

The Decorator

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The Decorator

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Front cover: Pennsylvania German Desk, Schwaben Creek Valley, 1834. Courtesy of Winterthur Museum. Back cover: Chest of Drawers, Essex County, Massachusetts, 1678. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration

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.

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.

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Scottish Clock Dials and the Influence of Robert Burns

by

Astrid C. Donnellan



"John Anderson My Joe"

Beloved Scottish poet, Robert Burns (1759-1796) wrote numerous poems and short stories with loving accuracy depicting the life of rural Scots.

Many of the themes and titles from his writings are illustrated on painted clock dials. These clocks and painted dials, sometimes called four season dials, usually had painted scenes in the corner spandrels depicting the four seasons, country scenes or the four continents.

The break arch area was reserved for a popular theme of Robert Burns' short story or poem. The technique was a more folk art style with vibrant colors. Many times the clothing worn by the subject had a silver leaf layer covered with a transparent glaze of color resulting in an iridescent quality.

Although the towns of Edinburgh and Glasgow were the main centers of Scottish clock and dial manufacture, there were other towns and villages where local talented artists worked. These Scottish Highlands clock dials were produced between 1780 and 1870.



"John Anderson My Joe"



"Pattie & Peggy"



"The Muse Finding Burns at the Plough"



"Halloween"



Lord Byron



Robert Burns

"Pattie & Peggy" spandrels



Allan Ramsay



Sir Walter Scott



"The Muse Finding Burns at the Plough"



"Pattie & Peggy"



"Halloween"



“John Anderson My Joe” spandrels



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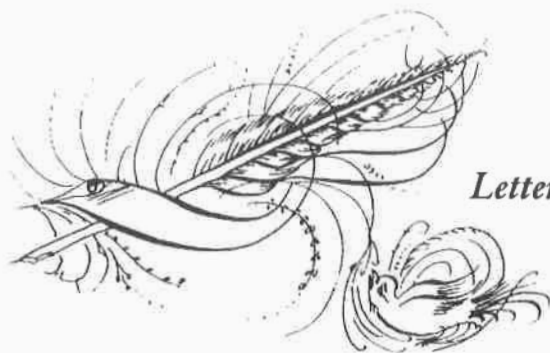
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Author's Note:

It is unfortunate that some artists did not sign their works, probably because more than one person worked on the piece. Over the years of restoring antique clock dials of Scottish origin, I have accumulated a number of photographs on this subject. My thanks to the many antiquarians, collectors, museums and clock dealers who have put their trust in me to restore their precious pieces...and in turn, allowed me to share these photographs with you.

Editor's Note: Astrid Donnellan is a member of HSEAD, a Master Craftsman and a Master Teacher.



Letter from Birmingham

by Yvonne Jones

Interesting Side-lights on Papier Mâché

Writing from Birmingham in the Spring 2000 issue of *The Decorator*, I quoted from a contemporary newspaper report that described the papier mâché articles shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851 as “shams.” Recently stumbling across a similar reference, I recalled finding similar allusions to the sham, light-weight nature of papier mâché and found the practice to be of longer standing than I imagined. How galling it must have been for those employed in the japanning industry as papier mâché makers who, no doubt, found themselves targets for similar wit.

In 1818, for example, a Mr T Brown of Brighton described a man as having “a clay-cold heart, and a mere papier mâché mind.” Almost 150 years later, similar sentiments were expressed in a letter written by one, F M Ford, where he suggested that politicians had hearts of papier mâché. While in 1977, a broadcaster is said to have referred to “a papier mâché exercise” by which he surely meant a “scissors and paste job.” In short, the term papier mâché became a derogatory epithet.

David Sarjeant, a Birmingham japanner, was acutely aware of this. Asked by the Society of Arts to visit the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867, he prepared an Artisan's Report which he entitled *On Papier Mâché*. There, he described how “it became a favourite practice with art critics and lecturers to point to the papier mâché trade as a shocking example of the untaught condition of English art-workmen. The public at length began to have their eyes open,” he said, and “to see that the goods bought as such rare bargains were not ‘the thing,’ and taking offence at the deception (which was self-imposed), have revenged themselves by joining in the abuse lavished upon their victims, and are pleased to call a false politician or dishonest tradesman a man of papier mâché.”

However, the tide may yet turn for, in the current climate when the need to recycle is of universal concern, papier mâché is, once again, being considered as a potentially valuable fabric. Charles Ducrest patented an idea for prefabricated houses in 1788, Charles Bielefeld built an entire village of papier mâché houses in 1853, and now, in Britain, a two-year investigation has begun to discover the viability of recycled paper as a building material. If it is successful, then papier mâché exercises will take on a wholly new meaning.

The Ultimate Luxury

James Brydges, first Duke of Chandos (1674-1744), patron, collector, and philanthropist, spared no expense when building his country house, Cannons, in the county of Middlesex; among its many luxuries were japanned lavatory seats.

Editor's note:

Yvonne would like to hear from any HSEAD members who have articles of 18th or 19th century papier mâché or tin-ware that have unusual, or especially interesting marks. She is collecting information for her forthcoming book on the history of the English jappanning industry. She is interested in English and non-English marks. See Walton marks below.

The marks of Henry Clay and Jennens & Bettridge are already well-documented so, unless they include information over and above what is standard, they are excluded from her current search.



*Photographs courtesy of
Roberta Edrington.*



Walton marks from the backs of two Gothic trays. The bottom mark is from the above Walton tray, "Himalaya Mountains." Courtesy of Roberta Edrington.

An American Vision: Treasures from the Winterthur Museum

by

Martina Tanga

A selection of early American masterpieces of 18th and 19th century furniture and decorative arts from the collections of Winterthur Museum and Gardens will be on display at the Worcester Art Museum this winter.

Winterthur, outside of Wilmington, Delaware, contains 85,000 objects made or used in America between 1640 and 1860. Originally the country home of Henry Francis duPont, he continually expanded the home and collections, and in 1951 founded the museum. This exhibit will bring a number works of art of exemplary quality and rarity back to their point of creation—New England, and also showcase works from other regions of the country.

These objects have the tremendous power to teach us about our past and disclose secrets to why they look the way they do and why they have survived. This article describes in detail six items included in the exhibit.

Early Settlement Chest

The oldest works in the exhibition date from the 17th century and are the earliest exemplar of American decorative arts, belonging to the first settlers who came from Europe. American furniture of this period was typically based on the European prototypes, modified to suit colonial tastes and uses. Objects of this period were created in the Jacobean style, which was characterized by heavy and bulky structure.

Ornamentation was integral to the design of these early objects. Most of the early colonial oak furniture was stained or painted. Pigments, composed of metals and earths, were imported from England and ground in oil prior to use. A less expensive option was to grind the pigments in water with size, but this technique was less favored since the decoration was not as durable. The most frequently used colors



Figure 1. Chest of Drawers, Essex County, MA, 1678. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

Figure 2. *Magdalena Douw (Mrs. Harme Gansevoort)* by John Heaten, New York, about 1740. Courtesy of Winterthur Museum.

during this period were: black, made from lampblack and bituminous earths; reds, made from cinnabar, red lead or iron oxides; and whites, made from white lead. Blues and greens were available from minerals and verdigris.¹

The Chest of Drawers (Figure 1, Ipswich, MA, 1678), the earliest fully developed chest of drawers known today, is attributed to Thomas Dennis, one of the early joiners working in New England. He came to the New World from Devonshire, England about 1663. The chest bears the initials "JSM", referring to Dennis' neighbors, John and Margaret Stanford, of Ipswich, who married in 1678.

Carving on this piece is limited to a single drawer front, and the surface is varied by moldings, panels, and split spindles.² Its painted decoration in red, white and black makes it the most significant example of early painted furniture in America. The overall decoration is distinctive among early chest of drawers, although over the centuries it has been subject to some minor alterations and additions. For example, some of the polychrome decoration is now thought to be of a later date.³ What is most unusual in this piece, given the time of its construction, is its five tiers of drawers and the alternative bipartite and tripartite organization of the drawer facades with their combination of turned applied parts and carved decoration.⁴

DuPont acquired this beautiful piece in 1930 directly from Alice Heard, a fifth-generation descendent of the original owners.⁵

Magdalena Douw

Portrait painting was the only form of fine art painting in Colonial America until the mid 18th century. Perhaps due to the lack of fine arts academies, portraiture of this early period had a folk-like quality, but still reflecting the memory of the established styles carried to America through prints or painted originals from Europe.⁶



In this 1740 painting of Magdalena Douw by John Heaten (Figure 2), the increasingly sumptuous and curvilinear quality of 18th century design is displayed. Movement permeates this image, from the curves of her red shoes, upward through the trailing foliate designs of her obviously expensive gown, to the ruffled lace trim and bonnet, and off the frame with the arches in the background. The colors are rich and inviting, demonstrating the artist's keen knowledge of imported pigments as well as available natural materials.

For today's viewers, this portrait serves as a social document that reveals the conditions under which portraiture, and the arts in general, developed and flourished in Colonial America.⁷ Magdalena had an important Hudson Valley Dutch lineage. Through her mother's line, she was connected in some degree to all the great landholding and merchant families of the Hudson Valley.⁸ This painting is thought to have been commissioned in 1740, just prior to Magdalena's marriage to Harme Gansevoort, a prosperous merchant with an equally distinguished Dutch lineage. The cherries and the fruit basket perhaps refer to abundance and fecundity for the impending union.⁹ The gown she wears has been tentatively identified as being of Harrateen, a fine English wool moiré, a new and most fashionable material at the time.¹⁰

The many signifiers of wealth and status evident in this magnificent portrait testify to the role portraiture played in the rich traditions of Hudson Valley Dutch mercantile society.

Fraktur

Skilled artisans, tradesmen, farmers, and religious leaders were among the German settlers who came to America for the opportunity and economic freedom. They were industrious people, hardworking, religious, most of which settled in Pennsylvania. They created certain social documents, known as *fraktur*, which they decorated with symbolic and fanciful imagery.

The *fraktur* grew out of the tradition of Medieval illumination, the decoration of manuscripts or books with gold and colored painted designs. Transferred to new soil, this art form aided both in the preservation of old world traditions and in the dissemination of Christian iconography.¹¹ Created by unknown artists, *fraktur* documents tracked the significant moments in the lives of this Germanic population: baptism, marriage, death. A common body of motifs, such as tulips, hearts, geomantic designs, animals, birds and trailing vines were depicted each with their own intricate symbolism.¹² These documents also are beautiful in their own right.

The *taufschein*, commemorating birth, is among the oldest types of *fraktur* document. This Pennsylvanian tradition has a very clear lineage in Europe that may be traced with certainty to the 16th century. However, the Pennsylvania *taufschein* represents a clear departure from the Old World prototypes in many respects.¹³



Figure 3. *Fraktur*, possibly Mahantango Valley, PA, about 1798. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

Fantastic decoration on this *taufschein*, (Figure 3, 1798) surrounds information about Johannes Kreniger's birth and baptism. We also learn that he was baptized by a Pastor Moeller, and was sponsored by Wilhelm and Barbara Keim. The symmetrical placement of the lions above the unicorns recalls the British coats of arms.¹⁴ The winged angel face in the lunette recalls tombstones, but in this context probably symbolizes angelic blessing of the newborn. The paired birds across the bottom and flanking the vase are a motif common to many *fraktur*, but in their distinctive coloring displays a masterful execution.

Pennsylvania German Desk

This desk, from the Schwaben Creek Valley (Figure 4, 1834) echoes some of the motifs from the *taufschein*, in particular the canonical tulips and birds. Close study reveals that they were probably derived from a variety of printed *Fraktur* produced from the early 19th century onwards.¹⁵ Originating from an isolated rural area of Northumberland County, this chest is decorated with quartered corners on the drawers, stylized eight petal posies in red and yellow along the stiles, and birds galore in red, yellow and black. The quartered fans are repeated on the panels. Two horses prance on the lid of the desk, which has a deep green background. The whole structure is solidly constructed of white pine and tulip wood.



Figure 4. Desk, Schwaben Creek Valley, PA, 1834. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

Painted in small lettering across the front of this desk is “JACOB 1834 MASER”, the name of the original owner. Maser acquired this piece the year of his marriage to Catharine Christ. Here, the motifs of earlier Pennsylvania German decoration are smaller, but highly stylized.

The furniture produced by the Pennsylvania Germans combined continental inspiration with British influences, resulting in a vibrant and charming folk art that was uniquely American.¹⁶

Federal Red Card Table

A completely different taste for vibrantly decorated furniture was developed in Baltimore. Due to the city's rapid growth in the late 18th century, patrons usually were relatively recent immigrants who had amassed great fortunes and therefore wanted the best design and quality furnishings for their homes. As a result, the furniture produced at the apex of the city's vogue is stylish, elaborate and sophisticated of this time.¹⁷

Furniture was inspired by the London Neoclassical style, which was made available to the Colonies through pattern books. In the late 18th and 19th centuries, Baltimore patrons favored the Federal style, characterized by appropriations of neoclassical forms combined with typically American motifs.



It was architectural in inspiration with a light refinedness and elegance.¹⁸ Emphasizing geometric form, flat surface treatments and delicate ornamentation, the lexicon was inspired by the Classical Revival with furniture integral to the design of the room.

Figure 5. Card table, Baltimore, 1800 – 1810. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

The decoration of Baltimore Federal furniture is particularly close to the English style in two ways: painting and pictorial inlay. Painted furniture was popular in other American cities at this time, but not to the extraordinary degree that it was in Baltimore.¹⁹ The variety of decoration was exceptional and included conch shells, grapevines, urns, eagles, thistles among other motifs. The demand was so great that some Baltimore craftsmen specialized in this kind of elaborate ornamentation.

Card tables were extremely popular during this period as leisure time was available to the wealthy. The most typical form in Baltimore is derived from *Hepplewhite's Guide*, a widely disseminated and popular pattern book from the Federal period. The standard card table design had a half-round top, a veneered and banded apron, and square tapered legs. Like other furniture created in Baltimore and the rest of the country, this card table (Figure 5), 1800-1810, was not a mere copy from *Hepplewhite's Guide* but a truly American interpretation.

This card table is one of the finest surviving Baltimore painted examples due to its elaborate design and well preserved condition. In an oval in the center of the skirt a romantic, imaginary landscape with classical ruins is depicted, as is also seen on other Baltimore card and pier tables.²⁰ The brilliant red paint, resembling Chinese lacquerwork, and the delicate gold lattice design on the skirt introduce a touch of chinoiserie. The square tapered legs with their distinctive, outward curve at the bottom, are unusual. The leaf and berry ornamentation on the legs, however, is seen on ornate pieces by the Baltimore cabinetmakers Hugh and John Finlay. This card table may have been produced by their workshop, but as no provenance exist, it is impossible to ascertain for certain. The high quality of the decoration and the density of the mahogany used in the top suggest that this was a very costly object.²¹

Klismos Chair

The classical Revival in the early 19th century permeated all branches of the arts. An important manifestation was the Klismos chair, clearly inspired by Grecian prototypes. This style is characterized by broad, curving tablet tops, elegant lines and outward fanning legs (Figure 6). This style was characterized by bold ornamentation on backs and legs and freehand gilt decoration, frequently of very high quality. Backs of chairs progressed from simple cross or double-cross to

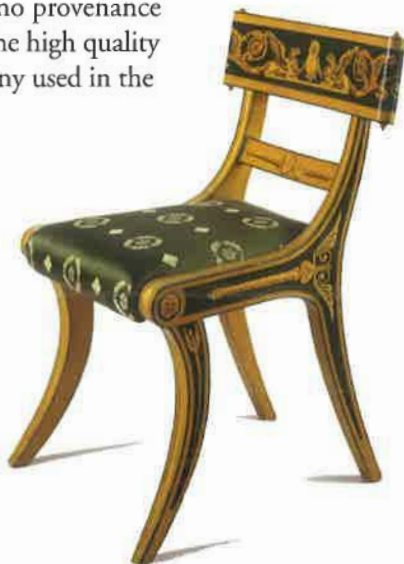


Figure 6. *Klismos side chair (one of a pair)*, Baltimore, 1815-1825. Courtesy of Winterthur Museum.

carved scrolls, harps, lyres and eagles.²² Newly liberated from the confines of corsets and waistcoats, men and women were encouraged to relax into the curve of the chairs, and be supported by the tablet top, the principal area of decoration.²³

This Klismos, dating from 1815-1825, with its brilliantly executed pair of painted griffins and foliate scrolls across the tablet top may also come from the shop of Hugh and John Finlay.

The rapid changes of style in the 19th century were abetted by technical advances on many fronts and they were particularly felt in Baltimore.²⁴ A new wood—rosewood—came into vogue in fine furniture production, and new pigments and techniques such as stenciling were introduced. At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, stenciling replaced hand drawing, in order to achieve a more exact and defined result. New gilding materials were also introduced, with less costly bronze powders substituted for gold leaf. All these innovations are embedded and can be appreciated in this Klismos.

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Editor's Note:

An American Vision: Treasures from the Winterthur Museum (www.winterthur.org) will be on display at the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA from November 4, 2007 to April 6, 2008. This is a rare opportunity, as Winterthur does not often send things out on tour.

Worcester Art Museum has its own outstanding collection of American paintings and decorative arts, including the second largest collection of Paul Revere silver in America. Visit (www.worcesterart.org) for more information.

The author, Martina Tanga is the Audience Development Assistant at the Worcester Art Museum.



Applicants Accepted as New Members

Rochester, New York

Glenda Barcklow

Deborah Fitts

Elizabeth Johnsen

Lucille Loder

Muriel White



Future Meetings

Fall 2007	Killington, VT	September 27-30 (TFSS)
Spring 2008	Sturbridge, MA	May 9-11 (FSS)
Fall 2008	Killington, VT	September 18-21 (TFSS)
Spring 2009	Burlington, VT	May 1-3 (FSS)
Fall 2009	Killington, VT	September 23-27 (TFSS)
Fall 2010	Killington, VT	September 22-26 (TFSS)

Members' "A" Awards



Dorcas Layport

Pontypool



Nancy Corcoran

Stenciling on Wood



Dortia Davis

Pontypool

Members' "A" Awards

on table



Ann Dimock

*Glass with Borders
(three pieces)*

on table



on table



Members' "A" Awards



Mae Fisher
Glass with Border



Carol Heinz
Metal Leaf



Mae Fisher
Glass with Border

Members' "A" Awards

Deborah Lambeth

Glass with Border



Polly Bartow

Stenciling on Wood



Deborah Lambeth

*Special Class Awards
(two pieces)*



Members' "A" Awards: Theorems



Dolores Furnari



Dianne Freiner



Linda Brubaker

Members' "A" Awards: Theorems



Alice Smith
(Pair)



Dianne Freiner



Alice Smith

Members' "B" Awards



Ann Dimock

Glass with Border



Dorcas Layport

Glass with Border



Mae Fisher

Glass with Border

Members' "B" Awards



Alexandra Perrot

Gold Leaf Panel



Parma Jewett

Pontypool



Linda Mason

Stencilling on Wood

Members' "B" Awards



Joan Coover

Theorem



Laura Bullitt

Pontypool



JoAnne Balfour

Theorem

Members' "B" Awards: Theorems



JoAnne Balfour



Charlene Bird



Charlene Bird

Members' "B" Awards: Theorems



Linda Brubaker



Joan Bradford



Ann Kline

Ink inscription within and below watercolor swag drapery: "Martha Nelson Furber. Aged 3 years. Painted Particularly for her favorite instructress, Miss Emily P. Parsons." "1835" "Painted by Joseph H. Davis—" "at Farmington N.H. NOVEMBER 1835"

The memory book's pages feature a collage of delicate floral watercolors, penned verses, woven hair and other mementos revealing the soul of a poet and artist. Sarah, her husband and son lived in Middlebury, VT in the latter part of the 19th century, and her musings about loved ones and crafty illustrations become an intimate self portrait.

Katcher's Collection reflects its owner's eclectic taste in works that speak of a time, a place and the spirit of their original owners, providing a loving and familiar connection to these people and what they valued. The importance of the historical and cultural context to Katcher is demonstrated by the sentimental presentation of these prized possessions. Each section, "Family and Friends," "A Child's World," "At Home" and "Germanic Influences," develops a narrative of art history, art and the meaningful expressions so inherent in decorative art. Painted storage boxes, decorated and glazed earthenware, fancy inked certificates of merit and more demonstrate that utility and beauty are compatible. Katcher's collection celebrates imagination, creativity and ingenuity, deliberately and lovingly focusing on individuals, home and hearth. Lord Charles is Fiddling [and] Lady Sarah is Sewing; Chairs, recognizable by design as Windsor's, parade across pages and paintings in an array of styles; Folk Art and craftsmanship capture endearing expressions of the heart and the hand. The soul of Folk Art lies in its simplicity and sincerity, hallmarks of these naïve painters, artists and craftsmen.

An essay by Robert Shaw entitled 'Humanizing the Mundane' quotes William Morris: "... Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful." Early American decorative arts often





Lucy (Knapp) Mygatt and George Mygatt, John Brewster, Jr. (1766-1854), Danbury, Connecticut, 1799. Oil on canvas, 54 x 40 inches. Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA. Gift of Mrs. Nancy Adams McCord.

marry the utilitarian with the aesthetic. A coverlet becomes a hand quilted narrative with garlands surrounding patchwork designs of personal and political references. Containers of all sorts display panels of still life and homestead scenes while other curvilinear and geometric patterns are early harbingers of abstract painting. The surfaces of chairs, chests et al are transformed by paint, stencils and architectural shapes that enhance their role as being useful and beautiful.

Unhampered by academic training in the arts, colonial portrait paintings portray, with originality and integrity, Colonial Americans in their settings. These likenesses are especially endearing when they include images of children. John Brewster's likeness of John Mygatt and his daughter Lucy and its companion portrait of his wife and son, George, portray the face of affluence at the turn of the 18th century. The direct gaze, restrained expressions, formal attire and conservative surroundings of this family combine success without affectation. A tender parental relationship is implied by the children's hands reaching and touching their parents. The open window by Lucy deliberately features Mygatt's sprawling homestead and Brewster's able rendering of a landscape.

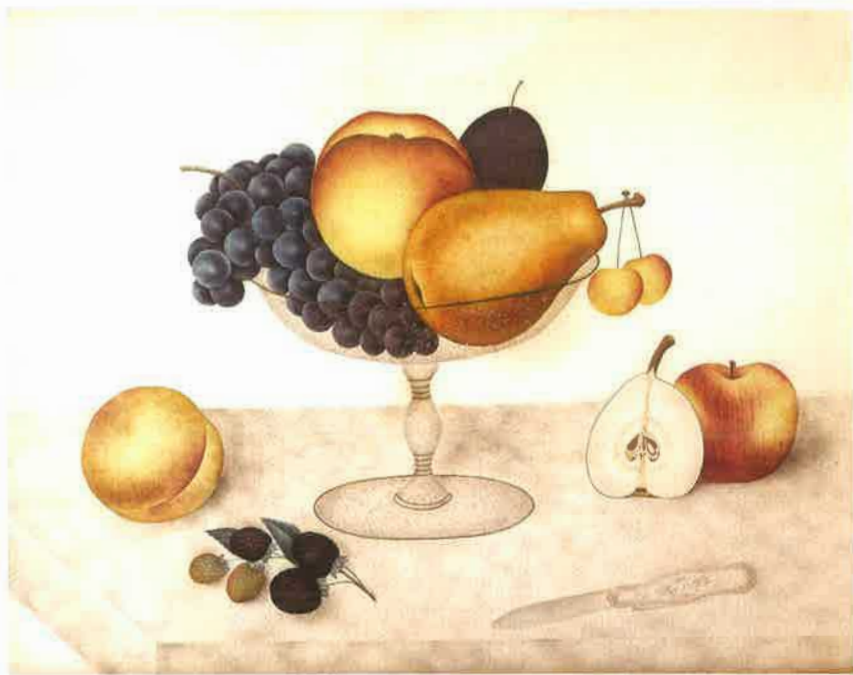
Joseph H. Davis' watercolor portraits convey happy narratives and are fully staged with props and inscriptions. His signature floor coverings,

bursting with color and patterns, the fancy frocks and the playful props of children all vie for your attention.

Four of Sheldon Peck's portraits depict the rudy complexions, occasional dour expressions and exaggerated angular features of his subjects.

Portraits sweetly jar the memory in a most personal way, but they are not the only repository of personal mementos from our past. Novelty and creativity are demonstrated by a Puzzle Purse 1830, leaves of papers tied with ribbons, which unfold to reveal delicate floral designs in watercolor. A Token of Friendship to Esther Fritz takes the form of an open hand cut from paper with inked prose, ribbon and woven hair. Pages in Lucinda Newton's *Friendship Album*, Sarah Tracy's *Memory Book* and especially Josephine's Brown's *Hair Book* illustrate delicately sculpted arrays of tiny hair surrounded by watercolor drawings. Locks of loved ones are found in many mementos. Hair that "survives us like love ... may almost say ... I have a piece of thee here."

One special watercolor is a theorem, *Fruit in Glass Compote with Pocketknife*, 1895, is attributed to artist, Emma Cady. Only seven others are attributed to her. This style of painting through a stencil was primarily practiced as an early schoolgirl art, and Cady's work is a later and highly refined



Fruit in Glass Compote with Pocketknife, Initialed H.J.V. Attributed to Emma J. Cady (1854-1933). East Chatham, New York, circa 1895. Transparent and opaque watercolor on paper with applied mica flakes, 14 3/4 x 18 1/2 inches, with original walnut frame with gilt liner.



Worktable. New England, possibly Maine, circa 1815-1825. White pine, maple, brass knob, original painted decoration, 28 x 23 1/2 x 17 inches. Inscribed in graphite on underside: "Mrs Cou[?]h"

example of this earlier technique. A pear, peach, plum, grapes and cherries fill a stemmed glass compote. Its marble base displays more fruit and a pocket knife. Cady's "shading was accomplished with repeated applications of paint...[and she]carried this technique a step further by dabbing one color over another to enrich texture and shade ... When completely

dry, the painted surface [was] buffed to a gloss ... To simulate the sparkle of glass, she applied mica flakes over transparent gray watercolor."

Katcher's collection covers a wide range of Folk Art. The collection of painted furniture and boxes is irresistible. A white pine and maple worktable painted yellow with a Mt. Vernon scenic on the surface has a fruit and floral border. The painted sides and legs of this table reveal a "virtual vocabulary of classic schoolgirl decorative elements, including seashells, seaweed, scrolls, roses, grape clusters, floral devices, trumpets and cornucopias." A feast for the eyes, many of these elements are found on chests, chairs, benches and boxes.

In the April 1933 issue of *The Magazine Antiques*, Esther Stevens Fraser's article on *The Tantalizing Chests of Taunton* is a researcher's odyssey of discovery. The article studies several chests attributed to Robert Crossman. Katcher's Lift Top Chest with Dresser was a wedding gift from Crossman to his sister Phoebe, inscribed 1731. The motif is reminiscent of an Indian textile tree-of-life design. The rendition is open with swirling C-scroll vines and smaller branching tendrils ending in tulip shaped flowers topped with rosettes. Birds attend the base and perch on a top scroll. The dark background accentuates the design, painted in white with red accent strokes.

A red and black grained, five-seat settee, 1810-1820 with stenciled and free hand painted decoration is amply spread across two pages with close-up details covering a third. Large pictures and generous details of painted and grained boxes invite analysis and speculation of various techniques. Stenciling, graining, combing, thumbprints and more are all employed to create these fanciful surfaces.

"Surfaces of Illusion" features some of the most vividly ornate examples of Mocha and Spatter Wares. Lead glazed finishes breathe life into the handsome marbled, sponged and spattered earthenware. Some of these pieces dating from the late 18th century seem timeless in their abstract painted patterns. *American Painted Tinware* by Tucker and Martin is referenced for identifying a tin deed box decorated with blue flowers and clusters of yellow strokes, a teapot (Filley Shop of Philadelphia) and tea canister identical to the one in the HSEAD Collection (Oliver Filley of CT).

Sculpture, frakturs and some Pennsylvania-German pieces continue to round-out a collection that represents the many faces of early Americans and their transplanted customs and culture.

The Katcher Collection keeps its promise visually, and its rich text, contributed essays and annotations, beautifully compliment the objects like little biographies. The last section offers thumbprints of each item, descriptions and annotations, provenance and where the item was exhibited. There is also an additional Index of Auctioneers, Dealers and Former Owners.

Early American Folk Art and Decorative Art is sorely underrepresented in publications on art. This exhibit at Yale University Art Gallery through August 2007 and this accompanying catalogue provide those who love Folk Art an opportunity to view works that would otherwise be unavailable to the public. Collectors like Jane Katcher deserve our gratitude for sharing their interest and their exquisite collections. Every once and a while, an extraordinary treasury of Americana like this one appears, and it deserves the attention of all who love this genre.



Deed box or trunk, Pennsylvania, probably Philadelphia, circa 1825-1850

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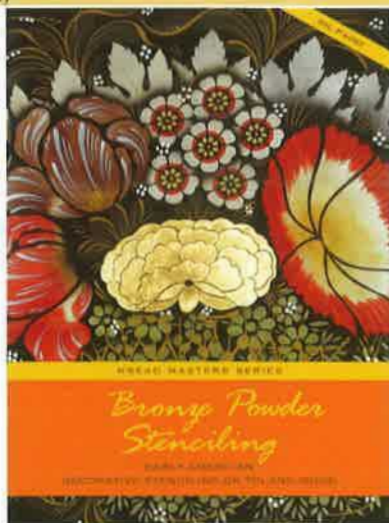
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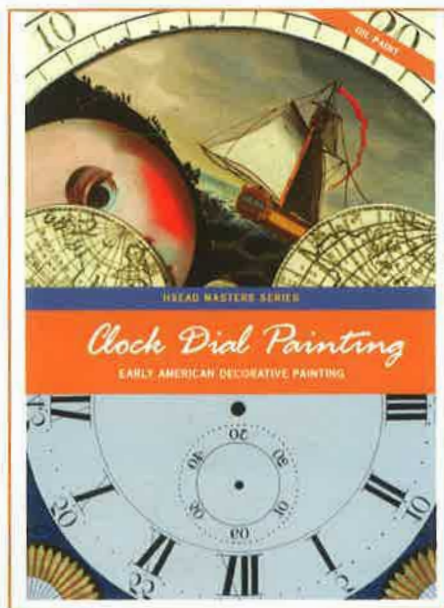
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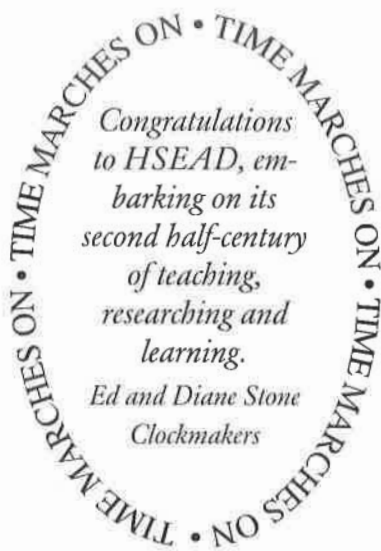
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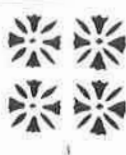
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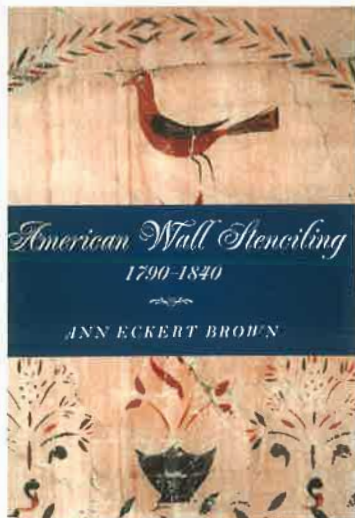
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