

The Decorator

Spring 2015 Vol. 69 No. 1



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The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.

The Decorator

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Contents

The Vanishing Art of Fore-edge Painting	6
<i>The Work of Clare Brooksbank</i>	
<i>by Samantha Elliot</i>	
The Importance of Working from Originals.....	18
<i>by Deb Lambeth</i>	
Sewing Through the Ages.....	24
<i>by Lynne Richards</i>	
The Bookshelf	36
<i>by Dianne Freiner</i>	
The Art of Diaphane.....	38
<i>by Lynne Richards</i>	
Advertising.....	41
Future Meetings.....	46

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Front cover: Curly maple octagonal top sewing table with a silk pouch. Original Castle scene in oval cartouche painted top. Cottages on the sides. Strawberry bands on the top drawer. Acorns/leaf bands - bag pull. Roses, buds, grapes - back. Baskets - front corners. Castle/ruins - back corners. Courtesy of Betsy Salm.

Back cover: Curly maple octagonal sewing table top with castle scene. Courtesy of Betsy Salm

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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Letter from the Editor

We hope that you will enjoy this issue of *The Decorator*. For our first article, we found an artist in the UK that has shared her love of fore-edge painting with us. One day when talking with Helga Johnson, she said that we had never had an article on fore-edge painting. I had never heard of it before so naturally had to look into it. It is a delightful and beautiful expression of decorative painting and one that I am sure many of you might want to try.

Our next article is by Deborah Lambeth. Deb is a Master Craftsman with a special interest in Pontypool. Over the years, she noticed one painter's identifying features on some of her trays and she shares this with us.

I have always admired Martha Tetler's lampshades when she teaches the art of Diaphane at the Fall workshops. I have written about Marti's business of lampshades and have included some of the shades that I cut from the early directions to show you the designs and how they would have looked.

When I put out the word that I was going to do an article on sewing implements for this issue I never realized how many different items I might receive. Sara Tiffany, Shirley Baer, Martha Barclay, Roberta Edrington and others contributed to this article and in the end, new questions have been raised as to the function of some of these articles.

Dianne Freiner found a great book on one of her trips to New York this past winter and she graciously contributed to our magazine with her book report. It is about a folk art exhibit that is traveling the country. I know our Hudson Valley chapter will be visiting the museum in Glens Falls when it comes there!

Lynne Richards
Editor of The Decorator

The Vanishing Art of Fore-Edge Painting

The Work of Clare Brooksbank

by

Samantha Elliott



Clare Brooksbank is an accomplished artist and a leading talent in the art of fore-edge painting. Her love of art was sparked at an early age by perusing books on the Great Masters. With a fine eye for detail and a need for challenge she would spend hours drawing in pencil the beautiful paintings from Michelangelo, Raphael, Bruegel, and Titian and also artists from the PreRaphaelite period.

"I guess I realised I had a capacity for drawing in fine detail, and as I started to look at old paintings in books, I felt I wanted to go beyond just looking. It was a combination of wanting to challenge myself and to become more involved in the old paintings."

This detail has become her trademark and inspiration for her fore-edge paintings as she has been able to express her love of the human form through reproducing the classics. It has also influenced her imagery of erotic art in this format, which is now proving very popular with collectors. She paints in a style that is rich and embellished with colour. Her themes are sometimes romantic or eclectic, and often the scenes are detailed with a framework of decorative motifs or with a single colour border.

In the late 1980s, Clare completed her academic training at the *Reigate School of Art and Design* in Surrey before moving to London where she began her career by painting portraits and murals. Her eye for detail was captured when Clare began to paint miniature classical paintings to adorn the interiors of her mothers' dolls houses.

"I had always enjoyed the challenge of tackling fine detail and I painted a few miniatures on oil painting paper for my mother as she was into dolls' house collecting. They were exact 1/12th versions of classical paintings in oil; usually around 1" x 2", painted with a brush so fine I could only see the hairs when I put paint on it!"

With some gentle persuasion, Clare was encouraged to start selling her miniature paintings on a family's stall in the prestigious Chelsea Antique Market on the Kings Road in London. Her journey into the world of fore-edge painting began purely by chance when renowned Antiquarian Book Dealer, Adrian Harrington, who owned the Chelsea Antique Market, became aware of her work. Trading as part of the Harrington Brothers since 1971, Adrian specialised in a wide selection of English literature, first editions and rare antiquarian books, and also ran an expert bookbinding and restoration service. Being impressed by the quality and detail of Clare's paintings, he approached her about becoming a fore-edge artist for him. Having never heard of this rare form of book decoration before, it took time, practice and research for her to be able to create such delicate forms of artistry.

"It took me a while to get used to the difficult surface and the fact that no mark you make can be erased. I remember thinking that this is a hundred year old leather bound book that can't be replaced, so I was extremely tentative to start with."

This was the beginning of Clare's career in the world of fore-edge painting and over a ten year period she received many commissions from the Harrington Brothers. Adrian's brother Peter was also an influence on Clare's career. With their professional approach being so different to each other she had to adapt to each individual commission very quickly.

"If it wasn't for Adrian, I would never have known about fore-edge painting, and I will always be very grateful to him for that. He was very precise about what he wanted on his books and he would supply the images: there was no room for choice. Peter gave me the freedom to develop my own style, which was a great opportunity, and I was able to develop my career as a fore-edge artist and choose the images that I wanted to paint."

It was Peter Harrington who first encouraged Clare to start painting erotic scenes.



Fig. 2: *Nude 1*, Annotated Dictionary of Fore-edge Painting

"When I worked for Adrian he always gave me an image to work from, but it was usually a black and white photocopy, so I got a collection of old Christies and Sotheby's Old Masters auction catalogues to reference necessary details and colours. For Peter's books I'd go to the excellent library in Kensington near where I lived at the time. I also have a good collection of books on the PreRaphaelites, of course."

The 'vanishing' fore-edge has been a form of English book art for centuries. Its history has been shadowed in mystery as the originator of this art form is unknown. Edge-decoration, as it's formally known, has been recorded as far back as medieval times. It is known that books were frequently stored flat on their covers, and this form of marking was used to display the titles and authors' names in order to differentiate the books for reference and to identify ownership. Other methods such as gilding and marbling were applied in order to protect the edges of the pages. By the mid 17th century, books were decorated with detailed paintings on closed or fanned out pages, and gold leaf was also applied as a luxurious indulgence.

Fore-edge paintings that have been created in modern and past times are usually applied to rare and collectable antiquarian books. When viewing a fore-edge painting, the book must be treated with great care and respect so as not to damage any of the pages.



Courtesy of Clare Brooksbank

Choosing a book is one of the most important features for the fore-edge artist.

“When I am purchasing a book, the first thing I check is the joints. Fanning the book in this way can put a strain on the joints so they must be in good condition or the boards may pop off.”

The following list describes the various techniques of fore-edge painting, each style requiring a particular level of complexity and skill.

- *Single: a single painting is applied to the fanned fore-edge of the book.*
- *Split: (usually on a thick book) the centre of the book is found and the pages fanned out to both sides. A painting is applied to each side. Two paintings are displayed on the two sides of the book edges.*
- *Panorama: A panorama is a single scene that is continuous across all three edges (fanned or closed).*
- *Double: a painting is applied to the fore-edge in the usual way, then the text block is fanned back the opposite way revealing the back of the pages just painted. A shadow of the image shows through the other side and a second painting is applied on top of this, carefully, so that it doesn't leak through the paper and mess up the first painting.*
- *Six-way: A double fore-edge painting applied to each of the three edges of the text block.*



The pictures opposite illustrate how to fan the book out before it is clamped and painted.

Hold the book on your lap with the front cover towards you. Take hold of the text block leaving the end papers and board loose. Always ensure that the board is supported; if it is allowed to hyper-extend backwards the joint may break. Gently curl the text block down with your thumbs up-
permost and fingers underneath. Using thumbs and fore-fingers, alternately curl the corners, left then right, to gradually fan out the fore-edge. Once the fore-edge is sufficiently fanned, hold it with one hand, it is then ready for the



clamp to be applied (previous page) This takes some practice and dexterity as well as strong thumbs!

Clare's preparation for painting is relatively simple as the materials consist of a clamp, a string to hold and support the front board, and a wide range of watercolours and fine brushes. [Fig. 1 on title page]

"I use Windsor and Newton watercolour blocks. You can't use white (or any colour that contains white) as it would stick the pages together. I have favourite colours that I use a lot: Alizarin crimson, Payne's gray (instead of black), Yellow ochre and Phthalo blue. The brushes I use now have been chosen for their combination of strength and flexibility. High quality sable watercolour brushes are too flimsy for the ridged surface that I paint on. Also, my brushes - especially the fine ones - wear out very quickly as they take a battering, so I don't buy super expensive ones. I get through hundreds of Windsor and Newton Sceptre Gold, sable/synthetic, size 000 brushes."

Clare usually works with full leather bindings dating from 1850-1920. Finding books of a certain quality can be hard, and those having edges already gilded are preferable, as adding this afterwards can be costly.

"Gilding is definitely preferable though I have done a number of modern ungilt books when people have wanted a specific modern book as a gift for someone. The image is then not hidden as it is with the gilding but a very condensed image can be seen when the book is closed. However, the pleasure of fully revealing the image, as the edge is fanned is still there. I am not at all an expert on gilding but I have found with experience that modern gilding often doesn't lend itself to fore-edging. A different technique is used in the modern gilding process and the gold tends to wash off a little with the application of the paint. For this reason, unless you purchase pre-1920 books, in my experience it is best to get the gilding done afterwards."

With the technology available in the 21st century, Clare can now research images online, providing her with a vast wealth of references and choice.

"When choosing a picture for a book, I like to choose something as relevant as possible. This is always easy with the great poets such as Tennyson or Byron but harder with some other books. This is really how the erotic theme began, it spiced up a book that perhaps needed a bit of spicing!"

In the fifteen year period that Clare has been working as a fore-edge artist she has produced over a thousand works, drawing inspiration from her love of the classics and the great masters that she had studied when she was younger.

In this scene [Fig. 3] Clare has created a fore-edge originating from an image from the Bible. It has been painted in her own style and colour with a decorative border. The image is from an extract from the Bible (Genesis 7: p. 99) which describes God instructing Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the earth. They went in two and two into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."

She has been commissioned alongside Martin Frost and Margaret Costa, to paint on ten copies of the deluxe edition of Jeff Weber's recent book on the history of fore-edge painting, *The Annotated Dictionary of Fore-edge Painters & Binders* [see Fig 2]. Weber is an antiquarian bookseller and scholar who is the grandson of Carl J. Weber, known also as a fore-edge painting historian. Clare's work on the limited edition of Weber's book is an unusual example of a fore-edge painting on a book about fore-edge painting!



Figure 3: Animals entering the Ark

Fig. 4 shows a scene which Clare has created from the original 1849 painting *Lorenzo and Isabella* by Sir John Everett Mills. The subject is based upon the Keats poem *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*. The scene employs symbolism to foretell the story of the murder of Isabella's lover Lorenzo by her jealous brothers. A tragedy follows, leading to sorrow, tears and death by a broken heart. The original painting can be viewed at *The Walker Art Gallery*, Liverpool, England.

Jeff Weber states that, "*Clare is a very talented artist who has been painting on book fore-edges for about 15 years. Her work is often inspired by the Pre-Raphaelites such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and others. She often depicts romantic scenes, and just as frequently religious views, and some erotics. She will paint to commission and certainly has her own style, which is precise, warm, poetic, and romantic. In the last couple of years I have encouraged her to sign her work, which has appeared as her initials found on the lower corner of the fore-edge painting.*"

As an amateur starting out, Clare had been told about the respected British fore-edge artist Martin Frost. Their paths crossed whilst working for the Harrington Brothers and this prolific artist was an instant inspiration for Clare.



Fig. 4: *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*- Keats Poetical Works

*"There was a bit of awe surrounding him;
he is the undisputed king of fore-edge.
So when I started selling my work on
eBay, and he sent me a message saying
he liked it, I was incredibly chuffed and
it gave me a great impetus to continue
developing my style. He has continued
to be very kind and supportive as well
as very inspiring.*

Martin Frost: *"Clare and I both worked for the Harrington brothers, antiquarian booksellers based in Chelsea, London, for many years. Peter showed me her work and teased me that I'd better watch out, as this 'new girl on the block' was pretty damned good, and what's more she's a lot prettier than me! Clare and I both are partial to the Victorian Pre-Raphaelite romantics with their historical whimsy, lush detail and loads of semi-clad women. It seemed very suitable for the scores of copies of Byron, Tennyson, and Shelley that we were presented with. That hint of 'naughty' fits nicely with the peek-a-boo nature of fore-edge painting. Clare and I have worked on the edges of the FEP reference book by Jeff Weber published in 2011, a large book that required forwarding and edge-gilding prior to painting. This process widens the scope of books suitable for fore-edge painting and will be our contribution to the advance of the edge-painted book in the 21st century."*



Fig. 5: *The Garden of Hesperides*, by Frederick Lord Leighton (1830-1896)

Clare is also having her fore-edge paintings illustrated in a book to be published by another leading fore-edge artist and author Jeanne Bennett, *The History and Technique of Fore-Edge Painting*. The scene that Clare has painted shows the complexity, skills and expression with a picture telling its story. In this scene [Fig. 5] Clare has created a fore-edge from the original 1891 painting *The Garden of Hesperides*, by Frederick Lord Leighton (1830-1896). The subject is based upon The Hesperides who were the guardians of the golden apple tree given by Earth to Hera when she married Zeus. They are creating an image of classical perfection and balance within the world. The original painting can be viewed at *The Lady Lever Art Gallery*, Liverpool.

So what is the future of fore-edge painting? It's still a mysterious and beautiful craft to encounter and explore. As Abbott Johannes Trithemius said in the late 14th century, "*As far as possible, manuscripts should be decorated so that their appearance alone will induce perusal.*" As Clare continues her journey there are sure to be more hidden treasures being discovered by chance; pieces for future generations to discover and learn.

Martin Frost states, "*It's really a kind of magic showing up from nothing; the magic transformation of a bright gilded book-edge into an intricate little painting.*" The description of fore-

edge painting as a hidden jewel is very apt, and reflects the delicacy and passions of a fore-edge artist. Never judge a book by its cover as you never know what delights you will find beneath the pages.

Clare Brooksbank settled in the Historical City of Derby where she lives with her daughter Amaia. Clare leads a very active life as a mother, artist and yoga teacher. She continues to take regular commissions and involves herself in other artistic projects within her community as her love of art is limitless. She also specialises in portraiture using various methods and materials that spark an infusion of modern and classic styles that is inherent in all of her work.

Samantha Elliott has recently completed a Foundation Degree in Media Journalism at Northbrook College, West Sussex, and is now in her final year studying for a degree specialising in magazine and feature writing at Southampton Solent University. She has worked in the printing industry and in marketing and research. She lives with her seven year old son, Harry, and has a busy life as a mother and full-time student but enjoys a challenge, life, the seaside and writing about interesting people.

Useful Links:

Clare Brooksbank: www.foreedgeclare.co.uk

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Photography: Ewan Mathers: www.ewanmathers.com

Samantha Elliott: email: sam2106@live.co.uk

Jeff Weber: www.weberrarebooks.com

Martin Frost: www.foreedgefrost.co.uk

Editor's additions: Below: Fore-edge paintings: Courtesy of Carolyn Dorsey; A local history librarian in New Jersey, took photos of these fore edge paintings of two books from her personal library. The books date from the early nineteenth century and originally belonged to her grandfather, who was a book collector.



Excursions in the county of Surrey: forming a complete guide for the traveller and tourist. London, 1821.



Fragments of prose and verse by Miss Elizabeth Smith, lately deceased: with some account of her life and character by H.M. Bowdler. London: printed for T. Cadell in the Strand, 1824.

The Importance of Working from Originals

by
Deborah Lambeth

Original pieces have always been and will always be our best teachers. Once you get hooked on working from an original, you will never go back to working from a pattern. By definition, working from an original means working from the original article. Only when you are working from an original can you take accurate dimensions and trace every component of the design exactly. Working from a photograph is not working from an original.

We are so fortunate in the 21st century to have so many more originals to study. Bless you Esther, for steering us in this direction. Esther Stevens Brazier collected original pieces for years and recorded patterns with the thought of starting a museum. Esther also wrote thirteen articles that were published in *Antiques Magazine* to further our knowledge. After Esther's death, HSEAD was formed in 1946 in her memory.

Emily Heath was the force behind establishing our headquarters and museum at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York. With the help of fellow collectors our collection grew. Mona Rowell was our first curator in Cooperstown. Mona diligently recorded all acquisitions in the accession books. Our collection remained in Cooperstown for twenty three years.



Unpierced edges on two circular



Example of a pierced flange. Courtesy of Barbara Quirk



Close-up: Typical daisy unit on bottom of tray.



Above tray: Courtesy of Jane Ashton

After two years of planning and construction, the Museum of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration was established at the Harmanus Bleecker Center in Albany, New York in 1981. At this time we were able to house our collection in a climate controlled location.

Close-up of center of the above tray.





*This tray shows the roses and daisy units that were done by the same artisan as seen on the other trays.
Courtesy of Parma Jewett*

Close-up of rose. Please note the curlicues.



Original pontypool tray with roses and daisy units. Courtesy of Mary Perry

Doris Fry became the first curator at the Center. Margaret Coffin was the director and orchestrated exciting changing exhibitions. Deborah Lambeth was the last curator. The collection resided in Albany until 1990 at which time the HSEAD Board of Directors voted to give part of our collection to the *Museum of American Folk Art* in New York City.

As curator of our museum, I gained a further appreciation for the study of many originals. In studying original Pontypool pieces, I was excited to find many originals that were executed by the same hand. There is no question these were done by the same person. The daisy sprays in all these photos are unique to this artisan. Look at the multitude of strokes in the daisies. Also note the shape of the strokes on the stems of the units. On further study, note how similarly the roses were executed.

What an exciting find! The more you study originals the more you learn.

Note the different shapes of the flanges on the trays. I have seen the usual pierced edged and the unpierced flange with a slight flare and unusual lip. You will also find Pontypool on pierced and unpierced oval gallery trays. Pontypool painting can also be found on many different shapes including baskets, knife boxes, plate warmers, tobacco boxes, chestnut urns, and tea kettles...to name a few.

I call this artisan the hand that didn't want to stop painting!



*Above: Multitude of daisy units.
Courtesy of Margaret Farmer*



Exquisite Pontypool tray with daisy units and flowers in a bowl. Note the curl-cues in the closeup below. Courtesy of Deborah Lambeth



Pontypool tray with daisy units, rose and bird. Note the number of daisy units and all the strokes in each one!

Courtesy of the late Margaret Emery



Below: Pontypool tray with daisy units.

Courtesy of Parma Jewett



Sewing Articles Through the Ages

by

Lynne Richards

The word "sewing" was first coined in the 14th century and has never left our lexicon. First, out of necessity, sewing implements were invented for use for sewing shelters, shoes, clothing and basic survival. From there, as survival was not as dire, one could use the basic tools of sewing for more decorative things.

Shears, measuring tools, needles, thread and cloth were all that were needed and children learned very young to sew, embroider, and work with all the sewing implements.

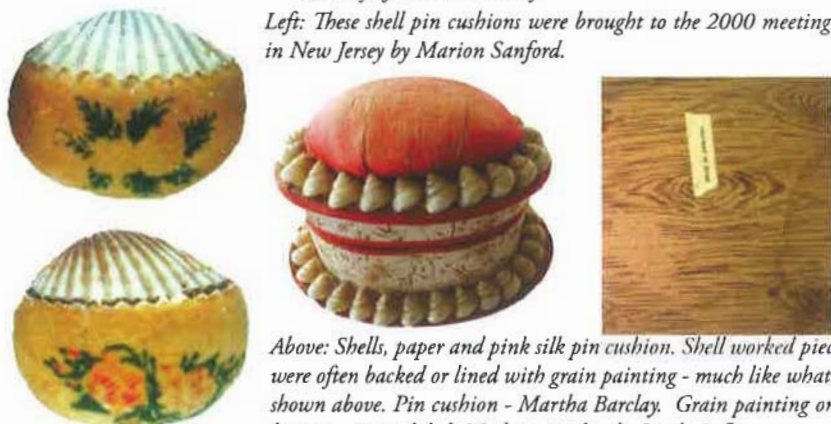
To hold all of these essentials, many large and small pieces were invented for needles, pins or thimbles. They could be made out of many things which might include velvet for theorems, wood, cardboard and papier mache.



Wonderful pin cushion right and left sides. Freehand painting in middle of open shell. 2"
The Art of Theorem Painting by Lefko and Knickerbocker has the instructions for making these.

Courtesy of Martha Barclay

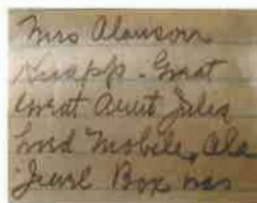
Left: These shell pin cushions were brought to the 2000 meeting in New Jersey by Marion Sanford.



Above: Shells, paper and pink silk pin cushion. Shell worked pieces were often backed or lined with grain painting - much like what is shown above. Pin cushion - Martha Barclay. Grain painting on bottom - Paper label: Made in England - Linda Lefko



Above: This piece was brought to the 2000 meeting in New Jersey by Marion Sanford. These boxes were known as trinket boxes and could very well have been used as sewing, jewelry or small mementos boxes. Most have freehand painting on them and passe-partout around them (the embossed metallic edging.)



Above: Fruit and rose may have some stencils but most if not all is freehand work. Cardboard construction with orange paper and embossed metallic edging. 4 3/4" x 2 1/2" Above: Outside part of the whole note found inside says: Mrs Alanson Knapp. Great Aunt Julia Lord Mobile, Ala. "Jewel box was hers - her husband was a Jeweler" Courtesy of Martha Barclay

Passe-partout is a term used for the embossed metallic edging around these boxes. It was made in Germany. The definition of it is: A method of framing in which a piece of glass is placed over a picture and {the picture} is affixed to the backing by means of adhesive strips of paper pasted over the edges. Another name used for it is dresden trim. In this case the adhesive paper is holding down the theorem.



Original woven basket with thimble to fit inside. Basket is 1 3/8" L
Courtesy of Sara Tiffany



Three photos of book pin cushion showing top, bottom and back, with pins on one side.

1 7/16" x 1 1/16" x 10/16"

Courtesy of Sara Tiffany



Urn pin cushion with flowers. Silk backing is very worn.

4 3/4" x 2 1/2"

Courtesy of Martha Barclay



Wooden sewing bird would fasten to a table.

The pin cushion was on top. The beak opened up and held the materials being sewn so both hands could be free.

Courtesy of Martha Barclay



Above: Pin cushions. Freehand painting on velvet.

Courtesy of Americana and Antiques on Etsy

Below: This painted spool was what young girls used to make cording.

Courtesy of Martha Barclay



Polychrome sewing box with passe-partout. Velvet pin cushion on top that says "To my friend"

Courtesy of Americana and Antiques on Etsy





Stenciled and freehand painted pin cushion. Cardboard construction with green, pink and metallic papers. Mirror inside the lid. Lift out tray with storage under it. Blue silk hinge. The pin cushion on top is 4 3/4" x 2 1/2" The total size is 5 3/4" x 4 1/8" x 1 7/8" Courtesy of Martha Barclay



Below: "Think of me" is what is written on the pin cushion on the box below. It appears that the flower is stenciled and that the leaves which are very pale are done freehand. Notice the wallpaper on the sides. This is the same type of box as the one above. Courtesy of Americana and Antiques on Etsy

Below: Freehand painting on velvet trinket box with a passe-partout edging. Courtesy of Americana and Antiques on Etsy



Flower stenciled with freehand leaves and wallpaper. Courtesy of Michael Weinberg





*Original hinged lid on
bird's eye veneer sewing
box. "Parting Couple"
with parents, dog,
trunk, two children.
Bright yellow paper
interior.
All photos on this page
Courtesy of Betsy Salm*

*Front: Cartouche of roses
encircling signature
"S. Dawes."
12" x 8" x 4"*



*Left side of the box:
Fruit compote.*

*On the right side of the
box is poetry encircl-
ing a little girl with a
flute: "The brook flowed
gently at her feet,
In murmurs smooth
aline
Her life which once she
tun'd so sweet
Had now forgot its
song!"*



*Back of box:: Bee skep and
giant bees.*



*Original sewing box with a lift lid.
One drawer with brass hardware.
Front: Three small baskets.
All photos on this page
Courtesy of Betsy Salm*

*Right side: Fruit still life.
Notice the border made up
of black angular, rectangular
shapes.*



Left side: Fruit still life.

*Top of sewing box.
Large melon, green
grapes, pears, peaches,
plums, strawberries rest-
ing on green grass.
12 1/2"x 9 3/4"x 5 1/2"*





Sewing box with theorem on the inside of the lid. Many boxes were "fitted", meaning to have an insert of card or wood, covered with velvet or silk with special depressions into which fit specific tools.

Courtesy of HSEAD



Victorian wooden needle case. Probably German although I have seen them listed on line as being Shaker. The top knob has a pin cushion and also acts as a handle to lift off the top. Inside you will find metal rods sticking up to hold the spools of thread which are then threaded out through the holes on the upper part of the box,

7"L x 5 1/2"H x 5"D

Courtesy of Shirley Baer



Crowley's Needle box

19"L x 9"H x 9"D

Courtesy of Shirley Baer

According to Wikipedia, “by 1790, the first sewing machine was patented by Thomas Saint;” although most sewing was still done at home and by hand, sewing could be a way that women could make a small amount of wage to augment their families’ meager incomes.

By the 1840’s, Bartjelemy Thimonnier had introduced his model of a sewing machine and by 1850, Isaac Singer produced his protocol. “The Willcox & Gibbs Sewing Machine Company was founded in 1857 by James E. A. Gibbs and James Willcox and opened its London office in 1859 at 135 Regent Street. By 1871 the Company’s Chief Office for Europe was at 150 Cheapside, London. This office was later moved (post 1885) to 94 - 96 Wigmore Street, then 37 & 39 Moorgate Street (by 1891 to post 1907) and later 20 Fore Street, London. Right from the initial production, the manufacturing of the Company’s single thread, chain stitch machine was undertaken by Brown & Sharpe in Rhode Island and this continued up until 1948.”



*Early Willcox & Gibbs Sewing Machine
The size on this machine is 10 1/2" x 8 1/2"
Courtesy of Shirley Baer*



*Toy sewing machine 5 1/2" x 5"
Front and back
Courtesy of Shirley Baer
Notice the decorative stenciling*

*Freehand bronze papier
mache sewing box.
4'H x 3 1/4" W x 2"D
Courtesy of Roberta Edrington*



Below: Papier mache sewing box with all items that were stored inside.





*Papier mache chinoiserie sewing box. Courtesy of Shirley Baer
14 1/2" x 10 1/2" x 5"*



Close up of inside top of the sewing box.



Sewing implements inside of box, some made of ivory and some of bone.



Small needle case. The inside blue silk lining has paper cases for Thomas Harper's #48 darning needles, oval eyed sharps, size 7, oval eyed sharps, size 8, and oval eyed sharps, 5/10. It also has a needle with a large eye, a small eye and a crochet hook on the end. 2" x 3 1/8" Courtesy of Sara Tiffany.

Rare Pennsylvania sewing chair with work drawer under seat (circa 1840). Made with maple and poplar with original paint and iron lock. 28"H 14 3/4" W 14" D

Courtesy of: M. Finkel & Daughter 936 Pine Street, Philadelphia PA 19107 www.samplings.com





Sewing table; Guangzhou, China c. 1860-1870 lacquer on Camphorwood.

Courtesy of Albany Institute of History and Art; Gift of Miss Emily Watkinson Rankin and Edward Elmendorf Rankin in memory of their mother, Mrs. Edward W. Rankin 1955.61.1

Book Review

A Shared Legacy: Folk Art in America

Introduction by Richard Miller

*With contributions by Avis Berman, Cynthia G. Falk, Lisa Minardi,
and Ralph Sessions*

Published by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia
Skira Rizzoli, New York

256 pages, available in soft or hard cover

Reviewed by Dianne Freiner

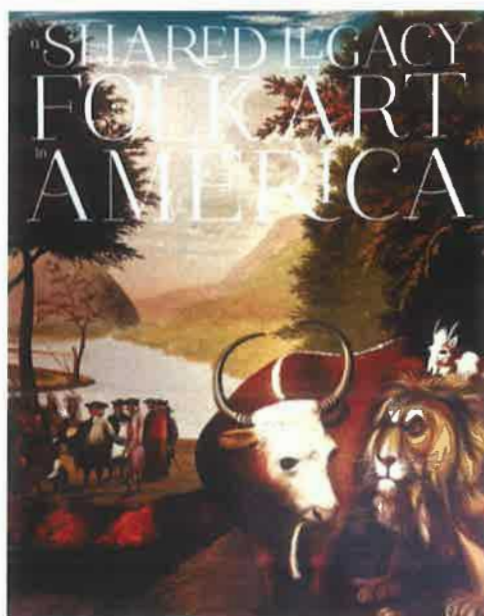
On a recent visit to the *American Folk Art Museum*, I browsed the book section and discovered a wonderful book that was newly published and released in 2014. It tells the story of American folk art created by artists in rural areas between 1800 and 1925. These artists were either self-taught or minimally trained, creating artwork painted in the naive fashion. The work of these artists was the prevalent art form in the United States for more than a century.

The works are drawn from the collection of Barbara L. Gordon who has been collecting folk art over the past twenty years. This vast collec-

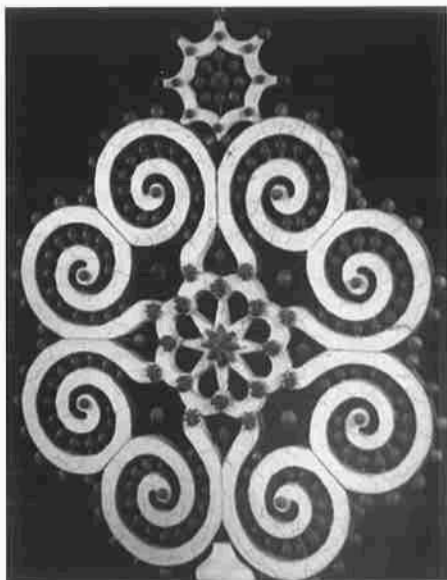
tion is available for public viewing at various exhibitions throughout the country beginning with the *American Folk Art Museum* (December 16-March 8, 2015). Future exhibitions will be held in Kansas City, KS; Memphis, TN; Alabama, Greensburg, PA; Denver, CO; Palm Beach, FL; Cincinnati, OH and Glens Falls, NY. The works comprise a vast collection of American paintings, sculpture, furniture and decorative arts of the highest quality.

A Shared Legacy: Folk Art In America begins with

beautiful plates of portraits by artists such as Daniel Lamont, Ammi Phillips, John Brewster, Jr., John Singleton Copley, and an essay written



by Richard Miller: *The Art of American Folk Art*. Miller characterizes folk art by drawing a comparison of the various ethnic or cultural traditions of the colonists and the subsequent influence on paintings, designs of barns and furniture (architecture), silversmiths, sculpture, and woodcarving. A large part of this chapter is devoted to portraiture with many images of famous folk artists displayed.



Back cover: A Shared Legacy: Folk Art in America
Snowflake Table

Included in the book is a chapter which examines the key roles of female collectors of folk art written by Avis Berman along with a nice article on Nina Fletcher Little which includes several color plates of Cogswell's Grant and the Littles.

Other essays are devoted to Pennsylvania German furniture stylistic traditions written by Cynthia G. Falk and Lisa Minardi. Figure carving and the influence of commercial carvers on the creation of a national school of folk sculpture is written by Ralph Sessions.

The reader is provided with a large catalogue featuring approximately 140 color plates of portraits, still life paintings, furniture, game boards, boxes, and carvings attributed to Schimmel. It also includes plates of oil paintings on canvas, *The Peaceable Kingdom with the Leopard of Serenity*, attributed to Edward Hicks. The front cover is a colorful rendition of *The Peaceable Kingdom*, while the back cover is a color image of the *Snowflake Table*.

This is a very interesting publication with a wealth of images and research that provides new insights into American folk art.

The Art of Diaphane

by

Lynne Richards critiqued by Marti Tetler

An Elegant Lamp Shade, the prettiest thing of the kind that we have seen, simple and inexpensive, yet wonderfully effective and beautiful, is a shade made of white Bristol Board. It resembles, indeed would be mistaken for, one of the costly porcelain transparencies... the same pure Parian appearance and soft shading where the light comes through." This was from an article written in the *Lady's Friend* in the December 1866 issue, although the making of these lamp shades had been published earlier in the January 1856 issue of Godey's *'Lady's Book'*.

Lady's Friend published slightly different directions than Godey's *'Lady's book'*. As was stated above, *Lady's Friend's* lamp shade was made of bristol board and the desired bunch of flowers or fruit was first marked with a soft lead pencil on tissue paper. This was placed on "the lampshade panels and the design impressed with an ivory knitting needle. A very sharp penknife was used to cut the solid traced lines, but where the design showed dotted lines, a fine needle was used to punch through the tracing.

The size of the holes graduated towards the ends of the veins in the leaves. Cut parts were then pushed in and a single sheet of tissue pasted to the back of the shade which was finished off with a narrow colored ribbon, sewed carefully around the edges of the shade."

HSEAD is fortunate to have one of our own members who presently teaches the art of making these lovely lampshades. Marti Tetler has taught the making of these shades for 35 years and offers classes in this art at our Fall Workshops. She has provided me with a CD that she and her husband, Frank, have produced. It has updated directions for making lampshades along with the past directions for making them the original way from Godey's *'Lady's Book'*. I am going to give a synopsis of the directions and show you some of the results that can be obtained.





The berries should be bright scarlet and the leaves light green.



The original Godey's *Lady's Book* stated that "after tracing the pattern onto oiled or transparent paper, go over the pattern with a hard pencil with sufficient enough force to make an impression on the card-board. With a sharp knife, cut the lines but leave some uncut so that it will hold together. Then, *push* in the figures far enough to cause a deep shadow when held to the light. Under each flower, fasten with gum, *double tissue* paper of a suitable color. Then, over the whole of the shade, gum a lining of *double green tissue* paper which forms the leaves, and also serves to darken the card-board, which otherwise would be too thin. Cut, from this green lining, a hole, where ever there is a flower. Then over all put another lining, of white, which gives the inside a finished look.



Flowers are purple and leaves are dark green.





Great care must be taken to puff out the tissue paper sufficiently to allow the cut parts which have been pushed in to make a deep shadow. The whole shade rests on one of the wire frames used for other lamp-shades."

All of the designs shown here came from the original January 1856 issue of Godey's *Lady's Book* that was published plus there were also two more sets of patterns in the February 1856 issue and a few more in the following months.

This art could also be used to ornament other objects in the parlor. This included screens, which with the addition of birds, butterflies or other objects added interest to the floral effect.

Marti has written a wonderful CD showing all of these patterns and has also included a comprehensive list of items used to accomplish this art.

It also covers everything to make the shade from all the tools you will need to how to do the cutting, piercing and painting. If you have a certain type or style of shade, the CD covers how to make the shade and design the arc. It also goes into the type of shade top that will be needed for your lamp. Other considerations would be the size of the lamp base, plus the height of the lamp. Marti's CD will give you all the necessary instructions for making lampshades similar to these.

If you want to try making these, you would have to have a lampshade that would accommodate these pieces. I can say that these were a challenge getting all the right colors and how to put them on tissue paper. I learned a lot using today's materials, I can't imagine how difficult it would have been doing it by hand back in the 1850's. It must have added much needed color in their oil lamp lit homes!

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