The

Decorator

Journal of The Historical Society of Early American Decoration

Fall 2017 Vol. 73 No. 2

The Historical Society of Early American Decoration

A Society with affiliated chapters was 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; promote continued research in that field; record and preserve examples of early American decoration; maintain exhibits and publish works on the subject of early American decoration and its history to further the appreciation of this art and the elevation of the standards of its reproduction and utilization; assist in public and private efforts in locating and preserving material pertinent to the Society's work and to cooperate with other societies in the accomplishment of purposes of mutual concern.

Vision: The Historical Society of Early American Decoration (HSEAD) perpetuates and expands the unique skills and knowledge of early American decoration.

Mission: HSEAD will develop new ways of growing and sharing its art and expertise, of expanding its membership and collaborative relationships and of awakening appreciation of early American decoration among new audiences.

Cover: Victorian Flower Gothic Tray painted by Linda Brubaker

The Decorator

Fall 2017

FEATURES

Office Address:
The Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.
at the Farmers' Museum
PO Box 30
Cooperstown, NY 13326
607-547-5667
www.HSEAD.org info@hsead.org

Editor's Letter

Following a long line of respected and talented Editors, I am honored and excited about continuing in the interim as Editor for *The Decorator* and publicizing the scholarship and commitment of our diligent researchers, recorders and collectors of authentic decorative arts. We are grateful to have Valerie Oliver, a thorough researcher and former Reference Librarian at the University of Connecticut as Assistant Editor as well as Joseph Rice, artist and web designer, for his valued aesthetic vision as our Design Consultant. Lynne Richards, Shirley Baer, and all the previous Editorial Staff members of *The Decorator*, have set a high bar, and we shall do our best to maintain our scholarly standard. I speak for all of us when I say thank you to all our contributors and hope that you will continue to share your insights, discoveries and treasures in this journal.

Our Annual Membership Meeting last Spring in Portland, Maine continued to echo a rich history of decorative arts in a profusion of reproductions and originals displayed in Exhibition. Gracing the cover is Linda Brubaker's breathtaking Victorian Flower painted Gothic tray, topping-off requirements that earned her the Master Craftsman Award. Her highlighted tray and past award pieces attest to her talent. The Country Painting category is always well represented, and adorning the display of painted tinware was a delightful reproduction of a peddler's cart by Anne Dimock who shares her creative odyssey.

Our articles for this issue are somewhat eclectic. A biographical piece by Lois Tucker introduces us to George Morland, from the gifted three year old prodigy and prankster to the successful artist. Tucker, an author, researcher and teacher, identifies his scenics, some of which have been reproduced on trays in bronze powders. Although his talent seemed only excelled by his drinking, his artwork, seen in photos accompanying this article and our members reproductions of his works, are what we'll long remember and admire.

Linda Carter Lefko, author and researcher, offers us a brief glimpse and description of painted walls in historical homes. Many are found, fortunately, in decent condition, some rescued from trash bins, while others are often found, serendipitously. She and colleagues have established the Center for Painted Wall Preservation to insure the preservation and documentation of these designs and murals, painted references of America's heritage.

Yvonne Jones, a frequent contributor from 'across the pond,' to *The Decorator* continues her research in Japanned Papier Mache and tinware. This time she profiles a lovely sample tray, a scenic with a red background. Traveling by horseback, the Japan-master carried small samples of his wares to prospective customers, and Yvonne has discovered one gem that also offers new information.

Luke Randall, professional artist and gilder, shares his remarkable restoration project on an historical landmark. Our gilders will surely admire his thorough and deliberate review and choice of materials, and empathize with his challenge and perseverance to achieve a successful outcome.

Anticipating our Annual Membership Meeting in Colonial Williamsburg in the Spring, I've reread a fascinating biography of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Descended from one of the most influential families of the Gilded Age, Abby married into one of the wealthiest families of the 20th century and contributed to a legacy that continues to enrich many lives.

Remember, we at *The Decorator* welcome your observations and discoveries and look forward to hearing from you (decorator@hsead.org), and we wish you celebratory Fall and Winter Holiday Seasons!

Sandra Cohen

Members' "A" Awards

Clock Dial
Dennis Lambert

Country Painting
Linda Mason

Country Painting
Linda Sheldon

Country Painting
Patricia Kimber

Members' "A" Awards

Country Painting
Pauline Bartow

Free Hand Bronze
Lois Tucker

Free Hand Bronze
Lois Tucker

Free Hand Bronze
Roberta Edrington

Members' "A" Awards

Metal Leaf
Carol Heinz

Reverse Painting on Glass w/Border
Anne Dimock

Reverse Painting on Glass w/Border
Anne Dimock

Reverse Painting on Glass w/Border
Anne Dimock

Members' "A" Awards

Stenciling on Tin
Pauline Bartow

Stenciling on Tin
Pauline Bartow

Victorian Flower Painting
Linda Brubaker

Penwork
Lois Tucker

Members' "A" Awards

Penwork
Tracy Harris

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Diane Tanerillo

Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Mary Avery

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Linda Brubaker

Members' "A" Awards

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Pauline Bartow

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Pauline Bartow

Members' "B" Awards

Clock Dial
Dennis Lambert

Clock Dial
Donna Ellison

Country Painting
Expanded Class
Dianne Freiner

Country Painting
Debra Fitts

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Debra Fitts

Country Painting
Debra Fitts

Country Painting
Dennis Lambert

Country Painting
Dennis Lambert

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Dianne Freiner

Country Painting
Luke Randall

Country Painting
Lucia Murphy

Country Painting
Nancy Toombs

Members' "B" Awards

Country Painting
Nancy Toombs

Free Hand Bronze
Donna Ellison

Free Hand Bronze
Kathleen Hutcheson

Metal Leaf
Linda Mason

Members' "B" Awards

Pontypool
Dennis Lambert

Pontypool
Dennis Lambert

Stenciling on Tin
Susan Tash

Stenciling on Tin
Tracy Harris

Members' "B" Awards

Victorian Flower Painting
Roberta Edrington

Victorian Flower Painting
Roberta Edrington

Penwork
Bonnie Gerard

Penwork
Donna Ellison

Members' "B" Awards

Penwork
Kay Hogan

Penwork
Maureen Morrison

Penwork
Maureen Morrison

Penwork
Sandra Strong

Members' "B" Awards

Penwork
Susan Tash

Penwork
Susan Tash

Penwork
Susan Tash

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Alexandra Perrot

Members' "B" Awards

Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Dennis Lambert

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Helen Meitzler

Theorem
Oil on Velvet
Diane Tanerillo

Theorem
Watercolor on Paper
Patricia Oxenford

Victorian Flower Painting
2017

Linda Brubaker: Master Craftsman

Sandra Cohen

How does one become a Master Craftsman?

A Master Craftsman in the making, Linda's love of early American decoration extends over 35 years of researching, painting and teaching and includes a long list of awards, honors and acknowledgements. A member of HSEAD for 22 years, Linda is an active member of William Penn Chapter, served on the Society's Standards and Judging Committee for 5 years and is presently its Chair.

Linda has taught and lectured for a variety of organizations, among them Winterthur, Landis Valley Farm Museums and the Heritage Center, Lancaster, PA. She has also served as a juror for the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen and for *Early American Life* magazine that recognized her among the country's 200 Top Traditional American Craftsmen. In her home town of Litiz, Penn., she is also an organizer of the Artisan's Porch Walk Juried Craft Show. The Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen recognized

Country Painting
2016

Linda's talent in its "Best New Direction" and "People's Choice" Awards. All this activity is punctuated by her work on commissions for new and historic restoration projects as well as painting authentic reproductions for the Society's juried exhibitions where Linda has earned numerous "A" awards in Country Painting, Stenciling on Tin and Wood, Metal Leaf, Free Hand Bronze, Pontypool, Reverse Glass, Theorem and Victorian Flower Painting, all leading to her Master Craftsman Award.

The recognition continued as Linda was a featured artist on HGTV, Decorating the White House, 2001, and she was selected twice to create an ornament for its Christmas Tree. In 2009 Linda was asked by Stackpole Publishers to write a book for its Heritage Crafts line entitled, *Theorem Painting - Tips, Tools and Techniques*. Her book shares years of experience

Stenciling on Wood
2015

Metal Leaf
2014

Gold on Glass
2016

Pontypool
2013

Reverse Glass
2013

Free Hand Bronze
2011

Country Painting
2011

and acquired skills, hallmarks of a talented and generous mentor, and she continues the tradition of teaching in her studio and in week-long workshops throughout the Northeast.

In retrospect, Linda's odyssey toward Master Craftsman began with her "A" Award for a Country Painted Tray in 1997, the first of ten "A" Awards in a variety of HSEAD disciplines. The requirements include: Two trays in Country Painting; Two Stenciled Trays, one on Wood and the other on Tin; One each of the following: Free Hand Bronze, Metal Leaf, Pontypool Painting and Victorian Flower Painting; Also, two recordings from the following three categories: Painting on Glass with a Border, Gilding on Glass and a Painted Clock Dial for Tall Case Clocks.

To quote one of her teacher's answer to the question, "What does it take to become a Master Craftsman?" Astrid Donnellan, Master Teacher and Craftsman herself, said, "It takes love of this art, dedication, perseverance, enthusiasm and the desire for perfection. I saw all that in Linda when she first came to my workshop class in 2004. Linda's achievement is as much a joy for me!"

Congratulations Linda from all of us.

Stenciling on Tin
2009

Country Painting
1999

Country Painting
1997

A Peddler's Tale

by Anne Dimock

First, a bit of history..... Peddlers were a critical part of the history of early American tinware. The earliest peddlers walked on foot, carrying their wares in satchels on their backs. As the industry grew, they walked aside their small horse-drawn carts. As roads became more passable, larger carts were made that resembled traveling general stores.

These carts were usually owned by the peddler who would take on a new load of merchandise from a tin shop and travel for several months until all was sold or bartered for other goods. He would then return, pay the tin smith and take-on a new load. Peddlers not only sold things, but were also the local news (gossip) carriers; he often played the fiddle and would be the center of a large gathering as he entered each village. He would have candy for the children, and they would dream of a future as a peddler.

A few years ago at a seminar with Astrid Donnellan, we were discussing exhibits when she mentioned that they used to have a peddlers' cart display. An idea was born! Since I could not have 'a cart before the horse,' the idea simmered until I was demonstrating for Central New York Chapter at an antique show. Low and behold, across the aisle was MY HORSE….a wonderful antique platform horse! A good friend helped me purchase him, and I eagerly began to design and build my peddler's cart.

I started with a picture I found in *American Country Tinware* by Margaret Coffin, and EBay came to the rescue with wheels of the right dimension.

With horse and wheels in hand, my next challenge was a light weight material that looked old; aha, old mirror and picture frame backs would be ideal! They were thin enough to cut with a knife and pieces could be glued together using interior glue blocks.

I knew the roof had to be domed and remembered from my refinishing days how to unwarp a board by wetting it and laying it in the sun. The process worked in reverse to WARP my roof and provide my dome! Of course it split when it dried, but I didn't mind. Creating an antique look came next, and when the first stroke of paint soaked into the old wood, I said, "Perfect!" I collected miniatures from friends and craft stores and had some small tin items I decorated with country tin patterns from the North Shop in Fly Creek, NY. Its shop was closest to where I live and where the peddler obtained his goods. The Norths also ran a general store, so the cart contained all sorts of merchandise. Of course the peddler had to have a name, and I remembered there was a Dimmick family near Cooperstown; I would name him after my father, Watson Dimock. I found a jointed wooden doll online and used an old HSEAD canvas bag to fashion his clothing. Every day I would enter my studio and smile or laugh out loud, as this was such a wonderfully creative and meaningful adventure!

The cart is now available for any HSEAD Chapter to borrow for its exhibits, with the stipulation it must be hand carried. I'll gladly do what I can to help make that happen.

Anne Dimock is a Specialist in Reverse Glass Painting and is Accredited in Reverse Glass and Country Painting. She is the author of *Reverse Glass Painting: Tips, Tools and Techniques for Learning the Craft.*

Painted Wall Preservation

by Linda Carter Lefko

Over the past 70 years of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration's (HSEAD) existence, members have expressed interest in the painted plaster decoration found in New England and beyond. HSEAD members have spent their time and skills uncovering and documenting some remarkable stenciled and free-hand brushstroke painted walls, as well as murals painted on plaster. Chapter programs have included visiting historic painted wall sites, stenciling walls in local historical societies and museums as well as members recreating them in their homes. Members have written numerous articles for *The Decorator*, published books and even started successful businesses based on their study of painted plaster walls.

With this wonderful history of HSEAD member interest in paint decorated walls, it is likely that this exciting new venture, led by my colleagues and me, will also be of great appeal.

Flint House Mural by Rufus Porter

Paint decorated plaster walls tell a story about our nation's history, when democracy was new and the American spirit was great. These massive paintings make us smile, and they remind us of a simpler, more agrarian time. However, paint decorated plaster is not only vulnerable, it's also in jeopardy because of environmental changes, transferred ownership and the impact of man on his environment.

CPWP Logo

The Center for Painted Wall Preservation (CPWP) was created this past year as a not-for-profit 501c3 organization dedicated to the research and preservation of 18th and early 19th century American paint decorated plaster walls. Its goal is to survey and document these walls in situ or in collections, further the appreciation of this rare and vulnerable art form and serve as a resource for the preservation of painted plaster walls for future generations. Its website, www.pwpcenter.org, outlines the mission, objectives and services.

The name Rufus Porter evokes scenic landscapes painted on plaster in Massachusetts. Recently, CPWP board members were in Rufus Porter's home town documenting the remains of paint decorated walls in a house and discovered that much of the early painted plaster had been removed and thrown into a dumpster before it could be examined and documented!

Stencil and Mural found under wallpaper in Hopkinton, NH

CPWP is contacted frequently by homeowners, museums and historical societies to help find the appropriate solutions for caring for their paint decorated walls. We can assist with the documentation, registration and attribution of paint decorated walls, as well as provide guidance for their preservation and conservation. CPWP can dispatch a team to document and archive these folk art treasures which ensures that they will be recorded for future historians and posterity, no matter who owns the painted plaster decoration or what happens to it. There are times when the remains of a mural found under wallpaper must be considered a 'lost painted wall,' but the fact that it has been documented helps to tell the story of this amazing American folk art.

Stenciled Bridal Chamber in Temple, NH

Recently, CPWP was alerted to a Moses Eaton stenciled bedchamber in Temple, NH that had previously not been documented. The house was for sale and there were no protective covenants to safeguard the walls. Because these walls were in almost pristine condition, it made the discovery and documentation all the more important.

Masonic Stencil, Woodstock, CT

Another exciting example that was brought to CPWP's attention were stenciled walls in Woodstock, CT. The stenciling had been mostly restored, but there was one original panel with Masonic stenciled images, something that is truly unique on a stenciled wall! We were able to help the owner with his efforts to put the home on the Historic Register.

The Center for Painted Wall Preservation is constantly discovering new information on some of America's most significant folk artists from the early 1800s!

Mural attributed to Gilbert in same house as stenciling now attributed to him

Most recently, members of CPWP documented two new murals in Maine, murals that are now attributed to Edward J. Gilbert. Interestingly enough, Edward J. Gilbert is also now identified as the stenciler of one of the more famous stenciled walls in Maine, initially documented by Mary Jane Clark, an early HSEAD member, painter, teacher and author.

Currently, CPWP is developing a digital archive of over 500 paint decorated walls,

Stencil attributed to Gilbert first documented by M. J. Clark for HSEAD

including walls that are stenciled, walls with painted murals and those with free hand brushstrokes. The digital archive will be available online to homeowners, researchers and historians alike. This exciting project will create and establish a permanent record of hundreds of historic, early American paint decorated walls.

Orison Woods Mural, Greene, Maine

If we lose these magnificent records documenting a way of life in early 19th century America, we lose priceless narratives of an ebullient patriotic period. Many of these decorated walls reflect a passion on which inspired Americans exhibited a love for their country. Once the walls are gone, they are gone forever! This sad truth makes the documentation and authentication work of the Center for Painted Wall Preservation not only timely, but also incredibly important!

For more information and to sign up for the monthly "Plaster Bits," newsletter from CPWP, go to www.pwpcenter.org and sign up.

Linda Carter Lefko is President of the Center for Painted Wall Preservation. Lefko is the author of *Folk Art Murals of the Rufus Porter School: New England Landscapes, 1825-1845* and co-author of the *Art of Theorem Painting.*

A Birmingham Traveler's Sample

by Yvonne Jones

What makes this traveler's sample tray especially interesting is the name Birmingham which is just discernible beneath the foliage framing this painted sunset.

Today, trays of this type are frequently attributed to Bilston or to Wolverhampton makers, but it is highly unlikely that travelers from either of those towns would have carried a sample showing Birmingham, the major Midlands Japanning center, to a prospect. Thus, this sample is a reminder that tin trays, produced for a popular market, were made in all three centers.

Before the advent of the railway, Japan-masters traveled the British Isles on horseback, to London, Bristol, Liverpool and other large towns and ports, to sell their products to fancy-goods stores, silversmiths, ironmongers and to various other retailers and exporters. Serving as their 'portable show rooms,' the samples often had listed, on their undersides, information about available products and their respective prices.

Through much handling during the course of the traveler's journey, some of the details given on this sample are now indistinct, but sufficient to show the retail costs, around 1830, of various items.

Waiters measuring from 6 – 20 inches cost between 8 pence, to 4 shillings and 6 pence; bread baskets, 11, 12 and 13 inches ranged from 3 shillings and 1 pence, to 3 shillings and 9 pence, while knife trays could be purchased in one size only, at 3 shillings and 9 pence each. Snuffer trays were 12 shillings per dozen, and the three available sizes of cheese trays, 11, 12 and 13 inches, ranged from 5 shillings and 3 pence, to 6 shillings and 9 pence. Square candlesticks were also included in the list, but, unfortunately, their price is now illegible.

Yvonne Jones served as Keeper of Applied Arts and as Head of Arts and Museums in Wolverhampton where she researched, documented and extended the town's rich collection of Papier-Maché and tinware. Jones is the author of *Japanned Papier Mache and Tinware, 1740-1940.*

Golden Gates
to the
Roofless Church of New Harmony

by Luke Randall

il cancello della

Approximately fifteen years ago, a friend and client named Jimmy Coleman told me about a church in New Harmony, Indiana with a gate that needed to be gilded. I pictured a cemetery with a surrounding fence and large sage bushes drifting by, something like a scene from the Clint Eastwood movie, "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly." Last summer, I was pleasantly surprised by a caller from New Harmony asking me if I would be willing to go out to Indiana to do a gold leaf job, and I knew, right away, that this was going to be an exciting project. I had already imagined the setting.

Preparing for this challenging project involved a review of the process and the materials I would need. My choice of a gold size and its application was a serious concern for me as well as a source of anxiety. When undertaking large exterior gilding projects, your size must work properly. Years ago, Lefranc & Bourgeois Charbonnel had reformulated its 12 hour gold size and removed the lead. The new formula was nothing like the original size that I had so much experience using successfully. The amount of time for the new formula to reach a point where the tack was workable varied greatly, especially in humid conditions, and I had already written-off

this new product years ago. I knew it was necessary to be able to apply the size at 5:00 P.M. and begin gold leafing the next morning at 8:00 A.M. There was so much gilding to do that I needed to be able to work all day and depend on a size that was cured properly. I had almost a pint of the old product and needed more. I asked The Historical Society of Early American Decoration (HSEAD) to broadcast a call for help from membership requesting old leaded Lefranc size.

Members graciously responded with two quarts of the old size, and my testing process began. The tack was consistent, but I found that it was not drying completely. It was still tacky a week later! The new Dux size I had previously found dried much quicker, in fact it dried too quickly to hold a tack all day. Then I decided to mix the old size with the new Dux slow size, a half-and-half mixture. Although it worked, I decided to test different mixtures to see which one worked best and used a number of small containers of the old size that I had from different time periods. My testing process took a couple of weeks before I finally went back to the half-and-half mixture that was going to work beautifully.

Choosing my gold leaf was a consideration. The thickness of the gold leaf is rated by the amount of gold used to make 1000 leaves. The most commonly used leaf has 18 grams of gold per 1000 leaves. I decided to use an extra heavy weight of gold leaf, 24 grams per 1000 leaves. My choice was a 23.75 k, Rosenoble (it has a little copper to give it a rosy cast) by an Italian manufacturer, Gisto Manetti. Manetti stated that this weight/thickness would 'stand-up' to the weather much longer than a regular weight. I was ready to leave for Indiana with nine boxes of gold leaf and begin gilding.

Arriving in New Harmony, I found myself in one of the most beautiful places I had ever been. It was so peaceful and serene, nothing like my imagined wild west scene. The community was founded in 1814 by the Harmony Society and George Rapp, the Lutheran leader, and settled next to the Wabash River, surrounded by fields and trees. In 1824 the community moved back to Pennsylvania and sold the town to a social reformer named Robert Dale Owen who imagined a utopian community. He named it New Harmony, but within two years his utopian experiment failed. Although these early communal experiments did not last, they created an innovative platform upon which scientific, intellectual, artistic and spiritual endeavors prospered. Today, New Harmony's rich history still informs the sentiment of the town.

My connection to New Harmony is through the Owen Family. Jane Blaffer, a Texas oil heiress, married Kenneth Dale Owen, the great, great grandson of Robert Dale Owen. She fell in love with New Harmony when she first arrived in 1941 and spent her life restoring and revitalizing the town. Her children and extended family are friends of mine. In 1962 Jane Owen commissioned Jacques Lipchitz to design the gates for the Roofless Church, a non-denominational place of worship designed by architect Philip Johnson in 1960. Lipchitz, internationally recognized as one of the great 20th century modern sculptors, had seen palatial gilded doors in Europe and brought that aesthetic into his design for the gates in New Harmony. The gates open into a walled garden with flowers followed by trees, grassy areas and sculptures that surround the modern architectural masterpiece which is called The Roofless Church. The Lipchitz Gates were first gilded in 1962, and I was the one chosen to bring them back to their original condition. Unfortunately, the gold leaf had long since disappeared, and the gates were covered with bronze paint many years ago.

Prior to my arrival, the gates had been chemically stripped by another contractor, and I was able to immediately begin applying an oil primer. I decided upon an industrial zinc chromate etching primer made by CPS Coatings in Louisiana which, in my opinion, is far superior to any commercial primers available at the local paint stores. I wanted to make sure the first layer was going to bond properly to the bronze. When gilding bronze or copper, one must use a primer and one or two coats of oil based finish paint before the size is applied. I used Benjamin Moore P 22 Industrial Urethane as my top coat material. After a few days of base coating, a local contractor erected a large staging platform and built a tent over the gates that

would serve as a wind proof shelter. I began to apply the gold leaf size and covered an area that could be gilded in eight hours the next day.

I started applying leaf at 8:00 A.M., and by 2:00 P.M. I became quite anxious; the work was proceeding slowly. Because the sculptural elements were deep and intricate, I was constantly cutting the leaf into small pieces to fit the uneven terrain. In addition, the sun had heated the tent to 100 degrees; as sweat was pouring off me, I drank over a gallon of water. However, by 6:00 P.M. I had finished gilding the section I had intended to cover that day and sized another large area for the next day's work. This was my routine, working ten hours a day in extreme conditions, for twenty days. Every few days the scaffolding and tent needed to be moved, and often the staging men had to work after hours. It was difficult to imagine how I would complete this huge gilding project. Also, each section took almost twenty per cent more gold than estimated. Final count was eleven boxes of gold, (5,500 sheets), and most of the time the sheets had to be cut a number of times! All things considered, I only had one very bad day.

One morning, when I arrived at 8:00 A.M., the size was not cured because I had failed to properly mix a new bottle of Dux size while I was making my formula the previous evening. This caused a major delay in cure time, and it was almost noon before the tack was right, leaving me almost ten hours of gilding to complete by 6:30P.M., sunset! Tears of frustration were actually running down my face, and that was at 11:00A.M. when the size was still not properly cured....a disaster! I did finally finish this section at 8:00

P.M., under lights, and the next morning, I found areas where the gold leaf had 'drowned' in improperly cured size. Only you, the HSEAD community, would notice these areas of failure. Luckily, it was the only day that my materials were not cooperating throughout the course of the whole project. Fortunately, the weather was perfect for the following three weeks.

Despite the rigorous nature of this project, it was an honor to work on such an historically significant landmark and piece of artistic history. Over the course of twenty-five years working professionally in the decorative arts field, I had never had the opportunity to restore a master sculptor's work. Just being that close to a Jacques Lipchitz sculpture was an inspiration for me as an artist.

In this sense, my work with the Society has a similar component. The task of reproducing historical artifacts of early American decorative art is both challenging and rewarding in a way that is continually inspiring. My HSEAD teacher, Peggy Rodgers, has taught me things about gold leaf that I never knew, even after working as a professional gilder for many years. When I initially began to learn this type of early American painting, I wondered if I were wasting my time because I was already established and successful as a decorative artist. However, as I continued recording historically authentic decorative patterns, I realized the importance of copying historical works of early American decorative art. I discovered the level of craftsmanship exemplified on these simple pieces of tinware to be extraordinary and ultimately challenging to me in a way that I had never been challenged.

I am so excited to share my gilding project in New Harmony, Indiana all with the members of the Society, and I know many of you will relate to the challenges it presented. This work in Indiana was an incredible test of all my skills as a gilder. In this community, I have found a group of colleagues who share a common interest in the traditional materials and techniques used by artisans. We are all painters, and when I look around the room at a Spring Meeting, I see fellow painters everywhere, and that serves as an inspiration for me.

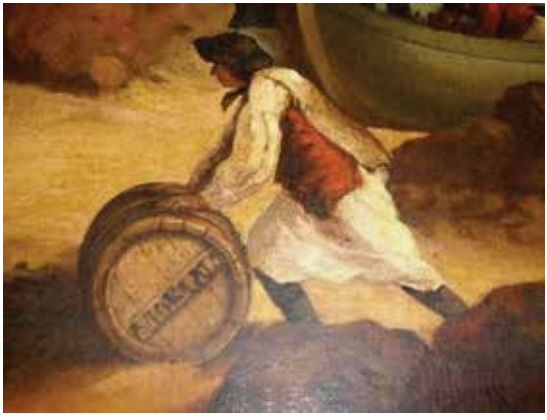
Luke Randall is a fine artist and works professionally as a decorative painter.

George Morland
Bronze Powder Reproductions

by Lois Tucker

England's Reading Museum and Art Gallery presented an exhibition of paintings, drawings and engravings by George Morland. The opening sentence of its catalog neatly summed up Morland's life. "The popular view of George Morland is of an easy going fellow of low company, a talented artist who too often produced inferior work in order to pay off a debt and who finally drank himself into an early grave."

George Morland (1763-1804) was a child prodigy whose artistic talent was inherited from his grandfather George Henry Morland and his father Henry Robert Morland. Henry also cleaned and restored works of art thus exposing George to the art world at a very young age. When he was three years old, he drew figures of men and horses in the dust on a tabletop. His first artistic performance was done with a piece of broken crayon and a lead pencil his father had discarded. It was a drawing of a gentleman's coach with four horses and two footmen behind. George was a practical joker throughout his life, likely a result of having no other way to release his childhood energies. There are many stories of the harmless pranks he played in his youth. He drew images of crayons on the floor which alarmed his father as he thought he would step on his own most valuable crayons. George drew a large charcoal spider on the maid's bedroom ceiling, and his mother attempted to sweep it away with her broom. He drew a beetle on the hearth that was so lifelike his father tried to crush it. George was not allowed toys or various means of amusement as were most children. Henry Morland wanted him concentrating on his artistic talents, even to the determent of a proper education.



Morland's signature on a barrel

His father took full control of his son's training and of his life

Morland at his easel

in general. George was ten when his sketches were first exhibited at the Royal Academy and twelve when he displayed a talent for modeling, particularly animals. At age fourteen, he was apprenticed to his father who worked him continually; days were devoted to painting, summer evenings to reading and winter to drawing by lamplight. George did not paint from nature at this time, but copied the old masters, particularly the Dutch and Flemish painters. He had no escape from his father's dominance until his apprenticeship ended when he reached twenty-one in 1784.

George's artwork was very popular in his time, and engravings were made almost as soon as he put down his brush. William Ward was his engraver and was a very shrewd business dealer indeed. He paid the artist approximately half the value of his paintings and then reaped the profits from the engravings he produced. The first Morland engraving was the Angler's Repast printed in 1780.

In 1786 George married Ann Ward, the engraver's sister, and his sister, Maria, married William Ward. The couples shared living quarters for a time, but they were not compatible due to petty jealousies between the women. The husbands threatened to settle the disputes with horse pistols loaded with slugs. An intervening friend was able to arrange for George and William to settle their differences over a bottle and some long pipes filled with Dutch tobacco. However, Morland changed residences often, sometimes just to upgrade, but more often to evade his debtors.

In 1787 Ann gave birth to a stillborn son and developed a severe illness; the surgeon advised her to never again put her life in such jeopardy. Morland overheard this warning, and his affection for

Ann began to wane. It was at this time that such places as Brittania Tavern, the Castle Tavern, Mother Red Cap's Tea Gardens and the Assembly Rooms at Kentish Town become more pleasant to him than his own home. During this time, he was the sole vendor of his paintings, and his expenses did not exceed his income. As his reputation grew, so did his desire to have a grander residence. Having an income of more than £1,000 per year, he commissioned to have a large residence built which he in turn filled with the very best furnishings and fully stocked wine cellars. Between 1787 and 1789 he entertained large parties, had ample credit (particularly from his wine merchant), but soon launched into expenses that were beyond his means. Being lectured about this extravagance apparently had an adverse affect on him because he would give up a whole day to drink, return home fully intoxicated and be unable to produce work for three or four days. He began to squander the money he received for his paintings, and when the bills came due, he was forced to submit to the creditor's terms. However, George could often avert these terms by arranging to paint a picture for the creditor for a renewal of the bill.

Morland took in students from time to time, and one in particular, called Irwin, suited Morland's habits well. Irwin was willing to go anywhere and took the care of disposing of Morland's pictures as he did not like to sell his own works himself. He would rather undersell them than admit to the necessity of the sale. George also objected to associating with respectable people for fear that they would give him an order and then instruct him on how to paint their picture. He could not abide interference into his work and avoided dealing with the patrons altogether. Regarding one example of frustration, Morland explained, "There is a picture which a man has returned to me to have a fine brilliant sky painted in, saying he will allow me five guineas for ultramarine. It will spoil the picture, and the absurdity of it is that he will not suffer that tree to be touched, but expects me to paint between the leaves." Irwin took advantage of this particular aversion of Morland's and arranged for the dealers to buy in advance at nearly the top price. Irwin then made use of those funds, which naturally put Morland deeper into debt.

Morland's initialed signature on a wheelbarrow

Morland went through periods when he could pay many of his debtors, but his love for the wayward life always kept him from becoming solvent. It reached the point where he needed to constantly change his residence in order to stay ahead of the bill collectors. He lived a hunted life and was only able to escape the bailiffs with the help of his friends. Sometimes he could pay off his debtor with a painting or two, and he was known to do a painting to bail himself out of the goal. After settling in Hackney, he began to feel less threatened by his pursuers and was able to sober-up and begin to get his life together. He was producing exquisitely finished pictures and soon his prices increased by 40%. However, nothing seemed to run smoothly for him, and he was once again forced to 'run,' this time because his neighbors who, not knowing he was an artist, suspected him to be a counterfeiter because of his secret comings and goings in the wee hours; this prompted them to involve the police. Once the truth was known, the neighbors gave Morland £40 and their sincerest apologies.

George spent many years in and out of debtors' prison but was never really able to catch-up. His wife's physician persuaded him to leave London saying it would get him clear of his 'companions-in-mischief.' He also said that George's wife needed a complete change, hopefully, to improve her health which had been poor since the death of their son. The doctor offered the Morlands the use of his cottage on the Isle of Wight. In April 1799 George, Ann and their two servants set off for Cowes, but by November the creditors had tracked him down once more; the family returned to London where George was arrested and sent to King's Bench Prison.

"The Fleecy Charge," 18" x 14" engraved by G. Shepherd 1796

"The Fleecy Charge," 28" papier maché tea board

He was again supplied with 'rules' and allowed to occupy a small house with his family. A garden at the rear was the receptacle for animals.....birds, asses, goats, sheep, swine, rabbits, guinea pigs, eagles, hawks, calves, dogs, etc., all of which he sketched.

His brother Henry said that during this period, Morland painted 492 finished pictures, as well as an additional 300 more for individuals and 1000 drawings of which he usually produced one per evening.

Morland was released under the Insolvent Debtors Act from his incarceration of 1802, but by this time his health was ruined. He was seized with palsy and had lost the use of his left hand. Although he could no longer hold his palette, he did continue painting until the last. Arrested one final time on a debtor's score, he died in a sponging house at Cold Bath Fields on October 29, 1804.

George Morland and his Anne are buried at St. James Chapel. He never realized just how important his paintings would be to the art world, but prints were still being published more than 100 years after they were first painted. It has been estimated that his total production was 4000 pictures. The ever-popular "A Tea Garden", originally worked in 1790, was still being printed in 1889. Today, some newly printed Morlands may be purchased.

Some of the very best scenic Free Hand Bronze images produced have been designs taken from a George Morland painting. As his artwork was so popular with the public, it is understandable that the tray factories would want to reproduce some of those scenes with bronze powders. At this time I am familiar with five Morlands that have been produced on a papier maché tea board or a metal tray. Undoubtedly, there are more yet to be discovered.

Lois Tucker is a Specialist in Country Painting and a Certified Teacher in Country Painting, Stenciling and Free Hand Bronze. Tucker is co-author of *American Painted Tinware: A Guide to its Identification*.

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"Smugglers," 21 ¾" x 17 ¼" engraved by James Ward 1793

"Smugglers," 28" papier maché tea board (also on metal tray)

"The Cottagers," 21 ¾" x 17 ¼" engraved by William Ward 1791

"The Cottagers," 28" papier maché tea board

"A Coastal Scene," 23" x 17" messotint by W. T. Annis, 1801

"A Coastal Scene," 20" metal tray

"The Warrener," 23 ¾" x 17 ¾" engraved by James Ward, 1806

"The Warrener," 28" metal tray

Bookshelf

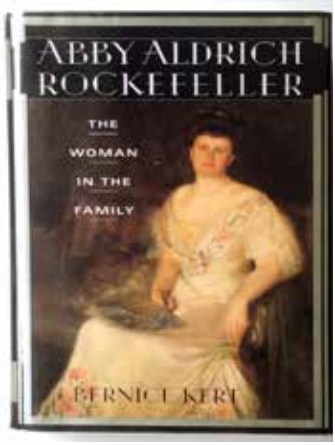
Abby Aldrich Rockefeller: The Woman in the Family

by

Bernice Kert

Random House, New York, 1993. pp. 537

An Overview by Sandra Cohen



Kert's heavily researched and annotated life of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller is a fascinating and inspiring account of a woman who played a pivotal role in the establishment of many of our country's worthwhile organizations and institutions. I am reminded of *Anonymous Was a Woman* by Mirra Banks who lifts the veil of anonymity to reveal that women, many of whom still remain nameless, in the midst of their daily duties as daughters, wives and mothers, expressed their creativity beyond their traditional roles. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller would not be caste among the nameless.

Kert portrays a woman whose character and zeal charted the course of a family's influence and fortune. We are the beneficiaries of Kert's many references, personal and professional correspondence, family interviews and research that provide documented and anecdotal evidence of her subject's character. It is not surprising that so much information is available about this woman and the Aldrich and Rockefeller families, considering their far reaching influence through business, society, politics and world travel. Kert accompanies these voices with Abby's, and we are totally immersed in the times, history, culture and lifestyle that educate, entertain and often evoke familiar emotions, that regardless of wealth or social status, are part of our shared humanity. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller never sought the spotlight and preferred anonymity. However, history and biographers have kindly revealed her as a woman of substance.

Nelson Wilmarth Aldrich and Abby Pearce Chapman married in Providence, 1866. Nelson was several generations removed from

Roger Williams, a free thinker who settled the Providence Plantation, a haven for those fleeing religious persecution from Massachusetts. Abby Pearce Chapman's family tree included Elder William Brewster, one of the Plymouth Plantation founders and a signer of the Mayflower Compact. Abby Pearce accepted her wealth as a convenience, but her intelligent wit and strength of character were as alluring to Nelson as her natural beauty.

Senator Aldrich with his family (Abby Aldrich on far left)

Nelson Aldrich, a self-made business man, was an assertive visionary who wanted to have a meaningful impact upon society. In 1871, after spending eighteen months in Europe, absorbing its historical and cultural heritage, he returned to Rhode Island and told his wife that "I must be a better and happier man for the experience….. have newer and clearer ideas of my relationship to the great world around me." In 1878, Nelson was elected as a Congressman and in 1881 as a U.S Senator. At the height of the Gilded Age, and unlike their contemporaries who invested their wealth in material extravagance, Abby Pearce Aldrich and her friends, the wives of Providence industrialists, founded the Rhode Island School of Design, established Pembroke Women's College at Brown University, advanced prison reform and women's rights. Nelson Aldrich and Abby Pearce would set a high moral bar for their children.

Abby Greene Aldrich, born Oct. 26, 1874, (one of eleven children) was a careful observer of her domestic scene, and although sympathetic to her mother's overwhelming responsibilities as a politician's wife and as mother to several young children, she was captivated by her father, a successful business man and influential leader in the Senate. Referred to as one of the "Big Four," key Republicans, Nelson's business and financial expertise earned him the moniker, "General Manager of the Nation." However, Nelson's European tour also cultivated his worldly tastes, especially his appreciation of the arts, and he found an eager ally in his young daughter. When Abby was thirteen, her family sailed to Europe leaving her, "in charge." Her mother wrote that "in the future you will understand why mothers are so desirous for their little girls to be studious and make most of their time……"

In 1893, Abby graduated from Miss Abbott's School for Young Ladies; her curriculum consisted of physics, English composition and literature, French, German, art history, gymnastics, hygiene and dancing. At nineteen, Abby was introduced to members of Rhode Island's prominent families. In 1894 she sailed for Europe, a 'Grand Tour' that took four months, an experience that would impact her life. On the threshold of womanhood, Abby discovered, as her father had, what the world had to offer and what possibilities lie ahead.

Laura Spelman and John D. Rockefeller, Sr. married in 1864, a year before the end of the Civil War. Ohio played a most active role in the country's Underground Railroads, and Laura's father, a prominent business man, helped operate this network to freedom. A strict Baptist, she graduated from Oread Collegiate Institute in Worcester, Mass. and was an outspoken advocate for women's rights and education, for human rights and civil liberties. John Rockefeller, Sr. and a friend, Samuel Andrews, young entrepreneurs in Cleveland's early oil industry, soon developed the largest oil refinery. Laura's Baptist morality, her independence and intelligence were compatible with John's Calvinist philosophy, professing "the pursuit of wealth not merely a challenge, but a sacred duty," Their aspirations lay the moral foundation for their marriage and children, and they paved the way for one of the most influential and philanthropic families in America.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the fourth child and first son of Laura and John Sr., was delivered by Dr. Myra K. Merrick; true to form, Laura would engage a pioneering female physician. John, Jr. was surrounded by strong, independent and intelligent women, and at an early age, learned to respect a woman's potential and ability. He was attracted to these qualities in Abby and responded to them immediately, but he was a student at Brown and she, an independent twenty-year old; their personalities and upbringing were quite different. Abby's family was demonstrably affectionate; discussions were open and reflected a worldly, sophisticated influence and a sense of wit and humor. John Jr., was raised in an austere Baptist home, where John's mother would conduct "Home Talks" with her children, encouraging them to admit their mistakes (sins), and then led them in prayer. She also considered dancing, card playing and theater tempting vices to be avoided. John's attachment to his mother caused conflicting emotions, and his relationship with Abby took several years of friendship and admiration to blossom into a confident revelation of his love for her.

Bassett Hall, Abby and John's residence in Colonial Williamsburg

Abby Aldrich and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. were married in Oct., 1901. Abby and John shared basic values and a serious commitment to using their gifts to do good, values inculcated in both of them primarily by their mothers. However, there were sharp differences in their home-life, personalities, religion and art. John once remarked that "We never lack material for lively arguments. Modern Art and the King James Version can forever keep us young." Abby's challenge, making time to give her children the attention and affection shown to her as a child, supporting John's endeavors, as well as taking time for her own interests created a level of stress with which she would learn to successfully manage throughout their marriage. Also, Abby observed that her husband did not share the business ambitions of his father. He wanted his success and profits to be used for broader social goals, and shared his mother's attraction to meaningful causes and her aversion to materialism. Kert reminds us of John's first love, Bessie Dashiell, whose death from cancer at eighteen devastated him. John Jr. had convinced his father to fund Bessie's physician, Dr. Coley, a cancer researcher, at Cornell Medical Center. The Rockefellers' continued financial backing resulted in the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. He and Abby continued to share their mutual commitment to a meaningful use of their wealth and position.

In 1902 John and ten patrons met to establish a philanthropic enterprise, the General Education Board (GEB), to promote education

without discrimination of race, gender or creed. John pledged $1 million dollars in his father's name; by 1921 John Sr. funded the organization's trust with $129 million. Later, John notified his father that "Abby was the only woman present [at the meeting]." Kert notes that "the precedent was established that would be followed for the rest of his life;" Abby would be present and pivotal in every important decision that he ever made. She was clearly not only suited to be the wife of one of the wealthiest men in America, but also prepared by her upbringing, education, business prowess, and determination to offer significant input.

One of Abby's pet projects was the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) which provided for the housing needs of 'industrial women workers.' She had a radar for a community's needs, and solutions to her seemed obvious. She persuaded John to underwrite the Bayway Cottage and Community House in New Jersey which provided room and board for a number of immigrant worker families. Abby's first hand involvement insured a comfortable domestic setting of shared ethnic crafts and cooking; language barriers were overcome and building on the familiar roles of women and mothers created a bound. Also, being familiar with the Washington, D.C. scene, Abby, with financial help from John, planned the construction of the Grace Dodge Hotel, for business

Peaceable Kingdom by Edward Hicks 1834

and professional women. The namesake was one of founders of Columbia University Teachers College; Abby served for 15 years on its Committee.

During Abby's trip to Paris in 1924, William R. Valentiner, Director of the Detroit Museum of Art, accompanied her through the galleries of Vienna, Munich, Nuremberg and Berlin. It was deja vu; art was her passion and in John's absence she felt free to indulge her genuine responses without John's scrutiny. Abby was already familiar with the works of the Modernists, having seen the famous International Exhibition of Modern Art of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, known as the Armory Show, in 1913 in NYC, and she bought a watercolor, Landscape by Erich Heckel, a German Expressionist, for $500.

The Old Plantation attributed to John Rose 1785

During his first 10 years at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Conger Goodyear asked Abby what drew her to purchase contemporary art. She replied, "I first started with Japanese prints, and early American prints…..and went on to Buddhistic art and European china and all sorts of very beautiful things….in older civilizations….as I did this, [I wondered] what….things mean to the present and how [would] they affect the art and artists of today?" Future generations would benefit from Abby's curiosity, admiration and response to art. However, John thought modern art appalling, "too strange and irresponsible….terrible beyond words," and Abby tactfully moved her collection to the seventh floor of their townhouse "where he wouldn't have to confront it daily." However, he never prohibited her from pursuing her taste in art, and in fact, he increased her allowance to purchase whatever she chose.

In 1926, the Rockefeller's visited old plantations along the James River with an impromptu detour to Williamsburg, Virginia.

William Goodwin, Professor at the College of William and Mary, was deliberately chosen as their tour guide, and the Rockefeller's, seeing the site of Williamsburg, former capital of Virginia, in such a dilapidated state, had Goodwin's desired effect on John. His interest in restoring the city ignites an excitement in him, and Abby supports his effort to restore the historical site. Exhaustive plans are underway while many of the homes in Williamsburg are still occupied by descendants of families from Colonial times. John arranges agreements allowing them to remain in the homes for the duration of their lives without the burden of rent, taxes and insurance if they agree to sell their properties to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The restoration of Colonial Williamsburg was launched.

Nine days after the 1929 stock market crash, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) opened its doors. This innovative Museum was conceived by Lillie Bliss, Mary Quinn and Abby Rockefeller, the driving force. John, reflecting his strong objection to Modern Art, would not financially or morally support such a museum (After Abby's sudden death, he suffers guilt and regret for taking this position). John's aversion to modern art would remain implacable, but Abby persevered, not letting it interfere with their relationship and her domestic roles. John was also reassured by Abby's support of his Williamsburg restoration as well as her interest in Folk Art which he and Abby admired as an "art of the people."

In November 1932, and to John's delight, American Folk Art: The Art of the Common Man in America, 1750 - 1900 debuted at MoMA. The exhibition displayed Abby's collection of 174 pieces. Holger Cahill, a leading expert on Folk Art, wrote that Folk Art is "the expression of the common people, made by them and intended for their use and enjoyment……." With Abby's financial support, Edith Halpert opened the Downtown Gallery in Manhattan and later the American Folk Art Gallery. With Cahill's and Halpert's help, Abby continues to learn and collect early folk and decorative art. Carolyn Weekley at Colonial Williamsburg remarked on Abby's discerning eye that drew her to Edward Hicks' paintings; her purchases have become the largest and most important collection of his works.

By 1937 their Colonial Williamsburg project was virtually completed along with the restoration of Bassett Hall, their residence at Williamsburg which has an interesting history connected to its namesake and duly relayed by Kert. However, the renovation of Williamsburg had it pitfalls, and attention is paid to race issues in the

South. Tact was Abby's forte, and although deference was paid to the historical fact of a white dominated South, John and Abby planned to address the area's needs and diversity. Abby and John paid for a site, the General Education Board (GEB) would underwrite material and equipment; Abby used her own money to complete the Bruton Heights School. This project, of primary importance to both John and Abby, was the raison d'etre behind their GEB Foundation. Black children now had access to a modern school for the first time in Williamsburg's history.

It is ironic that Abby found aesthetic connections between the folk artists and the modern expressionists who rejected traditional forms and subjects. However, she saw "primitive works as a logical historical background for her already sizable collection of modern American art…" She pursued her love of collecting both genres while John's enthusiasm was renewed by another project, the Cloisters, at the Metropolitan Museum. Abby believed that art "enriches the spiritual life and makes one more sane and sympathetic, more observant and understanding." At this time, Abby steps back from her direct involvement at MoMA to allow her son, Nelson, to take on its leadership and donates her collection of prints to MoMA, making this museum a reservoir of the most important 20th century European and American prints in the world.

After 400 pages of art, business, and domesticity, we are plunged into the devastation of World War ll. Kert's text includes many major players on the European front and recites their interaction with the Rockefeller family members. Sons, David and Winthrop, joined the army and John, Laurence and Nelson had desk jobs in Washington. Abby and John kept abreast of the war's progress reviewing speeches, maps and strategies, and she asked that a copy of Churchill's speech to Congress be sent to her while she was in hospital for possible gall bladder and chest pains.

In a prescient decision in the Spring of 1944, Abby decides to plan the major distribution of her estate, money and artwork to MoMA and other museums. In the Spring of 1948, Abby awoke feeling ill, and as her doctor listened to her heart, she suffered a sudden, fatal heart attack at the age of 73. The *New York Times* wrote that "The world is lesser today by the passing of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr." Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's legacy lies in the many institutions today that echo her vision and generosity.

In the Spring of 2018, HSEAD's Annual Membership Meeting will be held at Colonial Williamsburg where we will celebrate America's legacy of early decorative and folk art. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection (illustrated in *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection: A Descriptive Catalog* by Nina Fletcher Little) is our country's most important and abundant treasury in this genre. Having grown from 420 to over 7600 pieces, this collection is a comprehensive resource for scholars and admirers of early American decorative arts.

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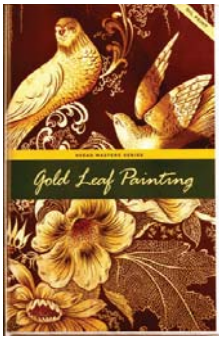

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A Guide to Its Identification (Vol. I, II, III, IV), *hard cover*

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James Ward engraving of George Morland's "Smugglers," 1793