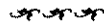


The
PEWTER COLLECTORS' CLUB
of AMERICA



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INFLUENCES ON NEW YORK PEWTER MAKING

by Percy E. Raymond

DUTCH INFLUENCE

It is probable that a good deal of pewter was brought into New Amsterdam and the Hudson Valley in the early days, and from what we know of the conservative tendencies of the descendants of the early settlers, one would expect to find Hollandish influence in early New York pewter. But, as a matter of fact, there seems to be remarkably little. There are two probable reasons for this: in the first place, the Dutch West India Company considered its American possessions primarily as trading posts, where articles made at home could be disposed of, so they sent no pewterers to New Amsterdam; and second, the Low Countries themselves were in the market for English pewter. Hence, although the colonists were accustomed to the pot-bellied measures and spouted flagons of their native country, they were sufficiently modern to accept the plain drums of the English style. Even the Dutch-influenced New York silversmiths based the fundamental designs of their tankards on English models. I can see only two evidences of Dutch influence on New York pewter; the first is in footed beakers and spoons; footed beakers alone survived.

Although I have never seen any Dutch pewter which reached this country during the 17th century, a few others have been more fortunate. In 1902, Mr. Wm. M. Beauchamp published in Bulletin 55 of the New York State Museum, drawings of two pewter articles found in a grave on the East Cayuga

Indian site at Fleming, N. Y. One was a beaker which contained 44 French copper coins, the latest dated 1656. Although the coins are French, the cup is obviously Dutch. It is $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches high, about $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter at the top, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the base. What became of this specimen I haven't been able to learn. (Fig. 3) Similar beakers were made in Holland at the time, and others were made by Peter Young in Albany between 1775 and 1795. The spoon found in the same grave is typically round-bowled Dutch, a style which did not survive, since it was entirely unsuited to the purse-lipped Puritans who succeeded the jovial Dutch. (Figs. 1, 2)

The second Dutch influence which I can see is the general solidity of New York pewter. Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, in commenting on this trait in a talk before the Pewter Club in 1941, mentioned it as an English characteristic. To me, however, solidity suggests stolidity, although in an active rather than a passive sense. One of my good wife's Dutch ancestors was a certain Jan Dirkse van Bremen (not a German as his name would suggest, for he came from Utrecht), who had a habit of preparing for the prayers which his lease required him to read on Sunday morning by letting himself go a bit on Saturday night. On occasions he used his knife, or hit his friends over the head with tongs, and in one instance, I'm sure, though I can't just now locate the reference, he was fined five florins for beating up a man with a pewter pot. At such moments, one doesn't want to damage the pot, so Dutch vessels had to be strong and well made. And this is conspicuously true of New York tankards and handled mugs, as compared with the few made in New England. Not that the Yankees were less excitable, but their pewterers were less liberal with their metal.

INDIAN INFLUENCE

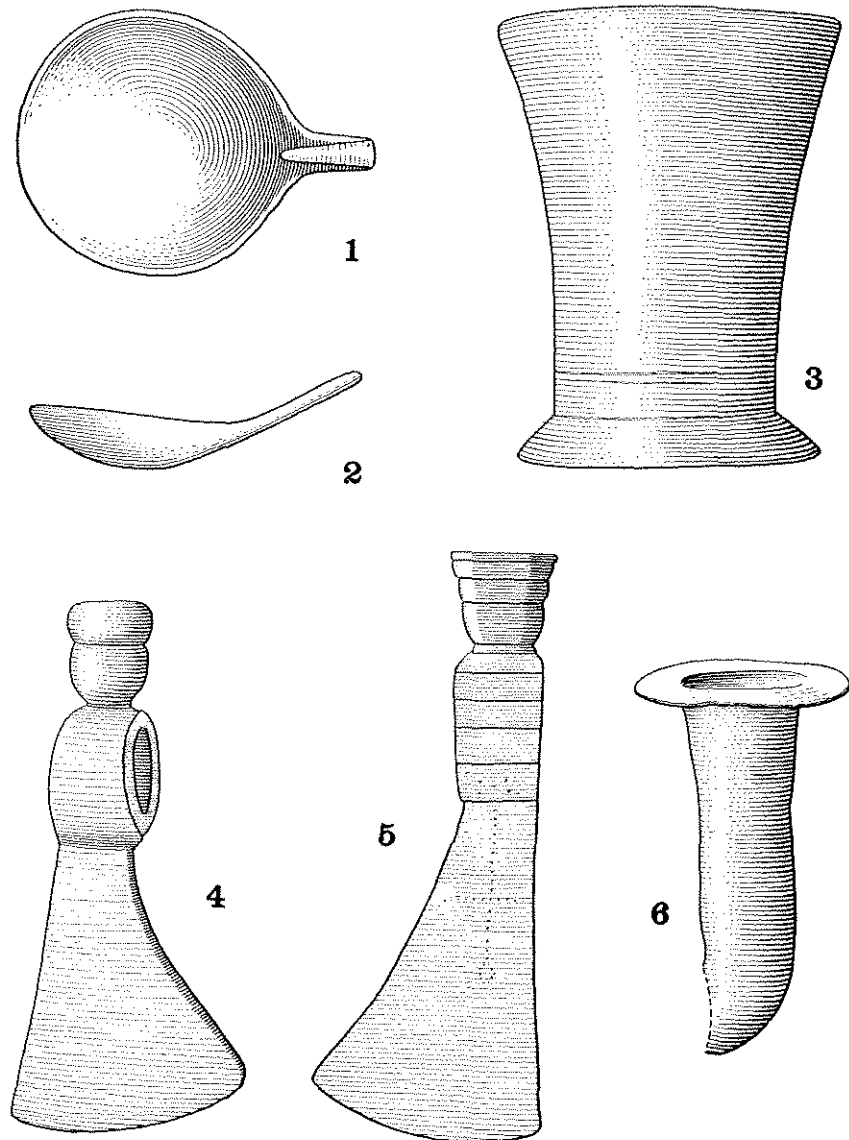
A chapter in the pewter history of New York, about which practically nothing is known, is that connected with the Indian trade. Somehow or other, pewter pipes for the smoking of tobacco, pewter pipe-tomahawks, and various pewter ornaments, got into the possession of the Indians of New York State. There is some reason to believe that the Indians themselves may have made some of these objects; it seems more likely however, that white men produced most of them and used them in trade. In the early days, the aborigines had no way of telling pewter from silver, and a shiny pipe may have been exchanged for a beaver pelt. Pewter tomahawks may have been purveyed with merciful intent, as dud ammunition, or they may have come from Connecticut along with wooden nutmegs. It would be extremely interesting to know by whom, and when, the various pewter articles were actually made.

PEWTER PIPES

Roger Williams, in a pamphlet published in London in 1643, wrote of the Narragansett Indians: "They have an excellent Art to cast our Pewter and Brasse into very neate and artificial Pipes." To most of us, that would seem to indicate that the savages learned, almost as soon as they had access to pewter, to employ it in making pipes. But the modern critical historians, the great debunkers, assure us that contemporary writers knew nothing about history in the making, and that we are better able now to tell what was going on three hundred years ago than were people then living. They point out that it takes considerable heat to melt brass, and considerable skill to make a mold

for a pipe; therefore, despite Williams' testimony, the metallic pipes used by the Indians were probably received by them from white traders. As a matter of fact, there is much to be said in favor of the latter opinion. It must take specialized skill to cast a pipe with a hole through the stem: I'm sure I shouldn't know how to go about it. And Worth Bailey, who found and described the famous Copeland seventeenth century pewter spoon at Jamestown, discovered pewter pipes on the same site. They did not bear Joseph Copeland's mark, but the chances are good that he made them.

Beauchamp mentioned several pewter pipes, one of which is shown here. (Fig. 6) It is merely a bowl, but a generous one. It resembles the upper portion of a candlestick, and strongly suggests that some white pewterer adapted his mold to a new purpose. The broad lip shows that it was not made before 1700.



Figures redrawn by Edward Schmitz, after W. M. Beauchamp.

The two pewter tomahawk pipes figured here (Figs. 4, 5) were almost certainly made by white men. They have the typical form of the trade-axe, an implement greatly desired by the savages. The altruistic whites supposed that in supplying small axes they were helping the natives to clear their land for planting beans and corn. They were a bit surprised to find that these implements quickly supplanted the wooden clubs which the Indians had previously called tomahawks, and soon became the articles which the well dressed warrior wore alongside his scalping knife. One was found south of Liverpool, N. Y., the other at Stone Arabia.

ENGLISH INFLUENCE

The English influence on the pewter made in New York City is so obvious that one need spend no time discussing it. Tankard drums, lids and handles all show it. Even the plates testify to honest English craftsmanship through the hammered bouge. It has been said that the New York pewterers were more English than were those of New England. If so, why?

We do not know, really. But there are possible explanations. In the first place, most of the surviving New York pewter is older than most of that found in New England. Most of the known New York product was made between 1740 and 1800, whereas little pre-Revolutionary New England pewter has survived, for the metal was in its hey-day there between 1790 and 1830. Secondly, pewterers came to New England very early, and the pewterers working after 1750 were, with a single exception, members of families which had been in this country for a hundred years or more. So far as we know, no New England pewterer except Lawrence Langworthy of Rhode Island had been trained in England; nor had they learned the trade from men who had been members of the Worshipful Company. One judges from their work that they were imbued with Yankee thrift, and endowed with Yankee ingenuity, for they seem to have made the best possible showing with as little metal and as little labor as possible. Unfortunately, their ingenuity seems to have been expended largely in the development of mass production, for they allowed themselves self expression only in porringer handles.

As Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin has shown, New York's first pewterer, William Diggs, made a freeman in 1702, had been a yeoman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London in 1699, and his near contemporary, William Horsewell, also seems to have come from England. It will be remembered that Francis Bassett, the first of that noble family of pewterers, was apprenticed to Horsewell. Although his master died before Bassett could have learned his trade, it is not impossible that many Diggs and Horsewell molds came into Bassett's possession, and that he handed them on to the later members of the family. This, at least, is a plausible way to account for the archaic styles of the beautiful tankards which have added such lustre to New York pewter. Joseph Liddell, Senior, was another native Englishman, and we know from his will that he brought his molds and tools from the land of his birth. This equipment went to Joseph, Jr., and to Robert Boyle, who had been trained by the elder Joseph. With such a start, in training, tools, and molds, it is not surprising that New York pewter was predominantly English.

GERMAN INFLUENCE

The German traditions which Johannes Will brought, along with his old country touch, seem to have had little influence on the evolution of New York

pewter. Although, according to Mr. Laughlin, Johannes must have been at least 45 years old when he set up business in this country, he quickly adapted himself to the manufacture of articles suited to the English taste. His son Henry, for a time a pewterer at Albany, went even further and made articles not known to have been produced by any other American. But these novelties were copies of English, not German originals. A trace of the Germanic taste crops out in the decoration of one of Johannes Wills' tankards, but that may quite as likely be due to the desire of the owner as to that of the maker.

The one German touch in Henry Wills' pewter is the famous flagon first figured by the late Louis G. Myers. That the handle should be short is in the best German tradition, but in this case its shortness is not a matter of premeditated design. Henry merely had no other handle mold. Another thing which the younger Will may have borrowed from Germany, perhaps from an article in his father's house, is the handle on the foot warmer in the Garvan collection. It looks remarkably like the screw tops on German milk cans.

All in all, the German influence on New York pewter is so slight as to be negligible. This is rather curious, for by 1750 there was a large population of Palatine Germans in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys, and families were spreading out into the hills back of the Helderbergs and east of the Hudson. It would seem that a German pewterer could have built up a considerable trade among these people, many of whom must have remembered the vessels in their ancestral homes. Evidently Palatines were much more rapidly Anglicised in the "Dutch" regions of New York than they were in Quaker Pennsylvania.

(The above is part of an address delivered at the opening of the exhibit of pewter at the Albany Institute of Science and Art on April 18, 1942. It was illustrated by specimens of spoons and pipes, loaned by Mr. Noah Clarke, New York State Archaeologist.)

EDWARD RAND, PEWTERER

by Lura Woodside Watkins

Edward Rand was the son of Dr. Isaac Rand. He was born in Charlestown, September 4, 1750, and probably learned his trade from Nathaniel Austin, who married Edward's older sister, Margaret. In 1781 he married Ruth Sprague and thereafter lived in Newburyport. After her death in 1789 he married Martha Parsons, who lived until the year of his death, 1829.

Rand had a shop and a hardware business in the Market Square. This is mentioned by Sarah Ann Emery in her "Reminiscences of a Nonagenarian." She says the buildings burned in 1811, although his house nearby was saved.

The Essex Journal and Merrimack Packet carried the following advertisement, January 5, 1774.

EDWARD RAND

Pewterer

Informs his customers and others that he has to sell at his shop, just to the westward of the Rev. Mr. Cary's Meeting house, in Newburyport, by Wholesale & Retail, as cheap as can be bought at any shop or store in town, viz:

Pewter Plates, Basons, Pots, Porringers, London Pewter Dishes and Plates, block-tin Tankards, Canns, Tea Pots and Spoons, Brass Kettles, Skillets, and Warming Pans, Brass Matthewman and horn Buttons, Plated Brass, Block-tin and white metal Shoe and Knee Buckles, Flat and Box Irons, Frying Pans, Table Knives and Forks, Pen Knives, Razors, Scissors, Shears, Brass and Iron Candlesticks, Combs, Coffee Mills, Chissels, Gouges, Latches, Iron Hollow Ware, 4d, 6d, 10d and 20d Nails, %C. %C. %C.

Another advertisement which appeared either late in the same year or in the next year reads:

EDWARD RAND

Pewterer

Acquaints his customers and others that he has to sell, at his shop just to the westward of the Reverend Mr. Cary's Meeting-house, in Newbury-Port, by wholesale and retail, as cheap as can be bought at any store in town, viz: London and Bristol pewter Dishes, Plates, Basons, Tankards, Canns and Spoons. (Then follows a long list of hardware, of metals other than pewter.)

also

He makes Pewter Plates, Pots, Basons, Porringers, Salts, and all kinds of Tin Ware

Cash for Old Pewter

Edward Rand Genealogy

Edward Rand, s. Isaac

Born Sept. 4, 1750

Married (1) Ruth Sprague, Sept. 20, 1781

(2) Martha Parsons, Oct., 1792

Died Dec. 3, 1829

Issue: Edward Sprague, 1782; Isaac (seaman) 1784-1818; John, 1786; Margaret D. (M. John Andrews); Jane, (M. David Wood)

Edward Sprague, s. Edward and Ruth

B—June 23, 1782

M—Hannah Pettingel

D—Oct. 22, 1863. He was a merchant—of Boston

Issue: Edward Sprague, 1809; Emily R. Sprague, 1811 (m. Augustus Arnold of Providence); Hannah Pettingel, 1813, (M. Dr. E. G. Kelley of Newburyport).

Edward Sprague, s. Edward Sprague and Hannah

B—Mar. 15, 1809

M—Elizabeth Arnold, Sept. 17, 1833

Issue: Edward Sprague, 1834; Arnold-Augustus, 1837; Francis Arnold, and Elizabeth (died young); Charles, 1843; Frederick-Henry, 1846.

All in Civil War except Edward.

Edward Sprague Rand, Jr., of Boston

M—Jane Augusta Lathrop

Issue: Edward Sprague and Henry Lathrop. Both lawyers in Court St., 1867

From Rand Genealogy, by F. B. Wyman

THE NICHOLS COLLECTION

Every member of the Club will be pleased with the article in *Antiques*, April, 1943, in which Dr. Edward A. Rushford describes the collection of American pewter which Mr. Melville T. Nichols has accumulated during the last few years. Many of us have seen and admired it, but few have realized the research, energy, and selectivity which have gone into it. Starting "too late," he has reached the front rank. The moral is obvious. We can still get something worthwhile if we go after it. The sources are not yet exhausted; even for Virginian plates, which are among the uniques in the Nichols collection.

P. E. R.

SOUTHERN PEWTERERS

by Ledlie I. Laughlin

I read with interest the latest issue of the Bulletin and noted at the end your inquiry about any information in regard to Southern Pewterers. Professor Wertenbaker read my notes on the Southern Craftsmen before my book appeared. He gave me access to his records and made valuable suggestions. After that he found information about Compaire and William Linthwaite. Both of these men advertised in the South Carolina Gazette in 1736. Copies of those newspaper notices follow:

South Carolina Gazette, May 22, 1736

"Claudius Compaire gives notice, that he mends all sorts of Pewter, Copper and Brass Work at reasonable prices; he likewise buys any old Pewter, Copper or Brass, and is to be met with at Mr. Laurens Sadler."

Ibid, July 24, 1736

"Whereas I have advertized in the Gazette all Persons to discharge their accounts with me . . .

Wm. Linthwaite

N. B. The said Linthwaite has a fine sortment of Indian Trading Kettles and Pewter by him to sell, and makes and mends all sorts of old ones at reasonable Rates, and gives the best Price for old Copper, Brass, or Pewter."

You will notice that Compaire does not state that he makes Pewter, and in preparing my own lists I omitted men who gave no greater evidence than this that they were Pewter makers. Linthwaite on the other hand, probably should be on our lists.

Years ago I read in a Maryland history, name now forgotten, that David Evans of Baltimore, made pewter buttons for the uniforms of Maryland troops. However, I made a very careful search of Maryland records and was unable to find out anything about this man. I, therefore, did not include him in the book.

Early Ohio Silversmiths and Pewterers, 1787-1847, by Rhea Mansfield Knittle, —Ohio, Frontier Series. Printed for the author by the Calvert-Hatch Co., Cleveland, Ohio. pp. 1-63, 5 illustrations. Price, \$1.00, from Mrs. Knittle, Ashland, Ohio.

Rhea Mansfield Knittle has been collecting all sorts of things Ohioan for years. She takes as much pride in a new historical fact as in an ancient plate or lamp or basin. She seeks facts, and objects which verify them. Her pen

has promised more than it has produced, but not from lack of knowledge. Her output has been restricted by purely personal reasons, chiefly ill health.

We are grateful for what we have received, particularly for pages 41 to 63; devoted to the pewter and Britannia makers of Ohio. Especially interesting are her notes on the "Scarcity of Old Pewter in Ohio," which she attributes largely to the need for munitions of war in 1812. At that time an edict was issued confiscating all pewter, that it might be manufactured into bullets. After the war there was a tremendous demand for pewter utensils, but at this time the transition to the lighter Britannia was already beginning. And so, much of the remaining heavier metal was run into spoon molds, either in shops or in individual households. Nevertheless, pewter candlesticks and Britannia pots and pitchers continued to be made in quantities in Ohio even after the Easterners had shifted their choice to the more showy electro-plated silver ware.

Although the members of this Club may be more interested in the part on pewter, the whole book is good reading. The reviewer enjoyed most, perhaps, the introductory pages of the section on silver, replete with historical information. To one who has seen only its great cities and broad farms, it comes as something of a shock to learn that Ohio was still a "howling wilderness" only 150 years ago.

Mrs. Knittle's check-list of early Ohio Pewterers and Britannia makers is a long one, containing 72 names. Few of them confined their activities to work with our particular metals. It is probable that many did not mark their wares. Undoubtedly some were "tinkers," and it is possible that some were merely vendors. But the list is a challenge to collectors with access to Ohioan material, and we hope that as marked pieces turn up, they will be reported. A prize would be a piece by Wilhelm Will, Jr., 1800-1802, who seems to have been the earliest of the recorded resident pewterers.

Every member of the Club will enjoy having a copy of this booklet. A large sale would doubtless encourage Mrs. Knittle, who at present feels doubtful about going on with her projected series. We cannot afford to let her accumulated knowledge go to waste.

PERCY E. RAYMOND.

Unknown Blonde Murdered by Unknown Man!

Do you know that a knowledge of Pewter may solve a Murder Mystery? The girl reporter picked up a paper bearing a rubbing of William Kirby's famous touch, "Early bird catches the worm." It led her to the villain, who was writing a book on old pewter. This book hasn't been published.

All this is in a story by Sewell Peaslee Wright, "A Bit of Paper," in the *Boston Herald*, Sunday, March 7, 1943.

Thanks to "Mert" Wheelock.

MEMBERS, JANUARY, 1943

This is actually an honor roll, for under present conditions it is almost impossible to attend meetings except in the immediate vicinity of Boston, and reduced income limits the number of Bulletins.

Those who, in 1943, are entitled to wear masters' Badges are starred. New members should be reminded that this means five years continuous membership. If anyone entitled to a Badge has not received it within 30 days after receiving this Bulletin, please notify the Corresponding Secretary. Since no pewter is

now available, old plates had to be melted to provide the medals distributed this year. They are antiques in new form. We thank those who contributed the metal.

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