*.



Plate 12: Pen tray made by the Société Nouvelle des Etablissements Adt to advertise their products; 1923-1927.

they were jannaped. It is a sign of Adt's competitive prices that a spectacles case, for instance, ornamented with a scrap-pearl and pewter border and lettered in gilt *A Present from Scarb'oro* [Scarborough] – a popular Victorian resort on the northeast coast of England – should be printed on its underside, *Manufactured in Germany*. But by the 1860s when this was made, the heyday of English papier mâché was almost past.

Much of the Adt Brothers' success was due to their shrewd marketing. In addition to the exhibitions already mentioned, they showed at every Leipzig fair between 1835 and 1939, and won medals at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and 1889. To outlets in Berlin, Nuremberg, and Milan, they added one in London in 1860 – mindful perhaps of the declining trade of the English papier mâché makers who had been one of their most serious rivals – and another in Brussels in 1880. Alongside England, it appears that their stiffest competition came from three American papier mâché manufacturers.* Accordingly, they opened a showroom in New York in 1888; it was less successful than their other outlets on account of the McKinley Tariff, introduced in America two years later, to control imported goods. By 1889, their trade catalogues were published in English as well as in French and German. In 1901, Adt Frères became a limited liability company with registered offices in Paris, where they also had a large warehouse with shop windows for the display of their wares.

In discussing the origin of the common flower-decorated boxes and associated wares, some of the more outstanding examples of papier mâché made by Adt and exhibited in the museum at Pont-à-Mousson have necessarily escaped mention. Here is not the place to describe them, but in order to convey a balanced impression of Adt's output, it is important to show that alongside these popular ranges, they continued to make high quality goods for their wealthier clients. Among them were a number of very large vases, decorated by hand in oriental style, of which some very fine examples are on show in the museum (front cover).

*One of these must surely have been the Litchfield Manufacturing company, but who were the others?

By the early 20th century, the thrust of their industry was changing. In 1904, for example, the Pont-à-Mousson factory had diversified into the manufacture of insulation sheaths for electric cables. When war broke out in 1914, the factory at Forbach was seized by the French authorities and continued under state ownership until 1923, when, together with the other factories, it became the *Société Nouvelles des Etablissements Adt*. They began to make *Fibrolaque*, a form of japanned, compressed paper, for the production of inexpensive advertising materials, and for bobbins and spindles for the textile industry (Plate 12). The company was bought out in 1927 and continued to make decorative papier mâché until the 1930s, but by then it was largely overshadowed by newer branches of business.

The *Musée au fil du Papier* deserves to be better known by those interested in the history of papier mâché. It sheds new light on many familiar objects, confirms long-held hunches about others, and narrows the area of doubt when seeking to distinguish articles of French and German papier mâché from those made in England.

¹ Musée Municipal, "Au fil du Papier," Hotel de la Monnaie 13, rue Magot de Rogeville 54700 Pont-a-Mousson, France.

² For a full and well-illustrated history (in French), see Pierre Lallemant's *Le Papier Mâché*, Editions Pierron, 57206 Sarreguemines, France, 1999.

Copies are available from the Museum.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Pierre Lallemant, from whose book *Le Papier Mâché* much of the history of Adt Brothers is taken. My thanks are due also to Patrick Bourgeois, who gave unstintingly of his time during my visit to the *Musée au fil du Papier*, and without whose excellent English I would have missed so much, and to Héléne Schneider who, as curator of the museum, orchestrated the necessary arrangements for my visit which took place, sadly, during her vacation. YGJ



Pen tray with the "daisy decoration." Collection of Shirley S. Baer.



Pennsylvania Dutch/German bride's box, 19th century. Collection of Anthony Macek.

1700-1880 by Clarke and O'Kelly addressed such decorative pieces and their history in depth. Cummins includes some historical context, but her focus is on these handsome boxes and the unique way their shapes, materials, drawers and compartments accommodate their belongings.

However, it is the embellishment of nearly two thousand pieces (all in color) and the quality of the color plates and the publication as a whole that will attract and tempt you to own this book. For many of us, it is the closest we will come to viewing such beautiful antiques whenever we choose.

The book's orientation is category rather than chronology. The availability of various woods explains the abundance of handsome boxes with their natural shaded inlays and marquetry designs, although mother-of-pearl, metals and shells also shared space as decorative elements. In the mid-eighteenth century, needles and threads found themselves in the painted sewing boxes like the one from Spa, Belgium. The beauty of maple provides the background for painted floral sprays, a motif that continues inside, delineating each compartment with its own decorative blossom.

Cummins continues to whet our appetites with an overview of some styles, decorations and general boxes that include English painted papier mâché and French papier mâché with églomisé. Chinoiserie decorates a small tin matchbox, while a fraktur covers another. A small personal chest (coffret) bears a familiar Norwegian flower pattern, and the inside lid reveals a similar repetition, its vivid colors preserved. A section on folk art and brides' boxes will also lure painters of EAD. American painted tinware is unfortunately referred to as "tole," a mistake that is becoming too common.

The category, "Eating, Drinking and Being Merry" provides the context for lacquered chinoiserie knife boxes, a lacquered Japanese lunch box, and an American tole (oops) painted tea canister. Tobacco and cordials also

occupy the landscape, but it is tea chests that dominate the scene. Examples include American, Anglo-Indian, Chinese, English and Russian wares. English country cottages, fruit shapes, sarcophagi and many more domicile concepts and geometric shapes influence the architecture of these most popular boxes. Some of us will have our first introduction to the “tea poy,” a three-legged tea table of rosewood and inlays and decorative motifs inside (an understated description to be sure).

The decoration ranges from abstract patterns to scenes executed with the precision of the finest Flemish painter. In all these samples, considerations are given not only to the tea; there’s a place for the glass sugar bowl, spoons and other necessary accoutrements. Materials and mediums include paint, gold, inlay, ivory, mother of pearl, papier mâché, pen work and paper twilling, and the results are table-top works of art. The author has never met a tea caddy and its contents that she didn’t like, and we are grateful for her vast display.

The “Work, Play and the Boudoir” category is a delight, for it not only offers the variety we’ve come to expect from this book, but it surprises with some unique entries. Included in the typical assortment is a box for the Bee-Keeper and the Bookie. The wide range of Needlecrafts results in a remarkable display of specialized designs. These tools and their totes tempt us to indulge in the craft, or at the very least, become a collector. The array and arrangement of contents themselves, with their own delicate craftsmanship, create an aesthetic composition. A “Ladies

Early Victorian lacquer needlework box covered with typical Oriental scenes in gold leaf. There is a drawer which has a lift-up gilt writing slope and spaces for writing tools. The box contains a collection of typical carved ivory tools. Courtesy of Antiques & Uncommon Treasure.



All photos from Genevieve Cummins' book.

Companion," a small handsomely painted sewing box, needlework caskets – one decorated with embroidered scenes and patterns and another an elegant papier mâché from Jennens and Bettridge with gilding inside and out – are just a few that make this section one of the most exquisite. A "large Victorian papier mâché writing slope," decorated with the unusual motif of mother-of-pearl and painted seashells, seaweed and anemones is one of many to please the eye. With carpenters' and cobblers' tools, perfume and puffs, card cases, games and gloves, objects from trades to trinkets, this section satisfies our eye and our curiosity.

Antique Boxes, Inside and Out is a credible tome on its subject. It is heavy with illustrations, and the limited text only makes more room for this generous collection with each object beautifully pictured and annotated. Cummins also shares her extensive research in a comprehensive bibliography. The quality of this publication does justice to the subject. Individually, the boxes are attractive, but together with their contents, we have a charming biography.

Editor's note: Our Bookshelf editor, Sandra Cohen, owns and operates Legacy Books.



Future Meetings

Spring 2006	Warwick, RI	April 21-23 (FSS)
Fall 2006	Killington, VT	September 14-17 (TFSS)
Spring 2007	Rochester, NY	May 4-6 (FSS)
Fall 2007	Killington, VT	September 27-30 (TFSS)
Spring 2008	Sturbridge, MA	May 9-11 (FSS)
Fall 2008	Killington, VT	September 18-21 (TFSS)

Cut Velvet Painting

Linda Carter Lefko



The above charming little painting arrived in the mail about 10 months ago, a gift from a friend in Massachusetts to whom it was given from M.J.Clark's estate. My friend indicated that it appeared to be on velvet. As a matter of fact, MJ had attached a clipping from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts exhibition in 1978 called "The Velvet Touch." Following that lead, I contacted a textile research fellow at the MFA and asked her to research the exhibition. She indicated that the exhibit had little else in common with my painting, apart from it being on velvet.

I looked at the painting and figured it was Japanese, and realized it was on a faille (ribbed) textile that resembled tapestry, with areas of flocked or fuzzy texture where appropriate to the painting – the roofs, tree tops and foreground foliage. This led me to believe that the painting was executed first, then the pile was cut. With these few facts, I began my research. I forgot to mention: On the back of the frame was the penciled price of 15 cents – apparently one of Mary Jane's garage sale finds!



Close-up of picture below.

During the 1860s, Japan's textile industry suffered a series of disastrous events – poor silk harvests, political upheaval and the moving of the capital to Tokyo – which led to a decline in demand for fine fabrics in Kyoto and threatened the extinction of the weaving industry there. In an attempt to preserve their craft of dyeing and weaving, people were sent to Europe to study the textile industry. They brought modern technology and equipment back to Japan, and by the 1890s they had adapted the highly efficient modern technology to the ancient art of weaving and dyeing.



The stereograph pictured shows an artist at work in the cut velvet industry painting the designs.

Away from the palace workshops where the elite were commissioning rich brocades, the weavers, dyers and needle workers developed innovative techniques that blended their local traditions with the foreign methods of weaving and dyeing. The weavers were able to create a stable business in machine-woven fabrics. Up until this time, all the Japanese dyes had been natural; the innovative European man-made dyes provided the Japanese a new palette of bright colors.

The new technique of *yuzen-birodo*, or Japanese cut velvet painting, was developed during the middle of the Meiji period (1868-1912), often called the Golden Age of textile development. Japanese artists experimented with painting an image with inks and dye pigments and traditional resist-dyeing methods on woven, unpatterned and uncut velvet. The woven textile is very ridged, almost like faille. After painting a picture with dyes on the woven textile ridges, the ridges were cut in some places to produce a tufted pile, giving dimension to the composition. It appears and feels almost like flocking on wallpaper, a velvet touch. Most areas of the painting were left uncut, and appear as horizontal ridges. This technique was used to create images of scenic paintings of historical landmarks and tourist attractions. Occasionally they were done in panels and scrolls depicting flowers and birds, and were made for both export and domestic markets. The example that I received is somewhat simple compared to the elaborate cut velvet panel pictured. At a local auction recently, I was able to purchase three additional cut velvet paintings to add to my "collection."

Sources:

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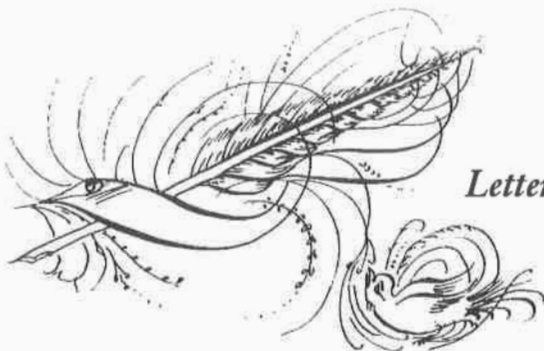
Kyoto Modern Textiles 1868-1940, Kyoto Textile Wholesalers Association

Right photo: Copyright N. Veenman.

All other photos courtesy of the author.







Letter from Birmingham

by Yvonne Jones

The Contemporary Rationale for Papier Mâché

Why should objects as diverse as buttons and furniture have been made from papier mâché when it would generally have been quicker and, in many cases, less costly to have used more conventional materials? This is a question I am frequently asked and one which, I feel sure, has puzzled many readers.

One answer, perhaps, lies in the prevailing spirit of invention and scientific curiosity which prompted, for example, the establishment of *The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce* in 1754, and which was particularly evident in Birmingham in the intellectual climate surrounding what later came to be known as *The Lunar Society*. Founded in 1775 and in existence for only fifteen years, the wide-ranging interests of its members – among them Matthew Boulton, Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestley and Josiah Wedgwood – embraced and championed links between science, industry and commerce. The challenge of making commercially viable household goods from paper would have fitted neatly into their thinking. As a business acquaintance of both Boulton and Wedgwood, Henry Clay may well have been aware of the lively debates among Society members, and although not a member himself, his patents concerning wagons and canal locks show that he shared their breadth of vision.¹

The novelty of papier mâché as a curious invention was undoubtedly an important factor in its success. Birmingham's papier mâché manufactories were soon added to the itineraries of the wealthy leisured classes as they toured Britain's industrial towns to observe the new industrial processes: "to Clay's new paper manufactory where we saw many

¹ In 1796, Clay patented a "Tilting mechanism for carts," and in 1798 he patented a method of "Saving water in canal locks."

curiosities and purchased some;² “went to see Mr Clay’s manufactory for the paper buttons etc.”³ Such curiosity was sustained through the first half of the 19th century by the introduction of eye-catching and ambitious articles made from this very versatile material, and it culminated in the lavish displays at the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851.

Some of the advantages of papier mâché, as described in contemporary records, partly explain its attractions and may have been sufficient, at least until the mid-19th century, to outweigh its long and labor-intensive production processes. Foremost among these was its suitability for japanning, which was much in vogue in the 18th century. Japan varnish, of course, had to be stove-dried, and papier mâché, unlike wood, could withstand the necessary heat without warping or cracking. Similarly, having been steeped in linseed oil and baked prior to decoration, papier mâché was unlikely to suffer the effects of damp. Moreover, being free from grain and closer in texture than wood, it required no filling and only a little smoothing in preparation for varnishing. As solid as wood (although generally less hard) and heavier in mass, papier mâché tended to blunt tools sooner, but it was so strong that it could be used in thin sections and was therefore perfect for making small, light objects. In addition, it could “if necessary, be carved or engraved in relief like the finest boxwood.”⁴ In short, japanners considered it superior to both wood and metal, and an article in *The Art Union* in 1846 suggested that papier mâché was “scarcely second to clay in means of being made subservient to art; it is singularly delicate in surface, susceptible of taking any form, and of its durability there can be no question.”⁵

It was considered superior in other ways too, for as Anne Cobbett wrote in 1851, when advising couples setting up home, “paper trays are the best, considering the small difference in appearance; it would be better to save in many other things than to hear tea-things, glasses or snuffers, jingle on japan [*i.e.* tinware].”⁶ Paper trays, it seems, were easier than tin trays on the sensitive Victorian ear.

² *Dr Johnson and Mrs Thrale (1774)*, ed. A M Broadby, London 1910

³ *The Hatchett Diary: a tour through the Counties of England & Scotland in 1796*, ed. Arthur Raistrick, 1967

⁴ *The Leisure Hour*, no. 62, 3rd March, 1853, p155

⁵ *Journal of the Art Union*, 1846, pp 59-62, *Illustrated Tour in the Manufacturing Districts*, Birmingham

⁶ *The English Housekeeper or Manual of Domestic Management*, Anne Cobbett, 1851, p20

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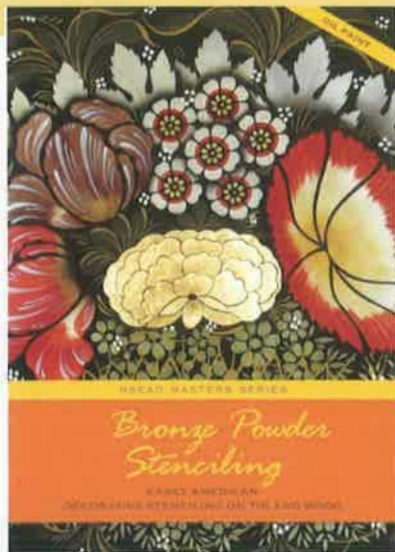
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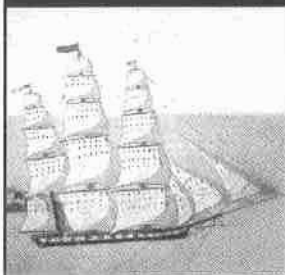
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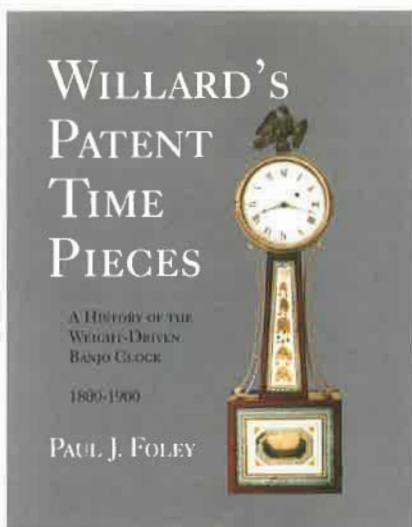


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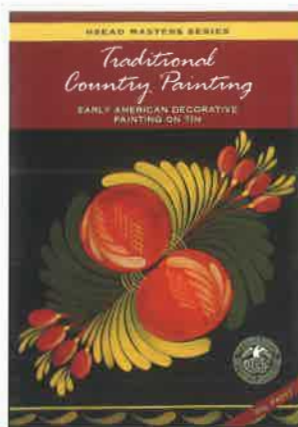
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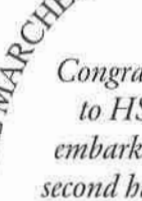
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