

The
PEWTER COLLECTORS' CLUB
of AMERICA

VOLUME 2. NUMBER 1.

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NEW YORK REGIONAL GROUP

OFFICERS, 1947

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A SUGGESTION

Bulletin 20 has been long delayed. Why? Because few members submitted anything for publication. We have formed a Club because of our mutual interest in Pewter. We want to exchange information, not to be lectured to by a professor. Years of prodding culminated in Bulletin 19. Now you have another P. E. R. product, and it serves you right. But P. E. R. is in his 69th year, and not insurable. We need the cooperation of every member of the Club if the Bulletin is to survive.

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE BULLETIN

Following the trend of the times, the Governing Board voted last June to increase the price of back numbers from the old price of twenty-five to fifty cents each. We found that we were selling some numbers for about one-half of what they cost the Club, and paying for mailing as well. It is no longer possible to obtain a complete set, for the supply of numbers 1, 2, 3, and 6 is exhausted. Numbers 1-5 were of small size, and devoted mostly to lists of the meetings. Bulletin 6 was the first in the present format.

An index of the longer articles in Bulletins 1-14 was published in Bull. 15. There is here appended another list, according to subjects. Reports of meetings and miscellaneous notes are not included. For completeness, Bull. 6 is included, although we cannot now supply it.

Architectural Designs in Pewter, Bulls. 13, 14

American Pewter Lamps, Bulls. 5, 13

Bibliography of Pewter, Bulls. 6, 15, 20

Composition of Pewter and Britannia, Bull. 10

Pewter Buttons, Bull. 11

Constitution and By-Laws of the Club, Bull. 14

Rufus Dunham, Pewterer, Bull. 19

Exhibitions of Pewter, Bull. 9

Love, Pennsylvania Pewterer, Bulls. 18, 19

Medical Pewter, Bull. 16

Previously Unknown Pewterers, Bulls. 12, 13, 16, 17

Porringers, Bulls. 8, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20

Reproductions in Pewter, Bull. 13

Sadware, Bulls. 14, 18

Pewter Ship Model, Bull. 19

Pewter Spoons, Bull. 4

Tankards, Bulls. 16, 18

AMENDMENT TO THE BY-LAWS

At the recommendation of the Governing Board, notice was given at the meeting on November 30, 1945, that a vote would be taken at the January meeting to amend Article 1, Section 2B, of the By-Laws, by striking out the figures \$.50 and inserting the figures \$1.50, so that this By-Law should read:—

“Regional groups may decide the amount of their group dues. Of such dues, \$1.50 per member shall be paid by the Treasurer of each regional group to

the Treasurer of the parent club each year. Such payment entitles the group member to membership in the parent club."

The principal reason for this change is that when the original By-Law was written, the Bulletin cost about 20 cents per member per year. In 1945 it cost about \$1.40. In 1946, it cost about \$1.58.

A printed notice of this change was sent out with the call for the January meeting, and at the meeting on January 30, 1946, it was so voted.

Certified by Percy E. Raymond,
Corresponding Secretary till the end of
the meeting, January 30, 1946.

The Constitution and By-Laws were printed in Bulletin 14, October, 1944.

MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST REPORT

Looking back over the past twenty months, one can see the effect the war had upon us. In pre-war days, we commonly had eleven meetings each year, and the majority of them were in private homes. We have now reduced the number to six per year, and of the last ten only two have been at the homes of members. Those, however, have been the best attended of them all. We regret the passing of the days when we could employ "help", and shine up our pewter and our homes to entertain our friends.

NATIONAL CLUB

November 30, 1945. Our birthplace, the Old State House in Boston, again gave us welcome and shelter on a day when the New England weather tried to out-do itself.

The President, Mrs. William V. Wallburg, read a report received from an informal committee which was planning the organization of a daughter club in New York. In accordance with their request, she appointed the following as a committee to arrange an organization: Mrs. Philip Huntington and Mr. Robert H. Ellenberger for Long Island, Mr. Charles Messer Stow and Mr. John M. Graham 2d, for New York City, Mrs. Paul J. Franklin and Mr. John P. Remensnyder for New Jersey, and Mrs. Ferdinand T. Wilcox and Miss Ethel Speer for Connecticut.

Mrs. Florence Paull Berger, then Acting Director, now General Curator, of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Conn., was elected as an Honorary Member, to take the place of Mr. Justus Eck, Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London, England, who died in 1941.

Madame Berger assembled the material for the first exhibition of American pewter, a display which antedated by two years that of the Kerfoot collection in Boston, and published the first real list of American pewterers in the Bulletin of the Wadsworth Atheneum in March, 1923.

Mrs. Eaton H Perkins had charge of the program, which continued the discussion of the names commonly applied to articles made of pewter. Mr. Carl W. Drepperd's glossary in his "Primer of American Antiques" served as a starting point. Many terms, as commonly used, lack precise definition. An article on the subject was promised for Bulletin 18, but the further one pursues the subject, the more complicated it becomes. We hope that we shall be able to start a series of articles soon.

January 30, 1946. The annual dinner and election of officers was held at

the Hotel Vendome in Boston. The nominating committee produced a slate which was not opposed, so the election was a mere formality, the Secretary being instructed to cast a single vote for the nominees. The names of the new officers appeared on the first pages of Bulletins 18 and 19.

President Wallburg most graciously turned the meeting over to her successor, who introduced Mr. Charles F. Montgomery. The new president expressed his surprise that the speaker of the evening, a graduate of Harvard, had made good in life, in spite of the fact that he had neglected to take the courses in Paleontology, offered by the presiding officer. "Charlie", however, soon demonstrated that, despite his handicap, he really knows pewter. In an hour, he managed to give us information which it had taken him years to acquire. There can be no doubt that the "laboratory method" is the only way by which a student can come to know antiques. One can read everything that has been published about pewter, and still know nothing about it, unless he has handled thousands of specimens. Being a dealer is not all fun, for one cannot retain for himself all the splendid specimens which he finds. But Montgomery has developed a satisfactory philosophy. As he puts it; "Everything that has passed through my hands is mine. I had the pleasure of finding it and keeping it for a time. I know where it is now. I can go to see it, and I feel pride in the collections I have helped others to build."

Mr. Montgomery continued to develop a theme which he had suggested at the meeting in Fairfield at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles K. Davis. It is, in brief, that we now know enough about American pewter to permit us to assign most unmarked pieces to their makers, so can identify the period and provenance. The time has come when we can sit back and enjoy the material and design of a piece, without overdue fuss about the touch.

The speaker also attempted to lay the britannia bugaboo. As he pointed out, britannia metal is the most excellent variety of pewter. Its rather undesirable reputation resulted largely from the introduction of factory methods of production, but more fundamentally from the general decadence of popular taste in early Victorian days. He showed basins, sugar bowls, pitchers, standing-cups and other articles of britannaware which were well designed, and would be ornaments to any collection. Dunham pitchers, Trask communion sets, Gleason candlesticks, Taunton Britannia Company lamps, and many Boardman pieces are in this category. Incidentally, he mentioned the fact that the Taunton Company appear to have been the only makers of the tiny nursing lamps with spherical reservoirs.

April 27, 1946. The twelfth annual Birthday Dinner was held at the Hotel Bradford, Boston. Master members' badges were awarded to those who had continued to live exemplary lives since they joined five years previously.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Messer Stow were the guests of the evening. Millicent Dingwell Stow, the M. D. S. of the Antiques page in the New York Sun, consented to make a bow. Mr. Stow, one of our original Honorary Members, known all over the country for his numerous writings and as Editor of the Antiques pages in the Sun, made the address of the evening.

Mr. Stow took us out of our relatively narrow sphere of mere pewter collecting into the realms of art, history, and philosophy. A long-time student of these subjects, he has evolved a most interesting theory. In brief, it is somewhat like that of the well-known cycle in history: beginning in poverty, there is simplicity of design; prosperity and wealth bring desire for show and decora-

tion; decadence ensues, with over-decoration; collapse, and return to simplicity, as people struggle up out of darkness.

Man seems to have an innate sense of good proportion, the *sine qua non* of simple articles, formed for a definite use. The Cretans showed it in their vessels and in their architecture. The Greeks reduced it to a science, but the opulent Romans eventually lost sight of design in their desire for ostentation. The upward climb in the early years of the Renaissance was confused by Roman models. But study of excavated materials brought a return to Greek simplicity for a time. This was destroyed again as wealth increased, degenerating into baroque, and finally the rococo. These were long, leisurely cycles, but in the late 18th century the tempo was quickened. Adam and his followers revived the Grecian in the neoclassical, but the happy Victorian days brought back the desire for show, and a regrettable lapse into the overdecorated.

A possible corollary to Mr. Stow's thesis is that the humbler the metal and the more utilitarian the products made from it, the greater the chance that good design will obtain. For example, compare the simple 17th century pewter with the contemporary decorated silver. It was not till pewter really set out to imitate silver in the 1830's to 1850's that it (one might say both) became atrocious.

The above is only one of the lines of thought which Mr. Stow developed. In recent years he has been especially interested in "Antiques as History," and the reader is advised to see his article, "Antiques—A Concrete Form of History," in "New York History," vol. 28, no. 2, 1947, pages 200-207.

June 29, 1946. June, strawberries, a splendid old house furnished with antiques, and Nina Fletcher Little for the speaker! No wonder that people came from New York and Connecticut. Cogswell's Grant, the summer home of our hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Little, has many unusual architectural features, ably explained by our hostess.

Mrs. Little spoke on the "Influence of the Metal Worker on Early Ceramic Forms," illustrating the talk with lantern slides and specimens.

Potters and metal-workers have, throughout the ages, constantly imitated one another. Anything made in metal was apt to be copied in ceramics, and the opposite is also true. In many cases it is difficult to ascertain to which group the honor of being the initiators is due.

Porcelain and fine china afford excellent examples of both processes. Not until 1710 did Europeans solve the problem of porcelain, which had been imported from China since the 15th century. The Chinese were drinkers of tea, the central and north-Europeans saturated themselves with mead, ale, beer, and other invigorating drinks. When porcelain was at last produced, its makers copied the silver and pewter tankards, standing cups, mugs, porringers, and even the trencher salts, standing salts, and gadrooned plates. On the other hand, metal workers based the designs for teapots on the ceramics imported from China. In the early days teapots were small, partly because it was the Chinese custom to serve each individual his own pot, partly because tea was expensive. Metal workers were singularly slow about starting to make teapots. When tea was first introduced to continental Europe and England about the middle of the 17th century, the potters made teapots, as best they could, in the Chinese style, but it was not till about 1700 that the silversmiths copied them, and pewter ones arrived some 25 years later. By 1780 the silversmiths had caught up with the changing styles made in porcelain; straight sided, oval, and circular ones were

made in both materials. Many of the pewterers lagged behind even then, the "Queen Anne" pear-shaped pot lingering on until 1830. Mrs. Little cited cases of similar lags on both sides.

July 27, 1946. Worcester, Mass., is fortunate in possessing, almost side by side, an up-to-date Art Museum, where the latest trends can be studied, and an Historical Museum, full to repletion with materials used by our ancestors. Any pewter collector is thrilled by the sight of the broad-brimmed paten, brought to Salem by Henry Skerry in 1637, and this is only one of many treasures in the latter. Mr. Charles E. Ayers, our host on the occasion of this visit to the Historical Society Museum, is keenly ancestor-conscious, and gave an excellent talk on the history of pewter-making from that viewpoint.

As he said, pewter has occupied a somewhat peculiar place in domestic economy, but managed to occupy that place for some 40 centuries. The melting point of the metal is too low to allow its use in cooking food, but its pliable resistance to abuse made it admirable for vessels used for the drinking and measuring of liquids, and for the service of meals. Its softness made it an ideal plate. "Gol durn these chiny plates", said one old timer, "they take the edge all off your knife."

A small amount of tin, added to copper, produces bronze, a hard, resistant metal much employed by races of men after they graduated from the stage of polished stone implements. A small amount of copper, added to tin, produces the soft pewter. There seems every reason to agree with Mr. Ayers that the discovery of the two alloys may have been made at about the same time. But pewter is perishable. If it was used during the Bronze Age, we have no record of it. In fact, little is known of its early use in China, where it is supposed to have been first employed, or in Japan, so that the first 20 centuries of its history are but poorly documented. Roman pewter is the oldest about which much is known, and most of the Roman pewter of the 2d and 3d centuries has been dug up in England, where it probably was made. Cornwall tin and Shropshire lead were in reasonably close juxtaposition. Lead took the place of copper in the Roman alloy, at least as made in Britain.

Pewter making may have been a lost art from the 4th to the 11th centuries. The history, at least, is lost to us. But those were the "dark ages". One doubts if they were as cruel and barbarous as the period from 1914 to 1945.

Little pewter has survived from the 11th and 12th centuries except for coffins, heart cases, and sepulchral chalices. Not until the 13th century did the alloy get into general use in the form of household utensils, and even then it was chiefly the property of the wealthy. Lords and Ladies, Abbots and Bishops ate from pewter, keeping their few pieces of "plate" for show. Even as late as 1760, royalty patronized the pewterers, particularly for coronation feasts, where the guests stole everything in sight.

In the 16th century pewter utensils became more common and were in general use in the 17th and 18th centuries. China, glass, and particularly the discovery of the electroplating process, brought an end to the pewter era between 1820 and 1850.

September 21, 1946. Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Reardon entertained the National Club and the New York Regional Group at their home, Apple Hill, Farmington, Conn., at their first joint meeting. This was the best attended meeting since the one at the Brooklyn Museum in the previous year. Members

from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts were present, and one lady from Illinois got almost there.

The splendid old house is so full of antiques of all sorts that their thousand pieces of pewter seemed at first to be but one inconspicuous item. But Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, the speaker for the afternoon, soon showed that in the selection of the pieces, quality had not been sacrificed to quantity.

Mr. Montgomery has prepared a list of fifty pieces of American pewter for the use of Curators of Museums, or prospective donors to Museums, as the nucleus of a collection which would show the range of the products of our pewterers. With this in hand, he went through Mr. Reardon's collection, and assembled on one table examples of practically everything on the list. Included was sadware, ranging from 6-inch butter dishes to 15-inch platters, with soup plates and deep dishes, illustrating the work produced from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania. Then came the porringers, America's greatest contribution to pewter style, tall beakers for church use, and smaller ones, commonly called tumblers (Mr. Reardon has 67 of these), the favorite handleless cups of the period from 1820-1850. The list continued with the rarer items, tankards, communion flacons, chalices, candlesticks, and spoons.

As usual, the speaker dropped many hints, invaluable to collectors. He called attention to the fact that the rims (brims) on Boston and Rhode Island plates were uncommonly narrow and that Boston plates were extremely shallow. The deep 11-inch dishes were made only by Connecticut men, whether working at home or in other states; that Richard Lee made his butter plates in a large mold, and turned them down; and that if a touch shows on the inside of the well of a plate, it was probably put on after the article was finished on the lathe. The so-called teakettle in pewter was really a punch pot, as is shown by the presence of a strainer inside at the base of the spout.

During the discussion, Mr. Francis D. Brinton of West Chester, Pennsylvania, announced that it had been definitely proven that the famous Westtown dippers were not porringers, as has been supposed, but really handleless bowls. A cache of authentic examples was found in the attic of the school.

December 4, 1946. The November meeting was held on this date at the Old State House in Boston. According to our constitution, a November meeting is necessary, but it is occasionally held in December. Since it is the most important meeting of the year, the nominating committee being elected at that time, members usually stay away in droves. But this time they had a valid excuse, for it was announced that Dr. Raymond would speak on "Pierced-handled Poringers". Fortunately it is not necessary to present an abstract of his remarks, for he has published articles on the subject in recent Bulletins, and in the April, 1946, and May, 1947, numbers of the American Collector. He has prepared two more articles on this subject, and it is hoped that when they are published, he may be cured of this obsession. But one is not sanguine, for the porringer has always been his dish.

January 30, 1947. The Annual Meeting and dinner was held at the Hotel Puritan, Boston. The special guests of the evening were Mr. Julius Daniels, who was the speaker, Mrs. Daniels, and Mrs. Lura Woodside Watkins, the newly elected President of the Rushlight Club. Mrs. Watkins, although primarily devoted to ceramics, has spoken at the Club on pewter, and has con-

tributed articles to our Bulletin. We were also pleased to have with us our Vice President from the "State of Long Island", Mrs. Philip Huntington, who reported on the activities of the New York Regional Group. Judge Huntington was in the distinguished company which sat down to dinner. Chairman Semon of the New York Group had expected to be present, but all flights were cancelled because of New England weather.

Despite an earnest and honest plea from the president, that he be replaced, the persons selected by the nominating committee were elected. Their names appear in the heading of this Bulletin. The various committees submitted their annual reports. Some were shocked by the fact that our treasury balance was only about \$47.00, but the president explained that this was intentional. The policy of the Club is to use all money possible on the Bulletin, so that current members, particularly those who do not attend meetings, may receive as much as possible in return for their dues.

Mr. Julius Daniels, one of the most active members of the Rushlight Club, is a student of lighting devices. He has a carefully selected collection, covering the time from the Stone Age to the present, and managed to compress into an hour the "History of Lighting".

Artificial lighting began when men learned how to make fire. The primitive stage was the cookery fire, within or outside the habitation. From this source were derived two distinct sorts of portable lights, the torch and the lamp. The original torch was merely a brand plucked from the fire. The use of such torches has survived until modern times in forested regions; the American Indians, for example, never had anything better. People who had access to natural bitumen, soaked sticks in it, others added fats, and so the torch was improved. This sort of lighting device was used in ancient Greece and other eastern Mediterranean countries, and led to the evolution of the candle, made of fat or waxes. All these devices have persisted to modern times. The pitch pine torches, splints, and rushes soaked in fat played a large part in early American lighting, and even now we resort to candles when the Edison Electric fails us, or when we have guests whose faces seem more attractive in a mellow light.

The lamp, like the torch, was probably an accidental discovery. While roasting meat on the open fire, puddles of fat rolled out. A pool might collect in the hollow of one of the hearth-stones, and if a charred twig or other substance happened to be in it, a lamp was produced. This probably happened many times in many countries, for lamps have originated independently in many regions. The Stone Age lamps are merely stones with natural or artificial concavities. Curiously, the Eskimo were still using this sort of lamp for heat and light until recent times.

The earliest lamps of the eastern Mediterranean region were merely bowls, made of baked clay instead of stone, or even seashells of suitable form.

The first great improvement on this type was in the introduction of better material for wicks, and the pinching of the clay to form one or more wick channels. This modernized lamp was fed with olive or other vegetable oils and was the popular type before and after the time of Christ. The "candles" in the Temple of Jerusalem were of this sort, as can be seen from the Biblical instructions for attending them. A natural modification produced the tubular wick tube, and the covering of the oil reservoir, except for a hole to permit replenishment. Thus was produced what has come to be known as the Roman

lamp, for the Romans made them in great numbers, both in pottery and bronze. This was the common lamp for many centuries. Pewterers in Germany and the Netherlands made them as recently as the 18th century mounted on stems.

In northern regions where fish oil and fats were the common fuels, a metal modification of the ancient open lamp was in use down to the time of the general adoption of coal oil. Many sorts of crusie, betty, phoebe, and pan lamps were produced, some simple, some "improved". Only rarely was pewter used in their construction.

The invention of the vertical wick-tube greatly improved the lamp, and the use of whale oil was of particular benefit to New Englanders. Pewter at last came into active use in lighting devices. But with the 19th century rapid changes were the order of the day. Whale oil gave place to "burning fluids" such as camphine, and about 1860 "mineral oil," and lamps in which the burners were fed with air from below rapidly displaced all previous types. We all know what has happened to the kerosene lamp.

The talk was illustrated by numerous specimens from Mr. Daniels' collection, covering pretty much everything from the Stone Age to the present. Mr. Charles F. Montgomery brought a large collection of pewter candlesticks.

April 21, 1947. The meeting on this date was at the College Club, 40 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, Mrs. Eaton H. Perkins was both hostess and speaker, a rather common but hardly fair division of labor. The first hour was devoted to business. It was gratifying to learn that dues were being paid promptly, which means that we should be able to publish two Bulletins this year. Nineteen new members were elected, indicating that interest in pewter is increasing. The same seems to be true in England, where prices which have been obtained at auction are almost horrifying. But of course these are only for exceedingly good 17th century hollow-ware.

"Sing a song of sixpence
What pewter will it buy?
Can we keep on collecting,
With prices in the sky?"

Mrs. Perkins gave an abstract, with comments, of a paper entitled "Wigan and Liverpool Pewterers," published by one of our Honorary members, Roland J. A. Shelley, Esq., President of the Society of Pewter Collectors. Mr. Shelley lost a most important part of his collection by "enemy action" during the war, but his losses brought no diminution of his interest in our subject. At the age of 77 he is still active in research, and has had two articles in recent numbers of *Apollo*, and one in *Antiques*.

Wigan, northeast of Liverpool, is one of the most ancient boroughs (chartered in 1247) in England, and, despite its relatively small size, was an important, and really influential pewtering center. A Pewterers' Guild was formed there at least as early as the 16th century, but the early records are lost. A partial list of its Masters and Wardens from 1627 has been compiled. By 1683 this body had grown so influential that it aspired to take over all rights and duties of the Worshipful Company, in the area north of the Trent. So far as is known, nothing came of this grandiose plan.

Mr. Shelley has been able to learn a good deal about Wigan pewterers from court records. The year books of the Wigan Court of Kings Pleas and the Court Leete Rolls indicate that the pewterers were a quarrelsome and litigious

lot. As Mr. Shelley says, we know more about the naughty, than about those of more quiet demeanor.

Mrs. Perkins was much impressed by the extent to which pewter making ran in particular families. We brag about our "Ten Pewterering Danforths," but they cannot hold a candle to the Thirty-eight Pewterering Fords. The oldest reference to a pewterer is to Rafe Banks, in 1470, but the real Banks line, with 32 members, began appropriately with Adam, who was at work in 1539, and ended with William V, who died in 1725. The Langshawes produced 27, the Forthes 21, and the Baldwins 13. Christopher Baldwin, who was master in 1709, made a platter which Mr. Raymond showed at the meeting. Mrs. Ferdinand Wilcox of New Canaan has one like it.

One of the Fords was Margaret, Spinster, who, without right, hawked pewter in Westhoughton on the last day of May, 1657—Naughty, naughty.

May 17, 1947. The parent Club and the New York Regional Group met for a joint meeting at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. The General Curator of the Museum, Madame Florence Paull Berger, was our hostess. As already mentioned, she is one of the six Honorary Members of the Club. The subject for the day was, appropriately, Danforth and Boardman pewter. These families had their headquarters in Hartford from about 1788 till about 1850, and had an enormous output, sold all over the eastern states by their agents, agencies, and pedlars. Although the Boardmans were among the first to introduce the factory system, they made good pewter and good britannia, adhering to the customs of their Danforth ancestors.

Madam Berger read a scholarly paper in which she discussed the various Danforths and Boardmans who lived and worked in Hartford, their relationships to one another, and their descent from their ancestors in Middletown and Norwich. She illustrated her talk by specimens from the excellent collection owned by the Atheneum. These pieces were arranged on a long table at the front of the room, and made an impressive display.

Mr. Charles F. Montgomery was the other speaker. Although exceedingly busy, he had taken days off to read the Norwich newspapers of a century and a half ago. Much to his and our surprise, he unearthed rather unexpected new information about Thomas Danforth I and his son John. This new matter, which will soon be published by Mr. Montgomery in the *American Collector*, complicates rather than elucidates the problem of identification of pieces made by Thomas I and Thomas II. But if more new material can be discovered, the good old "Danforth Lion" question will in time be answered.

Several members, including Mrs. Irving H. Berg, Mr. Melville T. Nichols, and Mr. Montgomery, brought rare Danforth and Boardman pieces, which were displayed on a table at the side of the room. After his formal talk, Mr. Montgomery ran through these, pointing out their significance.

It was one of our most instructive meetings, and at its conclusion a hearty vote of thanks was tendered to Madam Berger, Mr. Montgomery, and the authorities of the Atheneum.

P. E. R.

NEW YORK REGIONAL GROUP

The Organization Meeting of March 2, 1946, was reported in Bulletin 18 by the Secretary, Mrs. Kathryn Kern Ellenberger. The following account is prepared from notes in the New York Sun, by Mrs. Ellenberger, and in the American Collector, presumably by Dr. Kurt M. Semon.

April 27, 1946. The members gathered at the New York Historical Society for the first open meeting. Since Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin had found himself unable to serve as Chairman, an election was held, and Dr. Kurt M. Semon, publisher of the American Collector, was selected to replace him. Mr. Laughlin became a Vice-Chairman, and should have been listed as such in Bulletin 19.

Mr. Semon spoke briefly on the use of pewter in the olden days, and then introduced Miss Eleanor Mitchell, head of the Department of Art and Architecture in the New York Public Library. She gave an interesting and informative talk on the resources of the Library for those who wished to read about pewter, or to conduct research on the subject. She also presented a list of books to be found on their shelves. This list is published in this number.

During the discussion period which followed, M. H. Maxson Halloway, then Curator of Decorative Arts in the Society, told of the pewter displayed in their Museum, and called attention particularly to the collection of pewter buttons, found during the excavation of various Revolutionary war camp-sites in New York and its vicinity. These buttons have been described in Bulletins of the New York Historical Society, and, briefly, by Mrs. Paul J. Franklin in our Bulletin 11.

The most interesting exhibit at the Historical Society, from the pewter collector's standpoint, is the banner of the New York Society of Pewterers, carried in the Federal Procession in New York in 1788. The brush of Mr. Paul J. Franklin, and the needle of Mrs. Franklin have produced a copy, which they presented to the Club on the occasion of our Tenth Anniversary Birthday dinner.

June 13, 1946. The account of this meeting is taken from the July, 1946, issue of the American Collector, by permission.

"Pewter Collector's Club of America—The third meeting of the New York chapter, held June 13 at the Brooklyn Museum, was a very special one, notable for its lack of technical and routine matters. It culminated in the inspection of an exhibit of thirty fine, rare, American pieces selected from the museum's large pewter collection. The scene was a pewter collector's dream come true, for the pieces were arranged in open cabinets in sets of three and were not 'untouchable.' Mr. Arthur W. Clement, Chairman of the Museum's Governing Committee, served as master magician. Of the ecclesiastical pewter we noted the superb early flagon by Johan Christopher Heyne, of Lancaster, Pa., together with two later examples, one by Samuel Danforth, another by Thomas Boardman. There were also three fine chalices, one by the aforementioned Heyne, showing continental heritage, and two graceful and refined chalices of American design by Peter Young of Albany, and Timothy Brigden of New York and Albany, respectively. Among the beakers was a communion beaker by R. B., a pewterer probably working in Boston about the year 1760. Of the domestic pewter there were an early dome-top tankard by John Bassett, New York, a flat-top one in the style

of Charles the II by Frederick Bassett, New York, and a lidless one by Benjamin Day of Newport. Equally interesting was the choice of teapots. There was one by William Will of Philadelphia, another by John Andrew Brunstrom of Philadelphia (one of two in existence, and this one still with its original handle) and a third by Love of Pennsylvania, the pewterer to whom Prof. Laughlin has devoted his article in the June Bulletin of the Pewter Collectors Club of America. Other rarities admired were the earliest writing material box by Henry Will, a pewter spoon by Peter Kirby and a porringer by Joseph Leddell senior or junior of New York. Among the flatware was the unique platter by Henry Will, 7½" a plate by Colonel John Carnes of Boston (his only surviving piece of work), and a large dish by Richard Austin, of Boston, Mass. Space doesn't permit enumerating all of the thirty pieces, each a rarity and in a splendid state of preservation. Mr. Clement, in a scholarly interpretation of the exhibit, elaborated on the evolution of styles and on special points of importance. He also suggested an interesting new line of research concerned with the artistic merit of different pewter marks. All of these exhibit pieces were admired and eagerly discussed by the club members who were allowed to handle and fondle them. Finally, upon leaving, one of the members, elated by the splendor of the show, was heard to exclaim: "This was a real treat"—and certainly it was."

Nov. 15, 1946. The Group met at the Midston House for dinner, then spent the evening in an informal, lively discussion of pewter. Each member brought a piece or two, and had something to say about it. Experience has shown that these meetings at which actual specimens are shown and commented upon, are the most interesting that we have. A large display, such as one sees in a Museum, rather intimidates us. We decide that we will come again, when we have more time; but probably never get around to it. A small series, each specimen of which can be commented on and actually handled, provides more information and pleasure.

On this occasion, both American and Continental pieces were shown. One of them was a tiny teapot, only 5½ inches high, and of a two-cup capacity. A photograph of this interesting specimen was published in the American Collector for May, 1947, page 16. It is unmarked, and the owner would be glad to have information as to its probable date and provenance. A set which attracted much attention was a Dutch bowl with accompanying spoons, pieces which had been handed down in the family of Mr. Eric de Jonge. He had much information about the customs associated with them, and, fortunately, what he had to say will soon appear in print. Some of us regret our rather provincial devotion to American pewter. A broadening-out, on a Continental basis, would be highly desirable.

Dec. 13, 1946. The New York Group has one great advantage over the collectors who live in the Boston district in that the Metropolitan Museum and the Brooklyn Museum recognize pewter as a form of art. The Fine Arts Museum in Boston seems to take the position that since pewter is not a noble metal, nothing can be done with it to elevate it to the artistic level. A pewterer was an artisan, the silversmith an artist.

If the authorities at the Fine Arts could have met with the Group on this occasion, and have listened to Mr. Joseph Downs, the Curator of the American Wing, they would probably have changed their minds. Starting with a few

odds and ends, the Metropolitan has built up an extraordinary collection, thanks to their appreciative attitude. But even their odds and ends, some necessarily stored away, include such treasures as triangular trencher salts and unusual porringers. The Brooklyn and Metropolitan Museums are leading the way to a real evaluation of the artistic merit of pewter.

April 12, 1947. After a postponement, due to illness, the Group visited Princeton, to be entertained at the home of Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin, the foremost student of, and writer on, American pewter. The following note on the visit appeared in an article on "Pewter News and Riddles" in the *American Collector*, for May, 1947, page 20. Dr. Kurt M. Semon is, presumably, the writer.

"Spring in Princeton, with the forsythia bushes and the magnolia trees in bloom against the Gothic-style fine buildings of the University, is always a delight. To a group of about fifty people interested in old American pewter, some of whom had come from as far away as Albany and Boston to meet at the house of Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin, the tokens of spring were an added pleasure. Mr. Laughlin welcomed his guests in a short talk in which information and the charm of humor were intermingled. He then threw open his celebrated pewter collection, most of the pieces being assembled in a special 'pewter room.' Comprehensive and rounded, the collection contains so many rarities, of course, that merely to list them would take up much more than the space available here. But who wasn't thrilled? Think of how exhilarated you would be to hold in your hand a piece like the unique coffee pot by William Will of Revolutionary fame; the pint pot by Cornelius Bradford, another pewterer and patriot; a pair of splendid large beakers by John Bassett; a porringer by Benjamin Day of Newport—to mention a few treasures. Late and unwillingly, the group departed for the road home, everyone feeling happily indebted to the man who, having written the outstanding work on American pewter had now given us the opportunity of seeing and handling some of his precious source material."

TWO ADVERTISEMENTS

The following advertisements, of interest to our Club, have lately come to my attention. The first is particularly important, in that it suggests that Samuel Hamlin, at Providence in 1771, may have been the junior partner of a brazier named Henshaw in Hartford four years earlier. Various lines of evidence indicate that Hamlin was trained in the shop of Thomas II Danforth at Middletown.

From *The Connecticut Courant*, July 13, 1767

HENSHAW & HAMLIN
BRAZIERS & PEWTERERS,

HEREBY inform the Public that they have lately set up their business, at the Shop of the Widow Hooker, near the North-Meeting House, in Hartford, where they make, and have for sale, Brass Kettles, Tea-Kettles, Coffee Potts, Quart and Point (sic) Potts, Basons, Plates, Dishes Platters, Poringers, &c. on the most reasonable Terms, for Cash, Country-Produce, old Pewter, Brass, or old Copper. 33 10^w

The "33 10^w" possibly refers to 10 weeks because this advertisement appeared in about that many issues. Subsequent issues carried this addition:

N. B. He also gives the best Price for old Pewter, Brass, Copper and Lead.

The second adds a little to what Mr. Laughlin was able to learn about the Swedish pewterer, Abraham Hasselberg. Evidently he was at work three years earlier than had been supposed, but was at Wilmington at that time. Perhaps he did not move to Philadelphia until the year of his marriage, 1762.

From the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. September 6, 1759.

This is to give Notice That the Subscriber hereof, living at Wilmington, doth carry on the Pewterer and Tinman's Trade, and will serve all persons with all Kinds of Ware belonging to the said Trades in the best manner, and after the newest Fashion, both Wholesale and Retail.

Abraham Hasselberg

N. B. He also gives the best Price for old Pewter, Brass, Copper and Lead.

JOSEPH FRANCE

"I DON'T GIVE A TINKER'S DAM!"

Don't you? You had better if you collect American porringers. Its a birth-mark, and you would be wise to look for it. Its absence may be a stigma of illegitimacy. At a recent meeting of the Club a good friend asked my advice about having this blemish removed. Do not, unless you want to destroy the value of your specimen.

It was the custom on the Continent to cast the bowl and handles of a porringer in one piece. The Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London tried by an ordinance of 1556/7 to force British pewterers to do the same. But despite rules and regulations, many English makers soldered their handles on. This process led to no blemish on the inside of the bowl, but handles constantly broke off and had to be resoldered.

In the United States, only the pewterers of southeastern Pennsylvania followed the continental custom of casting bowl and handle in one piece. Most other Americans adopted an English method, adding a brackett beneath the handle to give greater security. Such a handle had to be "cast" or "burned" on, not soldered to the bowl.

The bowls were made first, then the handle-mold was clamped to it, and the hot metal poured in. Naturally, this was a bit uncomfortable for the bowl, heating and even melting the parts adjacent. To reduce the effect the maker applied a wet rag, a "tinkers dam," to the inside of the bowl. Despite this, the soft metal melted, hence we have the scar of the wet cloth, and in many cases, actual depressions. But do not remove them, for they prove that the handle was actually cast on by the maker, not soldered on by a later tinker or tinkerer.

I am indebted to Mr. Melville J. Nichols for impressing this thoroughly on my mind. I knew it, but had not realized its practical significance.

So few English porringers show the scar that the writer had gotten into the habit of thinking that all that do show it are American. Captain A. V. Sutherland-Graeme has fortunately called my attention to the fact that this is by no means true. Evidently despairing of enforcing the ordinance of 1556/7, the Company at some later date which I have not yet found, decreed that handles

should be "cast" or "burned" on. The earliest reference to this process which I have found in Welch is dated 1680/1, when John Pettiver was summoned for having the ears of his booge porringers run on with pale, and he promised to burn the ears on for the future. That the custom originated much earlier is shown by Mr. H. H. Cotterell in an article published in the September number of *Apollo*, 1933.

Mr. Cotterell, in discussing the oldest known English porringer, now in the collection of Sutherland-Graeme, describes the method of "casting on" the ear, but English-like, he refers to the wet "stopping rag," rather than be so vulgar as to call it a "tinker's dam." This porringer has a circular touch with the initials above a handcuff and the date 1642. Since this touch was not restruck after the great fire, the maker must have been dead or out of business before 1666.

The writer is much interested to find that the brackett is of the wedge type, thus supporting his theory of the origin of bracketts expressed in the May, 1947, number of the *American Collector*.

Another friend, Mr. C. N. Paige, when apprised of the significance of the scar, suggested that porringers might be dated by the pattern left by the cloth. He has been interested in the weaving of textiles, and something may come of it. Is there any end to the ramifications to which the real study of pewter may lead one? If the study of pewter were introduced early in their career, we might have some broadly trained college graduates, people who knew art, design, archaeology, literature, a half dozen foreign languages, history, metallurgy, and a few other odds and ends.

PERCY E. RAYMOND.

OUR OWN DOCTOR'S COLUMN

For "Ye Wind Collicke"

A remedy for distressing attacks of this kind was sent by Charles Chauncey, president of Harvard College to the Reverend Peter Bulkeley of Concord, whose wife was much troubled in this way. From him it passed to Gershom Bulkeley, a son who gave up preaching in 1667, and became a practitioner of medicine. Gershom advised his patients to "take a thicke toste of white bread, toste it thorwly & leisurely on both sides browne; in the meane time heate one-half pint of Muscadine or somewhat more, or for want thereof Sacke, on a pewter dish upon a chafing dish of water, very hot, and put ye dry toste into it & let it drinke up as much of ye Muscadine or Sacke over ye coales as it will receive and let this toste be applied as hot to the abdomen as she can possibly endure it, and let it lie till it be cold." This was thought to be "never failing in ye disease."

I do not know that anyone will want to use up their Muscadine, or even their Sacke, in this way, but the item is interesting as showing how things were heated in pewter dishes.

Remedy For Fits

Fits were due to worms. Pink and senna should be quickly administered, or for lack of these ingredients, a dose of twenty to forty grains of scrapings from pewter spoons. Do not get excited and use your best britannia ones.

P. E. R.

PEWTER SOLDIERS—AND OTHERS

"Delio: He has read all the late service
As the City Chronicle relates it,
And keeps two pewterers going, only to express
Battles in model."

The Duchess of Malfi, by John Webster, Act III, Sc. 3. (Webster lived c. 1580-1625). Why Not Collect Pewter Soldiers?

Floyd Collier, 21, told an East St. Louis judge he thought it was O. K. to use pewter counterfeit coins in gambling. He got two years. (Current newspaper.)

RUTH ELSPETH RAYMOND

A HINT TO BRIDES

Silas Fife, a young man from Bolton, Mass., was one of the pioneers in the region which is now Troy, New Hampshire. In 1772 he married Miss Abigail Houghton, of his native town, and took her to the home he had built in the wilderness. Like many a bride, she seems to have known more of the theory than of the practice of cookery. "A few days after becoming settled in her new home, she undertook to bake some pies, being arranged on pewter plates and placed in the heated stone oven. Shortly afterward, on looking into the oven, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, she found her plates a liquid mass, rolling about in different directions."

History of the Town of Marlborough, New Hampshire, by Charles A. Bemis 1881.

PEWTERWORT

Comparatively few people seem to know that this is one of the many names which have been applied to the one or more species of *Equisetum*, the horsetails, more commonly known as scouring rushes. One species, *E. hyemale* Linnaeus, contains so much silica in the epidermis that it was much used by white-smiths and cabinet makers in polishing their products. It was imported to England from Holland, and got its name pewterwort in the former country. The species is by no means restricted to Holland, but is common all over Europe, Asia, and North America. For some reason it does not grow well in England.

The English herbalist, John Gerard (1545-1612) says that in his time it was much used for scouring pewter and wooden vessels, and hence was called pewterwort. Gerard was a surgeon and gardener, rather than a botanist. He probably used the pewterwort for scouring his bleeding basins.

John Randolph, Jr., who published a *Treatise on Gardening* at Richmond, Virginia, in 1793, stated that he had been informed that the leaves of the artichoke clean pewter "the best of anything." He referred to the globe artichoke (*Cynara*), not the Jerusalem artichoke so familiar to us in old gardens. The latter is really a sunflower, native to America.

P. E. R.

REVIEWS

A Century of Silver 1847-1947.—Connecticut Yankees and a Noble Metal. By Earl Chapin May. McBride and Co., New York, 1947, pp. I-XI, 1-388, 40 plates. \$3.50.

Mr. May has done for the International Silver Company a book in some respects comparable to the study which George Sweet Gibb did for Reed and Barton. It is, however, a historical rather than a business study, and hence will appeal more to the general student and reader. The emphasis is more upon the personal than on the technical phases of production and finance.

It begins with the first successful application on a commercial scale of electro-plating by the Rogers brothers in Hartford in 1847. The process had been invented in England seven years earlier, but was greatly improved later.

The story interests us as pewter collectors, for it was necessary to have something on which to deposit the silver. The Rogers Brothers had their greatest success with German Silver (tin, nickel, zinc), but the succession in many cases was the same as that followed by the predecessors of Reed and Barton,—Pewter, britannia, silver plate. The rather poor pewter made in this country was too soft to afford a suitable base, but fortunately by 1847, the secret of making the harder britannia had become well known.

For Connecticut silversmiths, Ashbil Griswold was the ancestor on the pewter side. Trained by Thomas Danforth III at Rocky Hill, Griswold settled in North Meriden where he first made pewter, then turned to britannia so successfully that his little shop became a factory. He in turn trained many others, and by 1852, Meriden had become so great a britannia producing center that several of the firms consolidated to form the Meriden Britannia Company. For many years this company continued to make britannia ware, but more and more of their product was plated, till eventually none of it went out in its naked state. From this point on, the book reverts to the main theme of silver, and particularly the formation and work of the International Silver Company.

The pewter collector will be particularly interested in the first nine chapters. Probably few of us remember that the first Yankee peddlers were two Irishmen who came from Tyrone in 1738. They settled in Berlin, Connecticut, bought sheets of tin in Boston, and in 1840 began making tin pails, cups, dippers and wash basins. These they peddled, first by back-packs, later by carts and wagons. The Connecticut pewterers learned their selling methods from these two white-iron-smiths.

Ashbil Griswold and his apprentices are well written up. Plate II is a reproduction of his portrait, and plate VII shows a variety of his pewter, largely gathered by Mr. George Holmes Edwards, the Secretary of International Silver Company, and a member of our Club. Two chapters are devoted to the late William Gamiel Snow, formerly Advertising Manager of the Company, and a member of the Club at the time of his death. He was the historian of the Company in his later years, and gathered much of the data for this book, which is dedicated to him.

If, like the present reviewer, you are a native of Connecticut, you will be interested in the account of the brown-stone quarried at Portland, the rise and fall of Northford, and the myth of the nutmeg.

PERCY E. RAYMOND.

Osburn, Burl Neff, and Wilber, Gordon Owen. *Pewter, Spun, Wrought, and Cast*. International Textbook Company, Scranton, Penna. Second printing, 1939, pp. 1-151, numerous illustrations.

Kauffman, Henry J. *Home Craft Course in Pennsylvania German Pewter*. Home Craft Course series, vol. VIII. Pub. by Mrs. C. Naaman Keyser, Plymouth Meeting, Penna., 1944, pp. not numbered, numerous illustrations.

Both of these books are of interest to collectors of antique pewter. Although primarily intended to help those who "roll their own," the authors have studied the products of their predecessors in the craft. A knowledge of how pewter is made now-a-days helps us to a better understanding of the ancient craftsmanship. Incidentally, if well read and thoughtfully digested, the information gained may guide one in the selection of unmarked pieces.

The first, the more pretentious volume, starts auspiciously with a photograph of the collection of our lamented member, Albert C. Bowman. The first chapter, on the Story of Pewter, is not too fortunate. There are reasons other than the copyright laws for not quoting from it. The authors get onto their own ground in chapter 2 on the Metal, and there is much to interest the student of antiques in the following pages, even though the detailed instructions may deter him from any actual practice of the craft. The making of pewter utensils requires special skill and aptitude.

The reviewer was especially interested in two photographs, one on page 84 and the other opposite it. Fig. 190 shows a double-eared porringer in the Metropolitan Museum. The cover shows the typical high double dome of tankards of 1715 and later. This is a supplement to the low double-domed specimen in my collection, and an interesting parallel between porringers and tankards. The other (Fig. 191) is a double-reeded platter in the Johnson-Humerickhouse Museum in Coshocton, Ohio. It bears an engraved coat of arms and the date 1637. This is the oldest dated double-reeded piece to come to my attention.

The little book by Mr. Kauffman, a member of the Club, is appropriately illustrated by drawings by Zoe Toomer Kauffman of important Heyne and other pieces showing German influence. Then follows a brief but interesting discussion of the German influence on the making of pewter in Pennsylvania. Or rather, to state it in actual terms, the English influence on the work of Johan Christopher Heyne and William Will. English, German, and Swedish (Parks Boyd) mingled to produce some of the most interesting American vessels. The latter half of the book is devoted to illustrated instructions for designing and constructing a variety of articles, from buttons to mugs and teapots.

PERCY E. RAYMOND.

MEMBERS

This list is as of July 1, 1947, to the best of our knowledge and belief. Those who have received master-members' badges are marked with an asterisk. All that you have to do to get one is to pay dues for five consecutive years. They are worth having. The letters N. Y. G. after a name indicate that the person is also a member of the New York Regional Group.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIBLIOGRAPHY

When we published Miss Denman's bibliography of pewter as Bulletin 15, in 1945, we intended to issue supplements as information was received. After two years' experience, it now seems that it would be more satisfactory to issue supplements at five-year intervals, so that the material can be properly classified and arranged in a form approved by librarians. As was to be expected, some writings on pewter were omitted from Bulletin 15. The Publication Committee has been notified of some of them, has found others themselves, and now appeals to all members to make contributions to the first formal supplement. Please do not take it for granted that some one else has supplied the item: "All contributions thankfully received."

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